



minutes

August 25, 2017–10:00 AM-3:00 PM
Pacific Rim Institute, 180 Parker Road, Coupeville, WA, Island County
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Nan McKay (Chair), Jerry Masters, Tom Cowan, Doug Stark (Whatcom), Terry Turner (San Juan-alternate), Elsa Schwartz (Island MRC-alternate), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson-alternate), Ron Thom

Commission Staff: Rich Childers, Nicole Jordan, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart

Others in Attendance: Keith Higman (Island County Public Health Department-Director), Caroline Gibson (Northwest Straits Foundation), Tom Doerge, Mel Malkoff, Anna Toledo (Island MRC staff), Tom Mumford, Cheryl Lowe (Jefferson MRC staff), Lisa Kaufman (Northwest Straits Foundation)

Absent: Dale Moses (Jefferson), Jamey Selleck (Skagit, Vice Chair), Sheida Sahandy, Cecilia Gobin (Tribal), Ken Carrasco (San Juan), Alan Clark (Clallam), Ed Adams (Island), Paul Clampitt (Snohomish)

Welcome and Introductions

Nan McKay opened the meeting and introduced Keith Higman, Director of Island County Public Health Department. Keith welcomed and thanked the Northwest Straits Commission for bringing the meeting to Island County.

The minutes from the July Northwest Straits Commission meeting were approved.

Northwest Straits Commission - committee reports

Executive Committee

Nan said the committee discussed purchasing restrictions on equipment with EPA grant funds. The issue is somewhat alleviated for MRCs in the coming year as they will have state funds that allow equipment purchases. Staff have not been successful at getting clarification from EPA as to what constitutes equipment vs. supplies.

External Relations Committee

Tom Cowan said the committee is working on identifying new priorities now that state funding is secured.

Science Advisory Committee

Ron said the committee assisted in reviewing the recent MRC grant proposals and provided feedback.



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Education and outreach in Island County

Barbara Bennett, Island MRC member, presented on the outreach efforts of Island MRC as they tie into the overall work of the Northwest Straits Initiative. The MRC identified key decision makers within their county governments and presented a questionnaire to focus communications with the county. The Commission discussed communication and outreach to elected officials within other MRC and suggested Barbara's presentation might be a good item to present at the annual conference.

MRC reports

Monthly reports for each MRC are available by visiting this link: <http://bit.ly/2x6OdYZ>

Clallam

Clallam provided a written report. The three interns are working on completing their projects and summarizing the outcomes in posters for a presentation on August 28 at the Intern Celebration event. MRC members are continuing recreational crabber outreach throughout the entire crabbing season.

Island

Elsa said the MRC is working on monitoring eelgrass beds which were surveyed by underwater videography. Gregg Ridder completed aerial photography of Whidbey and Camano and Albert Foster has conducted monitoring with multi-beam sonar at several sites.

Jefferson

Jeff said the MRC is preparing for outreach at the Wooden Boat Festival. They completed installation of all summer navigational buoys for the Port Townsend waterfront no-anchor zone. All 7 Mystery Bay buoys were checked in early August and are still in place.

San Juan

Terry said a subcommittee met to plan for three meetings in late October to address issues of vessel traffic and noise, prey availability, and pollution to the southern resident killer whale population. The MRC is working on a project to restore vegetation at the Orcas Landing Experience.

Skagit

Nate said Skagit MRC member, Kit Rawson, passed away. Paul Dinnel is working with WA Department of Fish and Wildlife to distribute and monitor stacks of ceramic tiles at four locations in Fidalgo Bay to monitor native oyster settlement. 22 people are now on the wait list for next year's Salish Sea Stewards training.

Snohomish



minutes

Tom said the MRC is working on kelp monitoring. Elisa Dawson and Zoe Zilz attended the Warm Beach Summerfest on August 12, 2017, focusing on initial outreach on shoreline armor removal—four property owners signed up for site visits.

Whatcom

Doug said Laurie Caskey-Schreiber resigned from the MRC—the MRC has two prospective candidates for their vacancies. The MRC is getting ready for several events including Bellingham SeaFeast, the culminating event of Whatcom Water Week. The MRC will have their booth amongst several others.

Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) update

Rich updated on behalf of the PSP. The PSP hired several new people including Jennifer Lee as the new Planning Director, Stacy Vynne as the Salmon Recovery Manager and Tristan Peter-Contesse as the Boards Program Manager. The Partnership is beginning to feel the effects of the lack of a 2017-2019 capital budget, which has not yet passed in the Washington State Legislature.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) update

Caroline said the NWSF is feeling the effects of the capital budget stagnation on their restoration projects. She is focused on building donors through fundraising efforts to businesses and corporations. The NWSF will host a silent auction at the 2017 MRC Conference.

Public comment

The Commission discussed the most effective strategy to approach net pens.

Business items

Zooplankton monitoring program update

Lucas said Long Live the Kings currently manages the [Marine Survival Project](#), which aims to understand factors impacting salmon with zooplankton monitoring as a piece of the project. Lucas reported that the bottleneck in these projects is the lack of taxonomists to do species identification on collected samples. With past expressed interest by MRCs to do zooplankton monitoring on their own, this hurdle would have to be overcome to build a meaningful MRC project.

Marine renewable energy workshops

Commission staff updated on the two Marine Renewable Energy seminars put on in partnership with Washington Sea Grant and Jefferson and Skagit MRCs. Each MRCs hosted an event, one in Padilla Bay on September 8 and another at Port Townsend on September 21. Commission staff helped with promotion of the events.

Commission topic list review

Commission members were asked to review the list of commission meeting topics and provide feedback.

Locations for 2018 MRC Conference



minutes

Commission staff are previewing locations for the 2018 MRC conference – the Northwest Straits Initiative’s 20th anniversary.

Ecosystem health

Ron Thom and Tom Mumford presented on their work to help define ecosystem health by developing a model based on function x area x probability to equal Net Ecosystem Improvement (NEI). The ultimate goal of this project is to build a model that will provide the ability to report and document ecosystem impacts resulting from MRC projects. As an example, the model was applied to the eelgrass no anchor zone to quantify the impact of the project. The Commission discussed the equations usefulness in other MRC projects.

- Action: The topic will be forwarded to the Executive Committee to summarize next steps.

Roundtable

There was no roundtable discussion.

The next Commission meeting will be from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM on September 29 over WebEx.