



West Coast OCEAN ALLIANCE

December 2021

Member Call

SUMMARY

December 3, 2021

Attendees

West Coast Ocean Alliance (WCOA) Staff: John Hansen (WCOA Coordinator), Marisa Nixon (WCOA & WCODP)

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

State Staff: Casey Dennehy (WA Dept. Ecology), Patty Snow (OR DLCD), Margarita McInnis (CA State Lands Commission), Caren Braby (ODFW), Katie Robinson-Filip (CA State Lands Commission), Jenn Eckerle (California Ocean Protection Council),

Tribal Members/Staff: Mark Healy (Coquille Indian Tribe), Joe Schumacker (Quinault Indian Nation), Carl Merkle (Confederated Umatilla Tribes), Shirley Laos (Trinidad Rancheria)

Federal Staff: Toby Garfield (NMFS SWFSC), Chris Harvey (NMFS, NFSC), Maya Whalen-Kipp (DOE), Jim Mazza (USACE), Walt Wilson (Navy), David Croxton (EPA), Katie Morrice (DOE), Paul Michel (NOAA), Yvonne Fish (BIA), TJ Moore (NOAA), Becky Smyth (NOAA), Necy Sumait (BOEM), Kevin Werner (NOAA), Kris Wall (NOAA), Parker McWilliams (BOEM), Sara Guiltinan (BOEM), Bridgette Lohrman (EPA), Sara Conrad (USCG)

CALL SUMMARY

Federal Activities and Funding Update

Becky Smyth (NOAA) led an update and discussion on the federal infrastructure bill.

- There is \$56 million in the bill for established Regional Ocean Partnerships to coordinate the interstate and intertribal management of ocean and coastal resources and to implement their priority actions, including to enhance associated sharing and integration of Federal and non-federal data by ROPs or their equivalent. We anticipate spreading the 56 evenly over the five years. The language is pretty clear that this is intended

primarily for the ROPs but there is a data aspect. The intention is to include the regions that do not have ROPs in the data sharing aspect of this.

- This is addition to our current base appropriations for NOAA which in this last year was \$2.5 for regional data coordination. We are working pretty closely with partners on how best to move this money. We are also trying to listen on how best to ensure Tribes receive some of this funding for supporting involvement in the ROPs and in the activities related to the ROPs that they'd like to have resources for. This was discussed at the Tribal Caucus two weeks ago. We anticipate some lessons learned after this first year – we're going to learn as we go.
- What this means for this group is this group needs to come up with some ideas on how it would spend a couple million dollars in the next year and what that would mean for the Alliance.
- John Hansen (WCOP): I know it's still being worked out, but in terms of the pace of when we are going to be organizing the input and whether it's proposals or a range of things that the West Coast wants to push towards this and then thinking about funding actually being received is there a sense of kind of what is envisioning for that generally so the group can be aware?
- Becky Smyth (NOAA): It's going to hit pretty fast and furious probably starting January. As far as due dates it's partly dependent on the mechanism. Probably spring at the latest with the idea to get this money in people's hands starting October 1 which is our next fiscal year. We are also looking for guidance on the proposed legislation. In the legislation they clearly identify four regional ocean partnerships that are established.
- Allan Ota (EPA): We were informed by our national program to be on alert for potential carbon sequestration projects that might impact our ocean dumping program. I haven't had a chance to read the infrastructure bill in detail.
- Becky Smyth (NOAA): I have not read the thousand page plus bill personally, so I believe there is language somewhere in that encouraging it but I'm not sure what agency or where. Or whether that's in the draft appropriation bills. There's so much moving. We are combing through the bill to find other agencies' parts that are most relevant to ocean and coastal management.
- Kris Wall (NOAA): I know we are not at a point of having specific numbers yet but are there any rough numbers of what the West Coast Ocean Alliance might start planning around?
- Becky Smyth (NOAA): In addition to the data portal money there should be a couple million give or take for Regional Ocean Partnership activities. If we do want to support more money with the data portals, we're free to do that but the Alliance is also free to fund any of their other priorities.
- Jenn Eckerle (California Ocean Protection Council): I would love to hear if you have advice on how we should best be thinking about this and starting to scope a proposal.
- Becky Smyth (NOAA): It is five year funding and we're anticipating you'll have longer than five years to spend it. We [NOAA] have five years to award it. I think we have up to 10 years for you to expend it. It might be 8. The last grant doesn't end the year you get it. So I'd think about the timeline. Are there activities you want to start now to build to. I'd think about what can be impactful early on. Understanding that that may be something that's in year 2, 3, 4 or a further proposal. It needs to be tied to our existing plans. Do we want to think about any additions to our plans over the next couple of years?
- Kris Wall (NOAA): Bekcy makes good points around long-term planning but also the expediency around year one. Year one can create the capacity or space to plan for years 2, 3, and 5 as well.
- Becky Smyth (NOAA): This is a great opportunity for the Tribal Caucus to finally fund its Coordinator. I know it's only five years of funding but I hope this is the opportunity they

can leverage. But we will wait to hear from the Tribes about whether or not that is appropriate.

- Jenn Eckerle (California Ocean Protection Council): You had said we should anticipate a few million. Is that a few million per year for five years?
- A minimum of two is what I'm guessing right now.
- Jenn Eckerle (California Ocean Protection Council): Obviously we have to tie it to the Bill language. Are there any other restrictions or criteria?
- Becky Smyth (NOAA): There's a lot of restoration and resilience funding in other parts of the infrastructure. I would maybe think about niches that this group plays that doesn't have the resources needed to do it right right now. I don't think it's a restriction, I just think it would be hard to coordinate all of those other pieces.
- John Hansen (WCOA): Six months ago we were really uncertain about the Alliance and keeping any lights on and now to shift towards a very quick pace of getting some ideas down, that are going to be significantly funded around a couple million dollars, which is, a fantastic problem to have. But I think it's really going to need the Alliance membership to provide that guidance and feedback on what this actually needs to work towards and not just be coordination. Now it seems there is a move towards this has to be something specific with some tangible outputs. We've started this conversation with the Tribal Caucus but I think this is going to be a group conversation but also Tribe by Tribe. I'm scheduling a State Caucus call to think about some of the specifics here. Looking back to the history of our efforts, we were largely driven by State and Tribal perspectives. Is that the sense with this funding as well – that we're going to let the States and Tribes drive the priorities?
- Becky Smyth (NOAA): I think that's a group question because it's up to this group. The Feds have been involved with developing these priorities. It's not until we get to funding proposals that it gets awkward for us. I think it makes sense for Tribes, States, and Feds to develop these priorities together.
- Jenn Eckerle (California Ocean Protection Council): I think that makes sense. We're all in this together. Using the collective brain trust and prioritization across the group would be really helpful.
- John Hansen (WCOA): That's always seemed to be the tone. Some of these conversations might take place in separate channels but I think early next year we'll want to hit the ground with consensus across the full group. I see my role as taking this on with that coordination piece with as many of you as I can. I see huge potential in terms of supporting our ROP work. I think we have some action ideas and other things that we've worked on in the past that we're just going to have to really dial up to 10 in terms of identifying what the outputs are going to be.
- Jenn Eckerle (California Ocean Protection Council): Do we have an example of one of these proposals?
- Becky Smyth (NOAA): It may depend on the funding mechanism. Let me take that back and see if I can find some examples that would apply to both – more of an MOU or a grant.
- John Hansen (WCOA): Currently our fiscal sponsor for the project is the Coastal States Stewardship Foundation through CSO so they handle the money that is coming in. That's a question to think about – is that the mechanism we continue to use? We've talked about the Alliance setting itself up as a standalone 501(c)3.
- Patty Snow (OR DLCD): It makes it that much more important that we have you [John] as our coordinator over the next few months as we put these proposals together. Do we have your funding for the next few months?
- John Hansen (WCOA): I believe we have that figured out but it is not set yet. We do have another lead that I don't think I can say definitively is set yet, but I'm, we're hopeful

that there may be some other funding that's going to get set in the next week or even few days. We'll be able to make sure that I am good to go for at least the next 6 to 9 months.

- Kris Wall (NOAA): I'm putting on my West Coast Ocean Alliance hat. Looking at some of the comments in the chat, I think it would be really nice to have a collaborative workspace where people can start seeing some of the ideas. If there was a way to capture ideas where everyone can see it and build off of each other's ideas or get inspiration that would be nice.
- John Hansen (WCOP): I think that's a great idea, Kris. I know there are tools out there and those that maybe are more tech savvy than I am know of them, but I've seen some of those in the past where people can throw out bubbles or notes and bullets and all that kind of thing that maybe people could recommend.
- Becky Smyth (NOAA): We don't have to wait until there's a call for proposals. The earlier we have ideas, the better.
- John Hansen (WCOA): I see Mark's question in the chat and this is the key one, Mark, and again, I think this is a bigger one that we have to dig into in terms of supporting Tribal participation. And what that looks like, in terms of how Tribes can access this funding to support their own time individually, which I know we talked about on the Tribal Caucus call a couple of weeks ago as well as the larger tribal priorities around things like a Tribal Caucus Coordinator. We'll want to connect with NOAA and other Tribes to understand what we can do.
- Becky Smyth (NOAA): We're [NOAA] trying to be flexible. What we do year one may change. We're trying to learn in this program as we go. It may be also what works for Tribes – If we did a direct grant opportunity would there be capacity? Are there other groups you would be comfortable with getting the reimbursement? It could be a number of things that work for the Tribes. We just want to make sure the Tribes get the funding and it works.
- Andy Lanier (WCODP Co-Chair, OR DLCDD): I heard general timelines at the beginning of this update. It's going to be really important to put some real goalposts out there as a group for us to work towards because this is going to come quick. Looking at my calendar for the next year already it's starting to fill up in March and April. As soon as you know that it will be helpful to get those written down.
- Andy Lanier (WCODP Co-Chair, OR DLCDD): I think John's comment about potential staff support to support the Alliance is where my brain was going from the get go. I think it's been tough for the State of Oregon as a whole to coordinate all of the activities of the Alliance. Beefing up support at the State Caucus as well as the Tribal Caucus could be really valuable. As a regional group I think it's important to build up capacity and be able to move forward more efficiently.

Becky Smyth (NOAA) led an update and discussion on the Federal Ocean Policy Committee.

- The National Ocean Policy Committee met for the first time. The Chairs are Deerin Babb-Brott who works at the Office of Science and Technology Policy and Emily Menashes who is at Council of Environmental Quality – she's a detailee from NOAA. Rick Spinrad is our [NOAA] representative with Nichole LeBoeuf, head of National Ocean Service. The Interior rep is Keone Nakoa who is the Acting Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs. A lot of the other names were "acting" or may not be the permanent representatives for this Administration. We can share the permanent ones. They confirmed their three priorities around maximizing environmental, economic, and social benefit of the ocean, the ocean climate action plan, and strategic direction for ocean science and technology. There aren't a lot of details because this was the first high level gathering. They will be meeting again in January. Thomas and I met with

Deerin Babb-Brott to chat about what is going on. He agreed to join us for the February WCOA meeting, schedule permitting, to give us an update of some of the announcements he anticipates coming out. He highlighted a couple of things in that conversation including they are looking to the Regional Ocean Partnerships and regional groups for them to inform their priorities and they're also trying to see how these actions tie to the sustainable ocean economy group that the US signed onto (it's a group of 11 nations) as part of COP 26.

- Thomas Liu (BOEM): Deerin had talked a little bit about his interest in establishing a conduit for regional partnerships to be able to share best practices with DC. He said he was personally really invested in that so it's something for this group to be thinking about.
- Andy Lanier (WCOA Co-Chair, OR DLCD): Something that you said about the sustainable ocean economies rang a bell with me in that one of the things I've been reading about internationally is the fact that this decade is the United Nations decade for ocean science. With the data portal community we've been engaged at a working group level with some of their data coordination team efforts through my colleague Tanya Hadad. Is there any conversation at the OPC level about engagement of the US with that United Nations effort?
- Becky Smyth (NOAA): I know we've been engaged in the decade of the ocean, especially on the science and technology side. There are two subcommittees under OPC – one is the ocean resource management and the other is the ocean science and technology – and I've been more in tune with the ocean resource management group so I'm not sure of the specifics.
- Andy Lanier (WCOA Co-Chair, OR DLCD): Irina put in [the chat] the National Parks Service has a focus on marine debris for the ocean decade. It might be interesting to hear what other independent efforts are going on.
- Caren Braby (ODFW): It's not related specifically to the UN ocean decade but there was a lot of federal participation in the COP 26 meeting and one participation event in particular around ocean acidification and the ocean acidification alliance. There is interest at least from Libby Jewett, at the acidification program in NOAA, in having the federal government become a member and develop an ocean acidification action plan.

John Hansen (WCOA) gave an update on Tribal initiatives from the federal government.

- I think some of you probably from Tribal governments themselves are involved or maybe more attuned with some of these efforts, but I just wanted to flag them because I think it's relevant to a lot of things that we discussed. Seeing this push of the top levels of the federal government around Tribal engagement, recognition of ecological knowledge, et cetera. I think may have some increasing relevance for our work. So these are a series of highlights of things. I would point you to this link: [bia.gov/whcnaa](https://www.bia.gov/whcnaa) This is the White House Council on Native American Affairs and they have links to a lot of these materials.

US Coast Guard PAC-PARS

LTJG Nicholas Buch (USCG) gave an update on the Pacific Coast Port Access Route Study.

- A port access study is an evaluation and assessment of approaches departures, historical, routing industry agreements as well as regulated routing measures in or around the area of study it is required to be completed prior to any changes amendments or deletions of any routing measures and regulations in that waterway

region. It falls within the Coast Guard's responsibility. Authority to do so comes from the Port and Waterways Safety Act, specifically 46 USC 70003.

- This study in particular is focused on the Washington, Oregon, California coastlines, primarily from the C buoy seaward out to 200 nautical miles. The major ports of interest we're focusing on are San Diego, Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Francisco, Humboldt Bay, Coos Bay Yaquina Bay, Astoria, Grey's Harbor, and the Seattle-Puget Sound region.
- Several issues are prompting this study – BOEM call areas, new development of offshore infrastructure, etc. With these new uses we need to evaluate if safe and efficient navigation can be continued and if not, what recommendations we have.
- The study is going to be conducted in four phases:
 - Phase One is data gathering. The Federal Register was opened on the 28th of July, and just opened until 25, January of 2022. We are hoping any individual or organization to make a comment input for what they like what they don't like, areas of improvement, recommendations for what data, or what areas to focus on. We're EIS collecting data from 2021 to 2017 and we're also grabbing 2015 and 2012 as historical snapshots. We're collecting VMS fisheries data to really confirm where those stakeholders are operating on the waterway. We're collecting marine casualty and investigations incident data, search and rescue data, marine events that have historically happened on the waterways. Economic data for each port as well. And we're working with NOAA to collect marine mammal, fisheries and other habitat datasets that we can overlay.
 - Phase Two is going to be applying a suitability criteria. Once we have everything compiled, we're going to be looking to see what we consider higher concern or high risk areas.
 - Phase Three is doing the modeling and analysis, applying that sustainability criteria to determine spatially along the coastline where we really need to deep dive into.
 - Phase Four is implementing study results after we do our assessment. We'll be coming up with recommendations based on public input and the data that we've gathered to determine what routes and avenues there might be into the future for changes to the waterway that may be beneficial.
- The study ends with recommendations. There are no federal actions initiated by the study itself, if any of the recommendations are to move forward, they initiate their own unique federal rulemaking process.
- Joe Schumacker (Quinault Indian Nation): Would the recommendations include potential recommendations for dredging or new routes?
- LTJG Nicholas Buch (USCG): The scope of this study we are looking from the termination point of the separation schemes seaward so not a lot of opportunity for routes that may require dredging. If we get a lot of public comment really pushing for an analysis into those types of routes, that would still be beneficial to us because then we know what future studies to initiate to really do a deep dive into those topics. But for this study, specifically, those wouldn't be covered.
- John Hansen (WCOA): I see a question in the chat about considering marine mammal migration routes, including info on migrations, and any new vessel speed limits to reduce vessel strikes. I don't know if that's an item you could speak to.
- LTJG Nicholas Buch (USCG): We are working with NOAA to collect those marine mammal datasets as long as their strike data for our own awareness moving into this study. It is important to note that the Coast Guard's primary concern is safety inefficient navigation.

- John Hansen (WCOA): There's another question about how this study will integrate the call areas potentially being established in Oregon is they have not quite been set yet and wonder if that's something that will be part of this planning or in the future with those getting set how they might be integrated.
- LTJG Nicholas Buch (USCG): At this point in time our study only incorporates the leases that are officially established.

Offshore Wind Update

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

- California: The goal remains to hold a lease sale for the Humboldt and Morro Bay areas in fall 2022.
 - On November 12th BOEM announced the formal designation of the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area. The Decision Memo is posted on the BOEM website. The Morro Bay Wind Energy Area is located approximately 20 miles offshore. BOEM is starting to prepare an environmental assessment under NEPA. The environmental assessment scoping public comment period is open until January 11th and two virtual scoping meetings have been scheduled. This week our partners in California state agencies and NOAA representatives along with BOEM held three meetings with central coast Tribes and two fishing stakeholder meetings. The Morro Bay Wind Energy Area is adjacent to the proposed Chumash National Marine Sanctuary. The two do not overlap spatially at this point.
 - For Humboldt, BOEM continues to work on the environmental assessment. The target date for the initial draft is early next calendar year.
- Oregon: The last task force meeting was on October 21st and the recordings and materials are on the BOEM website. BOEM and DLCDC are working on incorporating the task force member comments and an engagement summary report. We anticipate presenting and discussing the draft Oregon call areas at the next BOEM Oregon task force meeting in early 2022.
- Washington: BOEM has not received any unsolicited lease requests or requests to form a task force.

Other WCOA members shared updates on offshore wind.

- Caren Braby (ODFW): From the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, the committee that was developed at our June meeting this year has been meeting and engaging on offshore wind as well as the PAR study. That work is going very well. We have representatives from the different fishery management plan groups and state representatives and our managers at NOAA and a Tribal representative as well. There have been a number of letters that have come out from PFMC about these issues and we'll continue to communicate informally and formally with BOEM on these projects as they move forward.
- Joe Schumacker (Quinault Indian Nation): I was able to participate in the Grey's Harbor Wind briefing with fishing industry reps. Adda Weinstein showed a map of the areas that they're proposing to go forward with potential lease requests off the coast have changed dramatically for what we've seen previously to areas that would be outside of and south of the Quinault usual and the custom harvest areas. The primary reason given was that consultations with Department of Defense would not allow placements further north of

that area. The Quinault Indian Nation has opted out of further participation with Grey's Harbor Wind at this point.

Dana Goodson (Udall Foundation) provided an update on the Tribal Cultural Landscape Assessment, a BOEM funded study.

- We at the Udall Foundation have an interagency agreement with BOEM to implement this study over the next three years focused on Humboldt Bay, Morro Bay, and the Oregon coast. The idea of the assessment is to really offer the opportunity for Tribes in those areas to gather and characterize any data they might need on the natural and cultural resources in that area in anticipation of contributing to the decision making processes. We've just started working on this in terms of really holding some initial conversations around what's the best way to structure this and the best way to work with Tribes in the region on it and support their capacity to engage with this project. It's really about giving the capacity for them to do this work so I think that kind of aligns with what was coming up earlier in terms of the best ways to provide funding to Tribes so we're working on that right now in the context of this project. We've had some of those initial conversations and we've drafted up a summary of what we heard giving us some guidance and insight on the on the best way to proceed. That summary is being reviewed right now and we'll be able to share some of the takeaways at a couple of webinars that are coming up in December.
- Jenn Eckerle (California Ocean Protection Council): Because OPC's Executive Director and our Climate Lead are leading our efforts on offshore wind in California I wasn't sure if you've been in touch with them on the work we are currently funding on a cultural resources inventory. I just wanted to make sure those connections had been made. The Ocean Protection Council received \$2 million dollars in funding for to fill some of those data gaps and we've advanced 6 or 7 projects already and are going to continue to look for additional opportunities.

John Hansen (WCOA) shared additional updates on offshore wind.

- The DOE SEER research project has webinars that are ongoing. They're looking specifically at questions on offshore wind planning around the country. They are planning a workshop in the Spring that would be an opportunity.
- We sent out a survey on actions related to offshore wind and the results were:
 - 1) Regional inventory of wind activities, proposals, info (4.6)
 - 2) Develop planning tools w/ WCODP (4.3)
 - 3) Exchange with other regions (4.3)
 - 4-A) Create West Coast offshore wind staff roster (4)
 - 4-B) WCOA as offshore wind forum (4)
 - 4-C) Identify priority planning issues and questions (4)
 - ~~4-D) Identify common state and tribal wind priorities to inform Fed activities (4)~~
 - 5) Catalog best practices for offshore wind planning (3.8)
 - 6) Launch West Coast Offshore Wind Forum (3.4)

West Coast Ocean Data Portal Update

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

- The Spatial Coordination Framework is an idea that has been around for a long time that includes different geographic polygons based on watersheds then a topic list where people and organizations with interest in that watershed can input their own contact information and the topics and polygons that they're interested in being contacted about essentially as a coordination tool for goings on the West Coast. We have officially received funding from BOEM for this project for fiscal year 21. We will be jumping into that in earnest in early 2022. The timeline for the whole project is January to September. There will be an emphasis about decision making on the framework and what's included itself in the January to March timeframe. The beta development for the tool will happen primarily about April to June. And then there will be time for some tool testing and revision in that July to September window. We hope to develop a use case focus group made up of WCOA members.
- With some of the pilot indicators we've been developing for the Ocean Health Dashboard we need to make decisions across those indicators related to their spatial and temporal extent, and the use of grades and or trends because that this group has a little bit of back and forth on that. We have some ideas to approach that that we'll be discussing at the next Executive Committee meeting.
- Anyone in this group is welcome to join the data portal coordination calls on the third Monday of every month.

Tribal Caucus

John Hansen (WCOA) gave an update on the Tribal Caucus.

- There aren't any substantive updates since our last call. The Tribal Caucus calls are ongoing. If anyone wants to tune into those calls, let me know.

END CALL