



## WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Scheduled for: **June 3, 2021**  
 Time: **5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**  
 Join Zoom Meeting: **Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/99550731250>**  
**Meeting ID: 995 5073 1250**  
**Passcode: 98225**  
**One tap mobile: +1-253-215-8782 US (Tacoma)**

1.		<b>Introductions and Determine Quorum</b>
2.		<b>June Agenda</b> <b>Action:</b> Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary.
3.	5:00	<b>Approval of May meeting summary</b> <b>Action:</b> Review and approve summaries as final.
4.		<b>Public Comment Period</b>
5.	5:10	<b>Nomination of MRC Vice-Chair</b> <b>Action:</b> Committee elects MRC Vice-Chair position
6.	5:15	<b>No Anchor Zone – Dana Oster and Allie Simpson (Northwest Straits Commission)</b> <b>Objective:</b> Allow Commission staff to provide an update on the Voluntary No-Anchor Zone project and testing out baseline monitoring at proposed sites in Whatcom.
7.	5:35	<b>Project Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Sound Stewards including status of intern (Alex)</li> <li>• Kelp (Eleanor)</li> <li>• Olympia oysters (Austin)</li> <li>• Chuckanut PIC (Austin)</li> </ul>
8.	6:05	<b>MRC Staff Update (Austin):</b> Volunteer hours, 2021-23 Northwest Straits Commission Proposal, summer meeting schedule, and project presentation to the Northwest Straits Commission, new CDC guidelines and meeting. <b>Objective:</b> Allow staff to provide a high level overview of the project proposals, review of MRC meeting schedule, and discuss project presentation to the Commission. <b>Action:</b> Determine summer schedule
9.	6:15	<b>Whatcom County Climate Action Plan</b> <b>Discussion:</b> Allow members to share their comments on the draft Land Use and Water Resources chapters.
10.	6:30	<b>MRC Partner Committee Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWIN (Water Week, Speaker Series) – Austin</li> <li>• County Council – Councilman Elenbaas</li> <li>• Port of Bellingham – Kurt B.</li> <li>• NWSC – Bob C.</li> </ul>
11.	6:55	<b>Adjourn</b>

**In attendance:** Eleanor Hines (Chair), Austin Rose (Staff), Alex, Colin Wahl, Kurt Baumgarten (Port of Bellingham), Mike MacKay, Elma Burnham, Kathy Ketteridge, Paul Troutman, Heather Spore, Andrew Gamble

**Others:** Allie Simpson (Northwest Straits Commission), Gary Stoyka, Julie Hirsch, Dana Oster (Northwest Straits Commission), Katherine Sell, Annika Fain, Christopher Brown, Elizabeth Kilanowski

1. **Introductions and Determine Quorum:** Eleanor began the meeting with introductions. A quorum was established later in the meeting.
2. **June Agenda:** Agenda was approved as written.
3. **Approval of May meeting summary:** The May meeting summary was approved as written.
4. **Public Comment Period:** Julie Hirsch mentioned that the Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB's) monitoring data can now be viewed on the Garden of the Salish Sea website <https://www.gardensalishsea.org/habs-updates-sampling>
5. **Nomination of MRC Vice-Chair:** Item was tabled. A quorum of members did not provide vote on poll.
6. **No Anchor Zone:** Dana Oster and Allie Simpson, Northwest Straits Commission, discussed the Northwest Straits Commission's efforts to expand the No Anchor Zone project currently underway in Jefferson County (Jefferson MRC) to other MRCs. Partial funding is in place and the Commission is seeking additional funding. This project involves a voluntary approach to eelgrass protection. Buoys are informational and placed ~20ft seawards of the edge of eelgrass beds to delineate the bed and zone of protection. Protection zones are non-regulatory. Marker buoys provide a visual cue and social prompt for boaters to anchor in deeper water away from eelgrass beds. The Whatcom MRC suggested three sites for voluntary no-anchor zones: Chuckanut Bay, Taylor Dock, and the Aiston Preserve (Lummi Island). The Commission is working to gather baseline information such as identifying stakeholders, and seeking help to pilot vessel monitoring protocols. The committee had a focused discussion about the Chuckanut Bay site. Committee members interested can help establish ideal areas to view boating/anchoring activity.

## 7. Project Updates

- **North Sound Stewards including status of intern (Alex):** MK (MRC North Sound Stewards intern) accepted a full time position with North Cascades Institute. The MRC will no longer have an intern to support the volunteer coordination. Austin explained the process for hiring a new intern for 2021-2022. Eleanor mentioned the North Sound Stewards Beach Stewards program has officially launched. Beach Steward volunteers can be seen in action at Larrabee and Birch Bay State Park.
- **Kelp (Eleanor):** The first kelp survey is scheduled for July 27 at the Aiston Preserve. Members interested in joining the kelp surveys should connect with Eleanor.
- **Olympia oysters (Austin):** The Olympia oyster population survey was completed with the help of Bellingham Technical College students involved in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Program. Data is still being entered. However, more oysters were observed at the sites further up the beach profile. Larvae recruitment was noted on Pacific oyster shell that was placed in 2020. Dr. Paul Dinnel joined the survey and placed ceramic tiles in the bay as another method to monitor natural larvae recruitment. Those tiles will be removed from the bay and examined in a couple weeks.
- **Chuckanut PIC (Austin):** Austin met with project partners: Whatcom County Public Works, Whatcom County Health, and WA Department of Health (DOH), to discuss the future of this project. DOH will be thoroughly reviewing the MRC's water quality data to determine if the pollution closure could be lifted. If the closure is lifted, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife would set the formal recreational harvest season. Project partners will need to assess the impact on: Chuckanut Village residents from increased traffic, private tideland owners in N. Chuckanut Bay, Tribal members interest in subsistence and commercial harvest, Olympia oyster restoration effort, resources to assure continued water quality monitoring and biotoxin monitoring is maintained, and access maintenance.

## 8. MRC Staff Update

- **Volunteer hours:** Austin clarified the need for members to submit their volunteer hours every month as they are used for match documentation for the grant. A reminder will be highlighted in the monthly e-mail including meeting information. Members should be including the dates and hours that they volunteered for MRC related projects or business.
- **2021-23 Northwest Straits Commission Proposal:** Austin submitted the Whatcom MRC proposal to the Commission. It is anticipated the Commission staff will be working with the Whatcom MRC throughout June and July to refine the scope of work proposed.
- **Summer meeting schedule:** The MRC voted to not hold their July meeting. The next meeting is August 5.
- **Project presentation to the Northwest Straits Commission:** The Whatcom MRC will present to the Commission on June 25.
- **New CDC guidelines and meeting:** Gary Stoyka, Whatcom County Public Works, Natural Resources Division Manager, mentioned that it could be likely that advisory committee will meet in person again starting in August. The MRC Executive meeting will also discuss options for those that need to continue to meet virtually.

9. **Whatcom County Climate Action Plan:** There was no interest from committee members to provide comment at this time.

10. **MRC Partner Committee Updates:**

- **WWIN (Water Week, Speaker Series)** – Whatcom Water Week will occur from September 11-19. Austin encouraged members to think about how they might like to participate.
- **County Council – Councilman Elenbaas:** No update.
- **Port of Bellingham** – Kurt mentioned that a live full size female European Green Crab (EGC) was found in Bellingham Bay Marina. The crab was sent to WA SeaGrant Crab Team for DNA analysis. Eleanor mentioned that she has been working with Austin, Alex, and Allie Simpson (NWSC) on an informational mailer to be distributed to the Drayton Harbor community, as EGC are a concern in Drayton Harbor.
- **NWSC – Bob C.:** The Commission meeting highlights were shared via email. Austin also shared information about a workgroup set up to expand the tool kit and share resources on how the MRCs provide comment on SMP updates.

11. **Adjourn** meeting adjourned 6:43pm