



September 2023 Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, September 18, 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), Alan Clark (Community at Large; Vice Chair; Northwest Straits Commission [NWSC]), Tim Cochnauer (Community at Large; Chair), Mike Doherty (District 3), Sasha Horst (NWSC), Lyn Muench (District 2), Arnold Schouten (Development Community), Ann Stafford (Marine Related Recreation and Tourism), Justin Stapleton (Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe), Nancy Stephanz (Ecology Alternate), Bob Vreeland (Conservation and Environment), Jeff Ward (District 1)

Others present: Rebecca Mahan (CC Habitat Biologist; CC Marine Resources Committee [MRC] Coordinator), Alisa Taylor (CC MRC Volunteer)

Call to Order / Introductions / Changes to Agenda

Rebecca Mahan noted that she had some items to discuss under Good of the Order.

Public Comment / Approval of August Minutes

Nancy Stephanz clarified a sentence under Biotoxins: Sound Toxins to say: "Nancy Stephanz said that the Sound Toxins survey team has identified *phytoplankton that can cause* diuretic shellfish poisoning each week; this week they thought they identified *phytoplankton that can cause* paralytic shellfish poisoning but are waiting for the sample to be confirmed." Jeff Ward noted that he was in attendance and should be added to the list of attendees. ***Nancy Stephanz moved to accept the minutes as amended; Arnold Schouten seconded. The August CC MRC minutes were accepted by consensus with those changes.***

Announcements

Educational Display: Retractable Display/Logo

Rebecca Mahan gave an update on the CC MRC retractable display for outreach events. The display is nearing completion; a QR code is still in development. The posters and other display elements should be finalized in time for Forever Streamfest. Alisa Taylor has volunteered to work with the CC MRC for 20 hours a week, so she will be helping with the displays as well.

Upcoming Events

- The Dungeness River Festival is scheduled for 9/22/23 from 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM, with the theme of connecting people with their watersheds. Setup will be on Friday, 9/22/23, between 7:00 and 9:00 AM. *Lyn Muench, Alan Clark, Tim Cochnauer, Helle Andersen, Rebecca Mahan and Alisa Taylor volunteered to help with the set-up. The sign-up form was distributed by email.
- Forever Streamfest is scheduled for 10/14/23 at Peninsula College. *Ann Soule offered to take the lead on this event. The sign-up form is forthcoming.

- Crab Fest is scheduled from 10/6/23-10/8/23. Ann Soule has arranged to cohost a table with Feiro Marine Life Center.
- The 2023 NWSC Conference in Port Townsend will be held on 11/3/23 and 11/4/23. Registration is open with a deadline of 10/02/23. Rebecca Mahan mentioned that accommodations are being booked very quickly. Photos are needed for the conference slideshow. The CC MRC has also agreed to bring festival displays. *Ann Soule volunteered to prepare a 10–15-minute talk on the development and production of the outreach coasters. Sasha Horst added that attending for one of the two days was an option, and that Caitlyn Blair with the NWSC was available to help if anyone was having trouble finding accommodations.

Rescue Tug Update

*Alan Clark will coordinate with Mike Doherty as he is unable to help with this event. Mike was on the call for the CC MRC meeting, but was not able to give an update due to technical issues.

Department of Ecology's Oil Spill and Wildlife Rescue Program

Ed Bowlby has been out of the country until this week, so he has been unable to follow up on the program. *He and Rebecca Mahan will find out the deadline for responding.

Ediz Hook Revegetation Project

Helle Andersen led discussion on NWSC reviewer comments on the Ediz Hook Revegetation Project; they raised concerns about the planting plan, and about it being a pass-through project. Helle's response was that this project would follow the format of the Olympia Oyster Project, partnering with a local tribe to place plants instead of oysters and oyster shells. Another concern from the NWSC was that they be able to identify a particular area of the project as a CC MRC outcome. Allyce Miller designed a map showing the specific planting areas and has been developing a more detailed planting plan. The plan includes managing for invasive species twice a year, tracking survival of planted species, and planting species that were conducive to not being watered. The NWSC has agreed to fund the project with these updates but requested that the CC MRC vote on whether to go forward with the project or not. Right now, there is \$3000 set aside for each year of the project to purchase plants; the project would continue for two years. **Bob Vreeland moved to approve the project; Ed Bowlby seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

NWSC Update

Alan Clark gave an update on NWSC news. The last meeting was held on 8/25/23. Updates included a new annual award in honor of Senator Murray and her work in the Salish Sea, which Alan is helping with via a subcommittee, and the upcoming 2023 NWSC Conference from 11/3/2023-11/4/2023 in Port Townsend and available funding for travel and lodging costs. NWSC staff are in the process of hiring a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant, and are looking for topic suggestions for the Speed Date with a Scientist Program; topics can be sent to Dana Oster at oster@northweststraits.org. Finally, the NWSC has approved the 2023-2025 MRC grant proposals, which have a start date of 10/1/23. Bob Vreeland suggested naming the next orca whale baby after Senator Murray. More information can be found on the NWSC website: [Northwest Straits Commission | Marine Conservation in Washington \(nwstraits.org\)](http://Northwest Straits Commission | Marine Conservation in Washington (nwstraits.org)).

Project Updates

Olympia Oyster

Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe representatives were not present for an update.

Pigeon Guillemot

Ed Bowlby said that the program had been completed. He and Mary Sue Brancato were entering the field data from the project forms into the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) database. There were late season observations that extended the project period.

Education and Outreach: Coaster Distribution

Rebecca Mahan gave an update for Ann Soule. There were only five packages of each coaster design left to distribute. There were remaining funds in the budget for additional coasters to be ordered if the CC MRC wished; the funding will expire at the end of the month. Rebecca added that Alisa Taylor had offered to help create new designs for the next funding round. The coasters have been very well received in the community. ***Ed Bowlby moved to approve the funding to order 2,500 of each of the three coaster designs, which will come to around \$2,100; Alan Clark seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

Education and Outreach: New Displays

Rebecca Mahan said they appreciated the feedback from project leads regarding project details. Alisa Taylor will be helping to put the information together for poster development. Ann Soule would like to get a subcommittee together to brainstorm a catchy phrase for the coasters.

Forage Fish

Tim Cochnauer said that they would conduct the August sampling next week. He took the eggs to Port Townsend during the Wooden Boat Festival, but WDFW was not working during those days.

Elwha Beach Stewardship

Helle Andersen conducted 11 surveys between 6/12/23 and 9/7/23 in three different ways: randomly, tidal-related, and when she was helping with Forage Fish surveys. The busiest times observed have been during surf tides. Local surfers and field trip leaders were very supportive of keeping the portable toilets.

Kelp Surveys

Alan Clark reported that the kelp surveys were completed. Due to this year's high wind and wave action, it took two attempts to finish the Freshwater Bay surveys, and Clallam Bay was done on the last possible day. A new surveyor participated this year. Alisa Taylor shared photos of the GIS maps of the kelp beds: at Freshwater Bay, the large kelp bed had increased, and the small bed was about the same size as last year; the Clallam Bay bed was probably about the same size as last year, but part of it was not surveyed this year due to safety concerns over high waves. She said that overall, the kelp looked very healthy. Alan added that several orcas and calves were sighted this year. The group discussed kelp farming, and a new kelp project off of Morse Creek.

Biotoxins: Shellfish

Bob Vreeland announced that all Strait beaches from Cape Flattery to the Jefferson County line were closed to all species. He has one more survey to conduct next week; high tides are making sampling times difficult.

Biotoxins: Sound Toxins

Nancy Stephanz said that the Sound Toxins survey team identified three different species that can produce toxins, but not as many as there were two weeks ago. Surveys will continue weekly through October, and then switch to every two weeks.

Other Updates

CC MRC and the Power Plant Timber Sale

Ann Stafford led discussion on revising the CC MRC Strategic Plan, their decision-making process, and the possibility of the CC MRC writing a formal letter to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) regarding the Power Plant Timber Sale. She advocated for taking a stand against the timber sale, arguing that it was a relatively small amount of revenue for the County when compared to the larger costs they will collectively incur. The group discussed carbon offset credits, school and hospital funding, and how to best fulfill the role the CC MRC has of advising the BoCC. Jeff Ward emphasized the importance of articulating any position with sound science, and the responsibility the CC MRC had to maintain their credibility. Tim Cochnauer pointed out that the main way issues like this timber sale are impacted is through public voting. Ann proposed two ideas: 1: writing a letter to the BoCC listing the main concerns of the CC MRC; and 2: asking whether it would be possible to get the BoCC to commit to objecting to the timber sale if the community could raise the funds to replace the revenue that would come from it. Discussion followed without consensus on the letter. Bob Vreeland voiced strong support of the established science regarding the damage to ecosystems from logging in watershed areas, but did not believe that raising the funds in the community would be feasible. Nancy Stephanz suggested asking the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to present locally about the timber sale and how it was selected, and as a follow-up asking the DNR if there were specific things that the CC MRC could help measure that would influence similar future decisions. Helle Andersen suggested reaching out to Jefferson County for their advice since they have had some success with similar efforts. Ann offered to reach out to DNR about a possible presentation, and asked if the CC MRC could commit to educating themselves and getting the data they needed for future endeavors. Rebecca Mahan added that in the letter she distributed from Mark Ozias, there were links to several presentations from DNR. She recommended viewing those presentations first. The group agreed that that would be the best first step. Ed Bowlby added that one of the important jobs of the MRC was to provide a public forum for these types of issues.

Seafood Aquaculture

LaTrisha Suggs proposed a presentation on seafood aquaculture from Jim Parsons with the Northwest Aquaculture Alliance and the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. Rebecca Mahan said she had been in touch with LaTrisha and Jim about this, and Jim said he would be happy to present. Ed Bowlby noted that aquaculture was a controversial topic, so several speakers should participate. Lyn Muench strongly advocated for Jim Parsons to present first the CC MRC before arranging a public forum for this, or any controversial topic.

Public Presentation Discussion

At the August CC MRC Meeting, the idea of hosting or cohosting a public presentation on a topic such as the warm ocean blob came up. *Ed Bowlby volunteered to help coordinate presentations. Ann Stafford appreciated the substantial discussion during the meeting and recommended moving any big discussion items up in the agenda for future meetings.

Good of the Order

Rebecca Mahan announced that CoastSavers coordinator Megan Juran would be presenting to the CC MRC at their October meeting about working together on future beach cleanups. Rebecca also sent out emails about quarterly reports, and *will send out emails tomorrow about Riverfest and who has volunteered. Ed Bowlby proposed that the CC MRC, along with Olympic Climate Action, co-sponsor a talk from Ian Miller on sea level rise and climate change in October. *Tim Cochauer said he would meet with Ed to work out the details. Rebecca reminded the group to respond to her email about the Maritime Washington National Heritage event in October.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

Chair Tim Cochnauer adjourned the meeting at 7:28 PM.

Action Items:

****Lyn Muench, Alan Clark, Tim Cochnauer, Helle Andersen, Rebecca Mahan and Alisa Taylor volunteered to help with the set-up for the Dungeness River Festival.***

****Ann Soule offered to take the lead on the Forever Streamfest event.***

****Ann Soule volunteered to prepare a 10–15-minute talk for the NWSC Conference on the development and production of the outreach coasters.***

****Alan Clark will coordinate with Mike Doherty as he is unable to help with the Rescue Tug Panel.***

****Ed Bowlby and Rebecca Mahan will find out the deadline for responding about the Department of Ecology's Oil Spill and Wildlife Rescue Program.***

****Ed Bowlby volunteered to help coordinate presentations.***

****Rebecca Mahan will send out emails tomorrow about Riverfest and who has volunteered.***

****Tim Cochauer said he would meet with Ed Bowlby to work out the details about co-sponsoring a talk from Ian Miller.***