



MRC Members

Glen Alexander (“Alex”)
Citizen-at-Large
Term 2: 01/21/2027

Rick Beauregard (Vice-Chair)
Scientific
Term 1: 01/31/2027

Jace Cotton
City of Bellingham, Council

Jackie Dexter
Economic
Term 1: 01/31/2027

Mark Fairhart
Citizen-at-large
Term 1: 01/31/2028

Kaylee Galloway
Designated, County Council

Joe Hoats
Economic
Term 1: 01/31/2028

Kathy Ketteridge
Citizen-at-Large
Term 1: 01/31/2026

Elizabeth Lorence
Conservation/Environmental
Term 1: 01/31/2026

Mike MacKay
Scientific
Term 2: 01/31/2028

Avery Maverick
Recreational
Term 1: 01/31/2028

Andrew Shelton
Economic
Term 1: 01/31/2028

Heather Spore (Chair)
Scientific
Term 1: 01/31/2025

Mary Lou Steward
City of Blaine, Mayor

Dan Sulak
Recreational
Term 1: 01/31/2026

Colin Wahl
Conservation/Environmental
Term 1: 01/31/2025

*** VACANCY ***
Conservation/Environmental

WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY | October 3, 2024 5:00pm – 7:00pm
ZOOM [LINK](#), Meeting ID: 848 5509 7034 | Passcode 280586
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.

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| 1. | | Introductions and Determine Quorum |
| 2. | | October 3rd Agenda Action: Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary. |
| 3. | 5:00 | Approval of August and September Meeting Summaries Action: Review and approve summary as final. |
| 4. | | Community Updates Objective: 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 | MRC Partner Committee Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council • Port of Bellingham • City of Bellingham • City of Blaine • Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) |
| 6. | 5:30 | Staff Updates: Successes in 2024, vessel turn-in event, Bellingham SeaFeast (October 5), 2025-2027 grant timeline Objective: Provide staff with opportunity to relay information and updates to the full MRC. |
| 7. | 6:00 | MRC Priorities and Project Development (Brief sheet #7) Objective: Open discussion for MRC members to share their priority marine conservation ideas and potential project ideas. |
| 8. | ~7:00 | Adjourn |

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 7th, 5:00pm – 7:00pm, [ZOOM](#). Please check out the [MRC calendar](#) for meeting dates and formats.

In Attendance: Austin Rose (staff), Rick Beauregard, Andrew Shelton, Glen Alexander “Alex”, Mark Fairhart, Kaylee Galloway, Joe Hoats, Beth Lorence, Mike MacKay, Heather Spore, Mary Lou Steward, Colin Wahl.

Others: Julie Hirsch (Garden of the Salish Sea Curriculum- GSSC), Jacob O’Donnell (GSSC), Alexi Guddal (Whatcom Conservation District-WCD), Alan Chapman, Kat/Katherine Garrah (Drayton Harbor Oyster Company-DHOC).

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

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- 1) **Introductions and Determine Quorum:** Rick was previously asked to chair, but to technical difficulties Austin began the meeting with roundtable introductions. A quorum was established at 5:29pm.
- 2) **October 3rd Agenda:** The agenda was approved.
- 3) **Approval of August and September Meeting Summaries:** The August and September meeting summaries were approved.
- 4) **Community Updates:**
 - Jacob O'Donnell with GSSC shared that the organization is looking for beach naturalists to help with upcoming field and class programs. He also shared that GSSC is hosting a beach cleanup on Wednesday, October 16th from 10am-12pm at Maritime Heritage Park. Additionally, GSSC is looking for volunteers to assist with beach excursions (with students) at Birch Bay State Park.
 - Kat Garrah with Drayton Harbor Oyster Company mentioned that Blaine Oysterfest will take place on Saturday, October 12th from 10-7pm in support of local food, culture, and clean water.
 - Alexi with WCD shared that Orca Recovery Day is coming up on October 19th. WCD is partnering with NSEA and Whatcom Land Trust to host a planting party at California Creek.
- 5) **MRC Partner Committee Updates:**
 - **County Council:** Councilwoman Galloway shared that council is in the thick of their budget season. Council will be spending the next few months reviewing and finalizing the county's budget, and encourages the committee to provide feedback as they see fit. Revenues are down due to low sales tax and lots of compounding challenges, resulting in some difficult budget conversations. The updated Shoreline Management Plan was approved at the most recent council meeting.
 - **Port of Bellingham:** No report shared.
 - **City of Bellingham:** No report shared.
 - **City of Blaine:** Mary Lou Steward reiterated that Blaine Oysterfest will be on October 12th and that government agencies in Whatcom County are having challenging budget discussions with limited funds due to inflation and decreasing sales tax.
 - **NWSC:** Caitlyn Blair wanted to remind members to register for the NWSI conference (registration and hotel room reservations close October 15). She also wanted to gauge member interest in the DEI cohorts as the NWSC is trying to recruit a member from each MRC. Members can reach out to Caitlyn or Austin if they are interested in participating or have additional questions. This cohort would be a fantastic way to get access to tools and applicable trainings that would allow you more guidance on how to integrate DEI into the work you/we all do.
- 6) **Staff Updates:**
 - **Successes in 2024:** Now that the majority of grant deliverable reporting has been completed, Austin shared project highlights from the 2024 MRC projects including Wildcat Cove, Beach Seine with Kids, forage fish surveys, harmful algal bloom monitoring, bull kelp monitoring, and Chuckanut Pollution Identification and Correction. Kat Garrah asked about opportunities for non-MRC members to participate in projects. Austin shared that projects are led by MRC members, but nonmembers can always volunteer for the various projects.
 - **Vessel Turn-In Event:** Skagit MRC and San Juan MRC have hosted successful vessel turn-in events where folks can bring boats to a particular location to turn in vessels at no cost to the owner. Dana Oster with the Northwest Straits Commission will join the November MRC meeting to share more information about the vessel turn in events and the possibility of conducting one in Whatcom County.
 - **Bellingham SeaFeast:** This event will occur this weekend from 10-5pm. If other members are interested in volunteering, please let Austin and Dana know.

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- **2025-2027 Grant Timeline:** The NWSC is looking for high level summaries of what the MRC anticipates putting into the next grant round by January of 2025. The MRC will carve out some time in our upcoming meetings to get a better sense of the types of projects the MRC wants to tackle.

7) **MRC Priorities and Project Development:**

The MRC began conversations about the types of projects that the group is interested in looking into for 2025-2027.

- Mark Fairhart shared the potential project of the MRC picking up intertidal monitoring efforts at the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve (4 total locations evaluated every other year). These surveys look at beach profiles, abiotic factors, and the biota across the 4 locations. Rick mentioned conducting a training program to train new naturalists. The MRC approved piloting this project in 2025 and approved putting intertidal monitoring into the 2025-2027 grant. November 5th will be the first meeting to discuss this project/effort moving forward.
- Rick Beauregard discussed the oil pipeline and increased tanker traffic going through the Salish Sea and the need for additional baseline/impact studies to deal with worst case scenarios. He suggested the MRC brainstorm ideas of how to address this issue. Mark suggested expanding intertidal surveys to other locations within Whatcom County to obtain more base line data across our shorelines.
 - Alan Chapman suggested reaching out to San Juan MRC who has been involved with these types of projects.
 - Austin suggested that the MRC could also put together a white paper to lay out recommendations for oil spills in our region.
- Andrew mentioned the MRC getting involved with stormwater infrastructure and oversight in areas with increased development to better protect water quality.
 - Beth mentioned looking into a presenter to discuss water quality issues along Whatcom County shorelines.
- The MRC IdeaBoard will be kept active as MRC members continue to brainstorm project ideas.

8) **Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 7pm.