



WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY | April 2, 2026 5:00pm – 7:00pm | Virtual

Members in attendance: Austin Rose (staff), Dana Daniels (staff), Laura Hanna, Mike MacKay, Mark Fairhart, Paul Meyer, Glen Alexander, Rick Beauregard, Jackie Dexter, Alexi Guddal, Beth Lorence, Kaylee Galloway, Mary Lou Steward,

Others: Erica Bleke, Emilie Litsinger, Alan Chapman, Jiewei Fridgen, Eliana Thompson (IOSA), Tyler Owens

1. **Introductions and Determine Quorum:** Mark began the meeting with the land acknowledgement and roundtable introductions. A quorum was present.
2. **April 2 Agenda:** The March meeting agenda was approved.
3. **Approval of February Meeting Summary:** The March meeting summary was approved with the typo fixed under the County Council update.
4. **Community Updates:** Austin announced that the MRC's Olympia oyster restoration project in North Chuckanut Bay was selected for funding for the WA Ecology Terry Hussman account. This project funding would support the addition of seeded cultch to the existing restoration plots, enhancing restoration potential. An official grant award letter will be received in a couple weeks.
5. **MRC Partner Committee Updates:**
 - **County Council:** The Council has just reviewed and suggested amendments to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. April 7 there will be a full day special session where Council will be talking about adjudication which spans five different chapters. They will be starting with chapters 5 and 7. But adjudication also shows up in chapters 8, 10, and 12. More relevant to MRC is that Council will continue review of Chapter 8, the Resource Lands chapter, which will be renamed the Natural Resource Lands chapter. Kaylee shared links to the proposed amendments for members to review. [Check out Council Proposed Amendments to Chapter 10](#) (you can ctrl F MRC to find the 27 MRC amendments Kaylee is sponsoring). Kaylee suggested that the MRC designate a couple members who might be able to come and provide a 2-minute testimony. It is an opportunity for the MRC to share about the process committee members undertook in reviewing these chapters. [Check out the agenda bill for the 4/7 meeting.](#)
 - **City Council:** no update
 - **Port of Bellingham:** no update
 - **City of Blaine:** Blaine is working with Jacobs Engineering Group to finish looking at the outflow of the Blaine Wastewater Resource Facility. Fixing Blaine's general sewer system throughout the city, fixed a lot of problems with stormwater.
 - **Northwest Straits Commission:** no update
6. **Islands' Oil Spill Association (IOSA) Community-Based Response Model Presentation:** Elaina Thompson, IOSA Executive Director, described the IOSA program, founded in 1985, a 501©(3) non-profit, with two staff and 50 tier 1 response trained volunteers. The group responds to about 10 to 15 oil spill incidents per year for San Juan County. Due to the remote nature of San Juan Island, the US Coast Guard and Department of ecology have no

immediate on scene response capability in the area. IOSA volunteers can be at the scene in a timely manner, crucial to containing the spill. [Check out the Islands' Oil Spill Association website](#)

7. MRC Project Updates:

- a. *Beach Seine with Schools*: Mike informed the group of the three upcoming Beach Seine with Schools events, which include:
Tuesday, April 14th (~45 students from Kendall Elementary School)
Tuesday, May 12th (~70 students from Columbia Elementary School)
Friday, May 22nd (~70 students from Cordata Elementary School)
Tribal speakers are confirmed for each event. More volunteers are needed for **April 14**
- b. *Forage Fish Monitoring* – Dana mentioned that the next forage fish surveys are scheduled for 4/17 from 10:00am-12:30pm at Little Squalicum Beach.
- c. *Kelp Monitoring Surveys* – Dana mentioned that the kelp monitoring dates have been scheduled for the summer. Dana will send them via email. Kayak safety trainings are available at Bowman Bay on May 30th and 31st. Registration is required. There are also shore-based trainings for volunteers to learn how to use the GPS for the surveys. Gov. Bob Ferguson has designated April 16 is full kelp day adopting bull kelp forests as Washington's Marine Forest. Our
- d. *Harmful Algal Bloom Sampling* – Sampling has switched to weekly. Two WWU students have joined and are interested in getting involved in the microscopic identification.
- e. *Olympia Oyster Restoration*: Call for volunteers! **April 22 between 2 and 6 PM, ~200 bags of Oly oyster spat on shell within two sites in Drayton Harbor.**

8. MRC Subcommittee Updates

Policy/Advisory (temporary title): Laura has a meeting set up with people to talk about the goals of the subcommittee like this. She will schedule meetings in the near future.

Education and outreach: Day at the Beach will occur on May 30 at Birch Bay State Park. The MRC can do a soft launch of the new education outreach toolkit.

Volunteer engagement and recruitment: Dana and members met with Lummi Tribe members at Northwest Indian College. Members are actively seeking participation from the Nooksack Tribe.

- Austin mentioned that staff have completed the 2025 MRC Annual Report. This report is used as a template for a presentation to County Council, which is tentatively scheduled for late May. Reminders will be sent, and volunteers are needed to help with the presentation.
 - Laura mentioned that the Department of Ecology hosts 8-hour Hazwoper trainings every year focused on response for oiled wildlife.
9. **Adjourn**: The meeting adjourned at 6:30pm. The next meeting is scheduled for May 7, and it will be hybrid.