

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Paul Andersson, Matt Arata, Aaron Boyles, David Checkley, Jeff Dyer, Kailey Genther, Patti Gobin, Brian Goodremont, Christina Koons, Laura Jo Severson, Beth Tate, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Abigail Ames, Norris Carlson, Tyler Davis, Sasha Horst, Katie Johnson, Jason Morgan, Jessica Owens, Frances Robertson, Lea Shields, Kendra Smith, Sam Whitridge, Cindy Wolf

9:00 AM **Convene MRC meeting**

Christina Koons

9:01 AM **Public Comment**

Norris Carlson

Norris: What is being done with the Snake River Dams by MRC? This is a concerning issue for orcas with not enough focus on breaching the dams. Tribal leaders want their rivers and salmon back. This feels like a critical moment.

There is an orca recovery meeting coming up; I hope Debra Lekanoff can be motivated to speak on this issue.

Thank you.

Frankie: I'll be talking more later in this meeting about the content of Orca day, it'll be a public event

9:07 AM **Approve meeting agenda, Approve September MRC meeting minutes**

MRC members

All approve the October agenda with no changes. David moves to approve the September minutes, Jeff seconds, all in favor, the September minutes are approved. And welcome to Brian here for the first time, thanks for being here

Brian: I've lived in Friday Harbor since 1998, I look forward to working with everyone and learning about current events

9:10 AM **NWSC September meeting report to the MRC**

Christina Koons

- The meeting was held in person at Coupeville library. Presentation by Island County, they drafted a white paper on climate change. Fascinating process coming to consensus about managing climate change. We have similar issues.

- Presentation by Ginny Broadhurst about the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 and concerns about scale increase and shipping transits. On October 10th at 10:30am, there will be a free virtual panel presentation and Q&A with Ginny Broadhurst

ACTION ITEM: Sasha has a pdf of the Island County white paper and will email it Christina and Sam for distribution

Cindy: SJC Council sent a comment letter about the Roberts Banks 2 and discussed it at the Trans Boundary Caucus

- Discussion of the American Shoreline podcast on Coastal News Today – could MRC's restructure commitment to coastal education? <https://www.coastalnewstoday.com/podcasts/could-the-marine-resource-committee-model-be-americas-coastal-solution>

9:14 AM **Presentation on derelict crab pot removal project off Lopez Island**

Jason Morgan

This past spring, we conducted a derelict crab pot removal project off Lopez Island. Program started in 2002, removed over 5800 fishing nets (over 95% gillnets) and 7000 crab pots in Puget Sound, restored habitat, largely on rocky reefs.

In 2012, launched a reporting/response/retrieval program so with no fault, fishing industry can contact via hotline. Jason shows map, 40% of nets removed across Puget Sound were from the San Juans, over 2400 nets removed and 30 crab pots removed opportunistically. We were largely focused on net removals up to 2015.

We chose area off NW of Lopez, Leo Reef. For every crab license sold, \$1 goes to management of derelict gear. Surveys showed a lot of crab pots in that area when we had been surveying for nets. Funding available helped determine location (among several choices around Lopez), estimate for Leo Reef matched the amount of funds available.

Map shows survey lines within Leo Reef. Removed 104 crab pots, 81 commercial and 23 sport pots. 1 shrimp pot. When possible, gear returned and otherwise recycled/reused. 706 acres cleared of marine debris. Total cost was \$43K.

We'd like to do another crab pot project in the San Juans, either Lopez or elsewhere, maybe in 2024. Interested in local knowledge and to find out what sites there's interest in. We'll have a technical report to share next month.

Questions:

David: do the pots have timed release mechanism?

Jason: they have rock-cord, which is biodegradable in the marine environment, that's meant to be a release mechanism. Doesn't always work but we can make some simple modifications to it to make release more effective.

David: How do you do the transects for surveying for crab pots and what are costs associated with doing more?

Jason: we use a side-scan sonar at high level, depending on factors we get a 50m swath. One total survey is \$5k/day. The project at Leo reef was relatively small, took one day. Lopez sound would likely be at least three days of surveys.

Tyler: why was some debris left? And with rate of loss, how many crab pots will be there again in 10 years?

Jason: Some things like mooring blocks are too big and heavy to get out. Or something partly submerged that needs sediment pump to remove. And the rate has lowered but still not great. There's been some progress with outreach.

Q: Approximately how many derelict nets remain in the County?

Jason: We were confident that we had cleaned up nets a decade ago, but there are still more coming in. We're not having a good compliance rate from fisheries; nets aren't being reported. It's worth surveying hot spots every 5 years.

Q: is there opportunity for the San Juan MRC to partner/collaborate with the Foundation on these gear removals?

Jason: We can use help with outreach. We prefer to reach out to MRCs to help with publicity

Cindy: what about a deposit system on pots - need to prove pot comes back to retrieve deposit?

Jason: there are already tags on commercial pots - if a pot is lost, fisher needs to purchase new pot and tag

Jeff: So that \$1 per license goes to removal? Who tracks/manages those funds? Could the County access that money?

Jason: yes, by RCW those funds are to be used by DFW, they use some for gear sweeps but also some to contractors. So the shellfish managers manage those funds. We're always looking for other places to submit proposals

ACTION ITEM: Jason will provide a copy of the presentation and GIS sites, we'll post presentation on the website

Frankie: I'd also like to highlight it in our MSA plan that I am currently finalizing. The map of removed gear is powerful.

Jason: my email is morgan@nwstraitsfoundation.org

9:44 AM MRC Updates/Business

• MRC subcommittee updates

Sam Whitridge

We introduced Brian, David is on his second meeting. We have a full committee with 15 members, we're at capacity.

9:45 AM • San Juan MRC Resolution Revision Process

Sam Whitridge

Our MRC resolution is out of date, operating resolutions are being updated for committees county-wide, want to set up a small MRC subcommittee to take the lead on reviewing. Christina, Kailey, and Sandy volunteer.

9:47 AM • 2023 Northwest Straits Initiative Conference Planning

Sam Whitridge

Registration deadline has past, seven from SJI are attending, Sam & Katie and five MRC members. Planning logistics.

Christina: will SJ be presenting? And opportunity to put up posters

Sam: we can give a 15-minute presentation, poster, and submit photos to shared slide show. For the presentation, we discussed the recreational vessel impact work we're doing here.

Christina: We also wanted to talk about Roberts Bank and ERTV but no currently active projects. Lovel will be there

Sasha: Lots of opportunity for conversations between attendees. Please give feedback in the post event survey

9:52 AM • NWSC No Anchor Zone Social Marketing Campaign Workgroup

Sam Whitridge

Social marketing campaign about no anchoring in eelgrass. Dana reached out to invite MRC members or staff with interest in participating in that workgroup. They have three tentative meeting dates in the fall/winter.

Sandy and maybe Beth interested in participating and representing SJI. Frankie is already a part of that effort

9:54 AM • Planning for potential 2023 MRC Retreat

Sam Whitridge

Focus will be on finalizing the MSA. Need to start planning for December. Interest in holding a half or full day retreat? and availability on the first Thursday, December 7th? Everyone in favor, maybe hold it at FHL. Staff will work on agenda.

9:58 AM • MSA Finalization Process

Frances Robertson

Hoping to send out early November for review, approve at retreat in December before submitting to council to approve

ACTION ITEM: Katie will work on a background with MRC logo for use by MRC members (per Kailey's request)

10:01 AM • Update on Jackson Beach Piling Project

Frances Robertson

This will move forward on October 11th. Frankie will be there most of that time as a marine mammal observer. If anyone can help that's great. This project is on track toward completion. Calendar for 2-hour chunks on observing.

ACTION ITEM: Frankie will put the dates and times on the calendar

10:03 AM • Orca Recovery Day (Oct 14)

Frances Robertson

This came together quickly with Debra Lekanoff, it is Orca Recovery Day and we're doing a 2-hour event with coffee and donuts. Hybrid virtual/in person, zoom link on MRC website. We'll be joined by various colleagues from WDFW, Soundwatch, Friends of the San Juans, and Center for Whale research. We'll discuss how science is influencing policy and Tribal efforts and connection. You can come to Jackson after the event and see the piling-removal action

10:06 AM • WDFW Mussel Monitoring

Sam Whitridge

Opportunity to work on this project this winter. Involves placing mussels in cages at intertidal locations, soak for 3-month period, mussels filter feed— it's a way to assess chemical pollution in nearshore environment. Put out cages in November and retrieve in February. Karin helped with this last year. - Beth volunteers to help on SJI

Christina: are the locations fixed?

Sam: yes, there are sites near Judd Cove/Eastsound, Obstruction Pass and the ferry landing. And Roche Harbor on SJI.

Frankie: need to pick up the gear in Anacortes with instructions. Beth may be able to coordinate that too

DFW have established connections with landowners to access sites. Retrieval between February 5-12th

David may be able to help depending on timing. Carl Davis may be able to help

10:12 AM • Potential MRC Projects

Matt Arata

I want to discuss barge landings: The Weeks Point project (depending final design) may interfere with the operation of the current Weeks Point barge landing site. County barged a lot of rock into Lopez and FH last year via Jackson beach and the Anacortes commercial barge ramp.

I'm familiar with operations and work with people who do it. There are three types of barging in the San Juans:

-daily barges, haul fuel/gas and hazardous materials and items too big to go on ferry. (propane, diesel, etc.)

-barging in houses, mobile homes etc. These only happen a couple times a year at different locations, tide and location dependent. Moving a house into islands needs to come in at Jackson if it's going to Friday Harbor and needs to come in at Roche if it's going to Roche, can't necessarily move. This is even more true on Orcas, hard to move through Rosario

- then bulk material barging, e.g., when County moved in rock, 200 trucks didn't need to get on ferry, took just 2 days.

There's public feeling against barge landings. But if we restrict them, we don't take away the need they fill. 90-95% of barges to Islands originate in Anacortes. Recently some homeowners complained about barge activity at ramp in Anacortes, want to shut it down. If that happens or if they restrict it in a way that prevents Islands from using it that means everything will need to come from further away, meaning more traffic, more diesel, etc.

My ask for today is to have someone from MRC go to the Anacortes Port commissioner meetings and provide our input. I'll volunteer, to discuss our needs/requirements, help to keep it open or just to stay in loop with what's going on

David: Is there any benefit to Anacortes to having this activity there? Is there an argument that can be pitched?

Matt: Port of Anacortes is in charge of that ramp, ramp fee is \$90 and there are 10-15 barges a day going through.

ACTION: consensus to have Matt go as San Juan County representative to these meetings in Anacortes, all approve.

-Matt will attend the meeting(s) as SJC rep; Matt will figure out the schedule and provide it to staff to send out

Kailey: are other departments in the County aware of this so we could team effort?

Frankie: I think this is the first we've heard of this so thank you Matt. We'll raise this with Public Works and the Port

Brian: I'm new to the board. In light of Jason's NW Straits presentation on derelict net and pot clean up and Matt's comments about marine debris, I'd be interested in learning more about a long-term plan to clean up at the local level

10:28 AM • MRC subcommittee updates

o Outreach & Education

Katie Johnson

Thanks to those of you who have turned in volunteer hours, they're part of our required reporting and due soon.

There are a lot of great volunteer opportunities coming up

o Plastic Free Salish Sea

Katie Johnson

We're still trying to gather final numbers, 52 on San Juan Island who gathered about 500lbs. of trash and debris.

A training was conducted on how to catalog debris

o Eelgrass Protection Subcommittee

Beth Tate

- Sandy joined, reinvigorated our motivation toward eelgrass protection. So, it's Jeff, Christina, Beth and Sandy

- Idea of putting eelgrass maps on the navigational charts that boaters use

- ancestral Tribal uses for eelgrass, having Tribes share their experiences and cultural needs and uses for eelgrass.

- discussed other species of eelgrass in the County, do they provide valuable habitats and are they in as much threat?

- Discussed ways to increase education, whether we'd ever be able to protect an area from anchoring due to eelgrass

Jeff: we also touched on educating boaters through the state licensing program and electronic charting notations

Frankie: suggest a member of this subcommittee join the NWSC led transboundary eelgrass protection group.

This is one of the actions that we have been pursuing through this group. Beth and Sandy are both interested in joining

Sasha: noted both Sandy and Beth to add to the list. Thank you!

Frankie: mapping of deep-water edge of eelgrass has gone ahead this summer, spearheaded by Friends of San

Juans, analysis should be complete by 2025. Adding deep water layers to navigational software has been pursued

by Friends as well. I submitted a proposal to Rose foundation last month toward aerial survey of vessel density in the county

10:39 AM Committee member updates and any other business

Sam Whitridge

One more reminder about Katie's request for members to submit volunteer hours, please

10:40 AM Adjourn MRC meeting, Convene CAG meeting

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10:41 AM CAG Updates

• Update on 2024 SRFB Grant Round including new riparian funding

Sam Whitridge

This is shaping up to be a massive grant round with a few pots of money (Sam shares screen – table showing funding sources with amounts). We have some high/low estimates based on PACSRF funding, \$373-485K, more than highest past allocation. There will also be an influx of money for riparian funding in the grant round, guidance for that is still being put together by RCO but should cover both freshwater and marine riparian projects. Funds could be used in 2024 or carry over to 2025, could be swapped with another lead entity if we can't use all.

- questions about the RFP process

Sam: I bring a draft to MRC in December for approval, that's opportunity to suggest edits. Then RFP or request for LOI's goes out beginning of January. Initial timeline and review process takes first half of year with final review in June.

Dave: it may be worth discussing at the retreat to get a general idea of what the money would be best spent on

Beth: questions about massive projects, local improvements to infrastructure or only restoration?

Sam: infrastructure is eligible if it has a clear link to salmon recovery. We have done a couple projects like that

Beth: how is salmon defined? Does it need to be chinook or any salmonid?

Sam: chinook is key, locally cutthroat is a consideration for which we have been able to fund projects in the past

Paul: what about connection with forage fish that salmonids feed on? There's other funding for riparian projects

Sam: I'll continue to keep in touch about how we can spend this money

10:55 AM • Al Giorgio San Juan TAG appointment

Sam Whitridge

Last month we discussed UW fish biologist Al Giorgio for the TAG, a lot of technical background, lives on Lopez.

Jeff moves we appoint Al to the TAG, Dave seconds. All in favor, the motion passes with approval of this appointment.

10:56 AM • Broken Point Restoration Project cost increase proposal

Sam Whitridge

I put in a cost increase request for the Broken Point Restoration project implemented by Friends of San Juans.

During initial construction, discovered that volume estimates for native sands and gravels were far below what was originally provided. Need more to restore beach to natural grade. This project is in process so it's an important request for just under \$35K to cover additional costs of purchase and transport of material. Sam sent out the proposal earlier this week, PSP has funds available in return funds pot, need approval from CAG to process. Sandy moves to approve the cost increase request, Dave seconds, all in favor, none opposed. The request is approved.

10:59 AM Adjourn CAG meeting