

WHAT'S NEW WITH WCOA?

A letter from our Executive Director, John Hansen

Hello friends and partners of the West Coast Ocean Alliance,

On behalf of our WCOA contract staff team and membership, I am thrilled to reconnect with you via our public newsletter to share updates on the growing activities and engagement happening through our efforts! We are excited to resume a more regular distribution of this newsletter to highlight our project achievements and news about the work of our member governments, while also finding new opportunities to engage with you and other regional stakeholders on the West Coast.

I am happy to report that the activities of the Alliance are quickly growing thanks to new federal funding to support Regional Ocean Partnerships (ROPs), including in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed in 2021, being administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). We are embarking on a range of regional initiatives to better coordinate and plan for the use and management of our ocean resources on the West Coast based on the needs of our members (see project funding summary below). As an organization, we have also added to our contract staff team with a new Tribal

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Coordinator and Project Coordinator who joined the Alliance earlier this year to further strengthen our organizational capacity along with our new West Coast Fellowship program being launched this fall (see updates below).

The Alliance continues to grow its role as a regional convener of ocean managers and stakeholders through its in-person summits. In October, we organized and hosted a WCOA Tribal Summit and WCOA Member Summit, bringing together Tribal, federal, and state partners to discuss regional ocean co-management priorities. We look forward to sharing updates on more in-person gatherings it plans to host in 2024, including a West Coast Offshore Wind Summit scheduled for the spring (further details forthcoming).

Lastly, we are excited to embark on the development of a new 5-year strategic plan that will guide the Alliance's activities from 2024-2028 and inform the use of its current federal funding and future organizational growth and operations. WCOA members representing Tribal, federal, and state governments in the region will provide the basis for the new plan while being informed by other regional ocean management activities and stakeholder input to find the ideal niche for Alliance activities moving forward. We look forward to sharing regular updates on this plan as it is being developed in the coming months and finalized in spring 2024.

Please look through this newsletter for further updates on our work, and do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or would like to learn more. Again, we are happy to reconnect and look forward to further opportunities to engage with you in the coming months.

Best,



John Hansen,
WCOA Executive Director



*2023 WCOA Member Summit, Oct. 2023
Portland, OR*

NEW WEBSITE IS LIVE!

WCOA was excited to launch a new-and-improved website in October, just ahead of the 2023 Annual Members Summit. The new site highlights WCOA's members, resources, and successes, while

enhancing readability. The updated site also offers advanced functionalities, allowing room to scale and adapt content as new ocean topics arise. Visit the new site at www.westcoastoceanalliance.org.

WEST COAST OCEAN ALLIANCE

CONTRACT STAFF

Over the course of this year, the team supporting the WCOA has tripled in size! Please see below to learn more about the contracted full-time staff of the Alliance, and feel free to get in touch.



John Hansen, Executive Director

John continues in his role supporting the Alliance as its full-time Executive Director. Previously, John was the lead staff for the West Coast Regional Planning Body during the Obama administration and has continued as lead staff since the transition to the West Coast Ocean Alliance in 2018. John is based in Lafayette, CA.

Bri Goodwin, Project Manager

As Project Manager, Bri supports all aspects of the Alliance's project portfolio while coordinating engagement between members, fiscal sponsors, and other WCOA staff and leadership. Bri has worked in ocean and coastal issues in Oregon since 2008, and joined the Alliance after working for the Surfrider Foundation. Bri is based in Port Orford, OR.



Margaret Corvi, Tribal Engagement Manager

As WCOA's Tribal Engagement Manager, Margaret brings together 15 Tribal Nations on the West Coast and facilitates conversations around health, uses, and issues of the ocean. She is passionate about uplifting and making space for Tribal perspectives, positions, authorities, and expertise. She has over a decade of experience working with and for coastal Tribal Nations in Oregon to expand capacity, improve consultation responsibilities, protect lifeways and sacred places, and assert the inherent sovereignty of Tribes. Based in Florence and Corvallis, Oregon, Margaret is a citizen member of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw and has roots in the Siuslaw and Coos Bay areas where her ancestors lived since time immemorial.



MEET THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

WCOA is thankful for the dedication of the Leadership Team. These members represent multiple tribal, federal, and state governments, and play a critical role in supporting WCOA's direction and programming.

- **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**
 - Becky Smyth, West Coast Director, Office for Coastal Management
 - Kris Wall, Coastal Management Specialist
- **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management**
 - Necy Sumait, Regional Supervisor, Officer of Strategic Resources
 - Natalie Dayal, Renewable Energy Analyst, BOEM Pacific Region
- **Quinault Indian Nation**
 - Joe Schumacker, Marine Resources Scientist
- **California Ocean Protection Council**
 - Justine Kimball, Senior Climate Change Program Manager
- **California State Lands Commission**
 - Jennifer Mattox, Environmental Program Manager
 - Katie Robinson-Filipp, Environmental Scientist
- **Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**
 - Scott Groth, Resources, Assessment, and Management Section Leader
- **Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development**
 - Lisa Phipps, Program Manager, Oregon Coastal Management Program
 - Andy Lanier, Marine Affairs Coordinator, Oregon Coastal Management Program
- **Washington Department of Ecology**
 - Jennifer Hennessey, Special Assistant to the Director
 - Jay Krienitz, Coastal and Ocean Management Unit Supervisor

Learn more about the leadership team on the new WCOA website!

WCOA EVENTS

WEST COAST OCEAN TRIBAL SUMMIT

The Tribal Caucus Summit kicked off a successful and connected week with WCOA membership in Portland, Oregon on October 16th and 17th. The event provided Tribal leaders and representatives the opportunity to share stories about their experiences, lessons learned, strategies, and priorities related to co-management/stewardship, offshore wind energy, data sovereignty, joint decision-making, and consultation with federal and state government partners. There were 15 Tribal Nations and 4 Tribal organizations in attendance, with three (3) East Coast Tribal representatives as panelists who brought insights and concerns from offshore wind energy development on their coast. The Tribal Nations drafted talking points and asks to report out to the greater Alliance as well as goals and ideas for strategic planning.



WCOA ANNUAL MEETING

WCOA convened its Annual Members Summit in Portland, Oregon from October 18 to October 19 following the Tribal Caucus Summit. During the Annual Summit, Tribal, federal, and state government representatives gathered to build and strengthen relationships, discuss Alliance currently-funded projects, and broadly inform the goals of WCOA's 5-year strategic plan that is in development. The Annual Summit was structured to provide Tribal Summit Report, informational updates and perspectives were shared by the wide range of governments represented. Participants discussed the Alliance's unique role and value in the coordination of ocean management activities as well as the priorities that member governments wished to advance. Priorities that were discussed included: supporting effective coordination of gathering data, advocating for an offshore wind energy cumulative impacts assessment, and doing a reimagination process of Tribal "consultation" to work towards mutual decision-making. Discussions and learnings from the Annual Summit will be incorporated into the strategic plan that is currently in development.



[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SUMMITS](#)

WCOA WELCOMES FELLOWS

We are excited to announce our first cohort of WCOA Fellows who have been placed with WCOA Member hosts in positions designed to offer first hand exposure to natural resource and ocean policy and science within the U.S. West Coast region. [Check out their full bios and project descriptions here.](#)



Ysabelle Yrad



Carina Burroughs



Avery Calhoun



Suzie O'Neill

- **Ysabelle Yrad**, placed with Blue Lake Rancheria, will be working on advancing regional efforts to address climate change and resiliency, supporting Blue Lake Rancheria tribal government's engagement with offshore wind and related matters along the Pacific Coast.
- **Carina Burroughs**, placed with NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Offshore Wind Team, will support the Team's work to minimize impacts of offshore wind development on living marine resources, their habitats, and the ecosystems upon which they depend.
- **Avery Calhoun**, placed with NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Offshore Wind Team, will be working to curate their geospatial datasets and develop GIS content for the West Coast Ocean Data Portal and other uses.
- **Suzie O'Neill**, placed with NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service - West Coast Region, will assist with the Oregon Aquaculture Association and state partners in developing a statewide aquaculture plan.

FUNDING & PROJECTS

- **WCOA 5-year Strategic Plan:** WCOA is working with [Strategic Earth Consulting](#) to create a 5-year strategic plan, involving input from members and outreach to regional ocean stakeholders to determine its future role and activities.
- **WCOA Contract Staff Capacity:** The funding will back the WCOA Executive Director, a full-time Project Coordinator, and a full-time Tribal Coordinator to enhance member engagement, broaden outreach, and supervise project progress and deliverables more effectively.
- **Tribal Capacity and Support:** WCOA is working to establish a dedicated funding program for tribal government members, ensuring their participation in chosen activities and supporting relevant tribal ocean planning aligned with WCOA regional priorities.
- **West Coast Fellowship Program:** In partnership with [Oregon Sea Grant](#), WCOA has launched a fellowship program to strengthen regional priorities. This program will establish a regional cohort, enhancing WCOA's capacity for member-driven projects in ocean planning, science, data, and management.
- **Regional Ocean Summits:** WCOA is funding three in-person gatherings focused on tribal engagement, an all-inclusive WCOA meeting (both held in Oct. 2023) and an offshore wind (upcoming), to convene ocean partners, shape future efforts, and foster effective relationships and partnerships.
- **Enhanced Communication:** WCOA is working with [Sea & Shore Solutions](#) to boost communication and outreach, including an improved website, expanded social media presence, and tools to raise awareness about its efforts, with a focus on amplifying project outcomes achieved in collaboration with members.
- **West Coast Aquaculture Inventory:** WCOA is working with [Ecotrust](#) to create a regional database to track West Coast ocean-based aquaculture, enhancing awareness and informing future efforts in best practices for management and policy.
- **Tribal Engagement Training Program:** WCOA is working with [Strategic Earth Consulting](#) to create a tribal engagement training program by collaborating with Alliance tribal members to enhance existing guidance for federal, state, and relevant audiences.
- **West Coast Ocean Health Dashboard:** WCOA is working with the [Southern California Coastal Water Research Project](#) to enhance the West Coast Ocean Health Dashboard, developed with the West Coast Ocean Data Portal. This enhancement will improve its indicators through contracts with regional experts, strengthening its role in identifying ocean planning needs and progress on the West Coast.
- **West Coast Ocean Data Portal:** WCOA is working with [Ecotrust](#) to support ongoing technical maintenance and improvements for the West Coast Ocean Data Portal, which serves as the primary mechanism for the coordination and sharing of ocean-related data for WCOA activities.

Quick Updates



WEST COAST OCEAN TRIBAL CAUCUS

The West Coast Ocean Tribal Caucus continues to meet monthly on the second Tuesday of each month; the agendas are a mix of inter-Tribal sharing, introductions to people and projects related to topics of interest to Tribal experts, funding and comments notifications, as well as deliberation of potential actions or needs.



WEST COAST OCEAN DATA PORTAL

In addition to the data-focused activities outlined above, the West Coast Ocean Data Portal has continued to support the development of the Alliance's new West Coast Ocean Health Dashboard, in partnership with the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP), with initial indicators to be rolled out in early 2024. The Portal is also using ROP funding to upgrade and improve its technical infrastructure and portal capabilities.



More from WCOA

WCOA Resources

West Coast Ocean Data Portal

Join our public information email list to receive timely updates on the vibrant activities and discussions occurring within the WCOA. As a valued part of the West Coast ocean community, we'll also share updates on any opportunities to contribute your insights to WCOA and participate in virtual and in-person gatherings. You can opt out at any time.

[Join Our Mailing List](#)