



Hoh Indian Tribe
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Makah Tribe
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Neah Bay, WA 98357



Quileute Tribe
P.O. Box 279
LaPush, WA 98350



Quinault Indian Nation
P.O. Box 189
Taholah, WA 98587

September 23, 2010

National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration
Coral Reef Conservation Program
1315 East-West Highway
SSMC 3, Room 14149
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-713-4300 ext. 178

RECEIVED

SEP 23 2010

SSMC

Dear Maile Sullivan, Kacky Andrews, and Tom Hourigan:

The four coastal treaty tribes - the Hoh Tribe, the Makah Tribe, the Quileute Tribe, and the Quinault Nation request a meeting to discuss with the Coral Reef Conservation Program what its research plans are for the west coast over the next two years. This meeting should be timely as the first year's research cruises are largely concluded for the season. We wish to hear how the program intends to achieve its objective of locating and mapping the distribution of deepwater coral and sponge communities along the west coast.

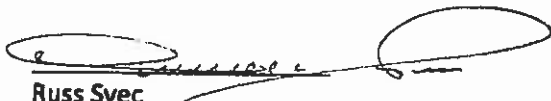
As you recall, the highest priority topic identified in the West Coast Regional Priorities Workshop was the identification of deep-sea coral species distribution, abundance, densities, and diversity throughout the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem. We believe this should be the research program's primary focus for the next two years. This coincides with the most pressing management concern of how these species are distributed by depth and latitudinally throughout the California Current. The other identified research needs from the workshop, increasing the understanding of deep-sea coral and sponge biology and their ecological role within the ecosystem, while important, are lower management priorities. In addition, these issues will take longer to address than the two years the program intends to remain focused on the west coast region.

The identified top priority from the workshop also coincides with NOAA's Deep Sea Coral Research and Technology Program's mission of providing information on deep-sea coral to the Regional Fishery Management Councils and other resource managers to enhance the conservation of these species. We are interested in hearing how the survey cruises are being designed to provide this information. We are aware that the Statistical and Scientific Committee of the Pacific Fishery Management Council has extended an offer to work with the program on its research design. It is important from our standpoint

that the Statistical and Scientific Committee be involved in the survey design so that there is as much confidence as possible in the data and information that result from this coast wide assessment. Our expectation is that the program will work with the Pacific Council's technical committees to ensure that their data standards are being met.

A coordinated regional management approach is necessary for effective conservation efforts to occur on species so widely distributed as deep water coral and sponges. The tribal co-managers have been working within the Pacific Fishery Management Council process to achieve this result. It is our desire to have data from coast wide assessment to inform the Pacific Council's deliberations for the next 5-year Essential Fish Habitat review cycle. We look forward to hearing from you on how the program is progressing on this task. Our contacts for this issue are Joe Gilbertson (Hoh Tribe: joseph@centurytel.net), Steve Joner (Makah Tribe: gofish@olympen.com), Jennifer Hagen (Quilleute Tribe: jennifer.hagen@quileutenation.org), Joe Schumacker (Quinault Nation: jschumacker@quinault.org), and Craig Bowhay (NWIFC: cbowhay@nwifc.org). We request that a joint meeting be coordinated through your staff at the earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Russ Svec
Makah Tribe
Fisheries Department



Ed Johnstone
Quinault Indian Nation
Department of Natural Resources



Lonnie Foster
Quilleute Tribe
Department of Natural Resources



David Hudson
Hoh Tribe
Department of Natural Resources

cc: John Coon, Pacific Fishery Management Council
Frank Lockhart, NOAA Fisheries