

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG



Minutes

Prepared by Elise Adams

May 5, 2026

HYBRID MEETING

PRESENT: Present: **Kelly Webb**, Chair, **Jill Lipoti**, **Ken Collins**, **Patrick Havel**, **Fran Horvath**, **Andi Kopit**, **Marena Salerno Collins**, **Josh Berkowitz**, **Paul Ben McElwain**, **Greg Easton**, **Kirk Larsen**, **Jeff Wheeler**, **Janet St. Clair**, Island County Commissioner, **Elise Adams**, MRC Staff

ABSENT: **Brad Thompson** - notified

VISITORS: **Sasha Horst**, NW Straits Commission staff, **Heather Vitiaz**, WSU – Island County Extension.

CALL TO ORDER: Kelly called the meeting to order at 4:03pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** MRC Coordinator noted that under “Upcoming Due Dates”, the corrected date for volunteer hours due is July 6th. Agenda approval was made by Jill Lipoti, seconded by Kirk Larsen. **MINUTES:** A motion to approve the Minutes from April was made by Kirk Larsen, 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: This month’s “Good News” highlights the first naturally hatched Chinook salmon being observed in Upper Klamath Lake since the historic dam removals.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

- Chair leadership report – Kelly Webb:
 - o MRC Earth Day Presentation at Commissioner St. Clair’s April 22nd Town Hall was written up in the Stanwood-Camano News. A big thanks to Commissioner St. Clair for including the MRC in the Town Hall!
- County Lead leadership report – Elise Adams:
 - o MRC was involved in a lot of outreach opportunities in April – a big thanks to those who participated and helped!
- Island County Commissioner leadership report- Commissioner Janet St. Clair:
 - o Thanks to the MRC for the Earth Day Presentation – it was great to get the word out and reach folks who don’t normally hear about the work!

NW STRAITS COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – Ken Collins:

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG

- MRC should start to think about what engagement with our state reps and legislators should and could look like this summer; what sites or projects would be best to highlight? How do we effectively convey the work of Island MRC?
 - o Coordinator noted this is likely coming up this summer so MRC should be prepared to engage and help with potential tours!
- NWSC Reauthorization Bill is headed to the House and Senate. Thought experiment: If we had additional funds, how would we use it?
- Green crab molt search update
- Jefferson County has 15 rain gardens in place and a great example and resource for rain garden work!

SRTCC REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – Josh Berkowitz:

- Site visits happened on April 16 – Jill Lipoti attended the Double Bluff site now called the Volcano Point Conservation Easement.
 - o Puget Sound Partnership invited them to turn in a full application.
 - o This site is also a SWS beach monitoring location.
- The next SRTCC meeting will be on May 21 where they will score applications, go through evaluation forms, and talk about ranking.
- They will submit the final ranked list by August 7 with the final status of projects known on September 17.
- SRTCC received a request for a letter of support from Camano Island State Park for shoreline restoration work.

MARITIME WASHINGTON WORKSHOP RECAP – Jill Lipoti:

- Island MRC attended the Maritime Washington Partner Meeting in Everett.
- Jill participated in a walking tour of the Everett waterfront, learning the history of the area, and touring new exhibits.
- The new development they toured has planned for sea level rise and climate change.
- They want to learn more from partners about restoration successes – could be a good opportunity for Hoypus Point!
- They had Dr. Megan Harden who put together a Tribal guide for Maritime Washington – not on their website yet but Jill will loop the MRC in once its available.

FORAGE FISH WORKSHOP SUMMARY – Kirk Larsen:

- More in depth summary will be presented at the June meeting!
- The workshop was incredibly successful and Kirk and the workshop facilitator, Emily, are looking forward to going through what they learned for future actions!

HOLMES HARBOR ANCHORAGE DISCUSSION – Jill Lipoti:

- A small group (including Ken Collins, Jill Lipoti, Florian Graner – Sound Water Stewards and MRC technical advisor, and Susan Berta - Orca Network) has met to discuss the anchorage impact of large container ships in Holmes Harbor to determine what, if any, action the MRC and Island County partners could/should have.
 - o Anchorage during COVID years caused harm to Holmes Harbor and nearby ecosystems; eelgrass, bull kelp beds, limited orca use while vessels were anchored, etc.
-

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG

- Commissioner St. Clair noted that Island County does not own the water, only up to the water, and jurisdiction falls elsewhere (U.S. waters).
 - o It would probably be helpful to work with federal electives – possibly Rep. Larsen - and figuring out the route which this moves through is helpful.
 - o Commissioner St. Clair mentioned submitting a FOIA request to the Coast Guard for back logged anchorage work and potentially crafting a Legal Assistance Request (LAR) letter to submit to the County.
 - Prepare a detailed memo, send it to the Chair (we have this problem, and the MRC is interested in working on it, including any legal questions the MRC may have) and then send to the Board cc-ing County staff.
- Kirk Larsen has created an online information portal for background and research.
- It was determined that the Executive Committee would discuss this at their May meeting to decide if an ad hoc committee is necessary.

OUTREACH:

- This will be a standing agenda item to determine what outreach opportunities are on the horizon and if/how the MRC wants to participate.
 - o This way it's not always the MRC Coordinator suggesting how the MRC gets out in the community but instead, encourages members to tell each other of opportunities to take part in!
 - You don't have to wait till the meeting, please feel free to email the MRC Coordinator at any point so she can bring it to the executive committee or next meeting!
 - o As outreach and communication with the public is an MRC priority stemming from, we want to make sure that all members are capable and able to participate in MRC outreach opportunities. For example: having a presentation ready to present at a Town Hall, feeling comfortable tabling at an outreach table, or talking with your community members while you're out and about!
 - o Moving forward, the MRC will have outreach coverage confirmed prior to confirming MRC participation in the event to encourage committee participation and coverage of all members.
- MRC Coordinator brought up the upcoming Penn Cove Water Fest participation, and asked the MRC would like to participate in Wings Over Whidbey on Sept 26 and Camano 101 on Sept 12.
 - o MRC will let the MRC Coordinator know by May 15 if they would like to participate in Wings Over Whidbey otherwise MRC will not participate.
- MRC Coordinator is working on outreach materials to have at events to build upon what we already have!

STRATEGIC PLAN:

- Please fill out the survey! The Strategic Plan working group welcomes any and all feedback!
- Strategic Plan committee will have an update at the next meeting to stay on the timeline of having the Strategic Plan published by 2027.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG

- Island County has released their Comprehensive Plan Final Draft and will discuss it at May 13 Work Session (agenda available online – tune in if you're able!)
- Greg Easton and the policy subcommittee will look at the Final Draft to determine a response and report back to the MRC.

Public Comment:

Meeting adjourned at 5:50pm.