

Washington coastal treaty Indian tribes and the citizens of the state of Washington have always relied on the ocean's resources.

Species such as salmon, groundfish, whales and crab are central to tribal cultures. The tribes and the non-Indian citizens of Washington State believe that these and all natural resources are connected and that only a holistic ecosystem management approach can ultimately be successful in meeting the needs of the resources and the people who depend on them.



From left, Vivian Lee, Hoh tribal chairman; Micah McCarty, Makah tribal council member; Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire; Daniel Basta, director of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program; NOAA Chief of Staff Scott Rayder (standing); Chris Morganroth, Quileute tribal policy member; and Fawn Sharp, Quinault Indian Nation tribal chairman, complete the signing of the charter to create the Intergovernmental Policy Council.

Because of their treaty-reserved rights, their legal status as co-managers, and in recognition of the challenges facing the region's ecosystem, the Hoh Tribe, Makah Tribe, Quileute Tribe and Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) in 2007 established the Intergovernmental Policy Council (IPC) with the state of Washington.

The council was developed to provide a regional forum and develop recommendations for management of coastal resources in Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS).

Background

OCNMS was created in 1994 and encompasses 3,310 square miles of Washington coastal waters from Neah Bay to the Copalis River. The sanctuary is entirely surrounded by the traditional harvest areas of the Hoh, Makah, and Quileute tribes and QIN. These sovereign nations possess treaty fishing rights and co-management responsibilities with the state of Washington for fish and other natural resources within the sanctuary.

The IPC represents a new way for governments to interact regarding ocean resources, as suggested by the Pew Charitable Trusts Oceans Commission report, which calls for better and more comprehensive coordination between governing agencies that deal with ocean resources.

"This Policy Council is a landmark collaborative opportunity, one of the first of its kind and a tribute to the resolve of the partners vested in the future of the sanctuary waters," said Daniel Basta, director of NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program. "It will bring together entities that have varied responsibility for regulation of activities and management of one of the most pristine marine ecosystems in North America."

"I am pleased to be a partner in this historic opportunity," said Gov. Chris Gregoire. "We know that isolated local efforts cannot adequately address the breadth of degradation to our oceans. By cooperating, we will combine state, tribal and federal resources and influence to make a real difference in the fight to clean and protect the oceans."

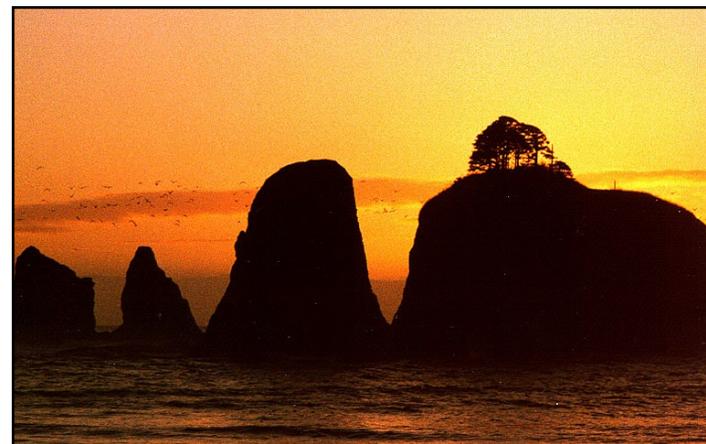
The IPC facilitates the exchange of information and recommendations regarding the management of marine resources within the sanctuary. The council's goals include:

- Protect the health and safety of coastal residents;
- Enhance the social and economic vitality of coastal communities; and
- Improve understanding and management of marine resources.

Ecosystem-based Management

A number of the IPC research priorities complement the priorities of the Ocean Ecosystem Monitoring and Research Initiative launched in 2007 by the coastal tribes and the state of Washington. The objective of the five-year ocean initiative is to support a transition to ecosystem-based management of ocean resources, including fisheries. IPC members passed a resolution in 2007 supporting the initiative and its associated funding proposal.

The need for an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and environmental issues in Washington coastal waters has come into sharp focus in recent years, fueled in large part by major studies conducted by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Charitable Trusts. Additionally, persistent low oxygen zones off the Washington and Oregon coasts that have killed thousands of fish and Dungeness crab require additional research to understand these phenomena.



IPC Research Priorities:

- The establishment of a finer scale biological database is an essential step toward improving the region's forecasting capability of stock status and abundance.
- The state of Washington and coastal treaty tribes plan to jointly implement enhanced rockfish assessment and habitat mapping.
- Also included within the initiative is a near shore observation and education program, expansion of ocean monitoring buoys and establishment of long-range high-frequency radar sites to improve weather forecasts.

As IPC partners, Washington State and coastal treaty tribes are working on a number of projects in support of these research priorities.



Jonette Bastian, Quinault Indian Nation harmful algal specialist, tests seawater.

Partners Focus on Algal Blooms

The state of Washington and coastal treaty tribes are helping to determine when harmful algal blooms (HABs) occur and how quickly they affect shellfish eaten regularly by Indian and non-Indian harvesters through the region.

The Olympic Region Harmful Algal Bloom (ORHAB) partnership was created in 1999 to foster collaboration and cooperation among coastal tribes, federal, state and local management agencies, marine resource-based businesses, public interest groups and academic institutions.

The ORHAB partnership investigates origins of blooms of toxic algae, monitors where and when the blooms occur, assesses the environmental conditions conducive to blooms, and explores methods to reduce HAB impacts on humans and the environment.

Earbones Tell of Rockfish History

Yongwen Gao, a research scientist for the Makah Tribe, uses chemical analysis of fish earbones to unlock some of the mystery about area rockfish, such as where they were born and where they move as they age.



Yongwen Gao, research scientist for the Makah Tribe, holds a fish earbone sample.

This information helps manage groundfish on an area-specific basis. Current management is largely based on commercial landings of rockfish in Oregon or California, which are used to make management decisions for the entire West Coast.

State Tax Funds Rockfish Research

To create a funding source for additional research on rockfish populations off the Washington coast and in Puget Sound, Washington State this year approved a surcharge on some commercial and recreational fishing licenses. The fee is expected to generate approximately \$200,000 a year.

The money will be used to expand abundance surveys, including the use of remote-controlled vehicles to monitor rockfish in rocky areas of the sea floor that are difficult to access with other survey methods.



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