ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Elise Adams

October 6, 2026

HYBRID MEETING

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

ABSENT: Janet St. Clair – notified, **Andi Kopit** – notified, **Ken Collins** – notified, **Brad Thomspon –** did not notify**.**

VISITORS: Jen Schmitz, IC LIO and DNR Manager, **John Incardona**, Research Associate, **Maddie Buehrer**, Whidbey Conservation District, **Renee Zavas Silva**, IC Surface Water Quality Specialist, **Kelly Zupich**, IC Shore Friendly, **Heather Vitiaz,** WSU Island County Extension.

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 Greg Easton, the motion was seconded by Marena Salerno Collins and approved by all. **MINUTES:** A motion to approve the September Minutes was made by Greg Easton, 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 recent Island and Skagit MRC Legislative Visit with District 10 Representative Clyde Shavers.

CORRESPONDANCE: Tori Kauffman with the Be Whale Wise Program reached out to the MRC looking for boater ambassadors to educate on Be Whale Wise and safe boater practices while boating in the Salish Sea.

FORAGE FISH SPAWN AS SENTINELS FOR NEARSHORE POLLUTION IN THE SALISH SEA - John Incardona

LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

- Chair leadership report – Kelly Webb:
    - Kelly is exploring a partnership with Florian Graner/Sound Water Stewards to be a part of a larger coalition of groups exploring toxins/6ppd/pollutants.
    - This is very preliminary so stay tuned!
- County Lead leadership report – Jen Schmitz:

- Canadian West Coast Oil Pipeline Proposal – from San Juan County MRCs' Vessel Strike Target Action Plan work.
- Big thanks to Elise for pulling together the Legislative Visit details and the NWSC September meeting details.
  - Mindy Roberts (PSP) attended both the NWSC Meeting and the Salmon Recovery Council Meeting also on Island County the day before and there were many good conversations about shoreline armoring, stemming from Island MRCs shoreline armoring work, so a big thank you to the Committee for inspiring so much of this work.
- The Salmon Recovery Council Meeting took place on Island County on September 24 and had a great site visit to Hidden Beach, where the group saw orcas, which added to how great a site visit it was!
  - This restoration project, which is separate from the MRC/any County work, is moving forward and Jen will forward on any new information once she has it.
- The Shoreline sub-committee of the Ecosystem Recovery Board continues to discuss shoreline armoring and those issues. The sub-committee has their final meeting the following week and will be bringing the recommendations to the full Ecosystem Recovery Board in their November meeting.
- The (mentioned previously and above) Canadian West Coast Pipeline Proposal conversation came up on the LIO Coordinator meeting.
  - MRC should plan to attend the upcoming LIO Technical Meeting to discuss the ongoing Target Action Plans.
  - These conversations are an opportunity for specific County LIO's to determine what types of projects/work are important for them specifically instead of it being a top-down approach. So, if and when funding comes through, a project list is ready to go.
  - The first Target Action Plan was on-site septic and completed a shoreline risk assessment, the second was healthy shorelines and they are working with a consultant to update the septic code, and the third plan is "Floodplains and Estuaries."
    - San Juan County chose to go another direction and focus on Vessel Strike & Oil Spill. This could be an opportunity for the MRC to collaborate with SJC to get project ideas in their plan.
- Please come to the Technical Committee meeting on Oct 15 ready to discuss ideas to add to the LIO Floodplains and Estuaries list.
- Jill asked if there was a role that the MRC could play in the Hidden Beach restoration work. Jen will send any information she receives when she has it.

- Island County Commissioner leadership report- Commissioner Janet St. Clair:
  - No leadership report.
- MRC Coordinator report:
  - MRC Position Overview: the Chair, vice-Chair, SRCTC Rep, NWSC Rep, and LIO Rep positions are open for new committee members to step in! Reach out to Coordinator or current position holder for more information.
  - The November MRC Meeting will be entirely virtual as the NWSC MRC Conference is the same week.

- Reminder for everyone to register for the NWSC MRC Conference if they are interested in attending and to please book your lodging and keep your receipts for reimbursement!

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE – Kirk Larsen:

- Strategic Planning sub-committee sent out the most recent Strategic Planning draft prior to the meeting for MRC review.
- Sub-committee went over the Strategic Planning timeline, possible discussion questions/Pillar-specific prompts, and EOY goals.
  - October is a Committee Draft Review
  - November is a Workgroup Review
  - And December will be the Committee Adopting the new plan.
- Opened up the floor to committee discussion:
  - PaulBen discussed the use of the term "pillars" in the plan.
  - Elise suggested the use of "Best Available Science" instead of "Science-based" to align with County language.
  - Jill discussed the MRCs role in County committees, such as the Island LIO, and whether this should be stated within our Strategic Plan under the Advisory Pillar.
  - How do we take our monitoring work and better connect it with our partnerships, scientific needs, etc.?
  - Is there a place to see the overview of all of the impact of Island County groups, partners, work – is this something that the MRC could consider developing?
- For those who haven't had a chance to take a look at the most recent draft, please look through it and have any thoughts, edits, etc. to send to Kirk and the Strategic Planning sub-committee.

POLICY UPDATE – Greg Easton:

- Island MRC participated along with other public commenters on the Shoreline Master Program at the Sept 15 BOCC regular session meeting.

Public Comment:

- Comment from Maddie Buehrer, Whidbey Conservation District: The Whidbey Island Conservation District will be holding a series of community meetings to help shape their long-range plan. This plan outlines and drives the work they will do for the next 5 years on Whidbey. The dates are October 28th in Oak Harbor, October 29th in Coupeville, and October 30th in Langley at the respective libraries. More information can be found on the Whidbey Island Conservation District's website at whidbeycd.org.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00pm.