

Snohomish County Marine Resources Advisory Committee Meeting

DRAFT Meeting Summary

March 16, 2022 6:30-8:30PM

Meeting conducted via conference call/video

MRC Members Present Mike Ehlebracht, Chair Natasha Coumou, Co-Vice Chair Tom Doerge, Co-Vice Chair Tim Ellis, NWSC and LIO Rep. Julie Schlenger Andrew Gobin Laura Gurley Brie Townsend Michael Kundu Absent Sara Maxwell (excused) MRC Members Recommended for Appointment Franchesca Perez Allan Hicks Bob Margulis	Staff Elisa Dawson, SWM Senior Planner and MRC Staff Alex Pittman, SWM Planner and MRC Staff MRC Ex-Officio Members David Bain, Citizen Susan Tarpley, Citizen Others Tom Teigen, Snohomish County Conservation & Natural Resources Phil Salditt, Northwest Straits Foundation Traci Sanderson, Citizen Richard Strickland, Citizen Lincoln Loehr, Citizen Mary Brueggeman, Citizen
Summary of Decisions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The MRC approved the February meeting minutes.• The MRC approved a motion to adopt the Snohomish County Tribal Acknowledgement, with an agreement to continue the discussion on revising this language in the future to include more actionable language specific to the MRC.	
Upcoming Events	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forage Fish Monitoring: March 22 and 23, April 19 and 20• NW Straits Initiative 101: March 17• Kelp Monitoring 2022 Kickoff: April 14• Next MRC Meeting: April 20• Earth Day Beach Cleanup with WSU Beach Watchers: April 23 at Picnic Point	

Welcome and Introductions

MRC Co-Vice Chair Tom Doerge opened the Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting at 6:30PM. Due to COVID-19 related stay-at-home orders, the meeting was held via conference call/video.

Tom introduced himself and asked for self-introductions of the meeting participants.

Approval of MRC Meeting Summary

Tim Ellis made a motion to approve the February 16, 2022 Meeting Summary. Natasha Coumou seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Draft MRC Annual Report Review & Discussion

Alex Pittman facilitated a discussion to review the draft MRC 2021 Annual Report and solicit MRC input. The draft report was sent out for MRC review a week prior to the meeting, and some

members submitted written comments ahead of time. Alex worked through the entire report to solicit MRC input on each page, with highlights of key discussion points included below:

- **MRC Members Page:** Alex requested that members please send in a different photo of themselves if they would like to change theirs.
- **Finance Page:** Alex made note of the fact that volunteer hours are down from 2020, which is a continuation of a longer-term trend (1,400 hours in 2020; 1,016 hours in 2021). Alex to note that this is part of the conversation we've been having through the 2022 Work Plan process, about empowering MRC members to take ownership of projects and get more involved. Also emphasize the importance of documenting time spent on MRC projects and general admin. There was great discussion around this point, with some members noting that the pandemic and shifts in project types are likely largely responsible for this decline, MRC Chair Mike Ehlebracht encouraged MRC members to make sure they are properly documenting all the time they spend on MRC projects when they are reporting volunteer hours.
- **Derelict Vessel Page:** Alex noted that we had a new graphic created this year to highlight impacts of derelict vessels.
- **Marine Vegetation Monitoring Section:** Alex noted that this is a newly added project section to highlight monitoring efforts with DNR. He asked for MRC member input on whether the photo in the draft is useful, and members noted that a photo of the underwater marine vegetation would be preferred.
- **Beach Cleanups Page:** Alex made note of this is a new project section.

Alex took notes on the report throughout the discussion and will coordinate final revisions to the report following the meeting. The plan is to have a final report completed by April 1, so that it is ready to be distributed and submitted as an MRC grant deliverable in early April.

MRC Tribal Acknowledgment Discussion

Elisa Dawson opened a discussion about Tribal Land Acknowledgement statement language which the MRC is considering adopting and adding to their meeting agendas and using in their documents, such as their Annual Report. The MRC has been discussing potential language over the past few months, and is currently considering three language options:

- **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Language:** The NWSC, the State coordinating body of the MRCs, was approached by Tribes within the NWSC area to develop a regional tribal lands acknowledgement statement that would be included in their documents. A document outlining this process has been provided to MRC members. After working together with these tribes, the NWSC adopted the language below as their formal statement. This adopted statement was provided to local MRCs to consider for their use, which could be adapted appropriately for their geographic area and used in their local meetings and reports.

NWSC Tribal Acknowledgement: *We acknowledge the land we're on today is the ancestral homeland of Coast Salish and Makah people and has been since time immemorial. We respect their sovereignty, support their Treaty rights and access to resources, their right to self-determination, and we honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. These nations include the Lummi, Nooksack, Samish, Swinomish, Tulalip, Stillaguamish, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Jamestown S'Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, and Makah Nations.*

- **Snohomish MRC Drafted Language:** Using the NWSC statement as guidance, the MRC worked with Tulalip and Stillaguamish Tribal staff to create a statement that the Snohomish MRC is now considering, as provided below. This language has not yet gone through any

vetting process with local tribes. The MRC is also trying to determine whether the Suquamish Tribe should be added to the list of tribes named in the Snohomish MRC statement. We are seeking county feedback on this and would also seek tribal feedback if we move forward with this language.

Draft Tribal Acknowledgement developed by the Snohomish MRC: *We, the Snohomish County MRC, acknowledge the lands and waters where we operate today constitute the ancestral homelands of the Tulalip Tribes and the Stillaguamish Tribe. We are committed to working with these sovereign tribal governments to promote effective stewardship of Snohomish County's marine waters, habitats, species, and shorelines in order to support their Treaty rights and access to resources, and to honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water.*

- **Snohomish County Tribal Acknowledgement Language:** We have also learned that there is language being adopted by Snohomish County Council below, as shown below. Snohomish County's recommendation would be that the MRC adopt the same as the county statement. If they would like to use a different statement than we need to schedule a meeting to discuss. Snohomish County reply from Lacey Harper on how the language was vetted for the Snohomish County Lands Acknowledgement statement: *For the Tulalip Tribes we consulted with Ryan Miller, the Director of Treaty Rights and Government Affairs, and for the Stillaguamish Tribe we consulted with Sam Barr, Cultural Resources/THPO Supervisor. The language was recommended, reviewed and agreed upon through our Government-to-Government consultation. Please let me know if you have any other questions.*

Snohomish County Council Tribal Acknowledgement: *"We acknowledge the original inhabitants of this place, the Sah ku mehu (Sauk-Suiattle Tribe), the stulag^wábš (Stillaguamish Tribe), and the sduhubš (Snohomish) Skykomish, Snoqualmie and their successors the Tulalip Tribes. Since time immemorial, they have hunted, fished, gathered on, and taken care of these lands and waters. We respect their sovereignty, their right to self-determination and honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. We will strive to be honest about our past mistakes and bring about a future that includes their people, stories, and voices to form a more just and equitable society.*

With this tribal acknowledgement, we open our time together by honoring the ancestors whose feet first knew these lands, and whose paddles still know the waters of what we now call Snohomish County."

The MRC continued discussing these options, as they have all now had a chance to review and consider the options over the previous weeks and months.

Michael Kundu made a motion to adopt the Snohomish County Tribal Land Acknowledgement language. Tim Ellis seconded the motion. The MRC discussed the motion, and Laura Gurley requested to amend the motion to adopt the Snohomish County language with a commitment to ongoing discussion about developing MRC-specific language which includes more actionable language. All MRC Members voted to approve the language and the motion passed by consensus.

Project Updates and Announcements

- **LIO:** No updates.
- **Northwest Straits Commission:** Tim Ellis reported the Key Highlights from February 25 NWSC Meeting:

- A reminder for the tentative in-person Northwest Straits conference November 18-19, 2022 at Maple Hall in La Conner. The Northwest Straits Commission plans to announce whether a conference will be held within the next month. A decision is pending public health recommendations.
- The REEF Volunteer Fish Survey Project is a citizen science opportunity for those who dive or snorkel. Learn more about how to get involved here: <https://www.reef.org/what-reef>.
- For invasive European green crab early detection and monitoring information, follow along with the work of Washington Sea Grant's Crab Team: [Get Involved With Crab Team – Washington Sea Grant](#).
- In Whatcom and Skagit Counties, NWSC staff will be leading intensive green crab removal efforts. Contact Leah Robison (robison@nwstraits.org) for more information about MRC volunteer opportunities in these counties.
- Maritime WA National Heritage Area recognizes our state's unique and diverse maritime culture. This new designation supports our coastal communities in celebrating, maintaining, and sharing their water-based stories. A draft management plan for this area has been released. Comments can be provided in several ways, including through a survey that focuses on the key components of the plan. <https://preservewa.org/programs/maritime-national-heritage-area/mw-nha-get-involved/>
- NW Straits 101 scheduled for March 17 at 3:30PM.
- The next NWSC meeting is March 25.
- **Port Susan:** Alex Pittman reported that the Port Susan Stakeholder Survey closed on March 2. We had 25 responses to the survey. We will continue to hold follow up interviews with stakeholders in the coming weeks, and will begin to turn our attention to a series of stakeholder meetings to be held through the spring and summer. The Joint Island-Snohomish Port Susan Team met on March 3 to debrief from the survey and discuss next steps. The team decided that interviews would be held over coming weeks, and ESA will have analysis from interviews and survey responses by 4/1. The team is also currently reviewing draft documents from the Evans School Student Consulting Lab team.
- **Forage Fish Monitoring:** Alex Pittman reported that February Forage Fish Monitoring was completed on February 16 (Picnic Point & Meadowdale) and February 17 (Howarth Park). March Forage Fish Monitoring is scheduled for March 22 (Picnic Point & Meadowdale) and March 23 (Howarth Park).
- **Nearshore Restoration:** Laura Gurley reported that the Nearshore Restoration subcommittee is continuing the effort to re-work a draft one-pager on the beneficial re-use of dredged material from the Snohomish River to help facilitate discussions about this prospective opportunity for nearshore projects. The team submitted comments via email and will meet again in April discuss the next iteration of the draft one-pager.
- **Derelict Vessels:** Elisa Dawson reported that Snohomish County staff convened a stakeholder meeting on March 2 to discuss 2021 accomplishments, the current status of all derelict vessels in the Snohomish Estuary, Snohomish County's 2022 vessel removal plan, and DNR Derelict Vessel Program updates. The goal is to post 5 vessels for removal in March.
- **Oil Spills:** Julie Schlenger reported that the Oil Spills Subcommittee met March 14 to discuss local Geographic Response Plans (GRPs) and other plans for the group. The group

plans to meet in person soon to review documents and identify areas of focus for moving forward.

- **Marine Vegetation:** Tom Doerge provided an update on the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) designation of an eelgrass and kelp protection area for the Snohomish Estuary. Washington State Department of Natural Resources has withdrawn approximately 2,298.01 acres of aquatic lands from leasing as authorized under RCW 79.10.210 effective February 28, 2022. These state-owned aquatic lands have kelp forests and eelgrass meadows that require additional protection and restoration activities. Such habitats provide critical habitat for threatened and endangered species such as salmon, rockfish, and Pinto abalone. These marine forests and meadows also play an important role in climate mitigation and adaptation by sequestering carbon and relieving ocean acidification. In addition to these ecological benefits, kelp and eelgrass have important cultural value to Northwest Tribal Nations, playing a prominent role in traditional fishing, hunting, and food preparation and storage.
- **MRC Volunteer Hours:** Alex Pittman provided a quick update that volunteer hours tracking sheets for the first quarter of 2021 are due by April 1.
- **Beach Cleanup Review:** WSU Beach Watchers hosted a beach cleanup on March 3 at Howarth Park, and several MRC members and staff attended.
- **Earth Day 2022:** WSU Beach Watchers is hosting a beach cleanup for Earth Day at 10AM on Saturday, April 23 at Picnic Point. The MRC will be providing coffee and snacks.
- **Native Tree Seedlings:** Michael Kundu reported that he has approximately 100 native tree seedlings available to be donated to restoration projects.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30.