

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Elise Adams

March 3, 2026

HYBRID MEETING

PRESENT: Present: **Kelly Webb**, Chair, **Jill Lipoti**, **Ken Collins**, **Fran Horvath**, **Marena Salerno Collins**, **Josh Berkowitz**, **PaulBen McElwain**, **Greg Easton**, **Patrick Havel**, **Jeff Wheeler**, **Elise Adams**, MRC Staff

ABSENT: **Kirk Larsen** – notified, **Brad Thompson** – notified, **Andi Kopit** - notified

VISITORS: **Alex Gradwohl**, **Lisa Walsh**, Town of Coupeville, **Gary Purcell**, Whidbey Island Maritime Heritage Foundation, **Quinn Farr**, IC Lead Entity Coordinator, **Kelly Zupich**, IC Shore Friendly, **Jason Magee**, Whidbey Island Maritime Heritage Foundation, **Barbara Bennett**, **Sasha Horst**, Northwest Straits Commission staff, **Leah Skare**, Northwest Straits Commission staff, **Ciera Edison**, Sound Water Stewards

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 Greg Easton. **MINUTES:** A motion to approve the Minutes from March was made by Greg Easton, seconded by Josh Berkowitz, 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: This month's "Good News" highlights the birth of a new Southern Resident Killer Whale calf!

PRESENTATION: **Alex Gradwohl of Maritime Washington National Heritage Area**

LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

- Welcome to our three new MRC members, Brad Thompson, Fran Horvath, and Marena Salerno Collins!
- Chair leadership report:
 - o Received an email from the NWSC Science Advisory Committee regarding the opportunity for two collaborative sessions: one in the first half of the year and the other in the second half of the year. Kelly will send out an email with more information!
- County Lead leadership report:
 - o SRTCC is working through salmon funding applications
 - o Reminder: MRC Retreat is Thursday, March 12

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- Volunteer hours are due Monday, April 6 – please turn them in!
- Barbara Bennett will continue in an MRC Advisory position

NORTHWEST STRAITS COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – Ken Collins:

- There are quite a few newcomers regionally across the MRCs; Island has welcomed three new members.
- NWSC is coordinating two separate “NWSC 101” sessions on March 19th and April 8th.
- Ken received an email regarding NWSC Conference Planning and is possibly looking for volunteers to help in that process and they can let the MRC Coordinator know.
- NWSC Science Advisory Committee is offering two opportunities for two collaborative sessions.
- At the last NWSC monthly meeting, Leah Skare presented on green crab status within the Salish Sea.
- Whatcom MRC successfully had three derelict vessels removed.

SALMON RECOVERY TECHNICAL & CITIZENS COMMITTEE REPORT – Josh Berkowitz:

- Quinn Farr has taken over as the Lead Entity Coordinator
- February meeting took a look at the three applications (Burwell Tidelands Acquisition, Kristoferson Creek Preserve - Beaver and Salmon, Double Bluff Pt Conservation Easement Acquisition)
- Next SRTCC meeting is March 19 and site visits are April 16 and May 21
- Quinn will work with the MRC Coordinator regarding any letters of support.

LOCAL INTEGRATING ORGANIZATION REPORT – Kelly Webb

- Whidbey Island Conservation District Native Plant Sale is on March 7th.
- Due to budget issues, Island County has frozen hiring replacement/new positions; therefore, people are doubling up on positions. Please be patient with county employees doing multiple jobs.
- Heather Kortuem is leaving her position as Environmental Health Manager with Island County.
- Funding has been received for the Island County OSS (on-site sewage system) shoreline mapping, which will proceed with ranked priorities in accordance with the Healthy Shoreline Action Plan.
- Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) has a new executive director, whose name has not been announced to date.
- LIO meetings have been moved to a bi-monthly basis.
- PSP’s Rachel Gilliland presented on the ongoing Whidbey Basin Estuarine & Nearshore Cumulative Effects Evaluation.

SOUND WATERS UNIVERSITY REFLECTION

MRC members who attended Sound Waters University gave a reflection of their day, including favorite or most interesting things they learned and what they took away from the day-long event.

Public Comment:

Meeting adjourned at 4:32pm.