

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Elise Adams

February 3, 2026

HYBRID MEETING

PRESENT: Present: **Kelly Webb**, Chair, **Jill Lipoti**, **Kirk Larsen**, **Paul Ben McElwain**, **Andi Kopit**, **Greg Easton**, **Patrick Havel**, **Jeff Wheeler**, **Janet St. Clair**, IC Commissioner, **Elise Adams**, MRC Staff

ABSENT: **Joshua Berkowitz** - notified, **Ken Collins** - notified

VISITORS: **Barbara Bennett**, **Renee Zavas Silva**, IC Surface Water Quality Specialist, **Jen Schmitz**, IC Natural Resource Manager, **Maddy Buehrer**, Whidbey Conservation District Natural Resource Planner, **Heather Vitiaz**, WSU Extension – Island County, **Sasha Horst**, NWSC Staff, **Fran Horvath**, **Marena Salerno Collins**, **Hiller West**

CALL TO ORDER: Kelly called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** The agenda approval was made by Jill Lipoti, seconded by Andi Kopit. **MINUTES:** A motion to approve the Minutes from January was made by Patrick Havel, seconded by Greg Easton, 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.

GOOD NEWS: Kelly announced her shift from sharing about “Arts and Culture” to instead focus on a monthly piece of “Good News.” This month’s “Good News” highlights Washington State Department of Ecology’s announcement for \$40 million in streamflow restoration grants available.

CORRESPONDENCE: Kelly was contacted by Representative Rick Larsen’s Organizational Liaison, Julie Nowak, also with the Citizen Climate Lobby, and was referred to Kelly through the Whidbey Climate Action. Kelly discussed with Julie about how the MRC works and learned that Island County is the only county that does not have an advisory committee focused on climate. There isn’t much overlap between the MRC and the work Julie focuses on, but she was invited to attend future MRC meetings to learn more about the work of the MRC.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

Report from MRC Chair:

- Patrick Havel is nominated to serve as the Vice-Chair. A motion to approve the made by Jill Lipoti, seconded by Kirk Larsen, and approved unanimously.

Report from Commissioner Janet St. Clair:

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- The Deer Lagoon Management Plan will be discussed during the BOCC Work Session on Wednesday, February 4th. The Deer Lagoon Management Plan will become a part of the Parks Plan. The Work Session meeting link and agenda is found on the Island County Agenda Center.
- Commissioner St. Clair responded to Julie Nowak (detailed in “Correspondence”) regarding the lack of a climate advisory committee. In the past, there has been two climate audits; one in 2011 to do a baseline study of greenhouse gas emissions and one in 2020 to update the original greenhouse gas emissions study and is included in the Comp Plan. The Board chose to do two things following this study: create a climate resolution that every policy that comes to the board and if there is any climate nexus, it must be noted and look at how to improve county operations to reduce greenhouse emissions and become more climate friendly. Additionally, the Commissioners volunteered to include climate elements in the upcoming Comp Plan.

Report from County Lead/MRC Coordinator:

- There is a new Volunteer Hour Tracking Document – MRC Members should use this new form to log their hours moving forward!
- Sound Waters University is this upcoming Saturday – IC MRC will have a table up throughout the day.
- The NWSC has identified additional funding through the FY23 NOAA funds available for MRCs for 2026 projects.
 - o This could be either a new project that is “shovel ready” or adding funds to our existing projects.
 - o Project proposals are due March 17, 2026 – applications for these funds are optional.
 - o Projects/funding must be completed and used by December 31, 2026.
 - o If an MRC chooses not to use these funds, these funds would be bundled and used for vessel removal/turn in events
- The Ecosystem Coordination Board Shoreline Subcommittee has been meeting monthly, having really engaging discussion regarding shoreline armoring, including contractor licensing. Jen noted that the licensing process for contractors doesn’t necessarily solve the problem regarding unpermitted shoreline armoring.
 - o Hoping to have a list of priorities to elevate and prioritize in the next six month.
- Puget Sound Partnership sent the Commissioners and County management, including the Planning Department, their recommendations on how to update critical area ordinances.
- Quinn Farr has moved into the Island County Salmon Recovery Lead Entity Position.

MRC APPLICANT RECOMMENDATION:

- The MRC has received three applications for membership: Brad Thompson, Fran Horvath, and Marena Salerno Collins. The MRC discussed the applications of all three candidates. A motion to approve the slate of three candidates was made by Patrick Havel, seconded by Jill Lipoti and approved.

NORTHWEST STRAITS COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – Kirk Larsen:

- Island County Comp Plan work was brought up during the NWSC January meeting was brought up. Rick Beauregard from Whatcom County is interested in talking with the policy sub-committee as his county is embarking on similar work.

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- Snohomish County is undertaking a shoreline armoring survey.
- There were two fantastic speakers.
- House Bill 2199 on derelict vessels and DNR budget for derelict vessels is shrinking.
- Kirk presented on the upcoming Island County Forage Fish Workshop on April 27th
- Kirk and the work of the greater MRC was highlighted in the NWSC Impact Report.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE:

- The policy committee has been diligently working on their most recent response and comment regarding the Island County Comprehensive Plan draft elements. They have previously commented on other drafts leading up to this final draft.
- The MRC White Paper on climate resiliency and the MRC's shoreline armoring survey has helped provide background and context regarding the current draft.
- The policy committee has finalized their response and is ready to submit their Comp Plan response and comments to the Island County Comprehensive Planning Team via their Comp Plan public comment email. The letter will be signed by Kelly Webb as the Chair and submitted prior to the 60-day public comment deadline.

HOUSE BILL 2421 and SENATE BILL 6119:

- House Bill 2421/Senate Bill 6119 focuses on phasing out 6ppd by 2035. 6ppd is a chemical in tires that helps the tire last longer. The MRC independently authored comments regarding their support for these bills and will send their letters in separately from the MRC Coordinator to avoid lobbying. A motion to approve was made by Jill Lipoti, seconded by PaulBen McElwain, and approved.

Public Comment:

Barbara Bennett recommended "Corporations at Climate Crossroads"

Meeting adjourned at 4:32pm.