



# West Coast OCEAN ALLIANCE

October 2021

Member Call

## SUMMARY

Friday, October 1, 2021

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### 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)

**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)

### CALL SUMMARY

#### West Coast Offshore Wind Planning

*John Hansen (WCOA) provided a brief introduction to the offshore wind energy topic, followed by BOEM staff providing an update on the latest state-level Task Force activities.*

- Necy Sumait (BOEM): In Oregon, the next Task Force meeting is scheduled for [October 21<sup>st</sup>](#). At that meeting we'll be reporting on the last several months of outreach that's happened in Oregon around offshore wind. Data engagement occurred all along the coast of Oregon and share what we learned.

- In California, we are having scoping meetings and doing the Environmental Assessment for the Humboldt call area. For the central coast, we have just closed the comment period for additional call areas adjacent to the Morro Bay call area, and soon will complete an Environmental Assessment. We hope to combine those into a single environmental review as part of a single lease sale for California, anticipated in fall of 2022.
- In Washington, BOEM has not yet received any applications for offshore wind energy projects in that area of the coast.
- [Doug Boren was recently named the new Pacific Regional Director for BOEM](#), and we are pleased to have our new director in place as we head into offshore wind leases in the future.
- Andy Lanier (Oregon DLCD): We've spent nearly a year working on cataloging relevant data and putting it into our state OroWindMap tool, resulting in over 325 datasets. You can use the West Coast Ocean Data Portal to [access this tool](#) and find other data resources; we've been excited to hear from stakeholders in Oregon and find priority data needs and existing data gaps.
- Jenn Eckerle (CA Ocean Protection Council): In California, we are working very hard on connecting multiple state agencies to discuss offshore wind. We're having regular meetings to discuss and coordinate on data and information related to impacts to marine life, habitat, fishermen and coastal resources and relevant links to offshore wind planning. In terms of timing, we anticipate the CA Coastal Commission will have a potential consistency determination for the north coast call area in March of 2022, and similar determination for the central coast in June of 2022.
- Joe Schumacker (Quinault Indian Tribe): We are in the very early stages of the Grays Harbor Wind project, which is being proposed in the treaty area of the Quinault. No formal application has yet been filed with BOEM for the project. Recently the project leads presented to the Washington Coast Marine Advisory Council (WCMAC) to share information for that group ([link to meeting information](#)). We hope to have a more formal presentation on this project for the WCOA on the December member call.
- Casey Dennehey (WA Dept. of Ecology): At the state level we are well prepared to engage on this type of project with the state's marine spatial planning program, with a focus on gathering data and information for permitting and approvals for state agencies, including federal consistency.
- Jen Hennessey (WA Governor's Office): We have heard that the leads for the Grays Harbor project are still working with the Quinault tribe on siting and project scale, and also engaging with the Dept. of Defense on how the project may overlap with DOD training areas. A formal project application may come after these discussions wrap up. Looking at the full region, with activities now in all three states there seems to be a great opportunity for this WCOA group to define what activities it can support to continue to connect regional partners.

## **Offshore Wind Planning Developments**

*Necy Sumait (BOEM) led an update on the activities of the Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Forces in California and Oregon.*

- California
  - There was a virtual Task Force meeting on July 13, during which BOEM provided a description of the next steps for the leasing process in California on the North

Coast and Central Coast. On July 28, BOEM announced that the Humboldt Wind Energy Area was formally designated, and the environmental review under NEPA has started on the North Coast. This NEPA review will include site characterization activities and site assessment activities (BOEM will do a second environmental review when they have a complete project description with construction and operations plans). The public scoping period will end for the NEPA review for the North Coast on September 13, and BOEM will announce a virtual scoping meeting soon. On the Central Coast, as stated in the July 28 announcement, BOEM published in the Federal Register a call for information and nomination on areas adjacent to the Morro Bay Call Area ("Morro Bay Call Area East and West Extensions"). All of these areas are within a 399 square mile area adjacent to the Morro Bay Call Area that was identified in 2018. The public comment period for this ends on September 13. Regarding tribal consultation, BOEM sent letters of notification and invitations for Government-to-Government consultation to federally recognized tribes. As in the past, BOEM will also continue to partner with the State through the California Energy Commission (CEC) and their tribal engagement process; the CEC will send notifications to non-federally recognized tribes. Meeting summaries and announcements related to all of these updates can be found on the BOEM California Activities site at <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/california>.

- Oregon
  - In Oregon, BOEM is continuing with the data gathering and engagement effort to inform offshore wind leasing. There was a webinar on August 4 and another on August 11 that focused on public data review, and there will be a virtual Task Force meeting sometime this Fall to present the results of the data gathering and engagement effort. Looking ahead, there will also likely be a Task Force meeting in Winter 2021/22 to review potential draft call areas.
  - Andy Lanier (Oregon Coastal Management Program): Since we started this endeavor and decided to build the OROWindMap tool [to support the data gathering and engagement process in Oregon], there have been over 270 different data sets identified and aggregated into the OROWindMap system. We just completed some pages on the Portal that document these resources and provide links to all of the relevant metadata that is housed within the tool. During the workshop that happened on Wednesday [August 4], we went through a comprehensive review of what is in the catalog. The August 11 webinar will focus on the marine fisheries, and we've been very active working with our fishing communities and trying to engage our State staff to review the information we've aggregated. So, a lot of progress has been made and there is some great new content available on the West Coast Ocean Data Portal. I would encourage you to go to the BOEM Oregon page to find the slideshow that was presented on August 4, because it also provides all the links to the data and information. Link: <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/Oregon>
  - Nocy Sumait (BOEM): I wanted to add that another set of webinars happened with the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC). PFMC has recorded that and the link to those two day-long webinars are also found on the BOEM Oregon site: <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/Oregon>
- Non-wind update: BSEE, BOEM's sister agency, published a Notice of Intent to prepare a programmatic EIS for oil and gas decommissioning activities on the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf. This NOI initiates a 45 day comment period (closing September 7, 2021). Link to Federal Register notice:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/07/23/2021-15723/programmatic-environmental-impact-statement-for-oil-and-gas-decommissioning-activities-on-the>

*Other WCOA Members shared additional updates related to offshore energy on the West Coast.*

- Caren Braby (Pacific Fishery Management Council and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife): The Council in June of this year established a Marine Planning Committee that has representatives from each of the FMPs that are part of the Council Management of fisheries, as well as representatives from each of the three West Coast states, Washington, Oregon, and California. Tribes have a seat and conservation has a seat. The Council built this advisory group for marine planning both for offshore wind and aquaculture, and then any other planning issues that come up. So we are better armed to engage and it's not just me trying to represent the Council now, but me as well as the Marine Planning Committee.
- Paul Michel (NOAA): Just a heads up that there are a couple of proposed offshore wind projects off of Vandenberg in state waters in CA. There are two companies proposing some demonstration projects; I think a total of about eight different wind turbines are proposed to go in and be decommissioned, after they've demonstrated whatever they're supposed to be demonstrating. But just a heads up to the group on that information.
- Joe Schumacker (Quinalt Indian Nation): There is a joint venture that has just gone public here in Washington in the last week or so. It's called Grays Harbor Wind. Grays Harbor Wind has a relationship with the Quinalt Indian Nation and will look at the prospect of an offshore wind energy facility that may be or not be situated within the Quinalt ocean treaty area. It is in its earliest stages of development at this time and there are currently no leases or lease applications. More information can be found here: <https://www.graysharborwind.com/>
- John Hansen (WCOA): There is one more update from the East Coast; NROC and MARCO have partnered with CSSF to launch what they call a Regional Wildlife Science Entity or RWSE, specific to offshore wind planning and related to science and data around impacts, tracking at a regional scale what science and data really are doing to inform offshore wind planning. I'm still learning about this and my hope is to connect more with the staff supporting this. Above all, I think it represents an interesting model for us on the West Coast for how regional discussions are starting to focus around offshore wind, and how they are bringing together key players to think about how science and data can support planning processes. More information can be found in the following press release: <https://www.nwf.org/Home/Latest-News/Press-Releases/2021/7-21-21-Regional-Wildlife-Science-Entity>

### **West Coast Ocean Data Portal Update**

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

- We are on track to begin FY21 funding from NOAA's Regional Data Sharing initiative this fall; we will have a kickoff meeting in September and this will be our third year receiving funding through this initiative, which includes an increase for 2021. Related to this funding, NOAA is beginning a technical working group for the regions participating to check in more frequently and better collaborate.
- West Coast Ocean Health Dashboard indicator updates:
  - Bacterial water quality: Heal the Bay produced some preliminary grades for the West Coast and its respective states recently, and we are working on next steps with them to make some revisions to the methodology, review it with regional

water quality experts, and work on visualizing that data and constructing a narrative to accompany it.

- Kelp: We have continued to work with a group of data providers and researchers in Southern California to compare different data collection methods for kelp extent on the Point Loma kelp bed, as a ground-truthing site. In the last several months we've been joined by a staff member from SCCWRP, Christina Frieder, who has been a great addition and who has conducted several correlation analyses looking at how the different diver, aerial overflight and satellite datasets that we have agree with one another. We are at a point where we are ready to apply some of the insights we've gained to dig into a coast-wide indicator for canopy-forming kelp extent, along with a series of sentinel sites that reflect other measures of kelp forest health over time for specific beds on the West Coast.
- Ocean acidification: NANOOS produced two recommendations for OA indicators earlier this year, and the next phase of developing those will take a significant amount of coordination with observational data PIs and modelers. We are in the process of communicating with NANOOS about what exactly this will look like.
- Spatial Coordination Framework: the concept for this tool has been around for some time, and we've heard from several WCOA members recently that developing it now would be timely because of the expected increase in things like consultation requests on the West Coast related to offshore energy, etc. We are in the process of getting a thorough estimate and work plan together for the software and user interface for that tool, to hopefully come to fruition in early 2022.
- Andy Lanier (Oregon Coastal Management Program, WCODP): I also want to point out that we as a state [Oregon] are applying for a grant to test out the ability to have interpretation from slightly better satellite imagery for the last five years of time, both for mapping kelp, as well as eelgrass within Oregon's estuaries. That would be for a researcher at Portland State University to help develop algorithms so that we can, on an annual basis, run a tool to create features from the years worth of imagery.

## **West Coast Tribal Caucus Report**

*John Hansen (WCOA) gave an update on the recent activities of the West Coast Tribal Caucus.*

- We are having ongoing internal discussions amongst the Tribal Caucus about activities and focus areas. We have a couple years worth of discussions around priorities Tribal Caucus members have identified, which go back to some things Katie Wrubel [former Makah Tribe staff member and Tribal Caucus Coordinator) helped coordinate and pull together, and we have been trying to build on that and continue the discussion of what current needs look like as we head into late 2021 and then 2022 so we can represent the needs and the goals of our tribal membership as clearly and as accurately as possible. For those tribal members and representatives that are on the line, I've sent out an email to set up one-on-one calls, and I've had a couple of those so far. These are extremely helpful and this is an opportunity to just connect with you on behalf of your specific tribe, to hear about needs and what's working on the Caucus, as well as what things are missing and could be built on. In the Fall we hope to have a draft work plan that will again be vetted by our Tribal Caucus to clearly delineate those goals and tasks and timelines.
- Related to identifying those priorities is our ongoing dialogue with the Udall Foundation. They have been fantastic supporting the NOAA training that already happened and building activities around the Tribal Engagement Document. Udall is now also seeking

input from tribes on some potential larger ideas around tribal engagement on the West Coast, and so this is again a reminder to Tribal Caucus members on the line to provide feedback to Dana if you would like to.

- In regard to the trainings Udall supported with the Tribal Caucus for NOAA, we received great feedback and are looking to see how those can continue within NOAA and potentially with other agencies. This is something we will continue to keep you updated on, and welcome input from other Alliance members in regard to what opportunities there might be for other trainings and what that looks like. The flip side of that coin is understanding what that entails in terms of the time and capacity of tribal staff to participate, because one of the best parts of these trainings has been highlighting tribal voices on them. So, we want to understand how we can best support tribal staff to participate in the preparation and delivery of future trainings, and whether that involves additional funding and time to maybe build a training program in the future.
- We are currently talking to private funders, obviously for larger Alliance support, but also specifically around supporting tribal engagement in the region and delivering trainings around the Guidance Document produced by the Caucus. Ultimately, any decisions in this realm again will need to go through the tribes to define what that would look like and what potential outputs would be.
- We now have standing agenda items from both NOAA and BOEM on our monthly Tribal Caucus calls, where they have an opportunity to share updates of interest to tribal members. If other agencies on this call have an interest in connecting directly with our tribal representatives, those monthly calls are a great way to do that, and you can get in touch with John Hansen directly to speak to him about a place on the agenda.

### **West Coast Aquaculture Activities Update**

*John Hansen (WCOA) shared West Coast aquaculture updates on behalf of Diane Windham (California Aquaculture Coordinator for NOAA West Coast Region) and Dan Tonnes (Washington and Oregon Aquaculture Coordinator for NOAA West Coast Region).*

- The NCCOS Spatial Atlas for the Southern CA Aquaculture Opportunity Area (AOA) is being submitted to the Center for Independent Experts for peer review Friday August 6. The peer review will be conducted over the month of August. After peer review, NCCOS will conduct final revisions, per the peer review results, with an intended publication date for the final Atlas on November 1, 2021. NMFS hopes to publish the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare the Programmatic EIS (PEIS) for the Southern CA AOA shortly after the Atlas is published. The NOI will include a public comment period, and triggers initiation of the NEPA process and drafting the PEIS.
- There are several current aquaculture funding opportunities to be aware of:
  - Pacific States Marine Aquaculture Pilot Projects: the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC), with cooperation and funding from the NOAA Fisheries Office of Aquaculture, will be issuing approximately \$640,000 in grants to fund marine aquaculture pilot projects focusing on sustainable aquatic farming techniques and regional business practices to grow U.S. domestic seafood. The deadline for proposals is August 20, 2021. Learn more: [https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/pacific-states-marine-aquaculture-pilot-projects?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/pacific-states-marine-aquaculture-pilot-projects?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)
  - Multi-stressor Federal Funding Opportunity: NOAA is soliciting proposals to increase our understanding of the combined impacts of multiple stressors, including harmful algal blooms, deoxygenation, ocean acidification, and increasing temperatures, on the function and health of marine ecosystems within

the context of climate change. Letters of intent are due October 4, 2021, full applications are due January 18, 2022. Learn more:

[https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/news/noaa-announces-fy22-multi-stressor-federal-funding-opportunity/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/news/noaa-announces-fy22-multi-stressor-federal-funding-opportunity/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

- EDA American Rescue Plan Programs: Under the American Rescue Plan, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) was allocated \$3 billion in supplemental funding to assist communities nationwide in their efforts to build back better. EDA is making this funding available through a series of six innovative challenges. Deadlines vary. Learn more: [https://eda.gov/arpa/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://eda.gov/arpa/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

## **Member Updates**

*Various WCOA members gave updates from their respective entities for the awareness of the group.*

- Patty Snow (Oregon Coastal Management Program): Our legislature decided to fund our agency to look at submerged cables and their management, so we'll be hiring a limited duration staff member for that in the very near future and looking to update the submerged cable portion of our Territorial Sea Plan. The Oregon Ocean Science Trust was funded for the first time and that funding will be primarily going to ocean acidification and hypoxia issues. Next, another bill was passed that requires the Oregon Department of Energy to look at the constraints and opportunities for developing 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030. Finally, we will be getting an Oregon Sea Grant Fellow to help us look at tribal coordination and especially federal consistency reviews with our Oregon-based federally-recognized tribes. They will be starting in mid-September.
- Katie Morris (Department of Energy Water Power Technologies Office): We have a recent request for applications open related to a program in DOE called the Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Project. This is primarily geared at supporting coastal and remote communities with technical assistance for energy planning purposes. We are seeking a Pacific Northwest Regional partner and the applications for that are due August 31. So if folks know of organizations within the Pacific Northwest who might be interested, we'd appreciate it if you could reach out to them. We will also be having a second cohort of community applications later this year, which will include communities in the Pacific Northwest. Link: <https://www.energy.gov/eere/energy-transitions-initiative-partnership-project-what-we-do>

END CALL