



# West Coast OCEAN ALLIANCE

April 2022

Member Call

## SUMMARY

April 1, 2022

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### Attendees

**West Coast Ocean Alliance (WCOA) Staff:** John Hansen (WCOA Coordinator)

**West Coast Ocean Data Portal (WCODP) Staff:** Andy Lanier (WCODP Co-Chair, OR DLCD); Marisa Nixon (WCODP)

**State Staff:** Casey Dennehy (WA Dept. Ecology), Patty Snow (OR DLCD), Caren Braby (ODFW), Katie Robinson-Filip (CA State Lands Commission)

**Tribal Members/Staff:** Haley Kennard (Makah Tribe), Andrea Sumerau (Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians), Jennifer Hagen (Quileute Tribe), Mark Healy (Coquille Indian Tribe), Illeana Alexander (Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians), Garrett Gray, (Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians), Joe Schumacker (Quinalt Indian Nation), Carl Merkle (Confederated Umatilla Tribes),

**Federal Staff:** Becky Smyth (NOAA), Kris Wall (NOAA), Katie Morrice (DOE), Maggie Dour (Navy), Jeffrey Ferguson (NOAA), Paul Michel (NOAA), TJ Moore (NOAA), LTJG Liesl Olson (USCG), William Otero (USACE), Sara Guiltinan (BOEM), Walt Wilson (Navy), David Croxton (EPA), Allan Ota (EPA), Yvonne Fish (BIA), J. Lilah Ise (NMFS), Michael Weiss (NOAA), Frances Sakaguchi (US EDA), Stefanie Stavrakas (USFWS), Alden Lundy (BOEM), Frank Pendleton (BOEM)

### CALL SUMMARY

#### WCOA Regional Ocean Partnership (ROP) Funding Proposal Review

*NOAA staff provided an update on the NOAA ROP Funding Process.*

- Becky Smyth (NOAA): Everything has to go through several levels of review so some of this may change – I don't think substantially – but this is where we are today. The

eligible applicants are the four regional ocean partnerships. As noted, we are running a separate funding competition with a portion of the funding that can directly go to federally recognized tribes or Tribal serving organizations. We're anticipating two-year awards. You won't have to write another full grant application next year. We're aiming at two million dollars per year, each year to support the efforts already in the ROP priority plans. You can develop and implement any of the actions that are already identified. At least \$300,000 of the budget should go to the ocean and coastal data sharing because we have heard that's a key part of the role the ROPs play. We want to make sure there's money for operation, administration, and capacity building, and partnership and engagement with Tribal governments. One caveat around this is federal agencies are not eligible to get any of this funding.

- Kris Wall (NOAA): The two-year funding is a little confusing but the vision is to reduce the administrative burden on the ROPs. The proposal should really span two-year's worth of funding. There should be a very clear workplan of year one and a very clear workplan of year two. Once NOAA reviews the activities, we would fund the first year with about two million dollars and about a year from now the ROP would request to get the second year of funding released. At that time we might make some adjustments [to the proposal] if we need to. There will be another new application period in the third year that will incorporate what we learn in the first two years. We are encouraging each of the ROPs to plan whatever capacity, support, and funding for Tribal nations is needed. While we do have this smaller pot for tribes, it's really important to plan active involvement into the ROP funding.
- Jennifer Hagen? (Quileute Tribe): I want it for the record that the listening sessions and the reach out for input that was done with the Tribes was not very transparent. All of the comments are going to one employee and not a federal website where anybody can see what kind of input was coming to NOAA. Everything was going to Heather Sagar on this funding specific to the tribes. That lack of transparency is disappointing to me. That said, thank you for your efforts to help us navigate this funding so we can continue the work we've been doing for years.
  - Becky Smyth (NOAA): I'll take your comment about posting comments back to NOAA and the group that's working on this. The comment period closed last week and initially we discussed if we posted comments did we need to strip personal information for privacy sake. We've talked about what to do and whether there are sensitivities about it. I'll take your feedback back to the group.
  - Jennifer Hagen (Quileute Tribe): Typically when you're responding to a federal registry notice there's a notice that your comments are going to be public. My expectation was this process would be the same. Maybe there was too much detail offered by different commentors.
- John Hansen (WCOA): Is it correct to assume the next notice of this guidance or overview would come with the formal announcement?
  - Becky Smyth (NOAA): Correct. I think we'll be able to give a heads up once we have the OMB clearance.
  - Kris Wall (NOAA): We're waiting both on the clearance on the language we're proposing for the program and the actual spend plan. As soon as we get both of those we'll get that out as soon as possible because we want to get this funding distributed as quickly as possible. There's probably going to be a pretty short turnaround time once this is formal. That's why we're encouraging you to do as much work as you can now.
- John Hansen (WCOA): In terms of the Tribal funding aspect, I assume that will be part and parcel in terms of formal release with the ROPs and to guide where the tribes

should pursue funding on this? There's a vision for including our active Tribal partners as part of our West Coast Ocean Alliance proposal but that the clarity of exactly the approach tribes need to take to access these funds would be something they need clarity on in terms of being part of an ROP proposal or not.

- Becky Smyth (NOAA): We're going to try to have the request for proposals with the Tribal funding overlap with the ROP funding but we don't have control over that. The Tribal period might be later than the ROP period.
- Jennifer Hagen (Quileute Tribe): Looking at eligible activities, one thing that comes to mind that was really successful was our cross border meeting with Canadians. That's a travel feature and a cross border feature which sometimes federal funding doesn't like to fund. I think that's really important region wide whether we're talking about the northern or southern border. There are no big walls in terms of how ecosystems go. I don't see anything about funding travel activities.
  - Kris Wall (NOAA): Travel is eligible. There are federal regulations that describe what is eligible. Coastal States Stewardship Foundation can help with this. International travel can be trickier but it is not prohibited – it just requires extra justification and rules.
- John Hansen (WCOA): In the funding table we do include specific funding for a West Coast Tribal Summit, similar to what we did up in British Columbia a few years ago. On the actual Tribal capacity piece, there is a call out of a funding item to support active Tribal members of the Alliance to devote funds directly to them to continue their engagement in the ROP.
- Kris Wall (NOAA): If any Tribal members want to contact me with questions or concerns, I'm happy to hear that and talk with you. We're trying to figure out how to make this work. I would recommend putting exactly what you just described, John.
- Haley Kennard (Makah Tribe): I just wanted to clarify that there are a few different communication streams going on. We submitted comments to the [infrastructure.Tribal@noaa.gov](mailto:infrastructure.Tribal@noaa.gov) which had three different topics. Have those comments made it to Kris and Becky? Great – they're both nodding.
  - Becky Smyth (NOAA): Kris and I just met with NOAA Fisheries yesterday to review those comments.
  - John Hansen (NOAA): I just wanted to clarify that those comments are just for NOAA and not available to the ROPs. Those comments are not factored into what I've put into this table.
- John Hansen (NOAA): I see a question from Allan asking if there are any examples of the levels of detail for these proposals. I don't think so since this is a new funding source.
  - Kris Wall (NOAA): In general, I would liken it to any other federal proposal for funding. We're going to expect a scope of work where you're going to describe what you want to do, how you're going to approach it, what the outcomes are going to be, and what budget is needed to accomplish that. We're probably looking at 15 pages max not including budget details or attachments.
- John Hansen (NOAA): I am in somewhat regular touch with the three other ROPs. Each region is going to define this as they see fit but there's interest in looking at commonalities or maybe bringing all of the ROPs together. There will be a sense of trying to see what all of the ROPs are doing.
- Kris Wall (NOAA): The Alliance will be accountable for the work proposed in this scope of work. If the application says, "we're going to do x, y, and z in this year" then NOAA will expect that those things to be done. It's going to be a shift.

- John Hansen (WCOA): Thank you. This will be a change. Previous funding from NOAA was more for capacity support and getting the ROP up and running. This will have discrete deliverables, outcomes, and metrics that will be tracked.
- John Hansen (WCOA): Last we spoke we were thinking early- to mid-April would be when the announcement goes out with a 30 day turnaround. Is that still on the table or has it shifted?
  - Becky Smyth (NOAA): It's in the clearance process and when it comes out we'll turn it around as quickly as possible. It will not be in the next week. Keeping fingers crossed for some time between now and April 30<sup>th</sup>.

*John Hansen (WCOA) provided an overview of the WCOA ROP funding proposal draft.*

- There is a need to be clear about how we are going to approach this as an ROP to understand what your role is in terms of participating. We've been ambiguous about that for the past two years due to uncertainty of the group. Now we really want to make sure everybody understands where we all fit and how we're going to finalize this proposal. The document includes a lot of language around the process side.
- I am going to put out a request for anyone who wants to dig into the funding proposal. Ultimately, the Executive Committee will be charged with finalizing the proposal. If anyone else wants to get into the weeds on this and help with the details, I'm all ears and would love to pull a smaller group together to do that.
- A question has come up on the contracting mechanism and administration of this. We do have the Coastal States Stewardship Foundation (CSSF) lined up as our fiscal sponsor for this work. The expectation is that they have a 10% fee to play that fiscal role for us. They would receive this funding from NOAA and be in charge of that contracting piece. They handled the Moore grant and current NOAA funding. At this phase, CSSF will still be doing that.
- Your input is welcome on the process side and the funding proposal itself. We're lining up a review date of Wednesday, April 13<sup>th</sup> for the first round of input on the draft. This draft is not set in stone. It is open for review and discussion.
- Section 1 lays out a process, timeline, and review criteria. One question that has come up is, "Who is a member of the West Coast Ocean Alliance?". This is tricky because we do not have a charter right now. We had a charter under the Regional Planning Body and that was quite an undertaking to get a document through all of our members. When the RPB was dissolved, we shifted to the ROP structure but we never did a new charter for the Ocean Alliance because it was not identified as a need. A phase we will undertake soon is a new charter for the WCOA. This document lays out how, in the meantime, we're going to define membership for the purpose of this proposal.
- The first key points are about an active membership versus a provisional membership. We've had questions about an entity that has not engaged with the Ocean Alliance recently or has been dormant coming back to the fold now and participating in this proposal. Tribal, state or federal entities are considered active if they have somehow participated in an Alliance meeting within the previous six months. Entities that have not engaged with us before or have not engaged in the last six months, they are considered a provisional member. There will be a provisional period of six months at which time staff will make a recommendation about if to add them as a full member at that time. For this proposal, we will only look to our active members. There is also a note on ex-officio members. The West Coast Data Portal and Pacific Fishery Management Council are longtime partners and will be considered ex-officio members.
  - Joe made a note in the chat about specifying which 2021 meetings count to qualify for being an active member. I have a sense of what the active member list

looks like. If you aren't sure if you'd be considered an active member or if you'd be included for funding, I would encourage you to reach out to me.

- We've had some discussions about the role of the Executive Committee. The language here is pulled from our RPB charter and continues to reflect the role of this group. The key point is when we have members of the Executive Committee, they're not intended to speak on behalf of any other members. The ExComm is not intended to be the final decider or approver of the proposal. We really look to the full membership to be the ones to sign off on something like this. The ExComm has been extremely helpful in pulling this package together.
- We are in phase two of full membership review. That is happening in meetings like these and can happen one-on-one.
- We are going to strive towards general concurrence for approving the proposal. This is, again, language we pulled from our previous charter. We want to make sure people are comfortable with the overall proposal. Ultimately, this is really a consensus driven group.
- The last phase of this will be the ExComm finalizing the proposal. Our federal partners' input and feedback is welcome.
- The last section of the front end piece is the ROP funding proposal review to guide what goes into the proposal. I encourage folks to take a look at this. We start with the goals and objectives of the Ocean Alliance. This will be our starting point for the table with dollar amounts and deliverables. This is a bit of a caveat because the first item we're going to tee up is a new five year strategic plan. In addition to a strategic plan, what activities can get us to the original goals of the Ocean Alliance? Cross-jurisdictional collaboration is something we pulled from the NOAA guidance. The topics we've identified are offshore ocean energy, marine aquaculture, ocean and coastal data, and enhanced Tribal engagement. Another item is thinking about what will be relevant and beneficial for the entire West Coast. We also want to make sure there is capacity among members to engage in the activity.
- The second half of this document is a table that lays out what we might spend the funding on. In the last 48 hours I've received a lot of input and many of those changes have not yet been incorporated into this draft.
- Category one is focused on regional development, engagement and implementation of WCOA priority actions.
  - Right off the bat is a five year strategic plan. That is a requirement of NOAA for this funding. We would hire a contractor to come in and work with members and potentially stakeholders on what we want to accomplish as a group. There are some decisions to be made on this about who should be included – is it members only or getting input from stakeholders?
  - The next couple are focused on offshore wind and aquaculture. Offshore wind is laid out as strategy development but that may shift to using year one to do more of an assessment of what is happening on the West Coast and what the needs are then in year two using that to develop what the Alliance's role is. Similarly with Aquaculture we'd do an assessment, look at best practices, and engagement.
  - We have funding for an annual meeting. This is something we used to do in our RPB days. We had a meeting in December 2019. This would be a public facing meeting that would also include conversations among members.
  - This stakeholder survey piece gets to doing an assessment, outreach, and strategic planning. Again, I'm looking to hear from folks about how we get out in front of stakeholders again.
- At the bottom of each category is a tentative funding amount for year one and year two.

- The second category is around ocean and coastal data sharing.
  - This big chunk is on the ocean health dashboard. We're hoping to grow that with funding we included here. A minimum of \$300k has to go into the proposal. We've bumped that up to \$500k and the Data Portal will define that.
    - Andy Lanier (WCOOP Co-Chair, OR DLCD): We feel the best opportunity is to continue work on the west coast ocean health dashboard. That's how we, as states, can come to an agreement about our priority ocean health issues then present that back to important stakeholders.
  - We have a bit of funding for continuation of the spatial coordination framework tool. There will be a new name for that.
- The third category is an overview of the operation, administration and capacity of this group.
  - We have staff as an Executive Director. That would be my role. We did have an idea of a Sea Grant Fellowship Program. This recently was changed to start in year two. It's probably too soon to put that in the system now with Sea Grant. We have details around the fiscal sponsor fee and IT development. Communications is one that came up quite a bit. As we develop tools or do outreach with stakeholders a communications piece could be really helpful in getting more visibility and better visibility.
- Lastly we have the Tribal piece here.
  - We have a Tribal Caucus Coordinator. That would be a 1.0 FTE supporting Tribal engagement. We have a piece on the Tribal training program. NOAA was able to use the Tribal guidance document to do a Tribal training program and received great feedback. A West Coast Tribal Summit meeting is also included. That can be shaped based on what the needs are. Lastly, individual Tribal capacity funding. This is penciled in as giving each tribe \$10,000 to support engagement with the Alliance. It would be noncompetitive.
- The totals are a little bit lower due to recent feedback. As you can see we're at about \$1.3 million and \$1.5 million. That leaves a pretty big buffer between that \$2 million amount. I have ideas for how we can spend that but if you have ideas please share them.

*John Hansen (WCOA) led a discussion about the WCOA ROP funding proposal draft.*

- Kris Wall (NOAA): For the Tribal Training Program, I'm asking as an Ocean Alliance member and not NOAA, is the intent of this to be able to deliver some more trainings again like what happened with NOAA previously. If the answer is yes, my follow up question is – I wonder if there's a way to include funding to hire Udall again if that's the desire. Logistically I don't know if our funding can go through you to Udall.
  - John Hansen (WCOA): It's up to the group to decide. My thinking of including it there is building a training program that establishes it as part of the Ocean Alliance. It establishes a training module and Tribal trainers built into the Alliance that are at the ready to deliver the training. Potentially working with Udall Foundation to refine the training. What we've heard to some extent is there is concern that putting funding into delivering the training lets feds and states off the hook from paying for the training that they should be undertaking to do this for their staff. It wouldn't be an expectation that the Alliance is putting funding aside for fed expenses for the training.
  - Kris Wall (NOAA): I think there are two models. One is we have trainers at the ready. You can hire us. Here's the cost of the course. The other model is, we

- have trainers and we want to give this to you. We have the capacity to deliver this many this year. From the NOAA side it took years to finally get this training.
- John Hansen (WCOA): Dana and I have a call scheduled to talk about if Udall could be a partner in this. We don't want to just create a great program that no one can do anything with. We want to make it easy so if some agency wants to do it we're ready to roll.
  - Kris Wall (NOAA): The mechanism of getting state or federal funding to someone else seems to be a barrier.
  - Joe Schumacker (Quinault) via the chat: Suggest the Tribal Coordinator position have a travel budget to meet with West Coast Tribes and present in-person to Councils about WCOA and Tribal Caucus and develop connections and proper points of contact.
    - John Hansen (WCOA): Yeah, that's a key one as well – having an opportunity for in-person. The mechanism of these things is really exciting. We really want to understand what the needs are. Are we having that person sit with a Tribe somewhere? Also having the funding to allow that person to travel.
  - John Hansen (WCOA): I'll work on providing a cleaned up version of this in mid- to late-April. I should have a new version available after the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Once we have the formal announcement from NOAA, we'll work this into the format from NOAA. If we don't hear from you, we'll assume you're onboard.

## **Regional Updates**

*Marisa Nixon (WCODP & WCOA) provided an update on WCODP activities.*

- We're officially in process for developing what was formally the spatial coordination framework. The new working name is the WCOA Blue Pages.

*Sara Guiltinan (BOEM) gave an update on offshore wind.*

- California: The goal remains to hold a lease sale in fall of this year. Next week on April 7<sup>th</sup> is the California Coastal Commission hearing on BOEM's consistency determination for the Humboldt Determination Area. Links will be provided in the written update.
- Oregon: There was a taskforce meeting in February and the materials and recordings are available on BOEM's website. BOEM is preparing to issue a call for information and nominations for potential lease areas this month.
- BOEM attended a Pacific Offshore Wind Summit earlier this week in San Francisco. I'll send links to the agenda and materials. The Summit focused on offshore wind for the entire West Coast region.

END CALL