



**WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
SUMMARY**

Scheduled for: **September 1, 2022**  
 Time: **5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**  
 Place: **PW Civic Annex Building, Garden Level Conference Room. 322 N. Commercial St. Bellingham, WA**  
 Join Zoom Meeting: **Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85730030249>**  
**Meeting ID: 857 3003 0249**  
**Passcode: 98225**  
**One tap mobile: +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.		<b>Introductions and Determine Quorum</b>
2.	5:00	<b>September 1 Agenda</b> <b>Action:</b> Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary.
3.		<b>Approval of August meeting summary</b> <b>Action:</b> Review and approve summaries as final.
4.		<b>Public Comment Period</b>
5.	5:10	<b>Cherry Point Environmental Impact Statement (Heather)</b> <b>Objective:</b> Share topics in the Environmental Impact Statement the MRC may consider providing comment on.
6.	5:20	<b>MRC Policies and Procedures</b> <b>Objective:</b> Discuss draft amendment to the MRC Policies and Procedures regarding public comment period. <b>Action:</b> Committee decision on amendment to Policies and Procedures.
7.	5:50	<b>Staff Update:</b> Support with additional project proposals <b>Action:</b> Assign members (project champions) to assist with preparing detailed project proposals for CDS funding.
8.	6:00	<b>Project Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olympia Oyster pilot restoration – review data</li> <li>• Forage Fish – application review team, site consideration</li> <li>• Kelp – project champion recruitment</li> </ul>
9.	6:30	<b>MRC Partner Committee Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWIN/Speaker Series (Austin) – Water Week 2022 including Plastics Matter event</li> <li>• County Council</li> <li>• Port of Bellingham – Kurt B.</li> <li>• Northwest Straits Commission – Bob C.</li> </ul>
10.	6:45	<b>Adjourn</b>

If you're not on our Northwest Straits Commission newsletter list, you can join here: <https://www.nwstraits.org/get-involved/join-the-mailing-list/>

**In Attendance:** Austin Rose (staff), Eleanor Hines (Chair), Heather Spore (Vice-Chair), Kurt Baumgarten (Port of Bellingham), Dan Sulak, Paul Troutman, Glen Alexander (Alex), Mike MacKay, Jim Boyle, Elma Burnham, Andrew Gamble

**Others:** Nathan Woods (Northwest Straits Commission), Jackie Dexter (Holdfast Mariculture, LLC)

1) **Introductions:** Eleanor began the meeting with roundtable introductions.

- 2) **September 1 Agenda:** Agenda was approved.
- 3) **Approval of August meeting summary:** Summary was approved.
- 4) **Public Comment Period:** No public comment
- 5) **Cherry Point Environmental Impact Statement:** The EPA just released their [final EIS for the Cherry Point North Terminal](#). The permitting has been going on for the last 15 years. The MRC may want to consider providing a public comment as a body, or members may want to comment on their own. There are issues that the MRC may be concerned about with respect to increased vessel traffic, potential impact to Southern Resident Killer Whales, and potential increased risk of vessel spill related to both crude and refined product. The EIS is a big document, however, there are appendices (biological evaluations, vessel traffic assessment) that are easy to read. Austin will share the [EIS document](#) and [contact information](#) for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff who can accept comment until October 12. The MRC formed a subcommittee to draft a comment letter that can be voted on at the October meeting.
- 6) **MRC Policies and Procedures:** Austin reminded the group that a draft amendment to the MRC Policies and Procedures was included in the MRC meeting packet. The draft amendment was suggested by members at the August MRC meeting and includes a revision to the MRC meeting protocol removing the formal public comment period unless requested. The Whatcom County Prosecuting Attorney verified that the MRC may remove a public comment period from their meetings in order to no longer adhere to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), which now requires meetings of a governing body (which the MRC is not) to offer a physical location for meetings. Including a public comment/testimony on the monthly committee meeting agendas is the only element subjecting the MRC to OPMA. The Committee agreed to replace the Public Comment period with an agenda item that would still allow community input on marine related issues that would be applicable to MRC business. Public engagement is a vital component of MRC meetings as they provide an opportunity for MRC members to connect with the community about marine issues or topics. The Committee asked Austin to verify with the Prosecuting Attorney acceptable language for an agenda item that would encourage community input but not be considered a formal comment.

No action was taken. A formal committee vote on the agenda language and amendment to the Policies and Procedures is scheduled for the October meeting.

- 7) **Staff Update:** Austin will be drafting project proposals for the Northwest Straits Commission Congressional Directed Spending for each of the MRC projects proposed to be funded through that source. Members/Project Champions will be helping finalize the proposals by September 30.
- 8) **Project Updates:**
  - Olympia Oyster Pilot Restoration: The 2022 survey data was shared and shows that there has been no natural recruitment of Olympia oysters within the pilot plots in N. Chuckanut Bay. The committee discussed project next steps including: identifying another location in Whatcom County that could support Olympia oyster restoration, establishing new sites in N. Chuckanut Bay with preferential substrate that would be more suitable for recruitment, or surveying the increasing Pacific oyster population in N. Chuckanut bay for Olympia oyster larvae.
  - Forage Fish: A [solicitation](#) for a 2022/2023 forage fish intern has been posted to the Whatcom County jobs page and the Whatcom MRC website. The solicitation closes on September 9. Members will help review applications and identify a candidate.
  - Kelp: Eleanor reminded the group that she will be terming off the MRC in January 2023 and a project champion is needed to continue the kelp surveying. Heather Spore is interested in becoming the project champion in more of a coordination role.
- 9) **MRC Partner Committee Updates:**
  - WWIN/Speaker Series: Staff from the Lummi Nation Natural Resources Department are scheduled to present salmonid research in the South Fork Nooksack River at the October MRC meeting. Water Week is occurring September 10-18. The MRC will have a booth at SeaFeast Saturday, September 17. Austin will send out a sign up for members to be at the booth. A new event, [Plastic Matters](#), a community plastic pick competition will occur September 10-16 and culminate at SeaFeast.

Eleanor mentioned the [COASST](#) program, University of Washington, released data that has been collected by community scientists over the years that includes information on how we are finding different types of trash in different areas of Puget Sound and the outer coast. They will soon release a report that will synthesize the data in layman's terms.

County Council: No report

Port of Bellingham: The [Little Squalicum Beach Park Shoreline Enhancement Project](#) is well underway. The upland habitat will look similar until recreation funding is available to establish ADA access, picnic tables, a parking lot with stormwater treatment, and other recreational amenities. Marine Drive Park is owned and operated by the Port of Bellingham which is working to complete the Marine Drive Trail allowing visitors to loop around the park, providing great views of Bellingham Bay near Cliffside Dr.

Northwest Straits Commission: Nathan Woods reminded the committee of the Collaborative Conservation workshop is occurring on September 16. Senator Lovelett and Representative Lekanoff are scheduled to speak.

**10) Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.