



Oregon Coastal Notes

Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association

March 12, 2012

The Oregon Coast Awakens to Ocean Planning—*Onno Husing, Director, OCZMA*



It was a stirring sight. A long line of people stretched out the door at the Kiawanda Community Center in Pacific City. People were waiting to sign in and attend an important meeting on Oregon's ocean planning process. The process—the Oregon Territorial Sea Plan (TSP) Amendment process—will, among other things, identify appropriate sites for potential ocean energy development in Oregon waters.

The estimates vary, but, it is safe to say between 125 and 150 people attended the meeting in Pacific City (March 6, 2012).

The Nuts and Bolts of the Process

The meeting in Pacific City marked the end of a series of the Second Round of Public Work Sessions conducted by the Territorial Sea Plan Working Group (TSPWG). The Work Sessions gathered public input on the ocean planning process. Each individual Work Session had its own dynamic. Each of those encounters with the public yielded important insights.

The TSPWG is a committee of the Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC). OPAC, along with the Territorial Sea Plan Advisory Committee (TSPAC), is preparing and will forward recommendations for a *spatially-explicit* ocean plan to the Land Conservation & Development Commission (LCDC). Oregon's ocean plan is anchored, legally, to Oregon's land use planning goals and statutes. In turn, Oregon's ocean plan is a component of the state's federally authorized Coastal Zone Management Program. As such, Oregon's ocean plan has teeth. That will be especially true once the TSP is amended and adopted by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]). In addition, under ORS 196.465 the State of Oregon's TSP must be "compatible" with the acknowledged comprehensive land use plans of coastal cities and counties.

David Allen, the Chair of the TSPWG (Territorial Sea Plan Working Group), provided opening remarks. Then, Lincoln County Commissioner Terry Thompson and I explained the emerging role local governments will play in channeling public input into the planning process. After two short state agency presentations and a 5-minute video on Goal 19 (Oregon's Ocean Resources Goal), it was time for the main event—over two hours of public dialogue.

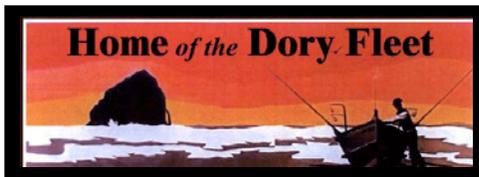
One of the first individuals to speak stood up, turned to the crowd and said, “I don’t know about all of you, but, I’m drowning in acronyms!” At once, everyone chuckled in agreement.

But, for me, the puzzling alphabet soup of committees and agencies is a good thing. The State of Oregon established—for a process as historic and consequential as this—a system of checks and balances. It maximizes citizen involvement and leverages expertise. There is transparency. *Citizen involvement* drives the process.

Of course, though, it takes a lot of time and effort to work through this maze of committees. The process, though, promises to produce much better outcomes. Looking ahead, perhaps the most significant filter for Oregon’s ocean planning process will be the Coastal Caucus. The Coastal Caucus is a highly influential group of eight state legislators (a bipartisan caucus) representing coastal communities in the Oregon Legislature.

Protecting the Fisheries

Early in the meeting Paul Hanneman—a popular former State Representative—underscored that the dory fleet in Pacific City is among the best-documented fisheries/oldest sustainable ocean fisheries in Oregon. He urged the TSPWG to provide the highest level of protection for their fishing grounds.



Ray Monroe, representing the Pacific City Dory fleet, commented, “In this community, all we have are cows and fish.” Ray shared how one third of the dairies in their area are “nearly broke”; the unemployment rate is at 10%; local schools have closed because of declining enrollments and reduced education budgets. Ray paused and asked, “If we have to give up fishing grounds to make room for wave energy, will we get anything out of it? Who is going to benefit from ocean energy development?” Someone blurted out, loudly, from the audience, “Does the State of Oregon even have an energy plan?” That stimulated an interesting discussion. Doug Olson, a Board member of the Tillamook People’s Utility District, provided an informed perspective on that complicated and evolving matter.

Viewsheds Take Center Stage

Yes, there was plenty of talk in Pacific City about energy policy, fisheries and the marine environment. But, by far, the dominant issue was protection of Oregon Coast’s scenic assets. People took turns explaining that the driver of the Oregon Coast’s economy, these days, is the region’s world-class scenery. People urged the TSPWG, in the strongest terms, to develop an ocean plan to protect the scenery (the coastal “experience”) as the TSPWG searches for opportunities to site the generation of electricity from the ocean.

As the dialogue continued, people began to understand that the State of Oregon only controls out to three nautical miles. That’s the western boundary of Oregon’s Territorial Sea. That led people to voice concerns about what will eventually happen in *federal waters* off Oregon. After all, standing on the beach (at sea level) on most days one can easily see six or seven miles out to sea. At higher elevation headlands and bluffs one can see many more miles out to sea.

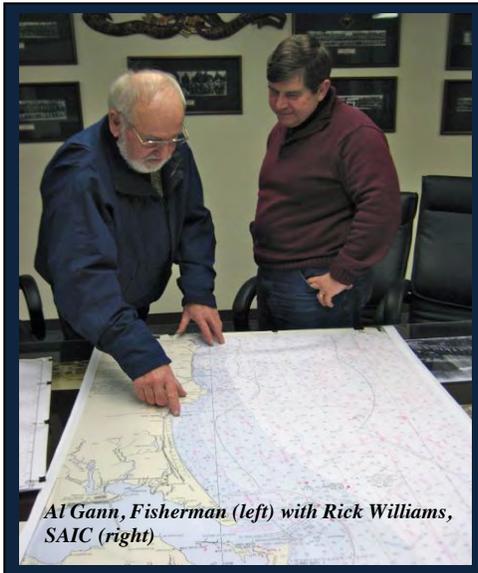
The potential for deepwater wind projects further offshore also arose. Off the Oregon Coast, about seven or eight miles offshore, there are world-class wind resources. Hearing that, members of the public urged the TSPWG to expand our planning efforts west to consider federal waters. They want the TSPWG to maximize, as a state, our influence over what happens in federal waters on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

People voiced strong concern to the TSPWG about the lack of data on viewsheds. And, they were concerned about the lack of specificity about how the viewshed issue will be handled. Because the local governments (coordinated by OCZMA) have taken the lead on this issue I took a few minutes to explain where things stood.

Viewsheds are important. We get it. Goal 19 explicitly references “aesthetics” as a beneficial use of the ocean. At the local level, through the local government outreach process, we can gather more information on viewsheds. In addition, we anticipate proposing to TSPWG a visual subordination framework as an amendment of Part 5 of the TSP. That would serve as a placeholder and give us time to engage our colleagues at the U.S. Department of Interior. And, it is important to note that Richard Whitman, Governor John Kitzhaber’s Natural Resources Policy Advisor, has encouraged us (TSPWG and the local governments) to address this issue head on.

The Road Ahead—Stay the Course

Oregon’s ocean planning process is something leaders on the Oregon Coast petitioned the State of Oregon to do back in 2007. Huge volumes of information about the marine environment and ocean uses have been assembled. The overall process, the implementation of “coastal marine spatial planning” (CMSP), is ***not*** easy.



Al Gann, Fisherman (left) with Rick Williams, SAIC (right)

The State of Oregon is at the forefront along with Rhode Island and Massachusetts in implementing CMSP. Our neighbors in Washington State are also stepping up and demonstrating leadership. All of us, in our own way, based on our different circumstances, must make CMSP work. And, we need to ask ourselves—how can we, at the local level and state level, find the resources and stamina to stay engaged with the federal government as they prepare to do CMSP for federal waters?

From the beginning, doing CMSP in Oregon has been an improvisational affair. There is no playbook. The process began with the coastal communities. The process is about to circle back through the coastal communities. Up and down the Oregon Coast local government leaders have committed to establishing local committees to facilitate more citizen input in this process. That will give people an opportunity to pour over maps and potential wave energy development

scenarios for their area. That’s the only way citizens can realistically provide quality input for ***their*** region. To make this work, though, ***sufficient resources and time*** will be needed to let the process play out.



Information about OCZMA

The Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association (OCZMA), formed in 1976 under ORS Chapter 190, is a voluntary association of coastal counties, cities, ports, soil & water conservation districts, and the Coquille Indian Tribe on the Oregon Coast established to provide a forum for the resolution of issues of particular concern to the local governments of the coast and the people they represent.

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Association Membership

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Lincoln County	Port of Garibaldi
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