



WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY | August 6, 2026 5:00pm – 7:00pm | Hybrid

Members in attendance: Austin Rose (staff), Dana Daniels (staff), Alexi Guddal, Laura Hanna, Mark Fairhart, Mike MacKay, Lisa Anderson, Paul Cline, Rick Beauregard, Beth Lorence, Kaylee Galloway.

Others: Ferdinand Mesmer (MRC intern), Claire Glaude (MRC Intern), Sasha Horst (NWSC), Jessica Owens (NWSC), Suzanne Shull (NWSC), Jeff Whitty (NWSC), Katalin Chapman (NWSC), Tida Rau (Lummi Natural Resources, ESA policy analyst), Brook Henderson (GSSC), Julie Hirsh (GSSC), Julie Eastlund, and Audrey Taylor.

1. **Introductions and Determine Quorum:** Mark began the meeting with the land acknowledgement and roundtable introductions. A quorum was not present.
2. **August 6th Agenda:** The August meeting agenda was not approved as a quorum was not present.
3. **Approval of June Meeting Summary:** The June meeting summary was not approved as a quorum was not present.
4. **Community Updates:** Julie Hirsh expressed interest in joining the MRC in a Citizen-at-Large seat. She also discussed the potential of the MRC adopting her current program, the Garden of the Salish Sea Curriculum, as an MRC project as she is looking to step back as the director of this program.
5. **MRC Partner Committee Updates:**
 - **County Council:** Councilwoman Kaylee Galloway discussed that the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan was officially approved by Council on July 28th. She thanked the MRC for providing feedback on the Environment and Resource Lands chapters. Kaylee discussed ongoing budget challenges and also requested the MRC's feedback on a proposed fireworks ordinance that could impact water quality and shorelines. She will send ordinance to MRC staff to be shared out with the committee for comments and feedback. The committee will discuss this during their September meeting.
 - **City Council:** Lisa Anderson provided updates on the city's budget process, potential land purchases in the Lake Whatcom watershed, and an upcoming quasi-judicial hearing regarding the Mud Bay development that she is unable to discuss further at this time. She also discussed the city's efforts to address the homeless encampment behind Walmart, which involves cleanup of damaged wetlands and providing alternative housing resources.
 - **Port of Bellingham:** No update
 - **City of Blaine:** No update
 - **Northwest Straits Commission:** Rick Beauregard (NWSC Rep) discussed the most recent NWSC meeting in Sequim that was held at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center. The meeting included a field trip to observe the Pigeon Guillemot census project. Rick also mentioned an upcoming HAZWOPER training that Clallam MRC will be hosting in October in Port Angeles that would be a potential opportunity for oil spill response volunteer involvement. The details are included as a PDF in the meeting summary packet. Austin also wanted to remind folks about the upcoming NWS Conference on November 6th and 7th that will take place in Port Townsend.

6. **Sound IQ:** Suzanne Shull, a GIS Specialist with Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the NWSC, provided updates on SoundIQ. Suzanne presented an overview of SoundIQ, a mapping application to display MRC data, demonstrating its features and potential uses for data export and analysis. Suzanne showed how to use filters to view specific data sets (like kelp surveys and forage fish), and explained the process of generating PDF maps and sharing data through URLs. There are also several short videos on the SoundIQ website to help folks navigate and use the resource. The group also discussed the potential for incorporating additional data sets beyond the current kelp and forage fish information in Whatcom County, including eelgrass surveys, clam data, and water quality data, much of which is 15 years old and needs to be updated or processed for better visualization on SoundIQ. The group discussed making SoundIQ more user-friendly for MRC members and county council members, with suggestions to create homework assignments or scavenger hunts to help familiarize members with the platform. Suzanne discussed scheduling a future work session with MRC members to discuss data integration and determine specific goals for using SoundIQ to present their data.

[Click here to view Sound IQ.](#)

7. **MRC Project Updates:**

- a. *Wildcat Cove Eelgrass Protection:* MRC interns, Claire Glaude and Ferdinand Mesmer, provided a presentation about their 2026 education and outreach efforts around eelgrass protection at the Wildcat Cove boat launch in Larrabee State Park. They shared findings and takeaways from data collected over 21 days from 511 total users at the highly trafficked boat launch site. Based on their observations and interactions with launch users, the interns recommended installing permanent signage and lane markers, continuing outreach efforts, and coordinating with local kayak tour companies and educational programs to better preserve the eelgrass habitat in this location. Their internship will end at the end of August. The presentation slides are included in the meeting packet.
- b. *Beach Seine with Schools: No update*
- c. *Forage Fish Monitoring:* Dana mentioned that the next forage fish survey will take place at Little Squalicum Beach on Friday, August 7th.
- d. *Harmful Algal Bloom Sampling:* Rick reported on HABs monitoring, noting benign results so far, with no *Alexandrium* or biotoxins in the water. He also mentioned the discovery of a potentially toxic organism that may be inhibiting *Alexandrium* growth (*Alexandrium* is the phytoplankton responsible for producing paralytic shellfish toxin). Rick also mentioned that an intern, Brook Hendrickson, with the GSSC, has been joining for HABs sampling.
- e. *Kelp Monitoring:* Dana reported that the MRC has completed 2 kelp surveys so far at Aiston Preserve and SW Lummi Island and will be surveying the Cherry Point / Gulf Road site next week. The last survey will take place in late August at Point Whitehorn. The data has not been processed yet, but Dana noted that the bed sizes look comparable to last year.
- f. *Olympia Oyster Restoration:* Since project lead, Jackie Dexter was not present at the meeting, project updates will be provided in September. The final volunteer field work event is taking place on Tuesday, August 11th at North Chuckanut Bay.

8. **MRC Subcommittee Updates:**

- a. *Education and outreach:* Alexi Guddal presented her work on proposed branding guidelines for the MRC, including updated logos featuring Pacific herring, kelp, and Olympia oysters. The branding information will be included in the meeting minutes and voted on for use during the September meeting. The group also discussed upcoming outreach opportunities, including Whatcom Water Week, SeaFeast, and Orca Recovery Day, and expressed the need to finalize decisions about piloting new educational toolkit components before funds expire at the end of 2026. The education and outreach subcommittee will be meeting to discuss this further.
- b. *Policy/Advisory:* Laura Hanna and Rick Beauregard provided updates on the advisory and policy subcommittee's development of a multi-step process for tracking and addressing marine resource

issues. Other folks expressed interest in attending future meetings, so the next meeting invitation will be sent to all MRC members in case other folks would like to participate.

c. *Executive:* No update.

9. **Other:** Julie Eastlund introduced herself to the group as a potential new MRC member who applied for a recreation seat. Dana requested that project leads submit any information (photos, summaries, data, etc) about their projects for final reporting which will be due at the end of September.
10. **Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 6:40pm. The next meeting is scheduled for September 3rd and it will be virtual.