

# ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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## Minutes

Prepared by Elise Adams

# January 6, 2026

HYBRID MEETING

**PRESENT:** Present: **Kelly Webb**, Chair, **Jill Lipoti**, **Paul Ben McElwain**, **Andi Kopit**, **Greg Easton**, **Patrick Havel**, **Jeff Wheeler**, **Joshua Berkowitz**, **Florian Graner**, Sound Water Stewards Executive Director and MRC Technical Advisor, **Janet St. Clair**, IC Commissioner, **Elise Adams**, MRC Staff

**ABSENT:** **Kirk Larsen** - notified, **Ken Collins** - notified

**VISITORS:** **Quinn Farr**, IC Pollution Identification Coordinator, **Jen Schmitz**, IC Natural Resource Manager, **Shawn Morris**, IC Public Health Director, **Maddy Buehrer**, Whidbey Conservation District Natural Resource Planner, **Katie Kowal**, Jefferson County MRC, **Fran Horvath**, **Brad Thompson**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Jill called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** The agenda approval was made by Kelly Webb, seconded by Andi Kopit. **MINUTES:** A motion to approve the Minutes from December was made by Jeff Wheeler, seconded by Andi Kopit, and approved unanimously.

### **TRIBAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

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.

**ART & CULTURE:** Jill did not read off an Arts and Culture piece at the meeting, but Elise will send out the suggested Arts and Culture piece after the meeting.

### **POSITION TRANSITION:**

Kelly Webb was nominated for the MRC Chair position. The appointment was approved unanimously. There were no nominations for Vice-Chair and the decision to discuss the position during the Executive Committee was made. The Executive Committee will remain Kelly Webb, Jill Lipoti, Patrick Havel, and Ken Collins with the possibility of adding an additional Executive Committee member once new MRC Members have joined and approved by the BOCC in a month or two. Ken Collins will remain NWSC Representative with Kirk Larsen remaining backup as needed. Josh Berkowitz will remain SRTCC Representative. The ILIO Representative will continue to rotate and members are invited to attend as they would like.

### **PROJECTS AND SUB-COMMITTEES:**

Reviewing sub-committees and positions:

- Executive committee: Kelly Webb, Jill Lipoti, Patrick Havel, Ken Collins
  - o Chair: Kelly Webb

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- Vice-Chair: TBD
- Northwest Straits Commission Representative (NWSC): Ken Collins, Kirk Larsen (backup)
- Salmon Recovery Technical Citizen Committee (SRTCC): Josh Berkowitz
- Island Local Integrating Organization Representative (ILIO): Open to all
- Education sub-committee: Andi Kopit, Jeff Wheeler, Josh Berkowitz, with support from technical advisor, Florian Graner
- DEI sub-committee: Andi Kopit, Kelly Webb, Jill Lipoti
- Policy sub-committee: Greg Easton, Paul Ben McElwain, Josh Berkowitz, Jill Lipoti

2026-2027 projects & leads include:

- Abandoned and derelict vessel removal (ADV): Kelly Webb
- Derelict crab pot removal: Jeff Wheeler
- Forage fish monitoring: Kirk Larsen
- Community-based forage fish workshop: Kirk Larsen
- Bull kelp monitoring: Carter Webb, Ken Collins
- Restoration and stewardship: Jill Lipoti
- Education and outreach: Andi Kopit

## LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

Report from MRC Chair: No report.

Report from Commissioner Janet St. Clair:

BOCC has begun reviewing the Comprehensive Plan draft elements. On January 14<sup>th</sup>, the BOCC will be reviewing the natural resources and climate elements. MRC members are encouraged to submit public comment prior to the January 14<sup>th</sup> discussion and welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussion. Greg Easton and the policy sub-committee will work to submit comments prior to the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting even if they are not necessarily complete, and will continue to work past the meeting to submit public comment prior to the February 9<sup>th</sup> 60-day deadline.

Report from County Lead/MRC Coordinator:

- Volunteer hours were due 1/5/26 – MRC volunteers need to send in hours ASAP.
- Sound Waters University registration closes January 31<sup>st</sup> – if you told Elise you planned on attending, please make sure to register before that date and save all receipts for reimbursement.
- Kirk Larsen and the forage fish community research workshop is looking for help/support to plan and coordinate the upcoming event. Please let Kirk or Elise know if you are interested in helping!

## NORTHWEST STRAITS COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE REPORT:

Ken Collins was not present at the January meeting so Elise reported out and will send out Ken's full report after the meeting. Main points/conversation topics include:

- How do we want to collaborate with the NWSC Science Advisory Committee (SAC) moving forward? "Speed dates with a scientist?" Guest speakers at MRC meetings?
- NWSC Conference review: general feedback was very positive; conference was logistically a lot of work!

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- MRC report outs were generally very quiet aside from noting that the San Juan MRC hosted an art-themed social event in their community. Would Island ever want to do something similar?

## **MRC NEW APPLICANTS:**

- The Island County MRC holds 13 members. Current roster as of January 2026 is 10 members with three open membership spots.
- Applications for three community members interested in joining the MRC have been sent out the MRC members.
- Elise will work with Andi, Kelly, and Patrick to coordinate a “get to know” conversation with the three pending MRC applicants to give them a chance to ask questions, learn more about the MRC, etc.
- At the February meeting, MRC members will vote to recommend the three pending applications be brought to the Island County BOCC for approval.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Fran Horvath, potential MRC member, is looking forward to getting to know MRC members through the application process!

Meeting adjourned at 4:05pm.