



minutes

January 25, 2019 • 10:30 AM-3:00 PM
Camano Island Library, 848 N Sunrise Blvd, Camano Island, WA 98282
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Paul Clampitt (Snohomish-Chair), Alan Clark (Clallam-Vice Chair), Elsa Schwartz (Island), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Christina Koons (San Juan – phone), Karin Berkholtz (Puget Sound Partnership Alternate), Pete Haase (Skagit), Cecilia Gobin (Tribal), Jerry Masters

Commission Staff: Lucas Hart, Nicole Jordan, Sasha Horst, Dana Oster

Others in Attendance: Anne Murphy (Northwest Straits Foundation), Janet St. Clair (Island County Commissioner), Phyllis Bravinder (Skagit Alternate), Austin Rose (Whatcom staff), Chris Castner, Jay Krienitz (WA Department of Fish and Wildlife), Tish Conway-Cranos (WA Department of Fish and Wildlife), Florian Graner, Mark Stamey, Russell Calendar (WA Sea Grant)

Absent: Tom Cowan, Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Ron Thom, Nan McKay

Opening and Introductions

Paul opened the meeting and facilitated introductions.

The minutes from the December Northwest Straits (NWS) Commission meeting were approved by consensus.

Welcome to Island County

Janet St. Clair, Island County Commissioner, welcomed the group to Island County and expressed appreciation for the work of the Island MRC and the NWS Commission.

MRC Diaries: Protecting and Preserving Our Island Waters

Elsa introduced a film by Florian Graner, Island MRC technical advisor, called [MRC Diaries: Protecting and Preserving Our Island Waters](#). The film provides an overview of the work of the Island MRC and highlights MRC members and partners as they share their connection to our local marine environment. The film will be used throughout Island County to create awareness of Island MRC.

NWS Commission - committee reports

Executive Committee

Alan said the committee discussed the upcoming NWS Initiative joint retreat scheduled for March 21-22. Commission staff will develop a Communications Plan to complement the Strategic Plan.

Science Advisory Committee

Dana said the committee is working with Dana to find a social scientist to join the committee. The committee drafted a volunteer job description and circulated to the Puget Sound Partnership's Social Science Advisory Committee.

- Action: Those with candidate recommendations should contact Dana at oster@nwstraits.org.



minutes

Director's Report

Lucas said The External Relations committee is working on educating legislators about the NWS Commission. Securing state funding is a priority this session. MRCs are working to obtain letters from their county commissioners/councils that express the importance of MRCs to their counties. Letters are being sent to state legislators.

Lucas encouraged Commissioners to take advantage of the Partnership's legislative update calls which are open to anyone interested in the current state legislative session.

- Action: Those interested in joining the weekly Partnership legislative calls can dial 1-855-929-3239, access code 807 543 663 each Friday at 11:30. The hour-long calls will take place through the end of session.

Lucas thanked Jerry Masters for serving as governor appointee to the NWS Commission. Jerry's term on the NWS Commission expired in October 2018, he graciously stayed on until January while a replacement was being confirmed.

Northwest Straits (NWS) Foundation update

Anne said the NWS Foundation hired Don Hunger as the interim director for six months in Caroline Gibson's absence. The NWS Foundation is shifting focus to private donors including private businesses and corporations. The NWS Foundation board is seeking candidates with non-profit experience for board membership from Island, Whatcom and San Juan counties.

- Action: Don can be reached at don@nwstraitsfoundation.org.
- Action: NWS Foundation Staff will be in contact with the MRCs on submissions to the MRC Opportunity Fund.

Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership) update

Karin said the Partnership secured funding to pursue a Mobilizing Funding Strategy, having a strategy is a requirement of all National Estuary Programs and is an element of the agency's strategic plan. . The current effort will assess the feasibility of activating the foundation, which is authorized in the authorizing legislation for the Partnership. Initially, the partnership is looking to support Near Team Actions in the Action Agenda by developing relationships and seeking private sector support. .

Public comment

There was no public comment.



minutes

MRC reports

Monthly reports for each MRC are available by visiting this link: <http://www.nwstraits.org/archive/>

Clallam

Alan said Kathy Cooper resigned in December 2018 and the MRC has a vacancy. Forage fish sampling was conducted at Cline Spit in January. The Clallam MRC is in the process of having the County Commissioners declaring March the "Oil Spill Preparedness Month".

Island

Elsa said the MRC has two new members; Jodi Crimmins and Randy Berthold. The MRC is now producing a quarterly newsletter to the Board of County Commissioners. The MRC will be participating in vegetation plantings at the newly-restored beaches at Sunlight shores.

Jefferson

Jeff said Kate Dean was replaced by Greg Brotherton as the new BOCC commissioner assigned to the MRC. The MRC's eelgrass buoy ad appeared in the January issue of 48° North regional boating magazine, which will be distributed free at the Seattle Boat Show. Planning has begun for 2019 rain gardens.

San Juan

Christina said the MRC established a membership subcommittee to address the current vacancies. 25 people will be volunteering at the Be Whale Wise booth at the Seattle Boat Show including MRC members and partners. A subcommittee has been formed to perform an initial review of the Marine Stewardship Area Plan.

Skagit

Pete said applications are now being accepted for the Salish Sea Stewards training and are available on the Skagit MRC website. The application deadline is March 1. Fidalgo Bay Day is scheduled for August 24, 2019. Paul Dinnel recently completed a report on Olympia Oyster Restoration in Fidalgo Bay.

Snohomish

Paul said the MRC continues to collaborate with the Snohomish Conservation District, who recently received a grant to study commercial kelp harvesting in the northern Puget Sound area. The MRC plans to have a booth at Sound Waters University 2019.

Whatcom

Austin said the MRC has two vacancies, an economic and conservation seat. The February MRC meeting will be a retreat. MRC intern Amanda Weiss is continuing to lead the forage fish surveys on behalf of the MRC. The MRC is brainstorming possible projects and consulting with Dana Oster.



minutes

Business items

MRC grants

Sasha thanked MRCs for getting quarterly reports in on time and said Commission staff are preparing for the next round of awards and developing the request for proposals that will be issued in the spring of 2019, and coordinating with Dept. of Ecology administrators of the online grant management system (EAGL).

Kelp project update

Dana said a survey was created and sent out to people in the kelp community to prioritize data gaps relating to kelp and kelp management.

- Action: Those interested in taking the survey or know people who work with kelp that should participate in the survey please contact Dana at oster@nwstraits.org.

February 22 Commission meeting

Lucas said due to the NWS Initiative Retreat moving to March, there will be a NWS Commission meeting on February 22 over WebEx.

Pinto Abalone support letter

The Science Advisory Committee recommended the Commission write a letter to Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife supporting the state listing of pinto abalone as endangered.

- Motion: Alan motioned to have the NWS Commission write the letter, Jeff seconded and the NWS Commission agreed by consensus.

Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) presentation

Jay Krienitz and Tish Conway-Cranos, WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), presented on the ESRP small grants program designed to support smaller projects, which don't compete well in large-scale restoration grant programs.

Round table

There was no discussion.

* The next Commission meeting will be on February 22, 2019 over WebEx.