

OTTER ROCK MARINE RESERVE COMMUNITY WORK GROUP – BIOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC
Meeting Notes/Summary

Date/Time: Thursday, May 19, 2011 – 3:30 PM

Location: ODFW South Beach Annex – 3238 Ferry Slip Rd., Newport, OR

Present: Jim Burke, Paul Erskine, Terry Thompson
Absent: Gary Wise
Staff: Alix Laferriere (ODFW), Pery Murray (City)

Review of Minutes – February 17, 2011 No comment.

Update on Science Progress

Thompson asked if any work had been done at the Otter Rock marine reserve since September, particularly fish counts. He noted the predators were getting thick, and Ling Cod population is increased. Erskine reported kayakers had limited on Ling Cod the other day. Laferriere and Burke said no scientific counts had occurred but Burke had found some large fish in small quantities when diving. Thompson said the male Ling Cod are active predators (not the large females) and fish are leaving the area now for off-shore. He added that stock assessments need to occur when the fish are there. Laferriere asked how often the BSCWG wants to meet now that it is field-work season. Thompson feels field work is not seasonal, must be year round. Laferriere agreed, adding that weather and ocean conditions make the opportunity for field work seasonal. She suggested meeting every two months. While funding for next year (beginning July) is unsure, it looks good and ODFW is proceeding as if the legislature will provide funding since the alternative is to stop all work as of June 30. Thompson voiced frustration with legislators, noting the agreement (MOU) to obtain baseline data (year round) on the reserve before closure. Laferriere said the Otter Rock marine reserve site is dangerous, which greatly limits the opportunity to conduct field work; ODFW has some data from winter months but not much. Thompson said there will be data in the future which will show the huge number of predator fish in the winter months, and if this information is not included in the baseline it will create a mess. Laferriere said the extension to January 2012 will help.

Laferriere reported the plate has been installed (end of March) and currently holds sensors for temperature and light, registering every two minutes. Burke will be on site tomorrow to do collection and scrubbing and will have a camera along. The plate is on the east side of Gull Rock in about 12 feet of water, which is shallower than desired. Sampling will occur quarterly and volunteer divers will be trained on the ODFW method. Laferriere reported the moorings are in, if the plate looks good sensors can be added and the moorings can be eliminated. A grad student, Jeremy Childress, has developed a new sensor device for dissolved oxygen, temperature and salinity. ODFW hopes to obtain one in the future, ODFW is nearly out of money now and what is left is being moved to provide for extensions to existing contracts. The tickler chain on the sled is working well and the new navigation system helps, lasers are needed. Tools and methods change as work proceeds. ODFW is sampling now, going over the same locations as last year with the sled. If the sand is gone then there is too much rock to use the sled. Erskine said there has been a recent change in the sand on Beverly Beach and it is different than last year. Burke suggested precautionary trips first, using a sounder to show rocks, then should be able to run the sled. Laferriere said the airlift was tested a couple days ago for algae and invertebrates. Gail Hanson will be doing the algae work. In a meter square area one quarter meter square will be excavated, samples will be counted by ODFW and possibly volunteers. Burke has experience and equipment for collection. Thompson said the crab spawn was about a month early this year.

Laferriere mentioned pinniped observation, suggesting the Marine Reserve Summer Event (tentatively in September) may be a good time to recruit volunteers. Elements of a pinniped observation program were briefly discussed including: current focus for pinnipeds is the Columbia River, aerials can be helpful, no flying allowed around Yaquina Head (bird rookery), seals without pups were sited at tide pools the other day and this time of year there should have been pups, there is a group of sea lions that are not afraid of people, access can be from the marine garden or the Inn at Otter Crest. Melissa Murphy, ODFW, is looking into placing cameras at the reserve site to monitor human use (surfers, kayakers, beachcombers, etc.) the cameras may be an option for pinniped observation. Everyone agreed the Summer Event will be a good opportunity to seek volunteers for pinniped monitoring.

Thompson reiterated that ODFW made an agreement with Depoe bay to obtain baseline data before closure of the reserve and if year round data, particularly spring time data on predators, is not obtained he will fight the closure. He emphasized that just doing summertime science does not show the entire picture. Laferriere said ODFW is not allowed to dive when conditions are hazardous. ODFW is doing the best science possible with available resources. Burke suggested fish counts could occur in the next few weeks (spring), then on a quarterly basis. Laferriere then showed members the new sled with extender and skids, two cameras (one for navigation) of higher quality. There was brief discussion of potential contracts if funding is allocated for the next year.

Review of Monitoring Plan

Members have provided comments directly to Laferriere.

Member and Public Comments

Brief discussion occurred on the buoy that recently broke loose off Yaquina Head. Laferriere will check on who it belongs to.

Meeting ended at 4:50 p.m.