

**State Ocean Caucus:
Status of Activities & 2011 Work Plan Summary
January 17, 2008**

Background

As a result of national level efforts, the 2005 Washington State Legislature directed the Governor's Office to investigate state ocean resources and report back with recommendations for improving management of Washington's ocean resources. The Governor's office formed the Washington State Ocean Policy Work Group (OPWG) made up of representatives from state agencies and commissions, county commissioners, members of the State Legislature, stakeholder groups, and city, county, and port associations. In addition, tribal representatives served as observers. In December 2006, the OPWG produced its final report entitled, "Washington's Ocean Action Plan: Enhancing Management of Washington State's Ocean and Outer Coasts." The final report contained over 50 recommendations for improving protection and management of Washington's ocean resources. The 2007 legislature provided money to Department of Ecology to implement the key recommendations and actions of this final report. Ecology coordinates a team of state agencies and the Governor's office called the State Ocean Caucus to act on these recommendations.

Organized by topics, this draft work plan offers an update on the status of activities to date and a summary of ongoing and future activities currently planned through 2011. The agency or entity leading the activity is denoted by parentheses. Otherwise, the State Ocean Caucus is jointly working on the activity. The State Ocean Caucus will finalize its work plan for 2008-2011 in early 2008. **Please note, the work plan activities are not listed in priority order. Most activities involve multiple agencies; the lead agency is generally noted in parentheses.**

Fisheries and Offshore Aquaculture

Ongoing

- Increasing research on groundfish stocks through new program (WDFW). *OPWG recommendation 1-1.*

Future

- Research and collect background information on offshore aquaculture from relevant agencies. Develop scope of work and identify resources for a facilitated consensus-based process on state policy for offshore Aquaculture. *OPWG recommendation 1-3.*

Erosion and Sediment Management

Completed

- Supported and participated in developing and hosting a science-policy forum on sediment management issues in Southwest Washington's nearshore area in summer 2007. Two-day workshop was convened by Washington State and U.S. Geological Survey and facilitated by Lower Columbia Solutions Group (Ecology). *OPWG recommendations 2-9, 2-10, 2-11, and 2-12.*

Ongoing

- Developing project to use sediment beneficially and advance understanding of sediment processes in Washington's nearshore with local, state, and federal partners.

Researching policy and funding options. Aim to conduct a larger demonstration project at Benson Beach as soon as possible. (Ecology & Gov). *OPWG recommendations 2-9, 2-10 and 2-11.*

- Participating in and representing state's interests in sediment issues in the Lower Columbia Solutions Group. Working to advance regional sediment management planning for the lower Columbia River (Ecology & Gov). *OPWG recommendations 2-9, 2-10, 2-11 and 2-12.*

Future

- Evaluate funding needs and build support for improving long-term support of sediment and erosion monitoring (Ecology). *OPWG recommendation 2-12.*
- Develop and utilize regional sediment management plan to improve beneficial uses of sediment. *OPWG recommendations 2-9, 2-10, 2-11 and 2-12.*

Ocean Research

Ongoing

- Analyzing options for pursuing Doppler RADAR and additional buoys and sensors for outer coast. *OPWG recommendation 4-3.*
- Participating in Washington workshops for developing West Coast Regional Research priority planning effort organized by Washington Sea Grant. *OPWG recommendation 4-1.*

Future

- Advance Washington's seafloor and benthic habitat mapping efforts: research status of mapping efforts, prioritize areas, understand challenges, and determine steps to advance efforts in the state by hosting a workshop with technical experts. Currently planned for winter 2008. *OPWG recommendation 1-2.*
- Advocate for establishment of Doppler RADAR on outer coast and expand other key ocean monitoring systems such as weather, and multi-sensor buoys by working with Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems (NANOOS), Congressional delegation, and others. *OPWG recommendation 4-3.*
- Survey Seashore Conservation Area during 2009-2011. Efficiently use resources by examining ways to meet other research needs by matching them with the survey effort (Parks). *OPWG recommendation 2-3, 4-1E, and 6-1.*
- Continue to support recently awarded NEPTUNE project for installation of cabled observatory project. Collaborate with project lead to discuss links for project with educational and economic opportunities and needs on the outer coast. *OPWG recommendation 4-4 and 5-8.*

Ocean literacy and education

Completed

- Jointly submitted grant proposal for K-12 ocean education pilot on outer coast with Pacific Education Institute, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, and Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Grant made it to final round of review, but was not funded. *OPWG recommendation 4-5.*

Ongoing

- Advancing ocean education in Washington by assessing education needs, linking educational resources and activities, connecting with additional potential partners, and

identifying funding opportunities such as for K-12 education. Working to leverage resources within state and along West Coast, including partners such as Washington State Parks, Washington Sea Grant, and Pacific Education Institute. *OPWG recommendation 4-5 and 4-7.*

Coastal Hazards

Completed

- Established an internal policy for FCAAP grant applications giving a level of priority to coastal hazard projects (Ecology). *OPWG recommendation 2-6.*
- Revisions to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) have slightly reduced incentives to development in coastal hazard areas by addressing repetitive loss properties requiring them to implement flood damage mitigation measures after reaching a certain threshold in the number of claims or dollar amount of claims. *OPWG recommendation 2-5.*

Ongoing

- Coordinating with FEMA Region 10 on arranging for No Adverse Impact workshops to be conducted during 2008 or 2009 (Ecology). *OPWG recommendation 2-6.*

Future

- Convene another meeting of multi-agency hazards group to analyze status and next steps for coastal hazards (Ecology). *OPWG Recommendation 2-1, 2-2, 2-3.*
- Continue to advocate for sufficient funding for Phase II of map modernization in 2011 (Ecology). *OPWG recommendation 2-5*

Marine Pollution

Ongoing

- Examining current state laws and the potential for expansion of ongoing derelict fishing gear activities to statewide program coverage (DNR & WDFW). *OPWG recommendations 3-1 and 3-4.*
- Eliminating some large commercial derelict vessels with revised program and increased funding, but examining long-term funding source with assistance of Department of Revenue (DNR). *OPWG recommendation 3-7.*
- Targeting education on derelict gear reporting and prevention to commercial fishermen (WDFW). *OPWG recommendation 3-3.*

Future

- Develop and pursue options for establishing statewide derelict gear program depending on resource availability. (DNR & WDFW). *OPWG recommendations 3-1 and 3-4.*
- Examine partnerships with beach clean ups including participating in the annual Washington Coast Clean Up in April. (State Parks).

Ocean energy

Completed

- Supported extension of offshore oil and gas moratorium in perpetuity. Governor Gregoire sent joint letter with governors of Oregon and California to President and Congress (Gov). *OPWG recommendation 1-8.*

Ongoing

- Engaging FERC, MMS, project proponents, and other West Coast states on impacts of alternative ocean energy technologies and associated regulations, and planning issues (Gov and Ecology). *OPWG recommendation 1-9 and 1-10.*
- Assisting project applicants by identifying baseline and site specific data needed for permitting pilot projects (Office of Regulatory Assistance leading all regulatory agencies). *OPWG recommendation 1-9 and 1-10.*

Future

- Host workshop with west coast states and federal agencies to increase information on technologies and their potential impacts; current ocean uses and services; and key ocean resources to coastal communities and ecosystem. Provide stakeholder workshops and forums on this issue. *OPWG recommendation 1-9 and 1-10.*

Sustainable Communities

Ongoing

- Developing regional offices to better assist local communities with economic projects and planning. Achieving a portion of the Governor's Next Washington Plan to serve the rural, coastal communities in a broader, more strategic fashion (CTED). *OPWG recommendation 5-1.*
- Increased funding for coastal Economic Development Councils and the legislative performance measures will enable ITED to better focus on local priorities. *OPWG recommendation 5-1.*

Future

- Examine use of innovation zones and other tools to increase sustainability of coastal communities, including environmental, social and economic sustainability. *OPWG recommendation 5-1, 5-2, 5-4.*

Climate Change

Completed

- Governor's executive order advanced state activities on climate change by establishing goals for reducing greenhouse gasses, improving clean energy/energy efficiency, and preparing for impacts of climate change. Ecology and CTED are jointly leading an effort to examine the best way for state to achieve the goals set out by executive order (Gov, CTED, Ecology). *OPWG recommendations 2-15, 2-16, 2-17, and 2-18.*

Ongoing

- Advising efforts on climate change related to Governors executive order and at national level, through Coastal States Organization Climate Change Working Group related to assessing coastal impacts and the necessary preparation and adaptation strategies. *OPWG recommendation 2-17.*

Governance

Completed

- Established the State Ocean Caucus comprised of state agencies involved with coastal and ocean resource issues as the interagency team to coordinate action on OPWG recommendations. Formed the Ocean Policy Advisory Group to provide input from local, tribal, and federal government representatives, academics and researchers,

business and environmental interests, non-governmental organizations, and other key interested parties. *OPWG recommendations 6-1, 6-2, and 6-3.*

- Conducted outreach to coastal communities in Aberdeen and Ilwaco during summer 2007. Established web site and listserv to improve communication on ocean policy efforts. *OPWG recommendation 6-1 and 6-2.*

Ongoing

- Participating with outer coast tribes on Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary's Intergovernmental Policy Council. *OPWG recommendation 6-2.*
- Assisting local citizens and county government representatives on the outer coast interested in establishing Marine Resource Committees by providing outreach on options, and facilitating information exchange with current Marine Resource Committees (WDFW). *OPWG recommendation 6-1 and 6-2.*

Future

- Explore additional resources needed for Marine Resource Committees. Collaborate with outer coast Marine Resources Committees on ocean resource activities as they are established. *OPWG recommendation 6-1.*
- Support establishment of Washington Sea Grant fellowship and internships as potential resources for advancing State Ocean Caucus projects as resources allow. *OPWG recommendation 6-7.*
- Examine Ocean Resources Management Act and Washington's Coastal Zone Management Program policies for potential revisions. Utilize assistance from UW internships or Sea Grant fellowship to accomplish this. *OPWG recommendations 6-5 and 6-6.*

Ecosystem-Based Management

Ongoing

- Learn from community-based ecosystem efforts and other regional assessments. Pursue assessment of ecosystem and development of ecosystem indicators with regional partners. *OPWG recommendation 1-6.*

Collaboration with West Coast states and British Columbia

Ongoing

- Washington is working with California, Oregon on shared issues and activities related to ocean health. The draft action plan for West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health helps advance Washington priorities, including those recommendations established by the Ocean Policy Work Group.

Areas for activities include:

- Alternative ocean energy technologies utilizing waves and tides.
- Regional sediment management planning.
- Water quality includes issues such as hypoxia, Harmful Algal Blooms, invasive species, polluted runoff and vessel pollution, and derelict fishing gear and other marine debris.
- Characterizing nearshore and offshore habitat through seafloor mapping and research.

- Ecosystem assessments and indicators. Learn from community-based ecosystem efforts and other regional assessments. Pursue assessment of ecosystem and development of ecosystem indicators.
- Regional scientific research priorities planning with West Coast Sea Grant institutions. Complete report expected by end of 2008.
- Ocean education.
- Sustainable economies in coastal communities, including providing tools for assessing climate change impacts and supporting working waterfronts.

OPWG Recommendations 1-2, 1-6, 1-7, 1-8, 1-9, 1-10, 2-1, 2-3, 2-9, 2-11, 3-1, 4-1(4-1: A, B, and C), 4-2, 5-3, 5-4, 6-3, and 6-4.

- During summer 2007, the Premier and Governor signed a memorandum of understanding establishing a British Columbia–Washington Coastal and Ocean Task Force to replace the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound Task Force. The new agreement covers both inland and outer coastal marine waters. *OPWG recommendation 6-4.*

Future

- Complete actions identified in work plans for two efforts over the next few years. West Coast Governors' Agreement action plan expected to be finalized by end of 2007. Development of BC/WA Coastal and Ocean Task force work plan is currently underway and will be presented to the Environmental Cooperating Council in November 2007.