



Washington's Ocean Action Plan

Mission

To manage Washington's ocean resources in a manner that serves to protect and improve the health and sustainability of coastal and ocean ecosystems while maintaining cultural and social well-being and ensuring the economic viability of coastal communities and the state.

The state supports gathering and improving scientific, ecosystem, local and traditional knowledge to guide ocean resource management decisions. The state coordinates policy by organizing across state agencies, and consulting and collaborating with a broad array of governments and stakeholders including local, state, federal, international and tribal governments, and non-governmental, business, and industry sectors.

Goals

1. **Manage the state's ocean and coastal areas to protect valuable marine resources and maintain ecosystem health while ensuring the vitality of coastal communities**, to include: effective, sustainable fisheries management; development of a state marine aquaculture policy; use of ecosystem-based management; and investigation of developing renewable ocean energy technologies.
2. **Protect the coastal environment and its communities from the threats of marine hazards**, such as storm surge and tsunamis, the effects of global climate change, and increased erosion, through improved research and management and increased planning efforts. Through state work, ensure continued coordination to **prevent and manage pollution and marine debris**.
3. **Enhance the sustainability and resiliency of outer coast communities** through appropriate economic development practices that honor the historical practices of the past, maintain present successes, and plan for future uses to maximize benefits to the state's residents.
4. **Increase state attention on ocean-related scientific research and observation** practices that satisfy coastal management needs while furthering integrated and coordinated scientific knowledge of the state's marine environment.
5. **Inform all state citizens of the vital importance of the state's ocean resources** by collaborating on ocean literacy programs in state K-12 education and expanding public outreach on ocean issues.
6. **Coordinate state policy and consult and collaborate with tribes, local government, ports and interested citizens through the state ocean caucus.**

Purpose of the State Ocean Caucus

- Create strategy and work plan to implement *Washington's Ocean Action Plan*.
- Coordinate ocean activities among state agencies.
- Foster collaboration and consultation with tribes, local and regional governments, federal agencies, academia, stakeholders and general public.
- Provide intergovernmental collaboration with tribes, local organizations and communities, and other planning efforts such as the Puget Sound Partnership, NW Straits Commission, and Olympic Coast Intergovernmental Policy Council.
- Promote and enhance relationship between state-federal governments including coordinating state response to federal actions and policies.
- Collaborate with West Coast governments on ocean policy issues including British Columbia and the states of Oregon and California through the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health.
- Review laws and funding related to coastal and ocean activities.

Communication

The State Ocean Caucus shares information, collaborates and conducts outreach with the public, and seeks input from the public to guide ocean policy work in Washington in several ways.

Ocean Policy Advisory Group (OPAG):

An informal stakeholder advisory group that meets a few times per year. A standing email advisory list will also provide opportunity for input between meetings.

General public:

- An established email listserv will gather comments on larger policy issues. Members can sign up for the list on the state ocean caucus website.
- Public meetings on the outer coast will allow general public comments as well as specific input on issues. The State Ocean Caucus rotates these meetings throughout the region.

State Ocean Caucus website

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/ocean/index.html>

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Key achievements

The State Ocean Caucus is a team of state agencies tasked with implementing the recommendations of *Washington's Ocean Action Plan*. The following list highlights some key activities and accomplishments of the State Ocean Caucus and other partners on recommendations in *Washington's Ocean Action Plan*.

- **Improved management with new partnerships.** Established partnerships to coordinate with local, state, tribal, regional, federal, and international entities and advance recommendations including: the State Ocean Caucus and Ocean Policy Advisory Group, the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health, the Olympic Coast Intergovernmental Policy Council, Coastal Marine Resource Committees Program, and the British Columbia-Washington Coastal and Ocean Task Force. These types of partnerships are a necessary mechanism for improving communication and management, especially given the diverse nature of the recommendations in *Washington's Ocean Action Plan*.
- **Created mechanism for additional progress on marine policy issues.** Washington Sea Grant founded the Hershman Fellowship and partnered with State Ocean Caucus agencies to implement this pilot project. This nine-month fellowship provides an opportunity for current or recent graduate students to work on ocean and coastal policy with state agencies. In its first year, two fellows are currently working on projects that advance recommendations in *Washington's Ocean Action Plan*. The project plans to place four more fellows over the next two years including two starting in fall of 2009.
- **Examined feasibility of renewable ocean energy and provided education on the issue by co-hosting a regional workshop.** Also provided input to federal agencies on policy and regulatory issues and improved communication with federal agencies including drafting a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Identified areas for future work such as research and monitoring, community outreach and education, and agency coordination.
- **Improved erosion and sediment management** by participating in the Lower Columbia Solutions Group, supporting a science-policy forum on sediment management issues in Southwest Washington's nearshore, advancing regional sediment management planning for the lower Columbia River, and developing a large project to use clean dredge material to replenish Washington beaches at or near Benson Beach.
- **Advanced efforts to characterize and map seafloor.** Assisted with elimination of Department of Navy's security restriction that prevented the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) from sharing high resolution data. Promoted development of strategic plan for mapping Washington's waters.

- **Increased ocean awareness and involved public by hosting several public meetings in outer coastal communities.** Meetings provided information on ocean science, policy and management with presentations from various experts.
- **Supported successful efforts to fund year-round Rescue Tug in Neah Bay.** The state legislature passed and Governor Gregoire signed a bill that establishes year-round funding for the emergency response and rescue tug currently stationed in Neah Bay. The bill shifts the burden for funding the tug from the taxpayers to the maritime industry starting in 2010.
- **Supported funding for Doppler weather radar for Washington's outer coast.** Senator Cantwell worked to obtain funding for NOAA to assess how to fill the radar gap on the coast and advocated for funding for a coastal weather radar system. President Obama's budget contains \$7 million needed for a Doppler coastal weather system in his fiscal year 2010 budget. This is an important step in the process, but the funding must be still be appropriated by Congress.
- **Supported ocean education.** Provided input on and letter of support for successful education grant (\$270,000 for three years) focused on developing stewardship projects for kids in outer coast school districts and creating an associated teacher and community-network.



Draft Work Plan Priorities 2009

Goal of work plan revision

Identify successes and areas for the State Ocean Caucus to focus on over the coming year with the goal of revising work plan and projects for coming year.

Potential areas for focus for 2009-2010

Most activities involve multiple agencies; the lead agency is generally noted in parentheses. Otherwise, the State Ocean Caucus is jointly working on the activity. The corresponding recommendation or recommendations from *Washington's Ocean Action Plan* are signified by italics. Please note, the work plan activities are not listed in priority order.

Ocean energy

- Coordinate regional activities under West Coast Governors' Agreement
 - Combine and improve data and information on renewable energy technologies.
 - Develop understanding of regional siting criteria and a standard way to monitor pilot projects.
 - Conduct outreach and education on regulatory process.
- Assess feasibility of comprehensive planning for renewable ocean energy, examine efforts by other states. In addition, the basic data would support planning for other marine resources and uses.
 - Produce guidance on Ocean Resources Management Act (Ecology).
 - Outline key data needs and gaps by understanding information needs and examining existing databases and tools.
 - Generate options for mechanism and process for planning.
 - Determine funding needed, identify potential sources, and seek funds to address issues above. Potential funding sources include: 1) federal funds for pilots with existing budgets or grants NOAA, Dept. of Energy, Minerals Management Service; 2) foundation or grant sources; 3) West Coast Governors' Agreement; and 4) federal funds through reauthorized CZMA.
- Comment on Department of Interior's Outer Continental Shelf energy plan, including their "5-year program" for oil and gas (Ecology/Gov).

Education

- Catalogue existing efforts, clarify roles, assess education needs, link resources and activities, and identify opportunities and funding for advancing ocean education, including: *Recommendations 4-5, 4-6 and 4-7.*
 - Pacific Education Institute outer coast programs such as culminating projects, tribal partnership regarding "shadow of the salmon," and marine curriculum.
 - Interpretive centers and programs by local, state, federal, and tribal groups such as State Parks, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, and Ocean Shores Interpretive Center.
 - Education, Environment, and Economy (E3) regional process
 - Activities under the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health

Marine Debris

- Assess current clean-up efforts and needs. Identify and scope potential projects such as need for large containers during coastal clean-up events. Examine funding opportunities such as stimulus bill, continuing federal and state grant programs, and other sources. Seek funding as appropriate.
- Examine efforts for clean-up and prevention, as well as education opportunities such as through state litter program and MARPOL.
- Develop and pursue options for establishing statewide derelict gear program depending on resource availability (DNR). *Recommendations 3-1 and 3-4.*
- Continue participation with the Washington Clean Coast Alliance on marine debris education and outreach program and beach cleanups at state parks (State Parks).
- Participate in regional activities under West Coast Governors' Agreement/

Ocean Research

- Continue work on state strategy and refined inventory for seafloor mapping and participate in regional activities under West Coast Governors' Agreement. Assess state leadership proposal for state seafloor team.
- Track Doppler RADAR funding and development for outer coast and engage as needed to ensure completion. *Recommendation 4-3.*
- 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. *Recommendation 4-3.*

Climate Change

- Assessing coastal impacts and the necessary preparation and adaptation strategies by: advising efforts on climate change related to Governors executive order, partnering regionally through the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health, and participating at national level through Coastal States Organization Climate Change Working Group (Ecology). *Recommendation 2-17.*

Coastal Hazards

- Convene another meeting of multi-agency hazards group to analyze status and next steps for coastal hazards, including DOT (EMD/Ecology). *Recommendations 2-1, 2-2, 2-3.*
- Examine opportunities for expanding hazards education, research and policy.

Sediment Management

- Evaluate status of science on physical (wave amplification) and biological issues related to sediment management with technical workshops. *Recommendations 2-9 and 2-11.*
- Continue to advance project to use sediment beneficially and advance understanding of sediment processes in Washington's nearshore with local, state, and federal partners. Aim to conduct a large beneficial use and regional sediment management project at Benson Beach as soon as possible. *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). *Recommendations 2-9, 2-10, 2-11, 2-12.*

Sustainable communities

- Developing regional activities to improve sustainability of working waterfronts under the West Coast Governors' Agreement, including identifying pilot areas to direct infrastructure funding and other resources. *Recommendation 5-1.*
- Examine ways to advance Ocean Action Plan recommendations with broader input from other experts. For example, convene meeting to brainstorm ideas, opportunities, and partnerships (CTED).
- Examine use of innovation zones and other tools to increase sustainability of coastal communities, including environmental, social and economic sustainability. *Recommendations 5-1, 5-2, 5-4.*

Offshore Aquaculture

- Organize briefing from NOAA's regional aquaculture staff.
- Monitor activity at federal level regarding offshore aquaculture bill.

Partnerships

- Support establishment of and projects for coastal Marine Resource Committees (WDFW). Collaborate with outer coast Marine Resource Committees on ocean resource activities as they are established. *Recommendation 6-1.*
- Continue participating in ocean partnerships to advance recommendations and shared interests in ocean and coastal resources, including:
 - Olympic Coast Intergovernmental Policy Council
 - West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health
 - British Columbia-Washington Coastal and Ocean Task Force
 - Pacific Coast Collaborative

Other topics

- Examine opportunities for additional work on human health related to ocean resources.
- Pursue updates from other related groups on their activities including invasive species, ballast water, and oil spills.



Comment Card

State Ocean Caucus Work Plan: Priorities and Activities

Which topics do you consider the highest priorities for state management over the next year or two? *Please rank in order of importance, if choosing more than one (1=highest). Note: the boxes below do not list all the issue areas for the State Ocean Caucus.*

<input type="checkbox"/> ocean energy	<input type="checkbox"/> coastal hazards (flooding, tsunamis, storms)
<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> sediment management
<input type="checkbox"/> marine debris	<input type="checkbox"/> sustainable communities
<input type="checkbox"/> climate change	<input type="checkbox"/> offshore aquaculture
<input type="checkbox"/> ocean research	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

What do you like best about the work plan? What do you think are the most important activities or issues covered in the work plan?

What suggestions do you have on the work plan? Are there different activities or issues the state should consider in the next year or two?

What can we do to improve communication and coordination of our efforts?

Name: _____