



minutes

April 24, 2020 • 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
WebEx – Conference call
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Alan Clark (Clallam-Chair), Elsa Schwartz (Island-Vice Chair), Pete Haase (Skagit), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Tom Cowan, Ron Thom, Chris Castner, Laura Blackmore (Puget Sound Partnership), Nan McKay, Christina Koons (San Juan), Sarah Brown (Snohomish)

Commission Staff: Lucas Hart, Katie Harris, Sasha Horst, Dana Oster, Allie Simpson

Others in Attendance: Senator Liz Lovelett, Don Hunger (Northwest Straits Foundation), Jennifer Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership – Alternate), Caroline Gibson (Northwest Straits Foundation)

Absent: Cecilia Gobin (Tribal)

Welcome and Introductions

Alan opened the meeting and facilitated introductions.

Legislative Update

Senator Liz Lovelett gave an update on two bills she sponsored:

- Antifouling paints on recreational water vessels ([SB 6210](#)): This bill creates a path forward for phasing out copper-based boat paints in light of new information showing that non-copper alternatives may be more harmful to the environment. Bill report can be found [here](#).
- Prevention of derelict vessels ([SB 6528](#)): This bill addresses derelict vessels by improving vessel owner accountability, removing the spending limit for the Dept. of Natural Resources' Derelict Vessel Removal Program and clearing DNR to carry out a pilot program for vessel recycling. However, funding for the recycling program was not allocated. Bill report can be found [here](#).

Senator Lovelett is focused on three additional areas:

- Carbon pricing and low carbon fuel standards,
- Hybridize and electrify our ferry system, and
- Land use planning - regional modeling for integrating climate resiliency into land use planning.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the March Northwest Straits (NWS) Commission meeting were approved by consensus, with one edit:

- Jefferson MRC is not having WebEx meetings yet.

NWS Commission - committee reports

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee would like to hold off on moving forward with joining the Billy Frank Jr. Coalition at this time. The Committee recommended hosting speakers on the topics of hatcheries and pinnipeds, two main focus areas of the coalition, to provide education on their importance to salmon restoration and treaty rights.



External Relations Committee

Tom Cowan noted that due to the restrictions related to COVID-19, scheduling of planned meetings is delayed.

Science Advisory Committee

The Science Advisory Committee has chosen two projects- kelp and forage fish- to use as tests for the Actions to Impacts methodology. The Committee's next meeting is mid-May.

Ad hoc Communications Committee

The Communications Committee secured a contract with Maul Foster & Alongi, the consultant team who will be helping the Commission with the development of a communications plan. The consultants will be attending the retreat webinar on April 30. Katie reported that some Commissioners will be asked for an interview for their input in the Communications Plan.

Items for Commission decision

Chair and Vice Chair appointments: Nan McKay presented Alan Clark as the nominee for Chair and Elsa Schwartz the nominee for Vice Chair.

- The recommendations for Chair and co-chair passed by consensus.

Rules of Procedure: The Commission previously approved a legislative comment process in late 2019. The Commission was presented with the full rules of procedure document for review and confirmation, which includes the updated legislative comment process.

- The adoption of the rules of procedure passed by consensus.

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC)/Tribal update

No update.

Business items

Webinar retreat reminder: Lucas announced that the retreat, which will include Commissioners and members of the board of directors from the NWS Foundation, will be held on April 30.

European green crab in Drayton Harbor: Allie explained that she has established four priority sites and drafted a scope of work for Drayton Harbor. She is working on volunteer liability and working on drafting land access permission forms for landowners to approve shoreline access. She is working with WDFW and Washington Sea Grant on this project. The timeline for starting field work is uncertain because of COVID-19. Allie reported that Sea Grant and Lummi Nation have done some monitoring.



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Virtual MRC Symposium series: Dana reported that the first of the Virtual MRC Symposium took place this week, which featured Jefferson MRC. Presenters from the MRC shared about their MRC structure and highlighted a few key projects that the MRC has done. Dana invited Commissioners to watch the recording of the session, which NWS Commission staff will share via link, and to join for the remaining three sessions.

MRC project presentations to Commission / WebEx May Commission Meeting: Lucas reported that the Commission staff is lining up four MRCs to present their projects during the May meeting and three MRCs to present their projects during the June meeting.

Operations plan update: Lucas explained that NWS Commission staff did the final quarterly review of the annual operations plan (which is the step-by-step version of the strategic plan). Some highlights include completion of the Puget Sound Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan and additional staff support for a few MRCs. NWS Commission staff will be updating the operations plan for the upcoming year, and will continue to do quarterly reviews.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) update

Don Hunger provided an update:

- NWS Foundation staff are developing a number of communications pieces, including an Adobe Spark presentation about the Shore Friendly project and the second Salish Sea Fresh video. Staff considering developing a video series for the crabber outreach program.
- The Foundation has closed the Opportunity Fund. Contact Don Hunger (Don@nwstraitsfoundation.org) with questions.
- The Foundation is working with the Commission staff to develop a unified training program for kayak safety training for kelp monitoring. The training workshop will be online.

Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership) update

Laura Blackmore and Jenn Grimm provided the following Partnership update:

- The Partnership staff will be teleworking through the end of May, all meetings will be virtual through the end of June.
- The Partnership coordinated a letter to send to Washington State's congressional delegation in regards to a natural resources stimulus package.
- The Partnership sent the Puget Sound Day on the Hill sign-on letter to the Washington congressional delegation. 97 organizations signed onto the letter.

MRC reports

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



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Whatcom

Bob said that they have two speakers coming to address the MRC in May who will talk about how COVID-19 has effected the fishing industry, and a speaker who will talk about sea star wasting disease. The MRC is working with the NWS Commission, WDFW and Sea Grant on the European green crab response in Drayton Harbor.

Snohomish

Sarah said the MRC has transitioned to remote meetings. The MRC has completed the creosote pilings prioritization framework. MRC members continue to work on existing projects, including culvert replacement feasibly at Pigeon Creek. MRC members have received many reports of derelict boats through the MyCoast app.

Skagit

Pete and the Skagit MRC are continuing the Salish Sea Stewards class online. Fidalgo Bay Day is still scheduled for late August. Skagit MRC signed up for the May 7 session of the Virtual MRC Symposium.

San Juan

Christina said that two temporary research assistants have been hired. The MRC is compiling information from the Marine Managers' Workshop and are including findings in the Marine Stewardship Area Plan. The MRC is developing toolkits for Plastic Free Salish Sea. The MRC was surprised to learn that Opportunity Fund contracts were being cancelled.

Jefferson

Jeff said that the MRC presented during the first session of the Virtual MRC Symposium series. The MRC has been onboarding new members.

Island

Elsa said that the Island County Commissioners has given the MRC clearance to meet via WebEx.

Clallam

Alan said that the MRC has hired interns for smolt trap internships.

Round table

There were no round table items.

Public comment

There was no public comment.

* The next regular Commission meeting will be on May 29 by WebEx.*