



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

Alexi Guddal
Conservation/Environmental
Partial: 01/31/2026

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

WHATCOM MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDASUMMARY | January 9, 2025 5:00pm – 7:00pm
2nd floor conference room, Civic Annex Building, 322 N Commercial, Bellingham
ZOOM LINK, Meeting ID: 850 5128 6318 | Passcode 636267
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.		January 9 Agenda Action: Modify and approve agenda as needed. New business can be added if necessary.
3.	5:00	Approval of December 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	Elections for MRC Officer Positions (Chair, Vice-Chair, NWSC rep., NWSC alt. rep) Action: Confirm nominations and elect.
6.	5:20	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)
7.	5:45	Staff Updates: Introduce Alexi to the Committee, member expectations and guidelines Objective: Provide opportunity to relay information and updates to the full MRC.
8.	~7:00	Adjourn

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 6th, 5:00pm – 7:00pm, ZOOM. Please check out the [MRC calendar](#) for meeting dates and formats.

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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In Attendance: Austin Rose (staff), Dana Flerchinger (staff), Rick Beauregard, Mark Fairhart, Alexi Guddal, Colin Wahl, Kaylee Galloway, Avery Maverick, Beth Lorence, Mike MacKay, Jackie Dexter, Andrew Shelton, Dan Sulak, Kathy Ketteridge, Mary Lou Steward, and Joe Hoats.

Others: Alan Chapman, Sasha Horst (NWSC Staff), Lucas Hart (NWSC Staff), Kat Garrah, Paul Meyer

- 1) **Introductions and Determine Quorum:** Austin began the meeting with the land acknowledgment. A quorum was established.
- 2) **January 9th Agenda:** The January agenda was approved.
- 3) **December Meeting Summary:** The December meeting summary was approved.
- 4) **Community Updates:**
 - Dan Sulak let the committee know he is resigning from his position on the MRC.
 - Paul Meyer, a potential new MRC member, introduced himself to the committee. Paul previously worked as the environmental manager for the Port of Seattle and was heavily involved in restoration projects and remediation work. The MRC Executive committee will be reviewing Paul's application in the coming week.
 - MERIS: Rick and Kat Garrah introduced the [Marine, Economic, and Research Institute for Sustainability](#) (MERIS) project. MERIS is a Blaine-based marine-centric multi-hub for industry, community, and applied research that will build upon existing infrastructure unique to Drayton Harbor. Kat explained that the concept for MERIS has been in the works for a few years, and the concept involves an innovation hub to generate economic prosperity in Blaine, while also maintaining sustainable initiatives. Funding has been secured for the initial feasibility study for the project. The next steps will involve recruiting a strategic planning group and holding meetings to brainstorm ideas and additional funding sources.
 - Austin shared that Dorie Belisle, who works with NSEA and the League of Women Voters' Climate Committee, is interested in raising awareness about plastic pollution and building a coalition for education and outreach efforts. They will be holding a meeting in March, but wanted to reach out to the MRC to see if any members would be interested in participating in these efforts. Mark indicated he was interested in participating in this.
- 5) **Elections for MRC Officer Positions:** The MRC confirmed officer positions for 2025:
 - MRC Chair: Andrew Shelton
 - MRC Vice Chair: Kathy Ketteridge
 - NWSC Representative: Rick Beauregard
 - NWSC Rep Alternate: Mike MacKay
- 6) **MRC Partner Committee Updates**
 - **County Council:** Kaylee updated the MRC on the upcoming council meeting, her aspirations to serve as County Council chair, and the County's ongoing projects and budget issues. She also mentioned an upcoming presentation she will be conducting with Austin and Dana at Western Washington University's Environmental Speaker Series in March of 2025.
 - **Port of Bellingham:** Kurt shared that the Port of Bellingham released their 2023-2024 Sustainability Report that can be accessed [here](#). He also shared that the Port is still planning on conducting a vessel turn-in event for 2025 in collaboration with DNR and the MRC.
 - **City of Bellingham:** No update
 - **City of Blaine:** Mary Lou Steward discussed the outflow study being conducted by Jacobs at the Blaine Wastewater Treatment Plant. According to the Blaine Public Works Manager, the study is moving along

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well. Kat Garrah asked if Mary Lou could obtain more detailed reports about the current status of the project for the group to review.

- **NWSC:** Lucas Hart discussed the definition and structure of the Northwest Straits Initiative, emphasizing that it is a community-led collaboration for protection, conservation, and restoration of the marine environment. Discussions around clarifying the definition and structure of the Northwest Straits Initiative (NWSI) have been in the works for years, but really came into focus during the September NWSI Retreat and during the NWSC and MRC lead staff meeting in December. Lucas clarified that under the new structural definition, the NWSI would be composed of the Northwest Straits Commission and 7 locally based Marine Resources Committees, but would no longer include the Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF). Because the NWSC and NWSF are now independent organizations with separate boards of directors, funding sources, projects, and staffing, this structural redefinition would help to bring clarity around the roles and responsibilities of each organization. This change does not impact existing partnerships or funding between the Commission and Marine Resources Committees nor would it impact the MRC's ability to partner with the NWSF. The NWSC will be discussing this at their upcoming meeting on January 31st, and wanted to make sure to incorporate any MRC member feedback or questions.

7) Staff and Committee Updates:

- Austin announced that Alexi Guddal was appointed to the MRC in an environmental/conservation seat. Alexi introduced herself to the committee.
- Cherry Point Implementation Committee Meeting Summary: Austin shared that she attended the most recent committee meeting and reported on a presentation by Austin Greene, who will be conducting eelgrass studies within the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve this summer. Austin mentioned that this might be a good partnership/ connection as the MRC will be conducting the intertidal surveys in the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve this summer. Mark Fairhart expressed interest in reaching out to Austin Greene to discuss collaboration opportunities.
- Member Expectations Discussion: Austin led a discussion about the roles and expectations of members of the MRC. The group agreed to adopt something very similar to the Skagit MRC's model, which clearly outlines the responsibilities of different positions and expectations for members. MRC staff will draft a document based on the Skagit model, incorporating feedback and suggestions from the group, to be reviewed during the February meeting.
- Project Updates: Mike MacKay and Dana Flerchinger shared information about the Beach Seine with Kids project kickoff meeting. Mark Fairhart and Dana provided details on the upcoming intertidal monitoring kickoff meeting and encouraged any interested members to attend.

8) Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.