



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**Natural Resources**  
Peter Goldmark - Commissioner of Public Lands

# Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Implementation Committee Meeting Minutes

Prepared By: Rose Whitson

July 17, 2013, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Ecology Bellingham Field Office

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**PARTICIPANTS:** **April Markiewicz** (Western Washington University), **Marie Hitchman** (Whatcom County Beach Watchers), **Rebecca Schlotterback** (Whatcom PUD), **Elizabeth Kilanowski** (Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee and Cherry Point CSC), **Bert Rubash** (Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee), **Wendy Steffensen** (ReSources), **Steve Irving** (Audubon Society), **Kathryn Mitchell** (Alcoa-Intalco), **Michael Kyte** (ARDEA Enterprises Inc), **Fred Felleman** (Friends of the Earth), **Alan Chapman** (Lummi Nation), **Oliver Grah** (Nooksack Indian Tribe), **Dan Eisses** (Birch Bay Water and Sewer District), **Chad Tunge** (Department of Ecology), **Skip Sahlin** (SSA Marine), **Barry Wenger** (Raven's Eye Environmental Consulting), **Bill Berrs** (Cherry Point CSC), **Raina Clark** (Alcoa Intalco Works), **Gaythia Weis** (Cherry Point CSC), **Brendan Brokes** (Washington State Department of Fisheries and Wildlife), **David Palazzi** (Washington State Department of Natural Resources [DNR]), **Megan Duffy** (DNR), **Kyle Murphy** (DNR), **Betty Bookheim** (DNR), **Rose Whitson** (DNR/ Puget Sound Corps)

## INTRODUCTIONS:

1. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) opened the meeting with introductions followed by an overview of the 29 January 2013 meeting and the agenda for the current meeting. DNR also reaffirmed a few facilitation points, reminding committee members why the committee exists and that cooperation from everyone is essential.
  - DNR highly values input from the implementation committee.
  - DNR feels that diversity of perspectives and expertise is one of the strengths of this group.
  - The success of this group depends on our ability to foster effective and respectful partnerships among a diverse group representing a wide range of perspectives.
  - To successfully develop effective and respectful partnerships, everyone should feel welcome to express their perspectives and expertise while respecting and inviting others to share their perspectives and expertise as well.

## DISCUSSION:

- The group began by continuing work on the Management Action Implementation Work Plan. DNR facilitated updates about the three prioritized management actions by summarizing discussions from previous break-out groups and highlighting actions taken and next steps. There were comments and questions interspersed throughout each presentation as the group worked to guide implementation efforts. (*See Appendix A for detailed questions and comments*).
- *Stormwater and Outfalls:*
  1. DNR will use a less intense version of the DoH stormwater survey model, informed by an in-office data review. After reviewing a past stormwater survey by Whatcom County, DNR determined that there is still a need for a shoreline survey. Next steps include seeking access to private tidelands from land owners and field surveys in August and again during the wet season. The field surveys will include information about noticeable drainage, debris collection, evidence of pipe discharge, etc. This data will then be used to compile a map for the big picture overview. Anyone who desires to share expertise and take part in the surveys should contact DNR.
  2. DNR also discussed a pilot study conducted last April that will guide a larger pilot to survey outfalls. The objective of these studies is to aid outfall authorization and management and to identify areas of interest. The April dive survey sampled across six 2 m x 45 m transects. They found a) no commercially important shellfish, b) a diversity of crabs, anemones, and other benthic fauna, c) no significant aquatic vegetation, and d) a substrate ranging from muddy to sandy to gravelly to shelly. The larger pilot study in development will explore these areas in more detail: a) distribution, density, and viability of aquatic vegetation, b) ocean acidification inputs and effects, c) sediment characteristics and bathymetry, d) contamination impacts, and e) outfall status and compliance. DNR is also looking into expanding upon previous work with Mussel Watch and mussel cage studies.

### *Questions/Comments (See Appendix A for more details)*

Discussion centered on study areas not currently explored in DNR survey and pilot study plans, such as pH, effects of pilings, dock structures and UV upon effluent plumes. There was some debate about the need to conduct detailed bathymetric surveys and reminders to not “reinvent the wheel” by thoroughly investigating existing literature to avoid duplication. DNR acknowledged these concerns while respectfully reminding members that the shoreline and the outfall pilot study are just the first steps to further guide future efforts. DNR will also do its part to foster inter- and intra-agency cooperation.

- *Education and Outreach:* Wendy Steffensen and Gaythia Weis provided updates from the Cherry Point Citizen Stewardship Committee (CSC).
  1. There are 15 active CSC members with great involvement not only within the CSC but also in this implementation committee. In addition, there are about

40-60 active participants involved in the CSC's various undertakings. CSCs are citizen-run groups focused on engaging and encouraging community members to take an active role in citizen science monitoring and reserve management. The Cherry Point CSC has three focuses: 1) education and outreach, 2) science projects, and 3) technical training for citizens.

The education and outreach group has prepared two brochures. One was recently made, covering general information about the reserve. The other is a pre-existing brochure, "What do you see at the beach?" that needs only minor revisions before reprinting. The Washington Environmental Council (WEC) will also host a website.

The CSC also fulfills their education and outreach mandate indirectly via scientific monitoring and technical training efforts. To provide meaningful data, members train via surveys, field guides and other useful tools. During the surveys, each CSC member is paired with an experienced member or expert, thus facilitating information exchange. Members also gain knowledge in the crafting of each project, whether by designing the scientific layout, or developing a visitor use survey.

The CSC plans to hold a public session about the reserve and a private session for CSC members to educate members about Cherry Point issues, relevant regulations, etc. WEC is handling the organization for the private session and will present at one of the CSC's regular meetings.

2. DNR is developing on-site signs in other reserves. DNR is looking for Cherry Point partners. The CSC is considering these educational on-site signs. They also propose simple "Welcome to \_\_\_\_ Aquatic Reserve" at reserve boundaries to increase awareness of the reserve.

*Questions/Comments (See Appendix A for more details)*

There was a comment to include "facilities" in the "Pollution" section of the brochure handed out. There was also a suggestion to contact Daniel Hull (Nisqually Reach CSC) to discuss public use and visitor survey design tips.

- *Herring:*

1. DNR proposes that work be done with the forage fish technical working group in the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PSEMP), primarily to avoid duplication. PSEMP can be asked to prioritize herring and to represent Cherry Point herring. The PSEMP forage fish group is facilitated by Caroline Gibson (Northwest Straits). There is also clear and obvious interest from the list of people identified for technical expertise and guidance.
2. The 2013 herring survey results found 908 metric tons of biomass with spawning focused around Pt Whitehorn.

*Questions/Comments (See Appendix A for more details)*

Committee members were concerned about deviation from desired objectives like herring mortality, DoE permitting, and water quality because the PSEMP forage fish work group mainly focuses on food webs. Committee members also want to

ensure focus on the specific Cherry Point herring stock, as this stock is unique and in trouble. DNR will bring concerns and highlighted research needs to the PSEMP, and if the PSEMP's workgroup proves inadequate, DNR is open to pursuing other avenues to accomplish this management action. There was also a suggestion to reach out to the Puget Sound Institute to start a Cherry Point herring research group, as well as a lively discussion about acoustic trawl surveys.

*Herring Research Gaps and Needs (brainstormed)*

- seasonal plankton sampling
  - genetic tracking
  - increased communication with Vancouver and cross-border expertise
  - UV toxicity studies
  - acoustic trawl surveys
2. After a short break, Rose Whitson presented updates and results from projects managed by the DNR Aquatic Reserves Program/ Washington Conservation Corps/ Puget Sound Corps team (PSC). Current projects include forage fish beach spawn surveys, Mussel Watch, SeagrassNet, marine debris and creosote log removal, and baseline sediment sampling. These projects will continue to occur through October 2014 and as funding allows. The presentation will be available as part of DNR's larger presentation on DNR's Cherry Point webpage and distributed with these minutes.
  3. Wendy Steffensen gave a brief overview about the two science projects managed by the Cherry Point CSC. The intertidal biota surveys use a DNR- and DoE-approved Beach Watcher protocol that samples for presence/absence and beach profiles. The bird surveys were designed in collaboration with the Audubon Society and John Bower (Western Washington University) to collect data that is compatible with the data set collected by John Bower's graduate students. CSC members undergo rigorous training, complete with testing to achieve different levels and roles, in order to maintain rigor and data quality. The bird surveys occur bimonthly, excluding June – September. Data from both surveys are currently descriptive, and the future is uncertain. CSC members desire increased DNR feedback and more answers about data integration and use. One of the committee members suggested that the CSC publish an annual report summarizing data collected and interesting observations.

**CLOSING:**

The next meeting will be held in three-four months. An on-line survey will be sent out to everyone in the next month or so asking for possible meeting dates.

- Next actions for DNR:
  1. Forward DNR's presentation, complete with PSC updates, to the group.
  2. Identify next actions to further develop the priority management actions and/or begin developing other management actions.