



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 | September 5th, 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.

1.		Introductions and Determine Quorum
2.		September 5th Agenda Action: Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary.
3.	5:00	Approval of August Meeting Summary 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	Staff Updates: Upcoming grant deliverables/ volunteer tracking, vessel turn-in event, Bellingham SeaFeast (October 5) Objective: Provide staff with opportunity to relay information and updates to the full MRC.
6.	5:45	Project Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cherry Point Intertidal Monitoring (<i>Brief Sheet 6.1</i>) Kelp Olympia Oyster Chuckanut PIC MST Sampling
7.	6:15	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)
8.	~7:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjourn

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 3rd, 5:00pm – 7:00pm, [ZOOM](#). Please check out the [MRC calendar](#) for meeting dates and formats.

In Attendance: Austin Rose (staff), Dana Flerchinger (staff), Rick Beauregard, Mark Fairhart, Kaylee Galloway (Council), Andrew Shelton, Mike MacKay, Jackie Dexter, Mary Lou Steward (Blaine)

Others: Julie Hirsch (Garden of the Salish Sea Curriculum), Jeff Whitty (NWSC), Alan Chapman

1) Introductions and Determine Quorum: Rick Beauregard chaired the meeting upon Heather Spore’s absence. Rick began the meeting with roundtable introductions. A quorum was not present.

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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2) **September 5th Agenda:** The meeting agenda could not be approved due to lack of quorum. No changes were requested.

3) **Approval of August Meeting Summary:** The August meeting summary could not be approved due to lack of quorum. No changes were requested.

4) **Community Updates:**

- Julie Hirsch mentioned that the Garden of the Salish Sea Curriculum (GSSC) is looking for beach naturalist to help with field trips. The GSSC will be hosting a Water Week event, “Family Field Day”, on September 15, 9:00am – 11:30am, at Birch Bay State Park.
- Alan Chapman, Chair of the Whatcom Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), reminded the group of the effort to provide coordinated input to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan update. If MRC members are interested in meeting with the members of the AAC to discuss/identify commonalities on the goals and policies within the Comp plan update, please contact Alan. Advisory Committees will have an opportunity to review and comment on a draft after October.
- Jeff Whitty reminded members to register for the Northwest Straits Annual Conference, if you plan to attend. Caitlyn Blair sent an e-mail to all members. Austin will re-send the info.
- Rick Beauregard shared info about a funding opportunity to increase harvestable shellfish bed acreage in Puget Sound. The Request for Proposals (RFP) targets work that addresses fecal pollution impacts to shellfish growing area classification protection and restoration, including supporting innovative solutions, regional scoped work, and addressing impacts from wastewater treatment plants. The MRC has discussed opening up the shellfish beds on the outside of Semiahmoo Spit (Lighthouse Beach). This funding could be a good fit.
- Rick also shared the Whatcom Waterfront grant for the Blue Ocean Technology project feasibility study.

5) **Staff Updates:** Year 1 of the MRC’s Ecology grant wraps up on September 30. Staff are working on final reports and will share when complete. Staff are working with NWSC staff on the possibility of Whatcom hosting a vessel turn-in event. More info will be shared as details come together. The MRC will be hosting a booth at Bellingham SeaFeast on October 5. Dana has shared a sign-up sheet with time slots. Several volunteers are needed for this event.

6) **Project Updates:**

- **Cherry Point Intertidal Monitoring:** A brief sheet on this work was provided with the meeting packet. Mark Fairhart led a discussion about his meetings with DNR and ReSources regarding the Intertidal Biota Monitoring program at the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve (CPAR). Mark and other members are proponents of keeping this program alive under the auspices of the MRC. Two sites are surveyed each year. Time and costs are minimal. Mark requested committee approval for the MRC to add CPAR Intertidal Biota Monitoring Program to the projects led and supported by the MRC, which may include development of a new task – specific to this project - in the next grant round (2025-2027). Adding this project as a task would allow expenses related to a storage unit, if needed. No quorum was present for a decision.
- **Kelp:** The MRC completed bull kelp monitoring surveys for the season. In total, 5 sureys were completed at Alden Bank, Aiston Preserve, SW Lummi Island, and two surveys at Cherry Point/ Gulf Road (one in August and one in September). Due to poor weather conditions on the scheduled survey dates and backup dates, the kelp bed at Point Whitehorn was not surveyed this season.
- **Olympia oyster:** Staff met with Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) staff to discuss the feasibility of piloting a restoration project in Drayton Harbor. PSRF is interested in helping the MRC identify

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locations for test plots. Next steps include applying for shoreline permits, acquiring shell, and determining locations for assay plots. PSRF is holding 1.5 tanks for Oly oyster spat at their facility, and is unclear whether the seed will be ready in 2025 or 2026. The MRC could start with assay plots and a small amount of seed, to see if any larvae recruitment occurs.

- **Chuckanut PIC MST Sampling:** The MRC will be conducting additional water quality sampling at North Chuckanut Bay over the coming year starting in September. Additional samples for eDNA analysis will be taken at priority sites that have demonstrated consistently high fecal coliform levels over the past years. The goal of this additional sampling is to better determine the sources of contamination to inform the next steps for the project.

Rick Beauregard provided a brief update on the HABs project. It has been a very warm year for HABs – particularly on the Oregon (OR) coast and parts of the Washington (WA) coast. Rick has heard that this year has resulted in the largest shellfish recall in history in OR and WA. In Puget Sound however, the results have been unremarkable, except for the sites in Drayton Harbor (toxins in mussels above standard all summer). Drayton Harbor Oyster Co. oysters are sent for testing, and there has been no detections of toxins.

7) MRC Partner Committee Updates:

- **County Council:** Whatcom elected officials have been holding round table meetings establishing priorities around growth. The next Council meeting will include a discussion around budget, and the Conservation Easement Program. The Department of Ecology has granted conditional approval of the Whatcom Shoreline Management Program periodic update. Council members are working to develop a food security resolution. The MRC may want to keep tabs and/or comment on potential impacts to the marine environment from the Lummi Island ferry – which needs to be updated.
- **Port of Bellingham:** No update
- **City of Bellingham:** No update
- **City of Blaine:** Mayor Steward mentioned that the County is asking small cities to prepare for substantial growth – more than 2% or 3%, which is going to impact our waterways. Blaine is waiting to hear about potential funding to look at the feasibility of Drayton Harbor/Blaine area supporting more tourism, recreation, and marine education. The City of Blaine will be meeting with the Port of Bellingham to discuss the future of Blaine Harbor. There is currently a study of the effluent coming from the Semiahmoo water treatment plant, and results are expected in the coming weeks.
- **NWSC:** The committee was reminded to register for the Northwest Straits Annual Conference.

8) Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 6:09pm