



WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY
February 1, 2024 5:00pm – 7:00pm
ZOOM [LINK](#)
Meeting ID: 848 5509 7034 | Passcode 280586
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.		February 1 Agenda Action: Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary.
3.		Approval of January 18 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.	5:15	Introduction to Local Elects: Blaine City Council Mayor: Mary Lou Steward and Bellingham City Council Representative: Jace Cotton
6.	5:25	2025 Comprehensive Plan Review – PDS staff will lead a discussion and compile recommendations for issues that need to be addressed in Chapter 8 /Marine Resource Lands and Chapter 10 /Environment Discussion of Major Concepts that Need to be Addressed
7.	6:30	Action: Form an Advisory Subcommittee
8.	6:45	MRC Partner Committee Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council • Port of Bellingham • Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC)
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/>

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 7, 5:00pm – 7:00pm, virtual. Please check out the [MRC calendar](#) for meeting dates and formats.

Items of interest:

- Check out the new and improved [Northwest Straits Initiative Floating Kelp Monitoring](#) page.
- What's the Point? – tentatively June 22

In Attendance: Austin Rose (staff), Dana Flerchinger (staff), Elma Burnham (Vice Chair), Kaylee Galloway, Rick Beauregard, Heather Spore (Chair), Mary Lou Steward, Elizabeth Lorence, Mike MacKay, Jace Cotton, Jackie Dexter, Dan Sulak, Glen (Alex) Alexander, Colin Wahl, and Jim Boyle.

Others: Priscilla Drewry (PDS), Thomas (Joe) Hoats, Leah Skare (NWSC Staff), and Jeff Whitty (NWSC Staff)

1. **Introductions and Determine Quorum:** Heather began the meeting with round table introductions. A quorum was present.
2. **February 1 Agenda:** The February agenda was approved.

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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3. **Approval of January 18 meeting summary:** The January meeting summary was approved.
4. **Community Updates:** Austin notified the MRC of an upcoming outreach event called “What’s the Point” that is tentatively scheduled for June 22nd. Alex and Dana will be attending monthly planning meetings and will need additional volunteers to help staff an informational table the day of the event.

5. **Introduction to Local Elects and Potential new members**

- Mary Lou Steward (Blaine City Council Mayor) introduced herself as she was appointed as MRC representative.
- Thomas (Joe) Hoats and Avery Maverick applied for MRC positions and will be appointed on February 6th. Joe Hoats introduced himself to the committee.

6. **2025 Comprehensive Plan Review:**

Priscilla Drewry started the Comprehensive Plan review discussion. The final product of this Comprehensive Plan review and the MRC discussion will be a single, written memo documenting big picture MRC recommendations that will be submitted to the PDS consultant. This memo will need to be approved by the MRC before submitting to the consultant. The goal of the discussion tonight is to compile a master list of each member’s individual recommendations. Ultimately, these recommendations and policies established in the Comprehensive Plan will inform code down the line.

A few MRC members expressed concern about providing thorough feedback on such a long and rigorous document in such a short amount of time. Concern was also expressed about the MRC agreeing to a list that may be incomplete. The MRC wants to ensure adequate time is given to create a comprehensive and well-thought out list. Priscilla encouraged the MRC to start tonight by simply compiling a list. This discussion and the resulting list that was generated by the MRC is attached as a **separate document**.

Timeline: The MRC will submit comments to the master list over the next week. The subcommittee will compile a memo for final MRC approval during the March 7th meeting.

The initial brainstorm list generated during this meeting was approved by the MRC.

7. **Action: Form an Advisory Subcommittee:** A subcommittee was formed to review and refine the MRC’s Comp Plan Recommendations and to put this list into a formal memo. This subcommittee will meet once or twice before our next MRC meeting on March 7th. Alex, Jackie, and Colin volunteered to be a part of the subcommittee, and Heather will try to attend the meetings and contribute, if possible.

UPDATE: On 02/06/24, Priscilla with PDS notified Austin and Dana via email that the MRC Comp Plan recommendations do not need to be put into a formal memo, but can simply be submitted as a list.

8. **MRC Partner Committee Updates:**

- **County Council:** The next county council meeting is scheduled for February 6th. There will be a discussion about the Climate Vulnerability Assessment, which Kaylee encouraged the MRC to familiarize themselves with as it will only become more relevant. Councilwoman Galloway has been working on policy endeavors, and State policies that are top of mind include the Climate Commitment Act. She mentioned that a letter of support from the MRC would be extremely helpful for her to bring to Council. The committee plans to draft a letter of support that will be ready before February 15th; it is needed for the Feb 20th Council meeting and the Climate Impact Advisory meeting on the 15th.
- **Port of Bellingham:** No update

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- **Whatcom County Public Works Update:** The County is applying for the Terry Husseman Grant, and if the application is selected, Austin will be the grant manager. This work would directly tie in to the vulnerability risk assessment work that the county is currently doing. The goal of the grant is to obtain funds to hire a consultant that will be tasked with gathering and compiling ecosystem data across Whatcom County shorelines and overlaying this data with the vulnerability risk assessment data. The current vulnerability assessment does not include marine ecosystem data, so the county is hoping to fill this gap. Austin requested a letter of support from the MRC to support this work for the grant. The MRC supported this action.
- **Bellingham City Council:** In the chat, Jace Cotton mentioned that the City and Port are entering a consent degree with Ecology for the RG Haley clean up. The public comment period on this is from Feb. 12th to March 12th if the members are interested in commenting. He also noted that Bellingham's Shoreline Management Program, Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations are also critical to protecting and restoring marine resources, given the concentration of development around Bellingham Bay, with a lot of legacy contamination and MTCA clean-up processes ongoing on Port of Bellingham property. Jace mentioned that it was great to listen to the discussion today and is looking forward to finding ways to be aligned with what we recommend to the County.
- **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC):** Mike MacKay attended the Jan 26th NWSC meeting and reported a few highlights. Highlights included that the next NWSC meeting will be on February 23rd from 10-3pm in the Civic building in Whatcom County. Whatcom MRC is invited to make a presentation during this meeting (contact Caitlyn Blair if interested). At the meeting, folks also heard about from Clallum County about a kelp exhibition tent (traveling exhibit focused on youth education about the importance of kelp/kelp beds). Don Hunger with the Northwest Straits Foundation also spoke with with Alex and Mike about a new source of funding to support hiring 3 interns that will assist with the beach seine with kids project.

9. Adjourn

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