



**WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**May 4, 2023 5:00pm – 7:00pm**  
**Garden Level Conference Room, Civic Annex Building**  
**322 N. Commercial St. Bellingham**  
**Or ZOOM [LINK](#)**  
**Meeting ID: 898 4927 5200 | Passcode 98225**  
**1-253-215-8782 US (Tacoma)**

*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.*

1.		<b>Introductions and Determine Quorum</b>
2.		<b>May 4 Agenda</b> <b>Action:</b> Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary.
3.	5:00	<b>Approval of April 6 and March 2 meeting summaries</b> <b>Action:</b> Review and approve summaries as final.
4.		<b>Community Updates</b> <b>Objective:</b> 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	<b>European Green Crab in Whatcom County Update:</b> Leah Robison, Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) <b>Objective:</b> Provide Northwest Straits staff with opportunity to relay information and updates on the European Green Crab regional project and the MRC's interest/involvement in volunteering.
6.	5:30	<b>Staff Update:</b> MRC retreat, Combined Review Team, Derelict Vessel Removal, summer meeting schedule, NWSI Conference, job shadow, <a href="#">2022 Annual Report</a> <b>Objective:</b> Provide staff with opportunity to relay information and updates to the full MRC. <b>Action:</b> Approve MRC staff participation on the Combined Review Team.
7.	6:00	<b>Outreach Events:</b> <a href="#">What's the Point</a> (June 17), <a href="#">Shore Friendly Workshop</a> (May 20, 9:30am – 12:30pm classroom, 1:00pm – 2pm beachwalk), <a href="#">Blaine Oyster Fest</a> (May 20, 12pm – 6pm) <b>Action:</b> Determine member capacity to host MRC booth at upcoming outreach events.
8.	6:25	<b>Project Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chuckanut Outreach Event</li> <li>• Olympia oyster (May 8 and 10) and future planning</li> <li>• Wildcat Cove</li> <li>• Beach Seine with Kids</li> <li>• GSSC Proposal</li> </ul>
9.	6:45	<b>MRC Partner Committee Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWIN/Speaker Series</li> <li>• County Council</li> <li>• Port of Bellingham</li> <li>• Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC)</li> </ul>
10.	7:00	<b>Adjourn.</b>

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:**

- Northwest Straits Initiative [2022 Annual Report](#)
- Kelp Plan Action [Workshop Notes](#)

**Members in attendance:** Austin Rose (staff), Dana Flerchinger (staff), Glen Alexander "Alex", Rick Beauregard, Jackie Dexter, Heather Spore (Chair), Mike MacKay, Paul Troutman, Bob Cecile, Kaylee Galloway (County Council), Beth Lorence, Dan Sulak, Elma Burnham

**Others:** Allie Simpson (Northwest Straits Commission), Leah Robison (Northwest Straits Commission), Alan Chapman

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**1. Introductions and Determine Quorum:** Heather began the meeting with the land acknowledgement and roundtable introductions.

**2. May 4 Agenda:** Agenda was approved with additions shown in track changes.

**3. Approval of April 6 and March 2 meeting summaries:** The April 6 and March 2 meeting summaries were approved.

**4. Community Updates:** Information about the [Woods at Viewcrest](#) stormwater proposal was shared. The City of Bellingham (COB) recently granted the developer a 60-day extension to respond to the Request for Information (RFI). The new deadline is now June 30, 2023. COB adheres to the WA Department of Ecology [stormwater manual](#) and has software available to look up information for stormwater structures within the city. It was suggested that the MRC hold off on providing comments about the proposed development until all information has been submitted by the developer, particularly regarding stormwater discharge directly into N. Chuckanut Bay. MRC staff will follow up with COB staff to confirm the comment period timeline after the response to the RFI has been submitted.

**5. European Green Crab in Whatcom County Update:** Leah Robison and Allie Simpson, Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) staff, provided an update on the European Green Crab (EGC) Regional Project. Suspected green crabs or molts should be reported by 1) taking photos, 2) marking the location, 3) submitting the report: [wdfw.wa.gov/greencrab](http://wdfw.wa.gov/greencrab) and 4) leaving live crabs in place (due to several misidentifications of native crabs as EGCs). The NWSC works in partnership with agencies, Tribes, and community members in green crab management. Drayton Harbor was identified as a hot spot in 2019 and consistent trapping efforts have been conducted in that area since 2020. An updated management plan has been created and core sites have been identified to help inform EGC abundance and distribution over time as well as establishing a baseline dataset of other species that are being caught in the traps. [Washington Sea Grant Crab Team](#) was vital in the early detection of EGC in Drayton Harbor, which led to a rapid response by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The core site observations in Drayton Harbor reflected a lower capture rate in 2022 than 2020, 2022 had a dramatic increase starting in early September (due to young of the year being large enough to enter traps resulting in a spike in captures), and trapping for a majority of the season was the lowest it has been since trapping began. Whatcom MRC and NWSC collaboration ideas include: outreach materials and outreach booths, advocating for trapping in areas important to the MRC, helping to connect with volunteers and other partners, and promoting the new [WSU/Sea Grant Molt Search](#) program.

#### **6. Staff Update:**

- **MRC Retreat:** Staff are working to organize an MRC retreat is late September early October. Triangle Associates has been contacted and is available and interested in facilitating. An e-mail will be sent to committee members in effort to recruit a retreat planning committee.
- **Combined Review Team:** MRC members granted permission for staff to participate in the Combined Review Team
- **Derelict Vessel Removal:** An update was included in the meeting packet. DNR gained custody of the *Wanderlust* in late April 23'. Removal is still in planning/work in progress status, though is still anticipated to be removed in 2023.
- **Summer meeting schedule:** A poll will be sent to members to assess the summer availability for a monthly meeting in July or August.
- **NWSI Conference:** The NWSI Conference is scheduled for November 3-4. Initial details were shared via e-mail by NWSC staff.
- **Job Shadow:** A high-school junior from Ohio will be visiting the area from May 8 – May 19 and will be participating in various MRC projects/activities during that time.
- **2022 Annual Report:** Staff provided a presentation of the 2022 MRC Annual Report to Council members at the April 18 Surface Water Work Session. The presentation was well received and the [report](#) is now available on the MRC website.

**7. Outreach Events:** A poll will be sent to members to assess member capacity to host the MRC booth at various outreach events scheduled throughout the summer.

#### **8. Project Updates:**

- **Chuckanut Outreach Event:** An outreach event in partnership with the Whatcom County PIC Program and Whatcom County Health is scheduled for Thursday, May 25, 4-6pm, at the beach entrance to N. Chuckanut Bay. An invitation postcard was sent to residents in the Chuckanut watershed, including the Chuckanut Village and Sea Pines neighborhoods. Staff will be available to answer questions and share information on water quality monitoring, septic system education, shellfish sampling and biotoxin monitoring, and European Green Crab monitoring with Chuckanut Bay.
- **Olympia oyster and future planning:** The annual Olympia oyster survey in N. Chuckanut Bay is scheduled for May 8 and May 10. Students from Bellingham and Technical College Fisheries and Aquaculture will be helping out, and new Pacific oyster shell will be laid out on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Austin also plans to set up a meeting with WDFW given the decline in oyster retention in Chuckanut Bay to determine next steps or recommendations. Jackie Dexter mentioned the prospect of expanding the project to Drayton Harbor as there are still live adult Olympia Oysters from previous restoration efforts by PSRF. This may provide a promising location to continue Olympia Oyster restoration efforts.
- **Wildcat Cove:** MRC staff met with State parks, DNR, and David Wallin at WWU to continue project planning for Wildcat Cove. DNR is able to conduct a survey of Wildcat Cove during late August in addition to the work being done at Clayton Beach with 10 m transects in the cove and 3 m transects along the boat launch to improve resolution in this focus area. WWU will also be conducting a drone survey from May-September to capture time-series data across the summer to determine changes with boat use and season. MRC expressed support

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for conducting both the survey with DNR and WWU to better determine the extent and potential damage to eelgrass beds in Wildcat Cove. MRC staff also drafted and sent out a request for proposals for a consultant to assist with a social marketing campaign in Wildcat Cove.

- **Beach Seine with Kids:** The final beach seine event with 3 classes from Roosevelt School is coming up. Alex and Mike discussed improving the methods so more students can engage with the activities and data collection, which will be utilized for the next beach seine event.
- **GSSC proposal:** Heather discussed that Julie Hirsh decided to withdraw her GSSC proposal to the MRC. Discussion among the MRC members involved concern around staffing limitations and limitations with taking on the program as whole. The MRC can circle back or create a subcommittee to address this in the future if the proposal develops proposal. Julie will still contact the MRC with volunteer events and opportunities. Jackie Dexter expressed that having a calendar of GSSC events would be helpful.

#### 9. MRC Partner Committee Updates:

- **WWIN/Speaker Series:** N/A
- **County Council:** Councilwoman Galloway shared that at the most recent Council Climate Action and Natural Resources Committee meeting, a presentation was delivered by Birdie Davenport with DNR on the Cherry Point Aquatic 2023 Management Plan is available for comment and the MRC could provide council with any recommendations or thoughts. Glen Alexander expressed support in the MRC reviewing and commenting on the Cherry Point Aquatic 2023 Management Plan. Bob Cecile mentioned coordinating with the Cherry Point Citizens Group to determine their thoughts and determine if the MRC can help in any capacity/ review specific sections of the plan.
- **Port of Bellingham:** Kurt provided an email update indicating that there is an open comment period of the draft Whatcom Waterway Phase 2 Consent Degree and Cleanup Action Plan from April 24<sup>th</sup>-May 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC):** Austin sent out highlights and minutes for the most recent NWSC meeting to MRC members, mentioning an interesting presentation about using dredge material for effective restoration.
- **Joint Shellfish Committee:** Rick Beauregard discussed a grant that is available for wastewater treatment facilities to upgrade outfalls. The joint Shellfish Committee urged the City of Blaine to apply for one of those grants, but ideally hopes to get the Department of Ecology or the Health Department to reassess the regulations or repeat the dilution testing to reopen the tideline area in Semiahmoo Spit. Beth Lorence indicated that she would look into this to determine more information.
- **No Anchor Zones:** Jackie Dexter expressed interest in updates about no anchor zone locations. Dana Oyster interested in involving MRC members in boat counts and getting. Allie Simpson will be reaching out to the MRC to schedule meeting to start planning for boat counts.

10. **Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 6:43pm.

***Next meeting: Thursday, June 2, 2023, 5:00pm – 7:00pm via ZOOM***

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