

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Kelly Zupich

January 7, 2024

HYBRID MEETING

PRESENT: Jill Lipoti, Chair, Kelly Webb, Vice Chair, Scott Chase, Barbara Bennett, Ken Collins, Andi Kopit, Greg Easton, Kirk Larsen, Paul Ben McElwain, Patrick Havel, Kelly Zupich, MRC staff

ABSENT: Note if notified or un-notified – Melanie Bacon, un-notified, Jennifer Schmitz, notified

VISITORS: James Watson, WICD, Josh Berkowitz, Public, Carlie Miller, IC Surface Water Quality, Jeff Whitty, NWSC, Renee Zavas-Silva, IC Surface Water Quality, Heather Teagarden, WSU Extension

CALL TO ORDER: Jill called the meeting to order at 4:00pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** December 3, 2024, Minutes approved.

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.

LEADERSHIP UPDATES:

- Jill explained that the MRC will send summaries of their meetings to the County Commissioners to keep them informed. We will work towards finding the right fit that keeps the Commissioners up to date and isn't a burden to review.
- Barbara outlined that the MRC's shoreline rulemaking review letter raises the conflict between private property rights and broader environmental strategies, seeking strategies from the Department of Ecology to address this issue more holistically. It is noted that it's difficult to achieve meaningful ecological gains on a property-by-property basis, and an approach coordinated across stretches of shoreline is needed. The group discussed the rulemaking process timeline and opportunities to provide further input.

COORDINATOR'S UPDATE:

- Staff discussed the upcoming Sound Waters University event, encouraging members to attend and participate. Kirk and Kelly Z. will be providing two presentations at the event focused on the importance of Community Science.
- The MRC voted to add James Watson as a technical advisor for the committee.

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- The meeting time for the MRC was changed back to 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM after a vote, as it was found that the previous 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM time was not working well for the Island County staff.
- The Island County LIO will be hosting the Ecosystem Coordination Board meeting in May, which will involve sharing information about the armoring survey.
- The Jan Holmes Award process is moving forward, and the winner will be announced at Sound Waters University.
- The MRC voted to keep Jill Lipoti as the Chair and Kelly Webb as Vice Chair for 2025.

MRC RETREAT PLANNING:

- Staff to draft an agenda for the MRC retreat and bring it to the Executive Committee for review.
- At the retreat we plan to update our strategic plan, draft a 2-year work plan, discuss recruitment for open positions, and review a draft land and sea acknowledgement.

PROJECT PLANNING:

- All MRC members interested in submitting project proposals for the next 2 years of funding must submit them by the end of the month.

NWSC/SMP UPDATE: Ken Collins, Barbara Bennett

- Jill proposed to insert a statement about addressing the aggregate effect on marine ecological systems in the SMP rulemaking, consistent with the Environmental Policy Act. The group then voted on the amended SMP comment letter, which passed.
- The Northwest Straits Commission makes key decisions about aligning the foundation as an equal partner to the Marine Resources Committees. Emily Grayson is the new head of the Scientific Advisory Committee.
- The next in-person commission meeting will be hosted by the Island County MRC on January 31st at the Coupeville Library, and MRC members are invited to attend and potentially present.

Meeting Adjourned 6:00 pm