



Meeting Summary
State Ocean Caucus outreach meeting
Ocosta High School Library
Westport, WA
February 13, 2008 3:30 pm – 6 pm

Copies of all electronic presentations and handouts mentioned in the summary below will be posted on the State Ocean Caucus website. Hard copies are also available upon request, contact Jennifer Hennessey at email: jenh461@ecy.wa.gov or phone: 360-407-6595.

Introductions and attendance

Jennifer Hennessey, Washington Department of Ecology and coordinator for State Ocean Caucus opened the meeting with welcome and introductions.

State Ocean Caucus members in attendance			
Agency	Representative	Email	Phone
Emergency Management Division	Linda Crerar	l.crerar@emd.wa.gov	253-512-7119
Governor's Policy Office	Kathleen Drew	kathleen.drew@gov.wa.gov	360-902-0648
WA Department of Ecology	Brian Lynn	blyn461@ecy.wa.gov	360-407-6224
WA Department of Fish and Wildlife	Michele Culver	culvemkc@dfw.wa.gov	360-249-1211
WA Department of Natural Resources	John Hansen (in for Sarah Dzinbal)	john.hansen@dnr.wa.gov	360-902-1109
WA State Parks	Chris Regan	chris.regan@parks.wa.gov	360-902-8632

Twenty-four members of the public signed the attendance sheet for this meeting. This may not have captured all meeting attendees.

Update on ocean and coastal issues

Jennifer Hennessey provided a **presentation and update on ocean and coastal issues including the state ocean caucus and its work plan.**

The State Ocean Caucus is a team of state agencies coordinating on outer coast issues specifically and acting on recommendations contained in Washington's Ocean Action Plan. The group developed an advisory group, which is open to participation by any interested person. In addition, the group



The State Ocean Caucus developed a 2011 Work Plan to prioritize recommendations and activities on Washington's Ocean Action Plan. The work plan covers a wide range of topics. A copy was available as a handout and is also posted on the website. A few specific activities were highlighted including completed and future work on ocean research, ocean energy, erosion and sediment management, sustainable communities, and governance. See presentation for details.

The West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health is an agreement signed among the governors of Oregon, Washington and California. Over the past year, the three states have been developing an action plan. The final plan is expected to be released very soon, likely in March 2008. This plan also helps advance several recommendations in Washington's Ocean Action Plan.

Washington Sea Grant is working with the other West Coast Sea Grant programs to develop a Regional Research Priorities Plan. During the past fall and winter, Washington Sea Grant held a series of workshops and collected input on research priorities in Washington, including a workshop in Ocean Shores. The Sea Grant programs are currently compiling and analyzing the information and will produce a draft plan for public review during this summer. The programs will release a final plan in the fall. The plan is intended to be used by a wide range of entities (state, federal, local, tribal governments, as well as other public and private institutions) to prioritize investments in research for the region.

Information was also provided on a few bills pending in the state legislature on ocean issues. These included bills on marine resource committees and tidal and wave energy.

State Ocean Caucus members added some other news and highlights. State Parks will work on recreation and conservation plans for more of the area state parks during summer of 2008.

Outer coast ocean research and monitoring efforts – Jan Newton, Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems (NANOOS)

Jan Newton provided a presentation that outlined the mission of NANOOS within the context of national efforts to improve ocean and coastal information through Integrated Ocean Observing Systems (IOOS). Ocean and coastal data is important for a variety of users, but IOOS came up with seven societal goals that cover most of the major uses for ocean and coastal data. The idea is to have one system that works to meet the needs outlined by those seven areas. Not only does the system work to integrate current research and monitoring data for ocean and coasts, while also working to identify and fill data gaps and needs. While the federal agencies are working to support a nationally consistent "backbone" of data for all areas around the country, regional groups work to integrate local and regional data, and identify and fill unique data needs.

NANOOS is the regional group that covers Washington, Oregon, and northern California. NANOOS has broad membership from private businesses, state governments, academic institutions, and other stakeholders. Already, this regional group has integrated monitoring data from many areas. They also conducted user workshops to identify high priority areas for additional data. The main four areas included: safe marine operations, ecosystems impacts such



as hypoxia and Harmful Algal Blooms, fisheries, and mitigation of coastal hazards. NANOOS received a grant to begin working on expanding the data gathered to support these areas. This includes a few high frequency radars to monitor current speed and direction along Washington's coast, a monitoring buoy off the Strait of Juan de Fuca (in the Big Eddy), wave radars at a couple key ports, and sustaining other assets such as shoreline and water quality monitoring stations.

Questions and Answers:

- Q: Seems like this is just another entity doing work already done by others. Our current buoys are not working; we need to maintain the ones we have. Other key data needed for tuna fishermen is temperature and currents.
A: The idea is to have the national efforts providing basic information, but the regional groups can focus on filling data gaps that are unique to a region. No one else is working to integrate and disseminate ocean and coastal data in this way. Some data is available that predicts currents, but nothing that yields real-time data on currents. This is the data that the high frequency radars would collect.
- Q: Could this data collection be connected to growing and supporting offshore aquaculture, since it is supported by NOAA funding?
A: This effort is in a separate area of NOAA than the offshore aquaculture efforts. This effort is aimed at getting better, basic information on ocean ecosystems. Data could be used either way: to either support aquaculture or to argue against it.
- Comment: What we really need is a redesign of the buoys that the National Data Buoy Center puts out there. Right now, they have one design that is made for calmer areas like the Gulf of Mexico. Given the violent nature of our coast, we need more resilient buoys designed for heavy weather and that can be serviced from small boats during the winter (current design requires buoys getting hauled up on the ship for service, which requires calm weather).
- Comment: Best location is within 5 miles of estuary entrances to assist with bar crossings. NOAA planning to put 80 new buoys across the country. We need to make sure we get our share of these new buoys.
- Comment: We need to keep and maintain the existing buoys, as well as get new ones.
- Response: The National Data Buoy Center is in charge of maintaining and designing the buoys. However, NANOOS can help carry the message to the federal level groups working on these buoys.

Alternative Energy Briefing

Jennifer Hennessey provided information on the regulatory process for alternative energy projects. Proposals for alternative ocean energy technologies, such as wave and tidal devices, are beginning to gather momentum on the West Coast and worldwide. However, they are still new and relatively untested. Some recent pilot projects have begun to generate more information about the potential and actual impacts of these technologies, but much of the information has yet to be publicly released.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) authorizes projects in state waters. The Minerals Management Service is authorized to lease areas for offshore, federal waters. The state



agencies do have authorities related to projects and have been involved the proposed projects in the state.

Most projects in the state have preliminary permits from FERC. These permits only allow an applicant to conduct feasibility studies. Only one site has applied for a license to construct a project, Finavera's Makah Bay wave energy project. FERC recently issued a "conditional" license for this project. Department of Ecology requested a rehearing of the license, because the license was issued prior to receiving authorizations from the state.

FERC has many ways for people to get involved with proposed projects (permits or licenses) including monitoring projects through their online documents and library, providing comments to the Commission and staff, or even formally intervening in a project and potentially challenging a decision in court (you must intervene to challenge a decision in court).

Questions and Comments:

- Comments: Appreciated Ecology requesting the rehearing for the Makah Bay project.
- Q: Are there specific criteria for intervening with FERC and what are they?
A: Don't think you have to meet any specific criteria in order to intervene. Although, FERC usually wants interventions to be "timely", which means they have to be received fairly soon after an application has been accepted by FERC. The state agencies typically intervene in all FERC licenses and permits to preserve their rights in the process.
- Comment: Fishing gear, especially pots, tend to move miles from where they are placed. Concerns about crab pots and fishing gear getting entangled on energy devices, pilings or cables. Gear losses can be expensive.
- Comment: Current proposal for off of Grays Harbor seems like they are trying to take advantage of research money available with Department of Energy. Some people expressed concerns about the way the proposal was presented and its scope. They also indicated a lack of trust regarding the project's backers.
- Comment: Process seems to be moving forward without the appropriate permits and review. Concern that political pressure will result in rushed and relaxed environmental review and standards.
Response: These projects will all have to go through appropriate permitting processes. This takes time. Also agencies reminded participants that most projects are only seeking permits to study a particular location, rather than construction of a specific project. Projects will likely change during the process of studying an area. In the course of studying an area, applicants may find it is not feasible for a project.
- Comment: Concern about this project being billed as a way to generate jobs, when it is unknown how many or how stable those jobs would be. At the same time, this project will reduce or eliminate fishing jobs by reducing fishing grounds.
- Comment: The local infrastructure doesn't exist to handle a project of this size.

Group discussion and public feedback on agenda, future meetings, activities, and priorities

Comment: Many expressed appreciation for the discussion and agency participation. People also indicated the presentations were useful.



Future meetings:

State Ocean Caucus will plan to do another meeting likely in late spring (May) and fall (October or November). Specific ideas for these meetings from the group included:

- Interest in getting an update on erosion and research and monitoring done by Ecology's George Kaminsky.
- Tsunami, earthquake, and emergency preparedness. Emergency Management Division has hazard and earthquake specialists who could talk about mitigating risks from hazards.

Q: What is the status of the Doppler weather radar request and hearings? Locals have collected 100 signatures in support of the Doppler.

A: The group is working to advance this through Congressional Delegation. It sounds like Senator Cantwell has this on her list of priorities for this year. Apparently, she is working to set up hearings on the issue in D.C. possibly as soon as mid-March (March 13th?).

Q: What is state's position on NOAA Aquaculture Act?

A: State agencies worked together with Governor's office to respond to a survey by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). GAO is surveying states, federal agencies, and other experts on their opinions about offshore aquaculture and the types of policies that should apply to any legislation authorizing offshore aquaculture. The results from their analysis should be available sometime in spring 2008. One of the recommendations from Washington's Ocean Action Plan was to develop a state position on offshore aquaculture through a facilitated stakeholder process. However, the state lacks resources to conduct this review.