

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

February 23, 2023

Agenda Item: 10c

Information

Topic: Territorial Sea Plan Part Three Rocky Habitat Management Strategy Update

Presented by: Guy Rodrigue

Background: This briefing to the Commission will provide a status update on the process to amend Part III of the Oregon Territorial Sea Plan (TSP): The Rocky Habitat Management Strategy. The TSP uses a multi-jurisdictional framework implemented by the Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC), Oregon’s legislatively established stakeholder advisory body, for guiding the plan. OPAC has almost concluded the process to amend Part III: Rocky Habitat Management Strategy in accordance with the requirements established in the TSP. This strategy acts as Oregon’s coordinated framework across state and federal agencies for managing the state’s rocky ocean shore resources. The strategy was originally adopted in 1994 and focuses on rocky habitat management.

The amendment process resulted in changes to TSP Part III including new recommendations for state agencies that manage rocky shore areas and resources on Oregon’s shoreline. While the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department is a non-voting member of OPAC, staff participated actively as the plan has impacts on resources under OPRD jurisdiction on the ocean shore. The Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) is the formal policy body responsible for adopting the draft recommended amendments received from OPAC.

Phase 1 of this update included general plan text including policies, objectives, management principles, contextual justification, and a community proposal process for site designation updates. This document underwent public comment, was presented to OPAC and was approved by the LCDC. The Rocky Shores Working Group then reconvened to conduct Phase 2 work, updating the Rocky Habitat Natural Resource Inventory, site-based designation language, and community proposal process details. Phase 3 included site designations. Altogether, plans that cover the rocky shores and Territorial Sea can affect OPRD policy and management of the Ocean Shore State Recreation Area.

Update: The amendment to Part Three of the Oregon Territorial Sea Plan – The Rocky Habitat Management Strategy – is close to reaching the culmination of the third and final phase of the project. Members of the public submitted 12 proposals to alter or add rocky habitat management sites or to update management at rocky habitat sites along the Oregon Coast. The Rocky Habitat Working Group conducted proposal evaluations and public comment in early 2021. The Working Group then reviewed and incorporated public feedback and submitted a recommendation to OPAC at their May 2021 meeting to designate two of the proposals and consider further evaluation of another six proposals. The remaining four proposals were not recommended for further evaluation. OPAC reached consensus on the recommendation to adopt the two new sites recommended by the working group.

On March 31 2022, two sites were designated by the LCDC: Coquille Point Marine Garden in Bandon and Cape Blanco Marine Research Area. Coquille Point joins other areas with the same no-take regulations and a focus on public outreach and interpretation, such as well-known tidepooling hotspots at Haystack Rock Marine Garden in Cannon Beach and Harris Beach Marine Garden in Brookings. The proposal was developed by Shoreline Education for Awareness (SEA), a local volunteer-organization that has been providing environmental outreach in the area for over 30 years. Cape Blanco Marine Research Area, proposed by a research group out of Oregon State University (OSU), joins other areas, like Cape Arago and Boiler Bay, focused on supporting scientific research and long-term monitoring while maintaining ecological integrity. OSU has been conducting research at Cape Blanco for more than 30 years. ODFW plans to adopt rules for these sites in August 2023, with an effective date of January 2024 for implementation. OPRD rule-making is likely not necessary for these sites since the designation types are already captured in existing rules.

In late April 2022, agencies and community proposal groups met to discuss the six sites under further evaluation: Ecola Point Marine Conservation Area (MCA), Chapman Point MCA, Cape Lookout MCA, Fogarty Creek MCA, Cape Foulweather MCA and Blacklock Point MCA. Following these workshops, OPAC re-considered the six proposals at their meeting in June and December 2022. The designation proposals include a variety of recommendations ranging from harvest restrictions (e.g., shellfish and shore-fishing under the purview of ODFW to algae and kelp under the authority of OPRD for the intertidal and DSL for the subtidal) to recommendations about on-site outreach and interpretation such as signage and volunteer docents. At their December meeting, OPAC voted to recommend moving all remaining six sites forward for designation. The next step is a presentation and decision at an upcoming Land Conservation and Development Commission meeting in April 2023. Rule-making would likely be necessary following designation of these new sites as they have site specific rules that are not captured in ocean shore rules. Tribal engagement will be conducted as ocean shore rules are updated to ensure traditional uses of the sites and resources are acknowledged and incorporated in accordance with agency policies and those outlined in the Territorial Sea Plan.

The rocky habitat site management proposal process is tentatively planned to re-open for submissions in Fall 2023.

For further information about the plan update process as it relates to OPRD, please contact Laurel Hillmann, Ocean Shore Resource Coordinator at Laurel.Hillmann@opr.oregon.gov or visit the DLCD website at <https://www.oregonocean.info/>.

Prior Action by the Commission: Informational item April 17, 2018; Workshop presentation November 17, 2020, Informational Item June 2021.

Action Requested: None.

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