



February 11, 2015

DRAFT Meeting Notes

Dungeness River Management Team

Guy Cole Convention Center, Sequim, WA

2:00 – 5:00 P.M.

Notes prepared by: Shawn Hines

Team Members/Alternates in Attendance:

Scott Chitwood, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
Judy Larson, Protect the Peninsula's Future
Robert Brown, Dungeness Beach Association
Shawn Hines, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe (alt)
Cathy Lear, Clallam County (alt)
Mary Ellen Winborn, Clallam County
Robert Beebe, Riverside Property Owner
Don Hatler, Sports Fisheries
Tom Martin, Clallam County PUD #1(advisory member)
Ann Soule, City of Sequim
Michele Canale, North Olympic Land Trust
Matt Heins, Estuary-Tidelands/Riverside Property Owners
Joe Holtrop, Clallam Conservation District (advisory member)
Marc McHenry, US Forest Service (advisory member)

Brian Phipps, Taylor Shellfish
Bill Dewey, Taylor Shellfish
Marlene Meaders, Confluence Environmental
Christopher Burns, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
Ralph Riccio, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
Phil Martin, resident
Ivan Stocker, Graysmarsh
Rebecca Benjamin, NOSC
Bob Lake, Sequim resident
Kathy Duff, Dungeness resident
Gary Baymor, Dungeness resident
Pat Miklos, Dungeness resident

Others in Attendance:

Ida Fintel, OCA
Jude Anderson, citizen
Kevin Ryan, citizen
David and Karen Hull, citizens
Laura Hoberrecht, NMFS
Betty Stahl, homeowner
Andy Brastad, Clallam County Environmental Health
Shirley Anderson, citizen
Aven Anderson, citizen
Erin Ewald, Taylor Shellfish
Diani Taylor, Taylor Shellfish
Michael Tramch, Taylor Shellfish
Coffee Miklos, Dungeness resident
Bob Lynette, Protect the Peninsula's Future

Melissa Soares, resident
Les Jones, resident
Jim Gifi, resident
Dan Stahler, resident
Ken Wiersema, resident
Liz Bumgarner, resident
Dick Bumgarner, resident,
Enid Phreaner, resident
Carolyn Heins, resident
Ken Stringor, resident
Karen Rozbicki Stringer, resident
Dow Lambert, resident
Shanon Dell, resident
Debbie Crist, John L. Scott Real Estate
Steve Allen, Clallam Ditch
Derek Barbe, resident
Marguerite Grover, Sequim Association of Realtors

I. Introductions/Review Agenda/Review & Approve December 2014 and January 2015 DRMT Draft Meeting Notes

Scott Chitwood called meeting to order. Introductions were made, sign in sheets circulated. Judy Larson moved and Robert Brown seconded the motion to approve the December 2014 meeting notes. Matt Heins moved and Robert Beebe seconded the motion to approve the January 2015 meeting notes. The motions were unanimously approved.

Public Comment

- Judy Larson mentioned that Bob Lynette and Darlene Schanfield are both on the Board for Protect the Peninsula's Future.
- Cathy Lear mentioned upcoming oiled wildlife training sponsored by Clallam Marine Resources Committee and Islands Oil Spill Association. The training will give hands-on experience handling birds. Classes are scheduled for March 28 and April 11. Space is limited.
- Robert Brown indicated that the SNOTEL site is recording almost no snow; wondered if any actions are being taken to address low flows. Scott Chitwood noted that there was no one from Department of Ecology present at the meeting, but he said that Ecology does have plans to put actions in place. There are record low flows all over the state. Robert said it would be good to update the Team. Scott said we would communicate with Mike Gallagher for future meeting update. *[Note: This topic is now scheduled for the April 8 DRMT meeting].*

- Scott Chitwood announced recent changes in DRMT membership. Changes since 2008 are documented in a joint memo between the Tribe and County. The most recent changes to membership include:

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| July 2014 | Daniel Dafoe steps down (retires) as WDFW rep | WDFW Rep and alternate TBD |
| October 2014 | Mike Gallagher replaces Cynthia Nelson as DOE rep | DOE Alternate TBD |
| October 2014 | Bob Caldwell steps down as WUA Alternate | WUA Alternate TBD |
| December 2014 | Ann Soule replaces Paul Haines as Sequim rep | David Garlington added as co-alternate (with Pete Tjemslanc) |
| January 2015 | James Beebe replaces Al Moore as Alternate for Riverside property owners | |
| February 2015 | Mary Ellen Winborn replaces Sheila Miller as County rep | Kevin LoPicollo added as co-alternate (with Cathy Lear) |

- Andy Brastad announced that one of the sources of funding the County uses for septs, monitoring and outreach goes away in 2017.
- Judy Larson noted the high flows at the Railroad Bridge. She also reminded everyone that the final SMP meeting is coming up in Port Angeles, February 18.

II. Sequim-Dungeness Bird Surveys (*Bob Boekelheide, Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society*)

- Bob provided an informative presentation on both the recent Christmas Bird Count, as well as some results from a project he's been working on for the North Olympic Salmon Coalition – conducting bird surveys in the project area for the 3 Crabs Estuarine/Nearshore restoration.
- Bob noted that we have the record for the highest count in the state – for 40 years. Christmas counts cover a 15-mile diameter circle. The center of the Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count is near the intersection of Brown and Port Williams Roads, so the circle includes from Dungeness Spit to the foothills south of Sequim, and from Diamond Point to McDonald Creek. Most of the Dungeness watershed is encompassed by this study area.
- Please see forthcoming presentation handout for details on the bird count results.
- Part 2 of Bob's presentation was on Bird Surveys at 3 Crabs:
- Mission
 - 1. Document bird use along shoreline over a seasonal cycle
 - 2. Document long term changes.
- Methods
 - 3 survey locations: 3 Crabs beach, Helen's Pond, Abernathy
 - Monthly high counts of all birds at 3 Crabs study area (just the highest from each month): 96 total species at 3 Crabs July 14 – January 15
 - Rank of most abundant species at 3 Crabs by 2 months per July/Aug plus Nov/Dec
- American wigeons – big drop at 3 Crabs, partly because its warm, so they are all over the place.
- Gull high counts (California gull, Glaucors-winged/Olympic gull, Mew gull) – California gull high in Sept., by December all gone.
- Fewer brant at 3 Crabs.
- What does it all mean?
 - Thousand. Use 3 crabs beach , mudflat, nearshore habitat
 - Dominant groups of birds using area, mutual awareness of predators (especially Bald eagle, Peregrine)
 - Area already a defacto wildlife refuge, excellent habitat, human distance
 - Few brant
- Bob had some questions he hoped Taylor Shellfish would respond to:
 - Clearly the area is heavily used by birds; some of the highest concentrations of birds in areas. Conflicts between birds and geoduck. How will impacts be minimized?
 - WDOH monitors bay. How will you deal with thousands of birds pooping near geoduck beds?

- How will you ensure geoduck protective devices won't cause harm to birds or become debris in bay?
- How will eelgrass be protected?
- "We are watching"

III. Dungeness Bay Geoduck Farm (*Marlene Meaders and Bill Dewey, Taylor Shellfish*)

- Bill Dewey introduced himself, and noted that Taylor Shellfish has been growing since 1890, and currently has 550 employees. They are committed to working with communities where they have shellfish. Right now they have 11,000 acres in the U.S. The area in Dungeness Bay under consideration for growing shellfish is possible due to the conditionally-approved status. Water quality is always the biggest obstacle in shellfish growing operations. Bill Serves on an advisory committee with Andy Brastad.
- Shellfish farming is very heavily regulated, time-consuming process with many steps and challenges, depending on the county. Taylor Shellfish is still discussing the proposal with Clallam County (it isn't final yet).
- Geoduck culture amounts to the most abundant biomass in all of Puget Sound.
- They are grown by seed production, no artificial food (produce algae in hatchery). As soon as they are big enough, they are transferred to a nursery.
- Initial phase – nursery tubes (3 per tube) with nets to keep predators out. Similar to tubes protecting trees at restoration sites. Have changed color of tubes from white to grey, to blend in with water/landscape.
- Now looking into eliminating these kind of tubes, experimenting with plastic mesh tubes instead of PVC. Anticipate using the mesh tubes in Dungeness, no nets required, stay in ground better. After 1-2 years, tubes come out, then nets are deployed for several months, then removed.
- Visual impact has been a concern expressed by some. Most of the time the tide is high and won't see.
- On a 30-acre farm, will have different age cycles, so will always have tubes, just in different areas of the 30 acres.
- There has been concern expressed about sound (harvest pumps, for example), so they are trying to address that; will try to come up with quieter harvest pump.
- Bill introduced Marlene Meaders, Senior Marine Biologist with Confluence Environmental Company. Marlene presented information on the project, plus results of research regarding potential environmental effects.
- While the project area includes 348 acres of leased intertidal area, only 30 acres are suitable as culture area.
- There is eel grass, kelp surrounding the area, protected by a buffer.
- Culture area uses a seven-year cycle. Plant over a 10-year period – ½ acre for year 1, 5 acres by year 8. 5 acres is the maximum acreage planted in any one year..
- Samish Bay is a good example of a culture area that also had nearby eelgrass. It's considered fully sustainable, as far as both eel grass and geoduck.
- Marlene noted the problem with nitrates, and ulvoid proliferation in the presence of excess nutrients. Ulvoids can smother eel grass.
- The rest of Marlene's presentation went over potential environmental effects from planting activities, birds and aquaculture gear, visibility of farm, water quality/clarity and bioextraction, harvest activities, etc. The summary slide reads:
 - Potential local effects would be controlled through a phased planting schedule (0.5 acres to 5.0 acres)
 - Planting plan provides separation by time (planting over a 10-year period), is phased in slowly, and suitable habitat results in a natural separation by space
 - The proposed culture area is well away from nesting habitat or restoration efforts
 - Eelgrass beds and attached kelp beds were defined based on a conservative approach and would be protected using 16-ft buffers
 - Bird interactions are predominantly neutral or even positive; there are rare cases that involve potential entanglement over a 40-year history of using predator exclusion netting

- Disturbance at the scale of current harvest practices is within the range of natural variation experienced by fish and benthic communities
- Potential negative effects appear to be minimal or insignificant, based on existing literature
- *To see entire PowerPoint, go to DRMT website, click on the Meeting Info Tab and scroll down to Meeting Notes, or follow this link: <http://home.olympus.net/~dungenesswc/team.htm>*

Public Comment

- The rest of the meeting included a Question/Answer period related to the geoduck proposal. Some of the Q/A is summarized below:
 - **Q: Where can we learn more about Nationwide 48?**
 - A: These are the ACOE conditions associated with geoduck operations. Taylor will provide a link for DRMT website.
 - **Q: What do they eat in the tubes?**
 - A: microscopic algae in the water
 - **Q: How many do the harvesting?**
 - A: 2 harvesters, 1 bander for every farm.
 - **Q: What is the net entanglement issue?**
 - A: Potential entanglement of birds. When tubes underground, nets extend. The mesh nets are ¾ stretch, 3/8-1/2 inch squares. The nets might also be potential safety zone for salmon - to keep away from predators.
 - **Q: Any other project example that is in a wetland recovery area and wildlife refuge?**
 - A: Unique in being close to refuge, but all areas we work in are sensitive.
 - **Q: Are any prophylactic treatments given?**
 - A: No, no chemicals/drugs used on farm.
 - **Q: Any impacts to Dungeness crabs?**
 - A: Trying to exclude them so they don't eat the geoduck; when nets are removed, there is a feeding frenzy, due to the amount of water life protected and growing under the nets.
 - **Q: Are nets marked?**
 - A: Not sure yet; under discussion. Dungeness Farms thinks it would be good to mark.
 - **Q: Where are you in the permitting process?**
 - A: Talking with agencies to hear initial concerns. Hope to start in next couple of months with permitting. Heard that a "conditional use permit" would be issued. There will still be a lot of opportunities for public input. Haven't started yet formally.
 - **Q: Does lease contain option for other conditional use farming?**
 - A: Yes. Matt responded that Ecology is urging them to also do Olympia Oysters; not sure there is a suitable area, though.
 - **Q: Who are the predators? Logs knocking things loose? How many nets lost?**
 - A: Predators vary with life cycle stage; early on it is fish, ducks, etc. Need tubes/net early on. At 1-2 years, geoduck are down two feet, beyond predators. So, tubes are pulled off. Some ducks (scoters, for example); starry flounder have eaten tops of siphons, killing geoduck. Logs haven't been a problem; used to farming in this type of environment.
 - **Q: If landowner notices management not as it should, what's the recourse?**
 - A: Can be a condition of permit (as with other sites). Matt added that the reason they went with Taylor Shellfish is that they have proved to be good stewards, plus they are a leader in water quality efforts.
 - **Q: Can you talk about the geoduck market, how it relates to local economy?**
 - A: Taylor sells all over the world, a lot of local (I-5) restaurants; 50% sold domestically (geoduck); our company unique – in trying to build local market/diversity. In general, each acre planted translates to 1 FT employee; when fully developed (30 acres), it will mean 30 jobs just on the farm itself.
 - **Q: Would Taylor Shellfish be in favor of a third party EIS?**

- A: Research has been done on effects of having this geoduck farm. Happy to discuss, but won't commit to that today. Taylor Shellfish has been doing this a long time; we have a good record on environmental practices. Don't want to adversely impact environment. Recognize some shoreline homeowners don't want this. All we ask is to look into our company/family. Matt added that Dungeness Farms has had a particular interest in water quality since the downgrade. Dungeness Farms was concerned about the eelgrass and bird. Dungeness Farms likes Taylor Shellfish's plan with regards to eelgrass and water quality issues.
- **Q: This is a neighborhood; do your other farms have such residential areas nearby? Are there other benefits with going with Taylor Shellfish?**
- A: We encourage employees to interact with the communities.
- **Q: Seems like the right project in the wrong location, especially with mouth of Dungeness and Meadowbrook being so close. An EIS was required. Will the approach be by water only? We're trying to upgrade salmon habitat at the same time. Seems like too much going on there, taking dikes out, etc.**
- A: The crews will come by boat. Manager by land.
- **Q: Have you considered effects of dynamic environment? After dikes moved, more change, etc. Very dynamic area. Sand bars always changing. Climate change, etc.**
- A: Matt responded that shellfish have been around a long time, experiencing environmental change. The Tribe had shellfish growing there before the downgrade.
- At this point, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe Council Member (and Natural Resources Committee Member) Kurt Grinnell introduced himself to explain where the Tribe stands on this issue. He stated the Tribe has a geoduck and oyster farm in Sequim Bay, so "we are in this business". We and other Tribes, too, appreciate Taylor Shellfish, their practices, and the job opportunities that will come. Our shellfish are doing well right now, hope to harvest in the fall (5 acres). We use larger nets, have never captured a bird. No entanglement of fish, crab, etc. We are comfortable with and in support of Taylor Shellfish and their plans for Dungeness Bay. Also appreciates how easy the company is to talk with.
- **Q: Impact on birds? Major migration route. Will birds get caught in the nets? Schoolhouse meeting showed pictures of this.**
- A: We're concerned, too. We don't see it happening. Bird interactions are rare --it can happen, but those are isolated instances.
- **Q: Real estate – heard realtors need to tell potential home owners about it.**
- A: Haven't heard of reduced property values anywhere, from our review. Don't know of any studies. In some areas, drives property values up.
- **Q: Can you expand this operation here? In front of people's property?**
- A: Matt responded that the majority on 3 Crabs are private owners. It's up to individual owners to lease with Taylor. Bill said that it has happened in the past. Don't know. This 30-acre farm would be our largest. Expensive/time-consuming permit process – so that's why we are leasing larger sites – to provide options.
- **Q: Why lease 348 acres if only planting 30 acres?**
- A: Matt responded that Taylor signed the lease two years ago. In that time, have determined that only 30 acres are available. That 30-acre area is the only suitable spot to grow. Will be outlined in the conditional use permit.
- **Q: Do you spray for burrowing worms (which affects bees)?**
- A: No, don't spray anything on geoduck farms or in Puget Sound. In other areas, have had to for burrowing shrimp. That pesticide has been phased out. New permit for another pesticide.
- **Q: Enormous amount of funding has gone into cleaning up Dungeness Bay. This seems to be the best thing for water quality due to the filtering effects of clams, oyster, etc. The more the better.**
- A: They're looking at this benefit in the Chesapeake. NOAA Fisheries trying to advance the industry. Washington lead the country in shellfish production right now.
- **Q: How do you mitigate against shellfish toxins?**

- A: Natural shellfish sanitation requires monitoring for those toxins. Cutoff level. We maintain a diversity of geography with our farms. “Don’t put all your eggs in one basket”. Have multiple locations.
- **Q: Plan for Dungeness Pier? How many days per month?**
- A: Matt said DNR had offered funding to remove pilings, but Port doesn’t want to do it right now. He noted that they are working with OPAS for solution on putting new purple martin boxes after pilings are finally gone.
- **Q: Amount of human activity related to farm?**
- A: There will be surges in activity depending on stage. Installing PVC pipes – 5-7 days max. Planting can take 10 days, but can be done at same time as pipe installation. Remove tubes two years later. Seven year cycle on one acre. Higher amount of human activity in summer. Bob Boekelheide said the least amount of bird activity would be April-August, so from his perspective it would be best to plant and be done June.
- **Q: Salmon runs Kennedy Creek, well farmed inlet.**
- A: Most intensely farmed; one of the best salmon runs.
- **Q: Light pollution?**
- A: Targeted, head lamps.
- **Q: Tests on geoducks themselves to check toxins?**
- A: Yes, for red tide (DOH), metals.

IV. Other Business

- Shawn announced that Streamkeepers requested a letter of support from DRMT for their continued biological stream monitoring. Motion approved for Shawn to write letter on DRMT’s behalf and provide to Streamkeepers *[now posted on DRMT website]*.

V. Adjourn

| Action Items or Items Needing Follow-up | Date Recommended | Date Completed |
|---|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Drought planning | 2/11/15 | Planned for 4/8/15 DRMT Agenda |
| Taylor Shellfish materials on DRMT website | 2/11/15 | To be completed ASAP |
| Letter of support for Streamkeepers biological monitoring | 2/11/15 | 2/17/15 |