



December 2023 Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, December 18, 2023

Time: 5:30-7:23 PM

Location: Zoom hybrid meeting

Minutes Prepared by Rebekah Brooks

Members present: Helle Andersen (Marine Related Recreation and Tourism Alternate), Ioana Bociu (Academic Community Alternate), Ed Bowlby (Academic Community), Chris Burns (Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe Alternate), Alan Clark (Community at Large; Northwest Straits Commission [NWSC]), Tim Cochnauer (Community at Large; Chair), Robert Knapp (Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe), Ann Soule (District 2; Vice Chair), Nancy Stephanz (Ecology Alternate), Lance Vail (District 1 Alternate), Bob Vreeland (Conservation and Environment)

Others present: Caitlyn Blair (NWSC), Rebekah Brooks (Rebekah Brooks Contracting), Cathy Lear (CC), Rebecca Mahan (CC Habitat Biologist; CC Marine Resources Committee [MRC] Coordinator), Alisa Taylor (CC MRC Volunteer)

Call to Order / Introductions / Changes to Agenda

Tim Cochnauer called the meeting to order. A quorum was present at the beginning of the meeting. There were no changes to the agenda.

Public Comment / Approval of November Minutes

There were no public comments. ***Nancy Stephanz moved to approve the November CC MRC minutes; Alan Clark seconded. Ann Soule clarified that the Advisory Role Subcommittee did not meet yet, but it was established. The motion to accept the minutes with that change passed with all in favor.***

Requests / Announcements

- Annual Workplan Draft: Rebecca Mahan gave an overview of the Draft Workplan, which is due at the beginning of the year. Several comments were contributed, including the addition of Sound Toxins, updating the year, and the addition of festivals and miscellaneous events.
*Rebecca requested any additional feedback by the end of the week so that it could be incorporated.
- Oiled Wildlife First Response / 24hr HAZWOPER Training: Rebecca announced the upcoming training, scheduled for 2/13/24-2/14/24 at Red Cedar Hall in Blyn, WA. The CC MRC will sponsor the event in partnership with the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe. Registration information was emailed out on 12/12/23 and is limited to 50 attendees. The training has been advertised to

local MRCs and tribes and will go out on 12/22/23 for wider advertising. There is a 16-hour online component that must be completed prior to the training.

- Joint Meeting with Jefferson County: Rebecca reported that the Clallam and Jefferson County MRCs were working on a joint meeting for the spring, possibly to be held on an evening in March. Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe will be hosting the meeting at Red Cedar Hall. The meeting will focus on networking and may include a Tribal presentation. Ed Bowlby suggested a joint meeting with the North Pacific Coast MRC as well.
- Jamestown Aquaculture Presentation: Rebecca announced that Jamestown Seafood CEO Jim Parsons would be presenting in person at the January CC MRC Meeting. Ed Bowlby suggested hosting another presentation on the other side of the topic. Discussion followed on how the CC MRC might attempt to handle contentious issues in order to receive balanced information and make it available to others.
- Storage Space: Rebecca brought up the idea of moving the CC MRC storage space to a more central location between Sequim and Port Angeles, like the storage units next to the Safeway on Highway 101.

NWSC Update

Alan Clark gave an update on NWSC news. He said that many people were terming out of their appointments on MRCs, so there are new representatives to get to know. The External Relations Committee is working to secure funding. The last meeting was held on 12/8/23 and featured an overview of the US Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program and a presentation on the Kelp Plan Status Update and Policy Recommendations. A stewardship fund through the NWS Foundation may be a way to fund work on the Elwha River and Beach. Information on kelp restoration and monitoring was distributed to the CC MRC, detailing the 90 percent reduction in bull kelp that has been documented over the last 150 years in the South and Central Sound. More projects are being planned, including in Freshwater Bay, to monitor kelp and gather genetic material to set up a seed bank for restoration. More information can be found on the NWSC website: <https://nwstraits.org/>.

Advisory Role

Subcommittee Status

Ann Soule reported that the Advisory Role Subcommittee met last week. There are seven members on the Subcommittee with Jeff Ward and Alan Clark serving as co-chairs. Alan added that the Subcommittee is trying to come up with ways that the CC MRC can be more effective in its advisory role to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC), and in its public outreach. Comments and questions are welcome.

Field Project Updates

Olympia Oyster

Chris Burns said they had acquired 4,000 bags of shell, weighing about 93,000 pounds in total. He was in the process of lining up a barge to distribute the shell to beaches. He is planning to move the shell by barge in March, and spread the shell by hand in May, hopefully with a Washington Conservation Corps crew. Rebecca Mahan added that the grant had a no-cost extension.

Pigeon Guillemot

Ed Bowlby announced that he and Mary Sue Brancato had submitted all the project data to the database, so it was now in a forum for agencies to view the combined results.

Forage Fish

Tim Cochnauer said they planned to survey at Cline Spit on the evening of 12/22/23 because it was the perfect time to catch sand lance spawning.

Elwha Beach Stewardship

Helle Andersen reported that she was continuing to conduct surveys; people have still been using the beach regularly.

Kelp Surveys

Alan Clark met with NWSC Marine Science Coordinator Jeff Whitty and explained why the sampling had not been complete each day of the project season due to the breaking surf. They are working together to make sure that all the kelp beds are accurately covered. He added that there was a lot of new activity in kelp restoration and encouraged the CC MRC to work as much as possible with the kelp restoration group.

Shellfish Biotoxins

There was nothing new to report.

Sound Toxins

Nancy Stephanz reported that with the reduction of sunlight and increase in rain, the survey team had been seeing very few phytoplankton lately. During today's survey, they saw eight different genera, but only one or two representatives were in each slide.

Pinto Abalone

Alan Clark said that the project was approved for funding for 2024 and 2025. There will be two diver surveys in year one in the Port Angeles area and at Pillar Point, with expanded diver surveys at each location in year two. Alan Clark and Jeff Ward are co-leading the project. *Rebecca Mahan said she had some homework to pass on for the project.

Education/Outreach

Coasters

There was nothing new to report.

New Displays

Ann Soule said that she hoped to have the other CC MRC projects to the graphic designer in January for the production of the remaining project posters.

Future Presentations

- The Blob (for public): Ann Soule asked whether there was still interest in this topic because she was hearing that The Blob did not really form this year. Lance Vail discussed the latest information from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which can be found at <https://www.integratedecosystemassessment.noaa.gov/regions/california-current/california-current-marine-heatwave-tracker-blobtracker> and which indicates that this a record La Nina year. The Blob seems to be correlated to the El Nino effect. Although the science tells an interesting story, he thought it would be more effectively expressed by the CC MRC in terms of the impact of The Blob (such as in coastal fisheries) than in actual physics, as the physical side was not practical for public outreach. Ed Bowlby added that since it was not as dramatic as last year, this might be the wrong time to pursue the topic. Alan Clark noted several fisheries being impacted and suggested that the CC MRC could instead look at the drivers in variation of

populations and making people aware of how ocean conditions change things. Ann Soule pointed out that an engaging speaker would be needed, and suggested meeting with Ed to brainstorm after the holidays. Alan recommended University of Puget Sound Biology Professor Peter Hodum.

- Dr. Catherine Copass (Olympic Forest Coalition): Ann Stafford suggested inviting Dr. Copass to give a presentation about Clallam County forest stands, their ecological connections, and their impact on climate change, but Ann was not present for an update. Rebecca Mahan added that Washington Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz announced a proposal to conserve forest land, which involved cancelling the controversial Power Plant timber sale on the Elwha River. Discussion followed on the timber industry in Clallam County, economic versus environmental concerns, and how to impact policy and perspectives.

Other Updates/New Topics

Update on CMRC Part-time Administrative Assistant

Rebecca Mahan said that the County had received 11 applications for the position. Interviews will be conducted in the new year.

Green Crab Leadership

Ann Soule explained that this new item was added to the agenda after it came up at the last CC MRC meeting that the MRCs were being looked to for leadership. Rebecca Mahan said that the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, and the Makah Tribe were all trapping and could use assistance; there were also molt surveys and online training available to participate in. Ed Bowlby added that he and Mary Sue Brancato have volunteered with Sea Grant's efforts for the past couple of years. Ann Soule suggested getting regular updates from experts so that the CC MRC could answer questions from the public. Helle Andersen recommended Sea Grant for an update on current status.

Rescue Tug Letter

Mike Doherty was not present for an update.

Interns in 2024

Rebecca Mahan and Tim Cochnauer met with Peninsula College Biology Professor Barbara Blackie about a new natural resources program and the possibility of working with a student intern. They have not heard back from her yet. *Ann Soule said she would try to remind Barbara to check back.

Adopt a Beach for CoastSavers

CoastSavers asked the CC MRC if there was a beach that they would like to sponsor for the Adopt a Beach program. The group has not decided on whether to participate or not. *Tim Cochnauer will make a suggestion at the next CC MRC meeting that the Committee can vote on.

Presentation(s) to the BoCC

Tim Cochnauer led a discussion on how the CC MRC would like to increase its involvement with the BoCC. Suggestions included making the BoCC aware of the Advisory Role Subcommittee, presentations on projects, and inviting the commissioners to be on the CC MRC.

Involvement with Shoreline Planning / Permitting

Rebecca Mahan said she would be keeping the Committee updated with the County's shoreline planning. Tim Cochnauer brought up the reconstruction at the Red Lion Inn and possible runoff issues into Peabody Creek.

Good of the Order

- Alan Clark mentioned a conversation he had with Julia Parrish about the University of Washington's Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team and possible ways the CC MRC could support the program.
- Rebecca Mahan announced that the Development Community seat was open on the CC MRC.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

Chair Tim Cochnauer adjourned the meeting at 7:23 PM.

Action Items:

**Rebecca Mahan requested any additional feedback on the Workplan by the end of the week so that it could be incorporated.*

**Rebecca Mahan said she had some homework to pass on for the Pinto Abalone project.*

**Ann Soule said she would try to remind Barbara Blackie to check back with the CC MRC about interns.*

**Tim Cochnauer will make a suggestion at the next CC MRC meeting for a beach for the Adopt a Beach Program.*