



## Island County Marine Resources Committee

<http://www.islandcountymrc.org>

# NEWS

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## **Nichols outlines boat yard plans to marine committee**

Can Holmes Harbor remain a healthy place for marine life and humans while Whidbey Island's largest industrial employer expands on its shores?

Nichols Brothers Boat Builders believes it can, and last week explained to Island County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) what it is doing to make sure.

Co-President Bryan Nichols and Chairman Matt Nichols described their vision for a 15-year expansion that will provide about 300 jobs and position their boat yard to compete for new contracts from the US Navy and Washington State Ferries. A key element of the proposed expansion would be a new 1,400-foot rail launch system extending further into Holmes Harbor, elevated several feet above the sea-bottom to reduce impact on eel grass, which is a key concern of the MRC. The new ramp would replace an existing rock ramp, which would then be removed to restore natural shoreline conditions and improve the available habitat for eelgrass as well as forage fish, which lay their eggs along Island County's shoreline. Also planned is expansion of the facility's system for collecting and filtering all surface water that drains from the site.

Touring the boat yard with the Nichols representatives were 14 members and representatives of MRC and Northwest Straits Commission.

Island County MRC is a citizen committee appointed by the Island County Commissioners. The MRC brings together diverse interests and disciplines including marine science, education, environmental planning, aquaculture, recreational and commercial fishing, the Navy, agriculture, county government and Island County's two port districts.

The committee is guiding the effort to study, understand and restore the health of Island County's 212 miles of shoreline. Working largely through grant funding, the MRC sponsors scientific studies that enable it to make recommendations to agencies of government, promote education and encourage voluntary citizen stewardship.

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Photo #1:

Phyllis Kind, Greenbank; Roger Sherman, Coupeville; Barbara Wood, Oak Harbor; Dan Pedersen, Langley; Bruce Wood, Oak Harbor; Joe Burcar, Island County Planning; Ian Jefferds, Coupeville; Peg Urstad, Greenbank; Gary Wood, Coupeville; Benye Weber, Coupeville; Rolf Seitle, Langley; Don Meehan, Coupeville; Matt Nichols, Freeland; Tom Campbell, Langley; (not pictured) Dave Anderson, Clinton.

Photo #2

Bryan Nichols answers a question from the MRC's Ian Jefferds, of Penn Cove Shellfish, LLC., in Coupeville.