

OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
115 E. Railroad Avenue, Suite 301
Port Angeles, WA 98362-2925

OCNMS Advisory Council Virtual meeting

Friday, May 19, 2023
Meeting Notes



SANCTUARY
ADVISORY
COUNCIL

Reviewed by OCNMS Superintendent and AC Chair:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Grant', is written over a horizontal line.

Kevin Grant, Superintendent

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Linda Sturgis', is written over a horizontal line.

Linda Sturgis, Chair

Advisory Council (AC) Members/Alternates: Linda Sturgis (Marine Industry, Chair), Casey Dennehy (Washington Dept of Ecology, Vice-Chair), Steve Shively (Tourism and Economic Development, Secretary), Sean Carlson (Washington Dept of Natural Resources), Cindi Kuntz and Stephanie Sleeman (US Navy), Jennifer Hagen (Quileute Tribe), Lorna Wargo, Jess Stocking, and Whitney Roberts (Washington Dept of Fish & Wildlife), John Hunter (Education), John Shaw (Grays Harbor Marine Resource Committee), Julie Ann Koehlinger (Hoh Tribe), LCDR Keola Velasco (US Coast Guard), Larry Philips (Fishing), Mike Doherty (Citizen at Large), Mike French (Clallam County), Parker MacCready (Research), Patrick Gallagher (Maritime Industry), Rich Osborne (Conservation), and Steve Fradkin (Olympic National Park)

Presenters and Others in Attendance: Amelia Ritger, Charlie Sheldon, Joel Kawahara, and Tommy Moore.

NOAA/OCNMS Staff in Attendance: Aleria Jensen (NOAA Leadership Competency Development Program (LCDP) XI), Kevin Grant (Superintendent), Rebecca Briggs (Acting Deputy Superintendent), Jacqueline Laverdure, Jenny Waddell, and Katie Wrubel (Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary staff).

Call to Order and Welcome

Linda Sturgis, Advisory Council Chair opened the meeting and called it to order. Council members and attendees introduce themselves.

Internal Affairs

Agenda: The draft agenda was motioned for adoption by Steve Shively and seconded by Rich Osborne. Motion was approved.

Meeting Notes: The March 2023 meeting notes were presented for approval. Joel Kawahara made the motion and Rich Osborne seconded the motion. *As a point of clarification, the March 2023 meeting notes were never formally approved as SAC guest and valued friend, Joel Kawahara's term as the primary fishing seat on the SAC as expired and so he no longer has member authority to move, second, or vote on SAC business.*

Superintendent report

Kevin introduced himself and noted that this is a busy time of year for staff. There are many education and outreach activities taking place such as the SPLASH program, which reached over 1500 kids this year, Kid fest in Port Angeles, and the 2023 MATE ROV competition to held at Forks Community Pool on May 20. Kevin noted staff are moving the vessel around to La Push for the season. Kevin noted spring beach cleanups have been supported by hundreds of volunteers. Very busy time of year for OCNMS with limited staff.

Other announcements of note include:

- New Intergovernmental Policy Council (IPC) Chair, Vice Chair of the Makah Council Chad Bowechop. Post-COVID, the IPC is renewing efforts and has agreed to meet 6 times a year on opposite months of the SAC.

- Recent publication identifies OCNMS as providing exceptionally high value marine habitats for seabirds resulting in high avian abundance and diversity and another provides results of underwater recording stations noting blue and fin whale vocalizations along with fish chorusing.
- New sanctuary designations – 5 proposed new sanctuaries for designation in NMSS, including Chumash Heritage
- New research seat – Parker MacCready, Leo Maddox Endowed Professor, School of Oceanography, University of Washington with connection with OCNMS as a long-time user of the mooring data to validate [LiveOcean](#) and [J-SCOPE](#) models.
- New WDFW representative, Jess Stocking of Wildlife Diversity division and species lead biologist for marine mammals, birds, and sea turtles. She’s been spending a lot of time on Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW), Marbled murrelets, and Tufted puffins
- Open recruitment for 4 SAC seats – primary and alternate Citizen-at-Large, alternate Fishing seat, and alternate Research seat. Applications accepted through May next Monday.
- Next SAC meeting for in person in Taholah in July
- New deputy position description should be out soon

Information Items:

NOAA’s Okeanos Explorer

Jacqueline Laverdure, OCNMS Education and Outreach Coordinator, provided a recap of the recent collaboration with NOAA Ocean Exploration resulting in the visit of [NOAA Ship Okeanos Explorer](#). The Okeanos conducted [shakedown](#) mapping and remotely operated vehicle (ROV) diving operations adjacent to OCNMS and in tribal usual and accustomed area in Quinault and Nitinat Canyons to characterize benthic habit.

Jacqueline shared snapshots of the [dives gallery](#) noting that lots of sea star diversity was observed but also that the mix of other species (new and previously seen) were those that could tolerate the low oxygen conditions. Sanctuary education and outreach staff worked closely with the scientists and schools to bring in Ship to Shore interactions with Quinault, Quileute, and Makah students and community members. Staff also supported a dockside informational booth in Seattle providing opportunity for interactive 360° dives in OCNMS to visitors waiting for ship tours.

Management Plan Review Public Scoping outcomes and next steps

Becky Briggs and Aleria Jensen, both on temporary assignment with OCNMS, provided a recap of the count and types of public comment received through April 3, when the comment period closed. OCNMS received 127 comments via scoping meetings, regulation.gov, mail, and email. The majority focused on partnerships and coordinated management, education and outreach, or resource monitoring and assessment. The following are a synopsis by category of the input received:

- Partnerships - continue and strengthen existing partnerships and efforts in reaching smaller/underserved communities

- Education and outreach – continue strong programming and expand stewardship and adult-based programming opportunities and presence in coastal communities
- Resource monitoring and assessment – strengthen protocols around salvage permitting, coordinating datasets around fisheries management, offshore wind concerns, research declines in kelp and razor clams’ populations, effects of increased visitation, and continue investment of mooring program

Additionally, regulatory change suggestions included the need for stronger protections for SRKW and salmon, reduced underwater noise, protections against bottom trawling, overflight regulations for Copalis airport, drones, and unmanned aerial systems (UAS). However not all these topics are managed by OCNMS, so staff, General Counsel, the SAC, and others will need to take this into consideration during the Management Plan drafting process and concurrent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

For next steps, staff have begun paring out references that are no longer relevant and adding in new programs, integrating working group recommendations as well as streamlining the format of the plan. Staff anticipate formation of SAC working groups staffed by OCNMS staff in July/September meetings and activating them in the fall and inviting tribal consultation and engagement.

Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA)

Katie Wrubel thanked everyone who has participated in this process. The report is out for working group review through mid-June. The CVA working group is also discussing interest in a dedicated IPC review along with Coastal Treat Tribes reviews. The target for SAC review is in September and when approved followed by peer-review and publication like the Condition Report.

Ocean Acidification Sentinel Site Working Group (OASeS)

Katie Wrubel announced an in person/hybrid steering committee meeting on Monday May 22 for digging into the 2023 priority actions through breakout sessions and beginning discussions on our next symposium slated for May 2024.

Member Reports

Mike Doherty, Citizen-at-Large thanked OCNMS staff for the great newsletter, which he feels is improving all the time (good photos and graphics).

- Clallam County Marine Resource Committee’s (MRC) public comment letter was the initial input and they plan again as we get into deeper planning.
- He periodically hears from citizenry about concerns over increased shipping of crude out of Canada. He encouraged others to review the Puget Sound Partnership Ecosystem Coordination Board meeting [presentations](#) available online. As that activity gets closer, OCNMS might consider have a spokesperson brief to the Council on its expectations and experiences.
- There may be opportunities for involving the IPC and Makah fishing fleet in monitoring and reporting marine debris in connection with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation’s recently announced award for marine debris removal.

Rich Osborne, Conservation reiterated that increased shipping traffic out of Canada is alarming and queried whether maybe Pat Gallagher can share insights and/or preparation information?

- New regulations related to SRKW, but deferred to Jess Stocking to provide details.
- Finishing out his term as the primary conservation seat by helping with Management Plan Review.

John Hunter, Education spoke with enthusiasm about the upcoming MATE ROV competition and noted that Quileute Tribal School teams are working on new and interesting technology.

- June 26-28 is the Muddy Boots Watershed Workshop at Quinault Beach Resort – space is available for those who are interested.
- In late July Northwest Aquatic and Marine Educators (NAME) will host the [NMEA 2023 Conference](#) in Bellingham.
- John is looking to work with people and teachers engaged in some aspect of shellfish in Pacific and Grays Harbor County.
- Please send names and email addresses of teachers interested in the "Muddy Boots" workshop and anyone engaged in shellfish and interested in working with teachers from Grays Harbor or Pacific Counties to him at hunter_john_m@yahoo.com.

Larry Phillips, Fishing has been testing stock abundance for halibut on the coast, which appears to be healthy where we are fishing. Catch rates seem lower than in the past, but WDFW can provide more information.

- This year the bottom-fish fishery opens with additional management for rockfish. American Sportfishing Association (ASA) is advocating to invest in new surveys and techniques for fishing independent surveys on those stocks.
- Pacific Fisheries Management Council will hold its June meeting in Vancouver, WA June 20-27.

Julie Ann Kohelinger, Hoh Tribe noted that despite challenges with staffing lately, the tribe is happy to share that they've hired a new Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) and have an offer out to a new Timber, Fish and Wildlife biologist. Also, they're bringing on Hershman Fellow this fall to work on climate change projects.

Heidi Eisenhour, Jefferson County Local Government announced that Jefferson County took the lead for derelict vessel removal and after months of work Washington Dept of Natural Resources (WDNR) is hosting a vessel recycling event in Port Townsend on June 5, 9am. MRC and work groups are preparing for Northwest Straits conference in Port Townsend in November.

Pat Gallagher, Marine industry responded to Rich's query noting that he attended a Board of Pilotage rulemaking through the WA Dept. of Ecology (WDOE) related to the increase in traffic and that it's a very long process. In short, this tug escort rulemaking is

focused on placing an emergency response towing vessel (ERTV) near the San Juan Islands, like the Neah Bay tug. This was the first of two stakeholder meetings— go to WDOE’s site and search board of pilotage.

- Seattle Aquarium is hiring for a research technician on the ROV team.
- [QuietSound](#) wrapped up data analysis of underwater hydrophone data collected during vessels slowdowns and the report will be released soon. Impressive result and surprising how much underwater noise was abated through that effort. ECHO program for Canada through Port of Vancouver published [results](#) and they have impressive results with ~97% voluntary participation rates and noise reductions as well.
- Marine Exchange is working on an FCC license for AIS towers to track vessels, including ATBA in OCNMS. Real-time notification is wanted by some stakeholders, this will be a mechanism to set up alerts if a vessel is transmitting AIS and in vessel slowdown area or ATBA The Marine Exchange can transmit a message to notify them of where they are. Alaska already has this in place. Contact: patrick@marexps.com). Both OCNMS staff and SAC members expressed interest in providing a letter of support.

Marine Resource Committees:

Tami Pokorny, North Pacific Coast (NPC MRC) shared that NPC MRC has reserved the R/V *Storm Petrel* for a sampling cruise from La Push with Jennifer Hagen of Quileute Natural Resources on May 31st (weather backup date is June 1st). They’re going far offshore to collect water, sediment, and phytoplankton samples. We have seats available and would like to extend an invitation to GHMRC, SAC and WCMAC members until the boat is filled. Please contact her ASAP if you are interested: tpokorny@co.jefferson.wa.us or text/phone: 360-316-9870.

- NPC MRC racing to finish projects, including collaborating with Twin Harbor Waterkeepers and COASST support for travel school student mentors, and a variety of other projects.

John Shaw, Grays Harbor (GHMRC) recently worked with Pacific Seafood, WaterKeepers, and the Quinault Indian National for a remote beach cleanup on Quinault lands. Decomposing, long-term plastic and debris was surprising to see. GHMRC is in discussion on getting more debris off the beach and Quinault are interested. This effort may help to engage Olympic National Park as well.

- European Green crab in Willapa and Grays Harbor are problematic. Willapa is capturing an average of 300-400 gravid females per day. Some feel it may be too late to get ahead of this problem. MRC trying to mobilize more resources- more traps, more people on the water.
- Engaged in some planning under NOAA grant for Cooperating Technical Partners on shoreline planning and erosion mitigation in our harbor.

Jennifer Hagen, Quileute Tribe reported placement of 3 moorings: Environmental Sample Processor ([ESP](#)) to measure domoic acid in water; [Chá?ba](#), which collects data

on multiple water parameters, and Northwest Enhanced Moored Observatory ([NEMO](#)), a Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (PMEL) mooring also measuring multiple parameters in water column with focus on carbon.

- The Quileute Tribe and the Quinault Indian Nation are part of a project ([Backyard Buoy](#)) to place wave height sensors in ocean to protect fishermen by showing swell height and period before leaving the harbor. Quileute has pilot deployment with current live readings and plans to place 3 off La Push (north, west, and south). Fisherman (and others) can set thresholds for their vessel, but intended for tribal fishermen. Data will be posted on [NANOOS](#).
- The R/V *Storm Petrel* is in La Push which allow recent repairs on buoys.
- Quileute was successful in raising money through Infrastructure investment and jobs act for deploying a 3rd oxygen sensor next year.
- The tribe is using NOAA Marine Debris money to remove the vessel that sunk off La Push, the *Unwind*, from fishing grounds. They are also working with CoastSavers to get temporary permission from ONP to use helicopter for removing debris caches in remote locations. She's excited about the MATE ROV event and plans to attend.

Parker MacCready, Research is giving a talk tomorrow at Pacific County Science conference in Long Beach, WA about upwelling.

- He is now a science advisory member to Willapa- Grays Harbor Estuary Collective which as mention is an area with many concerns related to European Green Crab and burrowing shrimp.
- Parker has developed an extension to LiveOcean for high resolution models in Willapa and Grays Harbor estuaries and will be presenting at the Washington OA Center symposium next week.

Steve Shively, Tourism reported that a lot is going on with tourism. During the now finished legislative session in Olympia, Washington State tourism requested \$26million for their biennial budget (fraction of neighboring state), coming off 2-year funding of \$3million. Approved at \$9million for 2-years this session.

- State tourism levels are still below pre-pandemic levels, but OP is beating that trend. Newly released [state statistics](#) show Washington Tourism remains significantly below pre-pandemic levels. Mother's Day, was the first holiday where restaurants showed recovery from COVID declines.
- Ocean Shores' Razor Clam festival was a success with good weather and expanded harvest of razor clams on the coast. Chef Rod won the People's Choice and Professional award using his Olympic Coast Chowder recipe. <https://olympicculinaryloop.com/eat/>.
- Shrimp fest, rebranded as Hood Canal Fjord fest (shrimp, oysters, geoduck, clams) will be held over Memorial Day weekend.

- Many business are working to keep everyone informed on closures and construction times, especially with WSDOT Hood Canal bridge work [WSDOT Travel Alerts](#) - Please share the link
- He expressed disappointed with loss of Day lodge at Hurricane Ridge. It remains to-be-determined when the road will be reopened.
- The Olympic Peninsula Tourism Commission and the OP Visitor Bureau has welcomed a vendor out of Vancouver BC to do an assessment, a variety of meetings and townhalls for long-range planning and 5-year strategic plan.

LCDR Keola Velasco, USCG advised attendees that this [National safe boating week](#) and USGC is visiting coastal marinas to remind to put on life jackets, etc. He encouraged folks to share the link with friends.

- Keola expressed thanks to the SAC for their community spirit and the opportunity to learn so much about the area. He announced that this is his last meeting as he will be transferring to a new position at Bangor. Travis McNeely will be his replacement and will be at next SAC meeting in person (hopefully).

Jess Stocking and Lorna Wargo, WDFW

Jess Stocking reported on new SRKW regulations. In November 2022, WDFW gave a report to the state legislature on efforts, efficacy, and conversations with many stakeholders around SRKW protections along with a look back on vessel regulations for all vessels which required a minimum distance of 300 yards from the side and 400 yards front and back. In 2021, WDFW implemented a commercial whale watching license program limiting viewing to 3 months (July to Sept) during 2-hour windows daily and only 3 vessels at a time within 1,000 yards. The report included recommendations to the legislature to expand the 1,000-yard buffer to all vessels. The Governor signed that legislate on Monday and it goes into effect January 2025. WDFW needs to bring together an advisory group on communication strategy that will help boaters to be able to distinguish ecotypes (Biggs or transients still require a 200-yard distance per federal regulations), how to tell distance, etc.

- WDFW working on 2025 state wildlife action plan ([SWAP](#)) to assess status of state wildlife and habitats for marine birds, mammals, sea turtles, etc. and will seek input on what should be added or removed from state listing for conservation needs. They just finished update for Orca, which is in internal review and then will open the 90-day public comment period. The recommendation is for keeping Orcas listed as endangered due to SRKW.
- Contact her at jessica.stocking@dfw.wa.gov or call 360.902.2591.

Lorna Wargo provided a Halibut fishery update noting that the recreational fishery opened May 4 on the coast. WA quotas are similar to previous years using fixed catch allocations approach with a 1-year extension this year. The 2024 quotas may decline. [Marine 2A](#) trend is stable, but are seeing declines in core habitat areas in Alaska. In June, PFMC will be taking up a halibut agenda item to scope the need to re-evaluate the catch sharing plan.

- Commercial crab had a delayed season with high abundance of Dungeness crab this year. Last year the average price was \$5.78 per pound but this year its \$2.50/lb. As of 5/18/23 state landings were 23.1 million pounds at a \$60 million ex-vessel value and is the highest on record. Combined state and tribal catch is also the highest on record at 27.5million pounds with 4 months left. On a related topic, the seasonal derelict gear removal program has removed 850 pots already.
- Razor clam season, now closed harvested 5.2 million lbs. this season with 330,000 diggers over 158 days. Domoic acid levels resulted in below total allowable catch (213 days of closure).
- Bottom fish is open but, it's too early for catch estimates. New bag limits don't allow retention of copper, quillback, or vermilion rockfish to stay within federal limits and be precautionary in approach.
- Port samplers are needed for seasonal positions to monitor fisheries (Forks and North coast due to limited housing availability)
- Victoria Knorr has moved to a new position in WDFW, so her position for crab/whale entanglement specialist is open.

Casey Dennehy, WA Dept of Ecology shared that the Legislature passed large 2-year budget, with a focus on climate issues including a climate change planning bill for large counties and cities to manage greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions, sea level rise (SLR) planning for shoreline Master plan updates.

- Highest priorities funded focused on coastal climate hazards, including WA Coastal Resilience Project and [Resilience Action Pilot Demonstration Project](#) and the multi-agency resilience team. Will have funding for the Coastal Monitoring & Analysis Program ([CMAP](#)) program, Coastal Hazards Organizational Resilience Team ([COHORT](#)) and building local staffing support and grants to local governments and tribes to implement plans.
- The West Coast Ocean Alliance will hold a summit August 22-24 offshore wind summit in the San Francisco Bay Area and the annual meeting will be held October 17-19 in Portland, OR.

Public comment:

Charlie Sheldon shared that he is an applicant for either citizen at large or fisheries (former commercial fisherman on the East Coast of the USA) and signed in to learn more about group. Offered more info on his history, but otherwise happy to listen.

Call for future agenda topics

Discussion/presentation of other marine mammals in OCNMS and WA coast.

Adjourn

Linda Sturgis adjourned the meeting.