

**San Juan Initiative
Policy Group Meeting
2/4/2008
Elements Hotel, Friday Harbor, San Juan Island
Draft – Meeting Summary**

Policy Group

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Ron Hendrickson

Next Meeting on Orcas, March 26th 2008, at the Orcas Firehouse.

Decisions:

- ~Approved Draft Meeting Summary Dec. 5th with one change on pg 4: SJ County has 50% growth changed to 50% built out.
- ~The Policy Group will send a letter to the County Council with copies sent to the CAO Citizen Review Committee, Pete Rose and Ron Henrickson identifying gaps in protection that the SJI would like considered through the update of the CAO.
- ~Case Study Criteria will be amended to reflect Policy Group suggestions and staff will send out the final criteria for review.
- ~Letter to Puget Sound Partnership requesting a baseline understanding of ecosystem health in San Juan County will be amended to reflect Policy Group suggestions and will be sent from Co-Chairs after sending to all Policy Group for review.

Announcements:

San Juan County stewardship network is being rebuilt to provide a directory of organizations involved in promoting opportunities for environmental stewardship. Conservation Summit on April 19, Lopez Island. Event includes field trips, exhibition hall and speakers. Public invited.

Discussion of Organizational Structure:

Staff will amend organizational structure document to include advisory committees in description of structure.

Consultants are hired and managed by an “oversight committee” consisting of representatives from Surfrider, Co-Chairs of Policy Group and Salmon Manager at Puget Sound Partnership.

Discussion of Identified Protection Issues

From discussion, staff will amend issues to read:

Findings to date have identified six potential reasons for the failure or success of protection efforts. These issues (both positive and negative) include;

- Issue 1: Effects of gaps in regulatory protection programs on shoreline modification
- Issue 2: Effects from the level of staff expertise and access to technical tools in county government and local non-profit organizations, on shoreline modifications.
- Issue 3: Effects of development patterns on shoreline modifications
- Issue 4: Effects of type of ownership and overlaying land use and protective layers on shoreline modification
- Issue 5: Effects of coordination within County and between County and state or federal government on shoreline modifications
- Issue 6: Effects of non-regulatory programs on shoreline modification

Should the SJI send a letter to the County requesting that the update of the Critical Areas Ordinance consider the protection gaps identified through the document “Guidelines for Identification of Gaps and Potential Impacts?”

Comments from Policy Group:

Sediment from feeder bluffs occurs at a natural rate that provides sand to adjacent beaches which provide habitat. Sediment from run off of construction or other human induced activities results in sediments and rates of sedimentation that are markedly

different from feeder bluffs: size, amount of organic material, rates of run off and location of sediment inputs.

Is eelgrass actually impacted by docks given that we know that eelgrass has natural variability.

Megan D.: Yes, docks have a proven impact on eelgrass abundance directly under the docks.

The Guidelines provide a sound rationale and logical conclusions.

What are the setback requirements from eroded areas? Gave two examples of erosion on Lopez and how the homes may need bulkheads to protect them but problem could be solved by setting back the homes further from the bluff not requiring shoreline construction.

Why is the county's protection of forage fish beaches deemed vague?

In county code there are no specific requirements for what to do on forage fish beaches if armoring or docks are requested by property owners. The response is up to the planner and there isn't guidance in the code.

Ron Hendrickson commented that he wasn't aware of any new armoring on forage fish beaches, most are for repairs which are exempt from regs.

How can the county issue a permit for a code violation, specifically regarding clearing and grading?

Ron Hendrickson addresses this by saying that the county only gives after-the-fact permits to those activities that would've been issued a permit if they had applied. Those who are out of code compliance can be taken to court and the non-permitted structure or change to property can be removed – though that hasn't happened.

The SJI needs to consider how to retain the buildability of lots and foster building in a way that reduces impacts to the environment.

Kevin states the importance of having the entire support of the SJI policy group, and that the letter should be submitted to the County Council.

All Policy Group members but Sam Buck and Jeri Ahrenius support sending the letter. Sam and Jeri chose not to block the letter.

Decision: The letter will be drafted by staff, circulated by email for review by all group members, and that Jonathan and Kevin will review and send the final draft of the

letter to the County Council and CAO citizen committee. Kevin and Jonathan will approve the final draft of the letter.

Are there additional criteria that the Policy Group would like to add to staff suggestions prior to approval?

The case study is designed to provide the Policy Group in depth information about the effectiveness of protection efforts: regulatory, educational and incentive efforts. There are essentially three components to the case study: documenting extent of shoreline modification, permit review/protection program analysis/ and community engagement within case study neighborhoods. The gathering of field data will begin in early March, permit review and analysis will happen in March, April and May and community engagement will occur in April and May.

Kevin points out that if the San Juan location is moved north and the West Sound location on Orcas were moved this would enable the inclusion of a large amount of existing data on habitat.

Jim Johansen reiterated the importance of a balanced case study site, not necessarily inclusive of only areas with data.

Megan Dethier: Existing data may be of little value given the need to have consistent data at all four case study locations.

Suggested that case study areas be familiar to the public so that the public can identify with the areas.

Include an area with a UGA or master-planned resort area.

Danna suggests 3 criteria: impact of ferries (docks, traffic, etc... transportation), exposure to weather, current and tides, will there be a least harmed area, or “pristine” area represented?

Jim Kramer states that the initiative is not comparing undisturbed vs. disturbed areas and how those areas are different in function.

Additional criteria can be submitted to Amy via e-mail.

Kevin states that staff should be allowed to prioritize criteria and then send out to policy group.

Decision: Additional criteria that staff will consider adding:

~Areas with a variety of human activities: marinas, public docks, commercial shellfish operations etc.

- ~Areas with ferry impact.
- ~ An area that is “pristine”
- ~An area that includes a UGA or hamlet plan.
- ~A variety of exposures: tides, wind, waves.
- ~Areas that the community can relate to, see, identify as “like my neighborhood”
- ~Area that represents issues of greater Puget Sound

Discussion of “Successful Community Outreach”

Amy asked for volunteers for Community Outreach sub-committee:

Decisions: Outreach Sub-committee volunteers: Patty Miller and Danna Kinsey

Policy Group identified the following groups of people as important to reach through community engagement:

Developers, engineers, builders, others affiliated with construction industry

People that are not already familiar with Initiative and other efforts to improve environment.

School children

Boating public, through marinas, yacht clubs, etc.

Important to work in a coordinated way with other non profits and those already doing outreach to community.

Proposal to have a “benefit” evening with a big name speaker to raise awareness of Initiative.

Discussion of Baseline Proposal to Partnership

Need to increase the specificity of the letter to reflect what we are really asking for: we want the PSP to fund research to fill the gaps in our understanding of the ecosystem to improve management.

Lincoln would like the letter to go directly to the PSP representative.

Decision: The Policy Group will send a letter to the Puget Sound Partnership requesting that the PSP fund the research necessary to provide a baseline understanding of our ecosystem. This letter will dovetail with work already underway by the Science Subcommittee of the Marine Resources Committee.

Next Steps:

Budget: The project is now funded as it was envisioned though there is a need for an additional 30-50K.

Kevin states that he believes it is important to secure funding for implementation