

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Elise Adams

June 2, 2026

HYBRID MEETING

PRESENT: Present: **Kelly Webb**, Chair, **Jill Lipoti**, **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: **Ken Collins** – notified, **Brad Thompson**.

VISITORS: **Emily Bishop**, Westward Ecology, **Ally Simpson**, NW Straits Commission staff, **Leah Skare**, NW Straits Commission staff, **Jessica Owens**, NW Straits Commission staff, **Maddie Buehrer**, Whidbey Island Conservation District staff, **Quinn Farr**, IC Lead Entity Coordinator & Conservations Futures Program Coordinator, **Renee Zavas Silva**, IC Surface Water Quality, **Josie Dodd**, IC Pollution Identification Coordinator, **Kate Olson**, WDFW, **Austin Greene**, WA DNR Aquatic Reserves Program, **Hiller West**, **Maureen**.

CALL TO ORDER: Kelly called the meeting to order at 4:00pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Agenda approval was made by Jill Lipoti, seconded by Greg Easton. **MINUTES:** A motion to approve the Minutes from May was made by Kirk Larsen, seconded by Marena Salerno Collins, 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 introduction of Washington's new Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP).

FORAGE FISH COMMUNITY WORKSHOP PRESENTATION – Emily Bishop

LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

- Chair leadership report – Kelly Webb:
 - o Board can expect to hear more from Kelly and Elise about terms and recruitment.
 - o July meeting will be entirely virtual.
 - o The Abandoned and Derelict Vessel workgroup reconvened on today.
 - We found out what the next two years of budget looks like for the program.
 - There was a lot of discussion about vessel turn in events, specifically Island County possibly hosting one.
 - There was a conversation about large marine debris.

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- County Lead leadership report – Elise Adams:
 - o Asked about any Outreach opportunities coming up to discuss if the MRC would like to participate.
 - o Andi Kopit reported about recent outreach opportunities with Whidbey Island students in partnership with Island County DNR.
 - o Coordinator and Andi will meet to discuss an Outreach Tracking Document.
- Island County Commissioner leadership report- Commissioner Janet St. Clair:
 - o Comprehensive Plan public hearing is on June 23rd at 10am.
 - o Commissioner St. Clair is interested in learning more about marine debris removal.
 - o How can Commissioner St. Clair help the MRC during these limited funding times to help propel projects further?
 - o Commissioner St. Clair mentioned the importance of crab outreach prior to the crab season.

NW STRAITS COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – Ken Collins:

- Ken reported out about the successes of the Island Forage Fish Workshop.
- There was an introduction of Mindy Roberts, new Puget Sound Partnership Executive Director.
- Continuation of the “what if we had more money” conversation and Island MRC brought up the importance of funding sustainability, need for admin support, and funding for bigger projects. It was noted that this type of thinking should be incorporated into Strategic Plan planning.
- NWSC is beginning the summer legislative visit planning process and is convening a workgroup to plan the talking points and details surrounding these visits.
 - o They are looking for 1-2 volunteers from each county to participate.
- There was a review of the ongoing NWSC communications work being done
- Green crab update: moving away from trapping in 2028 but there is early interest in engaging more with MRCs for molt searches.

SRTCC REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – Josh Berkowitz:

- SRTCC project ranking concludes June 16
- Final scoring and approval occur on June 18
- Final project status is known and approved on September 18

DERELICT CRAB OVERVIEW – Jeff Wheeler:

- Skagit County, Island County, the Northwest Straits Foundation, and the Swinomish Tribe are partnering to survey and remove derelict crab pots from Skagit Bay.
- The Survey process has begun with the goal of removing derelict pots via divers and ROVs by the second half of June.
- The project can’t be pulling pots while other people, including Tribes, are crabbing so timing is important!
- Josie asked about what the correct protocol for removing derelict crab pots if they aren’t yours.
 - o All pots should have the appropriate tagging and contact information to contact the owner.
 - o WDFW has a spot to report derelict gear online and the appropriate action.

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STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE – Kirk Larsen:

- Kirk reported out the progress of the Strategic Plan committee on the progress of the 2027-2030 Strategic Plan.
- The Strategic Plan committee has laid out a schedule for the completion of the plan throughout the rest of the year for the final plan to be approved in December.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN/POLICY UPDATE – Greg Easton:

- Planning sub-committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan Final Draft and Jill Lipoti attended the May 13 Planning Commission Public Meeting to thank the BOCC and Planning Department for their work and inclusion of the MRCs responses.
- Commissioner St. Clair thanked the MRC for the way we prepared and attended the Public Meeting.
- MRC Coordinator requested the policy sub-committee think about how their policy work is described – how do we label that work in terms of a project – to better highlight that work on the website and when communicating our work.

Public Comment:

Meeting adjourned at 5:50pm.