



**SAN JUAN COUNTY
MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE &
CITIZEN'S SALMON ADVISORY GROUP**

Meeting Notes 2/7/18

Reminders:

1. A discussion was tabled about recreating an informational placemat detailing eel grass bed location and 16 most commonly hit rocks.
2. The desire was expressed to have the MRC informed of relevant bills being presented at the State level. Lovel and Jamie were tasked with this job.
3. A discussion was tabled about whether the flags for boaters indicating that whales were in the vicinity would attract more boats.
4. The red/yellow flag without the "diver down" stripe was the most popular.

In Attendance: Terry Turner, Jaclyn Fowler, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Byron Rot, Arnie Klaus, Elise Dufour, Megan Dethier, Carl Davis, Jamie Stephens, Toby Cooper, Lovel Pratt, Libby Concord, Kendra Smith, Jeff Friedman, Iva Rife, Tina Whitman

Minutes approved.

Presentation by Tina Whitman

Discussion:

Karin: Are these visits by invitation of the owner?

Tina: Yes. We are very strategic about it. Sometimes we know people in the neighborhood. Sometimes we call. We use data from our surveys. We have this ongoing database of folks. It is all voluntary.

Terry: When I think of conservation easements, I think of "grantee" and "grantor". Who is that in this situation?

Tina: Land Bank. We used to wait for people to call. Now we go after these particular areas.

Terry: How do you expect the pickle weed to do after being rolled up?

Tina: I think it will do pretty well. One of the folks we work with have done a test study where they've dug it up and then carefully put it back. They did one where they rolled it up and threw it back. And they did another study as well. All came out pretty much the same. We will be photo monitoring to see. We did work with one ditch. We put the pickle weed back in that ditch and now you wouldn't be able to find that original ditch.

Terry: Would you expect to see migrating juvenile salmon at Neck Point Lagoon on Shaw?

Tina: Potentially. We are trying to figure out if there is enough justification of potential costs if salmon would come back. Getting those logs out would be important.

Byron Rot – Update on 4 Year Plan for Salmon Recovery

Discussion:

Megan: A little background. A landowner came and said that they wanted to do something about their armoring. That wasn't necessarily best for the ecology. So this project took off.

Tina: We don't want to get rid of armoring and cause damage to homes. Is it feasible and does it do the most good.

Terry: How many of our new members are familiar with PIAT1 and PIAT2?

Tina: Do you have the most recent presentation on the website?

Byron: I can send it out.

Jamie: It's on the website. Both 1 and 2 and the condensed 1 and 2.

Terry: Become familiar with that.

Level: Are there any subcategories within those tiers?

Byron: Yes.

Tina: Land owner willingness and opportunity are not shown here. But they are all individually scored, so you can go back to the base data and know the information so that you can know the complexity of each site.

Byron: There is some nuance to it. We want folks to think more broadly than that. There wasn't interest in a system that was more numerically varied. If you want to look specifically at feeder bluffs for instance, you can utilize the database.

Karin: What is involved in protection? Is there a moratorium on new armoring?

Byron: If a landowner has a structure on their property, Fish and Wildlife is required to give them a permit for armoring. There is this perception that the first thing you do when you buy a piece of property on the shore is to build a bulkhead. Sometimes you see people building one where it is quiet and not needed. For instance, with a shoreline forest, those roots are really all you need. There is a lot to be gained from visiting owners and talking with them.

Terry: If you want to see a bad example, the Kitsap Peninsula really destroyed their beaches. If you want to see what ugly looks like. They destroyed their beaches.

Byron: Compared to the rest of Puget Sound, we don't have much. But if you look at the erodible shoreline, it is fairly significant. There is this perception that the San Juans are pristine. This is a myth. We have more to do here. We still have really great habitat here. The Preservation Trust and Land Bank with the Friends are doing much to save this.

Terry: Byron, would you go over the idea that we look for project sponsors and how we might use PIAT?

Byron: In a lot of ways you guys are policy advisors. People will listen to you a lot more than they will listen to me, as their neighbor and their friend. The toughest aspect to doing a project is getting a land owner on board. There are a huge number of people out there who may have a bulkhead or a property that can be protected.

One of the things that is really useful is for you to go down your mental list of who lives on the shoreline. I can pull up PIAT2 and we can see where they are on the tier system. Reach out to Tina or another of our project sponsors and say, I have a friend and we can have GIS or someone else go out and talk to them about an easement. It is a really valuable thing that you guys can do for salmon recovery.

Tina: Byron, you talked about your placeholders. Projects have to be on the work schedule to be open for funding. Those placeholders are there for property owners that fall out of the sky. Those other ones are there for project sponsors. Other people can propose a project.

Megan: The broad listings are place holders.

Byron: One of the strategies for placeholders is that a sponsor could come and say, we're proposing projects in this area. We have some sense that people are interested and they ask for a certain amount of money. They don't identify a particular land owner, but they know that they want to do conservation in that area.

Megan: Does the four year plan only get updated every four years?

Byron: Every year, but this was a larger roll out. There are a lot of new projects.

Terry: It is interesting to me how many different sponsors we have.

Byron: It's nice, but we could always use more. Just as an example, the last two years we have not spent our funding allocation. That is kind of the kiss of death to get your funding lowered. It's really important that we spend our money this year. Watmough Bay may be up for funding. There are family issues, so it is an interesting process. The parents passed away and the siblings don't agree. There is also an issue with a long term renter that was asked to leave, but one of the siblings would like to have return.

Toby: Do you have totals for projects?

Byron: Yes. Some of these are just my best guess. As the project moves through the process, especially after a feasibility study and then moving into construction, those totals can change. Projects \$250,000 and over have to go through a design process before we can make a more finalized construction estimate. It was too disruptive to the legislative budget otherwise.

Terry: There are two kinds of projects here. Boots on the ground projects and then easements and acquisitions.

Byron: Our priority is protection. Restoration is number two. Studies are number three. We have so much wonderful habitat here. We are trying to make sure that we don't lose it all to development. People who have a lot of money are going to do what they want. Really the best way to ensure that property is getting conserved is to do easements or acquisitions. That's what Tina and the Preservation Trust are working on.

Tina: We don't spend a lot of money on easements because most folks end up donating it because it makes more financial sense. Most of our money goes to outreach.

Those easements continue if the property is sold.

Jamie: We were trying to get a property on Reed Harbor which was maybe \$500,000. Sometimes it makes more financial sense to do an easement.

Byron: Protection was secondary for a while because it was just thought that we could only do restoration. That is starting to change.

Tina: We never get things back to how they were. It makes more sense to protect it in the first place.

Megan made a motion to approve. Terry seconded.

Kendra: If something starts to emerge, even though there are placeholders, how do we deal with that?

Byron: There is already a new project not on this list. One of our project sponsors is not a good communicator and sent me a project last week. That is going to be a feasibility study on Lopez. The deadline for people to submit their letter of interest is February 16 before it goes before TAG. You guys are part of that process. You'll come in later during the pre-application process. There is a formal application on May 2 & 3. May 2 is the presentation in the morning, with field trips in the afternoon and possibly the next day.

Terry: Are you happy with your sponsor list?

Byron: Yes, it is really diverse.

Kendra: The question still is, what is the process to insert new projects?

Byron: It is informal. I think that they wanted something up front to work with. It isn't fixed in stone. There will be some tweaks to it.

Vote: All in favor of approving the plan? Vote carried unanimously.

Motion to adjourn meeting. Motion made, seconded, and passed.

MRC Meeting

Toby's Citizen input

Toby: On the ferry with the way over, we had some discussion. I would like to recognize Kevin Ranker's bill on the southern residents. It is precedent setting and sweeping. I don't know what its prospects are, but hopefully it will get something done. What should the MRC be thinking about in terms of this bill? It occurs to me that the MRC is this wonderful nexus of citizens and the County. It can play the part of liaison between the state government and the county. How do we fill the gaps it doesn't cover? It is primarily about enforcement and setting a zone around the pods. But it doesn't take an ecosystem approach. It doesn't provide for forage fish, as the MRC wants to do. It doesn't do the whales any good to have a quiet environment if they have nothing to eat. I want to encourage you to look at how the County can support this effort.

Terry: It's been so long since we've had good citizen input. I would be curious to know how many are familiar with Kevin Ranker's bill?

Karin: How long is the bill?

Group: It isn't very long.

Level: And the capital budget has a piece of this bill in it.

Byron: It's amazing how the orca whales have suddenly come on the scene. After twenty years, it is finally happening with chinook recovery. Last summer, suddenly everything is happening.

Jamie: I was talking to the Governor about the task force that the Governor is putting together. Really we need to save the fish. If they can hug an orca by saving the salmon, let's get the public rallied around the cause.

Toby: That is the message. Help the ecosystem recover.

Arnie: That is the new model. Helping the fisherman do sustainable fishing, etc.

Terry: Is it felt that this bill takes on the ecosystem approach?

Toby: No. It is about protection zones for the orcas. The report from the Whale Museum said that there were two big things: harassment and food supply. This bill deals with the former.

Jeff: Setting speed limits dramatically reduces the sound.

Terry: Is it in line with what has been recommended?

Jeff: We are more stringent. The bill says 400 yards, but we say half a mile.

Tina: Do you guys have a subcommittee working on it?

Terry: Yes.

Kendra: With the task force, have you managed to get a local seat on there?

Jamie: The executive order is coming out soon.

Kendra: The other thing in Inslee's budget was for hatcheries for Spring Chinook.

Discussion between Kendra and Tina about some of the hatcheries.

Arnie: To Toby's point, I believe an ecosystem awareness approach is the greater solution. That needs to be the focus, rather than focusing on one particular thing.

Toby: For us it could be an easy job to broaden the perspective. You love the whales, love the fish, too!

Tina's citizen input

Revitalizing protecting the eel grass. Anchor out of eel grass. Boater and community awareness, tideland protection, buoy upgrades, protection tool. Washington State parks has a voluntary no anchor zone that they are looking to revitalize. Eastsound is a voluntary anchor out zone. They also have a dwindling herring population. We want to have the MRC be a partner in these projects.

Terry: As a boater, dropping an anchor is a real pain in the neck. If I knew that there were public buoys, I'd be pretty happy.

Tina: Yes. There is some talk about Blind Bay. The County has some funding for buoys. We're talking about Eastsound. We're not saying, don't boat here. You can attach to the buoy. Boaters are hard to reach. There needs to be a concerted effort.

Carl: Who puts out these buoys now?

Tina: There is one put out by the County. Sometimes you may not even need buoys. If you have good signs, people come back year after year and will get the message.

Carl: At Echo Bay there was a sign asking you not to anchor, but they didn't give you enough information.

Tina: They realized when they did that pilot program that they didn't have enough information. The buoys were intended to say, "don't anchor past this point".

Toby: The topography of Eastsound is such that it looks better to anchor outside Indian Island. The other thing about Eastsound is that it is a wind tunnel. The boating community doesn't really want to anchor there.

Carl: As opposed to Echo Bay on Sucia, where everyone wants to moor.

Kendra: We are looking at updating the buoys at Odlin.

Byron: And I think it's more than just buoys. It's being conscious about what you're throwing overboard, etc. Water quality is really important, too. As a sea kayaker, I've noticed that the water quality goes down when there are a lot of boats around. That is not good for the eel grass either.

Level: Is there a way to get this information out electronically, maybe through commonly used apps? Maybe included on charts or through NOAA?

Tina: It is virtually impossible to get things like this on the NOAA chart because they consider the eel grass beds as transitory. But the other apps could work. We already have these maps, so we could provide that to them. There are certainly other platforms. You know how the MRC did the laminated placemat for the 10 most commonly hit rocks? We're going to steal that.

Terry: We are now going to redo it with the 16 most commonly hit rocks. Maybe we could dovetail?

Arnie: Active Captain is one of those apps. They are very approachable.

Carl: Navionics is a huge one, too.

Terry: I think we should put this on our agenda for future discussion and outreach.

Level: I wonder if on future agendas, could we include relevant bills?

Terry: Great idea, especially if we had a member such as yourself who was willing to do that?

Level: Jamie, would you like to do that, too?

Adoption of Workplan:

Discussion:

Arnie: These will be updated as we go along.

Kendra: Did everyone get a chance to look at them? This is kind of an expansion of the conversation from the retreat. The subcommittees that we discussed. It has a few clarifications of who was going to participate in varying aspects of the plan.

Terry: Part of this discussion is figuring out how we are going to meet as subcommittees.

Arnie: Not many people responded to the Google poll. I think we want to focus on the third week of the month for meetings. We've normally had a meeting on Orcas that we could break down into subcommittees.

Terry: In the past, our midmonth meeting was our subcommittee, outreach, and citizen science meeting. It seems like we've broken it more out into project groups. What I'd like to put up for discussion in that regard is

how we're going to meet during the mid-month and how we are going to get the work done. I find meeting with others very helpful as it helps me focus that time. I think having a fixed time on the third Wednesday is helpful.

Kendra: The other limitation is staff time. If we add commuting, that is hours of unproductive time for staff. That is why I encouraged us to move to email and conference call. That way you can get some written feedback and then talk on the phone.

Carl: That sounds like a terrific idea. It seems to me that the issue is that we have a subcommittee with three members, who will take the lead? Can we have a volunteer to take the lead?

Megan: Do we even need staff at those subcommittee meetings?

Kendra: If the mid-month Wednesday is good for folks, you could have subcommittee phone-ins. At least then there is dedicated time without the travel part.

Byron: I would like more time for the Salmon Recovery as well. I think we're still evolving on what it means to be a policy body. I don't think the mid-month meeting gave me enough time. I think we now have a focused subcommittee and task that will give me more time.

Lovel: Logistically, do the reports of the subcommittee reports demand too much time? Maybe we ask that the subcommittees do written reports?

Megan: That works well for other committees I'm on.

Kendra: And if that occurs and then someone writes that up and gets it to me in a timely manner, we can include it in the packet that we get you a week in advance. Then if we need to share anything else at the meeting, we can do that.

Jaclyn: You could potentially use something like Dropbox. Everyone could update it throughout the week.

Byron: You can use Dropbox online, outside the firewall.

Terry: Do we need to vote on meeting in person? Should we let groups decide?

Megan: Try an experiment of using phone meetings?

Carl: Each group needs to have a lead.

Volunteers

1. **Planning & Promoting Marine Stewardship**
 - a. **Lead:** Carl
 - b. **Add to subcommittee:** Kendra
2. **Renamed: Food Web Committee (Combined with #6, Restoring the Near Shore)**
 - a. **Lead:** Byron
 - b. **Add to subcommittee:** Lovel, Megan
3. **Reducing Vessel Impacts on SRKW**
 - a. **Lead:** Kendra
 - b. **Add to subcommittee:** Lovel
4. **Reducing Pollution of Marine Waters**
 - a. **Lead:** Elise

5. **Developing the Orcas Landing Experience**
 - a. **Lead:** Carl
6. **Merged with #2, Food Web Committee**
7. **Restoring Shellfish, Reducing Invasive**
 - a. **Lead:** Ken
8. **Understanding the Economic & Environmental Impact of an Oil Spill**
 - a. **Lead:** Lovel or Marta
9. **Reviewing the Feasibility of Establishing an Emergency Vessel**
 - a. **Lead:** Lovel or Marta
 - b. **Add to subcommittee:** Lovel
10. **Exploring Alternative Marine Technologies**
 - a. **Lead:** Ken

SRKW Update

Kendra: The discussion about enforcement is ongoing. We've worked up a flag concept. We have a yellow flag, yellow and red flag, and a yellow and red without the white line down the middle. The concept is that the oblivious boater will now know that there are whales. This should be enough indication that they should slow and stop. We shared it with enforcement folks and they said that it gives them a mechanism to help them write tickets.

Arnie: The colors are also the international color for "O" or "Overboard".

Kendra: We'd like some feedback from all of you. We also have an insert for the Be Whale Wise information. We also are working on a campaign to get the Be Whale Wise message outside of San Juan County. We are trying to get seed funding for the flag. We want to get people more aware at a grass roots level. Here people have to actively participate for the system to work.

Karin: How big is the flag?

Arnie: It depends on the size of the vessel the length of the flag.

Lovel: There was some question, too, as to whether a flag like this would attract more boats.

Kendra: We should continue to discuss it. People already see the entourage.

Karin: Basically, it is establishing that the Be Whale Wise rules are in place in this area.

Kendra: We need the social pressure to make change. We looked at a lot of literature about this. Hopefully, we might see a shift because of that social pressure.

Jaclyn: This is suggesting that people give an additional 400 yards from the boats. But there is no legal backbone to this suggestion?

Kendra: No.

The red and yellow without the "diver down" white stripe was the most popular flag.

Kendra: The broader question for the group is should I continue to have dialog with the Northwest Straits Foundation? There is potentially \$10,000 we could get there.

Terry: I'm curious to know what Jeff and Iva think.

Iva: I think most boaters will agree with it. There is already a system up north by MERS that does this. Obviously we are focused on the SKRWs, but we are seeing other whales here as well. MERS has had collisions with other types of whales. I don't know how widespread it is up north. I know that it is utilized.

Kendra: We will follow up with that.

Terry: I think that we should add that to our list of choices.

Motion for Kendra to move forward with the Foundation. So moved, seconded, accepted.

Terry: Thank you for being here Jamie. Anything you would like to say?

Jamie: Prey, vessel noise, pollution, oil spill prevention will be on subcommittees of the new task force. Kevin's bill has moved and stopped.

Motion to postpone other agenda items.

Card for Arnie.