

Committee Members in Attendance: Cathleen Burns, Jeff Dyer, Kailey Genther, Patti Gobin, Phil Green, Christina Koons, Ivan Reiff, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Beth Tate, Kendra Smith

Ex-officio, County support staff: Marta Green, Frances Robertson, Byron Rot, , Sam Whitridge

Members of the Public: Paul Anderson, Jenny DeGroot, Vickie Edwards, Abe Gates, Ray Glaze, Gary Greene, Gene Helfman, Judy Meyer, Kat Moore, Jen O’Neal, Mike Ramsey, Robin Reid, Laura Rivas, Paul Schlenger, Kim Sundberg, Bob Warinner, Tina Whitman, Cathy Wilson, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria, Todd Zackey

9:01 AM **Convene CAG Meeting** Sam Whitridge

Coast Salish Acknowledgement: *Let us acknowledge we reside on the ancestral lands and waters of the Coast Salish people who have called this place home since time immemorial and let us honor inherent, aboriginal and treaty rights that have been passed down from generation to generation.*

9:02 AM **Welcome and Introductions**

Introductions are made. This is the 2021 WRIA II grant round, virtual format. This is a smaller grant year, two proposals. 45 minutes each for presentations and questions, it will be recorded

Question: can you remind us about the money we gave to another program?

Sam: we did an allocation trade with North Olympic, that money will come back to us next year

9:15 AM **SRFB Virtual Site Visit: McArdle Bay Shoreline Conservation Easement**

Vickie Edwards, San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT)

Permanent protection of priority salmon habitat is one of our highest priorities, this fits that bill.

SJPT holds lands that protect ecological value of SJ archipelago and it’s an accredited land trust.

Shows map, zoom in on SE Lopez island, review local features. critical salmon habitat, provides more connectivity. Project is in high fish-use area, identified as a PIAT II Tier I priority parcel.

Property includes upland meadow portion, riparian habitat, pocket beach, freshwater seeps.

Maps to show hydrology. Photos/videos showing freshwater flow, natural filtration, feeder bluffs

9:36 AM Everyone breaks briefly to individually watch the 7-minute virtual tour,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1DrF7ZGFpY>

9:43 AM Vicki: landowners are motivated. Conservation easement would prevent any development or subdivision, leave this parcel/habitat intact in perpetuity. Our stewardship staff visits landowners on an annual basis. Shows table with budget. Estimated value of conservation easement, total project cost, and contributions of SJPT and landowners, review request from SRFB. isn’t enough to cover, but TAG review has discussed splitting request over 2 years.

9:51 AM **Questions for Vickie**

QUESTION: What about the Yang family who owns part of the beach?

Vickie: one goal of project is to conduct additional outreach to adjacent landowners. The Yangs are conservation-minded, haven’t yet been ready to move forward with an easement,

ACTION ITEM: Vickie will upload the presentation and make the budget a stand-alone in PRISM

QUESTION: have you applied current SMP and critical area regs, how much of property is at risk?

Vickie: haven't done GIS overlaying 200' boundary, easement would include additional protection
QUESTION: what is the current state of development in McArdle Bay, structures?

Vickie: dilapidated bathhouse on east side. Landowners want a forever wild easement.

Tina: about development, no shoreline structures. Yangs have a home that's well set back. Critical area ordinances are so specific, depends on property how far house is set back.

Paul: That's a lot of trust that shoreline regulations aren't effective in protecting these areas.

If you could provide more of the information Tina just gave in that answer that would be helpful, and the trend in variances. What we're hearing about shoreline development and real estate, how bad is the risk? Why the need for this type of protection at this site?

Vickie: county staff say trend in variances not easily accessible. Friends of SJ's may have that

ACTION ITEM: Tina can provide armor trend data, 138 new sites 1.84 miles since 2009

QUESTION: looks like trees stop at top of bluff? about site management, more vegetation added?

Vickie: Regarding revegetation, interested in buffering meadow more. Also included in the application regarding climate resiliency.

Tina: data on current and potential future forest buffer widths would help in the application

Kendra: we can say the SMP critical areas isn't working, but I'd appreciate understanding how much of that acreage is the bluff/drainage area – that is the nexus area for protection of water quality and salmon habitat. make sure we're really purchasing the part that's the most critical?

Byron: maybe you can word it so landowner part is upland and SRFB match covers the nearshore

Vickie: SJPT combined with landowner contribution covers upland portion, I can clarify that more.

QUESTION: if you do that, can you include a map so we can see the layout of those resources?

10:15 AM **SRFB Virtual Site Visit: San Juan Islands Eelgrass Restoration** *Mike Ramsey*

Goal to protect high priority multiple species recovery, restore eelgrass and develop cost-efficient methods. Review ecosystem services of seagrasses – help support salmon, protect from erosion, nursery habitat, etc. Vulnerable to anthropogenic and environmental stressors, pressure from coastal development and water quality issues. Critical fish habitat –specifically herring.

Two areas of focus – Westcott Bay and Blind Bay, historic locations of herring populations. Four methods: whole transplants, buoy deployed seeding, broadcast seeding, and seedling planting.

Whole plant transplants occurred in August 2020. 60% planted in Westcott Bay, 40% in Blind Bay.

For seeding, seeds collected from Griffin and Padilla Bays. Held seeds in culture system in labs.

Also collected for Buoy deployed seeding (BuDS) with flowering shoots, left buoys for monitoring.

Broadcast seeding in October, spread seeds along a 65m transect. Seeds spread according to source (Griffin or Padilla) along the transect.

Seedlings began to grow in culture system! Made frames and out-planted the seedlings,

Went out to Bell Point last Friday April 30, observed seedlings growing out of seedling frames.

For next project, expand restoration at both sites. At Blind Bay, broadcast seeding transect within area historically known for extensive eelgrass, includes location of 2009 herring spawn

Table with budget information. Acknowledgments to many who helped with this project

Some of these seeds sent for genetic analysis, some are growing in lab to assess response.

10:33 AM **Questions for Mike**

QUESTION: what's the survival rate once plants get more mature?

Mike: for the whole plant transplants all we have are qualitative data from dives at each site.

Westcott Bay showed 10, 50, and 90% survival. It looks like broadcast seeding is doing well

Sandy: there has been success with the seeding method in other locations like Chesapeake Bay,

QUESTION: Has the Blind Bay Eelgrass Project site been prioritized for Eelgrass warning buoys?

Beth: There is anecdotal evidence that something might be causing sediment changes in places like Westcott Bay (it's much softer than it formerly was, may not be as suitable for eelgrass growth). At Bell Point seems there is still a small eelgrass stronghold, but is there a restoration fallback plan in event larger forces are preventing Westcott Bay from being suitable habitat?

Gary: We are planning to look at sediments to see where the eelgrass grew in the past and collect samples in proposed re-plant areas to pick the optimum areas for replanting.

Tina: two questions, what are plans for this and next summer? Monitoring/planting? This money would be for 2022 and 2023

Mike: collect more seeds this summer, disperse more this summer and next spring. may seek a time extension. I may ask Kat for some funds to be used for an interpretative sign, explain buoys

Sandy: seeds often disperse under/around the buoy. Repeated application tends to show results

ACTION ITEM: Sandy will attach paper in PRISM that shows east coast seeding

QUESTION: You've demonstrated the need and critical link to herring. But the pilot is to learn lessons – may be early yet to advance. more information about why there are losses, potential of restoration –are these the right sites? What else can we learn from this study before investing more money? Do we know this is viable and viable location? Speak more to certainty of success

Sandy: some lessons from pilot included best time to collect seeds, also learned how to raise seeds in culture, learned limitations of the BuDS method. Developed the seedling frame.

Mike: the question is, why the decline? Rapid decline in Westcott Bay in early 2000's, Sandy did a study we can upload, no smoking gun. Now plan for core sampling with USGS, compare with past.

Beth: Do we know the limitations of eelgrass survival in warmer waters? more tolerant "strains"?

Sandy: We plan to gather more information relative to the relationship between the predicted increase in water (and air) temperatures and seedling survival.

QUESTOIN: it is unclear what method you are proposing to use in the 6.5 acre restoration.

Mike: the broadcast seeding, seeding buoys, and seedling frames. Need an assessment of adult transplants and if succeeding, spend some effort to add more to increase coverage.

QUESTION: within next two summers of existing grant, can we get more quantitative analysis on the existing methods? Do buoys just need repeat seedings? It seems like pilot isn't done so may not make sense to move forward with all four techniques? evaluate methods, which ones work?

QUESTION: is there a bibliography or CV in proposal? I'd like to know background of proposers

ACTION ITEM: Mike can put attachment in PRISM with proposers' qualifications and references

QUESTION: Will this project be able to continue if it doesn't receive this funding?

Mike: yes, we could keep moving. Depends on whole-plant transplants

QUESTION: will these areas be buoyed off to keep plants from being trampled? And what is cost per acre – is there only 6.5 acres or 12?

Mike: it's 6.5 at each site, so 13 total. Working with Tina to put volunteer no-anchor in eelgrass

Tina: that may not stop impacts at Bell Point, so shallow it's in boat-hauling zone. Maybe buoys

11:05 AM Closing Remarks. TAG will meet May 19th, review panel responses in early June.
Paul: I have additional comments we didn't get to so you'll see those on the applications. Segue to MRC –the use of conservation easement protection is about current regulations not sufficiently protecting. So continue to be vocal about enforcing regulations, instead of using salmon recovery funds to do it. (*Non-SJ MRC members depart the meeting*)

11:08 AM Convene MRC Meeting

- Approve April MRC meeting minutes *Christina Koons*

Kendra moves to approve the minutes, Kailey seconds. All approve. April minutes approved.

- NWSC meeting report to the MRC *Christina Koons*

Christina emailed highlights. The Commission received all funding requested from State Budgets.

- Approval of MRC 2021-2023 grant content and draft budget *Frances Robertson*

Christina: how does the work with eelgrass align with what we heard in CAG meeting today?

Frankie: this year we approved funding for the anchor-out buoys at Odlin County park. We're piloting vessel compliance monitoring there, at Bell Point and at Eastsound. NW Straits commission is working to expand voluntary anchor-out zone efforts so may be additional sites

This grant covers prevention and proactive effort, e.g. notices. Need to connect with sheriff dept.

Kendra moves to approve 2021-2023 scope of work, Christina seconds. All in favor, motion passes

- Membership Renewals *Frances Robertson*

4 positions up for renewal. Cathleen, Karin, Ivan, and Carl. Let Frankie know if want to continue.

11:21 AM **Project Updates**

- EPIC – eelgrass protection effort. A number of people interested in helping with vessel compliance monitoring aspect for this summer. Frankie sent an invitation to everyone on EPIC list to participate in third session on the May 13th, focused on monitoring techniques.

- Next is work sessions for Marine Spatial Planning effort with respect to SRKW. ready to run stakeholder engagement sessions. May 19-20 facilitated sessions to discuss alternate management options for Westside area. Frankie sent invitation to that, please RSVP.

Patti: did you send that out to Tribes?

Frankie: let's discuss after the meeting, a parallel workshop, discussions with Deborah Lekanoff.

Jeff: did you have any transboundary participation?

Frankie: some (fishers) but really tried to get local picture

- GICU was a success. Please record beach steward efforts on the PFSS website. For partners like NPS helps them to know what volunteer effort happening on their lands to help get funding

- Frankie will connect with Kailey on Killer Whale Tales.

- Kendra: Orcas Landing almost done. Mural is being finished up, delivery around May 22. Carl did a great job on bulletin board, need to start supplying information (PFSS, birds info from Phil).

ACTION ITEM: Kendra needs to buy a lock for that bulletin board

- Christina will forward information about ad hoc committee that review MRCs' participation in county shoreline master plan updates, Dana Oster is working on it

- We'll see Frankie at the June meeting and then her leave starts in July

11:40 AM **Adjourn MRC Meeting**