

San Juan Islands National Monument Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

May 18, 2022

Meeting via Zoom

All eight current MAC members were in attendance to provide a quorum for this meeting.

9:05 a.m. MAC Chair Jamie Stephens provided a welcome and Jeff Clark from BLM gave a brief introduction to Zoom and best practices and Sam Barr gave a traditional Salish greeting to start the meeting.

9:07 a.m. The new BLM Monument Manager Brie Chartier introduced herself and included a bit about her education and job experience. BLM District Manager Kurt Pindel welcomed Brie and reminded folks that although Brie would like to live on the islands, finding affordable housing is a real challenge. Brie then detailed her vast experience with collaborating and communicating with Tribes after Patti Gobin asked her about that.

9:20 a.m. The MAC members introduced themselves and mentioned their interest areas. Then Jamie reviewed the agenda, and the MAC approved the meeting minutes. Jeff reviewed the terms of current MAC members as well as a status of the outstanding applicants which should be approved this summer.

9:40 a.m. Brie mentioned she wants to be in the job a little while to determine what she'll need for the Recreational Specialist position before advertising it. Kurt gave a rundown of the ROD/RMP process and timeline. Hoping still to make the target of a signed ROD and approved plan in September. He also reiterated the issues of hiring and Human Resources in the government. Kurt also provided updates on his planned visit to the Monument with the BLM State Director and Brie on June 8-10. BLM Archaeologist Rich Bailey said the cultural surveys for the entire Monument will be completed this fall and will provide a strong data baseline for future projects and activities. Rich then talked about yesterday's Tribal meeting where the BLM and many Tribal representatives discussed ways to create a Tribal Forum.

10:08 a.m. Tualip representative, Patti Gobin introduced herself to Brie and expressed appreciation for Rich's report and the fact that the Tribal Forum is moving forward. Also from the Tualip Tribe, Libby Nelson welcomed Brie and also expressed appreciation for the Tribal Forum moving forward. Next, Jon

Snyder from the Governor's office expressed excitement that there is a new Monument Manager and that the ROD/RMP are progressing.

He was disappointed that the MAC application process is not moving faster and expressed concern over if BLM changed things to the plan based on the Governor's Consistency Review.

Barbara Marrett from the Port of Friday Harbor and Christa Campbell from the Port of Lopez were also called upon but had no comments.

10:20 a.m. 10-minute break

10:30 a.m. Russell Barsh from Kwiáht gave a presentation about his and Madrona Murphy's group and research they are doing. There was a strong focus on their work on Indian Island off the coast of Orcas Island. More than 50 docents and "citizen scientists" have been trained by Kwiáht and they have educated and engaged more than 36,000 people on Indian Island and developed a guidebook as well. The group is mainly funded by local donations and local volunteers. The 2021 Report they developed about the visitation increase and disturbances on Indian Island will be distributed to the MAC members. Russell stated there needs to be greater coordination between the state and BLM to manage this increase in human disturbance. Interestingly, people tend to stay on state lands more than the actual island, but their trampling is damaging sea grasses and crashing sea life populations. On the island itself, the bird populations (especially the black oyster catchers) are not thriving because of how the human activity and access has increased. Education and signage is desperately needed to decrease the impulsive and naïve visitation. A seasonal closure is also recommended for May to June to help protect migratory birds and wildflowers. ACECs should also be used despite the Monument being under an RMP, to provide more protection for certain areas in the Monument. The state land should be under more protection as well.

11:25 a.m. An update on the Sustainable Tourism Plan was given by Kendra Smith, the County Director of Environmental Stewardship. The proposed plan will be ready this fall and the county will go back to the public then for more feedback.

11:40 a.m. There were no official recommendations to the BLM, but signs at Cattle Point and other sites were repeated as things that need to happen soon. There was a lot of discussion about the length and quantity of meetings. It was agreed that hybrid meetings were the way to go and once the new members were in place, an annual meeting planner would be adopted. The next meetings are scheduled for October 6 and December 12. The only discussed agenda item was discussing the approved RMP.

- 12:12 p.m. Public comments were made by Wendy Mickell, Rhea Miller, Tom Reeve, Elizabeth Robson, Madrona Murphy, Sally Reeve, Michelline Halladay, Asha Lela, Ben Bama, Robert Memmott, Libby Nelson, Dante Abert, Sarah Garbett, David Robison and Caroline Armon. Tracey read written comments from Amy Nesser. The themes from the comments were concerns about uneducated visitors disturbing and destroying plants and harassing wildlife to include the foxes on San Juan Island and the birds on Indian Island. There was excitement about Brie coming on as Monument Manager and the seasonal about to start, but concern about the Outdoor Recreation Planner not being hired right away.
- 1:15 p.m. Adjourn.