

MARINE PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT ON MARINE PLANNING ISSUES

The Marine Planning Committee (MPC) met via webinar on October 2, 2026, to consider current issues and prepare this report for consideration at the November 2026 Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting.

Regional and National

Deep Seabed Mineral Mining on the High Seas

The MPC discussed the Permit Applications and Consultation Request letters from the National Ocean Service (September 2026 [Informational Report 5](#)). Members of the MPC and Habitat Committee will collaborate on drafting a Council response to the consultation requests.

West Coast Ocean Alliance (WCOA) Update

Subregional Convenings to Discuss Science Needs and Priorities

Development of a [West Coast Ocean Science Action Agenda](#) is currently underway by the California Ocean Science Trust (OST), Oregon Ocean Science Trust, and Washington Department of Ecology. The Action Agenda is focused on amplifying ocean and coastal science priorities and to drive investments in research, monitoring, and technology development. [WCOA](#) contracted with California OST to host subregional convenings for WCOA members to identify place-based science needs and priorities that will inform the Action Agenda and WCOA's future activities.

The Washington convening, October 20-21, 2026, in Shelton, WA, will generate dialogue between coastal Tribes, Washington agencies, and scientists to inform development of a Washington Ocean Science Agenda in addition to the goals above. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and tribal MPC representatives expected to attend, at least partially. The remaining convenings are currently being scheduled for December 2026 or January 2027 on the Oregon Coast, Southern Oregon/Northern California, and Central/Southern California

Cumulative Impacts Assessment Needs Assessment (CIANA)

WCOA contracted with [ESSA](#) to undertake this needs assessment to address the need WCOA members expressed to better understand the cumulative impacts of current and emerging ocean uses along the West Coast to help inform ocean resources management. WCOA is not conducting a cumulative impact assessment (CIA) through this effort or designing it around any regulatory CIA framework; rather, it is exploring how it might best support regional CIA work focused on members' priorities. The final product, which will be completed in spring 2027, will identify member priorities, existing regional CIA efforts and expertise, gaps, partnership opportunities, and practical next steps for future regional CIA work. (Contact: Lilah Isé, Lilah@westcoastocealliance.org).

Exploring Ocean Iron Solutions (ExOIS)

Paul Morris and Katie Roche of [Exploring Ocean Iron Solutions](#) (ExOIS) presented information on the proposed [North Pacific Carbon Study](#), where a 30 km x 30 km patch of ocean would be

fertilized with a relatively small amount (10 – 15 tons) of acidified iron sulfate solution. The study is intended as research rather than deployment-scale carbon removal. Iron fertilization is a proposed method for combating climate change by adding iron to the ocean to promote phytoplankton growth, which helps absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

The proposed experiment would take place in the Gulf of Alaska international waters, releasing iron from moving vessels, followed by monitoring of carbon-cycle and ecological effects. The proposed study would measure three major components of the carbon cycle:

1. Changes in surface-ocean CO₂;
2. Carbon sinking through the water column; and
3. Exchange of CO₂ between the ocean and atmosphere.

Additional monitoring would include nutrients, phytoplankton, zooplankton, and higher trophic levels, including fish. Acoustic methods and eDNA would be used for some zooplankton and fish observations. The presenters identified several issues that may warrant continued attention, including:

- Verification of fishing activity in and around the proposed study area;
- Potential interactions between research vessels and commercial fishing vessels;
- Tracking and notification as the experimental patch moves;
- Monitoring of fish, zooplankton, phytoplankton, oxygen and other ecological variables;
- Potential effects on fisheries production;
- Coordination with National Marine Fisheries Service and NOAA science centers; and
- Availability of research results for future management decisions.

MPC members noted this area has historic usage by West Coast-based fishermen participating the North Pacific albacore fishery and encouraged ExOIS to reach out to those fleets to consider how to mitigate potential impacts to that fishery.

Oregon Updates

Oregon Offshore Wind Energy Roadmap: The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) finalized and submitted the Oregon Offshore Wind Energy Roadmap to the Legislature in July following a collaborative Roundtable process. Lawmakers and key stakeholders are now evaluating potential legislation to guide the future protection and management of Oregon's offshore marine waters.

Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC): OPAC is strategically evolving its meeting structure and focus areas to broaden its impact. OPAC is currently [recruiting](#) commercial and recreational representatives from both the North and South Coasts, four positions in total. Additionally, OPAC is seeking applicants to join a specialized committee tasked with updating Parts 1 and 2 of Oregon's [Territorial Sea Plan](#)—the framework governing ocean management history and resource decision-making, respectively. Public members are welcome to apply by contacting DLCD Marine Affairs Coordinator Andy Lanier at Andy.Lanier@dlcd.oregon.gov.

OPAC's executive committee is asking Oregonians interested in the state's territorial sea to complete a brief survey that will help shape the council's priorities and management recommendations for the next five years: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6LLGFJK>. Input is especially welcome from the fishing community, seafood processors, tribes, researchers, ports, and conservation interests.

PacWave Wave Energy Test Facility: Oregon State University's wave energy testing facility consists of two sites – PacWave South and PacWave North. Both sites are located off Newport, Oregon where environmental monitoring equipment is currently deployed (more information here: <https://pacwaveenergy.org/>). PacWave South is fully constructed and operational, offering pre-permitted grid-connected testing of wave energy devices in an open-ocean environment. Three companies remain interested in using test berths at the facility, however testing has been delayed and may occur in 2027.

Washington and Tribal Updates

The Washington discussion included outreach from Paul Inzani of SubCom on a submarine cable project expected to land north of the Quinalt Beach Resort in Ocean Shores and connect near Hogans Corner. Mr. Inzani is conducting initial outreach with the fishing industry in the area and saw the MPC as a place to help spread the word. WDFW's representative on the MPC noted that another company, Sealink Networks, was planning to land multiple submarine cables in Westport and had most recently updated the Washington Coast Marine Advisory Council (WCMAC) at its [September 23, 2026 meeting](#) (a [recording of the presentation](#) is available through TVW). Sealink Networks advised WCMAC it was proposing to use an Oregon Fishermen's Cable Committee-style coordination framework. Washington's Marine Spatial Plan Management Framework does not apply to submarine cables, but the WDFW representative on the MPC advised the group that this coordination framework looked to be as strong a model for the type of fisheries stakeholder engagement and impact avoidance that could be hoped for if it did apply. He also said that he expected that Washington state would be encouraging Mr. Inzani's company to consider participating in the same coordination framework given that both would be occurring off Grays Harbor in similar timeframes. SubCom has not yet engaged with the state or WCMAC. MPC members emphasized the importance of coordinating among the several cable projects developing simultaneously as the project progresses.

The Quinalt Indian Nation's (QIN) tribally-owned telecommunications company, Toptana Technologies, in September [broke ground](#) on a cable landing station on tribal land near Ocean Shores, with four fiber-optic cable landing vaults and room for expansion. The Tribe is planning for an Amazon Web Services sub-sea cable in 2029, and it would also likely be the landing point for the SubCom cable.

The MPC expects to hear updates about both current cable projects, potential cable projects for the QIN Toptana Technologies' landing station and WCMAC's role in the development of these projects in the future.

California Updates

Offshore Wave and Tidal Energy. The MPC received a presentation from Danielle Mullaney (California Energy Commission) on the recently released [Draft Senate Bill 605 Wave and Tidal Energy Report to the Governor and Legislature](#). The comment period on this Draft document closes on November 3rd. The Council submitted [a comment letter on May 16, 2025](#) on a prior phase of the Senate Bill 605 requirements. The MPC believed no additional comments were necessary on the current Draft documents so did not prepare a letter for your consideration.

Ocean Rainforest Aquaculture Project. The MPC received a presentation from Heather McNair (California Coastal Commission (CCC)) on the recent CZMA conditional concurrence to a request for a consistency determination for the Ocean Rainforest commercial kelp aquaculture project. This was the last step in the process so we should expect construction to begin sometime in 2027. This project will be located in one of the Aquaculture Opportunity Areas offshore Ventura, California. The CCC, in considering the consistency request, identified potential effects involving:

- Marine wildlife entanglement;
- Commercial and recreational fishing;
- Anchor-related disturbance;
- Changes to water quality and primary productivity;
- Navigation hazards; and
- Spill-related hazards associated with project vessels.

Fishing data showed that certain fisheries and gear types have substantial vessel activity near the proposed project area. Under the Commission's rough estimate, full buildout could reduce fishing landings by approximately \$52,000 per year, although staff cautioned that this may overestimate the actual economic effect because fishermen could potentially compensate by fishing elsewhere. The project is anticipated to be developed in four phases, covering 10 years. In an effort to mitigate these impacts, a fisheries mitigation plan and funding agreement establishing a resiliency fund were included as a condition. Ocean Rainforest will be required to make mitigation payments during the first three years of each project phase. If the project ultimately reaches full buildout, total contributions were estimated at approximately \$156,000 plus an inflation factor.

Additionally, the CCC included a requirement that Ocean Rainforest develop a Lost or Damaged Fishing Gear Recovery Plan to compensate for fishing gear interactions with the project infrastructure or vessels.

PFCM

10/20/26