

Marine Spatial Planning Strategy Overview

Why do a strategy for Marine Spatial Planning?

A strategy will help further describe overall benefits, reasoning, information needs and steps for developing marine spatial plans in Washington. It will also help us develop a reasonable, practical approach by refining the breadth, depth and phasing for planning, including evaluating and understanding estimated costs for certain activities. The strategy will not only serve as a good foundation for the planning process, but can also be used to prioritize and leverage projects and activities that are essential for developing a plan.

In January 2011, the state provided a series of recommendations to the WA state legislature outlining a general MSP framework and identifying a series of next steps to prepare for MSP. A strategy is essential to continue our progress on next steps, provide more detail to guide the planning process, and create a clearer sense of priorities, projects and costs for planning. The strategy also provides a way of engaging and coordinating with all the interested parties and identifying and creating a sense of common interest and shared priorities, where possible.

What is Marine Spatial Planning?

Marine spatial planning (MSP) has the potential to improve the management of marine resources by spatially classifying human uses in locations that are socially and ecologically suitable. This type of planning can:

- Reduce conflicts among uses
- Promote compatible uses
- Reduce environmental impacts
- Streamline the regulatory process
- Reduce transaction costs
- Increase efficiency of marine resource use
- Address emerging uses of marine resources

The state has existing needs that will be filled through the MSP process, such as improving coordination among agencies, tribes and stakeholders. MSP provides an avenue which coordinates our efforts to solve our shared resource management challenges by providing a common decision making framework. MSP provides an opportunity for coordinated planning approaches, particularly future uses, such as renewable ocean energy projects.

How does Washington's MSP law provide a foundation to move forward?

Recognizing the utility of MSP to address resource use conflicts in Washington waters, the state enacted a law for developing marine spatial plans in Washington's marine waters (Revised Code of Washington 43.372). Under this law the comprehensive plan must include an ecosystem assessment; a series of maps; use priorities and limitations for federal waters; an implementation strategy and a framework for coordinating review of renewable ocean energy proposals. The law also tasks a marine interagency team with conducting planning once funding is available.

What will the MSP strategy include?

The MSP strategy will describe the overall benefits, reasoning, information needs, and steps of the planning process to help us develop a reasonable, practical approach to MSP. By creating a strategic plan now, we can develop the structural skeleton of the larger planning process and gather input from partners on the associated needs, options, activities and priorities.

Key elements of the strategic plan will include:

- **Need:** Define the need for MSP in WA by compiling a list of existing human/ use conflicts in state waters.
- **Scope:** Develop a clear vision, goals, principles, boundary of the spatial plan that is shared by key partners and stakeholders.
- **Data Needs and Management:** Provide scope of studies required by WA law. Identify initial data priorities. Suggest a suite of options for collecting social, ecological and economic data with estimated costs for each method of data collection.
- **Issue Assessment:** Create a synthesis report of current ocean energy technology which provides an overview of relevant links, references of organizations working in the industry. A series of questions related to management needs will be answered in an effort to identify key information gaps at various scales of the MSP process.
- **Partner Involvement and Stakeholder Engagement:** Assess mechanisms for the engagement of stakeholders and partners to better understand the capacity and resources needed to conduct the MSP process.
- **Project Management:** Develop a coordination strategy and structure at various stages in the scoping, planning and action phases of the project which include mechanisms for information sharing and adaptive feedback.

How can the Coastal Advisory Body become engaged in the Marine Spatial Planning Strategy?

- Identify what information needs or questions are important to create a marine spatial plan
- Provide feedback on elements of the MSP Strategy
- Identify ways to reach other stakeholders and encourage participation in the MSP planning process
- Others?

For more information, please contact:

Jennifer Hennessey

360-407-6595

Jennifer.hennessey@ecy.wa.gov