



West Coast OCEAN ALLIANCE

February 2023

Member Call

SUMMARY

February 10, 2023

Attendees

West Coast Ocean Alliance (WCOA) Staff: John Hansen (WCOA Executive Director)

West Coast Ocean Data Portal (WCODP) Staff: Andy Lanier (OR DLCD, WCODP), Samantha Coccia-Schillo (Independent GIS Contractor)

State Staff: Jennifer Mattox (CA State Lands Commission), Casey Dennehy (WA Dept. of Ecology), Tanya Haddad (OR DLCD), Brittany Poirson (WA DNR), Heather Hall (WDFW), Matt Koller (CA State Lands Commission), Jenn Eckerle (CA Ocean Protection Council)

Tribal Members/Staff: Mark Healy (Coquille Indian Tribe), Illeana Alexander (Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians), Andrea Sumerau (Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians), Carl Merkle (Confederated Umatilla Tribes), Sara Shen (Trinidad Rancheria), Jennifer Hagen (Quileute Tribe), Sarah H (Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians), Tina Calderon (Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous People)

Federal Staff: Necy Sumait (BOEM), Kris Wall (NOAA), Stef Stavrakas (USFWS), Frank Pendleton (BOEM), Katie Wrubel (Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary), Jeff Ferguson (NOAA), Sara Guiltinan (BOEM), Becky Smyth (NOAA), Matt Shields (NREL), J Lilah Ise (NOAA), James Mazza (USACE), Paul Michel (NOAA), Yvonne Fish (BIA), Leisyka Parrott (CA Coastal National Monument Manager, BLM), Jessica Curran (Navy), Hayley Farr (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory), Naomi Lewandowski (DOE), LT Gabe LaMartina (USCG), Alden Lundy (BOEM), William Connor (USACE), Dana Goodson (Udall Foundation), Dave Croxton (EPA), Kevin Werner (NOAA)

CALL SUMMARY

Agenda Updates

- Jenn Eckerle (OCP): I just want to flag the indicator work we've been doing with Steve Weisberg and the WCOA. I'm going to drop a link in the chat to our annual report that we just presented to our council where we have our preliminary set of indicators.

2023 WCOA Project Overview

John Hansen (WCOA) provided an overview of the planning WCOA activities for 2023.

- These projects have been laid out to NOAA. Some are ready to go, some will require RFPs or additional approval. The plan is to make sure you are aware and can get involved in whatever way you see fit.
- I shared a two pager via email that summarizes the projects for this year. We'll be setting up working groups, drafting RFPs, etc. If you want to know the background, you should have links to the google drive folder that has the proposal sent to NOAA.
- The Strategic Plan is going to be a big one for us. We're working on an RFP now to hire a consultant to develop a five-year strategic plan. The opportunity is great for us to take a fresh look at the work of the Alliance and how we're going to leverage the first two years of funding then how that informs the following three years that we already have allotted.
- We are going to have a funding program dedicated to supporting Tribal engagement in the Alliance. The idea is that we want to ensure any Tribe wants to participate in the Alliance is able to do so. This money would go directly to Tribes to support their time to participate in our group. We're going to have to set up a program of how to do that. The next element would be if there are funds that remain after the first round, then we would look at potentially supporting specific Tribal planning efforts. To clarify, this is internal to the Alliance. These are funds we have and are ready to use at our discretion. We will have to go through an additional NOAA review and work with our fiscal sponsor to know how that funding will be handled.
 - I saw a question in the chat about the timeline for this. The process needs to be defined first so it won't be immediate. I think we'll decide what the process looks like soon – hopefully in the next month or so – with the application process opening in the Spring. The first year of funding goes through November 30 so the sooner the better.
- The fellowship program will go through Sea Grant so we're going to talk to them about getting the Alliance set up as a host. This would be additional capacity whether region wide or specific state offices. We'll bring fellows on this fall or early next year.
- We'll have three in-person meetings. A Tribal Summit, Wind Summit, and all-inclusive Alliance meeting later in the year. We'll be in touch soon about scheduling and developing content.
- We'll be working on aquaculture, starting with a database to track projects. In year two we start developing best practices around aquaculture planning.
- Launching a training program for Tribes, built around the tribal engagement guidance document. We're looking to see how that can be expanded and how the Alliance can have some ownership over a training program. Our Tribes will be the leads on speaking in the trainings.
- Communication will be a big one for us. This includes updating the website, social media, improving those aspects. Having really efficient communication tools and products around those deliverables.
- The dashboard pieces on the Portal side are going to be huge and we'll talk about those later on the agenda.
- The two pager can be used with your own internal outreach about what we're doing. A lot more is going to be coming soon. Striking a balance of how you all can engage in this so we're efficient will be my role and our new staff.

- Sara Gultinan (BOEM): I heard you say this two pager can be used internally. Is there a plan to make this publicly available or is it okay for us to use this for external outreach?
 - John Hansen (WCOA): I think it's ready. The only thing I might add is putting my contact info on it so somebody can reach out to me to ask questions or follow up. If you want to use this one in the meantime, please feel free. Otherwise, I think the idea is to use this as far and wide as we can so people know what we're up to.

New WCOA Staff Hiring

John Hansen (WCOA) provided an update on the WCOA staff hiring processes.

- We have made a hiring decision and she has accepted the Project Coordinator position.
- I want to send a genuine thanks to our Leadership Team for guiding this process and specifically to Andy Lanier and Casey Dennehey because they were a part of the immediate review and the interview team for this position.
- We had nearly 50 applicants for the Project Coordinator position. We went through an extensive review and interviews and landed on Bri who many of you may know from her work in Oregon. Tentatively, February 20 will be her first day. Bri isn't under contract yet but she's joined us today to introduce herself.
 - Bri Goodwin (Soon to be the WCOA Project Coordinator): I'm based in Port Orford, Oregon down on the Southern Oregon Coast. I've been working in ocean and coastal conservation on the West Coast since 2008. Mostly in Oregon but I worked with the West Coast Marine Debris Alliance while I was in graduate school and connected with some of you folks during that time. For my thesis research I evaluated the community process used to site a wave energy test facility. Currently I'm the Oregon Field Manager for Surfrider Foundation. I've been working with a lot of amazing volunteers that are doing great work to protect the ocean – providing admin support to them and a lot of trainings on capacity building. I'm looking forward to working with you all and meeting you, learning how I can best support you and really excited about planning these Summits that will be coming up this year.
- We have a lot of work to do and I'm excited to have her on to help with that. Bri is really dialed in on West Coast issues. She has great experience in Oregon and a great perspective on our regional priorities. During Bri's interview she said something she sees as important is making it as easy as possible for all of you all to be involved in the Alliance. We're going to have some tasks right out of the gate for Bri, but we're going to learn how to best use her time. We did flag the State Caucus so Bri may be having more of an active role to try to reorganize the formal state discussions and support that.
- On the Tribal Coordinator side, we're bringing on a full-time position to support the Tribal Caucus and Tribal members. The hiring process is ongoing and has been really robust. This position is a unique one because we haven't had it as a standalone staff position. We did phase one interviews with eight applicants. We're in the process of selecting a smaller group of those to move into phase two. Special thanks to the initial review team that included Haley at Makah, Andrea at Siletz, Mark Healy at Coquille, Paul Michel at NOAA Sanctuaries and Lisa Phipps at State of Oregon. The phase two round is going to the larger Tribal Caucus. We do have a group that has opted in to be part of the final hiring process. If any other Tribal reps want to opt into that let me know. We hope to get the interviews scheduled mid- to late-February and get that person on board in March.

West Coast Offshore Wind Update & Discussion

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

- National updates:
 - There is a floating offshore wind shot summit coming up on February 22 and 23 hosted by the Depts of Energy, Interior, Commerce, and Transportation to discuss the floating offshore wind shot goal – the initiative to cut the costs of floating offshore wind energy by over 70% by 2035. Registration is free. It's virtual.
 - We sent an email update through John to the Alliance members about some new rules and regulations on the BOEM front. At that time, the rules were in a pre-publication state and now they're final.
 - The first one is a proposed renewable energy modernization rule with would update BOEMS regulations with the intent of streamlining and implementing improvements and lessons learned over the past several years of having a renewable energy program. This proposed rule was published on January 30 and there's a 60-day comment period. We encourage you to submit comments.
 - BOEM and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) have now split responsibilities for renewable energy on the outer continental shelf. This was an administrative rule so there isn't a comment period. BSEE now has authorities for primarily safety and environmental compliance oversight for renewable energy projects.
- California updates: On our last call in December, we provided a preview to the CA lease sale. That sale has now occurred. The Pacific Wind 1 Lease Sale took place on December 6 and 7. John shared an email about the results of this sale. Five leases have been provisionally awarded to five different companies. Two leases are off the north coast and three are off the central coast. The sale drew high bids from those five companies totaling just over \$757 million which goes to the US Treasury. There were three types of bidding credits, as described in the December call. What's available about the lease sale on the BOEM website is a round by round summary of the auction. The five leases that have been provisionally awarded haven't yet been issued. Those lease requirements are not yet in effect. This is due to timing requirements in the Inflation Reduction Act. That Act directs that BOEM can't issue a lease for offshore wind unless BOEM has also held an oil and gas lease sale in the previous year. In accordance with this law, BOEM will issue these leases following the next oil and gas lease sale, which per the Act, must be held no later than March 31 of this year and that will be in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Washington updates: BOEM continues to conduct reviews of two unsolicited lease requests off the southern coast of Washington.
- Jennifer Hagen (Quileute Tribe): Are any of the funds from these \$757 million – were any funds held for costs associated with CA agencies trying to respond to what the implications are for projects moving forward. Or is it all going to Treasury?
 - Sara Guiltinan (BOEM): That amount, the \$757 million, is the total of the cash bids and the full amount goes to the Treasury. So nothing is held back for the administrative costs of agencies or others to participate in this process. There are other funds that will be spent by the lessees on some of those bidding credit commitments – workforce training, domestic supply chain development, and

community benefit agreements. That is separate from that \$757 million. But nothing was withheld.

Frank Pendleton (BOEM) provided an update on the Oregon draft wind energy areas suitability modeling.

- We start with the general idea of the ocean is a busy place. We are working with NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science. The goal is to find the most suitable draft wind energy areas within the call areas. How can we find the least conflicted wind energy areas? There is not any place in the ocean that doesn't have something going on. We hope to share our results this spring or summer.
- We started with a planning area, 3 nm to 1300 meters deep. From there we got the call areas. Now we're looking to create draft wind energy areas. That is what we'll send out for comment around the spring our summer. From there out to final wind energy areas then proposed lease areas. The area can always get smaller, but it can't get bigger.
- *[Frank displayed a graphic showing the suitability model within NCCOS.]* This is a key process to help BOEM minimize conflicts while defining wind energy areas. There are other elements that go into that. We're doing our best to be as transparent as we can and show what went into the process.
- Geographic areas are given a suitability score. One is a suitable area and zero cannot have offshore wind there. We combine those into submodels: natural resources, fisheries, industry & navigation, wind, and constraints. Then we take all of these and combine them into a final suitability score.
- For our modeling a constraint is an area completely restricted from offshore wind development. The constraints we're using are DoD exclusion zones and PacPARS (the Pacific vessel use study). We started with a little over a million acres and after these constraints we're at about 500,000 acres.
- In the last two weeks we've reached out to CTCLUSI and Coquille to inform them on where we are in the process and get their input. We're also reaching out to fishing organizations – to the Council and Save US Fisheries.
- For next steps: We're working to finish up the modeling. We'll release a report and open public comment when the draft is ready.
- Paul Michel (NOAA): Does BOEM ever rescind or take away a call area? Or does it just live on forever until there's a lease sale? I'm thinking Diablo Canyon for example.
 - Frank Pendleton (BOEM): The fact is its new and it's a process we're trying to figure out. They do kind of get taken off the table in the process, like Diablo Canyon was taken off the table in the process. I can't tell you if it's gone or if it will come back.
- John Hansen (WCOA): From the slide that had a lot of red, the call area up into that northwest corner. Is the understanding that that's where any lease areas will land?
 - Frank Pendleton (BOEM): Yes, that's all that is left in Coos Bay. The rest of it is off the table.

Matt Shields (NREL) provided an update on the NREL-DOE West Coast Port Study.

- At a high level what we're trying to do is understand that if floating offshore wind is going to be built to a commercial scale on the west coast what are the needs from the port and vessel and port community resource to support that level of build out. There's a common narrative that if you're going to be building these commercial installations the current infrastructure is inadequate.

- We're working with BOEM and the State of California as well. We're expanding from looking at CA or OR and WA as well. We'll look at what these strategically developed port networks could look like and what it would need to develop as well.
- We will be considering the tradeoffs between these different scenarios in terms of cost and time required to build these different ports, what's the impact on these projects in terms of the cost to the project, potential delays, emissions from vessel traffic, and so forth. The impact on the host communities – what are the energy justice or environmental justice impacts, inclusive of the potential number of port jobs or workforce that can be created. Finally, the tradeoffs between domestic and international energy production.
- We kicked the study off in November last year and we're trying to wrap up a draft report by the end of March. We'd love to have the report published by summer to inform the California State offshore wind strategy.
- Today, we want to make sure everyone at the Alliance is aware of this study. I'll also be presenting to the Tribal Caucus in a couple of weeks. I'll go into more detail in that presentation and maybe as part of this project how we can incorporate as many different perspectives as we can.
- We hope to have the results of this study ready to be taken and acted upon by decision makers. We're not addressing or solving every question that's needed. There will be many areas we flag in the report that need further research or consideration.

Hayley Farr (PNNL) provided an update on the U.S. Offshore Wind SEER Project.

- The US Offshore Wind Synthesis of Environmental Effects Research (SEER). This is a multiyear effort supported by the Dept of Energy's Wind Energy Technologies office and led by PNNL and NREL. TETHYS is a free online knowledge hub with resources on the environmental effects of wind and ocean energy. The main feature is the knowledge base which is a document library. We also have an events calendar, archived webinars, and other tools.
- SEER began in 2019 and the goal is to synthesize and summarize the environmental effects of offshore wind from around the world and use that information to inform development in the US. We are using that information to inform development but also to help prioritize research, data, and monitoring needs for the future.
- We started with about a year of pretty extensive stakeholder engagement and outreach to identify the key topic areas that were needed for more synthesis as well as the products that would be most useful. We began by developing a set of educational research briefs on several topics.
- We also held a four-part webinar series in late 2021, early 2022. All of the recordings are available on the website. They featured presentations covering the information within the briefs but also some subject matter expert panel discussions and Q&A.
- We have research recommendations for the Pacific and Atlantic Coasts. These are synthesized environmental research recommendations. Our team worked to review about 40 documents, journal articles, comment letters, etc. We took over 500 research recommendations and synthesized them into a downloadable database.
- Finally, I'll talk about the Pacific Collaborative Group Questionnaire. Now that we've finished our first three years we're looking to expand and help stand up a regional coordinating group. If you could take a few minutes to provide some feedback, we're really looking at your feedback on the need for a group, what the structure would look like, and who should be involved.
- We are planning more webinars so keep an eye out for those. If you subscribe to the TETHYS list, all of the webinars go out in that newsletter.

- John Hansen (WCOA): We distributed the survey to our Tribal Caucus. There's a project on the east coast called the Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative that the east coast ROPs helped stand up in working through their data portals. There is increasing chatter about doing the same kind of process on the west coast. There is a parallel conversation happening through environmental NGOs. It's definitely more groups like Audubon, TNC, Ocean Conservancy and a few others who are organizing that.
- Paul Michel (NOAA): Do you need to register to access the tools part?
 - Hayley Farr (PNNL): No, you don't. There's only one page where researchers can allow their contact information to be shared and that's the only one you'd need to register for.

John Hansen (WCOA) provided an overview of the WCOA offshore wind efforts.

- We have plans for an Offshore Wind Summit and we have an Offshore Wind Working Group that's been dormant for a few months. We identified some initial tasks around coordinating and planning, looking at best practices, broader engagement, and planning the Summit. The Summit would bring together broader stakeholders to share and identify what needs there are with respect to offshore wind.
- Jenn Mattox (CA State Lands Commission): I don't want to repeat any points and I'm really glad Hayley was able to be on this call and we're looking to facilitate some connections between our group and what SEER is putting together. It's something we've been talking about on my agency's team. We're still trying to wrap our head around what the SEER team puts together and how the WCOA team puts together can be complimentary and not duplicative. I hope this connection is something that can be pulled out and refined to define all of the things we want to do and then what things WCOA can facilitate versus what is the SEER team doing. It raises again the issue of strategically bringing in some of the other important entities like the Energy Commission and Coastal Commission. We'd like to see a coordinated strategy outlined.

West Coast Ocean Data Portal Update

Andy Lanier (OR DLCD, WCODP) provided an update on the West Coast Ocean Data Portal.

- The Portal was successful in getting some temporary support after Marisa Nixon left in August last year. I would like to introduce Samantha Coccia-Schillo. She comes to us by way of a recommendation of the Co-Chair of the NE Ocean Data Portal.
 - Samantha Coccia-Schillo (Independent GIS Contractor): I've been working since December on digging into the WCODP. I previously was with the Office of Coastal Zone Management in Massachusetts and was their GIS Specialist for six years. I'm very familiar with a lot of coastal and ocean data. I'm excited to help out where I can.
- We've tasked her first with reorganization of map layers and our visualization tool. Over the next month or so you should start seeing that start to ship up. As her experience grows we'll have her doing some additional tasks.
- Steve Weisberg has been continuing to work with partners on the indicator development. As you saw at the beginning of the meeting, Jen provided the California ocean health indicators that they've been working on. Steve has been collaborating closely with them so the work was vetted by folks at the state agencies in California. We're trying to understand the overlap of what CA needs and what the West Coast needs.

- I have been keeping up with the administrative burden of making sure that contracts get completed on time and new contracts get implemented for work products and the programs including indicator dashboard development. Knowing about that new workload, John and I are putting our heads together and will be developing a scope of work and position description so we can acquire some more full-time permanent help. Someone who can really take the helm of the Portal and help it progress.
- Jenn Mattox (CA State Lands Commission): If folks look at the indicators in our annual report, they are preliminary and a work in progress. We'll be continuing to refine those.

Additional Updates

- Becky Smyth (NOAA): As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, we have the Tribal ROP Grants and we are hiring a federal term position for four years to help us with managing the grants we have and the future grants but also making sure Tribes have assistance in this region and the other regions. We'll have John help distribute that.
- John Hansen (WCOA): At the end of last year there was passage of language included in the ROP Bill that authorized ROPs within NOAA. Effectively now we have authorization. It gives us more formality. There's no funding attached to that.
 - Becky Smyth (NOAA): It does codify the four existing ROPs and provides for interagency support for, not just NOAA. It does also require NOAA to provide a process for approving additional ROPs and we're also required to provide reports every five years about the accomplishments. The timing of the funding and when our first report should be due will be really good.
- John Hansen (WCOA): I'm going to be doing some travel on behalf of the Alliance for some conferences and meetings.

END CALL