



SAN JUAN COUNTY
Marine Resources
Committee

MRC Annual Retreat
Friday, December 6, 2024
San Juan Island Grange, 152 1st Street N, Friday Harbor WA

Agenda

8:45 AM	Meet and Greet
9:00 AM	Convene Meeting: <i>Adam Parrott, MRC Chair</i>
9:05 AM	Member Updates and Public Comment
9:10 AM	Approve November Meeting Minutes
9:15 AM	Presentations/Panel on Kelp Aquaculture - Emily Buckner and Jodie Toft, Puget Sound Restoration Fund - Amy Carey, Sound Action
10:15 AM	MRC Business Items: • Northwest Straits Initiative Conference Debrief- <i>Retreat Attendees</i> • Open Public Meetings Act Training Debrief- <i>All</i> • Youth Membership on MRC- <i>Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria</i> • MRC Membership and Interview Scheduling- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Planning for San Juan MRC- <i>Karin Roemers-Kleven</i>
11:15 AM	MRC Member Team Building Exercise- <i>Karin Roemers-Kleven</i>
12:00 PM	Networking Lunch (Opportunity for Networking and debrief from morning sessions)
12:45 PM	Recap of 2024 MRC Accomplishments – <i>Sam Whitridge</i>
1:15 PM	MRC Work Plan for 2025- MRC Staff/Subcommittee Leads <i>Projects and work areas, Deadlines and key dates</i> 1. Plastic Free Salish Sea 2. Derelict Vessel Prevention Program 3. Eelgrass Protection 4. Oil Spill Prevention and Response Preparedness/ERTV 5. Marine Stewardship 6. Vessel Surveys/Benthic Habitat Project 7. Other projects of interest for 2025
2:30 PM	MRC Subcommittees- MRC Staff and Subcommittee Leads • Review of Subcommittees identified for 2025 and status update • Planning for subcommittee work going forward
3:00 pm	Adjourn Retreat

*This is an in person meeting, but a virtual option is available for those attending remotely:

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MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Dave Checkley, Brian Goodremont, Olivia Graham, Adam Parrott, Lovel Pratt, Mike Ramsey, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Craig Smith, Beth Tate, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria
Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Emily Buckner, Amy Carey, Marta Green, Katie Johnson, Kari Koski, Frances Robertson, Kendra Smith, Jodie Toft, Tina Whitman, Sam Whitridge, Cindy Wolf

8:45 AM **Meet and Greet**

9:04 AM **Convene Meeting**

Adam Parrott

9:05 AM **Member Updates and Public Comment**

- we could have a sign outside announcing that we're having a public meeting, and it is posted on our website

9:07 AM **Approve November Meeting Minutes**

No comments or edits. Dave moves to approve the minutes, Olivia seconds. All in favor. Minutes approved.

9:08 AM **Presentations/Panel on Kelp Aquaculture**

Emily Buckner and Jodie Toft, Amy Carey

Emily: We're here from Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) to speak about kelp cultivation. Our mission is to design, test and spearhead in-water actions to protect species in PS waters. We have many collaborators and partners. I'm the crab and seaweed programs manager. We help scientists, tribes, and fishermen work together. I'll talk about previous work with NOAA to develop best farming practice recommendations, and ways to promote algae growth.

Jodie: I've been at PSRF for six years as the deputy director and then transitioned to executive director role. Here today to talk about kelp restoration and action. We hope we can be a good set of resources to talk about kelp farming.

Emily: I'll talk about ecological considerations for commercial kelp farming. We published a paper on this topic in August 2024, in Marine Fisheries Review, written with NOAA. Big regional interest in kelp farming, a new industry we want to get right, put in regulations to set up for success and not make mistakes in marine environment. First, identified potential ecological impacts, looked broadly in literature and talked to experts around the world about what could go wrong. Second step was to apply those broad issues to our local context and native species. Third step was to move into research and adaptive framework for the industry, pilot projects to test questions. Step four –develop best farming practices, continue to monitor, assess and back to step 1 – look for potential impacts. Here we're really talking about the first two steps. Potential impacts from review of global literature:

Habitat Impacts, Crop could provide habitat/refugia for native species. Then harvested and refugia are removed.

Forage fish spawn on marine vegetation; if regionally important fish like herring spawn on kelp that's harvested then spawn could be lost. Farm infrastructure itself (buoys, lines, etc.) could also cause disruption or entanglement hazard.

Water quality and nutrient subsidies, Crop extracts nutrients, chemical s and metals from water column and absorbs carbon/stabilizes pH. But if water is nutrient-poor, crop could compete with other organisms. Crop can provide nutrient subsidies in the form of detritus, particulates, etc. but could also overload the system

Hydrology Impacts, Farm infrastructure/crop dampens wave energy, potential for shoreline protection

Benthic Impacts, Farm anchors/moorings create habitat-forming reefs, but these can also disturb the benthic vegetation and seafloor. Cultivated kelp could overshadow benthic vegetation, compete for light

Genetic Disease Impacts, Crop could populate environment with reproductive material, influencing wild genetic diversity, crop could spread disease. But can also assist in restoration efforts, reforestation of wild beds.

Our local context led us to zero in on a couple areas of emphasis kelp farm regulators will need to pay attention to: First is marine spatial conflicts. If kelp farming takes place in public waters, shipping and other vessel movement, infringement on tribal treaty fishing rights. As well as infrastructure, chains/moorings/etc.

And the issue of genetic diversity. Also concern around forage fish like herring spawning and not removing crop with spawn. Emphasize risks to marine mammals considering their importance in our region. Most of these concerns can be handled with good siting and research. Need to test best farming practices to see what works. Best practices may alleviate many concerns. E.g. with treaty right fishing, siting farm properly and include Tribes in the process from the start. With marine vegetation, it can be a matter of type of anchors used and siting away from eelgrass beds. As for genetic material drift, we can source genetically local strains. Siting to stay away from spawning areas and rules about not harvesting crop with forage fish spawn on it. For marine mammals, it's about smart siting and avoiding high traffic areas, like the west side of SJI. There are no known examples of mammals locally entangling in kelp farms.

Jodie: shift focus away from commercial side and into restoration aquaculture. This part of PSRF exists because for a while we were the only ones doing kelp aquaculture, and we were doing it to test the availability of sugar kelp to affect local water conditions and pH. We've been doing this for a while – figuring how to put seaweed back in the water and how to test what it's doing, we have experience permitting and growing the seaweed.

How do we reintroduce bull kelp in places where it has declined? Need to reflect on what we know about bull kelp. They're the forest builder kelp in the inland Salish sea. It's not doing great anywhere; we don't know how it's doing everywhere. Jodie shows data from Floating kelp forest indicator for WA State with assessment of where there's kelp. Colors on map show areas of decline, concern, stability, and patches of no data. South there's a lot of decline, some insufficient data in Admiralty Inlet and some areas of concern in North Sound and SJ waters. There's been 305 acre loss from 2006-2016, a 36% loss in one decade. Some beds matter a lot to certain groups. Our goal is to introduce “plants” (actually protists) and have them generate the next generation canopy the next year; for them to grow up and create seed bank on the sea floor that can restart the cycle. We hope those methods can be feasible and scalable.

Jodie tells about one bed in central Sound, “Jefferson Head”. Chart from 1800's shows kelp as a navigational hazard. Local Tribe wanted kelp bed to return but needed keep restoration work shoal-ward of existing geoduc tracts.

Early trials: tried making “green gravel” (i.e. seeding gravel and moving it into the marine environment,). Then tried sporophyte and psori transfers – this is feasible but not scalable. Made a notched-pyramid, unspooled a seeded twine. It worked – kelp grew up with reproductive patches; produced mature sporophytes (adult kelp) but did not reach surface and did not produce next-generation forest. But a promising technique. Adapted that technique to use thick anchored line and shuttle seeded twine along it. This strategy approximates farming. Seeds were collected from kelp around Salish Sea. In Central Sound we try to take samples from nearest neighbors. But we're glad to have a seed bank. Ideally, we need reproductive material in January to plant in February, but often kelp is senesced by then. In recent years we've been able to grow bull kelp and keep it on surface, it behaves much like real kelp beds. Environmental monitoring arrays have instruments measuring temperature, salinity, PAR, DO, and pH data. We have an experiment at Port Angeles funded by WA Sea Grant for finding parameters of kelp growth with a reciprocal transplanting experiment with north/central Sound and hybrid individuals, measuring reproductive output and time of emergence of reproductive material, looking for any hybrid vigor and at what portions of genome are activated at different sites. In 2026, working with Samish on bed loss in SJC, testing methods used in Central and South Sound.

We also have a draft manuscript which is an evaluation of the population genetics study and variability of kelp throughout the region, looking at which parts of the genome are activated in different parts of the subbasin. There's a similar population genetics study with sugar kelp -looking at where there's genetic differentiation across the region.

QUESTIONS

Karin: How significant is the carbon sequestration factor, to what extent is that a real impact or is it overstated?

Jodie: you didn't hear us talk about that at all – that's a clue. The amount provided by kelp/seaweeds is murky and it's much clearer that there's a biodiversity benefit. Focus should be on habitat benefits, water quality etc.

Craig: you mentioned biodiversity benefits – are you looking at those in your study?

Jodie: yes, there's a great program called Reefcheck foundation. They use a standardized protocol throughout the region, they do four different types of surveys. We pair that with snorkel surveys. We have an ROV run by Zach

Randall from Seattle aquarium. Lots of ways to look at diversity underwater. It's important to do that both at restored site and paired adjacent wild bed so we can assess change. And it's clear – with habitat, the critters come.

Emily: PSRF does restoration aquaculture which has similarities to commercial techniques, but the goals are different. I'd like to see more monitoring efforts at commercial farms to see their interactions with environment.

Jodie: we've been working with famers in Vashon because DNR has asked that they have some monitoring program, the farmer in Colvos passage does Reefcheck surveys, similar work going on in Hood Head.

Tina: There are folks interested in farming in SJC with applications in the works. MRC should consider best practices so we can support aquaculture where appropriate and be clear about what specific siting means.

Emily: the second half of our paper sketches out considerations for best farming practices and what's needed for local research. It includes recommendations. There have been a couple farms going through this process with regulators. DNR has been actively thinking about this for a couple years.

Tina: unrealistic for every county's regulator to be kelp experts

Jodie: I would connect with folks from King County. And talk with the folks associated with permitting at Lummi

Emily: but for siting, you'll be the best people for that because you know your local waters

Dave: Twofold question, issue of restoration vs. adaptation. Are the species the same inside the Salish sea and in Straits of Jaun de Fuca and outside? And what are your thoughts on ultimate causes on decline of kelp and the role of heat events in particular that aren't preventable? Can we accommodate with what species we put in?

Jodie: yes, Nereocystis is the bull kelp and we're not seeing signs of subspeciation. If anything, there are a couple different ancestral groups but all the same species. To your second question, there is temperature tolerance – bull kelp don't like warm water. Above 16 C is like a seawater fire wall, bull kelp has trouble reproducing under those conditions. Nothing is static, there are places with persistent warmer water and kelp does fine there. How does genome activate differently in those areas to give that persistence advantage? We have new funding to look at that. Megan Dethier is doing a big study in causal factors. We can't cool down the water, but we can change nutrient inputs where those drive changes in conditions. What can we do on the terrestrial that can change the environment? What if we find that the kelp in Whidbey basin is the kelp that would be more tolerant everywhere? We don't want to weaken diversity over region, need to answer more questions about effect of hybridization

Tina: Friends of the San Juans (2007) and Samish Indian Nation (2017) have ten years of data for bull kelp in SJC from work done with DNR showing 30% declines in the county.

Craig: The carbon storage/sequestration benefits from harvested commercial farms where the kelp biomass is removed from the ocean will be much less than natural beds where drift kelp detritus can sink into deep water, unless commercial kelp farming is harvesting and sinking/burying the kelp for carbon credits

Tina: Perhaps Megan Dethier could present to MRC about collaborative study into causal factors of kelp declines.

Beth: I am curious what you've learned about competition between understory and bull kelp. How does competition affect site selection or success of restoration? are there collaborative restoration actions that balance the grazer/predator interactions to allow success?

Jodie: In some places, competition seems to be a factor, and in some places it doesn't. When it is an issue, it may be because the understory establishes first and creates a less-than-ideal situation for recruitment of canopy kelp (i.e., the kelp 'seed' doesn't have a place to land and grow). OR that both understory and canopy kelp are finding spaces to land, but then the understory species use the nutrients more quickly, leaving the bull kelp in the lurch.

Beth: How does competition affect site selection or success of restoration? Or are there collaborative restoration actions that balance the grazer/predator interactions to allow success?

Jodie: we and others are trying to understand kelp crab predation better. Lots of kelp crab, and they love to eat kelp. Regarding competition - Megan Dethier's team is, as Tina mentioned, doing very cool work on understanding conditions during bull kelp emergence. Those results should shine light on the degree of competition/predation

Kari Koski: are sea urchins still a problem without sea stars keeping them in check?

Jodie: Sea urchins are a big part of the downfall of kelp forests in CA, but not the main stressor here. We have our eyes on them! And the effect of the sea star die-off along the coast was certainly part of the CA story

10:09 AM Amy Carey from Sound Action presents:

With the introduction of commercial longline kelp aquaculture in marine waters of WA, aquaculture applicants are not required to get HPA permits but we at Sound Action have reviewed approximately 5,000 permits among broad regulatory processes. With permits that don't meet mandated standards, we want to participate in the process, provide information, last option is take legal action either administrative or judicial. I've lived on Vashon and worked on killer whales for 20 years, they come here in winter for chum runs. I've been part of the work group for orcas, looking at habitat loss. There has been interest in benefits of commercial aspects of kelp farming and plans to use long line arrays in the Sound, set horizontally/vertically. There's a significant amount of line going in the water. Entanglement is a real risk for large whales and for orcas, there's evidence of that from various sources. There's an application for a kelp farm commercial permit on the SW part of Vashon, highest whale use area. Southern residents, humpbacks, sometimes they're there for 45 days straight. We see cases where laws aren't being applied, e.g. starting with federal level, the Vashon applicant provided incorrect whale information – applicant said summer-was the whale-use time for orcas in this area and that there's limited use in fall and winter. And no mention of humpbacks. NMFS accepted that as fact throughout the process. This is especially critical for orcas that are close to extinction. We saw the same thing at King County level. Shoreline permits can take time, but applicants are excited to start on projects. A process that should have taken a year was pulled to the front of the line. For the biological evaluation they accepted a towed video from the applicant, not a biologist, not in correct season. Very little opportunity for public comment, fast tracked process but the permit was still allowed to go in directly over native vegetation despite comment letters and some participation. At the State DNR level, many efforts to try to bring some better information in. There's native bull kelp adjacent to this site. Rather than a 12-year lease, they issued four years.

I mentioned before that our last resort is legal action -an appeal on this is still in process. There is no monitoring requirement, no reporting about whales, no parameters in permitting or leasing to stop work if whales are entangled.

We're not opposed to kelp farming, but we need to get this right. Both for the whales and for the emerging industry.

We've started talking to entities early on and developed this 'hold the line' campaign – we want to ensure these farms aren't sited in high whale use areas. And there are alternatives to using rope – i.e. fiberglass structures that wouldn't entangle. Siting in shallow areas away from whale-use. We brought forward a body of information about weak-link/breakaway lines. We've been mapping from available datasets, we know where high whale-use areas are.

Local experts (Amy provides names) have noted the risk of entanglement. Tighter lines are not an avoidance and wouldn't prevent a whale's weight from disturbing lines. Another issue ignored by regulatory agencies is "kelping" – whales are attracted to kelp. Bringing these issues up to highlight what's happening in regulatory process, and where we see problematic gaps. As the MRC you have a unique opportunity as projects are being proposed in SJ's. The lease for the farm in SW Vashon was granted despite the case in court. We've confirmed presence of whales next to buoys of the new farm, even though all lines aren't in yet. Need improvements in the industry.

QUESTIONS:

Adam: Which is the regulatory group or organization making these faulty decisions?

Amy: All of them. With whale data the Army Corps, King County with shoreline permitting and DNR for leasing

Frankie: there was a presentation this week regarding the orca occupancy model that is being built and will be used for the orca indicator, I think that will have benefit to these real-life with permitting. Not all that siting is necessarily getting into the databases that regulators see when they put those permits together. It's a more complicated question of how to get more comprehensive siting databases available for these purposes.

Amy: We have this body of information and different technology, we used various databases in our own mapping

Frankie: more about available databases, it's important to be wary of pseudo replication if you're just mapping from public sightings directly. The Whale Museum is collating from a lot of different sources.

Lovel: if we consider making recommendations to the County in terms of their role in permitting process it would be helpful if there's anything in writing that would summarize your recommendations, if you could send that to Sam

ACTION ITEM: thank you presenters, please share your PowerPoint presentations with Sam to share with members

10:52 AM MRC Business Items

• Northwest Straits Initiative Conference Debrief

Retreat Attendees

Sam: folks who attended should summarize main takeaways – Lovel, Karin, Olivia, Kari, Mike, Christina, and Katie.

Kari: we highlighted the DV program, I brought copies of the one-page handout. Generated great discussion

Lovel: NW Strait Initiative will be providing all the handouts there online

Dave: did you learn about anything other MRC's are doing that we should be doing?

Lovel: Islands County MRC provided their engagement around their comp plan update. They had some great advice

Mike: we have a direct line to County staff and County Council but not every MRC has that

Katie: many other counties have their marine programs in public works

Kari: We're also unique in that we don't have a local Tribe within our area. We have a lot of Tribes with stakes

Mike: before this, we went to WSN and there was a great presentation there about a Tribal led nonprofit. We have some transboundary issues – it would be great to work with a foundation/nonprofit that works with all Tribes

Karin: something I took away was from the keynote speaker, Elin Kelsey, who wrote the book Hope matters

Lovel: Seadoc has a podcast with an interview with the author

Olivia: I'd like to see if she could give a seminar maybe at FHL, her message was so great. It was a valuable meeting.

Frankie: we have a marine program supporting the MRC's work and allowing us to pull off substantially bigger projects, so it's a shame that as staff we're not able to participate and share with local counties.

Sam: we have several staff billing to our MRC grant, it would be good to have our staff members included.

Lovel: could applications for projects include the costs of attending these conferences?

11:14 AM • Open Public Meetings Act Training Debrief

All

- reminder, everyone must attend that online and let Sam know. Sam sent out the link to the training via email

Adam: Should we put something on the agenda for January – discuss implementing from that training in future?

11:17 AM • Youth Membership on MRC

Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

We have a description of the role and list of expectations, hope to have a final doc for MRC to review by February.

We want to have two high school students. They can pass along info to their cohort and parents

11:19 AM • MRC Membership and Interview Scheduling

Sam Whitridge

This is a call to participate in interviews. One spot on committee is open. We'd like to fill it sometime in the new year

It's not island-specific, it's open to all. But we do have a priority of having a non-SJI person.

Staff participate in the interviews but need another committee member. Adam and Karun are both available

11:21 AM • Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Planning for San Juan MRC

Karin Roemers-Kleven

Karin: Sandy and Olivia were also there. It was led by the Athena group by the NWSC. The point of meetings wasn't always clear– seemed directionless. That was difficult feedback for the Athena group. They put the cart before the horse – they want to talk about how the MRC increases diversity without talking about what DEI is. the end product wasn't really identified. Concluded that we don't need the Athena group, we know people within our own community. I suggest we start with training first.

Olivia: I was also confused, the meeting lacked structure and didn't address issues, just skirted around

Sandy: we also have a DEI group at FHL, we can bring some information from there

Frankie: the County also has a DEI taskforce.

11:25 AM MRC Member Team Building Exercise

Karin Roemers-Kleven

We've had some membership changes but not a lot of opportunity to network. We'd like everyone to talk about themselves, tell us something special about yourself, what brought you to MRC, and what brings you hope.

12:00 PM Networking Lunch (Break & opportunity for Networking and debrief from morning sessions)

12:46 PM **Reconvene**, special thanks & gift for Cindy Wolf, she's leaving big shoes to fill!

12:48 PM Resume and complete the MRC member team-building exercise

1:30 PM *quick group photo!*

1:32 PM **MRC Work Plan and Subcommittees for 2025**

MRC Staff/Subcommittee Leads

• Review of Subcommittees identified for 2025 and status update, Planning for subcommittee work going forward
Sam: we need to approve workplan, I emailed a draft. Let's discuss that simultaneously with subcommittee list.

1. Plastic Free Salish Sea

Karin: This year we created monthly beach cleanups at Jackson, largely thanks to Katie. We've done three so far
Challenge: how do we branch out more? want to reach out to other MRC's about joint ventures and activities, that should be in our workplan. In terms of membership, I think we need a little new energy. I'd really like Kari to join us, because she has lots of ideas and energy and issues of plastics ties in with marine debris
Sam: we're 14 members, so a quorum would be 8. Each subcommittee needs to be below that number
Committee members: Karin R.K., Craig S., Adam P., Sandy W.E., Kari K.

1:38 PM 2. Derelict Vessel Prevention Program

Adam: we had a great year, record-setting spring event in partnership with the Port. I hope we can do that again.
Kari has been amazing getting the word out about derelict vessels and she was great at the fair!
Kari: I'd like voices from community that aren't on MRC, can we explore having a liveboard on the subcommittee?
Committee members: Adam P., Kari K., Christina K., Matt A., Craig S.

3. Eelgrass Protection

Beth: We're still looking at ways to get eelgrass beds on navigational charts, that may happen by this spring
Sandy: I'd like to expand this to seagrass protection. Not as impacted by anchoring but still a native grass here
MOTION: Sandy moves to change the name of the subcommittee to 'Seagrass Protection'
Motion augmented by Olivia: let's broaden it to include all submerged vegetation. Kari seconds. Motion passes
Committee members: Beth Tate, SWE, Christina Koons, Olivia Graham
Note: add a column on our chart of 2025 subcommittee members for "Interested community members"

4. Tribal Partnerships

Discussion: we had a subcommittee called "Tribal Partnerships", it's no longer active but the idea is relevant
Sandy: I have some connections with the NWIC, they have a Coast Salish youth group, and they'd be interested
MOTION: strike this as a subcommittee and leave it for more general discussion
Discussion: but we want this to remain at forefront, can we put it language about making sure it stays in the mix?
Cindy: if strike the subcommittee, instead "adopt tribal partnerships as part of the work plan"
Dave: there's been a tribal representative, Patti Gobin. The best way is to have a person at the table
Mike: with 14 different tribes! I've worked with most of them. we are on their land for most of what we do
Frankie: It's a process because every Tribe is different, so we'll engage with each Tribe as much as they wish. I can share the Tribal engagement framework that was approved by Council a couple weeks ago. I can also send out the training parts 1 & 2 that were super helpful. I'd love to have the NWIC come talk to the MRC about new initiatives.
Adam: then can we make it a monthly update that happens at the MRC meeting?
-Question, should we strike this subcommittee without all members present
Frankie: The stewardship group is a subcommittee, there's a good opportunity to engage the Stewardship network tribal engagement group. That's about elevating tribal events that happen here, celebrating native awareness month – like the screening of the Fish wars movie. The MRC is meant to have a Tribal rep on the committee. In terms of understanding the government-to-government relationship we need to make sure we do things right

capacity. But we need to avoid actions/projects that Tribes don't even know about

ACTION: Frankie will talk to Patti about this before the January MRC meeting

ACTION: members that are present will check with members that aren't present, meet as a subcommittee to decide what to do going forward, this will be on agenda for January

ACTION: Sandy will check with Jeff Dyer about remaining on the subcommittee as a citizen member

Committee members: Patti G., Christina K., Jeff D., Kendra S., Mike R., Sandy W.E.

5. Oil Spill Prevention and Response Preparedness/ERTV

We've merged these two subcommittees into one, ERTV planning is a measure for oil spill prevention

MOTION: Mike moves to combine these two subcommittees, Karin seconds. All in favor, the motion passes.

Marta: Efforts in the County have been stymied due to Ecology's report on the oil spill risk assessment. The subcommittee's work has helped inform the County, but the report's results were damaging and misleading. They averaged the risk across the Salish Sea and diverted efforts to get more of a voice here and in Canada to solidify this message. I offered you all a final review of Ecology's report; we still have unresolved questions; we need to rely on the work that's been done in Canada and by NUCA study that we commissioned to come together with Islands Trust (who Cindy met with yesterday together with County Council). I encourage the MRC to get behind that movement, we've been at this for 10 years. Please help educate the new council on this. Governor Inslee wants to talk about this with Canada before he leaves office at the end of this month. The County's decade-long efforts in support of an ERTV were put on hold by Ecology's 4-yr modeling project. This year the ERTV subcommittee has accomplished much to inform the County's inquiries to Ecology, yet many concerns of the misleading conclusions and implausible results (Sidney v RH) remain unresolved. Let's put a pin in the Ecology report with the updated 1-pager on our review and findings. The point is not to let Ecology detract from all the support for an ERTV. We heard from Islands Trust yesterday that they could support a Joint statement with First Nations to Transport Canada. I hope the MRC will seek Tribal, elected and other partners for such a joint statement as a matter of urgency.

Level: thank you Marta for your tenacious work on this. Let's draft some outreach materials for the Council to use in their advocacy of an ERTV. We have two new council members and we're losing an important advocate with Cindy.

Marta: Senator Cantwell's and the Governor's offices have been reliant on the Ecology report. So, please look at the one-pager I've produced to say we acknowledge the work that's been done. We can say, 'this is what the Ecology report provided and this what it didn't do', but meanwhile still need to show the importance of an ERTV.

Adam: do we have an action item for January to have those one-pagers ready to send out?

Level: the staff has Marta's one-pager and the other handout we've been using. Now those need to be put together

ACTION ITEM: For January meeting we'll have a draft presented that we can review to send to Council

Cindy: We must keep Marta's information circulating and use it to educate. Ecology won't change the report, and they don't want to be criticized for it, but they are on the same page about wanting a ERTV. So now it's about how to move forward to get acknowledgement that the ERTV is needed. Ecology will cooperate, but not by retracting that report.

Craig: we can highlight the part of the report that showed zones around the SJI's and directly connected waterways. That part does strongly support an ERTV so we can use this report to our advantage even without being critical

Dave: would Ecology co-sign a letter from the MRC to the Governor's office advocating for an ERTV?

Cindy: Ecology's position is about how narrow a question was asked, and they addressed that question. But this is a marathon, it's not a time to give up. I don't know if a statement from Ecology would be enough. I think it's about getting the attention of the new governor and getting him involved as an advocate himself

Adam: the first step is agreeing as an MRC about the information we want to send up the ladder

Cindy: also with new Council members coming in, putting together a comprehensive briefing for them. Kari McVeigh and Jane fuller – get on their calendar and give them a compendium of all the materials that have been developed

Marta: I appreciate that Ecology is saying don't rely on the report , but the fact that it devalues the presence of an ERTV in Sidney is a major impediment. That's wrong and it's a big problem. I just hope everyone in this room has a sense of urgency about this, to work with Canadians and Tribal partners

Lovel: we are an advisory committee to the Council, so we'll be sending the necessary information to them

Frankie: and there's still value in the report we had done, we can focus on the results of our report

Adam: let's table this discussion and see what the subcommittee comes up with for January

Committee members: Lovel P., Christina K, Matt A., Craig S., David C., Brian G., and Marta G. as member of public

6. Marine Stewardship

We can disband this committee because the MSA is done.

MOTION: Lovel moves to disband this subcommittee, Beth seconds. All in favor. Yay Frankie!

7. Outreach

Sandy: we met, and we reported earlier about the subcommittee

Sandy will take lead on that subcommittee, he'll work with Katie

Committee members: Sandy W.E., Kailey G., Beth T., Adam P., Pema K.

8. Vessel Surveys/Benthic Habitat Project

Sam: These two projects were funded with NOAA federal funding, these can fall under the submerged vegetation subcommittee discussion. Majority of field work completed in 2024, we can report more on these in the new year

Mike: in terms of the OPMA, for the subcommittees, since there's no quorum, we don't need to consider?

Discussion: the subcommittees don't make decisions, they gather information and advise the MRC.

Lovel: but subcommittees can be subject to OPMA if involve other MRC members inadvertently to create quorum

Question: can subcommittees vote on something or just discuss it? - they come to consensus, but not a formal vote

Kari: some of the activities are confusing for DV because they overlap with paid staff activities

Craig: the PFFS does a lot of actions. Do all of those decisions need to get run by the MRC?

Adam: it should be every month when we meet, each subcommittees reports on what they've been doing and what they'd like to do in the next month. Action items don't necessarily need to be voted on, just more communication at each monthly meeting about what each subcommittee is doing

2:44 PM WRAP UP

Karin: one more thing, to create a subcommittee for DEI. There are underserved members in our community

MOTION: Sandy moves to create a DEI subcommittee, Dave seconds. All in favor. That's a new subcommittee

ACTION ITEM: Karin will give a briefing about that in the January meeting and then we can add members

Marta: Ecology senior management came to Friday Harbor to present to Council in June on Oil Spill Prevention. Any mention of their ERTV study was absent. We had no notice - A missed opportunity for ES and MRC members to engage with Ecology on oil spill prevention and ERTV to reduce risk. Ecology isn't standing behind their study so we should be clear that we don't (especially in international discussions)

Note: we may meet a week later than regular schedule for next MRC meeting, Jan 9th.

2:48 pm Adjourn Retreat