

**San Juan Initiative
Policy Group Meeting**

**Meeting 1: Prioritizing Protection
April 27, 8 am -11:30 am
Friday Harbor House: San Juan Room, Friday Harbor**

**Meeting Summary – Approved May 21
Prepared by Amy Windrope**

List of Participants:

Kevin Ranker, Co-Chair
Jeri Ahrenius
Tom Cowan
Jonathan White
Sam Buck
Patty Miller
Peter Kilpatrick
Lincoln Bormann
Lynn Bahrych
Liz Illg
Nick Jones
Steve Simpson
Ron Zee
Kit Rawson

Presentations:

Jody Kennedy, Marine Stewardship Area Plan
Surfrider Foundation
Jacque White, Ecology of San Juan Islands
The Nature Conservancy

Staff:

Amy Windrope, San Juan Initiative
Carol MacIlroy, Shared Strategy for Puget Sound
Jim Kramer, Shared Strategy for Puget Sound

Policy Group Members Absent:

Lisa Byers

Public in Attendance:

Jack Cory
Laura Arnold
Richard Ceville
David Loyd

Key points from the meeting

1. Policy Group and staff need to clearly articulate what success looks like at each phase and how each phase builds to a clear final goal.
2. The Initiative needs to pull existing information from existing or recent local processes to inform discussion of where we need to go.
3. Staff needs to provide a clear map of what products will be delivered and how the Policy Group will be engaged in that process.

Meeting Summary:

1. Beginnings

The meeting began with a warm introduction by Kevin Ranker welcoming the Policy Group to its first meeting. The meeting was facilitated by Jim Kramer, Executive Director of Shared Strategy for Puget Sound. Jim continued the introductions by asking Policy Group members and public to introduce themselves and share their favorite thing about living in the Islands.

2. Why you? Why the Initiative? Why now?

Kevin continued the discussion by explaining the national interest in local ecosystem based approaches. The group wanted more clarification about what an ecosystem based approach would look like and how it would be different than current approaches to resource management.

- There is a huge amount of interest nationally for how local communities can lead the way in protecting the ecosystem.
- San Juan County has an incredible amount of effort and people engaged in various parts of ecosystem protection
- The Initiative is focused on how well we are protecting what we have in SJ County from an implementation perspective. How effective we are has two components: implementation of programs (Policy) and effectiveness of program on the ecosystem (science). The Initiative is focused on analyzing how effective existing programs are from a policy perspective in full recognition of the importance of understanding the ecological piece of effectiveness. The monitoring and scientific studies are beyond the scope of the Initiative. Policy Group members are very interested in exploring how the work of the Initiative can highlight the need for monitoring and baseline understanding of ecosystem health.
- The Initiative is focused on understanding how well the regulatory, incentive, educational and voluntary programs are working for ecosystem protection.
- The Initiative has four phases:
 - Phase 1: choose priorities
 - Phase 2: evaluate programs
 - Phase 3: craft solutions
 - Phase 4: advocate and communicate for action

- The Policy Group's leadership is critical in determining the framework of the phases as well as deciding on the priorities, finalizing evaluation, generation of solutions and communicating for change.
- Policy Group members highlighted the need for more information about the products and decision points that will come out of each phase.
- The Initiative was kept intentionally vague in order to keep the focus on local leadership and local solutions to local problems.
- Policy Group members emphasized the importance of getting baseline monitoring data that would work in conjunction with the Initiative's policy process. In addition, the Initiative should highlight what data would be most useful in analyzing effectiveness of ecosystem protection.
- Tangible outcomes from Initiative should be described early in process in order to drive work plan.
- The San Juan Initiative needs to be a public process, we can't be cloistered. The Islands work neighborhood by neighborhood and the Initiative needs to address

3. What is special about the San Juan Islands: Ecology and Community
- Jacques White, The Nature Conservancy gave an overview of why the ecology of the San Juan Islands is important. Jacques highlighted how extraordinary, on a global scale, an archipelago in an inland sea is. He also focused on the level of biodiversity in the islands that is critical to protect as part of a much larger focus on protecting biodiversity throughout the west coast. He ended by encouraging the Policy Group to consider a terrestrial process similar to the Marine Stewardship Area Plan and suggested that The Nature Conservancy would be willing to entertain a partnership.
- Encouraged the Policy Group to think about how much of the ecosystem do we need to protect in order to define success.

Tom Cowan led the next discussion about how the ecology of the islands has shaped the character of the islands. He gave a quick summary of the character of the islands that was both insightful and engaging. Policy Group members generally agreed with the assessment and highlighted the struggle of working across islands. Policy Group members reinforced Tom's summary that the Islands separate us from each other and make it hard to know what is going on at County wide scale.

- What do we need to know about the differences or similarities of the Islands as we move the process forward?
 - One Island community likely does not know what the other Island community is doing.
 - All Islands share a love for beauty and tranquility.
 - Need to address people where they are, in their neighborhood, on their island.

4. Are we achieving the protection we want?

Following Jacques' talk and Tom's summary of island character, Policy Group members were asked to reflect on what they are most concerned about protecting in the San Juan Islands.

- Policy Group members care deeply about the ecological state of the Islands. Members shared their hopes for the Islands in terms of protecting the beauty of the Islands and the ecology that supports the beauty. Policy Members are concerned about the human community in the Islands and how the human community is changing from a rural small town community to a more transient population that is disconnected from each other and from the natural environment.
- Concerns for the Islands' increasing population but also about changing demographics on the Islands. Despite the changes seen, there are also positive changes, the ability to make a living at farming have increased. We can't see the future so our protection decisions should limit the creation of infrastructure that will limit our future choices.
- Brief summary of what Policy Group highlighted:
 - Loss of middle class
 - Increasing amounts of toxics in environment
 - Rate of change is too fast
 - Increase of population
 - Clean water and adequate supply
 - Need to educate, not herd people
 - Conflict of values between long time residents and new residents
 - Need to balance regulations and provide ways for private property owners to protect existing habitats on their land
 - For protection to be successful it must include individual stewardship and understanding, education, voluntary and incentive programs and regulatory approaches.

5. Building on existing processes and community outreach

Jody Kennedy from Surfrider Foundation summarized the Marine Stewardship Area Plan and some of the critical outcomes from the plans. One of the most critical outcomes was that of the 7 biological targets, all of them were rated in fair condition. The strategies that the Stewardship Area Plan has developed are voluntary.

- Policy Group members asked to receive a copy of the Plan.
- The Initiative will build on the MSA Plan's findings and recommendations by using the information to determine priorities (Phase 1) for the Initiative and also to help understand how effective various strategies (Phase 2) are in protecting ecosystem functions.
- Initiative must put the existing protection puzzle pieces together. Determine early what plans, approaches, and information is already out there and how and when the community will be engaged.

Conclusion of Meeting:

The meeting concluded promptly at 11:30 with several agenda items unfinished. These items will be picked up at the next meeting.

Agenda

1. Beginnings (10 min): Kevin
2. Why you? Why the Initiative? Why now?
 - a. Statement of purpose: Why now? National perspective. Kevin
 - b. Why the Initiative? Amy
 - c. Why you? Amy
3. What is special about the San Juan Islands: Ecology and Community
 - a. Jacque White, The Nature Conservancy: What is special about San Juan Islands ecology and why does it matter?
 - b. What is special about Island culture and how does that culture interact with the ecology? Group Discussion kicked off by Tom Cowan
4. Are we achieving the protection we want?
 - a. Short presentation by Amy
 - i. Summarize themes that emerged through one on one discussion
 - ii. Summarize regional protection priorities
 - b. Group discussion led by Jim:
 - iii. What are your core concerns for the Islands ecology?
4. Building on existing processes and community outreach
 - a. Jody Kennedy - What can the MSA Plan tell us about the marine system?
 - i. Key recommendations for protection from MSA Plan.
 - ii. How could the San Juan Initiative further the MSA Plan?
5. Specific example of how the San Juan Initiative process will work
 - a. Building on existing plans like the MSA Plan: focus on eelgrass
 - b. Structure of San Juan Initiative: Four phases- Amy
 - c. Group Discussion – Jim
 - i. Dealing with complex issues and imperfect science
 - ii. Defining “effective” in this context
 - iii. Testing solutions
6. Next Steps: Amy (5min)

San Juan Initiative

7. Communicating the San Juan Initiative to the Community: Draft project description: Jim (15 min)