

CLALLAM COUNTY

MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date: Monday, July 15, 2019
 Time: 5:30 – 7:10 pm
 Location: Commissioners’ Large Conference Room
 Minutes prepared by Helle Andersen

Members present:

P = Present E= Excused

E Bob Vreeland	P Robert Knapp	P Arnold Schouten	Mike McHenry	Jesse Waknitz
P Sissi Bruch	E Jeff Ward	P Mike Doherty	E Ann Soule	Greig Arnold
P Lyn Muench	P Alan Clark	P Ed Bowlby	P Pete Schroeder	Open Position

Ex-Officio Members / MRC staff/Members of the Public Present

Phil Dionne, WDFW; Makena Meredith, summer intern, Alisandra Baccus, summer intern; Dan and Valerie Stahler, residents and Olympic Peninsula Audubon society; Carol Hull, League of Women’s Voters; Helle Andersen, Clallam MRC Project Coordinator.

Call to Order/Introductions/ Changes to Agenda

None

Public Comment/Approval of Minutes

No public comments. The June minutes were approved as amended.

WDFW Forage Fish Program

Phil Dionne, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, came to the meeting to give an update on their forage fish program. He started the presentation by giving an overview of the program including why forage fish are important, forage fish species in Washington State, and challenges facing forage fish before he turned to current research and monitoring efforts. Forage fish are an ecological, not genetic, group which includes generally small, highly fecund, schooling fish at the middle of food webs. They are a vital conduit between primary producers and higher level consumers. They are also commercially, recreationally, and culturally important. Forage fish include pelagic spawners such as Pacific sardine, Pacific mackerel and northern anchovy, anadromous spawners, such as longfin smelt and Eulachon, and nearshore spawners, such as surf smelt, Pacific sand lance and Pacific herring. He discussed catching methods and population trends of the different species in Puget Sound. Challenges facing forage fish include overfishing/bycatch, poor water quality, degraded habitat and climate change. Numerous challenges make it difficult to separate out natural variability in abundances from human induced changes from natural fluctuations. Because it is difficult to estimate forage fish populations, decline in seabird populations has been used as warning signs. The 99% decline of the Western grebe population in Puget Sound is one example. He then turned to the results of the beach monitoring effort that Clallam MRC has been a part of for the last three years. All the monitoring data is uploaded to the online interactive map

<https://wdfw.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=19b8f74e2d41470cbd80b1af8dedd6b3&extent=-126.1368,45.6684,-119.6494,49.0781>. For example if you go to Ediz Hook and click on the light green line you will see that the collector of the data is listed as CLL MRC.

Introduction of 2019 Summer Interns

Makena Meredith, one of the two crabber outreach interns, introduced herself to the members. Makena finished high school and running start at the Peninsula College this spring and will be going to Maine Maritime Academy to peruse a degree in Marine Transportation Operations. Raven Sharpe, the other

crabber outreach intern, was not able to come to the meeting so Helle Andersen gave a brief summary of her background. Raven is a running start student from Port Angeles High School and Peninsula College. She is interested in pursuing environmental science in her studies and work after high school, and the internship gives her an opportunity to explore the field.

MRC Opportunity Fund and Olympia Oyster Restoration

Helle Andersen informed the members that Clallam MRC had received the MRC Opportunity grant for the Olympia oyster restoration effort. The funds will be used to purchase 850 bags of shells to be distributed at the new restoration site in Blyn. Chris Burns has reached out to Taylor Shellfish and it sounds like they can provide us the shells this summer. When the shells have arrived there will be an opportunity for the MRC members to help out with spreading them at the site.

Current Status of the Jamestown Tribe's Shellfish Lease in Dungeness Bay

Robert Knapp gave a brief update on the current status of the shellfish lease in Dungeness Bay. The Jamestown Tribe has the lease, but it is not likely that they will receive the permits anytime soon. It appears like the Corps of Engineers (COE) has no process to make the determination of allowing or disallowing shellfish agriculture in Dungeness Bay. The COE has received comments from other agencies and it seems like they just go back and forth. One of the comments the tribe has received is that they have to document that no other site in Puget Sound is suitable, and not just for oysters, which is an impossible task. The tribe is disappointed because they have put a lot of effort into improving the water quality of the bay.

NWSC Update

Alan Clark provided a brief update on the NWSC. The Commission met in person June 28 in Everett. Cameron Caldwell, NW WA Outreach Director for Office of U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell came to the meeting and could confirm that Senator Cantwell supports the Northwest Straits Initiative. Alan presented the 2019-20 kelp monitoring project and it went well. On July 17th Alan will have a meeting with the NWSC Science Committee to discuss other ways to collect plankton samples, snorkel surveys for fish and invertebrates, and motorized kelp bed surveys. The 2019-20 budget, the NWS Commission 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and 2020 Operations Plan were approved by consensus. Don Hunger will serve as the NWSF's new director as of July 1 and Caroline Gibson is now the Director of Partnerships for NWSF. Pete Haas from Skagit MRC presented on the Salish Sea Stewards, a program to train volunteers to support MRC and other local marine projects. Pete pointed out that funding and capacity to manage the program were the main issues with running the program. The next in-person NWSC meeting will be held August 23rd between 10 am and 3 pm in the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center, Blyn. All members are invited to participate.

Project Updates

Pigeon Guillemot: Ed Bowlby informed the members that the volunteers are surveying 12 sites along the Strait from Miller Peninsula west to Freshwater Bay. Because of family issues the summer intern has not been able to help out with the data entry; if that doesn't improve Ed and Jeff will enter the data into the database.

Kelp Monitoring: Alan Clark gave a brief summary of the monitoring effort. Alisa Taylor, the summer intern, received her kayak safety training July 13th from Alan and Jeff. Monitoring of the three kelp beds are planned for July 18, 19 and August 1 – weather dependent.

Crabber 101 Workshops: Helle Andersen informed the members that the two crabber outreach workshops went well. A total of 53 volunteers participated in the first workshop held at John Wayne Marina and another 30 volunteers came to the workshop in Port Angeles. Many of the participants gave a positive review of the workshops.

Good of the Order

Clallam MRC Retreat: Ann Soule is leading the planning of the retreat and she is looking for help. At the last meeting Alan Clark and Sissi Bruch volunteered.

Intern Celebration: Helle Andersen reminded the members that the August 19 meeting will be the Intern Celebration to be held at the Feiro Marine Life Center.

NWSC ad Hoc Committee: Helle Andersen informed the members that Sasha Horst from NWSC is looking for MRC members to participate in an ad hoc committee to work on creating a communication plan based on the new NWSC Strategic Plan. Interested members can contact Sasha or Helle.

Snake River Dams: Sissi Bruch told the members that Jim Waddell has asked if Clallam MRC has decided what to do regarding the dams on Snake River. The members talked about writing an advisory message to the commissioners. In this connection Robert Knapp recommended seeing the movie "dammed to extinction." *It was decided to add this topic to the September agenda.*

Plastics: Sissi Bruch also brought up the issue of disposal of plastics. China no longer accepts plastics so the city and county will have to decide what to do. The members discussed the role the Clallam MRC could have in educating the community on this topic.

National Maritime Heritage Area: Sissi Bruch told the members that the shoreline for the State of Washington has been designated as a National Maritime Heritage Area. The Washington State Trust for Historic Preservation is currently working on the 2-3 year process of getting a plan in place. The Clallam MRC can help by using this designation and documenting all our experiences after October 1st to use as matching funds. For more information see https://nmsolympiccoast.blob.core.windows.net/olympiccoast-prod/media/archive/involved/sac/bg_map_wa_maritimenationalheritagearea.pdf

Streamkeepers: Robert Knapp informed the members that Ed Chadd retired from Streamkeepers in July and that the program currently has been placed "on hold" while the County finds a new "home" for the program. The likely new home is Washington State University, but the agreement has not been completed yet. Robert expressed concern that the program may be discontinued and said that the tribe relies on the program for information on water quality of the streams and much more. He asked if Clallam MRC would be willing to write a letter of support for the program.

Water Availability: Carol Hull, League of Women's Voters, informed the members of a 2.5 year study the League is currently conducting on the watershed and water availability in Sequim. They are working closely with Ann Soule from City of Sequim and Carol Creasey from Clallam County. The goal is to make a film about the issue to be shown to the local community. Next they will focus on the Port Angeles watershed.

Public Comment

None

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.