

SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL



Lee Whitford, Chair
Casey Dennehy, Vice-Chair
Steve Shively, Secretary

July 23, 2021

Dear Superintendent Bernthal:

Representation

- Citizen-At-Large
- Commercial Fishing
- Conservation Education
- Marine Business
- Marine Resource Committees
- Research
- Tourism/Economic Development
- Hoh Tribe
- Makah Tribe
- Quileute Tribe
- Quinault Indian Nation
- Local Government:
 - Clallam County
 - Jefferson County
 - Grays Harbor County
- Washington State:
 - Dept. of Ecology
 - Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
 - Dept. of Natural Resources
- NOAA Fisheries
- Olympic National Park
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Navy

The Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) Advisory Council (AC) reconvened the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) following a presentation on Executive Order 14008 at the March 2021 meeting. The CCWG was invited to identify recommendations on Executive Order 14008 as it pertains to climate resilience and protecting 30 percent of our Nation's lands and waters by 2030.

The CCWG identified 22 priority recommendations that OCNMS and NOAA should consider in responding to this Executive Order. Below are the 22 recommendations for enhancing climate resilience and achieving the 30 by 30 goal, in terms of (1) processes and strategies for participation; (2) measuring progress; and (3) resiliency of fisheries and protected resources to climate change, in no priority order:

Processes and strategies for participation:

1. Clearly define conservation and the goals of the 30% conservation target. From the Advisory Council's perspective, conservation is the management of resources for sustainable and compatible uses. By this definition, the vast majority of the waters of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) are conserved.
2. Any new protected areas should engage with tribal governments early and often in defining the goals and criteria, ensuring treaty rights and trust responsibility are upheld, as well as careful consideration and integration of existing governance and co-management frameworks. Furthermore, any new protected areas proposed should be focused on climate benefits rather than no-take regulations (i.e., carbon sequestration, climate refugia, etc.).
3. Work in partnership with communities tied to resources across all phases (identifying problems/risks, developing science/understanding, creating tools and responses to adapt and manage, decision-making and governance).
4. Increase coordination across jurisdictional boundaries (agencies/managers) and international boundaries to improve understanding of social-environmental changes, as well as solutions for resilience.
5. Work with regional fisheries management councils as many are undertaking climate resilience planning into fisheries management. The Pacific Fisheries Management Council has led a [Climate and Communities Initiative](#). The purpose of this initiative is "to help the Council, its advisory bodies, and the public to better understand the effects of near-term climate shift and long-term climate change on our fish, fisheries, and fishing communities and identify ways in which the Council could incorporate such understanding into its decision making."

Artwork: David Sones

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6. Better coordination among agencies and relevant partnerships, as well as consideration of previous planning efforts, to improve ability to create management plans, conduct consultations (when appropriate), conduct research and monitoring, etc. Some existing examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Olympic Coast Ocean Acidification Sentinel Site - The Olympic Coast has been designated a sentinel site for ocean acidification. This is an area especially vulnerable to changing ocean conditions. Being a sentinel site allows us to improve coordination and collaboration on research and monitoring, education and outreach, and management in this area.
 - Regional Ocean Partnerships like the West Coast Ocean Alliance.
 - Washington State Marine Spatial Plan.

Measuring Progress:

1. In cataloging the current baseline of conservation and management actions, it is important to assess the efficacy of those actions (i.e., what is working and what isn't working).
2. Improved understanding of climate thresholds for commercially, culturally, and ecologically important species. This includes enhanced physical, chemical, biological, and social suite of data at a scale that allows observation of changing ocean conditions and associated impacts.
3. Evaluate the impacts of spatial closures on adjacent systems (e.g., can be spill-over effects of MPAs; or also shifted distribution of fishing/harvesting from health closures, such as domoic acid), consider seasonal impacts as well (e.g., overlap with whale migrations; increased storminess, etc.). Shifts in effort can be especially impactful on place-based people exercising treaty rights.
4. Assess climate impacts (sea level rise, flooding, erosion, storms) to key sites and infrastructure that are culturally and economically important: cultural heritage sites; (traditional) fishing grounds (sand bars, embayments, water flow, etc.); port facilities; canoe journey landings; navigation, etc.
5. Work with tribal governments to:
 - a. Assess climate impacts/disruptions to intergenerational knowledge transfer and altered environmental observations, including traditional ecological or indigenous knowledge.
 - b. Consider impacts to food security, which is arguably a component of national security, and food sovereignty.
6. Evaluate equity issues in exposures to risks, vulnerabilities, and adaptive capacity.
7. Invest in monitoring enhancements for existing and proposed protected areas to understand efficacies of protection and to allow for adaptive management. Protected areas should have clearly defined goals with measurable metrics and regular monitoring associated.
8. Enhanced understanding of the social dynamics of fisheries (social demographics, number of people working on vessels, temporary or long-term employment, etc.) to understand various climate and regulatory impacts. Better inclusion of social and economic connectivity of fisheries and ways to enhance diversification and resiliency

Resiliency of fisheries and protected resources to climate change:

1. Leverage existing information relevant to resilience, especially the interconnectedness of people and nature in conservation targets, including:
 - a. [Climate Change Adaptation A Resource by the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee](#)
 - b. [Human Rights in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: Options for integrating a human-rights based approach to achieve the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity](#)
 - c. [Integrating Cultural Resources into MPA Management](#)
 - d. [Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Climate Priorities Workshop summary report](#)
2. Support for carbon emission reduction strategies, including marine renewable energy and technological advancements (i.e., marine vessel emission reductions via biodiesel, electric engines, etc.). However, proposed new uses need to be carefully considered in light of preserving existing uses. Enhanced coordination and consultation with tribal governments and regional fisheries management councils

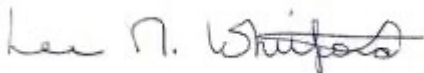
should be initiated early in these scoping processes.

3. Apply in partnership time-tested adaptation practices rooted in Indigenous Knowledge. These may benefit from basic social science and interdisciplinary social-ecological research to better understand and characterize such systems. Examples include clam garden terraces that have had climate change mitigation benefits, stone fish traps, and other types of cultural landscape management. Other examples include food-web alterations to restore 'balance' in altered systems, such as predator controls, competitor removals, etc. (e.g., kelp-otter-urchin-clam systems; pinniped harvesting; etc.).
4. Heritage sites are often the primary resource for understanding how humans responded to past climatic regimes, but are sometimes omitted from plans for mitigating adverse climate impacts. With renewed awareness of how climate change may impact cultural heritage, managers can take proactive steps to minimize the impact of climate change on their resources.
5. Enhance understanding, protection, and restoration of blue carbon habitats. Habitats at the land-sea interface and nearshore (i.e., estuaries, salt marshes, eelgrass beds, kelp forests, etc.) serve critical carbon sequestration roles and are especially vulnerable to climate change and human activities. We need to better understand blue carbon systems including their rates of sequestering carbon as well as how their availability and efficacy may be altered in a changing climate (i.e., rates of sequestration may lower as temperature increases). Early warning indicators for habitat declines would allow for rapid response.
6. Social and natural science pairing on fisheries resilience to support a national framework approach. There are many examples that can be built on, including the California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment approach.
7. OCNMS and other sanctuary sites should develop carbon mitigation strategies.
8. Careful considerations on any marine development (i.e., oil and gas exploration, seabed mining, and even marine renewable energy) to avoid further stress on marine ecosystems. Any development should coordinate with relevant federal agencies and engage with state, tribal, and local governments early in the process.

The CCWG responded quickly to the request for input on this Executive Order. We are requesting that these recommendations be sent to NOAA leadership and that sanctuary staff actively incorporate these recommendations into relevant efforts. Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, by consensus, agreed to approve and adopt CCWG's recommendations.

As the OCNMS AC, we represent a diverse group of constituencies that have a strong interest in sanctuary and marine resource management in the Olympic Coast region. Our role is to advise the OCNMS Superintendent on sanctuary management topics and concerns. We volunteer our time to assist OCNMS in maintaining a transparent, interdisciplinary, and comprehensive management structure for the sanctuary. The opinions and findings of this letter do not necessarily reflect the position of Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Sincerely,



Lee Whitford
Chair, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

Attachment: Section 216 of Executive Order 14008