



April 2026 Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, April 20, 2026

Time: 5:31-7:09pm

Location: Hybrid meeting, Zoom and Clallam County Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room

Minutes: prepared by Chase O'Neil

Member Roll

	Member	Present?	Alternate	Present?
Academic Community	Ed Bowlby	X	Ioana Bociu	
At Large	Alan Clark (<i>NWSC Rep, Vice Chair</i>)	X	Mary Sue Brancato	
At Large	Tim Cochnauer	excused	Bev Burton	X
Conservation & Environmental Interests	Nancy Stephanz	X	<i>[vacant seat]</i>	---
Development Community	Brian Hilderman	X	<i>[vacant seat]</i>	---
District I	Jeff Ward	excused	<i>[vacant seat]</i>	---
District II	Ann Soule	X	Lyn Muench	X
District III	<i>[vacant seat]</i>	---	Dann May	X
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe	Christopher Burns	X	Robert Knapp	
Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe	Allyce Miller	X	Chelsea Korbolic	X
Makah Tribe	<i>[vacant seat]</i>	---	<i>[vacant seat]</i>	---
Marine Related Recreation & Tourism	Rob Casey		<i>[vacant seat]</i>	---
Port Angeles City Council	LaTrisha Suggs (<i>Chair</i>)	X	Jon Hamilton	X
Port of Port Angeles Commission	Jesse Waknitz		Katharine Frazier	X
Sequim City Council	Meggan Uecker		Kelly Burger	

Staff and Others Present

Chase O'Neil (CC Habitat Biologist, CCMRC Project Coordinator), Rebecca Mahan (CC Habitat Biologist Manager; CCMRC Coordinator), Amelia Kalagher (CCMRC Administrative Support).

Welcome / Call to Order / Roll Call

Chair LaTrisha Suggs called the meeting to order at 5:31pm. Roll was called. A quorum was present at the beginning of the meeting.

Public Comment

- None at this time.

Approval of Minutes

- ***Nancy Stephanz moved to approve the March 2026 minutes, Dann May seconded. The motion passed unanimously and minutes were approved.***

Presentations

- Dr. Julia Parrish (Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team, COASST) presented on her citizen science program COASST. Her program trains participants to collect data on beach cast carcasses of marine birds using a standardized protocol. Scientists verify the information, analyze the data, and communicate the results. She explained why tracking dead birds can be very valuable for observing spatial and temporal trends. She showed several large die-off events (such as the 2016 Rhinoceros Auklet die-off from a bacterial infection outbreak) that were observed and documented by this program and team. Dr. Parrish also suggested some ideas for collaboration with the MRC and answered questions from members.

New or Special Business

- ***Skip an MRC meeting discussion:*** Last meeting members discussed skipping a meeting in July or December to give MRC staff and members more time for fieldwork and family or vacation time. Members discussed this idea more, in relation to what month would be best to cancel considering holidays, the Northwest Straits Clallam-hosted meeting in July this year, and fieldwork logistics. Ultimately, Ann Soule made a motion to cancel July meetings moving forward and make the December meeting tentative or “to be determined” based on workload. Alan Clark seconded this motion. Ed Bowlby asked if this was all Julys moving forward, and the group confirmed this. The motion passed with unanimous consent.

Announcements

- ***Welcome new member:*** new member Bev Burton (representing Community-At-Large alternate) introduced herself.

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- *Congratulations, Nancy Stephanz, Live United Community Champion of the Year Award:* Nancy explained her community work trying to start a home sharing program to create affordable housing in the area.
- *Congratulations, forage fish volunteer Stephen Craton-Tempel beginning PhD program:* Chelsea Korbolic shared Stephen's future plans and thanked him for his wonderful service helping out the MRC forage fish program.
- *Farwell, Amelia departing the MRC:* Members thanked Amelia for all her hard work and wished her well in her next adventure!
- *Northwest Straits Commission update:* Alan Clark gave an update on the Northwest Straits Commission activities. April 2nd and 3rd Northwest Straits hosted a two-day retreat for officers, employees, and appointees. They discussed the baseline awareness survey. They found survey participants wanted clarification on what the Northwest Straits is, a quick digestible history, more communication between MRCs and Northwest Straits, and to improve onboarding/transitions with officers. Nancy Stephanz mentioned the Northwest Straits 101 course which was helpful for some of this basic information. Pinto abalone funding was also approved at the retreat.
- *MRC officer elections coming in May:* This was a reminder that officer positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Northwest Straits Commission representative will be up for election or re-election in May.
- *Olympia oyster monitoring:* This is a reminder to sign up for Olympia Oyster monitoring surveys for our partner project with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. These will be June 1st-3rd. Contact Shellfish Biologist Annie Raymond, if interested.

Committee and Project Reports

- *Project updates:*
 - Ed Bowlby gave an update on the pigeon guillemot project. He mentioned the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society's Bird Fest and the keynote speaker who wrote a book on pigeon guillemots and gave a shout out to the Clallam monitoring team. Lyn Muench mentioned the author also gave a shout-out to Ed Bowlby. Ed was able to recruit new volunteers for the pigeon guillemot project from this event.
 - LaTrisha Suggs mentioned the Lights Out proclamation reminding people to turn off/down outdoor lights for migrating birds. Jon Hamilton said this was a proclamation at the Sequim City Council meeting.
 - Alan Clark gave a pinto abalone project update. Jeff Ward and Alan went out last week on the monitoring boat with Puget Sound Restoration Fund and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife towards the "west". They found 6 large abalones, one of which was previously tagged. They didn't find any ideal habitat sites.

- Christopher Burns gave an update on Olympia oysters. He said Annie Raymond gave a great presentation at the National Shellfish Association conference. She got great feedback and had good discussions with other professionals there.
- Nancy Stephanz gave an update on Sound Toxins. They only saw one of the three major poison producers, which was a relief but a surprise.
- *Advisory subcommittee:* LaTrisha Suggs gave an announcement that there is an open spot on the Advisory subcommittee now that Mike Doherty has retired from the MRC and anyone from the MRC is welcome to join.
- *Education and outreach subcommittee:* Ann Soule shared her experience at the Feiro Marine Life groundbreaking ceremony. She mentioned one of the staff members at the outreach table did not know what/who the Clallam MRC was. She suggested that we could do a presentation for the Feiro staff/board at some point. Amelia Kalagher clarified that it was a National Marine Sanctuary staff running the outreach table who may not be as aware of the MRC. But Amelia also felt that it would still be valuable to connect with these folks as they are major partners with Feiro. Lynn Muench gave an update that there have been some scheduling conflicts for the education and outreach subcommittee but they plan to meet again before the next monthly MRC meeting.

Discussion of next meeting date and agenda

- *Next meeting:* The next meeting will take place on Monday, May 18th and will include an update/presentation from the forage fish team.
- *Call for new agenda items:* none at this time.

Good of the Order

- Lyn Muench mentioned an article in Friday's Peninsula Daily News (PDN) about the Port Angeles Waterfront District. She was curious if any members had a connection to this group and whether they are aware of water quality issues, oil spills and such. Jon Hamilton and LaTrisha Suggs are aware of this district and provided more insight.
- Allyce Miller gave an announcement about an eelgrass planting with Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) on Ediz Hook May 6th – 8th. Volunteers are welcome and should reach out to her for more information.

Public Comment

- None at this time.

Adjourn

Chair LaTrisha Suggs adjourned the meeting at 7:09pm.