



February 2024 Final Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, February 26, 2024

Time: 5:30-7:21 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), Chris Burns (Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe Alternate), Alan Clark (Community at Large; Northwest Straits Commission [NWSC]), Tim Cochnauer (Community at Large; Chair), Mike Doherty (District 3), Katharine Frazier (Port of Port Angeles Alternate), Robert Knapp (Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe), Lyn Muench (District 2 Alternate), Ann Soule (District 2; Vice Chair), Ann Stafford (Marine Related Recreation and Tourism), LaTrisha Suggs (City of Port Angeles), Bob Vreeland (Conservation and Environment)

Others present: Lee First (Twin Harbors Waterkeeper), Amelia Kalagher (CC Marine Resources Committee [MRC] Administrative Support), Joann LaBaw (member of the public), Rebecca Mahan (CC Habitat Biologist; CC MRC Coordinator)

Call to Order / Introductions / Changes to Agenda

Tim Cochnauer called the meeting to order. A quorum was present at the beginning of the meeting. Mike Doherty noted that he had some announcements to add.

Public Comment / Approval of January Minutes

Ann Stafford announced that this would be her last meeting as she was moving to Port Townsend. ***Ann Soule moved to approve the second draft of the January CC MRC Minutes as written; Alan Clark seconded. The motion passed unanimously.***

Announcements

- Joint Meeting with Jefferson County MRC in March: Rebecca Mahan announced that the joint meeting has been scheduled for 3/6/24 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Red Cedar Hall at the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe. The Jefferson County MRC has arranged dinner to be catered. The meeting will include a presentation on treaty rights from the Northwest Indian Fish Commission. *Rebecca sent out the agenda but will resend it as a reminder.
- Oyster Shell Transfer/Spreading: This is scheduled for 3/4/24-3/7/24 from 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM at Sequim Bay State Park. *Contact Chris Burns if interested in volunteering.

- Ediz Hook Planting Event: This is scheduled for 3/26/24 and 3/28/24. There is one remaining slot open for volunteers on 3/26/24 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.
- River and Ocean Film Festival: This is scheduled for July 2024 at the Port Angeles Field and Event Center. Ian Miller is finalizing the agenda; the next step will be to submit a request for films.
- Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe Library: Mike Doherty announced that the new library is now open with around 5,000 items. It is open on Mondays through Fridays during normal business hours.
- Department of Energy Hearings: Rebecca Mahan sent out a notice with the various hearing times. The proposal is for increasing the amount of financial responsibilities of large oil facilities. *Mike will forward another notice, in addition to a summary prepared by the Friends of San Juan Islands that documents the reasons to support the increase. Rebecca noted that CC MRC members are not permitted to comment as a CC MRC member, but only as citizens.
- Sea Grant Calendar: Mike suggested contacting Washington Sea Grant to get on the distribution list for their collectible calendars.

Presentation

Lee First, Cofounder of Twin Harbors Waterkeeper, gave a presentation on the connection and importance of protecting old growth forests along our waterways. Lee has been in the Waterkeeper movement for about 18 years and lives in the Chehalis Basin. She spoke about floods, droughts, forest practices, and climate change. In 2007, the Chehalis Basin underwent a massive flood event that resulted in the loss of lives, property, and infrastructure. Causes of flooding in the Chehalis Basin and other areas include atmospheric rivers, forest mismanagement, floodplain development, and extensive industry. Last year, the Chehalis River broke the 95-year record for low flow. Its headwaters are in Weyerhaeuser landownership, where industrial logging on steep slopes with highly erodible soils has taken place for many years. In contrast, the headwaters for most Olympic Peninsula rivers are in the Olympic National Park, where they are protected from runoff by old growth trees that provide cold, slow, steady groundwater. In a clear-cut forest, the opposite is true: there is little vegetation, a lot of runoff, flooding, and a lower water table. This contributes to flashy hydrology and warmer stream temperatures. Lee discussed her research from a climate change perspective, which shows that older forests are extremely important, sequestering more water and carbon than younger or clear-cut forests. She talked about the role of legacy forests: forests that are at least 100-years old, have been logged once, are structurally complex and diverse, and regenerated naturally. These forests are becoming increasingly rare, but there are still many of them left on Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lands. Lee has been tracking DNR timber sales, which are scheduled to clearcut 7,000 acres over the next 18 months. In a lawsuit filed against DNR in Jefferson County in December 2023, the Jefferson County Superior Court approved an injunction to prevent DNR from logging or constructing new roads while the case is open. The Clallam County Board of County Commissioners determined that the Power Plant Timber Sale in the Elwha Watershed was more valuable to the community and conservation than if it was harvested to support County services. Additional scheduled units in the Elwha Watershed have been found to contain rare plants, and it is likely that those units will be protected. Lee described several other upcoming timber sales in the Elwha Watershed, and the low flows recorded at the McDonald Bridge Gage. Logging along the river and in its headwaters will contribute to lower low flows. For Lee, that is a very good reason to keep Legacy Forests intact. She suggested organizing walks to proposed units that contain Legacy Forests, studying the online Field Guide to the Rare Plants of Washington, supporting the Board of County Commissioners, attending Board of Natural Resources meetings, getting on the DNR's State Environmental Policy Act notification list, joining with others who are working on Legacy Forest issues, and writing to Hillary Franz. Discussion followed on the concern private timber landowners may have about additional regulations restricting future harvests. Lee welcomed additional questions via email: leefrider7@gmail.com.

NWSC Update

Alan Clark gave an update on NWSC news. The last NWSC meeting took place on 2/20/24. The meeting focused on a number of things, including a presentation from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife on the increasing demand for freshwater recreation in the North Puget Sound area; a review of the Boldt Decision Event; the formation of an ad hoc European green crab committee within the NWSC; an update on diversity, equity, and inclusion; and a recommendation from the Executive Committee for a second at-large tribal seat. It was also noted that the San Juan MRC benefited from Puget Sound Partnership's Nearshore Conservation Credit Program in the removal of creosote pilings, raising concerns about receiving aid from development; no recommendation was made, but it was agreed that more research and discussion were needed. The CC MRC discussed ways to increase Committee diversity, particularly to attract younger members. Amelia Gallagher spoke about Jefferson County MRC's process to adjust their bylaws for more diversity, equity, and inclusion. Suggestions included working with Lincoln High School to incorporate a youth and perhaps provide school science credits, involving students in field projects, or working with other high school or college groups. Tim Cochnauer suggested first contacting Jefferson County MRC for more direction on reformatting bylaws. After that, volunteers can take on the task of reaching out to different groups. More information can be found on the NWSC website: <https://nwstraits.org/>.

Advisory Role

Subcommittee Status

Alan Clark reported that things have moved forward well with the outline the subcommittee has created for an advisory process. A draft was distributed to the CC MRC. The subcommittee will be working with NWSC Executive Director Lucas Hart to finalize it before bringing it to the full CC MRC for approval. Subcommittee members include Jeff, Ann Stafford, Alan Clark, LaTrisha Suggs, and Chris Burns. Jeff and Alan are serving as co-chairs.

Field Project Updates

Olympia Oyster

Chris Burns said they were ready to start moving oyster shell by barge next week. They are watching the weather for ice, which may interfere with using the boat launch.

Pigeon Guillemot

Ed Bowlby said that the project is scheduled to start in June for 10 weeks of monitoring. Training will be scheduled for May. *Ed will send information on refresher training to Rebecca Mahan for distribution when it is available.

Forage Fish

Tim Cochnauer noted that they are continuing to collect samples but have not seen any eggs yet this year. Usually, the eggs are not seen until April or May.

Elwha Beach Stewardship

Helle Andersen said that she was continuing to conduct surveys. There was nothing new to report.

Kelp Surveys

Alan Clark reported that NWSC Science Coordinator Jeff Whitty was trying to meet in March to go over kelp issues, protocols, and survey changes. Alan found out that there would be a meeting for Peninsula volunteers in Neah Bay but did not know if Jeff Whitty would be available for that. Joanne Labaw is

writing an article about how to participate in surveys for the Olympic Peninsula Paddlers Newsletter. More information on the Kelp Plan can be found at <https://www.nwstraits.org/our-work/kelp/>.

Shellfish Biotoxins

Bob Vreeland will be resuming surveys in April; he is working on completing required forms and his annual report.

Sound Toxins

Nancy Stephanz was not present for an update.

Pinto Abalone

Rebecca Mahan said that they had a draft quality assurance plan together, and contracts with subcontractors were being signed this week.

Ediz Hook

Helle Anderson announced two planting events scheduled for 3/26/24 and 3/28/24; there is only one volunteer opening left.

Education/Outreach

Coasters

Coasters are available in Rebecca Mahan's office for distribution. Hook and Line Pub requested more.

New Displays

Ann Soule said that she had made some progress on the project posters for the next three projects: Forage Fish, Kelp, and Olympia Oysters.

Future Presentations

- *Send any ideas to Rebecca Mahan.
- Alexandra Morton, author of *Not on my Watch*: Tim Cochnauer suggested inviting Alexandra to speak at an upcoming CC MRC meeting to present the other side of net pens and aquaculture. The group discussed options and concerns regarding the education of the CC MRC and appropriate ways to communicate with the public on aquaculture and other community issues. ***Ann Soule moved that the CC MRC find a speaker to present to the CC MRC regarding concerns about netpens; Ed Bowlby seconded.*** Discussion followed on how to select the speaker. ***Ed Bowlby made a friendly amendment to form a subcommittee to select the speaker/s.*** ****Volunteers included Tim Cochnauer, Ed Bowlby, Lyn Muench, and Bob Vreeland. The motion passed unanimously.***

Other Updates/New Topics

Communication with our County Commissioners

District representatives Ann Soule and Jeff Ward are reaching out to their district Commissioners on a list of topics; no feedback has been received yet. Mike Doherty requested that his Alternate take that on for District 3.

Green Crab Update

*Ioana Bociu said that she would have an update for the next CC MRC meeting.

Rescue Tug

Mike Doherty said there was nothing new to report.

Recruiting for Open MRC Members

There are open seats for Development Community, Marine Related Recreation and Tourism, and Makah Tribe representatives. The Makah Tribe is interested in providing a representative.

Good of the Order

Amelia Gallagher introduced herself and mentioned that *she would be getting in touch with the CC MRC members about volunteer hours and a shared file system. She is also working on the MRC website and welcomes feedback.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

Chair Tim Cochnauer adjourned the meeting at 7:21 PM.

Action Items:

**Rebecca Mahan sent out the agenda for the joint meeting with Jefferson MRC but will resend it as a reminder.*

**Contact Chris Burns if interested in volunteering for oyster shell placement.*

**Mike will forward another notice about the Department of Energy hearings, in addition to a summary prepared by the Friends of San Juan Islands that documents the reasons to support the increase.*

**Ed Bowlby will send information on Pigeon Guillemot refresher training to Rebecca Mahan for distribution when it is available.*

**Send any ideas for future presentations to Rebecca Mahan.*

**Volunteers for the Netpen Speaker Selection Subcommittee included Tim Cochnauer, Ed Bowlby, Lyn Muench, and Bob Vreeland.*

**Ioana Bociu said that she would have an update on European green crab for the next CC MRC meeting.*

**Amelia Kalagher will be getting in touch with the CC MRC members about volunteer hours and a shared file system.*