

Overview

The West Coast Ocean Alliance (WCOA) hosted its 2019 Annual Meeting in Tacoma, Washington from December 2nd-6th. The meeting included elements focused on tribes, ocean data, WCOA membership, and public-facing meetings with stakeholders. The meeting included over 90 attendees, representing tribal governments, state and federal agencies as well as over 30 non-governmental groups. The meeting provided opportunities for internal member discussions about the direction of the WCOA, as well as a forum for public input to help define priority areas for regional and sub-regional activities. This document is meant to provide a broad summary of key themes and action items identified at the meeting. A more detailed summary will be shared in early 2020.

Key Themes

- WCOA members discussed the primary benefits of participating in the regional partnership, highlighting **stronger personal connections** with regional co-managers, better ability to **identify gaps in regional ocean data and policy**, and **learning from the experiences and outcomes** of other relevant West Coast projects.
- The group underscored the importance of tribal engagement in the region throughout the meeting, culminating with a training based on the ongoing efforts of the West Coast Tribal Caucus on a **new West Coast Tribal Engagement Guidance document** aimed at enhancing state and federal approaches to working with tribes.
- The West Coast Ocean Data Portal (WCODP) hosted a workshop and was able to gain valuable input and share updates around its efforts on a **new West Coast Ocean Health Scorecard**, development of new **sub-regional coordination framework** for WCOA members, and additional **technical updates** to the Portal infrastructure.
- The group explored opportunities for the WCOA to provide a long-term forum around emerging ocean uses, as well as growing threats to ocean health, that are not addressed in other regional dialogs. Early discussions focused on uses such as **ocean energy** and **aquaculture**, as well as the importance of addressing **increasing ocean warming and acidification**, as well as **harmful algal blooms** on the West Coast.
- Stakeholders and WCOA members both identified the need for increased regional outreach and engagement to build awareness around the work of the WCOA and WCODP. Due to frequent changes in structure and policies for regional ocean partnerships in recent years, the group emphasized the importance of highlighting the **strong ongoing relationships built on the West Coast** and **commitment to continue regional work**.

Action Items

- **West Coast Tribal Engagement Document:** Tribal Caucus and Udall Foundation will share an **updated draft of Tribal Engagement document in early 2020**; State and Federal members to work with Tribal Caucus to determine best approach for **dissemination throughout State & Federal agencies**; WCOA staff will work with Tribal Caucus on **public release of document later in 2020**.
- **West Coast Ocean Health Scorecard:** WCODP will develop a **short position statement to better define audience, purpose and benefits** of new regional ocean health scorecard product, and share with WCOA Exec. Committee and membership in January-February 2020. WCOA **state leads will provide feedback to WCODP in early 2020 on priority needs for scorecard**, including how to link to existing 'scorecard'-type products.
- **Sub-regional Coordination Frameworks:** WCODP will continue development of a new spatial coordination framework tool for the WCOA sub-regional teams, with an **updated version and new sub-regional boundaries to be shared with WCOA for feedback in early 2020**.
- **West Coast Ocean Data Portal Technical Updates:** WCODP will explore **hosting an informational webinar** about the use and new functionality of the Portal for WCOA members and stakeholders in early 2020.
- **New Ocean Use & Ocean Health Issues for WCOA:** WCOA staff will develop a **prospectus on emerging ocean use and ocean health topics** that may be appropriate for **increased engagement by WCOA membership**, with early focus on ocean energy, aquaculture, ocean acidification and harmful algal blooms, including links to the regional ocean scorecard. A draft prospectus will be discussed on the February 2020 WCOA membership call.
- **Increased Engagement & Outreach:** WCOA staff will work with WCOA members to **increase participation within tribal, state and federal government entities** on the West Coast. Staff will also define **renewed stakeholder outreach approaches to increase awareness and engagement** in future WCOA activities in the region. An updated priority list of outreach activities will be shared in early 2020.

For more information about the efforts listed above, or if you would like to participate in future WCOA activities, please contact WCOA Coordinator John Hansen at john@westcoastoceanalliance.org or 510-788-9265.