

CLALLAM COUNTY

MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date: Monday, January 11, 2021
 Time: 5:30 – 7:00 pm
 Location: Zoom Meeting
 Minutes prepared by: Alisa Taylor

Members present:

P = Present E= Excused

- | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| P Bob Vreeland | P Robert Knapp | P Arnold Schouten | P Tim Cochnauer | E Jesse Waknitz |
| P Ann Soule | E Jeff Ward | P Mike Doherty | P Latrisha Suggs | Makah Open Position |
| P Lyn Muench | P Alan Clark | P Ed Bowlby | P Ann Stafford | LEKT Open Position |

Alternates present:

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------|
| P Harold Kline | E Chris Burns | P Lance Vail | P Mary Sue Brancato |
| E Ioana Bociu | E Navarra Carr | P Lucas Hart | P Lisa Law |

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

Cathy Lear, Clallam MRC Coordinator; Sasha Horst, NWSC Operations Manager; Alisa Taylor, Clallam MRC Fellow; Adrienne Akmajian, Marine Ecologist with Makah Tribe; Liz Allyn, Marine Mammal Technician with Makah Tribe.

Call to Order/Introductions/ Changes to Agenda

Cathy Lear brought up an amendment to the agenda, and noted that Sasha Horst is present, to talk about upcoming MRC spring project development and grant applications.

Public Comment/Approval of Minutes

The November minutes were approved.

Tribal Marine Resources Program

Adrienne Akmajian, who works as a Marine Ecologist with the Makah Tribe, gave a presentation about the European green crab removal project. She shared that, since 2017 when the first green crab was seen in Neah Bay, 4800 traps have been deployed, and 3560 green crabs have been trapped. The traps were set in three locations: Wa’atch River, Tsoo-Yess River, and Neah Bay. In addition to monitoring and managing the green crab population, data is collected on each green crab’s carapace width, missing/regrown limbs or other damage, underside coloration, barnacle growth, eggs on females, whether the shell is soft, and molted shells. Data is also collected for the number of other species caught and released, and salinity and temperature. Green crabs caught range from abt 10-94mm. The traps used included minnow traps, fukui traps (can catch the greatest size variety of crabs) shrimp traps (can catch the most crabs), and catching some crabs by hand. Adrienne said that their work in 2020 wouldn’t have been possible without help from the intern hired by Clallam MRC, Angelina Woods. The team hopes to increase research and monitoring of the population, and would like to start a mark-recapture effort focusing on Dungeness crabs in the rivers, to develop a population estimate, and because there is some concern of green/Dungeness crab interspecific competition in intertidal zones where the Dungeness crabs are smaller.

Liz Allyn, who works as a Marine Mammal Technologist with the Makah Tribe, gave a presentation about Sea Lion entanglement in Northwest WA. The tribe has been monitoring sea lions for just over a decade, and wanted to know exactly how frequently entanglements occur. They also investigated what factors might drive or impact entanglement. The research focused on Stellar sea lions and California sea lions,

the materials involved in entanglements, annual and seasonal trends, and whether risk varies by species/sex/age. Data was collected via boat surveys, focusing on Tatoosh, Boldt(?), and Carroll Islands, and Neah bay. Their procedure was to count the total sea lions of each species at each site, count the number of entanglements, take photos, identify the entangled material, record the sex/age/species of the entangled individual. They also recorded all incoming reports about pinniped entanglement, and stranded or dead entangled sea lions. Stellar sea lions experienced an entanglement rate of 0.41%, and California sea lions 2.13%. Bands and flashers were the most common entangled gear, and were sometimes embedded as the animal grew. The salmon flashers were most commonly seen in the Summer, meaning sea lions are most likely encountering them only as active fishing gear. Members asked questions and discussed with Liz the importance of aiming to reduce entanglements by encouraging fishermen to either not throw bands overboard, or to at least cut them before throwing overboard (many don't cooperate with these requests). Although researchers in Australia are making biodegradable packing bands for this reason, they are not used commercially because they're not cost-effective enough. Latrisha asked if the data from this project could be used to support making changes in fishing regulations; Liz said that while the data is illuminating and interesting, it can't be generalized to the entire California sea lion population, because only male sea lions visit our local waters.

Kelp Webinar

Jeff Ward, Alan Clark, and Alisa Taylor are working with Tom Mumford to put together the kelp webinar, which will be held in February. Declines in kelp populations (especially in areas beyond the Straits of Juan de Fuca) are cause for concern, and the goal is to educate the public about kelp, its importance to people and marine ecosystems, what's going on with kelp presently, and for what reasons. Another goal (likely to be discussed in a later installment of the webinar series) is to discuss the possibility of kelp aquaculture in the Straits. The first presentation will be about 45 minutes, with a question and answer period at the end. The kelp team also plans to gather feedback from the audience via a brief series of questions to be filled out at the end of the webinar, including questions aiming to find out what valuable new information people may have learned from the material presented, and what topics they'd be most interested to learn more about in an upcoming kelp webinar.

Oil Spill Risk/Response Symposium

Ann Stafford presented about the NW Straits Symposium and WSU Webinar which she attended, regarding oil spill response planning. Each year, over 20 billion gallons of oil and other hazardous chemicals are transported through the Straits and Puget Sound. The GRP (Geographic Response Plan) includes outreach for oil spill preparedness, increases citizen knowledge, and helps create a network for understanding and carrying out protocols in the event of an oil spill. It also defines where environmental resources requiring protection are located, and is synergistic with all other MRC projects (those which focus on kelp, forage fish, PIGU, shellfish, etc). Over the past 5 years there have been oiled wildlife trainings, with over 400 people in Clallam County participating, but last year was cancelled due to the pandemic. Ann shared that WSU had presented 2 pilot programs: Beach Watchers (in Snohomish) and OSARS (Oil Spill Awareness and Response Support). It was brought up whether Clallam MRC has the resources to update the GRP, and noted that it would be ideal to be well prepared and to coordinate with primary response contractors and oil spill response orgs. Members asked if anyone from the county or the tribes are reviewing the GRP—it is unknown, but assumed that tribal biologists have at least reviewed it. Robert shared that Chris Burns is involved in an effort on behalf of the Jamestown tribe, to start mapping natural resources important to the tribe, to be included in the updated GRP. Bob pointed out that we should have a discussion about the resources in Clallam Co., especially those we don't know the locations of, and from the point of view of fossil fuel attorneys in the event of an oil spill related court case. Several members agreed that a time should be set aside to discuss this in more detail.

Clallam MRC Executive Committee

Alisa Taylor shared some notes from Jeff Ward, in his absence. Jeff recounted how, when he was the MRC chair in the past, an Executive Committee existed and was made up of the current chair, the most recent former chair, and the NWSC Representative. He thinks an executive committee would be a good idea, and other members agreed. If the EC will be made up of the same positions as it had been in the past, the presently involved members would be Bob Vreeland (Chair), Jeff Ward (Former Chair,) and Alan Clark (NWSC Rep). The notion was supported by several members, but a final decision was not concluded, and will be discussed by the involved members via email.

February Meetings

The members decided to hold the February meeting on the 22nd.

NWSC Update

Alan Clark shared about funding concerns for the NWSC and NWSF for 2021—there has been a falling off of folks contributing or donating, due to the pandemic. There may be a possibility to acquire money from stimulus packages, though they will need to be focused on “shovel-ready projects,” and a link will need to be demonstrated showing that it provides jobs, and permits are in place. They are looking to groups including UW to find connections to solve this financial challenge. They are also looking into “action to impact;” ways to demonstrate that educational outreach projects are having a positive impact. Due to time constraints, Alan asked people to email him with any additional questions about NWSC happenings.

Project Updates

Forage Fish Sampling: Tim shared that the sampling effort is going well, and was able to be done in the daylight for the first time after several months. There has been some discussion of adding Dawley Beach at the South end of Sequim Bay, as a sampling location, though confirming the addition is pending response from Sarah at NOSC. Tim said that the Cline Spit sampling team will discuss whether the addition of Dawley Beach is something they can take charge of.

The purchase of a tablet for the forage fish surveys (to use the WDFW survey app) was again discussed; options include getting a tablet with a waterproof case and either pay for a data plan, use a mobile hot spot in the field (which uses someone’s phone data), or to wait until an internet connection is available after the field survey, to later enter the data on the tablet. Tim said the team can keep playing it by ear for now, and continue using the app on Tim’s phone instead of a tablet.

Virtual River Festival: Lyn shared that there is a good chance there may actually be a festival in the fall, but it’s questionable and will depend on how things progress with the pandemic. She will share any updates about this as they come through.

Climate Change: Ann Soule shared that the North Olympic Development Council is putting out an RFP (Request for Proposals) to help with the Climate Action Plan, but the RFP is delayed and could be out in the next few months. After meeting with Rich Meier at the county, Ann learned that they are developing an agreement with City of PA to coordinate collection of data into a greenhouse gas inventory of the entire county. Ann is including Sequim City Council in this, if they are willing to be a part of it. Lyn did some great investigating about what was happening with DNR to climate change, and learned a lot—due to time constraints, Lyn will share about this in a short verbal or written report, soon. Ann would like to propose that the MRC continues to interact with commissioners on a regular basis, perhaps in the Fall after the field season. Commissioners would like the MRC to be recruiting business voices more, which Arnold agreed to help with. It was discussed that the climate committee will reach out to either Colleen or Jesse at Port of PA, and find out if they are working on a climate action plan.

Good of the Order

Cathy and Sasha discussed that soon, they will put together the list of spring projects for which to write proposals for funding. Sasha wants to help the MRC get the framework together, and to think about how to decide what to emphasize for the upcoming year. She mentioned that the Executive Committee may

be the ones to help decide project development; she's not expecting detailed project info just yet, mainly an overview of the MRC's desired approach. Sasha would like to touch base with the MRC again about this in March.

Tim shared that, in February, the internship subcommittee will present a report on the update of the program. Tim plans to email Ed, Jeff, Alan, and Arnold, to discuss and plan the report for the next MRC meeting.

Public Comment

Latrisha brought up the MRC having made a recommendation a few meetings ago, to send a letter to Clallam Co. Dept of Health to support stable funding of the on-site septic system program. There was mention that the county was looking at all utility users in the county regardless of city, and considering charging them all a fee, and Latrisha asked if anyone could share an update about this.

Lyn said that when the commissioners last discussed the topic, they decided to look at alternatives and postpone any immediate action. There is deliberation over the question: should everyone in the county pay, or just people with septic systems? "If you are already hooked up to a sewer, why should you have to pay to have someone else's septic system inspected?"

Latrisha pointed out that the concern for the city is that all users, regardless of being already connected to the system, are a part of what's concerning for the city and how issues may impact the city as well as the environment. Bob pointed out that we're all going to pay for it, if not in the form of a fee, in the form of how another overflow will impact natural resources.

Adjourn

The meeting ended at 7:30 pm.