



**WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
 March 7th, 2024 5:00pm – 7:00pm  
**ZOOM [LINK](#)**  
**Meeting ID: 848 5509 7034 | Passcode 280586**  
**1-253-215-8782 US (Tacoma)**

<p><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></p>		
1.	5:00	<b>Introductions and Determine Quorum</b>
2.		<b>March 7 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>Community Updates</b>  <b>Objective:</b> 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	<b>Staff Update:</b> MRC membership/leadership changes, MRC vacancies, Combined Review Team, MRC website, Beach Stewards  <b>Objective:</b> Provide staff with opportunity to relay information and updates to the full MRC. <b>Action:</b> Nominations for MRC Vice-Chair
6.	5:20	<b>2025 Comprehensive Plan Review Summary Approval</b>  <b>Action:</b> Review and approve the list of MRC recommendations for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update.
7.	5:50	<b>Project Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olympia Oyster</li> <li>• Beach Seine with Kids</li> </ul> <b>Objective:</b> Discuss next steps to plan for a feasibility study for Olympia Oyster restoration in Drayton Harbor, next steps for Chuckanut Bay pilot program, and update committee on BWSK program.
8.	6:30	<b>Review Outcomes from the Facilitated MRC Discussion from January Meeting</b>  <b>Action:</b> Form an Advisory Subcommittee
9.	6:45	<b>MRC Partner Committee Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Council</li> <li>• Port of Bellingham</li> <li>• City of Bellingham</li> <li>• City of Blaine</li> <li>• Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC)</li> </ul>
10.	7:00	<b>Adjourn</b>

**In Attendance:** Austin Rose (staff), Dana Flerchinger (staff), Heather Spore (Chair), Rick Beauregard, Glen “Alex” Alexander, Jackie Dexter, Avery Maverick, Colin Wahl, Mary Lou Steward, Kathy Ketteridge, Jace Cotton.

**Others:** Piper Olsen, Mark Fairhart, Brigid Wills, Alan Chapman, Andrew Shelton.

*Community members who require special assistance to participate in a committee meeting are to contact MRC Staff at least 4 business days in advance.*

[arose@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:arose@co.whatcom.wa.us)

1. **Introductions and Determine Quorum:** Heather began the meeting with round table introductions. A quorum was not present.
2. **March 7 Agenda:** March agenda was not approved as a quorum was not present. MRC Staff requested an additional item to the Staff Update, which is shown in track changes.
3. **Approval of February Meeting Summary:** The February meeting summary was not approved as a quorum was not present.
4. **Community Updates:**

Brigid Wills, Americorps intern with RE Sources, inquired about volunteers/partners to assist with continuing intertidal surveys at the Aquatic reserves. Since RE Sources funding was cut for the program, they are actively looking for partners to collaborate and to continue this work with. More information will be determined on the timing and logistics of these surveys and will be shared with the MRC.
5. **Staff Updates:**
  - **MRC membership/leadership changes:** Elma Burnham re-applied to the MRC, but due to the recent amendment to advisory groups requiring members to reside within the county they serve, she is no longer able to serve on the Whatcom MRC since she now lives in Skagit County. However, she will continue volunteering with the Beach Seine with Kids project. Because Elma was recently appointed as the MRC Vice Chair, a new nominee is necessary to fill this position. Rick volunteered and accepted his nomination as MRC Vice Chair. Rick was tentatively approved for the officer position (since no quorum was present) and will be formally approved as Vice Chair during the April meeting.
  - **MRC Vacancies:** The MRC is still advertising two vacancies: Citizen at Large and Economic. Avery Maverick (Recreation) and Joe Hoats (Economic) were appointed to the committee on February 6. An application has been received from Mark Fairhart and Andrew Shelton also has expressed interest.
  - **Combined Review Team:** Austin sent the invitation for MRC members to participate on the Combined Review Team (CRT). The CRT is comprised of community members with technical experience or interest in salmon recovery efforts. The goal of this team is to review and rank proposed salmon recovery projects and to make recommendations to the larger watershed management board about where funding should be allocated. Austin participated last year and indicated that this opportunity took about 8-10 hours of her time. Heather also participated for 2 years and voiced that it's a great way to become familiar with salmon restoration projects happening within the watershed and to get a better idea of what different organizations are doing. The key dates are listed in the information Austin sent out, but Becky Peterson will need to know if any members are interested in participating as soon as possible. Kathy Ketteridge volunteered to join the CRT.
  - **MRC Website:** The MRC website has been updated with an events calendar tab. The eelgrass protection MRC page has been updated with the content generated by Peak Sustainability and Shew Designs regarding eelgrass Protection within Wildcat Cove. The social marketing materials will be implemented in Wildcat Cove over the next few months.
  - **Beach Stewards:** Due to funding cuts at RE Sources and the elimination of the North Sounds Stewards program, the Beach Stewards program no longer exists. The MRC is trying to keep this program running, particularly in Wildcat Cove to coincide with the social marketing work. The goal would be for the Beach Stewards to educate the public about the intertidal environment while also emphasizing the importance of eelgrass and steps that can be taken to protect it. If any MRC members have interest in leading or getting

*Community members who require special assistance to participate in a committee meeting are to contact MRC Staff at least 4 business days in advance.*

[arose@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:arose@co.whatcom.wa.us)

involved with this program, they should reach out to Austin and Dana.

**6. 2025 Comprehensive Plan Review Summary Approval – not all members have reviewed. No Quorum**

The MRC reviewed their final list of feedback on the Comprehensive Plan and incorporated a few minor edits to the list. Because there was no quorum present, the MRC was not able to formally approve this list during the meeting, but all of the members that were present approved the list (These members included Heather Spore, Rick Beauregard, Glen Alexander, Jackie Dexter, Avery Maverick, Colin Wahl, and Kathy Ketteridge). The rest of the committee approved the list via email. Dana and Austin sent the approved final list of recommendations to Whatcom Planning and Development Services (Cliff Strong and Priscilla Drewry) on 3/12/24.

**7. Project Discussion:**

• **Olympia Oyster**

The MRC needs to begin the planning process for the Olympia oyster feasibility study in Drayton Harbor, which will need to be completed by the end of September 2024. Jackie Dexter mentioned that she was approved to attend the 2024 WA SeaGrant Conference for Shellfish Growers with several folks deeply involved within the Olympia oyster field (ex. Jodie Toft and Brian Allen with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF)). Jackie plans to discuss options with the folks at the conference and report back on any potential next steps for the MRC to conduct a feasibility study in Drayton Harbor. She also mentioned discussions with Mark Seymour (Drayton Harbor Oyster Company) and PSRF about the locations of historical Olympia oyster beds within Drayton Harbor. Jackie will also check in about recruiting BTC students to conduct a population study of existing Olympia oyster beds within Drayton Harbor to better determine where additional beds may be successful. Austin also mentioned that PSRF has set aside 1.5 tanks of Olympia oyster cultch that will be ready for the MRC in 2025.

• **Beach Seine with Kids**

The Beach Seine with Kids project team met and selected 4 schools to participate in the 2024 events. Lummi Nation School and Beach Elementary School were selected to participate in the April 19<sup>th</sup> event, 2 classes from Lowell Elementary school were selected to participate in the May 3<sup>rd</sup> event, and 3 classes from Eagleridge Elementary were selected to participate on May 15<sup>th</sup>. There will be a total of 193 students this year, and the MRC will need more assistance at the field events if any members are interested.

Don Hunger has a lead on additional funding/ intern possibilities with BP to assist with the field events and pre and post lessons for the events, and Austin will update the MRC as the details are determined.

**8. Review Outcomes from the Facilitated MRC Discussion from January Meeting**

The primary outcome that was determined from the facilitated meeting back in January was to create an advisory subcommittee for members to identify and bring issues to the County Council's attention at regular intervals. Members voiced support for potentially creating a rotating subcommittee, so all of the responsibility wouldn't just fall on a few folks. Rick mentioned that identifying priority issues should be the first goal of determining how the MRC will proceed forward with their advisory role; the different interest groups could create lists of priority issues that they would like to communicate to Council. Heather inquired about how often the subcommittee would meet and attend council meetings. Austin mentioned that members could report on the 2023 MRC annual report to improve the Council's awareness of what projects the MRC is working on. Andrew Shelton mentioned that having a template of information to fill out at council meetings can also be helpful to determine important information from meetings. The MRC will discuss this further at future meetings when more MRC members are present.

**9. MRC Partner Committee Updates:**

- **County Council:** Councilwoman Galloway's update was communicated via email (3/1/24):

*I think the only update I would have is that Council had our retreat on 2/28 where among other*

*Community members who require special assistance to participate in a committee meeting are to contact MRC Staff at least 4 business days in advance.*

[arose@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:arose@co.whatcom.wa.us)

*topics we discussed our council priorities. These included the fentanyl crisis, behavioral health, housing and homelessness, the Comprehensive Plan, the Justice project implementation, and the health children's fund implementation. We are likely to have a follow up/more in depth budget and policy retreat in May, so encourage the MRC to think about priorities they would like me to run. We will have had our next council meeting 3/5 – in skimming the agenda I don't see anything that is too pertinent to MRC. We are still making progress on the Forest Resilience TF. I know forestry topic came up at the NWSC meeting, but not sure how interested MRC folks are on this.*

- **Port of Bellingham:** No Update.
- **City of Bellingham:** Jace Cotton shared that on Monday, 3/11, there will be a staff presentation on the next steps for the R.G. Haley site remediation and project planning. Jace mentioned he can also share the slides from this presentation. The comment period on the R.G. Haley cleanup is also open for another week if members are interested.
- **City of Blaine:** Mary Lou Steward mentioned that City of Blaine is primarily focusing on the downtown area of Blaine. There have been concerns about homeless encampments impacting the water quality within Drayton Harbor; WCPW and the local police are working to address this issue. She also mentioned that they will be trying to determine the feasibility of working with the Port of Blaine and the Drayton Harbor Oyster Company to build a facility to determine ways to improve the marine industry (economy, cleanliness, tourism) in the area.
- **Northwest Straits Commission:** The February meeting was held in Whatcom County. Austin sent the highlights to the group via email which included a HABs presentation from Rick. [The presentation slides are available on the MRC Google drive.](#)
- **Other:** Colin Wahl brought up the potential issue of the ABC Recycling facility located within the Port of Bellingham waterfront that has been brought to his attention by folks within the conservation community and within the working waterfront community. Austin mentioned that she will check in with Kurt at the POB to see if he is able to provide an update on the facility and potential concerns.

## 10. Adjourn