**WA Maritime NWRC Review 8/27 – 8/28 2018**

Overall excellent discussion with staff and good field visits to Protection Island and Dungeness NWR. It was pointed out that I need to visit the outer coastal islands and to the San Juan islands when possible. It is noted that with such a small staff, the regular data calls, information requests, planning etc that happens with every refuge complex is more acutely felt. The need to prioritize efforts on issues that matter with a small but talented staff is a paramount responsibility for the Project Leader. The breadth of knowledge by the staff of the resource issues and the quality of the work that is accomplished is commendable. These assets need to be applied to making progress on the opportunities identified below.

It was also noted that existing shop buildings and equipment including boats are in top notch condition, the volunteer program is robust, active and make a difference. Good contrast between county ownership and Dungeness refuge and job well done on resolving the bathroom issue. Details and short assignments for refuge staff to other Refuges should be considered as the Complex staff there have skills that could be beneficial to others and exposure to other operations would aid in their development.

**San Juan Islands**

**Priority Issues**

Work to incorporate the Wilderness Character monitoring into seabird survey work. If that is not possible, have the wilderness character monitoring requests come thru line command with the request going to Kevin Foerster first.

Protection Island – I am open to more discussion on the issue of a new bunkhouse if there are some other thoughts that are salient to this issue. However at this time, I do not support moving forward with the construction of a new bunkhouse. Look instead to repurposing the existing caretaker’s house which is in excellent condition and already set up as a bunkhouse. Work with engineering and safety to review any needs or reconfiguring that could improve safety and function as needed. We will want to use the DM project to fund those needs and any other needs including, tearing down the building that is currently used as a bunkhouse and perhaps some of the other structures removed as well.

Deer – This issue should be a priority issue to resolve as it impacts our Golden Paintbrush recovery actions and has some negative consequences for burrowing seabirds. If the benefits of deer removal outweigh just about any technique to accomplish this goal, so let’s not get too narrow focused on only one way to accomplish this task. Discussions with required Tribes and WDFW should provide a path forward that makes sense and meets our resource needs.

Golden Paintbrush – Excellent project that can make a difference. The proof of concept has worked and initial efforts on Protection island are underway. Take a hard look if in the interim fencing is necessary as establishment of native vegetation is underway. If we can increase our overall acreage of restored prairie habitat while we tackle the deer issue, this might be worth pursuing.

**Dungeness NWR**

Dawley unit. We have a lot of liabilities on this property in terms of buildings and structures that will require significant amounts of money to upkeep or remove. The tract is not contiguous nor even close to the rest of Dungeness NWR and provides little in the way of significant habitat that adds materially to the purposes of the refuge. However the property does have some resource values. Long term, it would be in our interest to facilitate a trade for either property on Protection Island or headland property at Dungeness spit that would either add significant seabird resources or continuity of ownership and perhaps facilitated access to open portions of the refuge.

Invasive work – in general there is a lot of meticulous effort being expended on invasive species control at the Complex. However, a hard look at what we are focused on, the effort required, the resource gains and the long term viability of the control effort needs to be looked at. The green crab trapping effort is one that makes sense politically at the moment but it is hard to see at this time where this ends, if it ends and what impacts would occur to mig bird resources should our efforts cease. It may be worthwhile to engage the I&M program (Jess Wenik) to assist in prioritizing the invasive species efforts and get recommendations for moving forward.

Migratory birds – The approximately 300 acres of tidal wetland in Dungeness refuge / harbor that host up to 8,000 brant and close to the same in other species of waterfowl is an astounding amount of use for such a small area. We should look for ways to protect this use from outside disturbance. Other tracts such as the Cline tracts offer opportunities for public use that provide the additional benefit of not requiring a boat to access. The Cline tracts may also provide an option for the Tribe to pursue mariculture activities that reduce the impacts of such activities elsewhere on the refuge.

**Outer Islands**

Destruction Island – We need a solicitors opinion to clarify our jurisdiction (Charlie Parrot is working on draft request). If indeed Destruction Island is our management responsibility, then we need to take the lead on rabbit removal. However, if the Island is deemed a Coast Guard responsibility we need to work closely with them and assist them in carrying out this activity as the seabird resource warrants our time.

Move forward with the burrow nesting seabird monitoring in concert with WDFW. We should be cognizant of the difficulties of conducting these surveys and look to provide support to WDFW staff who have the expertise in accessing and doing this type of monitoring.