

2016

# West Coast Ocean Partnership

MEETING SUMMARY

OCTOBER 25, 2016

PORTLAND, OREGON

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- West Coast Ocean Partnership Coordinator Kim McIntyre for her coordination, document drafting, and meeting planning

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Section I: Background and Purpose, Objectives of Meeting and Introductions.....	4
Section II: Responding to Changing Ocean Conditions.....	4
Section III: Improving Ocean Data Access and Coordination.....	6
Section IV: Climate Resilient Coastal Communities.....	7
Section V: Next Steps for WCOP.....	8

### Appendices:

- *Appendix 1* - WCOP Attendance List
- *Appendix 2* - WCOP Agenda
- *Appendix 3* – WCOP Strategic Framework
- *Appendix 4* – Existing Climate Networks

## I. BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, MEETING OBJECTIVES, AND INTRODUCTIONS

### Background and Purpose

This document summarizes the outcomes of a one-day meeting held on October 25, 2016 in Portland, Oregon to discuss the West Coast Ocean Partnership's (WCOP) regional ocean health priorities and next steps. Participants included members and interested parties, including West Coast tribes and tribal communities, state governments from the states of Washington, Oregon and California, and federal agencies concerned with issues of ocean health. All meeting materials and presentations will be made available on [www.westcoastoceans.org](http://www.westcoastoceans.org).

### Meeting Objectives

The objectives for the meeting included:

- Improve understanding of regional ocean health issues by (1) providing updates on shared regional priorities and (2) identifying regional opportunities for the WCOP and/or members to pursue
- Identify appropriate activities and next steps for the WCOP

### Introductions

WCOP Co-Chairs John Stein (NOAA) and Patty Snow (Oregon) welcomed the meeting participants (for full list of attendees see *Appendix 1*). Kim McIntyre, WCOP Coordinator, invited participants to introduce themselves with their name and affiliation. She then walked through the proposed agenda and provided process reminders including ground rules.

## II. RESPONDING TO CHANGING OCEAN CONDITIONS – LOCAL, REGIONAL, INTERNATIONAL

The purpose of this session was to receive an update on activities related to the responding to changing ocean conditions priority at the state, regional and international levels, with a focus on ocean acidification.

Presenters were Jenn Phillips (California Ocean Protection Council), Caren Braby (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), and Jennifer Hennessey (Washington State Department of Ecology).

Jenn Phillips gave a presentation on the state perspective of tackling ocean acidification in California. The CA Ocean Protection Council is working in the state and with the West Coast and global leaders to identify response to ocean acidification and hypoxia (OAH) through leadership and leveraging investments. Jenn described four efforts: (1) the West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel, (2) recent OA legislation, (3) funding innovative projects, and (4) coordinating with partners.

### *West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Panel*

The Panel, made up of 20 scientific experts, was convened in 2013 by the Ocean Science Trust at the request of the California Ocean Protection Council. The charge of the Panel was to advance the understanding of OAH and to develop management options. The Panel recently released a report describing six findings, eight recommendations and 17 action items (the full report can be found at <http://westcoastoah.org>). The recommendations described in the report address local factors that can reduce OAH exposure and enhance the ability of biota to cope with OAH stress.

### *Recent Ocean Acidification Legislation in California*

Jenn described two recent bills that were signed into law by Governor Brown. The first one, Assembly Bill 2139 (introduced by Assemblymember Das Williams, District 37), calls out many of the recommendations and actions from the Panel. It charges the OPC staff to report out to the Council on an annual basis. Senate Bill 1363 (introduced by Senator Bill Monning), was written to promote protection and restoration of eelgrass habitat in California's coastal environments. The legislation calls out the multiple benefits of eelgrass restoration including helping to mitigate hypoxia and sequestering carbon in the underlying sediments.

### *Funding Innovative Projects*

The Ocean Protection Council currently funded six ocean acidification projects totaling \$3 million dollars with the purpose of implementing the Panel recommendations. They are: (1) advance integrated modeling of California's coastal ocean to inform ocean acidification and hypoxia policy, (2) potential seagrass buffering of Humboldt Bay to ocean acidification and implication for aquaculture industry and hatchery and eelgrass managers, (3) seagrasses' ability to ameliorate estuarine acidification, (4) revision of ocean acidification and hypoxia water quality criteria, (5) MPA effectiveness and ecological responses in the face of changing ocean conditions, and (6) an inventory of ocean acidification and hypoxia hotspots.

Caren Braby gave the next presentation, with a focus on changing ocean condition efforts on a regional scale. She first described the Pacific Coast Collaborative (PCC) ([www.pacificcoastcollaborative.org](http://www.pacificcoastcollaborative.org)), a West Coast leaders agreement signed in 2008 by the Governors of California, Oregon and Washington and the Premier of British Columbia with a focus on West Coast climate and energy climates. An Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia (OAH) subcommittee was formed to align regional, cross-border and national efforts with a science-to-policy goal to have an impactful way to address a changing ocean. The PCC's message is that OAH spans silos and the work is about building coastal resilience and ocean health, and that a joint response to OAH is collaborative to maximize effectiveness and elevate oceans in the global climate conversation.

Caren stated that there is a shared challenge on building on statewide efforts (CA Ocean Protection Council and Ocean Science Trust, WA Blue Ribbon Panel and OR Institute for Natural Resources) into aligning efforts across the West Coast through the WCOP, PCC and West Coast OAH Science Panel as well as engaging North American partners including the Federal Interagency Working Group on OA and others.

Jennifer Hennessey gave the last presentation in this session with a focus on international OAH efforts. She provided some background on the PCC Ocean Acidification Monitoring, including an Inventory Task Force and upcoming workshops with a goal of building a more robust monitoring network coastwide to detect trends and inform management. The PCC is also launching an International Ocean Acidification Alliance to include governments and affiliates with a goal of building an action plan to (1) advance the scientific understanding of OA, (2) take meaningful action to reduce OA, (3) protect the environment and coastal communities, (4) expand public awareness and understanding of OA and (5) build sustained international support for addressing OA. There is currently no funding to support this effort, and details for membership are still being worked out, but the WCOP could possibly become an affiliate. Separate governments can be members.

When asked how the WCOP could engage in the Changing Ocean Conditions priority and ongoing efforts, Jenn Phillips responded that the WCOP could be a link to bigger challenges beyond the purview of the PCC and could reach out to broader organizations. Jennifer Hennessey said that the West Coast Ocean Data Portal could be used to tell the story and provide education and data access and perhaps be the home for the California monitoring inventory.

### III. IMPROVING OCEAN DATA ACCESS AND COORDINATION: WEST COAST OCEAN DATA PORTAL

West Coast Ocean Data Portal (WCODP) Co-Chairs Andy Lanier (Oregon Department of Ecology) and Steve Steinberg (Southern California Coastal Water Research Project) and Project Consultant Allison Bailey (SoundGIS) gave an update on the Portal status and projects, and asked for feedback from the WCOP on next steps.

Steve started the presentation by setting the stage on the importance of data portals for regional planning. Of the four Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs), four have data portals: the Northeast (NROC), the Mid-Atlantic (MARCO), the South Atlantic (GSAA), and the West Coast (WCODP). These regional data portals provide significant benefits, including data coordination among multiple entities, organized and searchable information, and mechanisms to access and integrate data.

Steve then provided a brief history of the WCODP. The West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health (WCGA), established in 2006, established multiple Action Coordination Teams (ACTS) focused on key issues. The WCGA also recognized the need for an ACT for data coordination, and formed the West Coast Regional Data Network and Ocean Data Portal ACT in January 2012 with workgroups established for data, information technology and outreach. Initial funding came from the NOAA Regional Ocean Partnership funding program, which supported a Program Coordinator, a contractor to support the development of the Portal, infrastructure support and meeting support. Since then, BOEM has provided funds for data analysis for regional data products and IT infrastructure maintenance and support. Funding from the Moore Foundation has recently supported the RPB for the Portal to make connections to additional data catalogs, development of priorities document and development of example story maps.

Allison Bailey then gave a guided tour of the portal website, walking through a live demonstration of <http://portal.westcoastoceans.org>. There are three main aspects of the Portal: Discover, Connect, and Inform. The Portal is 'topic agnostic', meaning that the Portal team are not the topic experts, but can provide the experts in priority areas connect to the available data that makes sense and connects to an audience. Alison then focused on the recent work funded by the Moore Foundation, in particular a 'story map' on how ocean conditions are changing. This story map can be found at <http://wcodp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=20b1de61d4094465bb02a6cf44a19766>. The story map includes maps, time scales, text explanations and tours of websites.

Andy Lanier gave the final presentation of this panel on the Portal status and moving forward. As the co-chair of the Portal since its inception, his perspective is that the Portal's role is to increase the capacity of the RPB and engage with the WCOP on topic and thematic focus areas. He compared the structures of the WCGA and WCOP. The WCGA gave direction to the ACTs and the Portal tried to fit under those teams to coordinate, and had a clear institutional framework to work under. Now the relationship is unclear between the Portal and the WCOP, as well as what the WCOP's needs are from the Portal. In order to continue operating, the Portal has support needs, including annual basic operation and maintenance (webhosting, software updates, and server maintenance), coordination and outreach (project coordinator) and use case expansion and development.

The Portals' preferred alternative is to receive institutional funding to support operations and a full time coordinator position, totaling \$100,000 a year. Currently, BOEM gave the Portal money to keep the servers running in SCWRP's office for the next year.

Following Andy's presentation, there was agreement that the Portal is an important asset to the WCOP and to West Coast efforts and that trying to find resources to support the Portal seemed like an appropriate way of demonstrating how important it is as an asset. There was some discussion on possibilities for supporting the Portal, including finding staff time from participating agencies, contributions from each federal and state agency, and seeking funding from foundations. The idea that seemed to get the most traction was around the idea of member entities that had the financial capacity to contribute whatever amount they could, but with the understanding that not every entity was required to commit resources to support the portal. Several tribal governments expressed that they would not have resources to commit and didn't want to feel obligated. A few federal agencies thought they might be able to find some limited funds (amounts of \$5000-\$10,000 each were discussed), but again, no one was able to commit to specifics at the meeting. Most importantly, the discussion revolved around the fact that not everyone had to contribute, that those that could, would, and that which entities and the amount contributed would likely change over the years, but that this might be an initial approach to support the Portal in the short-term. There was some discussion of what mechanism could be used to transfer monies from member entities to a fiscal agent of sorts who could collect the resources to support the portal. There was no specific ideas or solutions for this identified, but all agreed they could share ideas or approaches as they identified them in their individual organizations.

For a copy of the presentation, visit [http://network.westcoastoceans.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/WCOPD\\_WCOP\\_Oct2016.pdf](http://network.westcoastoceans.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/WCOPD_WCOP_Oct2016.pdf)

#### **IV. CLIMATE RESILIENT COASTAL COMMUNITIES**

Becky Smyth (NOAA), Kris Wall (NOAA), Patty Snow (Oregon) and Brian Lynn (Washington) presented this priority to the WCOP. The objectives of this session were (1) to engage the WCOP in a discussion around previously identified potential activities for this priority, and to decide which, if any, to pursue, and (2) to identify existing climate networks and decide where, if any, WCOP's niche is.

Becky started the discussion with a recap of the nine potential activities the WCOP came up with at the previous meeting (see Appendix 3, WCOP Strategic Framework). She recognized that many of them are very ambitious, and that the panel would ask for input via a dot activity later in the session.

Brian then explained that the panel thought it would be helpful to develop a list of existing climate networks in the west coast region to understand who is already organizing around these same issues. Kris displayed a chart of existing networks in the region, and asked that the rest of the WCOP participate by adding networks that were not already listed (see Appendix 4, Existing Climate Networks). Brian and Patty then walked through those, and received input from the rest of group, which was compiled into the chart.

After the discussion on existing climate networks, the panel suggested an exercise to revisit the nine potential activities the WCOP identified previously, and to use dots to indicate where each organization felt it could potentially commit resources and/or time to. Each entity was given four dots and 15 minutes to place the sticker by each activity, keeping in mind that the WCOP does not have funding and needs to work on a regional scale.

The four areas that received the most dots, indicating topics of highest group interest and commitment, were (1) having the WCOP serve as a voice for putting a national focus on key issues for the West Coast, (2) facilitating the exchange of information, challenges, approaches, and examples of climate resilience among

West Coast climate resilience practitioners, (3) identifying existing activities and efforts by each member entity to see where alignment between members takes place and where projects can be duplicated, leveraged, or scaled up to a regional level, and (4) identifying regional climate resilience issues and policy challenges that tribal, state and federal governments need help with.

Based on the dot activity, the discussion turned to what would be realistic for the WCOP to undertake, given the number of groups and networks that already exist to address these issues and that the WCOP has no funding. An emerging proposal became focused on writing a letter to higher level decision makers, which could be a tangible and high impact action as well as achievable. Later in the meeting, this idea became rolled up in the “transition letter” idea where the WCOP’s statement on climate concerns and priorities could be included. Another proposal was that there are opportunities, with funding, for education and information exchange through a West Coast wide resiliency summit or conference (possibly in conjunction with other regional networks or partners), and to use the Portal to create a “Story map” to communicate climate and sea level rise impacts on the west coast and what communities are doing about it.

## **V. NEXT STEPS FOR WCOP**

In the final agenda item, the group discussed the next steps and direction for the partnership. The session began with a discussion on the status of membership. Kim McIntyre showed a slide with those who have signed on as members already, and asked for feedback for those entities who have not yet signed if there was a reason why. This led into a discussion on whether the federal agencies can legally sign as the Strategic Framework is currently written. The federal agencies would not be able to participate in activities such as drafting a letter to decision makers. Kris Wall gave some history on why the federal agencies were fully participating members to the WCGA, but were not signatories. There was some concern from the group, especially tribal members, what this meant for a commitment by the federal government. Those that were present and representing federal agencies assured the group that they are fully committed to the process, as evidenced by participation by many staff in all WCOP activities and meetings, and that they would research all the possibilities to show this commitment. Some ideas included developing and signing a MOU (federal agencies acknowledged this would be a lengthy and complex process), having the states and tribes send a letter to the CEQ to ask for federal agency support and engagement on the WCOP (this is similar to what happened when the West Coast Governors Agreement was established), to try and draft some other more informal statement or document the federal agencies could sign indicating their commitment (perhaps as a short term “fix”), or changing the wording of the Strategic Framework to make it something federal agencies could sign (but recognizing this would mean removing activities such as taking policy stances and letter writing out).

**ACTION:** Federal agencies will hold a caucus call, consult their attorneys and come back to the WCOP with options.

The next item for discussion was the status of the Co-Chair committee. As of this meeting, John Stein served as the federal co-chair, Patty Snow as the states co-chair, and the tribal caucus was in talks to come up with a process to choose the tribal co-chair. With John Stein retiring in January 2017 and Kim McIntyre’s contract ending in December 2016, it is important for the WCOP to choose co-chairs who will have the time to help with coordination efforts and to keep the momentum of the WCOP going.



ACTION: Federal and tribal entities will nominate representatives to serve as co-chairs to help with coordination of the WCOP.

Other operational next steps include updating the [www.westcoastoceans.org](http://www.westcoastoceans.org) website to reflect the transition from the WCGA to the WCOP, to send a public announcement on the formation of the WCOP, and to make changes to the Strategic Framework as necessary and with approval from the WCOP members (as a living document).

ACTION: Kim will update the website and send an announcement for approval.

The final part of the discussion was to identify activities for the WCOP to pursue. The group recognized that there were three **emerging proposals** to come out of the discussions, and were summarized in this session:

1. Support the West Coast Ocean Data Portal and try to find funding for operations and coordination.
2. Changing Ocean Conditions priority to become the Portal's first project for the WCOP.
3. Draft a transition letter on ocean health priorities for the West Coast.

Next steps are to start identifying potential funding sources to support the Portal, and to get approval from the entire WCOP membership to move forward with the above proposals.