

**Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee Meeting  
5:30 – 7:30 PM on April 7, 2026  
Hybrid Meeting  
Pavilion Bldg, Point Hudson (355 Hudson St.)  
Meeting Minutes**

**Present:**

Emily Buckner, Marine Science, Chair  
Neil Harrington, Tribal, Vice-Chair  
Heidi Eisenhour, ex officio, BoCC  
Gordon King, Commercial  
Troy McKelvey, Recreation  
Timothy Behrenfeld, District 1  
Brenda Johnson, District 2, NWSC Rep  
Jeff Taylor, District 2  
Frank Handler, District 2 Alt  
Jon Waggoner, Marine Science Alt  
Sarah Fisker, District 3, NWSC Alt  
Tim Cross, District 3 Alt  
Steve King, City of PT  
Bryan DeCaterina, Env/Conserv Alt  
Odhran Waggoner, Local Youth  
Bella Ferland, Local Youth Alt  
Tonya Cole, Meeting Recorder

**Absent:**

Roy Clark, Recreation Alt

**Public**

3

**Staff**

Katie Kowal – Water Resources Program Coordinator  
Jefferson County MRC/WSU Extension

**Via Zoom**

Sasha Horst, NWSC  
Betsy Carlson, Envir/Conserv  
Carol Hasse, ex officio, Port of Port Townsend  
Birdie Davenport, Friends of the Salish Sea

**Guest speaker**

Dave Nakagawara, P.E. Capital Projects Engineer,  
Port of Port Townsend

Topic	Update or Issue	Decisions/Follow-Up	Responsibility
CALL TO ORDER, MISSION & INTERDUCTIONS	Chair Emily Buckner called the meeting to order at 5:30PM  Katie announced there would be a group photo on the beach after Dave’s presentation.	A quorum was present.	All members – please send volunteer hours to Katie.
AMENDMENTS TO/APPROVAL OF AGENDA  APPROVAL OF MINUTES	<b>Amendments to / Approval of Agenda</b> Jeff Taylor notified the MRC he is resigning.  <b>Amendments to / Approval of Minutes</b> No amendments	Neil moved to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Jon. Motion passed.  Emily moved to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Sarah. Motion passed.	
PUBLIC COMMENT	<b>Public Comments</b> No comments.		
GUEST SPEAKER: DAVE NAKAGAWARA, P.E. Capital Projects Engineer, Port of Port Townsend	<b>opPORTunities – 2026 and Beyond</b> Dave Nakagawara, P.E., Capital Projects Engineer, Port of Port Townsend  Dave opened by noting that things are highly dynamic — his staff meeting that morning had already brought new developments. He gave an overview of Port properties and projects across Jefferson County: Port Townsend Bay, Quilcene, Point Hudson, and farmland in Chimacum — emphasizing how interconnected the upland properties and marine environments are, and how what happens on land affects the nearshore.  <b>Gardiner Boat Ramp</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ramp had deteriorated to the point of needing full replacement, with estimates coming in at \$600,000–\$800,000. The Port secured a state grant, but the project had to meet ADA accessibility and involved substantial in-water work (including an overwater structure). The Port needed to lessen the impact of that. They used the <a href="#">Puget Sound Nearshore Conservation Calculator</a> to determine the impact of that structure and amount of mitigation credits. 105 credits valued at approximately \$162,000.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Port was able to offset the cost by using the removal of creosote timbers from wetlands areas in west end of Boat Haven -- it equated to the same number of credits.</li> <li>• Dave noted that while permitting and the SEPA process can be lengthy, he sees them as valuable — agencies and the public provide checks and often propose solutions.</li> <li>• It was a successful project and they are ready to deploy the floats in the upcoming weeks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Jefferson Co. Int'l Airport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The airport drains into Chimacum Creek, connecting it to marine environments. A 12,000-gallon underground fuel tank was recently removed, they received funding through a liability agency (PLIA). A new above-ground tank with all the "bells and whistles" is scheduled for installation beginning in April.</li> </ul> <p><b>Boat Haven Stormwater Improvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seton Construction is building a new stormwater system that should be up and running by early summer—it will be four tanks successively treating the boatyard stormwater. Current system was built in the 1990s above ground.</li> <li>• This new system is designed to handle the specific pollutants found in boat yards — lead, zinc, and others — and will bring the Port into compliance with current and future DOE standards. This should be up and running by early summer.</li> <li>• A tribal midden turned up during construction, which required a cultural resource plan. The general approach in situations like that is to build up rather than dig down whenever possible.</li> </ul> <p><b>2026 &amp; Beyond: Boat Haven</b></p> <p><b>Stormwater Improvement Project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sims Gateway</li> <li>• West Boatyard Expansion</li> <li>• LST Spur Trail + Stormwater Project</li> </ul> <p><b>Port Townsend Bay Estuary Restoration</b> Respect natural and other resources reside on this property. What are other potential solutions that can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Help further the Port's goals</li> <li>B. Be respectful of our actual environments</li> <li>C. Service as future mitigation for future maintenance needs.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dave showed a map of a 3.5-acre area behind the Larry Scott Trail (LST) where the Port is looking to do estuary restoration. The idea is to breach the raised railroad grade to open up fish passage, create a natural estuary, and add new shoreline. They're also exploring whether city stormwater could be diverted into the restored estuary to meet Western Washington stormwater requirements. This ties into the Port's goal of gaining approx. 20 feet of additional boat yard space toward the highway, and rerouting the LST away from the industrial yard for safety. Design stages happen this year, they're looking for construction to happen next year.</li> </ul> <p><b>Boat Haven Breakwater</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Port-owned side of the breakwater is in rough shape. Bids just opened Friday. High diesel prices are making this one tricky to bid. The work involves pulling out existing rock and putting in multiple layers of various types of stones and rocks. Lots of permitting involved. Mitigation credits for the project are connected to habitat restoration work already done at Point Hudson.</li> </ul> <p><b>Shorts Family Farm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Port manages a 250-acre farm with a culvert on Naylor Creek. Surveys turned up 4-5 steelhead, which signals a fish passage problem. There's a potential project in the works to remove the culvert and restore passage. Federal partners are on board and the Port is negotiating the number of credits from this project that could be applied to the Quilcene boat ramp project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Herb Beck Marina – Quilcene Boat Ramp</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar scope to Gardiner — pilings, handling floats, nearshore mitigation credits required. The big question right now is whether Naylor Creek credits can be applied here.</li> </ul> <p><b>Regulatory Environment</b></p>		
--	--	--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dave was candid that things are moving fast. A lawsuit filed just last week (Center for Biological Diversity vs. US EPA) could affect how biological opinions are used and may require mitigation credits to be tied to specific projects rather than shared across them. The Port is keeping a close eye on how that develops.</li> </ul> <p><b>Quilcene Beach Study</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Port is looking at a roughly 700-acre stretch of beach north of the marina and brainstorming ways to restore beach function in that area, including near the Quilcene Yacht Club.</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A / DISCUSSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gordon: Q</b> re: the wetlands in Boat Haven.</li> <li>• <b>Dave:</b> the idea is that the opening is just big enough for a bi-directional flow. They've had preliminary sessions with DOE and other agencies and we have to show our work. So far, preliminary sessions have been receptive, with some caution, both from a fish perspective, from a waterflow hydrodynamics and from a protection standpoint.</li> <li>• <b>Katie:</b> Can mitigation credits be written into a grant?</li> <li>• <b>Dave:</b> We usually come up with it ourselves. We try to show the Port Commissioners and the public that it's a real cost of the project; and regardless of how you find the money or the credit, you have to add them to our cost estimates. They often come out during the permitting process.</li> <li>• <b>Carol</b> thanked Dave for represented the Port so competently. She also brought up the Sea Level Rise project--has been "cut off at the knees" by the current administration.</li> </ul> <p>Dave gave a short presentation on :</p> <p><b>Sea Level Rise Project FEMA BRIC Grant</b> Bluff to Ferry Terminal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Port had applied for a FEMA BRIC (Building Resilience in Communities) Grant in 2023 (75%/25% match, up to \$50M) at the state's suggestion, with the Seattle based firm, KPFF, who designed a 50-year time horizon using natural factors. They were 10%–30% through the process in 2023 and reapplied in 2024 at an estimated \$55M, with the state and Port splitting the 25% match.</li> <li>• The grant was cancelled under the Trump administration. Legal challenges from courts and state governments followed, but the program has been reduced to "funds available" status. The split is no longer available and they are seeing if they can resize the project. The science and design work is being carried forward and they want to apply to other projects.</li> </ul>		
<p>DISCUSSION ITEM: LETTER OF SUPPORT</p>	<p><b>Letter of Support – Protection Island Marine Sanctuary Expansion</b></p> <p>The committee discussed a proposed Letter of Support for expanding the Protection Island Marine Sanctuary to include North Beach kelp forest habitat. A draft would need to be ready for Heidi to present to the BoCC before April 15<sup>th</sup>, which is a tight deadline.</p> <p>Birdie Davenport explained that nearly all of the Protection Island Aquatic Reserve floating bull kelp is gone and the expansion would help protect remaining beds within the reserve. It's more of an opportunity than a problem—including an important area within the reserve. DNR is the lead but capacity-constrained; a local firm would provide planning support, environmental research, biodiversity data. The management plan is about 15 years old, this would be a plan update. The designation would withdraw lands from leasing and support monitoring and community science, though the exact cause of kelp loss remains unclear.</p> <p>DISCUSSION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Carol</b> was curious to hear Neil's input and noted that she can also write a letter on Port letterhead expressing her individual support (not the entire Port).</li> <li>• <b>Neil</b> noted the JST has co-managed Dungeness Spit &amp; Protection Island wildlife refuges with WDFW. There is currently a proposal before Congress to give those properties to the Tribe, which would simplify management. However, he was not yet able to speak for the Tribal Council on the expansion, even though he knows they</li> </ul>		

<p>DISCUSSION ITEM: LETTER OF SUPPORT</p>	<p>are in support of habitat preservation. He asked about DNR leading the project. (Answer summarized above).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Neil</b> felt the MRC would likely support the process and suggested a letter to explore, but raised the question of how an MRC recommendation interacts with Heidi's role as an individual commissioner writing a letter of support.</li> <li>• <b>Emily</b> wondered if the letter is in support of the expansion OR in support of evaluating a potential expansion. Birdie said it could go either way.</li> <li>• <b>Heidi</b> raised questions about county ownership of North Beach and potential overlap with the sewer outfall project. She also felt the timing was off in response to Neil's question.</li> <li>• <b>Birdie</b> said that Aquatic reserves are only created from state owned aquatic lands. May or may not include tidelands.</li> <li>• <b>Troy</b> asked whether the reserve would affect recreational fishing;</li> <li>• <b>Birdie</b> confirmed it would not, DNR doesn't regulate fishing or restrict it.</li> <li>• <b>Gordon</b> acknowledged the kelp loss is a real problem but questioned whether a reserve designation would actually address it, and asked for more information on costs and implication.</li> <li>• <b>Birdie</b> replied that protecting this one kelp bed will not solve the problem of disappearing kelp, but will provide an opportunity to direct more resources to research and support community science happening at this site. It is an additional layer of protection for development, which isn't likely in this case, but it's helpful.</li> <li>• <b>Betsy</b> supported expanding marine habitat protection, noting the designation would also prevent infrastructure such as pipelines and cable arrays from being built in the area.</li> <li>• <b>Jon W.</b> supported the process of exploration but emphasized the letter should support the <i>process</i>, not the expansion itself.</li> <li>• <b>Brenda</b> suggested Birdie or others give a formal presentation to the committee; it was noted that Selene and Birdie had presented to the group the previous year.</li> <li>• <b>Emily</b> raised the question of whether the letter was intended for this grant cycle or the next, given timeline constraints. She agreed the letter should reflect this conversation, and noted the committee couldn't vote on an unrevised draft. Revisit next month.</li> <li>• <b>Heidi</b> noted that other organizations at the table could write their own letters of support.</li> <li>• <b>Katie</b> stressed the need for significant lead time for the MRC to be able to provide letters of support. Suggested discussing the revised letter in May, and then send it to the BoCC.</li> </ul> <p>Without consensus and with the draft still needing revision, the committee agreed to bring a revised letter and draft scope of work to the May meeting.</p>	<p>Motion: Review a revised Letter of support for the May meeting, with draft scope of work and proposal included. Moved by: Gordon Seconded by: Neil Motion passed.</p> <p>Vote taken re: reviewing the revised letter at May's meeting. Passed.</p> <p>Action item: Bryan to review Lummi Island Aquatic Preserve as a comparable example.</p>	
<p>DISCUSSION ITEM: RAIN GARDENS</p>	<p><b>Rain Gardens</b></p> <p>With no volunteer to lead the project, the committee discussed the current state of the 13 rain gardens, all of which require regular maintenance, have signage, and are well known in the community. Ownership and long-term care contracts remain unresolved — the MRC is ethically but not legally obligated to maintain them.</p> <p>DISCUSSION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Katie</b> reviewed the task list and suggested using the hired contractor. Surveys need to be completed by June, with 10 gardens still to be assessed. She noted a drainage issue at Chetzemoka Park requiring excavation and remulching, possibly with equipment.</li> <li>• <b>Steve King</b> suggested a tour with City staff, noting the City's goal is to encourage neighboring residents to adopt the gardens.</li> <li>• <b>Frank</b> noted maintenance is substantial and strongly recommended simplifying planting schemes across all gardens, using the City's low-maintenance design as a guide.</li> <li>• <b>Carol</b> asked whether Students for Sustainability could be engaged, mentioning Matt Klontz as a possible contact.</li> <li>• <b>Tim B.</b> had recently spoken with SFS advisors and said the rain gardens came up as a potential project — the group could potentially take on some of them.</li> <li>• <b>Steve King</b> suggested a learning-mode partnership approach, noting that MPS Phase 2, which will have a stormwater and wetlands manager, is a natural candidate to</li> </ul>		
<p>DISCUSSION ITEM: RAIN GARDENS</p>			

	<p>take over the program around 2029 and could provide equipment such as a backhoe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Neil</b> raised the question of how the MRC can meet current deliverables with NWSC while staying involved enough to provide maintenance funding.</li> <li>• <b>Carol</b> noted the Port's work amounts to large-scale rain gardens and saw integrated opportunities for students.</li> <li>• <b>Jon W.</b> proposed forming a subcommittee to explore transitioning the program to another organization.</li> <li>• <b>Neil</b> reframed this as forging a path forward, not necessarily sunsetting the program.</li> </ul> <p>The committee agreed to form a subcommittee. Neil will chair the first meeting. Sasha and Dana will be invited to participate.</p> <p><i>Note: Brenda's update was tabled to the next meeting with a double time allotment.</i></p>		
ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES	<p><b>Administrative Updates</b> (Katie) Moved to next month due to time constraints</p>		
GRANT PROJECT UPDATES	<p><b>Grant Project Updates</b> Moved to next month due to time constraints</p>		
PORT of PT UPDATES	<p><b>Port of PT Updates</b> (Carol Hasse) Moved to next month due to time constraints</p>		
BoCC UPDATE	<p><b>BoCC Updates</b> (Heidi) Moved to next month due to time constraints</p>		
NWSC HIGHLIGHT NOTES	<p><b>NWSC Highlight Notes</b> Update not given</p>		
PUBLIC COMMENT	<p><b>Public Comments</b> None</p>		
EDUCATION/OUTREACH EVENTS	<p><b>Searching for Seaweed</b> April 21<sup>st</sup> 12:45 pm Point Hudson 15 out of 25 people signed up</p> <p><b>Blessing of the Fleet</b> April 25<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am -2:00pm Quilcene</p> <p><b>Crabs</b> June 24<sup>th</sup> 6pm-8pm Tri-Area Community Center</p> <p><b>Kayak Kelp Kickoff Meeting</b> Jon W. &amp; Jeff Whitty "How to use GPS, etc..." May 8<sup>th</sup> 1:00 pm -4:00 pm Red Cedar Hall at Jamestown</p> <p><b>Website</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betsy noted that she needs the web feedback sheet returned.</li> </ul> <p><b>NEXT MONTH MEETING IS AT QUILCENE COMMUNITY CENTER</b></p>		
ANNOUNCEMENTS	<p><b>Announcements</b> None.</p>		
ADJOURNMENT	<p>Meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm</p>	<p>Emily adjourned the meeting.</p>	