

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: David Checkley, Jeff Dyer, Kailey Genther, Brian Goodremont, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Lovel Pratt, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Craig Smith, Kimbal Sundberg, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Audrey Coyne, Marta Green, Sasha Horst, Katie Johnson, Kari Koski, Jason Lim, Mitch McCloskey, Wendel Raymond, Frances Robertson, Laura-Jo Severson, Kendra Smith, Sam Whitridge, Dezheng Sam Zhang

9:01 AM **Convene MRC meeting**

Karin Roemers-Kleven

9:02 AM **Public Comment**

none

9:03 AM **Approve meeting agenda, Approve MRC January meeting minutes**

MRC members

Lovel sent some edits to the minutes, we'll incorporate those into the final draft – some minor language changes.

MOTION: Dave moves to approve the minutes, Jeff seconds, all in favor, none opposed. The minutes are approved

9:05 AM **NWSC Meeting Report to the MRC**

Karin Roemers-Kleven

Karin attended. We still need additional kayak monitors for kelp monitoring and also volunteers for green crabs.

Jeff has been a kayaker volunteer for several years on Lopez. No green crab reported so far around Lopez or on SJI.

Brian: I'd like to learn more about how I can participate as someone who's on the water a lot

Frankie: Samish already does kelp monitoring; we should ask NW Straits where to monitor, not duplicating efforts

Sasha: Counties who have established sites may be seeking additional help, Jeff Whitty would be the person to ask

ACTION ITEM: we'll circle back to Brian G. about how he can help

Brian: if we need a representative on the ground, coordinating efforts on the water, maybe I can connect with Jeff

Frankie: We have a green crab site on SJI at Westcott Bay, Jess Newley and Katie Foster have been in charge of that, effort run by the green crab team. If people are interested in helping they should contact them for training

Laura Jo: we don't look for green crab in a kayak, it involves walking into water with high boots to pick up traps

Dave Checkley: I'm interested in helping, need more information about timing commitment

ACTION: Karin will reach out to Jess for more info and then circle back with Dave about what's needed

Lovel shares an article on the Samish Tribe's kelp monitoring: <https://www.hcn.org/issues/56-2/plants-reviving-the-samish-tribes-kelp/>

9:14 AM **Presentation: False Bay Nutrient Study**

Dezheng Sam Zhang

Sam's presentation: Unraveling marine and terrestrial nutrient interplay at False Bay. Sam thanks his advisors, Drs.

Brooke Sullivan and Wendel Raymond. Green algae growing season starts in March, peaks in mid-summer.

Questions about whether agricultural activities in the watershed are affecting algae growth. How does nutrient

input from the Creek affect the formation of the green tide, *Ulva spp.*, in False Bay? Methods included sampling

water and algae biomass. Results showed seasonal patterns in algal abundance peak in August or September. Clear

seasonal pattern with higher precipitation in the fall and winter months with some sporadic high precipitation

events and lower in spring and summer with sometimes no precipitation at all. Water flow can slow/stop in spring

and by summer. Salinity was stable at nearshore location, but at creek mouth when there's no freshwater available

there are clear marine signals. Beyond general seasonal pattern, there were also patterns in specific nutrients (Sam describes these in detail).

Isotope analysis – comparison with a study from Penn Cove which looked at seasonal variation in algal mats.

In our study, samples taken in May and November suggest that green algae at False Bay are using marine origin

water for nutrients, but still need more samples for definitive result. For future research, certain areas of False Bay

should be sampled further. Look closer at groundwater sources particularly with concerns about agricultural

influences. Some points within False Bay could be emerging groundwater where we may see more stable populations of green algae

QUESTIONS

Karin: with this information, how can we expect climate change to make this worse? In what way?

Sam: drier summer, climate change could reduce the water level in the Creek and flow earlier in the season, possibly more tidal intrusion into groundwater, groundwater may be a bigger nutrient contribution into False Bay

Karin: then how can we use this information? how else can we make changes?

Sam: potentially better agricultural land management. Could put monitoring equipment into the Bay and Creek

Wendel: these data are available here, <https://knb.ecoinformatics.org/view/doi%3A10.5063%2FF1KD1WBG>

Still more work to do to investigate the groundwater contribution question

Craig: is it more Nitrogen or Phosphorus limited?

Sam: it's phosphate limited now, Salish sea itself is nitrogen rich compared to other parts of world

Lovel: are there ag best practices that would make a significant difference, and how to mandate best practices?

Kim: CWAC has been looking at impacts to False Bay watershed for years, including how to implement BMP's (Best Management Practices). Working with Red Mill Farm through SJPT (800 acres of ranch land used for cattle grazing) and Land Bank which acquired Zylstra Lake property. VSP (Voluntary Stewardship Program) hasn't done enough to mitigate impacts so we've worked on grant funding to fence cattle out from creeks. With help from partners, we've fenced about half of the length of the Creek now, working on funding to fence the rest and then invest in restoration.

Dave: hypothesis that fertilizers cause Phosphate to come into False Bay or is it about production from cattle?

Wendel: the original question was about the drainage of land around the Creek causing a notable nutrient signature in False Bay. Ulva thrives in high nutrient environments. These data suggest it could be largely just a shallow open bay, a nice place to be Ulva. Teasing apart Nitrogen and phosphorus sources would require much more isotopic analysis

Kendra: mainly it's preventing cows' poop in creek drainage, there aren't good BMP's to manage the bacteria load

Kim: there is high phosphorus detected in Zylstra Lake. The result has been some toxic algal blooms. Sam's study brought up this question of groundwater and how that may drive the system when Creek drops in summertime.

9:50 AM MRC Updates/Business

- Emergency Response Towing Vessel (ERTV) Outreach Update

Sam Whitridge

ERTV has been looking at the Ecology report to highlight buried information we felt was important to the conclusion of the analysis. Our intent was to draft a letter to Governor Inslee. We met with Inslee's top policy advisor. She was clear the governor's office is not interested in compelling Ecology to revise the report. She suggested focus on moving forward with policy steps to get the ERTV positioned in inland waters. We've worked on a one-pager to send with Cindy Wolf to DC for when she meets with Senator Cantwell's staff, continue to highlight gaps we see in the report. Marta has put in a lot of time in on this, she was instrumental in drafting that one-pager. Kendra has been working with Cindy

Frankie: has the County's analysis of this been shared with Tribes or with NWFC (NW Fisheries commission)?

Marta: yes, and this one pager we've developed is a good tool to get our message out, I'd be glad to share it. But I'm not yet giving up on changing the Ecology report. I think we need to continue to raise the concerns about it.

Kendra: If Ecology won't revise report, we can blow past and share data as we see fit with Tribes and whomever.

Craig: I agree we must go to the next step regarding the conclusions. The main point is that we need an ERTV in Roche or Sydney. That Ecology report is ludicrous; let's just bypass it and push our main conclusion. As the MRC advisory body, not the County, and maybe with other MRC's and NWSC support those short couple of points.

Marta: there was a significant reduction in their risk analysis for benefits of an ERTV in Sydney, but that's an error.

Lovel: we need to take up Ecology's offer to confirm the data and correct the analysis for Sydney. Need to meet again as a subcommittee and review how to undertake that communication with Ecology. Transport Canada is in the process of writing the report about their version of an ERTV, due this spring, important for them to get these revised data

ACTION: Sam will schedule a subcommittee meeting, take up Brian Kirk at Ecology on his offer for correspondence

10:09 AM • Update on Jackson Creosote Pile Removal Funding

Sasha Horst

We've had an offer to pay for the Jackson Beach project that's underway. MRC will close out its grant as planned and there will be a funding swap, then those NOAA funds will be available again for another project in 2024

Kendra: Has there been discussion of using that money to advance the vessel monitoring/benthic impact project?

Craig: the habitat survey with Greene, can we extend to other areas like northern parts of SJI and Stuart?

10:15 AM • MRC Subcommittee updates

o Outreach and Education

Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

Sandy: we've been working with FH elementary school to make presentations in schools about what MRC is doing. I'm interested in making ways for High School age students to be more involved in what we do here. We've been in touch with their eco club. If anyone wants to join in this effort, please let me know.

o Marine Stewardship/Small Spills Outreach

Sam Whitridge/Katie Johnson

Sam: this is a reminder that as part of marine stewardship in our NW Straits grant this year, we identified small spills outreach as a main task. First step is outreach to marina managers, create a database about what they see as issues and needs. Then we've talked about convening a workshop for them, we want to keep this on folks' radar Boaters – if you have marina contacts/connections let us know if you're interested in participating in outreach.

Kari: I'd like to add DV (Derelict Vessel) issues to that workshop. I just compiled a marina contact database for SJC

o Plastic Free Salish Sea

Karin Roemers-Kleven

Subcommittee hasn't met recently. But last weekend I found shore between first and second lagoon to be contaminated with debris. If anyone wants to do an impromptu beach cleaning there, please let Karin know

o Derelict Vessel Prevention

Adam Parrott/Kari Koski

Adam: good preparation for vessel turn-in event in April. We plan to remove all materials collected from the island

Kari: I have some things sketched out, tentative schedule for DV subgroup to do a patrol in early March, potentially after our in-person meeting in March, concentrating on getting outreach materials out to various entities

Kailey: what if we have a neighbor who could use a flyer for the vessel turn-in event?

Kari: You can send them to the SJC MRC web and Facebook page for information, you can print the flyer from there

10:25 AM **Committee member updates and any other business**

Craig: there's a lot of debris in those locations Karin brought up. Maybe we can arrange a group of 10-12 people

ACTION: We'll bring this up at the next PFSS subcommittee meeting and see if we can arrange something

Kendra: be sure to talk to park rangers, that's their property

10:28 AM **Adjourn MRC Meeting, Convene CAG Meeting**

Dave moves to adjourn MRC, Sandy seconds. All in favor. MRC meeting is adjourned; call the CAG to order

10:29 AM **CAG Updates**

• Report on Salmon Day event in Olympia

Sam Whitridge

This event happened for the first time since pre-COVID in the State legislative session. Salmon Day is for the three statewide groups (Council of Regions, the Washington State Salmon coalition, and the Regional Fisheries Coalition) to have a joint effort to identify shared priorities that encompass salmon recovery efforts. It's a one-day event to meet with legislators and communicate priorities including funding for projects; removal of "match requirements" that create an administrative burden, especially a barrier to state funds for smaller organizations; and improved coordination/streamlining of the permitting process. Hope to reestablish this as an annual event.

10:36 AM • 2024 Salmon Recovery Grant Round

Sam Whitridge

Sam shares screen to show important dates. Letters of Intent have been sent out. March 6 – TAG meet to review Letters of intent. May 1-2 site visits; typically, these replace the regular May MRC CAG meeting. Then TAG meets again May 15 and June 27. CAG will do its final scoring at the regular August 1 meeting. This is a big year in terms of funding, still a moving target for final amount – Sam reviews details, combined total a little under \$2 million

10:40 AM • Re Agate Beach PSAR Project

Kendra Smith

The project depended on moving the road, Public Works still struggling to do that. Design completed BUT with latest storm events, bluff and road have eroded. We may not be able to provide beach access at Agate anymore. The road has not yet been moved. So, we propose to turn back in construction funds so that money can be used for other projects. We'll shelve the permits and the design and circle back in future. We plan to talk more about managed retreat and inundation effects on over 13 miles of infrastructure. We've recently completed a sea level rise study looking at some of these key areas and finishing up County mapping to show effects of sea level rise. We'll need to talk with our lawyer about how to communicate this to the public, what we can and can't do. Karin: we toured this area a few years ago, there was concern at that time about peoples' septic systems. Kendra: in this particular section of Mackaye, septic systems are still intact. Road is still there but it's down to one lane. But there are other areas, like Port Stanley, where inundation will make it challenging for systems to operate.

10:46 AM • Discussion on how to allocate PSAR Return Funds in San Juan County

Sam Whitridge

Talking with Kat Moore, our grant manager, about the \$316K allotted to that project. We have an option to keep those funds in the region for a salmon recovery project but short window of time because these are 2021 PSAR funds that expire sooner than current round of funding, sooner than a new project would be ready to move them. Need a project that's ready to pounce now and those funds go back to the Partnership. There is an immediate need now with the CD.

We were initially only able to partially fund the initial ask for CD eelgrass project. First step we could take now is to make their project whole, plus additional costs. No other active salmon recovery project has an immediate need.

Kendra: Frankie may have an additional need on Weeks Way.

Frankie: haven't had a chance to look into it yet but likely we'll need to increase our budget.

Why wasn't cultural resources review study incorporated into original budget? What are concerns from Tribes?

Mitch: These funds are not for cultural review, these are just to complete our original request. The reason the cultural review was unforeseen is because of an extensive request for subtidal archeological surveys to be done for each of our planting sites. These areas have been identified as close to culturally sensitive areas. Federal funding may be able to compensate for some of that. This is in very preliminary planning stages.

Frankie: where is your planting site at Jackson beach? Please coordinate with us and our restoration site.

MOTION: Dave Checkley moves to approve request for CAG to make CD eelgrass project budget whole, Kendra seconds. Everyone approves, the motion passes.

Sam: and for the additional funding, whether it goes to Mitch for CD project or to Frankie for Weeks, I'll just need to complete paperwork for the cost increase form with Kat. It'll need to be allocated pretty soon.

Jeff: do these funds need to be in alignment with original grant proposal or can it be supplemental?

Sam: if it's just a cost increase on an existing project because of new expenses, then it's straightforward CAG approval. If there's a change in the project scope or design, needs to go through TAG for approval.

Jeff: other projects from last year are going ok?

Sam: Sorenson project has had a lot of additional archeological costs, still no exact amount request ready. Nothing else imminent in terms of extra costs from Tina or Friends.

10:59 AM **Adjourn CAG Meeting**