

Draft Stakeholder Perspectives on Marine Spatial Planning

Members of the Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council (WCMAC) were interviewed to identify expectations, priorities, anticipated benefits and concerns of marine spatial planning on Washington's coast. Qualitative data collection through the use of individual, key informant interviews were chosen because it allows for a deeper exploration of experiences and perceptions of informants that would not be represented using survey techniques or group discussion. The following summary describes the common themes from these interviews.

Existing Human Use Conflicts

The two most common existing human use conflicts identified were: 1) the siting for the disposal of dredge materials on the Columbia River 2) competing space between commercial and recreational fishing. Other common responses included recognizing that there are both official and unofficial spatial mechanisms that exist offshore to avoid conflict. An example of an official spatial mechanism is the creation of tug boat lanes at the mouth of the Columbia River. An example of an informal spatial mechanism exists between telecommunication cables and fishing fleets. In this case, fishers know where the cables are exposed and avoid benthic fishing methods in these areas.

Other descriptions of existing human use conflicts included the conflict between the marine sanctuary and shipping; aquaculture and pulp mills; shipping and fishing; surfers and kayakers; conservation and beach mining.

Future Human Use Conflicts

Most of the group stated that they were not against ocean energy but expressed concern around potential future impact to the marine environment and impact on existing uses. The most common potential spatial conflict described was between fishing and ocean energy. Other potential spatial conflicts that may occur with ocean energy described by the group include: military activity, shipping, whale migrations, view shed, crowding of shipping lanes, recreational activities and ecological benefits, such as, healthy habitats derived from numerous ecological processes. Future offshore aquaculture was also commonly named as causing potential spatial conflicts with existing uses.

Stakeholders expressed concern that MSP will favor new uses at the expense of current uses. Members felt that MSP should be most focused on current uses such as shipping and fishing and secondarily focused on future uses.

Marine Spatial Planning Provides Opportunities

Most members agree that there are benefits to marine spatial planning on the coast. One of the most commonly cited reasons was an increase in predictability for the future. Many see this as *the* opportunity for the coast to plan for its future. The expectations and desired outcomes of marine spatial planning fit into three major categories:

Desire for an ecologically and economically sustainable coast

There was common understanding that marine spatial planning would contribute to a greater knowledge base of Washington's marine resources and create a better network of decision making for future uses of marine resources. Several members discussed the importance of gaining a better understanding of the three dimensional seascape and the associated benefits local communities receive from these resources. Creating a better understanding of the economic benefits derived from coastal resources was one of the higher priorities described by informants. Many members described the need to protect existing uses as a way to ensure an economically viable coastal future by making certain that existing jobs are not negatively impacted by spatial zones or future uses. In this case existing uses generally refers to sustainable existing uses such fishing, aquaculture, recreation and shipping.

Desire for a comprehensive marine spatial plan

Most members list the following desired outcomes of marine spatial planning:

- recognizes local knowledge
- fills critical data gaps
- creates plans that are future oriented
- identifies a framework for making decisions about the future uses of our coast
- integrates with shoreline master plans
- ensures that ocean energy will occur in areas with no or little impact to existing uses
- identifies and locates uses of marine resources in state and federal waters

One of the expectations of the process is that it will be an adaptive process that recognizes changing conditions and the need to adjust our plan to new conditions. Several participants expressed the importance of understanding the role of uncertainty and suggested identifying what we do not know about the marine ecosystem so we can take this into account during the planning and implementation process.

Protect the culture of the coast

Washington's coast has a rich history and its communities have a unique relationship with coastal resources. Most members felt that this has been overlooked and that coastal communities are often marginalized by government. Members felt that the coast has received fewer funds for marine research than other areas of the state such as Puget Sound. One member described their perspective that the coast provides marine resources for the whole state but receives a small amount of attention or funds to maintain those benefits. Marine spatial planning is viewed as one way for the coast to gain recognition for the important benefits and role that coastal resources and coastal communities play in Washington's economy, well being and culture.

Desire for an Inclusive Planning Process

Engage local stakeholder groups

Everyone expressed a desire to have strong local participation throughout the MSP process. Several groups were described as critical to this process including: MRCs, commissioners, local planners, fishers

and all resource dependent users. Interviewees placed a strong emphasis on the importance of building political support for this process through local governments and local organizations. For example, one suggestion put forward by several members was for mayors or commissioners to co-host or show support for informational meetings on MSP to reach a broader local audience. Most agreed that one goal of the process should be to develop a better public engagement structure for collaboration in marine resource management.

Engage Tribes

All members recognized the importance of working with tribes throughout this process. While everyone understood that it was necessary to engage tribes in a government to government consultation, people expressed concern that there is a lack of cross coordination between stakeholders and tribes in the process so far.

Engage NGOs that support local communities

TNC, Ecotrust and Surfrider had generally positive reputations among members of the group. Most stated that they had worked locally with the communities and seemed to have good working relationships on the coast. Members felt that other NGOs such as those involved in the Wild Olympics campaign would not be able to successfully work on the coast due to the negative reputation of this campaign among local communities.

Concerns of the Process

Communication challenges

WCMAC members' described communication challenges among the WCMAC group and more broadly across coastal communities on marine spatial planning. Several members expressed concern over the timeline of the process and worried that a fast process would result in distrust. Others were worried that marine spatial planning would not gain traction because it would not receive sustained funding and political support to be implemented well. Some were concerned whether everyone would be willing to buy in to the same data to create a sense of legitimacy in the process. Several interviewees expressed concern that the process would happen without everyone at the table. Interviewees explained that there was a need for wider general engagement of industries, businesses and communities. Members generally identified that representatives from ocean energy, tourism, military, WA coast sustainable salmon partnership and industry were missing from the conversation. Others indicated concern that some voices will dominate and other voices will not be heard.

North and South coast tensions

Members of both the North and South regions of the coast expressed concerns over different views in each area. North coast members discussed that they needed to make sure they had the opportunity to participate in the decision making process. They indicated a need for further engagement of the North coast community on MSP to ensure coast-wide decisions are made. South coast members discussed their sentiment that they felt they had more to lose if MSP did not include their interests. They

explained that the presence of the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary and tribal Usual and Accustomed Areas on the North coast, could make the south coast more appealing to offshore energy investors.

Distrust of government

Most members believe that there is a common sentiment that coastal communities do not trust government. Most explained that there is a history of conflicts between government agencies and the coastal communities and that it would take a long time and extra effort to gain back that trust. Several members felt that the state agencies were not here to protect the interests of the coast and that the agencies were not always forthcoming with information. Most people said that the agencies had to do a better job of engaging communities in natural resource management and they hoped it could be improved through the marine spatial planning process. Some members were interested in the National Ocean Council and had a desire for that regional process to be established so Washington State could create a process appropriately nested in the national framework.

Data Priorities

Consistently, data priorities listed by all informants included: 1) mapping of human uses, 2) mapping benthic substrate with associated species, 3) economic valuation of the coast.

The first most common data priority indicated by participants is to identify and create a map of all the human uses of the marine environment. NOAA and Ecotrust were both mentioned as potential entities to do this work because they have been used in Oregon and California. Interviewees suggested that we should understand how both our state and federal waters are being used and that we should map out these activities to 200 nautical miles. They discussed that it was important to use similar data methods to do this work to create consistency across the West Coast region. Consistency was one of the reasons some members listed as a benefit to choosing Marine Planner as Washington's map viewer and data platform. Another reason was that a pilot project is already established in Pacific county and has gained local support. Several people suggested using the same method as Oregon to map areas most important for Washington's fisheries. They described that this process seemed to be successful in Oregon and would be most receptive among Washington's fishing fleets. Some interviewees believe that logbook data is not reliable because, according to some members, the best fishing spots are not usually recorded by fishermen.

The second most common data priority is mapping benthic substrate and identifying the associated species with each substrate type. Most described this as very important to understanding the location of Washington's most important marine areas to ensure that these areas receive higher protection from new uses.

The third most common data priority discussed by members was to gather a detailed baseline of economic data for the coast. Members described an interest in gaining a better understanding of the value of Washington's marine resources, coastal industries and number of jobs and revenue which are

created by these resources. Many of the members mentioned the coast-wide Marine Resource Committee project which is beginning some of this work.

Recommended Next Steps

Engage stakeholders early in the process

Throughout the interview process, broad local participation in marine spatial planning remained a high priority among interviewees. In addition to engaging local user groups, participants suggested several additional organizations that need to be involved in the MSP process. Members also identified specific events and media tools which could expand education and outreach of MSP on the coast.

- Engage local businesses through the Chamber of Commerce
- Reach out to industry groups like the Cranberry Association
- Involve Economic Development Councils
- Involve local governments to create political support
- Involve the Marine Exchange, Puget Sound Harbor Safety Committee, Columbia River Steamship Association and U.S. Coast Guard
- Co-host workshops and information meetings supported by mayors and commissioners
- Make paper copies of materials available in local libraries and schools
- Set up a table at local festivals and fish shops
- Participate in local radio shows
- Provide information in local newspapers (Chinook Observer, Willapa Herald, Pacific Press, Longview Daily News, Daily Astorian, etc.)
- Create a website
- Provide a PowerPoint to distribute to WCMAC members that can be shown to their different interest groups and report back at the meetings
- Create a web information tool on YouTube that gives an introduction to MSP on the coast

Make transparency and accountability priorities of the MSP process

WCMAC participants expressed that there are several expected benefits of marine spatial planning on the coast which include:

- Increased predictability
- Coordination across sectors and across levels of government
- Increased safety for ocean users
- Proactive planning
- Future oriented planning
- Protection of existing sustainable uses
- Protection of Washington's coastal culture
- Reduced conflict among uses now and in the future
- Increased knowledge of the marine environment

- Increased understanding of the ecological and economic benefits Washington receives from coastal resources

While most participants expressed support for marine spatial planning, several members explained that their support for MSP was dependent on the process being transparent and accountable. Some members explained that they were concerned this would not be offered in this process. Members identified a few ideas for creating a transparent and accountable process.

- Have members of the WCMAC and state agencies sign an agreement committing each member to transparency throughout the MSP process
- Involve local stakeholders in the writing of goals and objectives for MSP
- Allow a comment period for the general public that is longer than 30 days
- Offer numerous opportunities for stakeholders to review management plans

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