

# Geoduck Task Force Meeting 2

March 18, 2024 1-4pm

## AGENDA

- I. Introduction and Welcome
- II. Review of Task Force Purpose and Goals
- III. Report out from Subgroups
  - a. Water Quality Subgroup
  - b. Harvest Restrictions Subgroup
  - c. Enhancement Subgroup
- IV. Discussion of Agendas and Deliverables for Upcoming Task Force Meetings
- V. Action Items and Close Out

## ATTENDEES

Billy Plauche (Plauche and Carr), Amanda Carr (Plauche and Carr), Chris Cziesla (Confluence), Alexis Huynh (Confluence), Phil Bloch (Confluence), Abby Barnes (DNR), Blain Reeves (DNR), Max Showalter (DNR), Kyle Lentz (Chelsea Farms), Mike Rechner (DNR), Paul Williams (Suquamish Tribe), Hannah King (DNR), Matt Beirne (Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe), Blair Paul (Skokomish Tribe), Chris Eardley (WDFW), Cody Holden (Jamestown Tribe), Deanna Finley (Puyallup Tribe), Frank Lawrence III (Lummi Natural Resources), Megan Russell (Lummi Natural Resources), George Stearns (Puyallup Tribe), Lauren Jenks (DOH), Leslie Connelly (Ecology), Vince McGowan (Ecology), Todd Hass (Puget Sound Partnership), Alex Gouley (Skokomish Tribe), Mike McHugh (Tulalip Tribe), David (Big) Bean (Puyallup Tribe), Eddie Kim (Squaxin Tribe)

## ACTION ITEMS

- (Facilitation team) Circulate meeting notes, DOH outfall strategy, and list of participants for each subgroup.
- (Facilitation team) Circulate Tech Memo annotated outline in advance of Task Force Meeting 3.
- (Task Force and Subgroup Members) Identify priority locations for areas of focus for water quality (point, nonpoint, and unclassified areas). Submittal of priority areas are due **Friday, April 19** for initial review.

## NOTES

### **II. Review of Task Force Purpose and Goals**

- Purpose and goals are articulated in proviso (see end of document for task force proviso)
- Goal to reduce impacts on harvest and find opportunities to expand or sustain wild stock geoduck harvest levels
- Specific charges within proviso:
  - Feasibility of enhancement to increase wildstock
  - Sustainable and cost-effective increases in number and area of harvestable tracts; water quality improvements
- Strong focus on protection of human health and long-term sustainability of geoduck
- Task Force meetings will be focused on actions on a policy level with subgroup meetings
  - Subgroups: Water Quality, Enhancement, Harvest Restrictions

### **III. Report out from Subgroups**

#### **a. Water Quality subgroup**

- Review of first 'kick off' meeting:
  - Working to identify areas of focus for the subgroup
  - Divide water quality issues into 3 areas of focus:
    - Point sources
    - Non-point sources
    - Unclassified areas
  - Received data from Ecology and DOH to identify priority areas
- Review of second meeting: point sources and outfalls
  - Clarified understanding of agency roles to identify potential pathways to make improvements and identify actionable items
  - Presentations from DOH, Ecology, and DNR to cover regulatory framework for point sources
  - Looked at DOH's outfall strategy and considerations around establishing classifications around outfalls
  - Discussed models of geoduck stock quantification
  - Discussed specific areas to be prioritized
  - Facilitation team requested input on priority areas from subgroup and task force members
  - Decided to deprioritize exploring new areas/tracts
- Deliverable will identify priority areas of focus and strategies. Confluence and Plauche & Carr are looking for task force and water quality subgroup members to identify their priority locations in all 3 focus areas (point, nonpoint, unclassified areas).

#### **b. Harvest Restrictions subgroup**

- Priorities discussed in first meeting:
  - Fishery management and calculation of harvestable biomass
    - Approach to show factor, show plots, and potential alternatives
    - Looking at different models and recovery-based approaches
    - Considering regional variations

- Impacts of macroalgae/herring spawning restrictions
  - DNR would support statute change for 200-yard rule
- Topics to deprioritize:
  - Time restrictions associated with auction
  - Exploring harvest areas deeper than -70 feet and shallower than -18 ft
    - Risking diver safety below -70 ft
    - Density of geoduck is low in both deeper and shallower areas
  - Identification of new geoduck tracts primarily related to water quality issues
- Questions about harvest restrictions subgroup report:
  - Who is a part of that group? Is the group trying to restructure anything or understand management models?
    - Megan Russell (Lummi Natural Resources) requested to be added to the Harvest Restrictions subgroup.
    - Recovery or current methods in fishery management identified as causing obstacles for harvesting. Subgroup identified this topic as a priority topic for the harvest restrictions subgroup.
  - What was the rationale for deprioritization on considering going into shallower water? There was a good argument in the water quality subgroup for considering relaxing restrictions to harvest in shallower water due to geoduck's depth in substrate compared to other shellfish and comparatively lower potential for exposure to contaminants.
    - Relatively fewer geoduck present in shallower waters and harvest would conflict with other resource management (like eelgrass) and shoreline residential.

**c. Geoduck Population Enhancement subgroup**

- Purpose of kick-off meeting – understand priorities for geoduck enhancement
- Topics discussed in first meeting:
  - Recruitment
    - What is the status of current research and what potential research is needed to understand recruitment mechanisms?
    - Potential opportunities for moving geoduck from closed/unclassified areas to approved areas to encourage spawning/natural recruitment
  - Larval production
    - What is happening with existing hatchery/nursery production and capacity?
  - Post larval enhancement
    - Seeding, larval enhancement, predator exclusion
  - Other topics: genetics, potential locations (existing tracts, nearshore enhancement)
- Future topics: regulatory considerations, best management practices, allocation of enhancement efforts, long-term funding options
- Looking at ways to enhance wildstock more broadly
- Questions about geoduck enhancement subgroup report
  - Have not heard of success in adult geoduck transplanting.

- What age of geoduck is considered adult geoduck for transplanting?

#### **IV. Discussion of agendas and deliverables for upcoming task force meetings**

Purpose of discussion: Provide an overview of the agendas for upcoming task force meetings and discuss how the written deliverables and recommendations required by the proviso language (see end of document for proviso) will integrate into remaining meetings.

- Task Force Meeting 3 (June):
  - Deliverable (in advance): Tech Memo annotated outline
  - Review annotated outline for technical memorandum, discussion of memo recommendations
  - Deeper dive on harvest restrictions/management issues subgroup
  - Update on enhancement subgroup
  - Update on water quality subgroup
- Task Force Meeting 4 (September):
  - Deliverables (in advance): Final Tech Memo, draft enhancement strategies factsheet and recommendations
  - Review follow up items from Meeting 3, tech memo and recommendations
  - Complete discussion of harvest restrictions/management issues subgroup
  - Deep dive on enhancement strategies/recommendations
  - Update on water quality subgroup
- Task Force Meeting 5:
  - Deliverables (in advance): Final enhancement strategies factsheet and recommendations, draft prioritization memo
  - Review follow up items from Meeting 4, enhancement strategies/recommendations
  - Deep dive on water quality subgroup topics, including prioritization
  - Wrap up and next steps
- Deliverables:
  - Based on feedback, add or flush out sections of Tech Memo and prioritization memo
  - Show our work in progress
  - Would like to incorporate feedback from Task Force and subgroup participants
  - Technical Memo:
    - Inventory level of information
    - Looking at all geoduck tracts and developing buckets for factors affecting harvest
  - Ranking Method:
    - Examine specific areas and think about what methods to implement
    - Looking for feasible opportunities
  - Enhancement strategies:
    - What's been done, what can be done, what needs to be done
    - Develop recommendations for pilot projects in different regions
- Questions/comments:
  - Facilitation team is looking for feedback for understanding pathways and priority areas
  - Input on prioritization: we've heard some input on ongoing efforts around areas that currently are not open (WQ) and interest around specific sites. We've identified roadblocks for resolutions on agency coordination, funding, and resource limitations.

- Example: Inability to open a site due to lack of telemetry at CSO site due to lack of funding

**V. Action items and close out**

- Circulate DOH outfall strategy and meeting notes
- Include reminder of who is in each subgroup
- Scheduling poll for next meeting in June

## Geoduck Task Force Proviso

*The task force must investigate opportunities to reduce negative impacts to tribal treaty and state geoduck harvest and promote long-term opportunities to expand or sustain geoduck harvest. The task force must provide a report to the commissioner of public lands and the legislature, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, by December 1, 2024, that includes analysis and recommendations related to the following elements:*

- (i) The feasibility of intervention to enhance the wildstock of geoduck, including reseeded projects;*
  
- (ii) Factors that are preventing areas from being classified for commercial harvest of wildstock geoduck or factors that are leading to existing wildstock geoduck commercial tract classification downgrade, and recommendations to sustainably and cost-effectively increase the number and area of harvestable tracts, including:*
  - (A) Consideration of opportunities and recommendations presented in previous studies and reports;*
  - (B) An inventory of wastewater treatment plant and surface water runoff point sources impacting state and tribal geoduck harvesting opportunities within the classified commercial shellfish growing areas in Puget Sound;*
  - (C) A ranking of outfalls and point sources identified in (b)(ii)(B) of this subsection prioritized for future correction to mitigate downgraded classification of areas with commercial geoduck harvest opportunity;*
  - (D) An inventory of wildstock geoduck tracts that are most impacted by poor water quality or other factors impacting classification;*
  - (E) Consideration of the role of sediment load and urban runoff, and pathways to mitigate these impacts; and*
  - (F) Recommendations for future actions to improve the harvest quantity of wildstock geoduck and to prioritize areas that can attain improved classification most readily, while considering the influence of outfalls ranked pursuant to (b)(ii)(C) of this subsection.*