

SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL



January 28, 2014

Brady Scott, Chair
Ellen Matheny, Vice-Chair
Heather Reed, Secretary

Dear Superintendent Bernthal:

Representation

Citizen-At-Large
Commercial Fishing
Conservation
Education
Marine Business
Outer Coast Marine Resource
Committees
Research
Tourism/Economic Development
Hoh Tribe
Makah Tribe
Quileute Tribe
Quinault Indian Nation
Local Government:
Clallam County
Jefferson County
Grays Harbor County
Washington State:
Dept. of Ecology
Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Dept. of Natural Resources
NOAA Fisheries
Olympic National Park
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Geological Survey
U.S. Navy

Artwork: David Sones

The Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) Advisory Council (AC) would like to reinforce its strong support for the sanctuary's oceanographic mooring program. We encourage the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and its West Coast Regional Office to support this critical program with available financial resources and other means.

For more than a decade, OCNMS's oceanographic mooring program has demonstrated cost-effective and efficient operations, generated valuable data from a generally data-poor environment, and supported other regional programs, such as harmful algal bloom monitoring and ecosystem assessments. The data from these moorings directly support most all of the seven priority science needs identified by the OCNMS (<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/assessment/ocnms.html>) by establishing the baseline and variability (both temporal and spatial) of key water quality variables, such as temperature, salinity, oxygen and chlorophyll. These properties are important not only for documenting climate change signals, but also serve to define habitat quality for pelagic, intertidal, and benthic communities. In this way the mooring program allows OCNMS to fulfill its mission, "*To protect the Olympic Coast's natural and cultural resources through responsible stewardship, to conduct and apply research to preserve the area's ecological integrity and maritime heritage, and to promote understanding through public outreach and education.*" The publicly available mooring data are critical not only to understand ocean change and ocean acidification, but also the habitat encountered by kelp, marine mammals, seabirds, and intertidal and nearshore species that the OCNMS stands to protect.

Data from the sanctuary's instrumented moorings support critical management needs identified in the OCNMS management plan and recognized by resource managers and scientists throughout the Pacific Northwest. Specifically, a 2012 report from the Washington State Blue Ribbon Panel on Ocean Acidification identified serious issues

OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
115 East Railroad Ave., Suite 301, Port Angeles, WA 98362
360/457-6622 • 360/457-8496 fax
<http://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/>

faced in Washington State, including waters of the sanctuary, and recommended actions in response to increasing ocean acidification. Their recommendations included expanded and sustained ocean acidification monitoring and development of predictive forecasting for the risk of corrosive water events. OCNMS has been collaborating with researchers from NOAA's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory to support development of an algorithm useful for monitoring corrosive waters using conventional water quality parameters available from the sanctuary's moorings. Data from these moorings have also been instrumental in identifying the timing, severity and spatial extent of low-oxygen events. Both corrosive waters and hypoxic events have caused economic impacts on shellfish growers and marine fisheries off the Washington coast. With the expectation that these events and impacts will continue to increase in severity in the near future, the value of data from the sanctuary's moorings to resource managers and scientists will increase.

We note the value of these data extend to audiences larger than the OCNMS area, but to state, national, and international arenas as well. The data are publicly available through the OCNMS website and discoverable via the Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems (NANOOS) and the United States Integrated Ocean Observing System (US IOOS), thus internationally. Global, national and state assessments of conditions such as warming, hypoxia, ocean acidification, and associated biological responses will be informed by high-quality data sets such as this one.

We understand that you, as the OCNMS Superintendent, have identified the oceanographic mooring program as one of the sanctuary's highest research priorities. We applaud your decision and support you in sending the message that this effort is a good example to the nation for sanctuary responsiveness in light of changing ocean conditions. We encourage you to highlight to NOAA the urgency of securing adequate support for this critical effort. Further, we urge you to explore additional funding sources beyond NOAA, if needed, to assure the long-term sustainability of this program.

As the OCNMS AC, we represent a diverse group of constituencies that have a strong interest in sanctuary and marine resource management in the Olympic Coast region. Our role is to advise the OCNMS Superintendent on sanctuary management topics and concerns. We volunteer our time to assist OCNMS in maintaining a transparent, interdisciplinary, and comprehensive management structure for the sanctuary.

The council is an advisory board to the Sanctuary Superintendent. The opinions and findings of this letter do not necessarily reflect the position of Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Sincerely,



Brady Scott
Chair, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
115 East Railroad Ave., Suite 301, Port Angeles, WA 98362
360/457-6622 • 360/457-8496 fax
<http://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/>