



**WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
DRAFT SUMMARY**

Scheduled for: **January 5, 2023**
 Time: **5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**
 Join Zoom Meeting: **Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89849275200>**
Meeting ID: 898 4927 5200
Passcode: 98225
One tap mobile: +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.		January 5 Agenda Action: Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary.
3.	5:00	Approval of December 1, 2022 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	Drayton Harbor and Birch Bay Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs): Rick Beauregard, Drayton Harbor Shellfish Committee Objective: Learn about biotoxin concentrations in North Whatcom county waters and how the MRC can get involved.
6.	5:20	Comment Letter to City of Bellingham Objective: Discussion of draft comment letter and next steps.
7.	5:40	MRC Policies and Procedures Amendment (Elma): Elma will highlight suggested additions to the MRC Policies and Procedures specific to the meeting protocols for virtual and hybrid meetings. Action: Committee approval of additions to the Policies and Procedures
8.	5:40	MRC Retreat: advisory role (recruitment from local officials), facilitation? Objective: Discuss ideas for MRC retreat and recruit planning subcommittee.
9.	6:15	Staff Update: Member appointment recommendations, additional staff, Little Squalicum Estuary event Objective: Provide staff with opportunity to relay information and updates to the full MRC.
10.	6:30	MRC Partner Committee Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWIN/Speaker Series (Austin) – new website • County Council • Port of Bellingham – Kurt B. • Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) – Bob C.
11.	6:45 pm	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 (staff), Alex, Heather Spore (Chair), Jackie Dexter, Bob Cecile, Andrew Gamble, Mike MacKay, Beth Lorence, Dan Sulak, Colin Wahl, Elma Burnham

Others: Rick Beauregard, Bob Seaman, Jana Turner, Leah Robison, Eleanor Hines, Alan Chapman, Margarette Grant, Chris Brown

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1. **Introductions and Determine Quorum:** As the new MRC Chair, Heather began the meeting with the tribal acknowledgement. No introductions were made.
2. **January 5 Agenda:** The January meeting agenda was approved.
3. **Approval of December 1, 2022 meeting summary:** The December meeting summary was approved.
4. **Community Updates:** Alan Chapman mentioned that the election process for the Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) Supervisor are underway. The deadline for applications is January 6. There are specific dates for vote by mail ballots. The WCD recently revised a 5-year plan that may be of interest for the MRC to review. Recommended modifications can be sent to Alan. Information can be found on the [WCD website](#).

Agenda items #5 and #6 were switched

5. **Comment Letter to City of Bellingham:** MRC members recently drafted a comment letter to the City of Bellingham regarding the proposed Jones Subdivision ([“The Woods at Viewcrest”](#)). The City informed the MRC that there is intent to issue a follow up Request for Information from the applicant. In which case, new information will be available to review and comment on. The committee agreed that there is ample time to review the new information and decide how to best comment.
Action: Heather and Austin will check in with the City to see when the request for more information will be posted to the webpage in order to inform the timeline for commenting.
6. **Drayton Harbor and Birch Bay Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs):** Rick Beauregard shared information about a citizen science program involving volunteers sampling for harmful algae blooms in Drayton Harbor and Birch Bay. Over the years, northern Whatcom County has had some of the highest biotoxin levels. With the influence of the Fraser River on the Salish Sea, this area is a strategic location to understand HAB distribution throughout Puget Sound. Volunteers sample weekly and send information to [SoundToxins](#). There is a desire to make this monitoring a standalone project that is not reliant on volunteers, with the potential to add sample sites. Rick asked the MRC to consider taking on the project to provide more stability with funding, additional volunteers, and a forum to share data.

Relevant comments in zoom chat:

- Eleanor Hines (RE Sources; she/her/hers): *For anyone interested/missed Rick’s presentation before, here’s a recording of his presentation the the Cherry Pt Citizen Stewardship Committee back in Nov:*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCoQojdk0C4&t=1s>
- Elizabeth Lorence: *I would happily help with trainings, and facilitating this project in any way I can*
- Eleanor Hines (RE Sources; she/her/hers): *Alex, Austin, and Beth- I can follow up with you to see if it makes sense to offer HABs as an option for NSS so we can at least get an email list of volunteers specifically interested in this, now is a great time for this as we kickoff the season.*
- Glen "Alex" Alexander: *I agree that this seems like a good fit with the MRC but it sounds like we have a lot of work to do to get it going. I'm willing to help.*

7. **MRC Policies and Procedures Amendment (Elma):** Elma followed up on the discussion of systemizing the MRC meetings differently now that most meetings are hosted virtually. When it comes to voting during a hybrid meeting, Heather suggested doing roll call, and strictly using the chat function during virtual meeting – both of which offer a more active way to identify consensus. Suggested updates can be found under item #5 “Meeting Protocol” (pg. 4-5) in the [2023 MRC Process and Procedural Agreement](#) available on the MRC website under “Whatcom MRC Member Resources”.

A motion was made to approve the Policies and Procedures amendments with adjustments made as needed. The motion was approved by a quorum, as indicated in the chat. There were no dissenting or disapproving votes.

8. **MRC Retreat:** MRC Staff relayed that the 2023 federal budget did include \$3M in Congressionally Directed Spending to the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC). NWSC are working to learn stipulations with that funding. The NWSC plans to issue a single Request for Proposals to MRCs for both the EPA/State funded award and the Congressional funding award. MRCs are being asked to develop a list of anticipated projects for a two-year funding period (October 2023 – December 2025), by March 1. This timeline does not allow a lot of time to hire a facilitator to guide the retreat and a project prioritization process. The committee discussed having self-facilitated in-person retreat focusing on project prioritization.

Action: MRC Staff will distribute a poll to gauge when and where members would like to hold their retreat. (Weekend, Weekday,

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or during regularly scheduled February meeting time).

9. Staff Update:

- **Member Appointment Recommendations:** There are currently two vacancies on the MRC, one for Citizen-at-Large (current member eligible to re-apply, and did), and one for a Scientific Interest position. The MRC Executive Committee met on December 20 to review applications and make a recommendation for appointments. Alex was recommended to fulfill his second term in the Citizen-at-Large position, and Rick Beauregard was recommended to fill the Scientific Interest seat. It is likely the members will be appointed at the January 24 Council meeting. Members discussed the need for recruitment to fill all seats (tribal representatives and City Council seats).

- **Additional Staff:** The CDS grant includes funding to support additional MRC staff support. This person would be a part-time temporary employee with the County, working up to 30 hours/week. A job announcement will be posted once the CDS grant is approved by Council, which is expected on January 10.

- **Little Squalicum Estuary Event:** The group was reminded of the Little Squalicum Estuary Community Event scheduled for Saturday, January 14 10am-1pm. The MRC was invited to host a booth to share information about the committee and connect with community members. Alex, Jackie, and Bob Seaman volunteered to be at the MRC booth.

10. MRC Partner Committee Updates:

- **WWIN/Speaker Series:** The Speaker Series committee is still working with Whatcom County Public Works River and Flood staff and Floodplain Integrated Planning (FLIP) to plan a flood symposium focused on an overview of the FLIP process, river processes, status/challenge of hydraulic modeling, habitat, and how fish use the river.
- **County Council:** no report
- **Port of Bellingham:** no report
- **Northwest Straits Commission:** Commission meeting highlights were e-mailed to the Committee. Bob Cecile added Tessa Francis, Puget Sound Institute, presented impacts of shoreline armoring to Chinook and Chum salmon along with some forage fish. Tessa is happy to provide a similar presentation to the MRCs. The Commission is aiming to expand their Science Advisory Committee.

Mike MacKay provided an update on the Beach Seine with Kids project:

- Lummi Natural Resources in on board to help with seining again.
- Boulevard Park remains to be the preferred locations for events, between 10am and 1pm.
- There is a new contact to help coordinate with Tribal schools and will provide additional help selecting tribal elders to join events.
- Tides from early April – June are more favorable on Fridays.
- Invitations will be sent to 4th grade classrooms.

Heather asked members who were interested in providing a blurb with their profile picture on the website should share with Austin.

11. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 6:52pm

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