

OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
115 E. Railroad Avenue, Suite 301
Port Angeles, WA 98362-2925

OCNMS Advisory Council Hybrid meeting

Friday, March 17, 2023
Meeting Notes

Reviewed by OCNMS Superintendent and AC Chair:



Kevin Grant, Superintendent



Linda Sturgis, Chair

Chair), Casey Dennehy (Washington Dept of Ecology, Vice-Chair), Steve Shively (Tourism and Economic Development, Secretary), John Shaw (Grays Harbor Marine Resource Committee), Liz Schotman (Conservation), Julie Ann Koehlinger (Hoh Tribe), Jennifer Hagen (Quileute Tribe), Lorna Wargo (Washington Dept of Fish & Wildlife), Whitney Roberts (Washington Dept of Fish & Wildlife), John Hunter (Education), Rich Osborne (Conservation), Mike French (Clallam County), Larry Philips (Fishing), Cindi Kunz (US Navy), Stephanie Sleeman (US Navy), Patrick Gallagher (Maritime Industry), Kevin Decker (Tourism and Economic Development), Mike Doherty (Citizen at Large), Heidi Eisenhour (Jefferson County), LCDR Keola Velasco (US Coast Guard), and Brittany Poirson (Washington Dept of Natural Resources)

Presenters and Others in Attendance: CDR Faith Knighton, CDR Faith Knighton, NOAA Scientific Support Coordinator Northwest Region at NOAA Office of Response and Restoration, Joel Kawahara, Ryan Johnson, and Amelia Ritger.

NOAA/OCNMS Staff in Attendance: Andrew Torres, Greg Busch, and Dwayne Hawes (NOAA Fisheries, Office of Law Enforcement), Aleria Jensen (NOAA Leadership Competency Development Program (LCDP) XI), Kevin Grant (Superintendent), Rebecca Briggs (Acting Deputy Superintendent), Jacqueline Laverdure, Jenny Waddell, Katie Wrubel, Pike Spector, Brendan Rager, and Chris Butler-Minor (Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary staff).

Call to Order and Welcome

Linda Sturgis, Advisory Council Chair opened the meeting and called it to order. Council members and attendees introduce themselves.

Internal Affairs

Agenda: The draft agenda was motioned for adoption by Linda Sturgis and seconded by Heidi Eisenhour. Motion was approved.

Meeting Notes: The January 2023 meeting notes were presented for approval. Steve Shively made the motions and Mike Doherty seconded the motion. The notes were approved without objection.

Superintendent report

Kevin encouraged advisory council members to reach out to their respective constituents and encourage comments during public scoping process which will close on April 3, 2023. During the prior week, Kevin attended a national meeting of site superintendents with 13 of 15 superintendents in the National Marine Sanctuary system present. He noted that it provided a reminder of the importance of in-person meetings for developing relationships between working partners. Meeting participants shared ideas, knowledge gained through their experiences, and issues their sanctuaries face. Each superintendent shared three priorities and/or issues at the meeting. Kevin's comments related to:

1. Ocean Acidification Sentinel Site (OASeS) and mooring program
2. Tribal and indigenous engagement
3. Staff attrition, which since 2005 has trend downward by about 50%.

Kevin noted that staff levels vary programmatically, but are a concern at many sites. Kevin then reported on the budget allocation for FY23. The sanctuary was allotted 103% of last year's

budget with additional funding under purchase, acquisitions, and construction (PAC) for a new trailer. Kevin asked for ideas /input for where to put the new trailer, noting that near Forks/La Push would be beneficial. The sanctuary also received funding that can support tribes' participation in the sanctuary management endeavors.

A member asked about climate-focused funding. OASeS and seasonal moorings count as funding directly related to climate assessment and data gathering. Kevin added that if funding became available the sanctuary would like to update the moorings arrays to allow remote real-time data gathering and allow for improved forecasting, etc. Several SAC members indicated they were interested in writing letters of support for that funding.

Information Item:

Scientific Support for Oil Spill Incidents

CDR Faith Knighton, NOAA Scientific Support Coordinator Northwest Region with Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R) provided an overview of NOAA's Scientific Support for Oil Spill Preparedness. Under the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan, there are established committees that authorize how different agencies respond to oil spills and environmental hazards. There is also a regional level plan, [The Northwest Regional Contingency Plan](#), which provides policy and guidance to response teams. The Northwest Regional plan includes state plans for Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington states, and for Tribes implementing a response to protect people, the environment, and property both on the coast and inland from a spill of oil or hazardous substance. Whether it is a local, state, or tribal community response, the purpose is to be consistent with the national and regional plans and coordinate with the public to protect the safety of people and environment through their response. The local level plan for the sanctuary is covered in two sectors, Sector Puget Sound and Sector Columbia River with a NOAA Scientific Support Coordinator available for each sector. Scientific Support Coordinators are one of many "special teams" described in the national contingency plan to provide support to the US Coast Guard and NOAA and to help with coordinating operational decisions.

Geographic response sectors are larger than geographic response plans (GRPs) which are specific to the location's environmental, cultural, and economic resources. Noting that prevention is the best policy, having a plan for responding is the next best policy. Faith noted that WA Dept. of Ecology coordinates GRPs

There is a 24/7 on-call duty member (NOAA's OR&R) assigned to work with the Coast Guard if a spill is reported. NOAA's role in spills is resource expertise, land management mandates, and natural resource damage assessment, as well as scientific and technical support. OR&R has about 170-200 oil spill cases per year that they support.

Faith shared that there are trainings available and listed on [OR&R website](#) as well as monthly seminars. The trainings are free. Reference material and job aids created by OR&R for field aid and responders are also available online. Faith encouraged people to attend Area Contingency Plan (ACP) meetings which occur quarterly and are open to the public and a good place to learn about volunteer coordination, networking to know who is involved in response, and to learn about how volunteers can get involved.

Questions for the presenter included

- Updated GRPs had any major changes to the outer coast or if updates are more technology specific? Faith answered that periodic review and updates are related to staging areas, equipment and infrastructure, where those things are located, what resources can be impacted in those areas, and interagency approaches between USCG, local and state governments, tribal partners, and OCNMS.
- Is USCG involved in proposal in the legislature for a rescue or escort tug stationed in the San Juan Islands to help outbound vessels navigate and asked. LCDR Velasco invited members to contact him on the topic: John.K.Velasco@uscg.mil.

Member Reports

Larry Phillips reported that the Pacific Fisheries Management Council's (PFMC) March meeting takeaway options for salmon fishing in the Pacific Ocean is to meet conservation objectives *and* balance opportunities for fishing. Of note:

- Fishing will be restricted in California and Oregon because of failure to meet conservation objectives.
- The Queets River salmon will not be a restrained stock.
- Pink salmon are returning to Puget Sound.
- Commercial salmon fishing season proposed to begin by June (to be determined at the next council meeting in April).
- Ground fishing changes enacted to meet conservation objectives. California is facing far more significant restrictions than Washington, where protection for nearshore has been more focused historically.
- New regulations in WA for recreational harvest of ground fish species.
- Data collection for species through harvest instead of independent research is challenging. More funding is needed for further data collection.

Mike Doherty reminded members that MRCs (seven (7) in northern area) have monthly meetings and can help support staffing gaps in reference to data collection that Larry had just discussed.

Julie Anne Koehlinger reported tribes are involved with fishery negotiations. Olympic Coast steelhead, which is valuable for tribes and others is under review by NOAA Fisheries for endangered species act listing.

Steve Shively reported that State of Washington's tourism funding ask for \$13.5 million per year via House bill [\[HB\] 1258](#) was approved by the House but for \$9 million despite neighboring states have budgets in the excess of \$50 million for tourism support. [HB 1010](#), which would expand WA Dept. of Health authority to close Dungeness crab fishing for biotoxin levels, did not make it out of House. Lastly, many restaurants rely on partners such as [Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch](#) index to meet sustainability goals. Maine fisheries are suing Seafood Watch for defamation due to characterizations of Right Whale entanglements in their lobster trap lines.

Pat Gallagher reported that industry trends in ship counts are flat and at pre-COVID levels. Cargo ship counts are down but cruise ships are up. The use of tugs is a frequent topic for the

[Puget Sound Harbor Safety Committee](#). Currently, a rulemaking comment period is open through April 8. [Quiet Sound](#) met with pilots about the test voluntary vessel slowdowns to help the Southern Resident Killer Whale population. Data show 53% participation in this first year. More funds have been requested to make the program permanent, perhaps using carbon tax and marine fuel exemptions for fishing vessels and tugs. The [Marine Exchange of Puget Sound](#) has added new members – one such group called [Net Your Problem](#) collects old fishing nets to recycle. Lastly, [Hull Scrubber](#), an ROV business in Port Angeles is looking to conduct husbandry on ships while they are in harbor.

[John Hunter](#) highlighted that in one week sanctuary staff will offer a workshop at ONRC for the upcoming May 20th [MATE ROV](#) competition. In July there will be a [National Marine Educators Association](#) meeting in Bellingham sponsored by Washington Northwest Aquatic and Marine Educators.

[John Shaw](#) suggested now is the time to eat more crab since prices are low and more crab coming in. He reported population explosion of European Green Crab in Grays Harbor County and a high level of concern for the area with active setting of Fish & Wildlife traps. He also reported great tourism numbers from the [Beachcombers and Glass float Expo](#), which had 1,700 visitors. [Razor Clam and Seafood festival](#) is this weekend. Field trip season, enabling schools to get students out to the beach for experiential learning is ramping up.

[Andrew Torres](#) reminded members he is available to field questions related to ACP.

[Britney Poirson](#) reported on legislative tracking and monitoring noting several bills are relevant for members of the council. [HB 1085](#), a plastic reduction bill, modifying what can be put under docks for floating. [HB 1145](#) aim to increase distance between whale watching vessels and orca to 1,000 yards to help protect Southern Resident Killer Whales.

[Casey Dennehy](#) shared that the West Coast Ocean Alliance received funding to increase capacity. They are currently seeking to fill a tribal coordinator position. They are also developing a strategic plan to hire contractors. Planning for offshore wind summit in August and annual meeting in October is under way. The Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council (WCMAC) Coastal Resiliency Committee recently presented to a federal delegation on assessment of issues like hazards and economic challenges and recommendation on issues like green crab and best management practices. In November they briefed the state caucus. WCMAC voted to submit a letter of support for HB1010 and submitted another letter for the bill to the senate.

[Greg Busch](#) requested public comment on Office of Enforcement national and West Coast division priorities at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/request-comments-noaa-office-law-enforcement-priorities>

[Heidi Eisenhower](#) reported that the Jefferson MRC heard from Pacific Northwest Lab on [Salish Sea Model](#). She noted the model show [oil spill flows](#). In late April input on Lower Snake River Dam removal opens, which is especially important given trends in salmon populations. The Port of Olympia fiberglass boat recycling and WA Dept. of Natural Resources are piloting turning derelict boat hulls into recycled material for concrete plants to avoid abandonment on beaches. [Strait \[of Juan de Fuca\] Environmental Restoration Network](#) meetings, seeking collaboration between MRCs and other organizations, has had high participation. A conservation program to redesign and provide funding to take lands out of DNR timber management and put them in conservation status with parks or wildlife conservation areas is

in the works.

Jennifer Hagan shared that European green crab monitoring will take place next month along with Dungeness crab larvae surveys. Multiple oxygen sensors have been deployed this year thanks to increased funding.

Keola Velasco announced that USCG is seeking to fill position on the Whale Desk by July.

Kevin Decker shared that he is continuing to identify industries that are compatible and desirable, like tourism, for this area. As a part of that, higher value components such as increased wages and removing shoulder seasons are being considered. Kevin reported on the annual meeting at Dept. of Ecology, noting the new coastal management specialist, fishery specialists, community science specialist, and aquaculture specialist. Lastly, he noted that Russell Callendar, Director of WA Sea Grant is retiring.

Liz Schotman shared that the Surfrider Foundation held its annual fly-in event *Coastal Recreation Hill Days* over March 8-10 in Washington D.C. Over 150 chapter volunteers held over 130 meetings with representatives and senators to advocate for federal policies on clean water, climate change, and plastic pollution, including advocating for increased funding for NOAA. A small team met with John Armor (Director of Office of National Marine Sanctuaries) and Grace Bottitta-Williamson (ONMS Recreation & Tourism Coordinator) to discuss ways Surfrider can support sanctuaries particularly with outreach and raising awareness. Liz emphasized the important work of OCNMS including piloting critical programs and efforts to protect ocean resources, and the need for increased funding and capacity to continue and expand their efforts.

Decision Item

Ocean Acidification Sentinel Site (OASeS) Working Group update and adoption of new terms of reference

Katie Wrubel shared OASeS working group accomplishments in 2022 and 2023 priorities. 2023 priorities include:

- Complete work plan tasks and integrate symposium takeaways
- Launch OASeS website and share info broadly [olympiccoastsentinel.org]
- Implement communication plan
- Develop OA/Climate change solutions/mitigation science summaries
- Organize workshops on OA management levers
- Resource managers/harvesters' decision support tool recommendation (what tools/needs are and how can they be informed better in real time?)
- Begin planning biennial symposium for 2024 (locations, targeting)

The council was asked for approval to update OASeS terms of reference to add two community at large seats to the steering committees and move to meeting summaries instead of minutes.

A member asked about membership language. Katie noted membership is synonymous to "parties" in the appendix. Another requested clarification was on the new unlimited term of co-chairs for the OA working group. Katie explained that one co-chair would be an advisory council member and subject to SAC term limits with that body, but non-SAC members could participate in OASeS indefinitely. Steve Shively moved to accept the recommendation. Heidi Eisenhour seconded the motion. The decision item passed by consensus. Recruitment

notification will be developed and shared with the advisory council. Chris added that although it is advisory council working group, participation is not limited to council members.

Information Item(s)

Climate Vulnerability Assessment Working Group (CVAWG) updates

Katie reported that progress in drafting the full report's edits continues with the final review planned for April. CVAWG will meet at the end of March to adopt mitigation and prioritization recommendations. The group plans to provide the assessment to SAC for review and approval by fall.

Management Plan Review Public Scoping and next steps

Amelia Ritger provide a recap on public scoping activities.

- Public scoping meetings held Feb 21-27 in person at several coastal locations on the peninsula to allow communities to voice comments and learn about the sanctuary. A virtual meeting was also held.
- Preliminary summary: 82 total comments were received at the meetings. Partnership and engagement were some of the most mentioned topics.
- Public comment period is open until April 3 and can be submitted online or mailed to Sanctuary offices in Port Angeles

Next steps

- March/April
 - Bin comments into common theme areas
 - Assess proposed regulation changes, if any
 - Review Condition report findings and draft CVA, propose initial working groups
- May AC meeting
 - Present public scoping findings to SAC
 - Introduce SAC MPR working groups' structure

Becky thanked Amelia, who with Emma Htun helped to navigate the management plan review (MPR) process. Becky then introduced Aleria Jensen who will be helping with organizing comments and organizing initial working groups.

Questions from members included

- What is the process for assessment and possible adoption of new regulations and how the public is involved with that piece? The designation purpose can be changed and/or amended during an MPR. NOAA general council reviews then draft language which is then available for public comment and review before finalizing. Currently there is no intention to change boundaries nor were such comments received to date. Kevin noted that a regulatory update is needed for accommodate aircraft at the Quillayute airport. The addition of pump out stations at coastal marinas could affect discharge regulations.
- How does 82 comments received compared to other sanctuaries? Is no news is good news? OCNMS is choosing to interpret the lack of more comments that way.

Public Comment

Joel Kawahara shared that coastal salmon fishing is opening May 1 north of Falcon Point.

Pacific halibut seem to be doing poorly and not responding to fishery conservation measures as hoped. PFMC received a presentation on West Coast Sanctuaries which noted possible difficulties of siting wind energy in sanctuaries. Joel opined sanctuaries may become places where fishing occurs once wind energy is established and mused the impacts of increased fishing vessel traffic in sanctuaries noting while PFMC has little authority over non-fishing impact to essential fish habitat, sanctuaries could fill the gap in protection.

Call for future agenda topics

- Summary of treaty tribes and what they have been doing. Kevin noted we should ask the Chair (Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission) to present to AC.
- Presentation to clarify how councils work in regards to regulation process. Note: Steve Joner gave a presentation on tribal perspective to fisheries and regulations last year which is available by request to council members.

Standing Item(s)

Research seat application received, with recruitment continuing to fill empty seats on the advisory council.

Adjourn

Steve Shively called for motion to adjourn. Patrick seconded.