



JOINT MRC MEETING DRAFT SUMMARY

July 18, 2018
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

**Padilla Bay National Estuarine
Research Reserve**
10441 Bayview Edison Rd
Mt Vernon, WA 98273



<i>Agenda</i>	
10:45 am	Start potluck (<i>Attendees are invited to grab lunch to eat during the meeting</i>)
11:00 am	Convene meeting. Review agenda.
11:05 am	Welcome: Jude Apple
11:10 am	Presentation and Discussion: Northwest Straits Initiative Strategic Plan: Lucas Hart
11:55 am	Presentation and Discussion: Marine debris: Eleanor Hines and Bob Seaman
12:40 pm	Roundtable
12:55 pm	Public comment
1:00 pm	Adjourn
<i>Attendees invited to stay after the meeting for networking and project collaboration with other MRC members.</i>	

In attendance:

Whatcom MRC: Eleanor Hines, Austin Rose (Staff), Doug Stark, Chris Brown, Glen “Alex” Alexander, Bob Seaman

Skagit MRC: Tracy Alker (Staff), Sarah Tchang, Rachel Best, Paul Dinnel, Lynne Jordon, Nate Biletchnikoff, Jude Apple, Phyllis Bravinder, Pete Haase, Darla Galsmith

Island MRC: Barbara Bennett, Ruth Richards, Anna Toledo (Staff), Elsa Schwartz, Matt Kukuk, Kelly Zupich, Kes Tautvydas

Others: Jamie Kilgo (DNR), Amy Keiper (Whatcom MRC Intern), Birdie Davenport (DNR), Erica Bleke (DNR), Jay Lind (NWSF), Suzanne Shull (PBNERR), Caroline Gibson (NWSF), Dan vanHees (NWSC), Kurt Baumgarten (Port of Bellingham), Jason Morgan (NWSF), Bridget Trosin (WA SeaGrant), Nicole Jordan (NWSC), Lucas Hart (NWSC), Janet St. Clair (Sound Water Stewards), John Amell (Island County resident)

Convene Meeting: Elsa Schwartz (Island County MRC) chaired the meeting and encouraged participants to stay after the meeting for further networking.

Welcome: Jude Apple, Research Director, Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (PBNERR), welcomed the group and encouraged visitors to view the aquarium. Jude explained that PBNERR is one of 30 Estuarine Research Reserve’s in the county, and the mission of the reserves is to advance education, research, and stewardship of these coastal resources and the partnerships with the MRCs has been very valuable.

Northwest Straits Initiative Strategic Plan: Northwest Straits Commission Director, Lucas Hart, provided an overview of the draft update to the Northwest Straits Initiative (NWSI) strategic plan and requested input from the MRC members present. The updated strategic plan will be developed as an overarching framework under which the MRC's can build work plans for specific progress they are working on. Lucas highlighted five themes: long term stable funding; structural support to MRCs; measuring progress; engagement and diversification; and messaging, identified for the draft strategic plan, which are further supported by goals, strategies and outcomes. Lucas also highlighted the stewardship goals which were developed as a resource for MRCs in project development. Several members provided feedback on the draft language and questions presented. Lucas is available for further discussion and feedback to help finalize the strategic plan.

Marine Debris: Eleanor began the presentation reminding members of an effort for the Coastal MRCs and the Puget Sound MRCs to collaborate on a project such as marine debris. There is still potential to collaborate and Eleanor asked MRCs to consider ways to partner and tackle to issue of marine debris. Eleanor emphasized that plastics and micro plastics are a global problem, meaning they are a land based problem as well as effecting the health of our marine ecosystems. Eleanor mentioned several projects and education and outreach efforts that are currently underway that the MRCs could lead in their counties – i.e. The Ocean Conservancy International Coastal Cleanup.

Eleanor and Bob recently attended a meeting in Burnaby B.C. sponsored by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), who is implementing a project entitled “Building Community Solutions for Marine Litter” to reduce land-based litter in the transboundary Tijuana River and Salish Sea watersheds. Both Eleanor and Bob highlighted their “take-aways” from that meeting and discussed efforts MRCs could take on locally, which included ways to connect with the younger generation.

Marine debris could be a topic at the annual MRC conference coming up in November.

Roundtable:

- Representatives from the DNR Aquatic Reserves shared their new rack cards applicable to Island, Whatcom, and Skagit Counties. There is interest for the state aquatic reserves to collaborate with the MRCs.
- Doug Stark mentioned that as marine debris is emerging as a huge concern there is curricula available that the NWSI could review and assess what is working well in particular areas and develop a protocol that could involve the MRCs and their local community.
- Suzanne Shull mentioned that there is a volunteer, Albert Foster, who is conducting eelgrass surveys by sonar and is available to chat with MRC members who are interested in monitoring in the region.

Business items: Island County letters of support: Kelly moved to approve the Chair to sign the letters of support for the Oak Harbor Marina restoration feasibility project, Seahorse Siesta restoration project, and Strawberry Point Preserve project. Barbara seconded. The motion passed.

Public Comment: no public comment.