



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

<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>		
1.	5:00	Introductions and Determine Quorum
2.		June 1 Agenda Action: Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary.
3.		Approval of May 4 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	Olympia Oyster Restoration in Whatcom County: Brian Allen, Habitat Restoration Director, Puget Sound Restoration Fund Objective: Learn about the Olympia oyster restoration success in Drayton Harbor and discuss the MRC's efforts in N. Chuckanut Bay.
6.	5:30	Staff Update: summer schedule-July meeting, 2023-2025 NWSC proposal, derelict boat removal. Drayton Harbor eelgrass survey and vessel counts, 10-yr Implementation Plan – Salmon Recovery Plan Update Objective: Provide staff with opportunity to relay information and updates to the full MRC.
7.	5:45	Project Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chuckanut Outreach Event • Olympia Oyster Survey Results • Wildcat Cove • HABs
8.	6:15	MRC Partner Committee Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cherry Point Implementation Committee • WWIN/Speaker Series • County Council • Port of Bellingham • Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC)
9.	~6:30	Adjourn.

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/>

In Attendance: Austin Rose (staff), Jim Boyle, Mike MacKay, Paul Troutman, Kathy Ketteridge, Dana Flerchinger (staff), Rick Beauregard, Kurt Baumgarten, Glen "Alex" Alexander, Kaylee Galloway, Elma Burnham

Others: Brian Allen, Alan Chapman, Chris Brown, Julie Hirsch

1. **Introductions and Determine Quorum:** Jim Boyle (MRC Vice-Chair) began the meeting with the land acknowledgement and roundtable introductions.
2. **June 1 Agenda:** The agenda could not be approved (no quorum), though the committee followed the meeting agenda and included the additional staff update item (shown in track changes).
3. **Approval of May 4 meeting summary:** The May 4 meeting summary could not be approved.
4. **Community Updates:** No community updates.

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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5. **Olympia Oyster Restoration in Whatcom County:** Brian Allan, Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF), provided insight on the pilot Olympia oyster project in N. Chuckanut Bay and the potential of continuing restoration in Drayton Harbor. There is a need to gather basic information to identify test plot locations in Drayton – which may include the inside of Semiahmoo Spit and the tide waters of California Creek. Sediment transport can be an issue and there is a need to think holistically about the water body versus just ease of access. Hydrodynamics /eddy locations in Drayton Harbor need to be examined more closely to determine the viability of this location for oyster retention. Testing needs to be conducted with seeded cultch keeping in mind the hydrodynamics of the particular testing areas. Larval recruitment from the adult population is directly related to population abundance. This can be measured via spat collectors made from oyster shell at certain stages during the reproductive season. The MRC discussed the feasibility of conducting a reconnaissance mission for test plot locations with PSRF. Tidal elevations of -0.5 to -1 are ideal locations for Olympia oyster growth. Extreme freezing conditions as opposed to heat events can cause Olympia oyster population die offs.

Kathy Ketteridge, mentioned that she will look into the tidal circulation model for Drayton Harbor to inform hydrodynamic conditions.

6. Staff Update

- **Summer schedule:** Next meeting will be July 6. **No August meeting.**
- **2023-2025 NWSC proposal:** The MRC's proposal was submitted in EAGL. Staff provided an overview of the budget. The Northwest Straits Science Advisory Committee, which provides scientific input and guidance to the Commission on emerging issues and opportunities, and conducts technical review of MRC projects where appropriate, will be working with MRCs through June and July.
- **Derelict boat removal:** DNR tried to remove the *Wanderlust* on the May 23 but the tide was too low. DNR plans to refloat it off the beach and tow it to the disposal facility.
- **Drayton Harbor eelgrass survey and vessel counts:** Due to funding available, the NWSC will contract out to complete an eelgrass survey of the entirety of Drayton Harbor, using DNR methodology. This information will benefit multiple projects (Oly oyster & European Green Crab). Dana F. will scout good locations to take vessel monitoring photos. Staff will also be communicating with the Port about this work.
- **10-yr Implementation Plan – Salmon Recovery Plan Update:** This plan is a tool intended to facilitate implementation of actions and strategies in WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan - addressing water quantity, water quality, instream flow, and fish habitat challenges. MRC staff ensured MRC projects were included in the update.

7. Project Updates

- **Chuckanut Outreach Event:** The event occurred on May 25th. 15 community members attended and engaged in great conversations about improving conditions in Chuckanut Bay. The MRC wants to look into ways to get more community members involved with these outreach events.
- **Olympia Oyster Survey Results:** Very low counts of live Olympia Oysters were recorded during the 2023 population survey in N. Chuckanut Bay. The MRC is discussing other steps for continuing the project. Paul Troutman asked about continuing the survey tiles for larval retention in Chuckanut Bay. The MRC decided on continuing collection and analysis of larval retention with the help of Bellingham Technical College and will look into other options for analyzing the tiles in the future. Analysis takes about an hour per month and is conducted via compound microscope.
- **Wildcat Cove:** The MRC is in the process of finalizing contracts with Peak Sustainability, WWU, and DNR.
- **HABs:** Rick Beauregard provided an overview of the Harmful Algal Bloom (HABs) project that the MRC has adopted. The HABs project samples for harmful algal blooms and other phytoplankton at 2 sites: Drayton Harbor and Birch Bay Harbor. Other sampling includes collecting mussels for biotoxin analysis and Dungeness crab larval sampling to determine if larval tracking is a better way to manage the resource. More can be read about the crab larval trap sampling here: <https://www.pnwcrab.com/the-group>. The HABs group samples in locations where there was previously a major gap in the sampling data for Whatcom County. There have been major spikes in HABs in this region as compared to the rest of the Puget Sound. This data helps show trends in blooms and provides information on the conditions/ variables that influence these HAB events, while also informing recreational shellfish harvest safety.

8. MRC Partner Committee Updates:

- **Cherry Point Implementation Committee:** Austin will provide the meeting notes once complete.
- **WWIN/Speaker Series:** This group is starting to work on a climate change seminar, hopefully for the fall.
- **County Council:** The last Council session included a presentation on the Yakima basin adjudication. Council will be reviewing the 2025 Comprehensive Plan – incorporating [HB 1181](#) (improving the state's response to climate change). The MRC may want to track the [Voluntary Stewardship Program](#) (deadline removed for enrollment). There will be a water works session on June 13.

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- **Port of Bellingham:** There will be a final public meeting for the Whatcom County Compound Flood Vulnerability and Risk Assessment will occur on June 14th 6-7:30 pm (virtual event). This project is an assessment to better plan for the compounding effects of riverine and coastal flooding with sea level rise. The Port conducted a restoration project at Little Squalicum Beach last year and is looking into treating the stormwater that drains into the beach since extra funding is available. Squalicum Creek – state budget included 600,000 to be divided between Squalicum and Whatcom Creeks - COB moved forward with funding strategy/ feasibility study and alternatives analysis to assess habitat and flooding issues. There is a project coming up to address legacy contaminants in Whatcom waterway phase 2 – funding package from Ecology to assess the area from the granary building to the Waterfront Tavern and Jalapenos restaurant. The Port is looking at habitat enhancements and design in this area. The Port is also moving forward with an osprey platform design in partnership with the Audubon Society.
- **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC):** Meeting highlights were shared with the committee via e-mail.

Items of interest:

- Job postings with the Working Waterfront Coalition. <https://www.whatcomworkingwaterfront.org/billet>
- The Garden of the Salish Sea Curriculum is offering a summer internship with a stipend. Contact Julie Hirsch garden.salishsea@gmail.com

9. **Adjourn:** 6:53pm

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