

Public Comments Summary
West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health
Seattle Aquarium
July 30, 2007
6:30 pm

Kevin Ranker, San Juan County Councilman, Chair of Coastal Counties Caucus (represents all county commissioners and county council members of all 15 Coastal Counties in Washington), Steering Committee on California Current Ecosystem-based Management Conference Committee, Member of Washington State Ocean Policy Work Group, The SeaDoc Society Board, Washington State Coastal Advisory Council

- Commend leadership role taken by governors. Noted Governor Gregoire's great comments when the Agreement was announced.
- What are the opportunities with this agreement? What can we achieve state-by-state and on a regional basis that we couldn't otherwise achieve with this agreement?

Critical areas to address under this agreement:

1) Clean Water and Healthy Beaches

- Fully fund BEACH act. Purpose is to provide clean and healthy coastal waters for fishing, recreation, and everyone who enjoys the coast. The act has never been fully funded or implemented. Many issues on the coast could be addressed if the act was fully funded. Send a joint letter to Congress and President.
- Send joint letter on Coast Guard reauthorization bill, specifically oil spill pollution prevention, preparedness, and response section. This is a priority for the Coastal Counties' Caucus. Need year round funding for rescue tug at Neah Bay; funding for Oil Spill Advisory Council; and their recommendations moving forward.

2) Ecosystem-based Management (EBM)

- Needs to remain a priority of its' own. Concerned that using it as an overarching theme will mean it doesn't actually get addressed anywhere. EBM has been a priority of the Ocean Commissions and many others. Understand the concern might be: what is it? how do you implement it? where does that take place?

Three recommended actions for EBM:

- 1) Governors' could formally recognize these 5 local, West Coast efforts as successful models of ecosystem based-management. 5 West Coast models of Ecosystem-based management are being recognized nationally by Joint Ocean Commission Initiative and others as ways to do EBM. These are already underway and some are completed: Ventura, Elkhorn Slough, Morro Bay, Port Orford and San Juan Island Initiative. Of these, Port Orford and San Juan

were most successful at engaging all local, state, federal agencies and stakeholders. Port Orford partners included: Pacific Marine Conservation Council and Surfrider, POORT, and Oregon state coastal zone program. San Juan Initiative partners included: Surfrider, Marine Resources Committee, all of resource managers, tribal involvement, etc. Provide staff resources to learn from and assist in implementing these.

2) Blue water connections – ecosystem management offshore. This is an opportunity to recognize regional differences in fisheries management (a recommendation of the Ocean Policy Work Group). Work on regional fisheries management with the Pacific Fisheries Management Council rather than managing them on a whole West Coast wide basis. Cape Blanco to Cape Arago...seems to fit better. An opportunity to recognize and encourage this effort.

It is important that ecosystem-based management not just be about fisheries. It needs to include sediment transport, trophic linkages, key habitat functions and connections, water quality and water quantity, etc. Some of this already taking place and the Governors can take ownership of this.

3) Ecosystem-based management should be a part of **all** of the other 6 priority areas.

Jacques White, The Nature Conservancy

Organization dedicated to conserving biodiversity. Oceans are terribly underserved in conservation and have lots of stresses. Need to take into account human actions and natural impacts (laws of nature).

- Need to understand: what are the constraints? and how the system operates? Develop Ocean Observation systems that take into account human activities and ecology of system. To that end, The Nature Conservancy has developed Ecoregional Assessments for southern California, northern California, and nearshore habitats of Oregon and Washington.
- Encourage three states to engage in identifying where more information is needed, and to make sure organized in a way that we can develop conservation goals. Conservation goals for biology alone are not enough. Need sit down with scientists, the people who use the ocean (fishermen, seabed cables, energy projects, tourism, shipping, etc.) to identify goals for economic development, residential, social, and commercial development and uses of the ocean. Compare these with ecosystem and biodiversity goals. Need consistent sets of goals that are compatible in order to make progress together – otherwise will talk past each other and not make progress on conserving resources.
- San Juan Island The Nature Conservancy has land acquisition there. Clearly this area is under stress with endangered species and high rate of growth. Involved

with conservation efforts in San Juan Islands before coming to conservancy. Didn't get traction until they identified interests of stakeholders (development, fishing, etc). Put their interests on the same par – evaluation methods, etc.- as the needs of conservation (seabird, orca, salmon, fish conservation) and developed strategies to address both of those needs together. Encourage governors to identify effective processes (maybe community-based ecosystem approach) that will establish goals for conservation, development, for using ocean for economic gain and combine these to develop and effective forum to come up with solutions. Support Community-based ecosystem approach.

- Encourage governors to pursue funding issues. Developing National Trust Fund excellent way to start providing resources (money) for these efforts – evaluating biology, social and economic factors that are driving use and enjoyment of oceans – to find a combined and an effective ecosystem-based management approach to ocean conservation.
- Will send formal comments by August 1st.

Cat Began, Surfrider, co-chair of Seattle Chapter, previous chair of New York City Chapter.

- Supports Governors' Agreement, excited that states are working together.
- Water enthusiast – surfer, water enjoyment, etc.
- Grassroots organization dedicated to preservation and enjoyment of coastal resources.
- Experienced first-hand negative changes in the water quality and beaches. More beach closure days, expanding shoreline development (seawalls, jetties, other development) that influences shape and quality of beaches. Illnesses suffered from poor water quality after rains.
- Unique opportunity provided by agreement to improve conditions facing our coastline and ocean to communities that use them. As develop details for Agreement, consider the following 3 Priorities for action:
 - 1) Water Quality
 - Please keep this as a priority. Important to all of our health.
 - Ultimately wants to see a decline in number of beach closure days
 - And feel good about eating fish and shellfish harvested along West Coast.
 - To achieve this, needs to be greater effort to address non-point, and point pollution. A lot more resources to tackling stormwater pollution.
 - 2) Ecosystem-Based Management
 - Thanks for recognizing its importance as a separate priority.
 - If three states could generate better coordination among resource managers, coastal communities and use systems-based approach to protecting coastal resources – this would be one of the greatest achievements of this agreement.
 - To accomplish, asks to support local and regional initiatives already mentioned at this meeting – implementing the eco-based management. Several exciting efforts – such as San Juan Initiative. Engagement and

support from the states will help efforts learn how to best implement ecosystem-based management so they can serve as models for doing EBM on a larger scale.

3) Protect Coastal & Ocean Habitats

- Already coastal habitats have suffered significantly from pollution and coastal development impacts.
- By 2025, projected 75% of Americans will live within 80 miles of coast. Under current policies this means more development pressure, more pollution, and garbage. West Coast states need to tackle these issues today. Can do this, a few actions to highlight:
- Set West Coast commitment to stronger protection policies for natural beach and coastal processes.
- Support for federal legislation to strengthen oil spill prevention policies. Senator Cantwell recently introduced important legislation under Coast Guard reauthorization act to protect coast from catastrophic oil spills. Please send letter from West Coast states to our Congressional delegation in support of Senator Cantwell's legislation to strengthen oil spill prevention, preparedness, and response.
- Greater support and resources for community-based approaches to marine conservation, such as Marine Resource Committees (MRCs) in the Northwest Straits.
- Thanks for combined effort of West Coast states to better manage resources for our enjoyment, and health of natural resources. Appreciates attention to these important challenging issues we face and efforts to protect our coasts.

Alicia Zeoli, Surfrider Foundation

Supports everything Cat and Kevin just said. A few additional comments:

1) Washington Oil Spill Advisory Council

- Important to create continued funding for the council.
- Secure permanent funding for infrastructure improvements, oil spill prevention and response programs.

2) Instead of tackling Ecosystem Management at regional level, encourage states to support local community-based efforts – they can serve as models for the greater effort. San Juan Initiative is the best model in this state.

Fred Fellemen, Friends of the Earth

- Friends of the Earth had a northwest office for over 20 years. One of largest, international coalitions of environmental groups in the world. Interested in particular in growing cruise ship industry and growth of shipping.

- Came to northwest 20 years ago to study killer whales and lived in San Juans for past 10 years. Has seen changes in the San Juans used to be the only boat out on the water, now more boats than whales. Reminded of Scripps Institute researchers and scientists who were not too politically motivated, but say their research subjects are harder to find and so now have a self-interest in protecting the habitat upon which their subjects rely. Was one of the petitioners to put the killer whales on the endangered species list. Not proud that the local killer whales are endangered and are the most toxic whales on earth.
- Consider how to leverage this unique opportunity presented by the Governors' Agreement. After graduate studies worked on legislation (Mike Lowry) to set aside habitat for whales. Proposed national marine sanctuaries for Olympic Coast and San Juan Islands. The one for the Olympic Coast stuck and the San Juan Islands didn't. Olympic Coast National Sanctuary congressionally mandated in 1989, but EIS was finished in 1994. But since that time Sanctuary has had a stealth profile to the public. One thing governors could do is to elevate profile of marine sanctuaries along West Coast.
- Interesting conundrum to see what governors could do – on this large stretch of marine real-estate - in a coordinated fashion to really elevate marine conservation in a holistic fashion. Striking, that ships ply waters for marine trade visit all our ports. Shared marine traffic unites all three states and our ports. Ships are an important vehicle for trade and for human interaction and contact with the marine environment. Unique challenges, glad to see invasive species as a priority.
- San Francisco Bay, one of the most polluted water bodies. Washington does a lot of trade with San Francisco, so this poses high likelihood for biological invasions for our depleted herring beds at Cherry Point (Washington). Programs in place to look at invasive species, or really ballast water treatment methodologies. Really, barge traffic puts us at the greatest risk of exposure.
- Shipping: New port development opportunities to interact with international shipping industry. Port Seattle (double in next 10-20 years) and Tacoma (quadruple) both looking to greatly expand capacity. Meanwhile, Port of L.A./Long Beach and others have constrained growth due to air pollution. State of Washington (and west coast) needs to find ways to continue to provide benefit to economy w/o environmental caps to capacity? Trade within the Pacific Rim circle unites our West Coast states.
- British Columbia/Washington ocean and coastal task force that is looking at primarily oil spill issue. Oil spill issue links up and down coast and with British Columbia, Hawaii and Alaska.

Clean Water and Cruise Ships:

- Dramatic increase in cruise ships and passengers. In 1999, 6 cruise ships carrying 7,000 passengers in Washington. This past year, 200 ships carrying 740,000

- passengers in Washington. Passengers alone don't tell the whole story, because cruise ships with 3,000 passengers on-board has close to 5,000 people on-board (staff) – all using the facilities.
- Unlike any other municipal discharger, cruise ships are exempt from National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) standards/permits, and reporting. Cruise ships have the same exemption that is applied to tanker or freighter vessels – under theory that tankers are primarily shipping cargo around the world and their dozen or two passengers are incidental to the overall operation of the vessel. Just need a coast guard approved marine sanitation device and don't need to report on discharges. These cruise ships, large vessels with their large volumes of waste, are not appropriate for same exemption. Friends of the Earth has a lawsuit challenging EPA on this at this time to get reporting requirement – worthy of reporting and acknowledging the discharges, especially in enclosed marine waterways of Puget Sound and inside passage. Should at least be required to report the volumes and quality of their discharges.
 - Both Oceans Commissions recognized need for national legislation. In fact, Friends of Earth is working with Senators Durbin and Farr and others to advance national legislation. Remarkable that while everyone concerned about stormwater pollution and other sources of pollution, we can't even enumerate the quantities of materials that each one of these ships generate. Each ship is equivalent to city of Duvall (Washington). In one given season, about 4.2 million gallons of sludge released somewhere along the way. Advanced wastewater treatment systems that can produce almost clear water, separating out the sludge – but they don't tell you that the sludge is then dumped back into the sink. Washington State benefits from citizens of Alaska - Alaska has most stringent standards of any port of call for cruise ships. Best of the best, but still no enumeration of what is going into the water. In addition to sludge, we have 6 million gallons of black water and 50 million gallons of gray water. Some recent data suggests that in just one week a cruise ship generates 110 gallons of chemicals from photo chemicals and dry cleaning fluids. But none of this has to be reported. Finds it unreasonable for these floating cities to pass through our waters without reporting. Without this reporting we may miss something in our other efforts to clean up our waters. The cruise ships have improved operations considerably (after several years of lawsuits and bad press). But even in the last few years have seen discharges in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, just over the international border and they say that it is okay to dump there, because British Columbia does not have the same laws as we do in Washington. Our killer whales and salmon don't care about these things. This is an opportunity under, since some cruise ships leave from California, some from Oregon, Some from Washington, some from Vancouver – all headed to Alaska. This is one thing the Governors could do is to support uniform national standards as introduced by Senators Durbin and Farr – the industry wants uniform standards anyway. Make sure people can travel on their vacation and not feel they are spoiling the very places they are visiting.

Rein Attemann, People for Puget Sound

Field director for People for Puget Sound. Will submit written comments as well.

- Recently established Puget Sound Partnership provides tremendous momentum for restoring the sound by 2020. They are developing action agenda by 2008. Similarly, the actions for the Governors' Agreement action plan should be:
 - Proactive, result-oriented, effective, and accountable
 - Like with the Puget Sound Partnership, the fear is actions process, process will continue to absorb most of the effort.
- Water Quality – need to improve that especially in Puget Sound with stormwater runoff being major threat to ecosystem health. Can be done at regional and local level. Puget Sound is going to have one single “no discharge” zone – might be something to consider (For example, Buzzard Bay, Massachusetts where grew up – the entire bay is now a no discharge zone).
- Ecosystem-based Management – should be a separate priority to get all achievements accomplished.

Tom Bougher, Surfrider Foundation, member of South Sound Chapter

- San Juan Initiative - encouraged by model.
- Lives in Grays Harbor County and looking to establish a Marine Resources Committee. Having successes, examples to look at from other areas and help securing funding would be useful, something our County Commissioner is interested in. Emphasized need to keep ecosystem-based management a priority and share successes for other communities to utilize.

Written Comment Cards:

Tom Bougher, Surfrider Foundation

Ours is a “grassroots” organization with members involved in community activities related to protecting and preserving our ocean and beaches. Those of us residing in Grays Harbor County, Washington are working to establish a Marine Resources Committee (MRC) along the lines of the San Juan County model. We can all make a difference at the community level, and often beyond, by sharing our successes with others along our common Coast. Eco-based management projects must remain a priority.

Jonathan Josi, Surfrider Foundation

I would like to see a greater effort to manage point and non-point sources of pollution and more resources committed to stormwater drainage. I would also like to see a commitment to stronger protection policies for natural beach and coastal processes.