

August 3, 2023

MRC & CAG Meeting Minutes

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Matt Arata, Aaron Boyles, David Checkley, Kailey Ginther, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Lovel Pratt, Craig Smith, Beth Tate, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Aaron Barnett, Catherine Buchalski-Smith, Tyler Davis, Kurt Licence, Katie Johnson, Kari Koski, Kathryn Moore, Makenna Pittman, Frances Robertson, Laura Jo Severson, Kendra Smith, Kyle Spragens, Bridget Trosin, Sam Whitridge, Cindy Wolf

9:02 AM Convene MRC meeting

Christina Koons

As a county policy we've adjusted use of the Coast Salish Acknowledgement based on conversations with Tribal leaders, we've decided to use it only when we're gathered together for special ceremonies, not at every meeting.

9:03 AM Introductions around the virtual room, starting with staff

Welcome to Dave Checkley, our newest member whose position will be voted on by council later this month.

9:11 AM Public Comment

Laura Jo: carry on, keep up the good work!

9:05 AM Approve meeting agenda, Approve July MRC meeting minutes

MRC members

All approve the agenda with no additions. All in favor of approving the July minutes, the minutes are approved as is.

9:12 AM NWSC July meeting report to the MRC

Craig Smith

- Discussion of messaging about climate change and sea level rise that's not political, from the Commission level.
 - Looks like funding is coming through for commission this year, looking at ways to not need to update it every year.
 - Discussion of rain gardens, effectiveness at improving water quality and then how to properly maintain them
 - Presentation about crab trap recovery in Jefferson county that discussed current efforts, such as habitat mapping.
- Christina: also, the MRC conference coming up November 3-4. SJ County has an opportunity to present there.

9:17 AM Presentation on expansion of mobile pumpout services in Salish Sea *Catherine Buchowski-Smith*

State Parks in the Boating program, on behalf of the Clean vessel Program, working to address impacts from recreational boating. In 2018, EPA designated areas in Puget Sound/Salish Sea as no discharge zone. Waste must be captured and transferred to an appropriate facility by law. There are pumpout locations in the SJI's, but facilities are insufficient. In Pierce county they had similar challenges. So piloted a mobile pumpout program. We provided boats and funding to take it out at select times to pump out directly from boats. Pilot programs starting in other counties

ACTION ITEM: Catherine will share the link to the news story she just shared about the Pierce County boat
In Pierce county they're taking advantage of the pumpout timing for outreach and education opportunity with boaters.

As of last Sunday, nearly 12K gallons of waste pumped this year. This is free for boaters. Funded through grant program, money comes from sport fish and boating restoration trust fund; funded by Clean Vessel Act Grant Program.

Clean Vessel Act (CVA) grants fund: pumpout stations, marine dump stations, pumpout barges, floating restrooms, pumpout boats, also some of the time for the personnel doing operation and maintenance. There's funding to ensure the program continues. We can capture/transport the sewage, but not treat. There is a 25% matching cost share requirement. CVA will reimburse up to 75% of eligible costs. Some of cost share can be in kind (property value, labor).

State Parks has appropriated funds to assess marine pumpout facilities to understand gaps and other funding opportunities beyond CVA. We partner with WA Sea Grant for this pumpout WA program. Boater outreach.

- States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) 2023 Education and Training symposium will be in Washington for first time since 1990, August 28-31, 2023 in Tacoma. Adam Parrott and many other local speakers, Frankie will be there.

QUESTIONS:

Beth: can CVA funds be used for purchase of pumpout vessel and salary for someone to do that job?

Catherine: yes, Jeff Barney has a whole package of materials to share about how to get up and running

Craig: Is a mobile pumpout boat really feasible? What about a barge that could rotate around the San Juan Islands?

Catherine: yes, the grant could be used for that. We hope the needs assessment coming up will show exactly that.

We can't just collect sewage, need to take it somewhere. Anacortes can take the discharge but need to have the line built.

Adam: we have a time release tank now at POFH to help with sewage load from recreational boaters at the marina.

Aaron Barnett: describes where pumpout goes from each location – it's mostly trucked off, depends on the island.

Kendra: the barge is needed because trucking sewage on the ferry is not effective. But tied to this is a problem with pumpouts for RV's. FH can't accept those. So with this grant program, if we identify we need a barge, if we can't fill it on weekly basis with boats, can we add the on-land capacity? Can it be a general pumpout?

Catherine: yes, we'd pay for the proportion that's related to boaters, we can share.

ACTION ITEM: Kendra will talk to Kyle about putting together number for that (Catherine is in touch with Kyle too)

Adam: what is carrying capacity of pumpout boats? Our pumpout vessel has 200-gallon tank, can do 15 small boats.

Catherine: largest possible is 700-1K. There are already some boats here that we may be able to use as partners

9:53 AM **MRC Updates/Business**

Sam Whitridge/Tyler Davis

• MRC Chair/Vice Chair Elections

Sam Whitridge/Christina Koons

Christina: Karin isn't here today but we discussed and we're both happy to continue in these roles.

Craig: how long are the terms? Sam: one-year terms, but no limit on number of terms

MOTION: Craig moves that both Christina and Karin remain in their leadership positions. Adam seconds. All in favor.

Sam: we have one additional position. Dave's membership will go before council August 8th. then one seat still open and we have some new candidates' applications received so we'll do a couple more interviews

Craig: I'd like to participate in interviews, when are they?

Katie: one on the 8th at 2pm, haven't heard back from the other one. ACTION ITEM: Katie will send Craig a link

Sam: we'll be in touch after interviews to update if we have a recommendation for that 15th seat

9:59 AM • MRC Support for NSF funded curriculum for community college students at FHL *Sam Whitridge*

Program at FHL for community college students, testing if a place-based issue-based program geared toward diverse students will result in greater retention in the demographic they're targeting in geosciences. 10-day program in September, is anyone interested in participating - have MRC members give a presentation OR provide a project that could occur during that time (e.g., policy, vessel impact issues, oil spill prevention). Please follow up with Sam

Sandy: We're already in touch. It would be great if other MRC members could be involved at some level. And it would be great for them to hear about the meeting that was attended in WA DC about sea level rise

Cindy: could students work on something with middens and shellfish-use differences over time?

Kendra: have we shared that we're almost done with the sea level rise analysis? We currently have ESA finishing up some sea level rise modeling, planning to bring that to council September 18th.

Christina: I'd like to discuss the work that was done at Crescent Beach on Orcas either with these young people or at the conference in November. The issues of moving a whole road, the process the county has gone through.

Sam: I appreciate you bringing up the conference, we need to get back to them about that by end of month
Craig: with respect to this workshop for education at FHL, it's an opportunity for highlight positions at the County

10:13 AM • MRC 2023-2025 Grant Update *Sam Whitridge*
We submitted grant proposal back in May, working through process with Straits to respond to comments from their scientific advisory committee, then we'll have our grant in place for the next few years to deliver on slate of projects

10:14 AM • MRC subcommittee updates: *Katie Johnson*
- Outreach and Education
- San Juan County Fair Planning
We're close to County Fair, County will have two booths – one about marine Salish sea issues and one about climate sustainability. We still have slots needing volunteer help at the booth, especially on Thursday and Saturday mornings
- New MRC Blog
Our new blog is up on our website. It would be great to get entries from members, what you're interested in/doing, engage the community in projects going on, your travels. Please send Katie a message if you can contribute

10:16 AM - Eelgrass Protection *Katie Johnson*
- Vessel Surveys at no-anchor zones
In the past we've been doing Bell point, Crescent Beach and Odlin. Please let Katie know if you're going to continue and use the app toolbox to submit the information, Katie can provide a tutorial in how to do that. We are supposed to be doing it throughout the summer, weekends/evenings/mornings etc. Please get back to Katie if you can be involved

10:18 AM - Derelict Vessel Prevention *Adam Parrott*
We did the NW Straits Commission workshop. We came up with a couple of vessels to put up for consideration. Pauline (large tug that had an emergency pullout in early spring) is ready to be chopped up. The Winsome was successfully donated. The NW Straits committee is working on an extension for this year's leftover funds to carry over to next year
Christina: can you please get photos of the boat being chopped up for the blog? ACTION: YES, Adam will get photos
Adam: We're working on a boat turn-in program to invite owners to bring boats that may become derelict for a crunch.
- some discussion of El Capitan (large derelict tug) it's in a private marina in West Sound, some issues with removal.
Kari: I discussed this with Tyler and Marta and the marina owner there. This will stay on our subcommittee discussion list for creative solutions. There will also be a haul out of a long-time derelict boat at Orcas just next to ferry landing

10:29 AM - Oil Spill Prevention and Response Preparedness *Lovel Pratt*
The presentation made to the ECB was a great opportunity to connect in person, moving forward with advocacy for the ERTV seems to be progressing, the transboundary group has a meeting coming up and Sam and I met with Partnership yesterday, have a date now for transboundary meeting, we'll stay involved in the process.
Want to continue addressing the issue of small spills, Sam is finalizing a grant to fund that education/outreach now.

10:32 AM - Plastic Free Salish Sea

Commented [LP(FotSJ1)]: Sam - or this could be attributed to you? I don't remember who spoke about our meeting with Jillian.

Katie: Adopt a Road program is up and running. And Adopt-a-beach program is ongoing, we have stewards signed up

Kendra: and plastic film recycling is set up now at FH Marketplace. This is a pilot program just on SJI for now. Also, climate and sustainability meeting earlier this week, greenhouse gas report forwarded to council then release to public. In this report, the third item on the list for amount of greenhouse gas emissions was 1. ferries, 2. Wood-burning, and 3. Recreational boaters. Transportation over all is the biggest hit in the county.

- Other subcommittee updates

Adam: I'm speaking at SOBA next week, my presentation will revolve around marina infrastructure and preparing for electrification. Let me know if anyone else has other information they want me to present. Thanks for any help!

10:39 AM **Presentation/Discussion on Sea Duck Hunting in San Juan County** *Kyle Spragens*

Kurt Licence is here too, he's the regional rep for San Juan and Snohomish county. (Kyle shares slides.)

Flyway management of migratory birds is connected to original treaties, formalized in Migratory Bird Treaty Act from 1916. There are Flyway Councils but ultimate authority rests with US DFW. Focus on conservation and habitat are a large part of the North American Waterfowl Management plan signed by Canada, US and Mexico in 1986.

These habitats support waterfowl and many other species. There's federal law guiding dates and regulations, e.g., no game bird season outside of sept 1-March 10 and a maximum number set of 107 days for any species.

Washington can't be more generous than federal framework but can be more restrictive, like with sea duck harvest. In WA state, we use federal guidance for species like mallards but for sea ducks we take a state-restrictive exception. Federal framework in WA (part of flyway) allows a full 107-day season in which bag limit could be 7 ducks, but no more than 2 can be hens.

1994 – part of Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring program (PSEMP) focused on marine birds and mammals, funding has changed over time and aerial flights for water fowl now done by WDFW. It's a 27-year dataset across Puget Sound.

2004 – restricted daily bag limit on 7 of 11 species, the only species not affected are mergansers and buffleheads. All sea duck hunters required to self-identify with mandatory reporting card recording harvest by date/county/species

2010 –additional boat-based composition survey allows for greater resolution of species composition, male to female ratios (these species tend to be male dominated) and adult to hatchling ratios. Sea fowl are difficult to monitor

2022- season closure for harlequin. During this next 2023-2024 season this closure will be extended.

Now looking at the sea duck hunting strategy set 10 years ago, ways to spatially refine areas of concern, unclear how to invoke closures in open-water areas. Issues of plastic on beach clean-ups, uptick in plastic shotgun wads related to uptick in hunting. We're interested in partnering to help promote eelgrass, benthic forage and bivalve habitat

QUESTIONS:

Frankie: Are there opportunities to work directly with guiding outfits to do things differently? And, what is the actual compliance and how do we know that they're only getting what they're allowed to be catching? Where's the control?

Kyle: yes, starting in 2019 there was an uptick in number of guiding outfitters. It wasn't just more numbers of hunting, but also the effectiveness of hunters. Bird-guides don't have requirements the way fishing charters do, only the 6-pack captains' license requirement enforced by Coast Guard. Tough enforcement task in the winter.

Craig: I'm pleased the plastic wad issue is on your radar, and it's illegal by federal law to dump plastic in oceans. Why not mandate use of biodegradable wadding for waterfowl like cardboard?

Kyle: There are three companies on the verge of rolling out an alternative but no place to get it from yet. That's the focus of WSU extension discussion with those companies – seeing where they are at and how soon to transition. We have a waterfowl regulations pamphlet we're putting in front of hunters. It's easy to smear all guides, but it's

