



West Coast OCEAN ALLIANCE

October 2022

Member Call

SUMMARY

October 7, 2022

Attendees

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

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

State Staff: Caren Braby (ODFW/PFMC), Jennifer Mattox (CA State Lands Commission), Casey Denehy (WA Dept. of Ecology), Tanya Haddad (OR DLCD), Brittany Poirson (WA DNR), Heather Hall (WDFW)

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), Joe Schumacker (Quinalt Indian Nation), Garrett Gray (Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians), Carl Merkle (Confederated Umatilla Tribes), Chairwoman Louise J. Miranda Ramirez (Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation), Scarlett Schroeder (Strategic Earth Consulting/Trinidad Rancheria)

Federal Staff: Necy Sumait (BOEM), Alden Lundy (BOEM), Kris Wall (NOAA), Stef Stavrakas (USFWS), Frank Pendleton (BOEM), Liesl Olson (USCG), Jessica Curran (Navy), Michelle St. Martin (USFWS), Katie Wrubel (Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary), Bridgette Lohrman (EPA), Jeff Ferguson (NOAA), Sara Guiltinan (BOEM), Tricia Perez (DOE), Yvonne Fish (BIA), Dana Goodson (Udall Foundation)

CALL SUMMARY

Fall 2022 & 2023 WCOA Activities Preview

John Hansen (WCOA) provided an overview of the fall 2022 and 2023 WCOA activities.

- The ROP Funding proposal was submitted a few months ago for years 1-2 of the 5 year program. The total budget was \$1.9M per year. Funds are expected to be disbursed in December. Kris Wall (NOAA) is waiting to get more clarity on when the funds will be

received. Our fiscal sponsor is the Coastal States Stewardship Foundation (CSSF). They'll be handling all of the fiscal details of this, including making sure we're following federal guidelines, handling contractors, etc.

- Please use the google form to sign up for working groups and hiring committees.
- This funding will allow us to hire two new staff. We have a hiring committee for both of these positions as well as a scope and budget for the positions. The budget is about \$94k for each. These will be contract positions. We'll do interview panels. For the Project Coordinator, the hiring committee will provide selection recommendations and the WCOA Leadership Team will make the final selection. For the Tribal Coordinator, the hiring committee will provide selection recommendations and the WCOA Tribal Caucus will select the final candidate. The hope is if our funding arrives in December, we'd get these announcements out in the next couple of weeks.
- The 5-year strategic plan will inform our work for the next five years. The budget is \$300k to have a contractor come in and see where we can be the most effective. This will define the work of the group in real time and also have us be clear about how we'll be successful in the next five years of NOAA funding. We'll be sending an RFP out and looking to get someone onboard. The RFP will have to go to NOAA for an additional approval. The Leadership Team will be really hands-on on that but anyone else can join.
 - Kris Wall (NOAA): I just want to add this is a really important and exciting piece. On the NOAA funding side, we're asking all of the ROPs to put together a five year plan. We really want to make sure each of the Partnerships is on a path to success and will be able to carry on after this funding runs out. For the West Coast, I'm really excited about the opportunity to make a strategic plan because I think it's really going to shift our focus.
- Another big piece of our proposal was in-person meetings. We have three tentatively planned for next year: Tribal Summit (Spring), Offshore Wind Summit (Summer), and the WCOA Annual Meeting (Fall). Our last in-person meeting was in 2019 and it was really helpful. Early feedback on the Wind meeting has been really positive. There's support for WCOA to be a convener in this space.
- We have funding in our proposal to create a new cohort of Sea Grant Fellows on the West Coast that would support the Alliance. We anticipate having three or four fellows. We'd have Fellows come on as soon as Fall 2023 and they'll address any number of topics.
- There are some other elements of our proposal:
 - Tribal Engagement and Training Program: We'll have a contractor coming on to start setting up the training program using our Tribal engagement guidance document to build on previous training.
 - Aquaculture Inventory & Best Practices: In our first year we'll create an inventory of current aquaculture projects and proposed projects. In year two will be a focus on sharing best practices.
 - WCOA Communications Support: This will help the Alliance gain more visibility and support communication tools for Alliance projects. We have funding to contract with a communications outfit to help us with this.
- A separate funding opportunity was put out for Tribes to support their engagement in ROPs and their own ocean work. That was a separate opportunity with a separate timeline.
 - Kris Wall (NOAA): Proposals are undergoing merit review now and we hope to make selections by the end of October. Funding would go out by January.
- For Tribal support in our region, we do have approximately \$100k in our budget that will go to a Tribal Ocean Planning Grant Program through our Alliance. The primary use will

support Tribal engagement in the Alliance. Any remaining funds can go to projects that are proposed to the Tribal Caucus.

WCOA Administration: Leadership Team & Member Charter

John Hansen (WCOA) provided an update on the WCOA Leadership Team and Charter.

- With this new funding coming in, we are going to be ramping up how we make decisions and move things forward.
- A new MOU is being circulated among the Executive Committee. I'm looking to change the name of the Executive Committee to the Leadership Team. Currently we have NOAA and BOEM, each of the three States, and Joe Schumacker as the de facto Tribal Caucus liaison. That group has oversight of my activities. We need to decide if we keep the same structure or shift it. This needs to be the strategic decision making body of the group. They don't want to do that in a silo so they want it linked back to you in an efficient way. The MOU would define Caucuses and what leadership of them looks like.
- We'll also be doing a new Charter. We had one for the Regional Planning Body. The Charter defines who's a part of the group, how we make decisions, and how we resolve disputes. The West Coast RPB Charter will be a foundation for the new Charter so we aren't starting from scratch. We will be asking for formal signature on the Charter.

Offshore Wind Update

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

- National update: On September 15th the Departments of Energy, Interior, Commerce, and Transportation launched joint new initiatives on floating offshore wind energy. These initiatives include three goals:
 - Lower cost of floating technologies by 70% by 2035
 - Research and development investments
 - Deploy 15 GWh of floating offshore wind capacity by 2035 (starting with the planned California lease sale at the end of the year).
- California:
 - On October 5th, BOEM released the final environmental assessment for the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area. This environmental assessment considers the potential impacts for the potential for leases in the energy area. Those impacts may include site characteristics and site assessment activities (the installation of meteorological surveys). BOEM issued a finding of no significant impact. Those materials are available on BOEM's website.
 - The final Humboldt environmental assessment was released earlier this year in May.
 - The pre-leasing environmental reviews are now complete. We continue to prepare for a lease sale by the end of 2022. Since the close of the public comment period of the proposed sale notice BOEM has been reviewing the comments along with information from Tribal Consultations and non-consultation Tribal Engagement. The next milestone will be publishing the Final Sale Notice. That will describe the final lease areas that will be offered for auction, auction format, date of the auction, and a list of qualified bidders along with the final lease contract.
- Oregon:

- There was a call for information and nominations published earlier this year in two areas: Coos Bay and Brookings. The comment period closed in June and BOEM received 278 comments. We're reviewing those comments.
- BOEM announced in September that we're going to collaborate with NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCOS) on a spatial modeling analysis of those call areas. That analysis will inform draft wind energy areas.
 - Frank Pendleton (BOEM): We started a modeling exercise with the team from NCOS. We're creating suitability models – taking the call areas and finding the most suitable areas. The first step has been to reach out to all of our partners and get any data we might need and we're in good shape because of the WCODP. The next step is working on the constraint model – the 'no go' areas. We'll do a variety of these constraint models from very conservative to not. Next we'll do the sustainability model which will include a much broader dataset. In the process we'll be reaching out to various groups for input. Ultimately, this will inform where wind energy areas will go in the call areas.
 - Stefanie Stravakas (USFWS): What kind of environmental constraints are you using as elimination factors?
 - Frank Pendleton (BOEM): In the environmental constraints we've reached out to NOAA and folks from Fish and Wildlife about bird issues. There's been a lot of work over the years developing two different datasets: where are birds and how vulnerable different species are to offshore wind. For other datasets we've reached out to NMFS and ODFW to give us information on fishing and bottom habitats. I've been working with a lot of partners.
 - Mark Healy (Coquille Indian Tribe): Would Humboldt be included in that model?
 - Frank Pendleton (BOEM): This is specifically for the call areas for Brookings and Coos Bay. It will not include anything outside of those areas.
- Washington:
 - BOEM received two unsolicited lease requests of the coast of southern Washington state. We're still doing a completeness review. BOEM will hold Tribal consultation meetings on the completeness.
- Stefanie Stravakas (USFWS): Is BOEM evaluating any of the transmission to get the offshore energy where it needs to go?
 - Sara Gultinan (BOEM): BOEM does not have any authority to regulate transmission infrastructure. Our authority is on the outer continental shelf so we can't make decisions about transmission. We fully realize it's all connected. BOEM has provided some funding to research efforts to look at transmission. Currently BOEM is taking a support the research kind of role. A number of different authorities are responsible for the decision making for transmission infrastructure.
 - Nocy Sumait (BOEM): As Sara said, we provide access to the lease area but connection is really under the purview of the State.

John Hansen (WCOA) provided an update on the WCOA Offshore Wind Working Group.

- The idea is to reinvigorate a discussion among our members about offshore wind. The working group will have a more active dialogue to identify planning and coordination

needs and exchange ideas. Some initial ideas came up about the Offshore Wind Summit. The need for sharing best practices was identified.

West Coast Ocean Data Portal Update

John Hansen (WCOA) provided an update on the Ocean Data Portal.

- The biggest thing the WCODP is the Ocean Health Dashboard. We're also planning for the new funding coming through our ROP proposal – the bulk of which will develop new indicators. Outreach is happening within the Caucuses as well to get targeted input on the indicators.
- Andy Lanier (OR DLCD, WCODP): The biggest update is that with Marissa Nixon's departure the ball has been passed to my co-chair and I. Steve Weisberg is going to be leading the Ocean Health Dashboard Initiative. I want to have guidance from the Alliance as we work on the Strategic Plan on how much the focus on the Portal is. I will be handling more of the day-to-day tasks that keep the Portal running. The new Portland technical support position will be one coming later this fall. We hope to get somebody on board so we can have that added capacity back.

Update: West Coast Blue Pages Tool

John Hansen (WCOA) provided an update on the Blue Pages Tool.

- This funding is coming from BOEM. We have contracted with Ecotrust to support development of the tool. The deadline has been pushed back to March. Ecotrust is now taking on a new input form for the tool. Originally the form was a google form. The new form will be available in early 2023. Form submissions will go directly into the database. We're going to try to get everyone's information into the tool in January and February for the anticipated launch in March.

END CALL