

# Snohomish County Marine Resources Advisory Committee Meeting Meeting Summary

**March 21, 2018 6:30-8:30PM**  
**3000 Rockefeller Ave, Snohomish County Campus, Everett WA 98201**  
**Admin East Building, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor**

<p><b>MRC Members Present</b>          Tom Doerge          Mike Ehlebracht          Laura Gurley          Bob Hillmann          Deborah Hopkins          Susan Tarpley          Sarah Brown          Paul Clampitt          Franchesca Perez (by phone)          Traci Sanderson          Craig Wollam</p> <p><b>Absent</b>          Cathy Stanley (excused)</p>	<p><b>Staff, Presenters, and Others</b>          Kathleen Pozarycki, MRC Lead Staff          Elisa Dawson, Snohomish County MRC Planner</p> <p>David Bain, Orca Conservancy          Kari Quass, Snohomish Conservation District          Logan Daniels, Snohomish County Parks          Matt Van Deren, Earth Economics</p>
<p><b>Summary of Decisions</b></p> <p>The MRC approved the February MRC Meeting Summary with edits.</p>	
<p><b>Upcoming Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● April 4-6<sup>th</sup> Salish Sea Conference. Seattle, WA.</li> <li>● April 18<sup>th</sup> MRC Meeting. Snohomish County Campus. Everett, WA</li> <li>● April 22<sup>nd</sup> Our Coast Movie Night at UWB. 7-9PM. Chasing Coral Screening</li> <li>● April 25<sup>th</sup> Our Coast Movie Night at EvCC. 6:30-8:30PM. Chasing Coral Screening</li> </ul>	

**Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Sarah Brown opened the Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting with a quorum at 6:30pm.

Sarah introduced herself and called for self-introduction of meeting participants.

**Approval of MRC Meeting Summary**

Laura Gurley made a motion to approve the February 8, 2017 MRC Meeting Summary with edits. Mike Ehlebracht seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

**Earth Economics Meadowdale Ecosystem Valuation Presentation**

Matt Van Deren introduced himself as the Western Washington Program Director for Earth Economics. Earth economics does science-based economic analysis, and works with clients to identify

and place a dollar value on what nature provides. This analysis helps create a full understanding of nature's value so that decision makers can truly make the best choices for investment and planning.

The MRC used funds from the 2017 budget to help pay for a Benefit-Cost analysis of the Meadowdale Beach Park Estuary Restoration Project. Meadowdale Beach Park is a 108 acre park located in unincorporated Snohomish County, Washington, bordered by the cities of Edmonds, Lynwood, and Mukilteo. Park visitors access the beach by way of a six-foot-wide concrete box culvert under the railroad berm. This culvert also conveys the year-round flow of Lund's Gulch Creek. Due to the narrow opening of the culvert, sediment carried by the creek accumulates in the passageway, causing frequent flooding in the culvert and surrounding area. This flooding limits beach access for park visitors, limits salmon's use of the creek, and restricts nourishing sediments from reaching the beach.

In 2014, The MRC worked with Snohomish County Parks and Recreation and partnered with Snohomish County Surface Water Management Division, and Anchor QEA, to conduct a feasibility study to develop design alternatives that would improve beach access, enhance public safety, and restore habitat critical for native salmon species. After soliciting feedback from the local community, local organizations, and Tribes, design commenced on the preferred alternative park design, the Meadowdale Beach Park and Estuary Restoration Project (MBPERP). The MBPERP proposes the construction of a five-span railroad bridge to replace the existing culvert and enhance the connection between the park and shoreline. The bridge will allow for American Disability Act accessible pedestrian beach access and accommodate naturally occurring patterns of the creek's flow with enough room for the creek to carry nourishing sediment into the Puget Sound. The MBPERP also proposes the creation of two acres of restored estuary and riparian habitat to improve the natural and aesthetic value of the park. The restored estuary will provide critical habitat for juvenile Chinook salmon, currently listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, and other native species that thrive in tidal marshes and freshwater wetlands.

Because of the significant investment needed to initiate the MBPERP, Snohomish County contracted with Earth Economics to perform a holistic benefit-cost analysis (BCA) of the project. Earth Economics' analysis reveals that the MBPERP would unlock more than \$200 million worth of public benefits over the next 100 years, far outweighing the costs anticipated for the project. Earth Economics' benefit-cost analysis looks at the environmental, recreational, educational, and economic benefits unlocked by the MBPERP, as well as the dollar values associated with those benefits. When compared to a "no action" scenario, the significant marginal increase in public benefits that will be provided by the park following the implementation of the MBPERP far outweigh the project's costs. When considering a 100 year timeline, the MBPERP has a benefit-cost ratio of 4.35. In other words, Snohomish County can expect about \$4.35 in public benefits for every dollar it invests in the MBPERP.

### Economic Benefits

Studies suggest that consumers are willing to pay more for homes that are close to parks. Studies also show that as the quality of a park improves, so does a consumer's willingness to pay for a home in the area. The MBPERP is expected to raise the value of homes around the park by 6.2%. Higher property values means Snohomish County can expect an additional \$20.1 million in real estate tax over the next 100 years.

### Recreational Benefits

As a regional park, Meadowdale Beach Park draws visitors from across Snohomish County. By improving beach access, and preventing frequent flooding, the MBPERP is expected to increase recreation visits to the park by 1.6 million over the next 100 years. Recreation visits to local parks

have been shown to improve public health and community cohesion. These benefits are valued at \$41.1 million.

### Educational Benefits

Currently, 16 different educational programs, ranging in size from 4 to 200 students, use Meadowdale Beach Park for educational purposes. Improvements made under the MBPERP are expected to increase the park's utilization as an outdoor classroom with an average of 1,200 students visiting the park each year for the next 100 years.

### Environmental Benefits

Earth Economics' valuation of the ecosystem services provided by the park estimates that \$11.1 million to \$41.2 million worth of ecosystem services will be generated over the next 100 years, following the completion of the MBPERP. This valuation includes the significant addition of a pocket estuary, restored by the MBPERP, which will provide critical habitat for native salmon species, including Chinook salmon.

Overall, when compared to a "no action" scenario, the significant marginal increase in public benefits that will be provided by the park following the implementation of the MBPERP far outweigh the project's costs. Compared to a project cost of \$14 million, the Cost-Benefit Analysis shows \$60 million in benefits. When considering a 100 year timeline, the MBPERP has a benefit-cost ratio of 4.35. In other words, Snohomish County can expect about \$4.35 in public benefits for every dollar it invests in the MBPERP.

Matt finished his presentation and opened up the conversation for questions and comments from the MRC. Tom asked about the maintenance costs for the bridge and if those were included in the project costs. Matt replied that yes they are included and that the life span of the bridge is assumed to be 100 years. Bob asked where the 100 year life span of the bridge was from. Matt replied that this was the number given by BNSF to use.

Paul asked how much of the budget is just for the bridge. Logan Daniels from Snohomish County Parks replied that the bridge costs also include the road improvements and mobilization and demobilization along with the Operations and Maintenance Agreement with BNSF and that she would need to get back with the MRC on more details. Kathleen will follow up with Logan about the budget breakdown.

Laura asked how Earth Economics values things like eelgrass beds. Matt explained that Earth Economics uses studies and expert opinions. For the eelgrass beds, a consultant was able to give an opinion on how opening up the estuary would increase eelgrass habitat in the estuary. Earth Economics also looks at the different ways humans interact with something. For example, Earth Economics looked at the price of educating a student in a school system and broke the cost down to a per hour rate. This was then used to calculate the benefit of increased educational time at Meadowdale by multiplying the rate by the increased number of hours students would spend under the project scenario.

Matt finished with saying that the study does not include all benefits that the project may give. For example, travel costs, train safety and risk reduction, fine sediment additions, and other additional ecosystem services were not included. The team took a conservative approach to try to give a realistic number for the cost-benefit analysis. The MRC thanked Matt for his time and presentation.

## **MRC Presentation to Council on 2017 Annual Report and Accomplishments**

The MRC gave their Annual Report to the Snohomish County Council Public Works Committee on Tuesday March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Chair Sarah Brown and Lead Staff Kathleen Pozarycki gave the presentation. Staff Elisa Dawson and MRC members Traci Sanderson, Deborah Hopkins, Laura Gurley, Craig Wollam, Paul Clampitt, and Bob Hillmann were present. County Council members were very engaged in the presentation, and asked question on kelp data, mussel watch, crabber education, monitoring of temperate in Snohomish County marine waters, and more! Watch the [video here](#). Kathleen will follow up via email to answer the Councilmembers questions.

Kathleen encouraged MRC volunteers to stick around whenever possible after presentations to use the opportunity to speak with councilmembers and other members of the audience. Shaking hands and introducing yourself is a great way to make a personal connection.

## **2018 MRC Work Plan**

Kathleen reported that the 2018 Work Plan is embedded in the February minutes. Once this Annual Report is finalized it will be turned in to the Northwest straits Commission for the Quarterly Reporting due in early April. Susan Tarpley completed the Oil Spill Subcommittee report which has been added to the 2018 MRC Work Plan. Below are her additions:

Oil Spill Preparedness- Susan, Franny, Mike, Paul, Debbie, Craig

Highlights: Successfully encouraged Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) to facilitate a multi-jurisdiction, virtual tabletop exercise designed around the realistic scenario of a Bakken oil train derailment. This discussion-based exercise, sponsored by FEMA's Emergency Management Institute, helped participants think about creating a more coordinated response, in the event of an oil spill. Participated in the National Academy of Sciences' webcast "[Preparing for a Rapid Response to Major Marine Oil Spills: A Workshop on Research Needs to Protect the Health and Well-being of Communities](#)". Two MRC members attended WA Dept. of Ecology's Oiled Wildlife HAZWOPER Training to assist in a large-scale wildlife response, if needed. The MRC reviewed and offered substantive comments on the state's Draft Stillaguamish Geographic Response Plan that focuses on regional oil spill response strategies.

Lessons Learned/Next Steps: Continue important partnership with Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management

- a. Schedule Subcommittee meetings as needed
- b. Continue to Network moving forward. Emphasize the paramount need for pro-active spill preparedness.
- c. Promote the value of multi-organization/multi-jurisdictional tabletop exercises and hands-on drills involving realistic scenarios, particularly oil train derailments.
- d. Continue to work collaboratively with DEM and other organizations
- e. Participate on the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) - Susan
- f. Update Oil spill section on the MRC website

## **MRC Grant**

Kathleen reported that the MRC needs to decide on projects for the MRC grant as well as the 2018 consultant budget. Kathleen presented a list of ideas for projects to the MRC. The MRC has already decided to spend \$5,000 of the budget towards Northwest Strait Foundation Derelict Pot Removal, but needs to determine other projects for 2018. Ideas included:

- Florian Graner- videos and curriculum for Snohomish County schools

- MyCoast app add-on feature to organize Forage fish pictures
- Funds for consultant to write forage fish report
- Feasibility Study for Howarth Park Culvert Upgrade/Repair
- Money for additional derelict boat removal
- Creosote piling prioritization and stakeholder process- Phase 1
- Stormwater Study- "removing local barriers to Green Infrastructure"

The MRC discussed using the 2018 consultant funds for the existing contract with NRC to analyze forage fish data and write a report. The MRC agreed that this would be a good way to spend funds. Additional funds could also be used to pay for the next subscription of the MyCoast app.

The MRC will continue to brainstorm ideas for the 2018-2019 MRC Grant. Kathleen will send out the MRC Training Guide graphic on how to choose projects.

### **LIO NTA Update**

Elisa passed out copies of the Creosote Piling and Derelict Vessel NTAs which need to be submitted by the 3/30/18 deadline. Drafts for both of these NTAs are complete and were distributed for MRC review. The budgets for these NTAs will be reviewed at a meeting with LIO staff later this week. Elisa asked for the MRC to review both documents and get any edits to her by the end of the day 3/26/18.

Kathleen passed out copies of the Meadowdale Restoration Project NTA Logan Daniels from Snohomish County Parks plans to submit. Kathleen asked if the MRC would be interested in writing a letter of support for the Meadowdale NTA. The MRC agreed to write a letter of support. Mike Ehlebracht will draft the letter.

### **Announcements**

- **NWSC Update (Paul):** Paul reported that he attended the NWSC Annual Retreat. The NWSC is looking for a new Executive Director. The retreat also focused on planning for future efforts to secure long-term funding for the Northwest Straits Initiative.
- **LIO (Paul):** Paul reported that he attended the LIO workshop on March 14<sup>th</sup>. The MRC is working to submit the two NTAs by the deadline of March 30<sup>th</sup>.
- **Forage Fish Update (Elisa):** Elisa reported that the MRC completed their seasonal sampling on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Traci will take the monthly index site sample and blue vortex the sample monthly until August. The MRC is working to schedule ESRP monitoring for June in partnership with the University of Washington and SWM Staff.
- **Science Camp Scholarships (Sarah):** Sarah is fundraising for science camp scholarships. She will send out information on the scholarships via email.
- **Crabber Education (Susan):** Susan reported that she has been asked to do crabber education at the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Boat Launch in Everett for Opening Day. Susan asked the MRCs permission to do Crabber Education on May 5<sup>th</sup> at the Everett 10<sup>th</sup> Street Boat Launch participate. Everyone agreed that this was a good idea. .
- **State of the County Address (Mike):** Mike reported that he attended the State of the County address given by Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. Mike will follow up with information on the event.

- **Regional Kelp Workshop (Tom):** Tom Doerge, Snohomish County Kelp Lead, reported that he attended the Puget Sound Kelp Recovery Plan workshop on March 20th. With support from NOAA, the Northwest Straits Initiative is working alongside numerous partners to develop a Puget Sound Kelp Recovery Plan. Tom represented the Snohomish MRC at this meeting and brought data from the MRCs 2015-2017 monitoring of kelp beds at Meadowdale, Mukilteo, and Edmonds. A follow up to the workshop is being scheduled for June.
- **Chasing Coral Posters (Elisa):** Elisa will make new posters for the Chasing Coral events using the Chasing Coral graphics.

**The meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.**