



## Quiet Sound Leadership Committee Meeting Summary

July 18, 2022

Meeting notes v. 7/26/22

Action Items	Who	By When
Begin planning for the next state funding ask for QS. QS staff will reach out to schedule a meeting	QS staff, Joshua, Patrick, Kathleen	August
Draft and review Tribal outreach letter	QS staff, Makah Tribe, NWIFC	End of July
Check if small cruise ships may still be operating during the trial slowdown timeframe	QS staff	August
Add language to trial slowdown proposal document describing speed transition zones	QS staff	August

### Decisions

QS will move forward with the proposed voluntary slowdown trial after meaningful outreach to/feedback from Tribes. "Meaningful outreach" means QS will engage tribal governments with Usual & Accustomed Fishing Areas in the proposed trial slowdown area and adjust, adapt, and/or postpone the trial and trial parameters accordingly. QS staff will report to LC members on the feedback received and how it is being addressed and implemented.

QS will move forward with hydrophone permitting and the process of hiring a hydrophone consultant.

Acronyms: QS - Quiet Sound, WG - Work Group, LC - Leadership Committee, SRKW - Southern Resident Killer Whale

### Agenda

#### Welcome/Introductions

- Land and water acknowledgement

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- Orca moment - first new calf in K-pod since 2011 dubbed K45! 13 SRKW individuals are under extra restrictions to whale watching boats due to poor body condition
- QS staffing updates - Caitlin was hired full time as a Project Manager for Quiet Sound, Angel will continue to support QS in an administrative and operational capacity
- Logistics - LC meetings may be recorded for internal administrative use only (to assist in meeting summaries)

## 2022-2023 Budget Update and Funding Model

- Overview of Maritime Blue board-approved budget, see attached meeting packet for details
- Maritime Blue is engaging in a broader strategic funding campaign that will include Quiet Sound
- It is time to start planning for more state and federal funding - QS staff will contact LC members to begin discussion/planning
- During the next legislative session, WSF is hoping for funding to design a hybrid class of vessels to replace the Issaquah class that will be the first chance for ferries to fully incorporate noise reduction into design of the vessel from the beginning
  - Maybe QS teams up with WSF for a funding proposal? Joshua and Kevin will connect

## Project Updates

Caitlin O'Morchoe gave updates on the major Quiet Sound projects currently underway.

- Project 1: Further Develop the Whale Report Alert System
  - Contract finalized with Ocean Wise
  - Extension on NOAA funds and NFWF funds granted
  - Conversation with Pacific Whale Watch Association about API
  - Next steps: scope of work for Orca Network, OceanWise continue to develop API and data sharing agreement, create a monitoring/evaluation plan
  - Comments and questions: Leadership Committee members continue to emphasize that they would not support with data sharing from WRAS to PWWA, are glad that dollars are on track to bring local sightings into WRAS
- Project 3: Port of Seattle hydrophone gap analysis
  - Feedback on scope provided by QS work group
  - Port is finalizing the interlocal agreement with UW and NOAA
- Project 4: Oceans Initiative hydrophone study
  - Contract finalized with Oceans Initiative
  - Feedback provided on study scope and locations
  - QS has a hydrophone kit
- Project 5: Navy NW Tech Bridge Challenge

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- None of the submissions met the criteria of the Naval Office of Underwater Research for state of the art advancements
- But QS and NUWC are still advocating for prizes to be distributed on the basis of encouraging broad participation in whale sensing technology development

## 2022-23 Voluntary Trial Slowdown Proposal

Rachel Aronson gave an overview of the proposed trial slowdown area. See attached meeting packet for proposal details. Leadership Committee members asked clarifying questions and discussed the following:

- Concerning the noise budget research paper referenced in the proposal, what location did the study cover and is it the same as our proposed slowdown area?
  - The study area covered the northern half of our proposed slowdown area and extends to the north
  - The study focused on the area immediately around and north of the Port Townsend to Coupeville ferry route, and did not include the Edmonds to Kingston and Mukilteo to Clinton ferry routes that border the slowdown area to the south and east
- What is the Salish Sea NEMO model mentioned in the proposal?
  - AIS data records a vessel's speed over ground, ECHO uses speed through water as their metric since water speed affects sound output from a vessel, ECHO has higher reported participation rates than what AIS data shows them, The NEMO model calculates tides and can be used to convert speed over ground to speed through water which allows ECHO to align AIS data and reported participation rates from vessels/pilots.  
<https://salishsea.eos.ubc.ca/nemo/>
- Cruise ships won't be operational (as in carrying passengers) during the proposed slowdown, so why are we including this vessel type in the slowdown?
  - Large cruise lines will not have passengers but will still be transiting through the area during the slowdown timeframe
  - Small cruise ships may still be operating with passengers during that time, need to check
- What are the complicating factors for extending or moving the slowdown area further south?
  - The targeted vessels for the trial slowdown are a large percent of traffic in the proposed area and a smaller percent of traffic south of there (because of ferries and fast ferries, for example). So the proposed geography has the potential to create a significantly quieter area for whales, versus having a much smaller benefit if the slowdown area was farther south.
  - QS also has an untested hypothesis that the slowdown at the mouth of Puget Sound may have an effect of slowing speeds south of the slowdown. This can be tested with AIS.

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- It is important to continue to recognize and maintain focus on data gaps and filling those to make sure our decisions are based on the science
- Nora Nickum recommends a hydrophone go into the water before the trial slowdown, as well as after, to get a better understanding of cruise ship's noise contributions in the area, recognizing that this may not be possible due to funding and timing.
- The LC discussed the decision to not include ferries/fast ferries as targeted vessels for this trial slowdown:
  - The US Coast Guard is worried that if we exclude ferries, then the slowdown will not effectively reduce the combined vessel noise in the proposed area and the data will not show the true soundscape of that region
  - Even though ferries have the majority of the number of sailings in the proposed area, the other vessels QS is targeting have significantly larger noise output per vessel. Therefore, this proposed trial will still be effective in reducing vessel noise in the area by targeting the vessels with the highest noise output
  - This trial would allow QS to monitor the soundscape with ferries operating normally (including enacting their own procedures of slowing down and/or stopping when a whale is present) which will inform our future recommendations for the ferries
  - Excluding ferries from this slowdown makes practical sense (they can't slow down for months due to community demand and operational constraints) and slowing other vessels down will still make an impact.
- Tribal outreach needs to happen in a timely manner so Tribes have a chance to give feedback and QS can make changes needed
  - A meaningful letter needs to go out to Tribes with enough time for changes to be made to the proposal if needed
  - Haley can be a resource to help draft the letter
- LC discussed how ships slowing down to the prescribed speed before entering the slowdown area:
  - ECHO has a speed transition zone, their expectation is once you enter the slowdown area you are traveling at the prescribed speed
  - QS staff will add information/language into the slowdown document to communicate that vessels need to slow down before they enter the slowdown area
  - QS emphasizes in the document that vessels should prioritize safety when making decisions about whether or not to participate in the slowdown
- Kate Snider asked, "Does anyone who is currently on the call have an objection to QS moving forward with this trial slowdown as described?"
  - Laird Hail, Coast Guard VTS, noted his opposition to the trial moving forward if the ferries do not participate. Responses to this concern from other LC members were:

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- It will be important to be transparent and explicit when describing and reporting on the data from the trial
- Ferry noise will not be excluded from data gathering
- There is extremely high value in operationalizing the trial slowdown now when we have many stakeholders ready to go (including vessel operators and Puget Sound Pilots). Running the trial this year and learning from it will allow us to make informed changes moving forward
- A major question of this trial is how will operators of the targeted vessels react to the slowdown?
- A lot of work has gone into preparing this proposal using the best science available - don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good
- No other objections were heard from the LC
- The facilitator suggested that QS move forward with the proposed trial AFTER meaningful outreach to/feedback from the tribes and any subsequent changes have been made. QS will communicate to LC members on the progress of tribal outreach and changes made. -approved by LC
  - Note: Meaningful outreach to tribes means outreach and a genuine willingness to make changes to the proposal including stopping the preparation of/operation of the slowdown if needed
- Rachel asked to move forward with hydrophone permitting and starting the process of looking for a hydrophone consultant - approved by LC

## Updates from LC members

- Councilman Bowechop: the Makah Tribe met with ECHO to support the transboundary nature of the work in their treaty area. Makah agreed to a slowdown in the treaty area to advance their relationship with USCG and Canadian partners. Bringing the levels of interactions between Makah and partners to a higher level will help lead to dependability and long term sustainability.
- Kevin Bartoy is now the Chief Sustainability Officer leading the new Office of Sustainability and Environmental Services at WSF
- Seattle Aquarium/NRDC/others are continuing to push forward the US Coast Guard reauthorization bill to include things that could help advance QS and reduce underwater noise. There may be grants available to help this work.
- Natalie Lowell: Makah, ECHO and partners are developing an emergency pause protocol on how to address unforeseen consequences to treaty rights and resources resulting from ECHO programs like slowdown trials
- Kathleen Hurley: Update on the Port of Seattle's underwater noise management process - it is close to completion and will be presented to the commission in the next couple of months, the plan is more expansive than just addressing noise from

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vessels. Rachel presented on our QS progress to managing members, they are in discussion of additional QS funding for this or next year

- Via John Veentjer's communication, Mike Moore has been able to follow up with vessel operators who did not participate in the Swiftsure Bank slowdown
- Video highlighting Quiet Sound by Barrier Breakers/Acer - <https://www.acer.com/ac/en/US/content/barrierbreakers>

## Attendees

- Rachel Aronson, Quiet Sound Program Director, Washington Maritime Blue
- Caitlin O'Morchoe, Quiet Sound Project Manager, Washington Maritime Blue
- Patrick Gallagher, Executive Director of the Marine Exchange of Puget Sound
- Grace Ferrara, Natural Resource Management Specialist, NOAA Fisheries
- Gabriela Dunn, intern, NOAA
- Kate Snider, Principal and Founder of Floyd|Snider environmental consulting firm
- Natalie Lowell, Hershman Fellow with the Makah Tribe
- Nora Nickum, Ocean Policy Senior Manager at Seattle Aquarium
- Todd Hass, Special Assistant to the Director, Puget Sound Partnership
- John Veentjer, Past Executive Director of the Marine Exchange of Puget Sound and current Chair of the Puget Sound Harbor Safety Committee
- Mike Moore, Vice President at Pacific Merchant Shipping Association
- Joshua Berger, President/CEO of Washington Maritime Blue
- Kevin Bartoy, Chief Sustainability Officer for WA State Ferries
- Laird Hail, Director of Puget Sound Vessel Traffic Services, US Coast Guard
- Kathleen Hurley, Sr. Environmental Program Manager, Port of Seattle
- Carol Reamer, Port of Neah Bay Director, Makah Tribe
- Haley Kennard, Natural Resource Policy Analyst for the Makah Tribe
- Councilman Chad Bowechop, Makah Tribe Council