

Monument Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
August 27, 2020

Attending: Tom Reynolds, Tracey Cottingham, Mike Jonas, Erin Corra , Jackie Ferry, Gene Helfman, Rick Wigre, Del Guenthur, Genevie Thomas, Kurt Pindel, Rich Bailey, Lauren Pidot, Jeff Clark, Skeet Townley, Marcia deChadenedes, Stormy Purser, Scott Schulyer, Lena Tso, Josephine Jefferson, Kerry Lyste, Sam Barr, Patti Gobin, Libby Nelson, Bill White, Chris Guidotti, Ruth Milner, Jamie Stephens, Zach Radmer, Alex Greisemer, Tom McDowel, Karen Reagan, Jennifer Brown-Scott, and varying numbers of the public in attendance.

Location: Zoom and via phone

9:00 – Matt Christensen from the Oregon State Office gave an introduction to Zoom and best practices for a smooth meeting.

9:05 – Tom Reynolds (MAC Chair) opened the meeting and led a review of the agenda, and an acceptance of the last meeting minutes which were approved unanimously by the MAC. The annual vote for chair and vice-chair were also held and Tom was reappointed unanimously as was Vice-Chair, Tracey Cottingham. Then a statement representing the MAC was read re the BLM not meeting their legal obligation under the proclamation, engaging with the MAC, allowing them to interpret public input or discuss disputed topics, such as dispersed camping, target shooting and public access to cultural and environmentally sensitive landscapes, including Category A and B Rocks. Also, the MAC is handicapped due to the lack of appointment of three members – local government, landowners, and cooperating tribes. Statement entered into the record. Also submitted are the governor’s consistency review letter (key points read aloud) to the record and The Wilderness Society to the record (key points reiterated).

9:15 – An introduction of MAC members and invited subject matter experts was made.

9:25 – BLM Spokane District Manager, Kurt Pindel greeted all attendees and gave a brief message expressing his regret to not be able to meet everyone in person as well as his gratitude for the high level of engagement by the MAC and the community as a whole. He spoke of the cultural inventories effort, to complete a 100% inventory in all locations, no implementation to occur on a site without that being completed. He underscored that the proposed RMP has been held up from going further, awaiting this meeting to hear from the MAC, in order to integrate their input.

9:35 – Lauren Pidot, lead BLM planner, provided an overview of the planning process and plan implementation and answered questions from attendees for clarification, including the differences between the draft and the proposed, and what is happening presently. She clarified the difference between the RMP (30,000 feet) and plan implementation following the signing of the decision for the RMP (e.g., work on the ground) and emphasized that engagement by the MAC and the public would continue to be important.

9:40 – Subject Matter Expert Presentations began with Tribal representatives, Many asked that their written statements be included in the official record.

-Lena Tso, Lummi Nation THPO: declined to comment at this time.

-Bill White, Lower Elwa Klallam THPO: declined

-Patti Gobin, Tulalip, Special Projects: expressed extreme displeasure that a tribal representative was not appointed. There should be direct input between the sovereign nations and the federal government. She thanked the agency for the cultural surveys work.

-Libby Nelson, Tulalip legal aid: also expressed her displeasure and implored the BLM to appoint a tribal representative, stating that representation of Tribes was critical. Submitted the Chairwoman's letter of concern re lack of engagement to the record.

-Josephine Jefferson, Swinomish THPO: Was also upset about a lack of a tribal representative. She asked not for a response, but that the BLM should show action of commitment.

-Stormy Purser, Port Gamble Sklallam THPO also was upset re lack of representation

-Sam Barr, Stillaguamish Dep THPO pushed for representation, and also encouraged the agency to keep in mind that regardless of the presence of artifacts and what might be a significant landscape.

MAC members Tracy Cottingham, Tom Reynolds, Jackie Ferry, Gene Helfman, and Rick Wigre weighed in on the importance of the BLM having all of these cultural inventories accomplished and looked forward to greater understanding of the cultural setting.

10:40 – Jamie Stevens, local government representative and former MAC member also read aloud the SJ County input to the proposed and requested that it serve as a statement to the official record of the meeting. The Governor's Consistency Review included concerns shared by the county. As the majority of work on the ground is accomplished by county citizens working as volunteers, the County feels like it should speak for them. Jamie Stephens stated that proposed dispersed camping is opposed to county planning guidelines for natural areas, is seen as an extreme fire hazard, a decision that shouldn't be made without the staffing and equipment to support it, and also in conflict with state and fed legal guidelines for protected species.

10:30 – Ruth Milner, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife – presented a statement of the vulnerability and potential demise of numerous birds and marine mammals should the dispersed camping move forward. She stated that, with growing numbers in recreation, including kayaking and boating, the prioritization of human activity over these animals resting, roosting, pups, etc., as well as the confusion that it would lead to for the NWR, could be devastating. Regarding Target Shooting, she spoke to the likely damage to the setting and to wildlife, and that it would negatively affect the most popular activity – hiking, that there are places in the islands for that activity and it doesn't make sense to try to include that activity in these small locations. She shared a statement that she asked to be added to the record.

10:40 – Chris Guidotti, Washington State Parks – spoke of the long history between BLM and WA State Parks, that for decades the BLM had practiced natural and cultural preservation through their relationship with Parks, by leasing numerous small islands to them, and Parks in turn closed many of those islands to camping, while managing others for day use and designated camping. This was the alternative to having BLM employees based in the islands. He encouraged BLM to continue that relationship and see the wisdom in the existing collaborative structure with Parks managing the camping facilities with support of BLM in maintenance. He stated that the concept of dispersed camping as proposed is untenable in terms of protection of the setting without a large investment in infrastructure, staffing and equipment. Parks would not be able to assume these duties. He stated that there would be

a likelihood of adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources, they know from experience that there is no way to monitor all those locations for impacts or fire hazard. He also stated that many of the islands are too small for camping or have sensitive flora and fauna.

10:50 – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Adam Griesemer and Zach Radmer spoke of the work underway with T&E species Island Marble Butterfly, pressing for the BLM to protect the butterfly and manage for their habitat at Cattle Point, that decisions need to hinge on their impacts on the butterfly. They stated that the BLM should continue working proactively with USFW in order to meet that legal framework

11:00 – James (Skeet) Townley, Shooting (different use than Hunting) BLM Managed lands within the San Juan Islands National Monument are currently open to recreational access and recreational shooting year-round. This includes Category A and B rocks. In March 2019 John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation Management and Recreation Act was signed. It directs the BLM “before permanently or temporarily closing any Federal land to hunting, fishing, or recreational shooting, the Secretary concerned shall.... Provide an opportunity for public comment for a period of not less than 60 days for a permanent closure. San Juan County is designated a firearms restricted area for hunting by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. This restricts the firearms legal for hunting to short range weapons. The firearms restriction put in place for hunting by WFDW does not apply to recreational shooting on the monument currently and would not apply to recreational shooting as described in the Proposed RMP.

11:10 – Break

11:25 - MAC questions for presenters

(Tom Reynolds) asked for clarification re the relationship between BLM and State Parks, the intent to prevent overnight use, and how this has continued. Though informal since agreements expired around 2000, these islands have continued to be managed this way.

(Tom Reynolds) asked why there are areas that obviously aren't appropriate to camping in that group – marine rocks, marine mammal haul-outs. Where is the greatest need. If this is the decision, where is the opportunity to intercede? (Lauren Pidot) Before the Record of Decision is signed the Governor has a chance to review it, and can appeal within 30 days, to which the BLM would respond. The public would know of these actions by the Governor's discretion.

(Gene Helfman) to Jamie Stephens – Does the County sue on points that are contrary to county direction? When will the MAC know what is being proposed and what has been changed. There is no loop back. (Jamie Stephens) The county has contributed comments as a Cooperating Agency. (Kurt Pindel) responding to the question as to whether the BLM would have to put the document out for public review if changes that the MAC is desiring to see were made to the document. The rule is that the Solicitor will review the changes to see whether they are significant enough to merit repeat of public review. Considering that the changes the MAC would like to see are all within the analysis already accomplished, the speculation is that there would no reason to go back out for public review.

12:15 – Lunch break

12:45 – Public comment
[live comment]

Chuck Sheitinger – no dispersed camping, no shooting: lead and copper in soil
Wendy Mickle – been working with the BLM for more than 30 years. no dispersed camping, no shooting
Asha Lela – Has managed the volunteer monitor group for 29 years. no dispersed camping, no shooting
Sally Reeve – Adjacent landowner, forest health and wildfire concerns, veg treatments, lack of staffing to manage visitation and challenges to private property, no dispersed camping, no shooting
Gregg Krogstad – Adjacent landowner, BLM has been trespassing since 2008– access to Watmough and trail to Chadwick. Would like to be compensated and situation resolved. Access to sensitive rocks and islands, no dispersed camping, no shooting
Liz Scranton- longtime resident yes to hunting, no dispersed camping, no recreational shooting
Tim Clark – previous Land Bank Lopez steward, longtime resident, no dispersed camping, no shooting
Rhea Miller – MAC alum, comment on the agency managing relationship with MAC poorly and very disrespectful, no dispersed camping, no shooting, no herbicides
Jan Alderton – President of Friends of the San Juans, no dispersed camping, no shooting, no herbicides
Chanda Stone - no dispersed camping, no shooting, no herbicides
Leslie MacDonald – MAC alum, lacking engagement with agency, encourage the agency to expand equestrian opportunities, no dispersed camping, no shooting
[comments read aloud by Marcia deChadenedes, all texts entered into the record]

Tom Reeve
Gretchen Wing
Dave Robison
Patrick Presentin
Cynthia Dilling
Meredith Moench
Shawn Hubbard
Grace Lembo
Connie Holz
Jessica Dahl
Mary Ferm
Pat Presentin
Sue Roundy
Dale Roundy
Gene Helfman
Caroline Armon
Eric Burr & Margrit Broennimann

1:30 – MAC discussion, questions for public, subject matter experts, or BLM folks, followed by recommendations for the final RMP.

The MAC made a recommendation A and B rocks be protected, and excluded from classification within an Recreation Management Area.

Additionally they provided a unanimous recommendation voted that dispersed camping be prohibited within the Monument, and that camping only occur in those locations where it is presently managed for designated camping.

The MAC discussed whether to provide a recommendation on allowing the use of herbicides within the Monument. They discussed the rationale for allowing herbicides in vegetation management and that consideration for any use of herbicides would necessarily be part of a public NEPA process and would be

reviewed on a case by case basis. The committee decided not to recommend that herbicide use be prohibited within the Monument.

The MAC discussed whether to provide recommendations on managing for wilderness characteristics and setting Visual Resource Management (VRM) classes. Lauren Pidot clarified for the group what kinds of actions could or could not happen at different VRM classes. The MAC determined to not make recommendations on these topics at this time.

The MAC recommended to not allow recreational shooting, although there wasn't enough time to complete the discussion.

4:45 – Next steps were mentioned, and the MAC recommended the vacant positions be filled and that a whole MAC (with all positions filled) be able to meet prior to a record of decision (ROD) being signed.

5:00 – End of meeting