



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

**Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
UW Friday Harbor Labs, Friday Harbor
January 24, 2003
Decisions and Future Agenda Topics**

Members attending: Buck Meloy, Andrea Copping, Anne Murphy, Duane Fagergren, Kirby Johnson, Kathy Fletcher, Gary Wood, Paul Dinnel, Kevin Ranker, Ed Bowlby (alt.), Harlan James (alt.), Dave Anderson, Scott McCreery
Members absent: Terry Williams, Mike Stoner, Joe Schmitt
Alternates attending: Jeanne Robinette, Andy Palmer, Dennis Willows
Staff: Tom Cowan, Sasha Horst

Duane Fagergren, chair, opened the meeting at 11:05 and introduced Dennis Willows, director of Friday Harbor Labs and San Juan MRC alternate to the Commission. Dennis Willows welcomed the group to the facility. Tom Cowan introduced the three San Juan County Commissioners, John Evans, Rhea Miller and Darcie Nielsen. Chair, Rhea Miller welcomed the Commission to San Juan County.

The agenda for the meeting was reviewed and one addition was made to add Ginny Broadhurst of the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team to report on MPA Coordination progress.

The minutes of the November 22 meeting in Clallam County were approved with the addition of Dave Anderson's update on the meeting with the Captain of the Port of Puget Sound to support funding the rescue tug in Neah Bay.

It was moved and approved by consensus to appoint Scott McCreery as the alternate for Mike Stoner's position on the Commission.

Committee chairs provided their monthly reports. **Administrative/Planning Committee**, chair, Paul Dinnel, reported on the December 9 meeting. MRC grant application issues were discussed, as well as opportunities for receiving a donation of intertidal lands and sponsorship of a creosote log removal project. The strategic planning retreat and mid-term report were also discussed. **Technical Committee** chair, Andrea Copping, requested feedback on meetings with MRC representatives to finalize grant applications and provided an update on the regional MPA benchmark tasks. **Education Committee**, chair, Kathy Fletcher noted that the committee is looking for a few new members and is working on a second newsletter to come out in the next month. Workshops and education opportunities will be on the next committee agenda. There was no meeting of the **Tribal Committee**. There was no meeting of the **Fundraising Committee**.

During public comment, Connie Barndt introduced herself as a new staff for Senator Patty Murray's office. Don Ragsdale submitted a letter on behalf of the Griffin Bay Preservation Committee. John Evans, a farmer from Orcas Island, commented that he would like to see the Commission and San Juan MRC start an initiative to stop commercial harvest of all species in Georgia Basin.

Dennis Willows led a tour of the Friday Harbor Laboratories facility, including a newly acquired vessel to be used for research. MRCs have been invited to make use of the research vessel during the next two months.

Tina Whitman of Friends of the San Juans, and Jim Slocomb of San Juan MRC, presented information about the San Juan County Forage Fish Program. Included in the presentation was an overview of the project and database system, as well as specific data totals. Next steps in the project include using collected data for on-the-ground projects and mapping eelgrass.

On behalf of the Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program (PSAMP), Duane Fagergren requested that MRC representatives evaluate the work being done and indicate its overall usefulness. A questionnaire will be sent to MRCs via Tom Cowan for those who are willing to complete the evaluation. Duane also requested that MRC representatives interested in attending the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin Research Conference contact him for scholarship information. A panel of Northwest Straits Initiative representatives will be presenting at the conference, and MRC representatives are encouraged to participate on the panel.

Ginny Broadhurst of the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team provided an update on the MPA coordination effort that is underway. She is compiling information from Washington State as part of an executive order to complete a national inventory of MPAs. There are currently around 100 sites included on the inventory. It is expected that the inventory will be completed in March, and data will be available online soon thereafter.

MRC representatives summarized their current MRC activities. **Clallam MRC** held their monthly meeting this week and had an update on the forage fish project; have changed to monthly rather than bi-monthly monitoring for PSP; are working to complete their 2003 work plan and have updated their MRC member list. **Island MRC** held elections for the MRC, with Roger Sherman elected as the new vice-chair; will co-sponsor the Sound Waters "one day university" on February 1; have started on their Shore Stewards project; are reviewing a proposal to submit to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board for Maylor's Marsh; finalized their grant application to the Commission; and are completing a year-end report for the County Commissioners. **Jefferson MRC** presented information on their Anchor Protection Zone to local community groups and the Port Townsend City Council; will give two presentations on derelict fishing gear at the Port Townsend Marine Science Center in January; had a presentation on the proposed Fred Hill pier project. **San Juan MRC** approved their 2003 work plan; presented forage fish information to groups on Shaw and Waldron Islands, as well as several other community groups; surveyed 19 beaches for forage fish spawning habitat; finalized their MRC grant application. **Skagit MRC** made a presentation to the County Commissioners; held a public meeting on derelict fishing gear; presented results of their Rapid Shoreline Inventory to Samish Island residents and discussed restoration projects; held elections and elected Jeanne Robinette as the new MRC chair. **Snohomish MRC** adopted their 2003 work plan; held elections for the MRC and elected Heather McCartney as the new MRC chair; is sending a proposal for use of the UW Friday Harbor Labs research vessel; completed a county-wide marine shoreline survey; completed a draft Dungeness crab stewardship plan for review by the MRC. **Whatcom MRC** held a successful Marine Summit; trained volunteers for forage fish survey work; formally invited the City of Blaine to have a representative on the MRC; will co-sponsor the Drayton Harbor Shellfish open house in January.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm. The next meeting will be on February 28 in Whatcom County. Meeting topics should be suggested to Commission staff by February 10.



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

**Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
Port of Bellingham, Squalicum Boathouse, Bellingham
February 28, 2003
Decisions and Future Agenda Topics**

Members attending: Dave Anderson, Ed Bowlby (alt.), Paul Dinnel, Duane Fagergren, Kathy Fletcher, Harlan James (alt.), Kirby Johnson, Buck Meloy, Anne Murphy, Kevin Ranker, Mike Stoner, Gary Wood
Members absent: Andrea Copping, Joe Schmitt, Terry Williams
Alternates attending: Jeanne Robinette, Scott McCreery
Staff: Tom Cowan, Sasha Horst
Support: Terry Stevens, Doug Dobyns, Connie Barndt

Duane Fagergren, chair, opened the meeting at 11:05 and introduced Scott McCreery, chair of the Whatcom MRC who welcomed the group to Bellingham.

The agenda for the meeting was reviewed and approved as written.

The minutes of the January 24 meeting in San Juan County were approved with the addition of Scott McCreery on the list of members attending.

Committee chairs provided their monthly reports. **Administrative/Planning Committee**, chair, Paul Dinnel, reported on a day-long meeting of the committee – the substance of that meeting will be discussed later on the agenda. The mid-term report will be sent to MRCs on Monday for review in the next week; a meeting for MRC lead staff and chairs will be scheduled sometime in April. **Technical Committee** chair, Andrea Copping, prepared a work plan for the MPA project for review by the A/P Committee. **Education Committee**, chair, Kathy Fletcher, reported that the spring newsletter is now available online/being printed and recommended that remaining education budget be used to contract with a public information officer. There was no meeting of the **Tribal Committee**. There was no meeting of the **Fundraising Committee**.

During administrative matters, Tom Cowan noted that the final task of the derelict fishing gear project is to complete a video of the project, and that an application is being submitted for new funding from the NOAA Community Based Restoration Program. Sasha Horst requested that each MRC identify one person to do media collection and that any articles and images be forwarded to the Commission.

It was moved and approved by consensus to send a letter to Senator Patty Murray thanking her for her successful efforts to secure federal funding for the Initiative for FY 2003.

David Roberts and David Palazzi of Department of Natural Resources provided an update on the derelict vessel program and presented information about the Aquatic Reserves Program. An advisory committee will be convened to review sites nominated to be Aquatic Reserves.

There was no public comment.

The Year Five Workplan and Budget was discussed. The Year Five federal appropriation is \$795,000. The Administrative/Planning Committee recommends reprogramming funds from previous years to bring the total Year Five budget to \$868,000. In addition to MRC and Commission tasks, there are additional Year Five tasks needed for reauthorization efforts, including a public conference, Year Five report, Web site improvements and convening an evaluation panel.

At the Commission retreat in January, the need for additional staff was acknowledged and the Commission requested that tasks be identified for an additional staff/contract person. Tasks identified by staff and the Administrative/Planning committee include: preparation of a benchmark progress and gaps report, drafting a Year Five report, managing MRC grants and ecosystem projects. Concerns were raised regarding the need for increased resources to the web site and adequate funding for other important tasks. Tom Cowan will draft a memo to include with the proposed budget describing how these concerns are being addressed.

It was moved and approved by consensus to adopt the proposed workplan and budget as a working document, allowing Tom Cowan discretion to distribute administrative costs into MRC and Commission tasks to reflect a more accurate distribution of resources.

Doug Dobyms provided a final report as the tribal liaison. As a next step he recommended that the Commission work with interested tribes to accomplish projects of mutual interest. He noted the many impressive projects being done by various tribes and recognized several tribes for hosting workshops and meetings to support his role as liaison to the Commission. The Commission thanked Doug for his outstanding work over the past 14 months.

MRC representatives summarized their current MRC activities. **Clallam MRC** had a presentation on derelict fishing gear from Michelle McConnell; documented another sand lance beach west of Port Angeles; received a letter of thanks from the Department of Health in recognition of the MRC work monitoring shellfish. **Island MRC** awarded a contract for the Feeder Bluff project to Coastal Geology Services Inc.; adopted a logo for the Shore Stewards program; completed shoreline hardening surveys on Camano Island and awarded a contract for surveying of Whidbey Island. **Jefferson MRC** is planning a retreat for the MRC; plan to use the Friday Harbor Labs research vessel ROV to view the artificial reef; are seining for chum and forage fish in Tarboo Bay. **San Juan MRC** visited Lopez and Orcas Islands as part of an ongoing effort to hold meetings on other islands; will hold their March 19 meeting on Shaw Island; held a productive retreat for MRC members; will advertise their Bottomfish Recovery Program on the back of the WDFW Sportfishing Guide; have documented 34 forage fish spawning sites to date. **Skagit MRC** appointed four new MRC members; had a presentation on the DNR Aquatic Reserves program; continued outreach on the derelict fishing gear project; began forage fish spawning habitat surveys; **Snohomish MRC** confirmed Kirby Johnson as the representative to the Commission; is preparing to present to the County Council; completed their proposed Stewardship Plan for Dungeness Crab; will use the Friday Harbor Labs research vessel to do deep water video profiles in support of the Dungeness Crab stewardship plan. **Whatcom MRC** held three public meetings in February on the health of bottomfish in Whatcom County which were well attended and received media coverage; will post the report from their recent Marine Summit to the MRC web site; had a presentation on DNR Aquatic Reserves program.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm. The next meeting will be on March 28 at the Maxime's Restaurant in Stanwood, Snohomish County. Meeting topics should be suggested to Commission staff by March 12.



NORTHWEST STRAITS
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**Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
Maxime's Restaurant, Stanwood, Snohomish County
March 28, 2003
Decisions and Future Agenda Topics**

Members attending: Dave Anderson, Paul Dinnel, Duane Fagergren, Kathy Fletcher, Terry Williams, Kirby Johnson, Buck Meloy, Anne Murphy, Kevin Ranker, Scott McCreery (alt.), Gary Wood, Andrea Copping
Members absent: Joe Schmitt, Mike Stoner
Staff: Tom Cowan, Sasha Horst
Support: Rachelle Hein

Duane Fagergren, chair, opened the meeting at 10:00 and welcomed Terry Williams back from his time away, and thanked Heather McCartney and Daryl Williams of the Snohomish MRC for attending the meeting.

The agenda for the meeting was reviewed and approved as written.

The minutes of the February 28 meeting in Whatcom County were approved as written.

Committee chairs provided their monthly reports. **Administrative/Planning Committee**, chair, Paul Dinnel, reported on the March 12 meeting and noted that most of the topics would be covered later in the agenda. The Commission mid-term report is now available. **Technical Committee** chair, Andrea Copping, noted that an application to The Russell Family Foundation has been submitted and it is expected to be reviewed and a decision made in May. The **Education Committee** reported that there is a spring newsletter now available. There was no meeting of the **Tribal Committee**. However, Daryl Williams reported that the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission is finalizing a public policy on Marine Protected Areas that is expected to be complete late in April. **Fundraising Committee**, chair, Gary Wood, reported that an application was submitted for a Coastal America Partnership Award, and that the Commission received recognition from Shared Strategy for the forage fish project.

Heather McCartney, chair of the Snohomish County Marine Resources Advisory Committee, provided some highlights of the county and the MRC, as well as an update on current projects, including the Kayak Point Pilot Project, Forage Fish Habitat Inventories and the Dungeness Crab Stewardship effort. Kirby Johnson, Snohomish MRC member and representative to the Commission, presented additional information about the Proposed Dungeness Crab Stewardship Plan for Snohomish County.

Andrea Copping provided a brief overview of the panel session that the Commission will be presenting at the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin Research Conference in Vancouver on Thursday, April 3. The panel will include MRC and Commission representatives, as well as San Juan County Commissioner Rhea Miller.

During public comment, Mike Sato of People For Puget Sound noted that there would be a session at the upcoming Puget Sound/Georgia Basin Research Conference on Orca Pass and he would like to keep dialog open with the Commission to investigate other ways to approach the Orca Pass issue.

During administrative matters, it was recommended that the three former Commission chairs be appointed as the nominating committee for Commission chair and vice-chair positions. There were no objections and Andrea Copping, Duane Fagergren and Kent Scudder were appointed as the nominating committee. The Commission budget and workplan has been modified slightly. The public conference is now planned for February 2004. Staffing options for the Commission are being explored, with more information needed on how to approach the hiring process. Tom Cowan reported on his recent visit to Washington DC, where he met with several Federal legislators and/or their staff. Reauthorization of the Initiative was discussed. An educational video on the Derelict fishing gear project is now in progress, with an expected completion date in May.

MRC representatives summarized their current MRC activities. **Clallam MRC** finalized their MRC work plan for the year; had a presentation from Jeff June of Natural Resources Consultants on their upcoming derelict gear removal project; are considering a joint pilot project with the Department of Health on Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning. **Island MRC** had presentations on Shorebirds of the Bluffs and Whidbey-Camano Land Trust and will hold a MRC retreat in May. **Jefferson MRC** has received permission from the Port of Port Townsend to install signs on Port property about the Olympia Oyster restoration project, signs will be produced at the end of March; are actively recruiting for three vacant MRC positions; will have a complete Priority Habitat Stewardship Report by the end of the month. **San Juan MRC** held an outreach meeting on Shaw Island in March and will hold a meeting at Camp Orkila on April 16; had a presentation on herring from Greg Bargmann of WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife; have surveyed 77 of 99 potential miles of habitat for forage fish spawning habitat with 38 sites documented, 24 of which are newly documented sites. **Skagit MRC** has four new MRC members – Margaret Schwertner, Lori Kyle, Ken Youngsman and Robert Knowles; have held meetings to kick off the Pacific Oyster enhancement projects; have begun surveys for forage fish habitat; designated \$9,000 of their current grant funding for derelict fishing gear removal. **Snohomish MRC** nominated and approved Daryl Williams as the MRC vice-chair; had a presentation from Michelle McConnell on derelict fishing gear; and finalized their Proposed Dungeness Crab Stewardship Plan for Snohomish County. **Whatcom MRC** completed a summary and held a wrap up of their recent successful Marine Summit; has sampled over 70 sites for forage fish spawning habitat with 9 sites confirmed as spawning sites; held three public presentations on bottomfish in Whatcom County which were well attended; and had a presentation of all the nearshore and shoreline data collected to date by the MRC.

There was discussion of the Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Reserves program and the current process of convening an advisory committee. It was moved and approved by consensus to send a letter to the Department of Natural Resources noting that members of the Commission will not participate in the Aquatic Reserve Advisory Committee.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm. The next meeting will be on April 25 at the Port of Skagit County Commissioner Board Room in Mount Vernon, Skagit County. Meeting topics should be suggested to Commission staff by April 14.



NORTHWEST STRAITS
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**Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
Port of Skagit, Skagit County
April 25, 2003
Decisions and Future Agenda Topics**

Members attending: Paul Dinnel, Duane Fagergren, Terry Williams, Kirby Johnson, Buck Meloy, Andy Palmer (alt.), Mary Masters (alt.), Gary Wood, Mike Stoner
Members absent: Joe Schmitt, Dave Anderson, Andrea Copping, Kathy Fletcher, Kevin Ranker, Anne Murphy
Staff: Tom Cowan, Sasha Horst
Support: Terry Stevens, Jill McKinnie

Duane Fagergren, chair, opened the meeting at 10:05 with introductions.

The agenda for the meeting was reviewed, with one addition. Ginny Broadhurst of Puget Sound Action Team was added to update the Commission on the Marine Protected Area (MPA) inventory.

The minutes of the March 28 meeting in Snohomish County were approved as written.

Committee chairs provided their monthly reports. **Administrative/Planning Committee**, chair, Paul Dinnel, reported on the April 17 meeting. The committee discussed the DNR Aquatic Reserves Advisory Panel, which is a later agenda topic. The main topic of the meeting was the upcoming evaluation and reauthorization. There was no activity of the **Technical Committee**. The **Education Committee** reported that there is a spring newsletter now available. The education committee also discussed the Fall Training Conference. There was a discussion of the location for the conference, and the Commission selected Fort Worden Conference Center as the preferred location if the Bellwether in Bellingham is not feasible. There was no meeting of the **Tribal Committee**. A meeting is expected to be arranged in the next month. **Fundraising Committee**, chair, Gary Wood, reported on a grant opportunity for additional derelict fishing gear removal funds. The deadline is in two weeks, and he is interested in assistance in completing the proposal.

Officers for the Commission were elected for one-year terms. Following the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, Paul Dinnel was elected chair, and Kathy Fletcher was elected as vice-chair.

Jeanne Robinette, Skagit MRC chair, and Paul Dinnel, Skagit MRC representative to the Commission, presented an overview of Skagit MRC projects to date, focusing on current projects including Bottomfish Reserves-Phase III, native and Pacific oyster enhancement and Rapid Shoreline Inventories on March Point and Samish Island.

There was no public comment.

Duane Fagergren reported on his correspondence with David Palazzi of Department of Natural Resources regarding the Aquatic Reserves process. In his letter, David Palazzi addresses the concerns raised by the

Commission. Duane will forward copies of the letters to Commission staff for distribution to MRC representatives.

During administrative matters, Sasha Horst provided current information on the status of MRC grant funds and noted that all invoicing for these grants must be complete by June 30. Terry Stevens provided a budget update on Commission funds, and derelict gear project funds.

Tom Cowan updated the Commission on staffing needs. A Marine Conservation Specialist position will be advertised soon to work with MRCs on a gaps analysis, as well as coordinate the MPA project and project management for other ecosystem projects. The goal is for this position to be hired by June 1. Also, a small contract is being arranged with Lew Moore to work on outreach opportunities with the business community and generate a list of contacts for further efforts.

A video is currently being produced for the derelict fishing gear removal project, produced by KVOS Studios. It is expected to be approximately 6-8 minutes, and will be used for educational and fundraising purposes.

Ginny Broadhurst of Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team updated the Commission on the national Marine Protected Area (MPA) inventory. The list of MPAs in Washington is now complete and will be available online soon. The list does not include federal or privately-owned sites.

MRC representatives summarized their current MRC activities. **Clallam MRC** dedicated most of their time to preparing a strategy and Request for Proposals (RFP) for their Elwha nearshore restoration project and drafting a Request for Proposals for their derelict fishing gear removal project; updates on their shellfish monitoring and forage fish projects were also provided at their last meeting. **Island MRC** is working on *Spartina* removal in Penn Cove; has hired a contractor to complete Whidbey Island shoreline hardening surveys; is designing materials for the Shore Stewards program; has begun initial outreach for the Cama Beach restoration project; has started a geological assessment of drift cells, accretion shoreforms and feeder bluffs. **Jefferson MRC** has hired a coordinator for the MRC (Michelle McConnell) to lead Year Four projects; is completing public and educational signage for Olympia Oyster restoration; held their annual MRC retreat and appointed two new members; continues forage fish sampling and is currently focusing on Tarboo Bay for forage fish and salmon smolt use. **San Juan MRC** held an outreach meeting on Orcas Island on April 16 as part of its ongoing effort to solicit public opinion and initiate discussion about the concept of a marine stewardship area in San Juan County; met with Senator Patty Murray; had a presentation on marine resources stewardship from Russel Barsh of the Coast Salish Institute; will start the bottomfish fishing pressure assessment on May 1; continued forage fish outreach and field work. **Skagit MRC** had a presentation by the North Sound Baykeeper, Wendy Steffenson; have held several meetings to kick off the current oyster enhancement projects; monitored Fidalgo Bay oysters planted in 2002 for survival and growth, which appear to be excellent; will use UW Friday Harbor Labs' ROV system on April 29 for deep water surveys of proposed bottomfish reserve areas. **Snohomish MRC** welcomed one new MRC member (Sally van Niel) and a new outreach staff (Suzi Wong Swint); scheduled their summer beach expos; reviewed the MRC Annual Report and will prepare to present to the County Council. **Whatcom MRC** had a presentation on Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Reserves; posted GIS maps of marine data on their web site, as well as other site updates; has completed a final report on bottomfish workshops (also available on the web site); has appointed three new members (Wendy Steffenson, Bob Cecile and Ron Akeson).

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:05pm. The next meeting will be on May 30 at Fort Worden State Park in Port Townsend, Jefferson County. Meeting topics should be suggested to Commission staff by May 12.



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

**Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
Fort Worden State Park, Port Townsend, Jefferson County
May 30, 2003, 10:00am-3:00pm
Decisions and Future Agenda Topics**

Members attending: Paul Dinnel, Duane Fagergren, Kirby Johnson, Dennis Willows (alt.), Gary Wood, Dave Anderson, Andrea Copping, Kathy Fletcher, Anne Murphy, Amy Kraham
Members absent: Terry Williams, Joe Schmitt, Kevin Ranker, Mike Stoner
Staff: Tom Cowan, Sasha Horst
Support: Alison Peake (Senator Patty Murray's office)

Paul Dinnel, chair, opened the meeting at 10:05 with introductions. Dan Titterness, Jefferson County Commissioner, welcomed the group to Port Townsend.

The agenda for the meeting was reviewed, with the addition of a discussion on the Navy's use of sonar in Puget Sound.

The minutes of the March 28 meeting in Snohomish County were approved as written.

Committee chairs provided their monthly reports. **Administrative/Planning Committee**, chair, Kathy Fletcher, reported on the May 15 meeting at Padilla Bay. Discussed on the agenda were the upcoming evaluation and public conference, the recent lead staff/chair meeting, the next round of MRC action grants, and election of a new chair for the education committee. **Technical Committee**, chair Andrea Copping, provided an update of recent activities, which included review of two applications for derelict fishing gear removal grants, development of the MPA project and the hiring of staff for this project. Any suggestions for issues the technical committee should be working on should be forwarded to Andrea. **Education Committee** chair, Kathy Fletcher stepped down since she is now chair of the Administrative/Planning Committee. It was moved and approved by consensus that Duane Fagergren be elected as chair of the Education Committee. Additional membership is needed for this committee, as well as other committees. There was no meeting of the **Tribal Committee**. There was no report of the **Fundraising committee**.

There was a discussion of the Navy's use of sonar in Puget Sound. It was agreed that the Commission needs additional information about the use of sonar, but that it is an issue that the Commission would like to follow up on. It was moved and approved by consensus that a letter be written to the Navy that would voice concerns and explain the Commission's role in marine issues, as well as request more background information on the use of sonar. The letter would also recommend that the Navy temporarily discontinue use of sonar in Puget Sound until more information can be gathered. Kathy Fletcher was authorized to speak for the Commission on this issue at a meeting of the National Marine Fisheries Service in Seattle May 31.

Paul Dye of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) presented information about work that TNC does in marine conservation. Habitat protection is one main focus of TNC, but they also do work in ecoregional planning and conservation area planning. Several areas were identified that the Commission and TNC may be able to work together.

During public comment, Alison Peake of Senator Patty Murray's office noted that Senator Murray and her staff are working with the Commission on reauthorization, and that the Senator is following the Navy sonar issue closely. It was noted that the rescue tug has left Neah Bay for the summer season, since the Coast Guard has not released funds that the Senator worked to secure for year-round operations. Also during public comment, Kirby Johnson provided information from MRC member and NOAA hazardous materials specialist Alan Mearns on the results of a study on cruise ship effluent in Alaska. Results can be found at <http://www.state.ak.us/dec/press/cruise/documents/sciencepanel.htm>.

During administrative matters, Tom Cowan updated the Commission on staffing. A Marine Conservation Specialist has been hired through a cooperative agreement with Washington Sea Grant Program to work with MRCs and the Commission on regional projects. A short contract with Lew Moore will begin at the start of June to work on outreach opportunities with the business community and generate a list of contacts for further efforts. Commissioners had several suggestions for industries to focus on for contacts.

A video produced on the derelict fishing gear project was shown, running approximately 12 minutes. Commissioners recommended that it be shortened in order to be as useful as possible for future presentations. A funding update for the derelict gear removal project was given. Remaining funds for the project are planned to be used for locating derelict gear in several locations later this month. It was suggested that the Commission prepare, in addition to the full final report, a brief technical memo outlining lessons learned and recommendations.

Sasha Horst and Tom Cowan gave an overview of the recent MRC lead staff/chair meeting. Topics discussed included the MRC grant process, Commission and MRC web sites, MRC membership and the Initiative evaluation process. A summary of the meeting was distributed and will be sent to chairs and lead staff next week.

A written budget summary of Northwest Straits grants was provided by Terry Stevens. It was noted that the Year Four funding will end as of June 30 and all work done under this grant must be complete by that time.

MRC representatives summarized their current MRC activities. **Clallam MRC** discussed updates on shellfish monitoring, forage fish surveys, and Olympia oysters; reported progress on plans for the Elwha Nearshore Monitoring Workshop, with a preliminary list of invited participants and draft agenda; formed a subcommittee to review contract bidders for the Derelict Gear Removal project. **Island MRC** held a meeting at Cama Beach State Park, the site of two MRC restoration projects; had a presentation on the Shore Stewards program and developed a yard sign for participants; are holding an MRC retreat June 2; presented to the Board of County Commissioners on current MRC work. **Jefferson MRC** conducted bi-annual monitoring of Olympia oyster planting sites and report that growth looks good; presented to the Board of County Commissioners on May 27 and expect to do quarterly updates from now on; are researching issues related to submerged vertical structures; are working with a Discovery Bay citizen's group to identify a project to partner on. **San Juan MRC** re-elected Jim Slocomb as chair and elected David Loyd as vice-chair; developed and adopted a two phase plan for their Marine Stewardship Area Project; has updated their bottomfish recovery program ad on the State sportfishing guide; to date have surveyed 80% of potential forage fish spawning habitat. **Skagit MRC** reallocated funds from derelict gear removal to do ROV surveys of candidate marine reserve sites; is targeting Pacific oyster planting in September; has updated their web site, which can now be found at www.skagitcounty.net/SMRC; reported excellent survival and growth of Olympia oysters planted in 2002. **Snohomish MRC** proposed a methodology for a science-based, collaborative approach to identifying and prioritizing candidate sites for restoration and protection and expects to draft a "road map" for a final report by the end of the year; will present on current MRC progress to the County Council on June 3; have scheduled a deep water observation cruise in June with the UW Friday Harbor Labs vessel. **Whatcom MRC** completed their Bottomfish Report and identified two action items – conducting dive surveys to monitor bottomfish populations and help develop fishing regulations for recreational fishing to present to WDFW at the next cycle; completed a 30 minute video on forage fish which will be aired by KVOX, the local TV station; continued creosote log removal in Drayton Harbor; is coordinating with Lummi Nation on MRC projects.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm. The next meeting will be on June 27 at the Service Alternatives building in Coupeville, Island County. Meeting topics should be suggested to Commission staff by June 16.



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

**Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
Service Alternatives Bldg, Coupeville, Island County
June 27, 2003, 10:30am -3:00pm
Decisions and Future Agenda Topics**

Members attending: Paul Dinnel, Duane Fagergren, Kirby Johnson, Gary Wood, Dave Anderson, Andrea Copping, Kathy Fletcher, Anne Murphy, Amy Kraham, Kevin Ranker, Ed Bowlby (alt.)
Members absent: Terry Williams, Joe Schmitt, Mike Stoner
Staff: Tom Cowan, Sasha Horst
Support: Terry Stevens

Paul Dinnel, chair, opened the meeting at 10:05 with introductions. Mac McDowell, Island County Commissioner, welcomed the Commission and noted the many successful projects of the Island MRC.

There were no changes to the agenda.

The minutes of the May 30 meeting in Jefferson County were approved as written.

Committee chairs provided their monthly reports. **Administrative/Planning Committee**, chair, Kathy Fletcher, noted that the committee met on June 4 and June 27. The main topics of discussion were the Initiative evaluation and reauthorization process. There has been some redesigning of the process, with the public conference to be held in late spring, and an evaluation panel to be convened in early January. Discussion followed with suggestions for some of the organizational aspects of the evaluation. **Education Committee** chair, Duane Fagergren, reported on the June 24 meeting in Port Townsend. Updates and changes to the Commission and MRC web sites were discussed, as well as a tentative schedule for the October MRC conference. Additional planning for the fall conference will follow the meetings today, and the conference is expected to be a working session. **Technical Committee**, chair, Andrea Copping, reported that there are two new members – Scott McCreery and Chris Fairbanks, both from Whatcom MRC. There was no meeting of the **Tribal Committee**. There was no report of the **Fundraising committee**.

Tom Campbell, chair of the Island MRC, presented on their current Shore Stewards program. A draft of the Shore Stewards handbook was shown, and an overview of the ten guidelines for shoreline living given in the handbook was presented. In addition, Tom Campbell reported that Island MRC recently held a successful retreat, from which a new concept for a Saratoga Passage Stewardship Area is beginning to be developed.

There was no public comment.

A video produced on the forage fish habitat inventories was shown, produced by Whatcom MRC. The video is approximately 30 minutes long and has been shown on local television in Whatcom County.

During administrative matters, Sasha Horst distributed copies of the video produced for the derelict fishing gear removal project to Commissioners. Tom Cowan provided an update on current staffing. Lew Moore is currently making contacts with corporations, marine industries and business associations. Several suggestions were made for industries that should be contacted, such as fishing and building industries. The contract with Lew Moore will be evaluated at the end of July. Ginny Broadhurst has started work and has made improvements to the MRC grant

application. The gaps analysis is next, as well as working on the MPA coordination project. Sasha Horst provided an update on the status of MRC grants and the remaining balances to be invoiced. The RFP for new grants has been sent, and one letter of intent received. Copies of the letter sent to the Navy regarding sonar use was distributed, and it was noted that no response has been received to date.

MRC representatives summarized their current MRC activities. **Clallam MRC** is starting derelict gear removal this week, focusing on crab pot removal; has received excellent coverage of the derelict gear project in the local media; is planning to send a letter of support for a Canadian project to run fiber optic cable across the Strait of Juan de Fuca; noted that identified forage fish spawning habitat areas need to be included in Geographic Response Plans for protection in the event of oil spills. **Island MRC** is interested in partner MRCs to work on invasive *Spartina* removal; held a successful MRC meeting with speaker Ken Balcomb on the Navy's use of sonar, which received good media coverage; is developing an idea to create a Saratoga Passage Marine Stewardship Area. **Jefferson MRC** has surveyed for Olympia oyster planting sites, and expect to plant at three different sites; have developed a fact sheet about the voluntary Anchor-Free Zone; reviewed MRC projects to identify gaps, and identified bottomfish as an area where work has not been done; generated a list of possible Year 5 projects. There was no report of the **San Juan MRC**. **Skagit MRC** completed three days of ROV survey work on eight candidate marine reserve sites; identified approximately 2000 feet of sand lance spawning habitat; deposited 15 bags of oyster shells near the 2002 oyster planting site to provide substrate for spawning oysters; has set July 26 as a tentative *Spartina* removal date. **Snohomish MRC** hosted their first beach expo of the summer; has posted their Proposed Dungeness Crab Stewardship Plan on their web site; presented their annual report to the County Council; held a deep water ROV observation voyage with invited participants from local government, tribes, local students, MRC members and others. **Whatcom MRC** co-hosted an open house on the Dept. of Natural Resources aquatic reserves program; discussed subcommittees and decided to retain all and add new work groups for goals/priorities and shoreline management; will discuss upcoming projects at their next MRC meeting.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm. The next meeting will be on July 25 at the Audubon River Center in Sequim, Clallam County. Meeting topics should be suggested to Commission staff by July 11.



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

**Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
Dungeness River Audubon Center, Sequim, Clallam County
July 25, 2003, 10:15am -2:45pm
Decisions and Future Agenda Topics**

Members attending: Paul Dinnel, Duane Fagergren, Kirby Johnson, Gary Wood, Dave Anderson, Andrea Copping, Kathy Fletcher, Anne Murphy, Kevin Ranker, Terry Williams, Joe Schmitt, Scott McCreery (alt.), Buck Meloy
Members absent: Mike Stoner
Staff: Tom Cowan, Sasha Horst, Ginny Broadhurst

Paul Dinnel, chair, opened the meeting at 10:30 with introductions. Bob Boekelheide, director of the Dungeness River Center welcomed the group and described the center.

The agenda was changed to include a round table at the end of meeting.

The minutes of the June 27 meeting in Island County were approved as written.

Committee chairs provided their monthly reports. **Administrative/Planning Committee**, chair, Kathy Fletcher, reported on the July 9 meeting where the following were discussed: status of the 2004 Public Conference planning; Fall 2003 MRC conference objectives; comprehensive 5 Year Report recommended to be produced for the evaluation panel in January, followed by a complete report (with panel recommendations) to be published in late spring. Tom Cowan updated the Commission on the evaluation process. Bill Ruckelshaus has agreed to chair the evaluation panel, and the process will involve the Policy Consensus Center, a joint venture between UW/WSU. **Education Committee** chair, Duane Fagergren, reported on invited speakers for the fall MRC conference; noted that the webmaster under contract with the Commission is reviewing MRC and Commission web sites and will make recommendations in preparation for upcoming evaluation; outlined the plan for upcoming newsletter publications; formally thanked Kathy Fletcher for having served as committee chair. There was no meeting of the **Technical Committee**. A **Tribal Committee** meeting has been scheduled for August 7. There was no report of the **Fundraising committee**.

Ginny Broadhurst provided an update of projects, including progress on the gaps analysis. All MRC leads have been contacted, and she is gathering information about outcomes of accomplishments since the inception of the Initiative. She also noted that letters of intent have been received from two MRCs for the next round of grants.

Kevin Ranker presented a comparison of recommendations from the recent Pew Oceans Commission report and the anticipated US Commission on Ocean Policy report. He noted that Governors will have until the end of November to comment on the report, and recommended that the Commission send comments to Governor Locke. Discussion followed on the procedure, issues to be commented on and general tone of the letter. It was moved and approved by consensus that Commissioners should provide input on the draft comment letter by August 8 and the Administrative/Planning Committee will review and revise the letter on August 13 and send out to Commissioners for final approval by August 15.

There was no public comment.

Tim Smith of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) provided an update on issues relevant to the Commission. He noted that WDFW is interested in working with the Commission on an expanded derelict gear removal project. Tim also noted that he is on task force that has been convened to revamp the Salmon Recovery Funding Board process for evaluating and funding nearshore/marine projects. A discussion followed regarding concerns about the proposed options, and Commissioners were encouraged to forward comments to Tim before a retreat of the task force next week. The Commission requested that a representative from WDFW attend a future meeting to discuss enforcement issues at Edmonds underwater park and other areas.

Terry Williams provided copies of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission's (NWIFC) recently adopted policy on Marine Protected Areas. It was noted that while the NWIFC tribes support the policy, tribes' use of the policy is determined individually. Coastal tribes are in the process of developing additional comments on issues specifically related to the outer coast. Discussion followed on next steps and how to formally support the NWIFC policy. It was moved and approved by consensus to write a letter of support, recognition and appreciation to NWIFC for the recently adopted MPA policy. A similar letter is also to be sent to Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife as resource co-managers.

MRC representatives summarized their current MRC activities. **Clallam MRC** discussed projects for the next grant; completed derelict gear removal operations in late June/early July, with excellent media coverage of the project; continue to monitor shellfish for PSP, with levels still undetectable. **Island MRC** mourns the loss of active MRC member Tom Roehl; held a subcommittee meeting to discuss a Saratoga Passage Marine Stewardship Area; followed up with Department of Ecology to discuss forage fish habitat inclusion in Geographic Response Plans for oil spills. **Jefferson MRC** sent 20,000 Olympia oyster newspaper inserts out in the local newspapers and installed interpretive signs at two sites on Discovery Bay; have seeding of oysters planned for Aug. 10-12; will host a booth at the Jefferson County Fair; are working on extensive outreach and education on their Voluntary Anchor Free Zone, including presentations to city council and the Marine Cluster Group. **San Juan MRC** held an outreach meeting in Roche Harbor; had a presentation from Soundwatch on the Be Whale Wise guidelines; continued forage fish surveys and trained new volunteers; will have a display at the upcoming county fair. **Skagit MRC** is co-sponsoring a *Spartina* dig day on July 26; has begun diver surveys for Phase III of the Rocky Reef Bottomfish project; ordered oysters for upcoming enhancement in Padilla Bay. **Snohomish MRC** had a presentation by Sound Transit and is exploring partnering on a beach nourishment project; approved a methodology for a science-based, collaborative approach to identifying and prioritizing candidate sites for restoration and protection; discussed projects for a grant received from the Marjorie Mosher Schmidt Foundation and will develop and test a methodology for identifying juvenile Dungeness crab habitat. **Whatcom MRC** endorsed recommendations from their Bottomfish Subcommittee on fishing regulations; has new members on the Community Partnerships Subcommittee and will host the nearshore section of the Salmon Summit in Bellingham on November 13; will have a booth at the Salmon Celebration on September 13 and will have a field trip to observe creosote log removal.

Tom announced that the Northwest Straits Commission's Derelict Gear Removal Project has won the nationally prestigious Coastal America Partnership Award and it will be presented to the Commission's core team at the Estuarine Research Federation conference in September.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 2:45pm. The next meeting will be on August 22 at the Lopez Islander on Lopez Island in San Juan County. Meeting topics should be suggested to Commission staff by August 11.



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

**Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
Lopez Islander, Lopez Island, San Juan County
August 22, 2003, 11:15am -3:30pm
Decisions and Future Agenda Topics**

Members attending: Paul Dinnel, Kirby Johnson, Gary Wood, Dave Anderson, Andrea Copping, Anne Murphy, Terry Williams, Joe Schmitt, Scott McCreery (alt.), Jim Slocomb (alt.)
Members absent: Mike Stoner, Duane Fagergren, Kathy Fletcher, Kevin Ranker, Buck Meloy
Alternates attending: Jeanne Robinette
Staff: Tom Cowan, Sasha Horst, Ginny Broadhurst

Paul Dinnel, chair, opened the meeting at 11:45 with introductions. The agenda was modified to adjust for the late start time due to ferry delay.

The minutes of the July 25 meeting in Clallam County were approved as written.

Committee chairs provided their monthly reports. There was no meeting of the **Administrative/Planning Committee**. **Education Committee** chair, Duane Fagergren was not present. Sasha Horst reported for the Education Committee. Fall Conference invitations have been sent to MRCs, and registrations are now being taken. MRC presentation topics were discussed, and Ginny Broadhurst will be the point of contact for MRC presentations. MRCs should plan to forward presentations via disk to Sasha by October 17. Web sites have been reviewed and Sasha will forward suggestions to each MRC lead staff and chair. The **Technical Committee** noted that two letters of intent have been received from MRCs for action grants. The deadline for letters of intent is September 30. A **Tribal Committee** meeting was held on August 7. A letter is being drafted to Northwest Straits area tribes to solicit potential project ideas that the Commission could sponsor; a letter to Billy Frank was approved supporting the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission's MPA policy; and it was recommended that a tribal component of the fall conference be integrated into each MRC presentation. There was no report of the **Fundraising committee**.

There was no public comment.

A video from Ken Balcomb was shown with information on the Navy sonar use in Haro Strait. Actual footage from the incident was shown, and a video with information about the porpoise necropsies. It was noted that a letter from the Commission was sent to the Navy inviting them to provide additional information, but there has been no response to date.

Tom Cowan updated the Commission on the derelict fishing gear project. Datasets from survey work were shown, with over 500 derelict crab pots found in four areas. A recent net removal operation off San Juan Island was conducted by Department of Natural Resources divers, removing 400-600' of gill net which had entangled several birds, fish and a river otter. Grant funds for continued removal efforts are expected to be received in the near future.

Ginny Broadhurst presented an outline of the work completed on a Performance Benchmarks Analysis. Discussion followed, and Ginny will be contacting MRCs individually to review the contents of the report for accuracy and completeness.

Jon Brock of the Policy Consensus Center (PCC) gave an overview of what the PCC is and the resources available to them to conduct an independent review of the Northwest Straits Initiative. He noted that the PCC is well positioned to carry out the review, and is already taking steps to plan the evaluation panel process. While MRC and Commission involvement in the evaluation process will be minimal in order to maintain independence, MRCs will have an opportunity to discuss areas where changes or additional support are needed. Tom Cowan will provide regular updates to the Commission on the evaluation process.

MRC representatives summarized their current MRC activities. **Clallam MRC** did not hold a meeting in August due to member vacations. **Island MRC** launched their Shore Stewards program at an event at Cama Beach State Park and will hold a town meeting on the program August 28; made a presentation to the Oak Harbor Rotary Club on the derelict fishing gear removal project; will submit a request to the Puget Sound Action Team to fund shoreline displays to visually inform people about marine issues. **Jefferson MRC** planted 200,000 Olympia oyster seeds at six sites on Discovery Bay; noted survival of 2002 oyster seed is approximately 75%, with further monitoring to be done by Jamestown S'Klallam tribe; will conduct a large scale outreach effort for the voluntary anchor free zone during the Wooden Boat Festival in September; hosted a booth at the Jefferson County Fair. **San Juan MRC** held one meeting and is working on their county-wide marine stewardship area plan; is finishing their forage fish habitat survey work; have completed fieldwork on eelgrass surveys; and will begin a workplan item on aquaculture issues. **Skagit MRC** removed invasive *Spartina* in Swinomish Channel in July; monitored their 2002 Olympia oysters and noted excellent survival and growth; is preparing to plant Pacific oysters in Bayview; is reviewing several draft final reports for projects, including Bottomfish Phase III, March Point Outfalls, Skagit Bays Restoration Blueprint and March Point Restoration Site Plan. **Snohomish MRC** is developing descriptions of protection/restoration candidate sites; is preparing to launch their program to encourage private shoreline property owners to replace bulkheads with soft shore alternatives; had approximately 200 participants at their recent beach expo in Mukilteo. **Whatcom MRC** discussed action grant proposals for the upcoming year; is planning for upcoming events including the Salmon Summit and Salmon Celebration; developed testimony and recommendations on proposed rockfish and lingcod recreational fishing rule changes and submitted them to WDFW; is continuing their study of water quality issues affecting shellfish in Drayton Harbor.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:45pm. The next meeting will be on September 26 at a tribal location to be determined. Meeting topics should be suggested to Commission staff by September 12.



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

**Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
Lopez Islander, Lopez Island, San Juan County
August 22, 2003, 11:15am -3:30pm
Decisions and Future Agenda Topics**

Members attending: Paul Dinnel, Kirby Johnson, Gary Wood, Dave Anderson, Andrea Copping, Anne Murphy, Terry Williams, Joe Schmitt, Scott McCreery (alt.), Jim Slocomb (alt.)
Members absent: Mike Stoner, Duane Fagergren, Kathy Fletcher, Kevin Ranker, Buck Meloy
Alternates attending: Jeanne Robinette
Staff: Tom Cowan, Sasha Horst, Ginny Broadhurst

Paul Dinnel, chair, opened the meeting at 11:45 with introductions. The agenda was modified to adjust for the late start time due to ferry delay.

The minutes of the July 25 meeting in Clallam County were approved as written.

Committee chairs provided their monthly reports. There was no meeting of the **Administrative/Planning Committee**. **Education Committee** chair, Duane Fagergren was not present. Sasha Horst reported for the Education Committee. Fall Conference invitations have been sent to MRCs, and registrations are now being taken. MRC presentation topics were discussed, and Ginny Broadhurst will be the point of contact for MRC presentations. MRCs should plan to forward presentations via disk to Sasha by October 17. Web sites have been reviewed and Sasha will forward suggestions to each MRC lead staff and chair. The **Technical Committee** noted that two letters of intent have been received from MRCs for action grants. The deadline for letters of intent is September 30. A **Tribal Committee** meeting was held on August 7. A letter is being drafted to Northwest Straits area tribes to solicit potential project ideas that the Commission could sponsor; a letter to Billy Frank was approved supporting the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission's MPA policy; and it was recommended that a tribal component of the fall conference be integrated into each MRC presentation. There was no report of the **Fundraising committee**.

There was no public comment.

A video from Ken Balcomb was shown with information on the Navy sonar use in Haro Strait. Actual footage from the incident was shown, and a video with information about the porpoise necropsies. It was noted that a letter from the Commission was sent to the Navy inviting them to provide additional information, but there has been no response to date.

Tom Cowan updated the Commission on the derelict fishing gear project. Datasets from survey work were shown, with over 500 derelict crab pots found in four areas. A recent net removal operation off San Juan Island was conducted by Department of Natural Resources divers, removing 400-600' of gill net which had entangled several birds, fish and a river otter. Grant funds for continued removal efforts are expected to be received in the near future.

Ginny Broadhurst presented an outline of the work completed on a Performance Benchmarks Analysis. Discussion followed, and Ginny will be contacting MRCs individually to review the contents of the report for accuracy and completeness.

Jon Brock of the Policy Consensus Center (PCC) gave an overview of what the PCC is and the resources available to them to conduct an independent review of the Northwest Straits Initiative. He noted that the PCC is well positioned to carry out the review, and is already taking steps to plan the evaluation panel process. While MRC and Commission involvement in the evaluation process will be minimal in order to maintain independence, MRCs will have an opportunity to discuss areas where changes or additional support are needed. Tom Cowan will provide regular updates to the Commission on the evaluation process.

MRC representatives summarized their current MRC activities. **Clallam MRC** did not hold a meeting in August due to member vacations. **Island MRC** launched their Shore Stewards program at an event at Cama Beach State Park and will hold a town meeting on the program August 28; made a presentation to the Oak Harbor Rotary Club on the derelict fishing gear removal project; will submit a request to the Puget Sound Action Team to fund shoreline displays to visually inform people about marine issues. **Jefferson MRC** planted 200,000 Olympia oyster seeds at six sites on Discovery Bay; noted survival of 2002 oyster seed is approximately 75%, with further monitoring to be done by Jamestown S'Klallam tribe; will conduct a large scale outreach effort for the voluntary anchor free zone during the Wooden Boat Festival in September; hosted a booth at the Jefferson County Fair. **San Juan MRC** held one meeting and is working on their county-wide marine stewardship area plan; is finishing their forage fish habitat survey work; have completed fieldwork on eelgrass surveys; and will begin a workplan item on aquaculture issues. **Skagit MRC** removed invasive *Spartina* in Swinomish Channel in July; monitored their 2002 Olympia oysters and noted excellent survival and growth; is preparing to plant Pacific oysters in Bayview; is reviewing several draft final reports for projects, including Bottomfish Phase III, March Point Outfalls, Skagit Bays Restoration Blueprint and March Point Restoration Site Plan. **Snohomish MRC** is developing descriptions of protection/restoration candidate sites; is preparing to launch their program to encourage private shoreline property owners to replace bulkheads with soft shore alternatives; had approximately 200 participants at their recent beach expo in Mukilteo. **Whatcom MRC** discussed action grant proposals for the upcoming year; is planning for upcoming events including the Salmon Summit and Salmon Celebration; developed testimony and recommendations on proposed rockfish and lingcod recreational fishing rule changes and submitted them to WDFW; is continuing their study of water quality issues affecting shellfish in Drayton Harbor.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:45pm. The next meeting will be on September 26 at a tribal location to be determined. Meeting topics should be suggested to Commission staff by September 12.



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

**Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
Lummi Nation Tribal Council Chambers, Whatcom County
September 26, 2003, 10:00am – 3:00pm
Decisions and Future Agenda Topics**

Members attending: Paul Dinnel, Mike Stoner, Duane Fagergren, Kathy Fletcher, Dave Anderson, Andrea Copping, Anne Murphy, Buck Meloy, Joe Schmitt, Tom Campbell (alt.), Heather McCartney (alt.)
Members absent: Kirby Johnson, Gary Wood, Kevin Ranker, Terry Williams
Alternates attending: Scott McCreery
Staff: Tom Cowan, Sasha Horst, Ginny Broadhurst
Support: Terry Stevens

Paul Dinnel, chair, opened the meeting at 10:15 with introductions. Tommy Edwards of the Lummi Nation welcomed the group with a song. Randy Kinley, natural resources manager for the Lummi Nation, thanked the group for coming.

The minutes of the August 22 meeting in San Juan County were approved as written.

Committee chairs provided their monthly reports. **Administrative/Planning Committee** chair, Kathy Fletcher, discussed the public conference scheduled for June 4-5, 2004 expected to be held at the new Everett Event Center; provided a draft agenda for the upcoming MRC Retreat at Fort Worden; and reported on progress on the MPA project now underway. **Education Committee** chair, Duane Fagergren updated the Commission on the next newsletter, expected to be printed just prior to the evaluation; noted that changes have been made to the Commission web site and that a short biography on each Commissioner will be added to the site soon. The **Technical Committee** noted that the deadline for letters of intent is September 30, and several have already been received. There was no meeting of the **Tribal Committee**. However, a letter is ready to send to tribes soliciting potential projects for the Commission to sponsor. There was no report of the **Fundraising committee**.

During administrative matters, Sasha Horst proposed a list of dates/locations for Commission meetings in 2004. It was confirmed that the final meeting in 2003, November 21, will be held in Skagit County. Ginny Broadhurst provided an update on the status of the Performance Benchmarks Analysis, and a proposed outline for the Five Year Report to be prepared for the evaluation process. An additional section to the 5 Year Report was suggested, to include more of the big picture achievements of the Initiative. Terry Stevens gave an update on the annual NOAA grants for Years 3-5 and the derelict gear project.

Tom Cowan outlined the current status of the upcoming evaluation process. The Policy Consensus Center (PCC) has agreed to assume their costs, and have requested that the Commission pay other expenses in the amount of \$70,000. It was moved and approved by consensus to amend budgets by \$55,000 to benefit the evaluation process, with \$40,000 from the Year 5 ecosystem budget and \$15,000 from Year 4 unprogrammed funds. \$15,000 had been previously budgeted in the Year 5 Workplan for a total of \$70,000. It was noted that the Northwest Straits Foundation has applied for a \$35,000 grant from the Musser Foundation for the evaluation and that PCC will continue to explore other independent funding sources.

There was no public comment.

Joe Gaydos of The SeaDoc Society, formerly MEHP, presented information about a recently completed study on a 35 acre eelgrass loss in Westcott Bay in San Juan County. The Commission requested that a letter be sent to the Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program (PSAMP) noting the importance of consistent monitoring of eelgrass. The Commission also noted that the MRCs are in a good position to collect more casual local knowledge about changes in eelgrass areas.

David Roberts of the Department of Natural Resources provided information about restoration grants available to MRCs in the amount of \$10,000. Proposals for these grants are due by January 1, 2004. David also provided an update on the derelict vessel program, which has removed six vessels to date from Puget Sound.

MRC representatives summarized their current MRC activities. **Clallam MRC** received their final report on derelict fishing gear removal and presented the information to County Commissioners and the MRC, estimating a mortality rate of 17,000 Dungeness Crab per year in the area surveyed; completed a prioritized list of action projects for the next grant; continued planning for the Elwha Nearshore Monitoring Workshop expected to be held at the end of March or early April, 2004. **Island MRC** is printing their final Shore Stewards handbook; are working on a PIE grant proposal to the Puget Sound Action Team for interpretive shoreline signage at public locations; are receiving estimates for the Cama Beach boat ramp removal, expected to occur in October or November. **Jefferson MRC** implemented a pilot project to test the Voluntary Eelgrass Zone concept and materials; will hold a public presentation on eelgrass at their next MRC meeting. **San Juan MRC** hosted a booth at the county fair; held their Rockfish Symposium at Friday Harbor Labs; held a meeting on Waldron Island in August; provided outreach on bottomfish recovery at a recent fishing derby; have documented 49 forage fish spawning beaches to date. **Skagit MRC** has completed scuba surveys of all eight candidate bottomfish reserve sites; planted about 1.3 million Pacific oysters at March Point and Bayview State Park; had a presentation from the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP); is communicating with Texaco to identify and carry out forage fish habitat improvements in Fidalgo Bay; are reviewing the draft final report for the Skagit Bays Restoration Blueprint project. **Snohomish MRC** had a presentation from PSNERP; developed narrative descriptions of candidate restoration sites; are considering restoration projects for three areas including Martha Creek, Picnic Point and Kayak Point. **Whatcom MRC** has completed bird surveys at the Blaine Marina; has completed digitizing creosote log project data; participated in the Salmon Celebration and are planning for the November 13 Salmon Summit; will hold MRC elections in the next two months; are reviewing data maps on the web site to ensure they are user friendly.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm. The next meeting will be a business meeting only at Fort Worden prior to the MRC Retreat on October 24.



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

**Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
Port of Skagit County, Commissioner Board Room
November 21, 2003, 10:00am – 3:00pm
Decisions and Future Agenda Topics**

Members attending: Duane Fagergren, Kathy Fletcher, Dave Anderson, Anne Murphy, Buck Meloy, Kirby Johnson, Gary Wood, Jeanne Robinette/Polly Fischer (alt.), Ed Bowlby (alt.) Scott McCreery (alt.)
Members absent: Kevin Ranker, Terry Williams, Joe Schmitt, Andrea Copping, Mike Stoner, Paul Dinnel
Staff: Tom Cowan, Sasha Horst, Ginny Broadhurst
Support: Rachelle Hein

Kathy Fletcher, vice-chair, opened the meeting at 10:05 with introductions and a review of the agenda.

The minutes of the September 26 meeting were approved as written.

Committee chairs provided their monthly reports. **Administrative/Planning Committee** chair, Kathy Fletcher, reported on the upcoming Public Conference in June, 2004. Planning is underway and a registration system is in place. A draft 5 Year Report is being reviewed and is expected to be printed in early December. **Education Committee** chair, Duane Fagergren noted that the next newsletter is being finalized and is expected to be printed in December. The education committee will take the lead in preparing a proposal for the upcoming Restore America's Estuaries conference to be held in September 2004. **Technical Committee** chair, Andrea Copping was not present, but an update on the status of MRC grant proposals was provided. Further discussion of this topic was added later on the agenda. There was no meeting of the **Tribal Committee**. There was no report of the **Fundraising committee**.

Tom Cowan updated the Commission on what is known about the upcoming evaluation process. Panelists have been identified and an interagency agreement is in place with the Policy Consensus Center. A large binder with information about the Initiative and the Marine Resources Committees has been sent to each of the identified panelists. The charge to the panel is expected to be issued by Senator Murray and Governor Locke in the near future. The panel will meet on January 17-20 in La Conner. While the agenda for these meetings is not known, each MRC should be aware of the dates and expect that there may be some opportunities for participation.

Jon Neel and Dale Jensen of the Department of Ecology reported on a legislatively-mandated Tug Escort Study (Senate Bill 6072). A consulting study will begin in spring 2004, and recommendations to the legislature are expected to be prepared by fall 2004. Dave Anderson and Scott McCreery were appointed to represent the Commission in upcoming meetings of the steering committee for this study. Along with Kathy Fletcher, Buck Meloy, they will make up a subcommittee on this issue.

During public comment, Rachelle Hein from Senator Patty Murray's office informed the Commission that the Charge to the Evaluation Panel has been approved by the Senator.

Phil Bloch and David Palazzi of Department of Natural Resources presented information on the status of the Aquatic Reserves program. They are currently working on site-specific reviews of the recently recommended sites. It is expected that the first Aquatic Reserves will be final in September, 2004. The next proposal cycle will begin in January 2005, and it is expected that the Department of Natural Resources will be in touch with MRCs in spring, 2004 in order to begin preparing for the next cycle.

During administrative matters, the upcoming MRC Chair/Lead Staff meeting agenda was discussed. This meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 17.

The status of the MRC grant proposals was discussed. The Commission approved delegating approving proposals to the technical committee and Commission staff if no problems are foreseen. MRCs interested in a coordinated effort on creosote removal with grants provided by Dept. of Natural Resources should contact Ginny, who will assist with coordination. Steve Jennison mentioned that any MRC with questions should contact him, and that the deadline in January is flexible depending on the circumstances.

A Marine Protected Area science meeting was held in Seattle on November 20. Ginny Broadhurst will circulate the minutes from this meeting to Commissioners.

MRC representatives summarized their current MRC activities from the past two months (since there was no Commission meeting in October). **Clallam MRC** held their regular monthly meeting on November 17; in all areas west of Dungeness, shellfish PSP levels are low or non-detectable; has completed their forage fish final report; discussed funding for derelict gear removal that the NWS Foundation received for removals in Clallam County; have 6 bags of Olympia oyster seed in storage as the project has been held up in order to work with private property owners; finalized a RFP for a facilitator and technical writer for the Elwha Nearshore Workshop; is considering a creosote removal project with DNR grant funds, volunteers will be doing a preliminary assessment to determine if creosote logs are a problem. **Island MRC** will present a formal recommendation to the county commissioners on 12/17 to establish and designate by board resolution two Stewardship Areas - the two proposed areas include all waters surrounding Whidbey and west of Camano; the Year 5 grant application has been submitted to the Commission for processing; the MRC's interpretive signage PIE proposal remains under consideration; we look forward to working with Robyn du Pre as the new PSAT local liaison; had a presentation from Jacques White & Curtis Tanner on the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project. **Jefferson MRC** held a project evaluation meeting to develop a plan for the 2004 Olympia oyster restoration program; elected a new interim Chair-Gabrielle LaRoche; the Discovery Bay Ecosystem Stewardship Committee, sponsored by the Jefferson MRC and PSAT, had their first planning meeting; the MRC is being lobbied heavily by certain interests in the community to consider using a mooring buoy field rather than our proposed marker buoys in the Voluntary Anchor Free Zone which will delineate the deepwater boundary of the eelgrass beds along the Port Townsend waterfront- we are encouraged by the interest and continue to have discussions with potential partners. **San Juan MRC** has been struggling lately due to changes in staff; on the forage fish project a total of 500+ potential spawning sites have been sampled, with a total of 56 positive sites (34 previously undocumented); UW Labs Fall quarter MPA class has been attending MRC meetings this fall; MRC Auxiliaries are getting active on Waldron and Shaw Islands; discussions continue on the Marine Stewardship Area -the MRC is preparing to submit their draft resolution for a SJ Co. Marine Stewardship Area to the BOCC at year end; draft amendments to the County's aquaculture regulations are being worked on by a sub committee, with a goal to have suggested amendments for presentation to the BOCC at year end. **Skagit MRC** projects are running well, several in the report writing stage, within budget; September 23 MRC members presented Skagit County Commissioners with potential contract with Texaco Trustees for restoration work in Fidalgo Bay; excellent media coverage told the story of the 1.3 million Pacific oysters planted Sept 5-6 by several dozen volunteers; check our web site - we've got new pictures!; the bulk of our work this month was finalizing our Round 5 proposal; considerable Spartina surveying has been done in preparation for 2 dig events in 2004; the Skagit Bays Restoration Blueprint is nearly complete with a final report expected in January. **Snohomish MRC** had a presentation from WDFW Shellfish Biologist Don Velasquez on preliminary findings from analysis of the '02-03 Dungeness crab harvest data; is working with WDFW and the Tulalip Tribes to develop a juvenile Dungeness crab habitat survey methodology to be implemented in 2004; scheduled an evening beach walk with the Edmonds Beach Rangers at Olympic Beach on February 17, adopted its 2004 work plan, including substantive actions to address Dungeness crab stewardship and nearshore habitat restoration; the County has identified internal staff and an on-call consulting firm with marine shore restoration expertise to integrate the MRCs Shoreline Enhancement Incentive Program with the County's cooperative bank stabilization program. **Whatcom MRC** plans to testify at DNR's Cherry Point Reserve hearings in January; will have a preliminary Creosote Piling Removal report available soon; Michelle Evans has stepped in as MRC Chair, and Chris Fairbanks is the new Vice Chair; completed 2 new Fact Sheets (sandlance and surfsmelt) bringing the total to about a dozen; coordinated the Nearshore component of the recent Salmon Summit, with Amy Kraham presenting an overview of the MRC's work; is drafting a position on WDFW's two rockfish sportfishing management options, as a follow-up to its earlier regulatory proposals; a concerned teacher from the Bellingham SD brought to our attention that Oceanography is being eliminated from the middle school curriculum, and the MRC is formulating a strongly-worded letter to the school board.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:20pm. The next meeting will be on January 23 at a location to be determined in Island County.