



MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE SUMMARY May 2, 2019

In Attendance: Eleanor Hines (Chair), Chris Brown, Kristin Murray (Vice Chair), Elizabeth Kilanowski, Glen “Alex” Alexander, Bob Cecile, Bob Seaman, Pete Granger, Rachel Arnold, Rud Browne (County Council), Ryan McLaughlin, Atina Casas, Jim Hansen, Kurt Baumgarten (Port of Bellingham), Austin Rose (Staff), Robin Klein (Staff)

- 1) **Introductions:** Eleanor began the meeting with roundtable introductions.
- 2) **May Agenda:** Agenda was approved
- 3) **February and April Meeting Summaries:** The February and April meeting summaries were approved. Last month’s meeting sign-in sheet is missing and members were asked to include their hours for last month on today’s meeting sign-in sheet.
- 4) **Public Comment Period:** no public comment
- 5) **Kelp Report:** Eleanor gave a presentation that included why we monitor kelp, ways of collecting data, and how to protect kelp.
 - Relatively little is known about kelp. It is important for juvenile fish, which are important for Chinook salmon, which are important for Orcas.
 - Better management policies and best management practices for kelp beds are needed.
 - We don’t know how to manage kelp beds if we don’t know how to protect them or what important eco functions and services they might be providing.
 - To study the kelp bed a GPS is used to take the perimeter of the bed, inside and outside depth, take series of photos and temperatures.
 - Considering doing some sites by motorboat instead of kayak due to distance from land and swells.
 - There has not been much variation in size of kelp beds Whatcom MRC has been monitoring since they have begun studying them. A 30% variation is considered normal.
 - There is a correlation between kelp growth and temperature.
 - Determining the health (morphometrics) of the kelp bed. DNR is developing protocols.
 - Have more education and outreach to community.
 - Possibility of doing beach cleanup while they are collecting data.
- 6) **Staff Update:**
 - Austin asked if the MRC approved support of a letter from Lucas Hart, Northwest Straits Commission Director, for Puget Sound Day on the Hill. Eleanor Hines will sign on behalf of the MRC. A MRC member moved to approve the letter. All present approved.
 - At the June 28, 2019 NW Straits Commission meeting in Everett, MRCs will have the opportunity to provide a presentation to the commission about a project that they are conducting that is included in the 2019-2020 grant. Austin asked the group to think about who would like to do a presentation and what that would be on.
- 7) **2019-2020 Grant Proposal**—Application is due June 7, 2019. Austin has gone through all the projects and has heard back from two out of the six projects she submitted applications for. Review and discussion of the following:
 - Chuckanut Bay PIC—More volunteers and more defined roles are needed, but MRC wants to continue with this project.
 - Continue monitoring and reporting water quality data to the Department of Health.
 - Increase community outreach and engagement the Chuckanut community, but also increasing the engagement with the entire community and try to recruit and solicit volunteers to help with both the fresh water and marine sampling. There are going to be 16 monitoring events between October and September of 2020. That will produce



12 water quality summaries once a month. Austin suggests at least one meeting with the Department of Health to discuss the upgrade of the area.

- Austin recommends production and distribution of at least one newsletter to Chuckanut Village Community providing an update on water quality.
- Forage Fish—Little Squalicum estuary will be undergoing restoration. MRC will not be able to do surveys during restoration. It was suggested that during this time to do surveys within the footprint of the Birch Bay pedestrian facility project. The project relies heavily on volunteers. Austin put language in the proposal
- North Sound Steward—More staff and resources are needed. Better define MRC involvement.
- An internship announcement was given to the Bellingham Technical College. Suggestions were made to also notify Western, Whatcom Community College and NW Indian College.
- Olympia Oysters—Austin will be meeting with Dr. Paul Dinnel May 8, 2019 at 1:15 pm for a site visit to our plots and will have him provide some technical expertise and suggestions on what the MRC should do moving forward. There will be a population count this year. BTC would like to help over 2 days, May 21st and 22nd) so that all students can have an opportunity to be in the field.
- Northwest Straits Foundation Opportunity Fund--Action- Austin is completing the application for this funding opportunity to support an intern work study that could work as the Volunteer Program Coordinator for the North Sound Stewards Program.
- Public Speaker Series—There is not currently an adequate way to evaluate how the Speaker Series is doing. Discussion regarding ways to obtain consistent feedback from attendees.
- Community Education and Outreach—MRC will participate at least three community events—What’s the Point, Bellingham Sea Feast, Birch Bay Beach Days. MRC will also participate in Whatcom Water Week planning. Discussion regarding having an Outreach intern.
- Funding Opportunities—
 1. There is a \$10,000 donation from BP. It has to be a tangible, measurable project that can be completed in one year. They will not support any kind of monitoring or education and outreach. Suggestion to do ecological habitat survey under the kelp beds and that would be a measurable way to look at the health of the kelp and get a baseline. Austin will see if BP considers this an appropriate project.
 2. NW Straits Foundation has \$2000 to \$3000 from the NW Fish and Wildlife Foundation to provide education and outreach engaging community members about Orca recovery. Eleanor and Austin have met with the Port of Bellingham to share materials already produced, like the Be Whale Wise program. MRC could purchase whale warning flags and make available for boaters. The money would cover the cost of flags and printing costs for materials.
 3. Opportunity Fund through NW Straits Foundation is split into two funds this year. One is \$10,000 and the project needs to be completed within one years. They are also offering a fellowship program. They have enough funding for three fellowships at 200 hours each. Those funds need to be spent by December 1st of this year. Austin, Eleanor and Bob have working on an idea to do remote beach cleanups. One criteria for this fund is to partner with another MRC. San Juan MRC would like to join with Whatcom MRC to do cleanup on various islands (Sucia, Eliza, etc) in Whatcom and San Juan Counties. Consider using funds for a charter boat to take volunteers to remote sites.
- Budget—There is about \$4,100 excess in the grant right now. Austin asked how members would like the money utilized. Suggestions were:
 1. Money for intern in Forage Fish.
 2. Bull Kelp surveys and costs for boating support.
 3. Travel funds for conferences.

8) MRC Subcommittee Updates

- Project Development—In their meeting they discussed funding opportunities and projects. Drayton Harbor clean up doing as a 2 part project, one with North Sound Stewards volunteers to do light clean up and then DNR will take care of the larger part of project.
- Speaker Series—There was not a meeting. The will have one in June or July. Todd Sandell will speak at the June MRC meeting on forage fish. The Orca forum has been delayed until probably fall.
- NWSC—There is funding for two more years and the amount of money was doubled.
- Advisory—Shoreline management plan is with the consultant and hearings will be coming up. Jim will keep everyone informed of when that will take place. The rulemaking process relating to exempt wells in the watershed is coming up May 10, 2019. The State budget that was passed also funded the Orca recovery measures.



- County Council—Rudd Browne reported that they have engaged Cascadia Law to help complete the Cherry Point amendments. That will include a change to the preliminary draft Comprehensive Plan and what is permitted and what is not permitted. It is likely that coal ports will be prohibited as well as additional refineries.

9) MRC Partner Committee Updates:

- WWIN—No report.
- Salmon Recovery—WRIA 1 funding being solicited and a process for reviewing them is in place.
- Port of Bellingham—No report.
- BBAT—No report.

10) Review Action Items and Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Upcoming Events:

- **Ocean Acidification Monitoring - Can Eelgrass Make a Difference?** – Tuesday, May 7, 6-8pm, RE Sources Main Room
- **Invasive Green Crab Monitoring (WA Sea Grant)** – Tuesday, May 14, 6-8pm, RE Sources Main Room
- **Anacortes Boat Show** – May 16-19, Cap Sante Marine, Anacortes, WA. Marine Resources Committees will be present.
- **Boulevard Park intertidal survey training** – Saturday, June 1st, 12 – 4pm, Co-Op Bakery Healthy Connections classroom.
- **Boulevard Park intertidal survey** – Monday, June 3 @ 10:30am (early bird at 9:30) and Tuesday, June 4 @10:30am (early bird at 9:30).

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