



**WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
DRAFT SUMMARY**

Scheduled for: **March 3, 2022**  
 Time: **5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**  
 Join Zoom Meeting: **Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85730030249>**  
**Meeting ID: 857 3003 0249**  
**Passcode: 98225**  
**One tap mobile: +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.	5:00	<b>Introductions and Determine Quorum</b>
2.		<b>February Agenda</b>  <b>Action:</b> Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary.
3.		<b>Approval of February meeting summary</b>  <b>Action:</b> Review and approve summaries as final.
4.		<b>Public Comment Period</b>
5.	5:10	<b>Staff Update:</b> Combined Review Team, In-person meetings
7.	5:20	<b>MRC Project Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote Beach Cleanups – recruit for announcement (share photos)</li> <li>• Derelict boat on Nooksack Delta</li> </ul> <u>Education and Outreach</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach Seine with Schools (Mike, Elma, Alex)</li> <li>• What's the Point? (Alex)</li> <li>• Wildcat Cove (Austin)</li> </ul> <u>Monitoring</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olympia oysters (Austin)</li> <li>• Kelp (Eleanor)</li> </ul> <u>Restoration</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clayton Beach (Heather and Austin)</li> <li>• Remote Beach Cleanups (Bob and Austin)</li> </ul>
8.	6:20	<b>MRC Partner Committee Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWIN/Speaker Series (Austin) – Whatcom Marine Research Symposium discussion</li> <li>• County Council</li> <li>• Port of Bellingham – Kurt B.</li> <li>• BBAT</li> <li>• NWSC – Bob C.</li> </ul>
9.	6:45	<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/>

*Whatcom County boards, commissions, and advisory committees are currently following State Open Public Meetings Act amended requirements by holding all meetings remotely. Community members who require special assistance to participate in a committee meeting are asked to contact the meeting facilitator at least 4 business days in advance.*

**In attendance:** Austin Rose (staff), Eleanor Hines (Chair), Heather Spore (Vice-Chair), Alex, Mike MacKay, Andrew Gamble, Bob Cecile, Elma Burnham, Paul Troutman, Councilman Todd Donovan

**Others:** Jana Turner (Garden of the Salish Sea Curriculum – GSSC), Julie Hirsch (GSSC), Annika Fain (Fain Environmental), Chris Brown, Elizabeth Kilanowski, Jeff Whitty (Northwest Straits Commission - NWSC), Leah Robison (NWSC), Mia Somenek (Americorps),

- 1) **Introductions and Determine Quorum:** Eleanor Hines began the meeting with roundtable introductions. A quorum was established.
- 2) **February Agenda:** The February meeting agenda was approved. Austin noted the mis-numbering of meeting items (no item 6), and the remote beach cleanup discussion is listed twice.
- 3) **Approval of February meeting summary:** The February meeting summary was approved.
- 4) **Public Comment Period:** Leah Robison, Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC), shared that the NWSC will be leading European Green Crab trapping efforts along Whatcom County shorelines – outside of tribal jurisdiction. Volunteers will now be able to participate more. Austin sent a volunteer announcement to the committee. This work will involve boots in the mud during trapping weeks, and setting up to 90 traps at a time. Any committee members interested should contact Leah and/or complete the questionnaire that was included in the e-mail from Austin.

*Due to technical difficulties, agenda items were not addressed in order.*

#### 7) **MRC Project Updates:**

- **Beach Seine with Schools:** The Beach Seine with Schools project will focus on working with 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms in 2022. 4<sup>th</sup> graders will field trip to Boulevard Park to observe a beach seine led by Lummi Natural Resources staff/field crew. The goal is to have students see juvenile salmon using their intertidal habitat along the shoreline. Three dates have been set: April 26, May 10, and June 7, all with a 11:00am start time. Anyone can participate. The project is being considered a pilot this year, but will likely grow in popularity as teachers are eager to share applied science and data collection with their students. This project connects well with the salmon curriculum already established in schools. MRC project leads will be meeting with students in the classroom before the field events. Invitations/applications were sent to every 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and principals in the Bellingham school district (14 schools and 32 classrooms). 7 applications have been submitted, and 3 classrooms will be chosen to participate.
- **Remote Beach Cleanups:** Information about the remote beach cleanups completed by the MRC in 2019 at Lummi Island, and Sucia Island – in partnership with the San Juan MRC – was shared. Remote beach cleanups are included in the 2021-2023 MRC grant. The MRC would again like to complete a cleanup on Lummi Island, and work with island residents and the Lummi Island Heritage Trust (LIHT). A landing craft will be hired to help transport volunteers and garbage collected. Bob Cecile (project champion) will work with the LIHT to settle on a date for a cleanup in 2022, most likely in July. Austin will reach out to the Northwest Indian College to inquire whether summer students would be interested in joining, as they also participated in 2019.
- **Derelict boat on Nooksack Delta:** Lummi Natural Resources staff informed Austin of a derelict boat in the Nooksack Delta. The boat has been logged into [MyCoast](#) several times which informs Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Bob Cecile spoke with a DNR – Derelict Vessel Removal Program representative and learned the custody process for removal. This was brought to the MRC’s attention to consider addressing with CDS funding.
- **What’s the Point?:** What’s the Point is a community event sponsored by the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve and is intended to raise awareness of the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve and the importance of the marine habitat. Naturalists are on the beach to teach visitors about the intertidal habitat and organisms. In previous years, the Point Whitehorn County Park was used as the event location – however, the public access is currently closed. In 2022, the program will be held at Semiahmoo on Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1:00pm – 5:00pm. The MRC has participated in the past with their educational booth. Alex recruited MRC members to participate.

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- **Wildcat Cove:** Austin reminded the MRC about the education and outreach opportunity at Wildcat Cove to help address potential damage to the eelgrass bed adjacent to the boat ramp. State Park staff, DNR, and interested volunteers met to discuss next steps. The group decided to utilize North Sound Stewards/Beach Steward volunteers to help gather data on the frequency the boat ramp is being used at low tide. The MRC has discussed pursuing a social marketing campaign and interpretive signage to educate visitors about the eelgrass meadow and its ecosystem services.
- **Olympia oysters:** Austin shared the 2021 survey data from the pilot Olympia oyster restoration project in North Chuckanut Bay. Bellingham Technical College students are on board to help with the annual population survey – and dates in May are being considered for the survey. Guidance from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Dr. Paul Dinnel on project next steps was discussed. The MRC would like to scope additional pilot plots in the bay within harder substrate areas. Using photo quadrats was suggested. Austin will reach out to members to establish an ad hoc committee to discuss next steps.
- **Kelp:** Eleanor mentioned that the Bellingham Community Boating Center is interested in working with the MRC on their kelp monitoring. Ideas discussed include: a hosted zoom lecture about Bull Kelp in Puget Sound, a youth internship for high school students throughout the summer, and help with locating and monitoring additional kelp beds the MRC does not have the capacity to monitor.
- **Clayton Beach:** Heather summarized the minutes from a recent meeting with all interested parties involved in the Clayton Beach restoration project. Objectives and goals identified include: the pedestrian overpass, where the funding is coming from, project timelines, beach restoration goals and management of recreation to not impact the resources, incorporating interpretive signage, coastal resiliency, current habitat forming processes, engaging both Skagit and Whatcom MRC in long term monitoring, and stakeholder identification.

#### 5) Staff update:

Combined Review Team – Austin sent committee members their annual invitation from the WRIA 1 Lead Entity Coordinator for a community member to participate on the Combined Review Team (CRT). The CRT reviews and ranks local salmon recovery projects proposed for funding by the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and recommends the ranked list to the WRIA 1 salmon recovery lead entity, which is the WRIA 1 Watershed Management Board. Heather Spore participated in 2021, and has volunteered again for 2022.

In-person meetings – Whatcom County Executive Sidhu ordered full re-opening of County facilities for public business, which allows for the MRC to meet in person and host a hybrid meeting if they wish. The MRC Executive Subcommittee will determine whether the committee meets in person when they meet to develop the meeting agenda this month. The committee agreed to meet in person for the April meeting.

MRC Vacancies – The MRC has two vacancies for a Scientific interest position and a Conservation/Environmental interest position. These vacancies are advertised on the MRC website in addition to the Whatcom County Executive Boards and Commissions

#### 8) MRC Partner Committee Updates:

- **WWIN/Speaker Series:** The Marine Research Symposium was held on February 23. 109 people participated in the event. Recording will be shared to all registrants. Austin will share the recording with the full MRC and post to the MRC website for further dissemination.
- **County Council:** Councilman Todd Donovan is the new Whatcom County Council representative on the MRC. Eleanor mentioned that the MRC should make a presentation to the Council in the near future to remind them of the work the MRC has accomplished. The Council is working on the public access to Pt. Whitehorn. The Council will be revisiting the proposed ordinance ordering the temporary closure of Gulf Rd.
- **Port of Bellingham:** no report
- **Bellingham Bay Action Team (BBAT):** Eleanor mentioned that the Little Squalicum Estuary and Squalicum Beach restoration projects are moving forward. The MRC's forage fish survey data has been informative to both projects. Squalicum Creek fish passage barriers are being addressed. The RG Haley site just had its engineering design out for public comment.
- **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC):** The annual MRC conference is tentatively scheduled to be held in person November 18-19 in La Conner. Whatcom and Skagit will be addressing European Green Crab removal. The next NWSC meeting is March 25, 10:00am – 12:00pm

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9) **Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 6:40pm