

***INTERGOVERNMENTAL POLICY COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
2008***



Intergovernmental Policy Council: Collaborative Management in Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Annual Report 2008



Debbie Preston

On the cover: Quinault Indian Nation tribal member and harmful algal bloom specialist Jonnette Bastian-James processes a seawater sample on Kalaloch Beach. She will later count the numbers of pseudonitzschia to see whether a harmful algal bloom is in progress, and begin monitoring razor clams for levels of domoic acid, which can sicken or kill humans who eat them. Above: Third Beach on the Olympic Coast is part of the Quileute Tribe's treaty-reserved and customary area of gathering and fishing, as it has been for millenia.

Introduction

During its second year, the Olympic Coast Intergovernmental Policy Council (IPC) has focused its priorities on a few select issues. These are issues that the IPC has determined in the near term are central to achieving the goals originally adopted in October 2007 to:

- protect the health and safety of coastal residents,
- enhance the social and economic vitality of coastal communities, and
- improve the understanding and management of marine resources.

The coastal treaty Indian tribes and the state of Washington as co-managers continue to work with the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) to achieve a shared vision of priorities for understanding and protecting the marine environment and improving the lives of all who depend on the sea.

OCNMS is undergoing its first Management Plan Review, providing an excellent opportunity for IPC to shape the direction of the Sanctuary for the next five years and more clearly define the relationship envisioned by the founding MOA and Charter. In response to an invitation from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to participate in a Climate Change Symposium, the Council also is coordinating logistics to ensure a strong presence at this important event. To this end, the IPC has focused on the following five topics.

Management Plan Review

The first Management Plan Review not only will update the Plan but also provide a template for future reviews every five years. There have been bumps along the way, but the lessons learned are critical to the success of both the Sanctuary and the IPC. As the Sanctuary develops its priorities for the future and the plans to achieve them, the IPC is working closely with the Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) and staff to ensure that the vision for the future is sound and reflects the shared goals of all involved. Ultimately the Management Plan will reflect the statutory and policy mandates of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, as well as the perspective of multiple stakeholders from both the general public and the SAC, and the policy direction developed by the state/tribal co-managers in the IPC.

One of the challenges of this Management Plan Review process is incorporating the IPC into the Sanctuary's administrative structure. This includes delineating the treaty trust responsibility and crafting mechanisms whereby the policy recommendations developed by IPC are integrated into OCNMS operations. Two aspects where this is particularly important are budget development and scientific research and monitoring programs.



Debbie Preston

Quileute tribal member and fisheries technician Jack Davis collects mussel shells on Second Beach for testing to make sure they are safe to eat.

OCNMS Budget

The IPC is concerned that all of the planning and hard work developed in this first five-year review process will be futile if the budget situation does not improve for OCNMS. Money is needed to accomplish the shared priorities developed by the IPC and Sanctuary. Likewise, effective program development is dependent on the support of strategic allocations. For IPC to be most effective, it needs to have a voice in structuring processes that will affect tribal interests and the citizens of this state.

Another important fiduciary concern is the need to increase the ability of OCNMS to do its work within the context of the national budget. This includes IPC funding to support tribal involvement and staff time. The IPC is committed to work with OCNMS to develop budgetary goals that support our shared priorities and to build our capacity to meaningfully engage in policy development with the Sanctuary.

Research Priorities

The Council is working to become more active in Sanctuary research. The IPC is forming a Scientific Committee made up of state and tribal experts that will:

- prioritize research goals within the Sanctuary, and
- review scientific work, especially projects off the Washington coast, to recommend for policy development by IPC.

In addition to the priorities identified during the Management Plan Review, the IPC will use the advice of the Science Committee to outline annual priorities for research and monitoring by OCNMS and its partners. Research to support ecosystem-based management continues to be of the utmost importance for state, tribal and federal governments.

With the Scientific Committee, the IPC will ensure that managers are using the best available science to accomplish important research goals such as:

- seafloor mapping and habitat characterization,
- calculating local effects of ocean acidification, and
- completing rockfish surveys with remotely operated or autonomous underwater vehicles.

Relationship with SAC

When the state and tribes sought the formation of the IPC, they recognized the need for an advisory body that would in many ways complement, but ultimately be distinct from, the Sanctuary Advisory Council. Because of the trustee status of the tribes and the responsibilities with the state as co-managers of our ocean resources, the IPC was formed to provide the appropriate forum for meaningful collaboration as sovereign governments with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Today, the IPC seeks to engage the SAC to coordinate advising the Sanctuary.

Advisory Councils play an important role in every National Marine Sanctuary. The Olympic Coast is unique in having both an Advisory Council and the IPC. In addition to regular attendance at SAC meetings by representatives of tribal and state management entities, the IPC has established an annual joint meeting of the two bodies. Each year the IPC and SAC will convene to share ideas for the coming year and develop concerted strategies for working together in their respective roles. This coordinated approach will ensure that the two Councils are fulfilling their individual responsibilities efficiently while building on the strong working relationship that has developed between them.



Seraphina Peters, Makah tribal marine stranding coordinator, helps with a marine mammal survey.

Debbie Preston

Climate Change Symposium

The IPC is dedicated to understanding how climate change will impact this area, especially to predict and mitigate the effects. We are excited about the prospect of a symposium that highlights the effects of climate change on indigenous people while bringing us together to work toward solutions. Place-based people with traditions tied to their environment have long histories that are critical to providing context for natural resources management in the face of climate change.

The symposium should focus on incorporating this context into solutions for dealing with climate change. By bringing tribes to the table at management forums that impact their land, water, and food these shared resources can be preserved for future generations. The IPC is as a leading example of incorporating native people into governance to achieve solutions. It is from this perspective that we hope to energize the symposium with ideas for cooperative governance to tackle the challenges of monumental environmental changes.

Summary

IPC is the best forum for bringing the appropriate parties to the same table to coordinate the various ocean management policy initiatives coming from the federal, state and regional levels.

Cooperative, effective ocean governance can only occur when the tribal and state co-managers are engaged with federal managers at the policy level where priorities are set.



A young Quileute tribal dancer.

The IPC is a unique example of collaborative partnerships and cooperation among governments and agencies with overlapping jurisdictions to develop a common vision, establish priorities and develop mechanisms to move toward a holistic, ecosystem-based resource management approach to ocean governance that will continue to ensure our ocean's health now and in the future.

IPC Annual Meeting LaPush 2008

