



WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY
December 7, 2023 5:00pm – 7:00pm
Or 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.		Introductions and Determine Quorum
2.		December 7 Agenda Action: Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary.
3.	5:15	Approval of November 16 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.	5:25	Northwest Straits Foundation Grant Collaboration – Don Hunger, Executive Director, Northwest Straits Foundation
6.	5:40	Nominations for MRC Officer Positions (Chair, Vice-Chair, NWSC rep. NWSC alt. rep) Action: Confirm nominations submitted on google form and discussion.
7.	5:50	MRC Partner Committee Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWIN/Speaker Series – Climate Adaptation Forum • County Council • Port of Bellingham • Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC)
8.	6:10	Determine Action Items to Bolster Communication with Elected Officials Roundtable
9.	7:00	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, Dana Flerchinger, Heather Spore, Mike MacKay, Rick Beauregard, Jim Boyle, Paul Troutman, Colin Wahl, Kaylee Galloway (County Council), Elma Burnham, Beth Lorence, Glen Alexander (Alex), Jackie Dexter

Others: Piper Olson, Brigid Wills, Julie Hirsch, Don Hunger

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

2. December 7 Agenda: The December agenda was approved.

3. Approval of November 16 meeting summary: The November MRC meeting summary was approved.

4. Community Updates: Paul Troutman expressed gratitude to other MRC members as his term on the MRC comes to an end. He requested that the MRC stay informed on the development of The Woods at Viewcrest as another Request for Information (RFI) has been submitted to the COB and if approved, will have a public comment period. He requested that the MRC express any concerns to the COB about the development during this comment period.

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Piper Olson with the Garden of the Salish Sea Curriculum mentioned that her organization is trying to connect high school students throughout the county with local industries and companies. She inquired about interest in hosting these high school interns (especially in aquaculture fields), and requested that folks reach out if they are interested or know of any opportunities.

5. Northwest Straits Foundation Grant Collaboration: Don Hunger shared that NWSF has secured two grants (from HollyFrontier Sinclair and Marathon) and is working towards securing one more (from Seeking Help) to raise funds to help with marine and coastal restoration projects. These funds would support interns, project efforts, and outreach and education activities into 2024. These stewardship funds are to care for what we have already restored (not for new restoration projects) to upkeep the current restoration. One idea Don and Austin discussed was potentially using the funds to staff the boat launch at Wildcat Cove to improve education, awareness, and best practices to protect the eelgrass beds within the cove. Don encouraged members to reach out with ideas within Whatcom MRC to utilize these funds. Alex inquired about NWSF funding Salish Sea Conservation Core (SSCC) interns to help run the Beach Seine with Kids event into 2024. Other stewardship project examples Don mentioned included supporting raingarden upkeep, creating interpretive signage, or running interpretive programs.

6. Nominations for MRC Officer Positions: MRC staff shared nomination results for MRC officer positions. Nominated individuals expressed desire to participate in positions or withdraw. Formal elections occur in January following nominations.

- **MRC Chair:** Heather Spore received the majority of the votes, but expressed that her work load will be picking up into the next year, and she may need more assistance from a co-chair or vice chair going into 2024. (Mike, Rick, and Alex expressed that they wanted to withdraw from being nominated from this position)
- **MRC Vice Chair:** Vice chair was split between Elma Burnham, Jackie Dexter, Beth Lorence, and Mike MacKay (Mike withdrew from being nominated for this position). All expressed that they wouldn't withdraw their names, or could split up responsibilities. Elma accepted nomination and Jackie and Beth expressed that they were content with Elma being the nominee for this position.
- **NWSC Rep:** Mike was nominated and accepted.
- **NWSC Rep alternate:** Beth and Rick were nominated and expressed interest in tag teaming the role.

7. MRC Partner Committee Updates:

- **WWIN/Speaker Series:** The Speaker Series Committee is planning a Climate Adaptation Forum for late January or Early February 2024. The goal is to provide a high-level overview of anticipated local climate impacts and current efforts of some local governments, Nooksack Indian Tribe, and Lummi Nation to mitigate those impacts including efforts to collaborate with each other. Followed by a list of programs offered by local governments that individuals can participate in and where they can learn more about those programs. If members are interested in joining the subcommittee, contacting individuals, or providing ideas for presentations, they should contact Austin. Beth mentioned that Lummi is doing lots of work with freshwater HABs and this may be a great presentation topic (biotoxin/ HABs).
- **County Council:** Councilwoman Galloway mentioned that Council passed the mid-biennium 2023-24 budget. In terms of the Forest Resilience Task Force, funding was approved for facilitative services and an RFP will be going out early next year. Eight community members with expertise have also been appointed to the task force. An ordinance was passed removing citizenship and voter registration requirements for advisory groups. There is still a requirement that folks live in or own property within the county, but they are not required to be a citizen or registered voter to serve on advisory committees. Councilwoman Galloway also mentioned the County comprehensive plan and that council will welcome the MRC's guidance and expertise especially on shoreline implications and climate resilience. Council members will be reconvening in the new year with new council members and will be going through reorganization, which includes appointments to various advisory groups. Councilwoman Galloway intends to put name down for the MRC, but also understands if the MRC would prefer another council member to take over the role. The MRC expressed gratitude and support for councilwoman Galloway continuing in this role.
- **Port of Bellingham:** No Updates
- **Northwest Straits Commission:** No update until January.

8. Determine Action Items to Bolster Communication with Elected Officials

Adding a policy seat: Heather Spore inquired about adding a policy seat to the MRC; Austin communicated that this would need to be done with an ordinance. Councilwoman Galloway suggested that if the MRC wants to make this change, we should review and adjust any other components of the code concurrently.

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Creating a subcommittee, adding responsibilities to an existing seat, or creating a new officer position: Beth asked if the MRC could add duties to an already existing seat or form a subcommittee to tackle policy issues. Elma mentioned that the seats aren't always indicative of the perspective that those individuals bring to the table. Rick mentioned that we could designate responsibilities to each of our interest groups to help better identify MRC priorities. Alex mentioned that when recruiting members, it would be good to include these responsibilities under each seat. Heather inquired if the MRC wants to redefine what the different seats bring to the table (focus on topics identified through seats?) or focus more on general MRC issues to prioritize. Mike MacKay added that trying to create a new role /group/organization to cover policy issues will likely be challenging and keeping it more simplified would be the best approach.

Councilwoman Galloway suggested top down priorities for the MRC to review in the coming year including:

- The Comprehensive Plan Review (Due June 2025)
 - o Potentially creating subcommittees to review
 - o Shoreline development, parks, climate change
- Relevant components in the 2025-26 Biennium Budget review (start 2nd quarter of 2024)
- Chapter 2.112 code and updates (citizen requirements, gender language)

Councilwoman Galloway also suggested leaning on relationships with other MRCs to see what they are doing to influence policies, ordinance changes, etc. It may be beneficial to attend other MRC meetings and check out their websites to learn more from them.

Mike MacKay also mentioned the importance of better outlining MRC priorities so we have a better idea of the topics the MRC wants to bring to council. Rick stated that these priorities would also apply with other county entities including COB, State Parks, etc. Heather expressed support for a plan to inform/review policies that have the greatest impact on MRC priorities.

Jim Boyle mentioned the need for more metrics to measure our progress as an MRC including outlining clear goals, purpose, needs, and project accomplishments (better measuring our success). Dana mentioned the MRC annual reports that summarize some of these metrics MRC members were inquiring about.

Mike MacKay mentioned that having Hilary Wilkinson with Triangle Associates facilitate this discussion further would be helpful. The MRC agreed that having a facilitator to further refine MRC goals and provide guidance on moving forward with more of a policy focus would be helpful. Austin mentioned that she would try to get Hilary to attend our January MRC meeting.

Beach Seine with Kids: Mike MacKay provided an update on the project, including that Lummi Natural Resources has committed to partnering with the MRC to make this event possible. There will be a meeting in January to plan more details for this project.

9. Adjourn

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