

IC MRC Interviews

Person being interviewed: _____

Needs Assessment 2020-21

Organization/Department: _____

Date: _____ Interviewer: _____

Introduction

Thank you for making the time to meet with me. I am a member of the Island County Marine Resources Committee (MRC). The MRC is a committee made up of local volunteers from a variety of backgrounds with the goal to protect and restore our local marine resources. We serve as an advisory body to the County Commissioners and also carry out monitoring, restoration, and outreach projects.

Purpose of interview

Our conversation today is part of a series of conversations we are holding with County leadership and partner organizations to help the MRC focus our efforts over the next 3-5 years.

How familiar are you with the MRC? _____

About the MRC

The MRC collaborates with other local organizations and volunteer groups to research, protect, and restore our local marine habitats and species. Some of our work includes: *(choose one(s) that relate to you/your interviewer)*

- *Monitoring the status of critical marine habitat and species:*
 - *forage fish*
 - *salmonids*
 - *kelp*
 - *eelgrass*
- *Facilitating and supporting nearshore restoration:*
 - *Cornet Bay*
 - *Hidden Beach*
 - *Sunlight Shores*
 - *studied phytoremediation for local water quality improvement*
 - *Seahorse Siesta*
 - *Oak Harbor Marina*
 - *Hoypus Point*
- *Increasing public awareness through outreach work: forums, videos, signage, displays, and participation in community events*
- *Responding to invitations from the Board to advise regarding marine resource issues:*
 - *e.g. fin fish net pens for Commissioners' in 2016 SMP update*

You can also learn more about the MRC through the fact sheet we sent with the initial email.

Interview process

In this interview, I will ask several questions about the MRC and how we can support your department/organization. There aren't any right or wrong answers – we're just trying to understand how the MRC can best fulfill its role within the County and community.

As mentioned in the introductory email, your responses will be anonymously compiled with all other responses we receive in our interviews. If you believe it would be helpful to identify yourself or your organization as the source of a comment, please let me know.

Do you have any questions about the interview process or how your responses will be used?

OK let's get started.

Can you help me understand current and emerging issues for your Department/Organization and how marine issues relate to them?

Right now, what trends and issues are currently pressing for your Department?

In 3-5 years, what emerging trends & issues do you expect to become more critical?

How do these trends and issues relate to the marine environment?

What changes in awareness, attitudes or behaviors would you like to see regarding these issues?

What outcomes, long term, would be your ideal for these issues?

Example topics:

- Water quality
- Fish, shellfish and wildlife
- New building requests on shorelines
- Derelict structures on shorelines
- Beach access, Tideland ownership
- Storm surge, Sea level rise

Given the MRC's roles, how can the MRC support your work? Short term ... and long term?

Immediately

Looking ahead

What issues need to be:

- researched?

Immediately

Looking ahead

- changed?

Immediately

Looking ahead

- communicated to County Staff?

Immediately

Looking ahead

- communicated to local residents?

Immediately

Looking ahead

- communicated specifically to an audience subset: (e.g. shoreline and tideland property owners, students)?

Immediately

Looking ahead

What is the best way to communicate with you and your Organization/Department?

Example communication methods:

- Attend official meetings or work sessions
- Develop policy white papers
- Provide brief informational summaries
- Meet with you or your staff in-person/virtually
- Educational presentations at MRC meetings
- Educational forums

Have you been aware of the work of the MRC over the past 3 years? _____

If not,

please reflect on this new information and knowing the MRC is available as a resource:

If yes,

▪ what of the MRC's work do you value most?

▪ What comments do you have about current projects?

▪ What recommendations or requests do you have for future MRC work?

Do you have any suggestions on other Departments or Organizations we should interview?

The following Departments were already represented on the list:

Commissioners

Planning

Emergency Management

Dept of Nat Resources

Public Health

Public Works

WSU Extension

And the following organizations:

Sound Water Stewards

Whidbey Camano Land Trust

WA State Parks

South Whidbey Parks and Recreation

Whidbey and Snohomish Conservation Districts

Naval Air Station Whidbey Island County

Mayors (OH, Langley, Coupeville)

Tribes (Tulalip, Swinomish)

Ports (SW, Coupeville)

Schools

Suggestions: _____

For the final two questions, we are partnering with the Island Local Integrating Organization to follow-up on a survey they recently conducted with Island County residents. The Island Local Integrating Organization brings together community groups to support ecosystem protection and recovery efforts.

In this recent survey, Island County residents identified drinking water, air quality, and sound stewardship as their top natural resource priorities. How does this finding relate to your department's/organization's priorities?

The results from this survey were compared with a larger 12-county survey around Puget Sound, which found that Island County residents in particular feel their identity is tied to the shoreline, and they utilize the shoreline to benefit their psychological wellbeing and find relaxation. In addition, 69% of Island County residents have observed changes along the shoreline, and more frequently indicated they felt the changes were negative (*44% negative vs. 13% positive*). These findings tell us that Island County residents value the shoreline and notice changes that are happening. How do you think this finding fits with your department's/organization's priorities?

That's it! To wrap up:

- Thank you very much for your comments and your time. Our Assessment Committee will report on our interviews in March 2021 and will use these responses to inform the MRC strategic plan for the next 3-5 years.
- Our goal is to assist our local leaders, elected officials, and partner organizations in their roles as they relate to marine resources.
- Please be mindful, the MRC may not be able to address everything you have raised but we will review and consider all comments as we plan our work. We assess all new project ideas or requests in relation to the MRC's mission and capacities
- Let us know how we might be of assistance. We are staffed through the Island County Department of Natural Resources and contact information for our coordinator, Anna Toledo, is on the fact sheet I provided earlier.
- Thank you for the important work you do for our community. It's been a pleasure to talk with you.