



WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY
 April 6, 2023 5:00pm – 7:00pm
ZOOM [LINK](#)
Meeting ID: 898 4927 5200 | Passcode 98225
1-253-215-8782 US (Tacoma)

<p><i>We acknowledge the lands we're on today are the ancestral and current homelands of Indigenous Nations who have stewarded them since time immemorial. We respect their sovereignty, support their Treaty rights, their right to self-determination, and we honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. These Indigenous Nations include the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe.</i></p>		
1.	5:00	Introductions and Determine Quorum
2.		April 6 Agenda Action: Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary.
3.		Approval of March 2 meeting summary Action: Review and approve summaries as final.
4.		Community Updates Objective: Community members attending the meeting who wish to address or update the Committee on Committee related matters will be provided up to five (5) minutes to speak.
5.	5:10	Marine Vegetation in Whatcom County: Dana Oster, Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Objective: NWSC Staff will provide an update on the voluntary no-anchor zone work, the potential idea of marine vegetation surveys with DNR across multiple MRCs, and a historical kelp analysis for Whatcom County.
6.	5:40	Port of Bellingham Green Marine Certification: Eleanor Kirtley, Senior Program Manager, Green Marine Objective: Learn about the Port of Bellingham's preparation for Green Marine's certification.
7.	6:00	Staff Update: Introduction to Dana Flerchinger, job shadow, derelict vessel removal update, upcoming outreach events , Combined Review Team , April 18 SWWS Objective: Provide staff with opportunity to relay information and updates to the full MRC.
8.	6:15	Garden of the Salish Sea Curriculum (GSSC) Collaboration: Rick Beauregard or Julie Hirsch Objective: Discuss revised proposal from Julie Hirsch re: the integration of the GSSC, HABs, and MRC education and outreach goals.
9.	6:25	Project Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chuckanut (outreach with City of Bellingham and NSEA) • Olympia oyster • Wildcat Cove • Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs)
10.	6:45	MRC Partner Committee Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWIN/Speaker Series (Austin) – training survey, mariculture, HABs • County Council • Port of Bellingham – Kurt B. • Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) – Bob C.
11.	7:00	Adjourn. <i>Next meeting scheduled for May 4, 5:00-7:00pm, Garden Level Conference Room, *HYBRID*</i>

If you're not on our Northwest Straits Commission newsletter list, you can join here: <https://www.nwstraits.org/get-involved/join-the-mailing-list/>

Items of interest:

- [Herring spawn off Hornby Island, B.C., Canada.](#)
- 2023 ANeMoNe Community Science Summit, April 7, 2023, 9:00am – 12:00pm. [ZOOM](#)

In attendance: Heather Spore (chair), Austin Rose (Staff), Paul Troutman, Mike MacKay, Bob Cecile, Dana Flerchinger (Staff), Kaylee Galloway, Glen (Alex) Alexander, Rick Beauregard, Elma Burnham

Others: Eleanor Kirtley, Christopher Brown, Julie Hirsch, Alan Chapman, Jana Gustin, Dana Oster, Adrienne Hegedus, Sasha Horst

Community members who require special assistance to participate in a committee meeting are to contact MRC Staff at least 4 business days in advance.

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1. **Introductions and Determine Quorum:** Heather began the meeting with the land acknowledgement and participant introductions. A quorum was not established.
2. **April 6 Agenda:** The agenda could not be approved as a quorum was not present. Edits were suggested and shown in track changes in this summary.
3. **Approval of March 2 Meeting Summary:** The meeting summary could not be approved as a quorum was not present.
4. **Community Updates:** Concerns were expressed about the potential lack of maintenance of the oil/grease separator that drains into the NW corner of Chuckanut Bay as presented by Janet Migaki, Save Mud Bay Cliffs, at the March MRC meeting. A MRC member mentioned he would look into whether the maintenance logs are being properly maintained and whether there is proper oversight. The Department of Ecology manages and oversees stormwater permits, so if the City is unable to provide insight, it may be brought to the attention of Ecology. Jana Gustin introduced herself to the committee. Jana is a high school junior from Ohio with a passion for marine science and interest in attending WWU. Jana will be job shadowing with Austin, Dana, and the MRC from May 8th-19th, participating in as many projects as possible.
5. **Marine Vegetation in Whatcom County:** Dana Oster, Northwest Straits Commission, provided an update on the effort to expand the voluntary no-anchor zone project to other MRC counties. The goal of these zones is to encourage boaters to anchor outside of shallow eelgrass habitat to reduce damage to beds. Buoys are the best visual cue, but also the most difficult to maintain. Dana provided a three-tier approach to including promotion of the best recreational boating practices for anchoring away from eelgrass (providing maps of eelgrass-critical habitats with the main difficulty being updated eelgrass data), virtual voluntary no-anchor zones (virtual aids to navigation have been used in southern BC for seasonal no-go zones for Southern Resident Killer Whales and for Walrus Protection in Bristol Bay), and physical voluntary no-anchor zones (installing buoys in larger areas where buoy maintenance is possible). Next steps include a social marketing campaign to develop messaging and toolkits, an eelgrass monitoring plan, and revisiting the sites and tiers for appropriate protection. If virtual aids to navigation are successful, the physical buoys may not be necessary in all sites. Drayton Harbor has been raised as another area of interest for eelgrass protection. There is interest in getting a more thorough survey of eelgrass along with documentation of boat usage in Drayton Harbor. Dana mentioned partnering with the MRC or Semiahmoo resort about the most effective strategy for determining boat usage in the areas of interest.

Other MRCs are interested in county-wide marine vegetation surveys. The goals of these surveys are to create an inventory of marine vegetation to assess trends for eelgrass where possible, provide local planners with information about kelp/eelgrass beds, and to create eelgrass maps for key areas to target for voluntary no anchor zones. It will be key to determine priority stretches of shoreline in Whatcom County for these efforts. DNR is not available for this work until summer 2025, so there is time to determine funding and strategies.

6. **Port of Bellingham Green Marine Certification:** Eleanor Kirtley, Green Marine, introduced Green Marine which is a voluntary environmental certification program. The Port of Bellingham joined Green Marine in February of 2023. Adrienne Hegedus Sustainability Program Manager, Port of Bellingham, mentioned this program has had many benefits to the Port including verifying that the Port is going above and beyond what is required, complimenting existing programs, providing guidance for future work, and allowing for information sharing of best practices. 2023 is a self-reporting year and third-party verification will be completed in 2024.
7. **Staff Update:**
 - **Introduction to Dana Flerchinger:** Dana is the new MRC extra staff person helping across the board with MRC projects.
 - **Derelict Vessel Removal Update:** Austin received an email indicting that DNR is currently planning for the removal of the vessel in the Bellingham tidelands with the cost estimate at \$60,000 which is right on target with the CDS funds of \$62,000. It is currently unknown when this work will start, but DNR is in the planning stages for the removal.
 - **Upcoming outreach events:** Austin shared a google doc that listed all the upcoming outreach events that may be of interest to the MRC.
 - **Combined Review Team:** The MRC is looking for a representative to join the Combined Review Team to rank and review salmon recovery projects. Heather Spore or Becky Peterson would be a good source for information about this.
 - **April SWWS:** MRC Staff and any available members will present to the Whatcom County Council at the Surface Water Work Session on Tuesday April 18th from 10:30 to 12 PM, hybrid option.
8. **Garden of the Salish Sea Curriculum (GSSC) Collaboration:** Julie Hirsh discussed the GSSC and exploring avenues for the longevity of the program. Rick discussed determining strategic partnerships between the projects to provide opportunities for outreach. Julie mentioned involving the GSSC in MRC grant proposals to secure support for MRC involvement with the GSSC. Julie Hirsh will be putting together a questionnaire/survey to get some ideas rolling on this.

9. **Project Updates:**

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- **Chuckanut:** There will be an education and outreach event hosted in May at the North Chuckanut Bay beach entrance to discuss water quality monitoring, the Olympia Oyster project, and other efforts to preserve water quality in the Bay. The MRC is partnering with County Health and the Whatcom County PIC program to run this event. A mailer will be sent to residents in the Chuckanut watershed and the neighborhood on the north end of the bay.
- **Olympia oyster:** Bellingham Technical College Aquiculture students are available to help with the annual oyster survey on May 8th and May 10th. A shellfish transfer permit application is in progress and the seasoned shell will be donated from Taylor Shellfish.
- **Wildcat Cove:** Austin and Dana are meeting with PARKS to determine the scope of work and the potential for continuity of surveys at Wildcat Cove and Clayton Beach depending on DNRs availability. The social marketing campaign will be addressed once the timeline for the eelgrass surveys is determined in more detail.
- **HABs:** Sampling for HABs has switched from bimonthly to weekly sampling to accommodate spring plankton blooms. Jackie Dexter and Dana Flerchinger have joined the HABs monitoring team and are hoping for a potential MRC compound microscope acquisition. Sound Toxins training occurred in February, with a site visit to verify methods, making this program officially part of the Sound Toxins database.

10. MRC Partner Committee Updates:

- **WWIN/Speaker Series:** WWIN sent a community survey to gauge interest in trainings WWIN could offer. The speaker series group is currently working on hosting events on mariculture and HABs.
- **County Council:** The next council meeting is April 11th. The Climate Action and Natural Resources Committee will be discussing the letter of support for the NW Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization. Puget Sound Day on the Hill will be happening in early May.
- **NMEA:** The National Marine Educators Association is holding its annual conference in Bellingham in July. This will involve field trips, presentations, and keynote addresses over 3-4 days. The sessions are all filled and session proposals are closed, but they are still looking for proposals from tribal perspectives on marine environmental issues/science. Registration is now open for the conference. <https://www.marine-ed.org/conference/2023>. There is potential for the MRC to participate/ have an exhibit at this event.
- **Port of Bellingham:** No updates provided
- **Northwest Straits Commission:** Bob Cecile mentioned that there was recently a retreat in La Connor with Northwest Straits Foundation board members and commissioners that was very informative and provided leaders with more direction.

11. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM

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