



### April 2023 Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, April 17, 2023

Time: 5:30-7:00 PM

Location: Zoom hybrid meeting

Minutes Prepared by Rebekah Brooks

**Members present:** Helle Andersen (Marine Related Recreation and Tourism Alternate), Ed Bowlby (Academic Community Representative), Mary Sue Brancato (At Large Alternate), Chris Burns (Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe Alternate), Alan Clark (Community at Large Representative; Vice Chair; Northwest Straits Commission [NWSC]), Tim Cochnauer (Community At Large; Chair), Mike Doherty (District 3), Robert Knapp (Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe), Allyce Miller (Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe Alternate), Lyn Muench (District 2), Arnold Schouten (Development Community), Ann Stafford (Marine Related Recreation and Tourism), Nancy Stephanz (Conservation and Environment Representative Alternate), Bob Vreeland (Conservation and Environment Representative)

**Others present:** Rebekah Brooks (Rebekah Brooks Contracting), Tamara Galvan (Feiro Marine Life Center), Sasha Horst (NWSC), Rebecca Mahan (Clallam County [CC] Habitat Biologist; CC Marine Resources Committee [MRC] Coordinator) Debbie Schouten (Citizen), Alisa Taylor (CC MRC Intern), Melissa Williams (Feiro Marine Life Center)

#### Call to Order / Introductions / Changes to Agenda

Chair Tim Cochnauer called the meeting to order. *The agenda was accepted as written.*

#### Public Comment / Approval of March Minutes

Mike Doherty added a clarification to the March CC MRC minutes under the section Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) Letter of Support. He asked that the minutes reflect that Rebecca Mahan has the right to make any submitted changes to the letter and to send it in when all comments have been received. *Arnold Schouten moved to approve the CC MRC March 2023 Minutes with Mike Doherty’s amendment; Helle Andersen seconded. The minutes were accepted with that change.*

#### Presentation by Melissa Williams

Education Director of the Feiro Marine Life Center Melissa Williams presented on the upcoming Marine Discovery Center, an expansion of the Feiro Marine Life Center. The Feiro Marine Life Center opened in 1981 with the intention of functioning as a laboratory for Peninsula College. The City of Port Angeles owns the present building on the City Pier. In 2006, the relationship between the Center and College changed and a group of community members came together to reform the Center as a stand-alone nonprofit organization. In addition to Feiro staff, 30 to 40 naturalist volunteers help with the Center and community outreach programs. Existing programs include tidepool exploration with the Clallam Bay Library summer reading program, a watershed science project on Peabody Creek for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students, an underwater robotics summer camp for 10–12-year-olds, and a stranded marine mammal network. A benefit of Feiro programs is that they are “school agnostic,” meaning that students from any school or

school district may participate. A new building is needed now, as the current location has reached its end-of-life status, presents multiple operational barriers, and there is not enough room for it to be remodeled on site. A new facility will offer new and expanded opportunities, including professional accreditation. The Marine Discovery Center will be relocating to the corner of Oak and Front Streets with the theme of “One ocean unites us all.” The region covered by the new Center will be from Protection Island to Ocean Shores, including the six coastal tribes in that area. Melissa showed illustrations of displays and described examples of sub-themes such as Oceans and People, Biodiversity, Ocean Exploration, Threats to the Ocean, and Taking Action. To honor the Feiro legacy, the current site will be reused as the Arthur D. Feiro Learning Laboratory. Prior to the pandemic, the Center saw about 30,000 annual visitors; about 75,000 visitors are estimated at the new facility. The fundraising campaign is in the “quiet phase” right now, focusing on raising 70-80% of the campaign goal over the next 12-18 months through top major gift leads. Melissa also recognized Arnold and Debbie Schouten’s work and research, which will be represented in the new Center.

### **NWSC Update**

Alan Clark gave an update on NWSC news. The Commission has returned to in-person meetings on alternating months; the last meeting was held in-person. On 3/30/2023-3/31/2023, the Commission and the Northwest Straits Foundation met in La Conner to go over next steps and plans for working together with the MRCs. The 2023 NWSC Conference will be held on 11/3/2023-11/4/2023 in Port Townsend; the CC MRC can plan for attending and accommodations. The Jefferson MRC is interested in having a joint meeting with the CC MRC when the weather warms up. On 4/5/23, Alan Clark joined NWSC Director Lucas Hart and the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe at Littleneck Beach to welcome Senator Patty Murray. Robert Knapp was one of the principal presenters. Robert thanked the group for their support and discussed plans for more legislative funding for European green crab management. More information can be found on the NWSC website: [Northwest Straits Commission | Marine Conservation in Washington \(nwstraits.org\)](https://nwstraits.org).

### **NWSC Request for Proposals for 2023-2025**

Rebecca Mahan led continued discussion on current and new projects for the congressionally directed spending funds, which will be available on 1/1/24. The County is working on increasing the full time equivalent for an outreach and events position to help Rebecca. She met with Feiro Marine Life Center to work together on the issues of sharing an intern position and collaborating on the Sound Toxins monitoring and a pinto abalone project. She also met with Peninsula College about the possibility of incorporating student interns from their new Natural Resources Program. In terms of the Valley Creek project, the Port of Port Angeles is on board to help with native plantings. The City of Port Angeles may be able to help with invasive weeds but is concerned about it being a mitigation site, which would require special permitting. Allyce Miller gave a brief presentation on Pebble Beach Backshore Revegetation, describing a draft proposal for planting in the pocket estuary. The design involves planting dune grass and maintaining trails and sidewalks, with a budget between \$1000 and \$1500. The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is very interested in partnering with the CC MRC on the project. Helle Andersen suggested expanding the proposal to incorporate invasive weed management at some other beaches. Ann Soule is working on acquiring more coasters for outreach. Rebecca brought up an opportunity to participate in a pilot survey with Washington State University, which trains volunteers to monitor beaches for European green crab molts using the MyCoast app; \*she will send out more information. Lyn Muench mentioned other upcoming outreach events such as the Dungeness River Festival and Crab Fest. Arnold Schouten added Oiled Wildlife Response Training to the list of outreach events. Current projects include forage fish surveys, pigeon guillemot surveys, Olympia oyster restoration, kelp monitoring, education and outreach, Elwha Beach stewardship, and Biotoxins.

### **Forage Fish Survey Presentation**

Tim Cochnauer presented on the forage fish project, which surveys sand lance, pacific herring, grunion, and surf smelt eggs. Rock sole are not considered forage fish, but they are also found along the Strait. The project samples four beaches: Cline Spit, Ediz Hook, and the east and west sides of the Elwha River. Sediment is collected four times along a 100-foot transect below the second high tide of the last 24 hours. The sediment is run through three sieves, with the fines put into a bowl where the eggs float to the top. Tim displayed a graph of surf smelt findings from 2022 at Cline Spit. They can spawn year-round, but predominantly from May through September. The highest counts are around 200 eggs per month. The eggs are mostly found in sheltered coves and bays. The survey team has only found about two sand lance and rock sole eggs over the last two years. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife data for Pacific herring show that numbers peaked in 1990 in Discovery Bay and in 2000 in Dungeness Bay; numbers have been declining since then. Reasons include marine shoreline degradation, bird and marine mammal predation, development, and the loss of sea grass and kelp. Ten-year averages of Puget Sound wild Chinook salmon show nearly a 50% decrease since the 1970's and 80's. Alan Clark commented that local fishermen remark that kelp has thinned appreciably. Ed Bowlby added that the Washington Department of Natural Resources has data from aerial kelp surveys for the last 20 years. Alan noted that non-canopy species seem to be outcompeting canopy species, which may be linked to extensive sea urchin harvesting, water temperature, and other causes.

### **Project Updates**

Ed Bowlby announced that pigeon guillemot surveys will recommence in June and go through August. They are looking for volunteers. He gave a presentation to Surfrider, which garnered a lot of interest. About 20 volunteers from last year will be returning. They are hoping to increase volunteers and sites this year. The Pigeon Guillemot Network has hired a new director. Collaborators from the University of Washington will be attending a site visit this week for the region-wide effort with Jefferson and Clallam counties. \*Ed will send his request for volunteers to Rebecca Mahan for distribution. Nancy Stephanz asked about an Earth Day event and Olympia oyster surveys. Chris Burns said that oyster surveys will start in May this year on 5/8-5/9 and 5/18-5/20. Ed clarified that there would not be an Earth Day event in Port Angeles this year because there were no sponsors available to host it. Rebecca gave an update on the oyster shell project: they are still waiting for permits; shell should be purchased as soon as the permits come through. Sasha Horst said that if the permits are not available in time, the proposal can be expanded for next year.

### **Good of the Order**

Tim Cochauer noted that elections of a new CC MRC Chair, Vice Chair, and NWSC representative will be held in May. Alan Clark volunteered to continue to represent the CC MRC with the NWSC unless anyone else wished to take it on. Mike Doherty reminded the group that Rebecca Mahan sent out a notice about the proposed rescue tug; workshops on different sections of the rulemaking start in May and go through October and public opinion will be accepted. Mike also mentioned that Clea Rome with the Washington State University Extension Office gave a great presentation to the Board of County Commissioners about climate change and the impacts of greenhouse gases. The transportation of the logging sector was a huge component. Ed Bowlby said that public comments will be accepted at next week's County Commissioner meeting. Bob Vreeland added his support for the Clallam County report. Discussion followed on climate change and how the CC MRC might address it. Rebecca added that the Washington Coast Cleanup would be taking place on Saturday for Earth Day; she has talked to Washington CoastSavers about future collaboration.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Adjournment**

Chair Tim Cochnauer adjourned the meeting at 7:24 PM.

**Action Items:**

***\*Rebecca Mahan will send out more information on the European green crab pilot survey.***

***\*Ed Bowlby will send his request for pigeon guillemot volunteers to Rebecca Mahan for distribution.***