

**Island Local Integrating Organization (ILIO) Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**May 26, 2020, 10:00-11:00am**  
Zoom Meeting

**Executive Committee (EC) Members Present:**

Janet St. Clair, Island County Commissioner  
Melanie Bacon, Island County Commissioner  
Tim Callison, Mayor of Langley  
David Day, Coupeville Port District  
Jack Ng, Port of South Whidbey  
Stan Walsh, Skagit River System Cooperative Representative  
Blaine Oborn, representing Robert Severns, Mayor of Oak Harbor

**Also Present:**

Lori Clark, Island County DNR, ILIO Coordinator  
Ann Prusha, Island County DNR  
Hannah Liss, Island County DNR  
Dawn Spilsbury Pucci, Island County DNR, Island County Salmon Recovery, PSEMP  
Laura Rivas, Puget Sound Partnership  
Tim Lawrence, WSU Extension Island County  
Ryan Elting, WCLT  
Barbara Bennett, Marine Resources Committee, ILIO

Commissioner St. Clair called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

**I. Approval of February 24, 2021 Meeting Summary Notes**

**MOTION:**

Mayor Callison made a motion to approve the ILIO Executive Committee (EC) February 24, 2021 Meeting Summary Notes. Port Commissioner Day seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**II. Forestry Practices in Island County (IC) Discussion:**

**Discussion:**

- At the February ILIO EC meeting, the EC added addressing accelerating deforestation in Island County (IC) on ILIO's workplan. On April 14<sup>th</sup> the ILIO Technical Committee (TC) hosted a collaborative meeting to begin dialogue among the stakeholders involved in managing forestry practices programs and permits to better identify the problems/concerns, to discuss the possible solutions that might be explored and/or prioritized, and to consider how we might leverage the LIO to support collaboration on this issue. The [ILIO TC Forestry Discussion document](#) summarizes the TC's and advisors' recommendations to best manage the delicate balance between timber removal on private property and the importance of protecting Island County forests. The intention of this document is to inform the EC about possibilities and opportunities for next steps.
- The ILIO cannot own any of these recommendations, however the EC could direct the ILIO's National Estuary Program (NEP) direct allocation funding towards one of these recommendations. The NEP funds should be available in the upcoming months. We receive direct allocation of \$100k, and the EC can decide to allocate it. We do not have any Near Term Actions (NTAs) that are up for funding.

- Kevin Zobrist sent feedback to Commissioner St. Clair. She will share this feedback with the group. We have two critical educators. Conservation Districts (CDs) advise property owners, and Washington State University (WSU) Extension is the lead on timber management plans.
- The Puget Sound Conservation Districts (PSCD) have an [NTA](#) that could direct funding to the Whidbey Island Conservation District (WICD) and/or the Snohomish Conservation District (SCD) to provide forest health management technical assistance to help small acreage forest landowners protect forest areas from land conversion, meet ecosystem restoration priorities, and improve stormwater quantity and quality.
- Lori then walked the group through the IC Sustainable Forestry Document and highlighted key points.
  - Communication: Improved Inter-Agency Communication
    - IC needs to create incentives for small forest landowners, support education & outreach, and offer information/flyers on conversion as an option (it is better than a moratorium).
    - Commissioner St. Clair commented that IC Planning and Public Works are important as we look at some of these questions. She applauded Mary Engle for getting moratoriums back into the system. This work has begun.
    - Most of the recommendations in this document aim to add options for landowners, not remove their rights to harvest timber. Many of the landowners who come to WICD are looking for options to keep their forests intact yet they do not have a tax incentive to manage forest as an ecosystem service.
  - Communication: Buyer Notification
    - Budd Westcott from the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WADNR) worked with Mary Engle to add a forestry parcel layer into ICGeoMap to provide Designated Forest Land (DFL) information, plans, and highlight parcels under a 6-year moratorium as a tool that permit reviewers can incorporate into the permit intake process.
    - There was discussion about the 6-year moratorium. It is a state statute, and some counties have longer moratoriums. Commissioner St. Clair would like to see research done on other moratoriums. Increasing the moratorium would mean including this in county code. Six years is not a lot of time for regeneration. A 6-year moratorium allows time for invasive species establishment, and that should be addressed. Commissioner St. Clair would like to see Seth Luginbill of IC Noxious Weeds be involved. There are practices, such as buffer strips, that can be implemented to reduce noxious weed spread.
  - Education and Outreach
    - We must have an NTA to receive funds from this Action Agenda (AA) item. Lori urged partners to look into this funding. The PSCDs have an NTA that could direct funding to the WICD and/or the SCD to provide forest health management technical assistance to help small acreage forest landowners protect forest areas from land conversion, meet ecosystem restoration priorities, and improve stormwater quantity and quality. They could do outreach to landowners about their options and how to properly manage forested land.
    - Kevin Zobrist, WSU Extension, has a lecture series that can help with education. He does coached management plans with the outcome of people completing forest management plans that are usually well received by the Assessor's Office.
    - Going forward, it will be important to make the distinction between a regeneration harvest (e.g., clear-cut and replant) and deforestation (clear and build houses). They appear to be used synonymously but have very different implications.
    - Commissioner St. Clair commented that she wants to ensure that the group focuses on surface water outcomes. We are better able to manage outcomes to surface water rather than drinking water. Tim Lawrence commented that the literature supports this.
    - There is mention of CDs assisting landowners with management plans. While they provide some technical assistance (more now that Stacey Dixon has been hired) most work done with landowners in IC relative to management planning is done by WSU and

WADNR, who are not mentioned. The CDs work with us on this, and in the case of SCD (covering Camano), they contract with us to support landowners in forest management planning. Also, WSU is the lead agency for forest management education in IC, not the CDs, who provide more of the individual support. WSU, SCD, WICD, and WADNR all have very specific roles and we work together in collaboration for synergy, efficiency, better service coverage, and avoiding overlap. It is important for ILIO to understand who does what.

- Education and Outreach: Proper Forest Land Management
  - There needs to be more education about proper forestland management.
  - There is a small amount of time to fix issues, especially as properties change landowners.
  - Often, when a landowner gets to the point where they do not properly manage their forest and it needs to be clear cut, the timber is less valuable due to disease.
- Education and Outreach: Forest Practice Options
  - IC needs to offer information on forest practice options for landowners on the IC website and pamphlets at the main office counter.
  - CDs have some funding. We are different because we are islands, and our materials need to represent that.
  - There was a comment that none of Washington's island counties have been a part of the state timber caucus because our forested areas are too small and we are not considered timber counties. We should learn more about the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) and Timber Caucus.
  - The majority of IC is not public forest; it is small private forest. We should keep focusing on the small forest piece, education/outreach, and incentivizing. Our county is most in danger of conversion ([source](#)). Residents worry that when a forest is cut it is for development.
  - There was a comment that we need to determine how to reach new buyers.
- Education and Outreach: Land Stewardship
  - We should take responsibility to protect our resources.
  - There was a comment that it can be suggested to buyers and landowners that there is a benefit for people who leave a high percentage of forest. We can make it more beneficial to leave most of their forest intact as people move here and buy parcels.
- Education and Outreach: Resources Available to Landowners
  - These resources were identified in researching this topic. We could do a better job of linking these resources on our webpages.
    - The [Small Forest Landowner Regulation Assistance Program](#) provides free consultation to landowners.
    - Kevin W. Zobrist is a Professor at WSU, Forestry Extension. He has two webinars he won awards for– Gold and Silver from the Association of National Resource Extension Professionals Association. Here is a link to his webinars: [https://forestry.wsu.edu/webinars/onlinefieldday/2020ofd\\_recordings/](https://forestry.wsu.edu/webinars/onlinefieldday/2020ofd_recordings/)
    - Whidbey Island and Snohomish CDs host excellent forest management program educational opportunities.
    - The website <https://www.globalforestwatch.org/> has maps representing forestry from 2001-2019. These are maps of relative deforestation in the county. With newly available Near Infrared (NIR) remote sensing and Radar for Detecting Deforestation (RADD) canopy data, we can now gain perspectives of forest loss/gain that is otherwise not seen or lost in permit/paper shuffles. You can view canopy cover and forest canopy that was reestablished after clearing.
- Policy Changes: After-the-fact permit

- IC should not allow after-the-fact conversions. The notice should be recorded on the title. Tightening up on these repeat offenders is important; IC does have the ability to issue fines for this, in addition to doubling the application fee (this is the current policy). Mary Engle is speaking to her staff about this.
  - Putting a moratorium notice on the title would eliminate the “innocent purchaser” loophole.
- Policy Changes: Increased Collaboration
  - Staff could sign up for emailed notice of all applications for Class II or III permits and engage applicants about options such as Conversion Option Harvest Plans (COHP) and discuss moratorium issues on each permit. We need to ensure that the new Assessor is aware of this to know when applicants for new permits are in the system.
- Policy Changes: State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Review
  - Each land clearing permit could include a SEPA review, especially if a landowner approaches IC to request to lift their moratorium. San Juan County has this requirement. They have advocated to WADNR to treat their county differently since they are comprised of islands. The Forest Practices Rules were not written for islands thus there are opportunities to adjust how we permit land-clearing activities.
  - There was a comment about inviting affordable housing experts to these discussions. Often, deforested parcels become a single family unit rather than development for multiple families. We should have a focus group with developers and partners.
- Incentives: There can be more support for agroforestry and silviculture. There was an NTA for Camano Island.
- Incentives: Conservation Futures Funding (CFF)
  - This program could be expanded to include VSPs. There are pilot projects in Kitsap County that demonstrate the success of applying CFF to VSP.
- Incentives: Public Benefit Rating System (PBRS)
  - IC Planning is looking at this this year.
  - Earth Economics is conducting an evaluation now to assess the value of forestland.
  - We can alter the existing PBRS incentive for timber production into conservation tax breaks for forest stands too small for the timber tax credit program (2.5-5 acre).
- IC Department Improvements: Improved Data
  - IC Planning has a wonderful new staff person who is focused solely on GIS and he is currently working on making improvements to the wetland/stream layers.
- IC Department Improvements: Make Information Accessible and Transparent
  - Making data more accessible would be helpful to make the information more transparent to the public, giving them the opportunity to provide feedback. Making this GIS dataset available as a public portal will also allow moratoriums to be attached to parcels so that buyers can do their due diligence.
- IC Department Improvements: Funding
  - CFF could be modified to recognize non-timber values and base tax reduction on ecological/environmental criteria (i.e. size, connectivity, landscape position, natural infrastructure services provided to benefit the public and ecosystem).
  - We could Leverage Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding to protect intact forests.
- IC Department Improvements: IC Forest Management Plan
  - We can develop a forest management plan that aims to mitigate climate change, improve forest health, increase the tree canopy in unincorporated cities, improve public access to forests, enhance salmon habitat, improve water quality and supply, and support a sustainable timber industry. This could direct CFF investments for conservation. A consultant could be hired to do this.

- There was a comment about using federal funds for stormwater and infrastructure plans. We could create readiness plans, and work with federal elected officials as part of a broader stormwater management plan.
    - There was a comment that the Shoreline Master Plan (SMP) deserves some time and attention. This could be as broad as the forest management plan, including interface between upland forest and shoreline habitats.
  - IC Department Improvements: Monitoring DFL Properties
    - We can ensure IC Assessors are properly trained to monitor the DFL program properties. This is an area that may need some attention as a new Assessor was recently appointed.
- Reach out to Commissioner St. Clair or Lori for additional input or questions.

### III. Island LIO Ecosystem Coordination Board (ECB) Ex-officio Member

#### Discussion:

- In August 2019 the ECB committed to elevate the stature of LIOs to enable greater input in decisionmaking, and provide clarity around roles and responsibilities in AA development and implementation.
- Adding Ex-Officio seats for a one-to-one ratio between an LIO geography and an Action Area representative on the ECB for Island, Snohomish/Stillaguamish, and Puyallup White River Local Integrating Organizations will give Island LIO the opportunity to appoint one ex-officio member to the ECB, which will develop stronger linkages with the ECB and allow the ILIO to be better represented.
- The May 12<sup>th</sup> ECB meeting approved the recommendation to add Ex-Officio seats for Island, Snohomish-Stillaguamish, and Puyallup White River LIO's particular to our LIO geography. The goal would be for these nominations to be submitted prior to and for the new members to start at the August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 ECB meeting.

The required documents for the new ex-officio members:

- 1) *a letter of support from the LIO*
  - 2) *if possible a letter of interest from the nominee*
    - a. *These two items will then be placed in the file for ECB to approve*
  - 3) *The new member's preferred email address and phone number for the roster*
  - 4) *The new member's preferred method of contact, especially for any last-minute or emergency needs*
- If no one from the EC is interested, we can cast a wider net. Commissioner St. Clair commented that she would be happy to be this Ex-Officio member, but she would like to save space for anyone else who is interested.

#### MOTION:

Stan Walsh, Skagit River System Cooperative Representative moved to nominate Commissioner Janet St. Clair to be ILIO's Ex-Officio member of the Ecosystem Coordination Board. Port Commissioner David Day seconded the motion. The motioned passed unanimously.

Commissioner St. Clair thanked Lori for all she has done, and is excited for her next opportunity.

*Audio recording of all ILIO meetings are available, by request.*