



Oregon Territorial Sea Plan: Part Three

Rocky Habitat Management Strategy

A. The Rocky Habitat Management Strategy

1. Purpose

Strategy Goal: This strategy aims to be a coordination and adaptive planning framework focused on the long-term protection of ecological resources and coastal biodiversity within and among Oregon's marine rocky habitats, while allowing appropriate use.

The Rocky Habitat Management Strategy is one of several elements of Oregon's ocean-resources management program. It provides clear policies and direction for strong, site-based management and the protection of unique ecosystems along the Oregon Coast. The strategy is a combination of policies, objectives, and site-specific recommendations supported by scientific information on the natural resources which exist in rocky habitat areas. The strategy relies on authorities and programs of local, state and federal agencies to carry out activities in the field.

2. Objectives

This strategy acts as a framework to support the following objectives:

- a. To maintain, protect, or restore rocky habitats and biological communities;
- b. To implement a holistic management program through site designations and management recommendations that allows for enjoyment and use of Oregon's rocky habitats while protecting them from degradation and loss;
- c. To enhance appreciation and foster personal stewardship of Oregon's rocky habitats through education, interpretation, and outreach;
- d. To improve our knowledge and understanding of rocky habitat ecosystems by fostering research and monitoring efforts;
- e. To facilitate cooperation and coordination among local, state, and federal resource management agencies, and tribal governments, to ensure that marine resources and habitats are holistically managed.

3. Rocky Habitat Importance

Oregon's rocky habitats are integral to the unique landscape and seascape of the Oregon Coast. From Tillamook Head looming above the Clatsop Plains south to the cliffs of Brookings, rocky habitats are a trademark of the Oregon Coast. These biologically rich and visually dramatic locations have high value to Oregonians as places

to enjoy, learn, and use. Rocky habitats provide a window to the marine environment, making them attractive places to visit for recreation, harvest, education, and research.

Oregon's rocky habitats harbor a variety of lifeforms uniquely adapted to live on the margin between the land and sea. The living resources found in rocky habitats include a productive mix of fish, invertebrates, and plant life, particularly in the intertidal areas, as well as seabirds and Pinnipeds that utilize adjacent cliffs and offshore rocks for shelter, feeding, and reproduction. Below the surface, rocky habitats offer stable footing for structure-forming marine plants such as kelps and seagrasses. These foundational species provide shelter and food for the diversity of unique and economically important organisms that live in submerged rocky habitats, and may also serve to help mitigate the effects of ocean acidification and other changes in seawater chemistry.

Oregon has long recognized the ecological value of rocky habitats, as well as the societal value associated with the variety of human uses occurring in these areas. Oregon's long history of managing rocky habitats to balance conservation and use reflects this recognition. Rocky habitat management needs to continue to adapt to changes in human use pressure, as the number of coastal residents and visitors increases, and development progresses. Additionally, recent advances in the understanding of climate change have exposed new threats including warming temperatures, sea level rise, and changing seawater chemistry, as well as potential cumulative impacts.

Oregon's marine rocky habitats belong to the public, with few exceptions. There are several state and federal agencies responsible for managing Oregon's rocky habitats in the public interest. Agency jurisdictional boundaries and authorities exist in a complex matrix and rely on a suite of management goals, objectives, and strategies. Section C. of this plan outlines the authorities of state and federal agencies that have jurisdiction over Oregon's rocky habitats.

The creation and stewardship of this strategy embraces a site-based management approach and protection of rocky habitat ecosystems that incorporates the voices of the diverse groups that share an interest in Oregon's rocky coast. The membership and mission of the Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC) reflects legislative intent to make sure that the many governmental interests of coastal cities and counties, state and federal agencies, coastal Tribal Nations, and the diverse user groups on the coast are coordinated.

4. Plan Implementation

Interagency coordination and cooperation has been critical to preparing and carrying out the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy and will remain essential in executing appropriate management. A collaborative, coordinated effort, based on a commitment to

cooperate, increases the likelihood of success and decreases the need to add laws and authorities for any individual management agency. The management agencies responsible for implementing natural resource protection and managing human uses have reviewed and agreed to prioritize the recommendations within the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy. It should be noted that although this strategy includes a substantial suite of recommendations for rocky habitat management, not all site management recommendations may be applied through state rule or statute.

a. Amending the Strategy

i. General Strategy Amendments

Due to constantly changing ocean conditions, coastal uses, and advancing scientific knowledge, this strategy will require periodic reconsideration and amendment to remain relevant. While there is not a specific timeline for updating the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy, or the Territorial Sea Plan (TSP) more broadly, management agencies and the public at large are offered the flexibility of presenting proposed modifications at any time. General amendment initiation criteria for the TSP are available in Part 1.F.2. and apply to management agencies recommending any modifications to the TSP (including the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy). Proposed amendments to site designations specific to the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy can be submitted through a community-based proposal process, outlined in the section below (A.4.a.ii.), and Section E.

ii. Site-Based Proposals

The Rocky Habitat Management Strategy allows local community groups and the public at large to submit proposals for changes in site-specific rocky habitat management. Changes may include recommendations for new site designations, modifications of existing designations, or deletions of existing designations. All members of the public are eligible to submit proposals, with proposals representing local multi-stakeholder interests strongly encouraged.

Proposals are subject to multi-agency analysis and review which will be used by OPAC to evaluate the proposed designation changes. All rocky habitat within the territorial sea is eligible to be proposed for designation alteration under the community proposal process. Proposals will be collected by Oregon Coastal Management Program (OCMP) staff on a rolling basis and do not require an active TSP amendment period to be submitted. More information and details on the public proposal process can be found in Section E.

5. Strategy Elements

The management elements of the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy will be carried out primarily by state agencies such as Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and the Department of State Lands (DSL). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) manages offshore rocks and islands as National Wildlife Refuges¹. In some cases, local governments, federal agencies, tribal governments, and other partner organizations may be involved. The timing for carrying out this plan will vary with the management needs, conditions and resources of each site, availability of financial and technical resources to agencies, and with the interests and involvement of local citizens and groups. This subsection outlines the major elements of this strategy for Oregon's rocky habitats².

a. Management Principles

Refer to definitions in Section B.1. for clarification of terminology.

- i. **Management to Follow Plan.** Management of rocky habitat areas should aim to be consistent with the recommended site management designations, management objectives, policies, and management recommendations in this strategy;
- ii. **Ecological Units.** The interconnected relationship between rocky shoreline areas, offshore sites, and submerged rocky habitat warrants related areas to be managed as an ecological unit;
- iii. **Ecosystem-Based Management.** Management recommendations and prescriptions should follow ecosystem-based management and adaptive management principles;
- iv. **Planning and Management.** Planning or recommended management actions by the Ocean Policy Advisory Council or any agency with respect to rocky habitat areas should:

¹ Oregon Islands, Three Arch Rocks, and Cape Meares National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Wilderness Stewardship Plan. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Newport, Oregon.

² The intent of these principles is not to replicate or expand Oregon Marine Reserves under ORS 196.540 – 196.555.

- a. involve all appropriate management agencies, city or county planning agencies, affected Tribal Nations, and interested citizens and organizations;
- b. be based on the best available scientific information and local knowledge about the site, its resources, and uses as obtained through detailed site studies or as provided through comment and testimony by agencies and interested parties;
- c. include provisions for encouraging periodic monitoring of site use and condition of habitats and resources, where feasible, for the purpose of updating site management actions;
- d. comply with state and federal regulations and permitting;
- e. incorporate public educational, awareness, citizen and community science, and outreach programs as integral parts of local site management, where practicable.

b. Education & Public Awareness

An informed and aware public is critical to protecting rocky habitat resources and carrying out the goals, objectives, and policies of the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy. It is essential for the continued ecological functioning and well-being of Oregon's rocky habitats that visitors interact responsibly in these areas. Fostering a culture of stewardship of rocky habitat resources will help protect the ecological, cultural and economic resources of Oregon's rocky coastline. Targeted messaging, including information on ways that individuals and groups can take action to positively affect these rocky habitats, is crucial.

Successful implementation of the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy needs a strategic communication plan focused on both coastwide and site-specific efforts that will foster stewardship of rocky habitat resources. Current education program providers should collaborate on a systematic approach to target audiences with agreed-upon messages. This will require both financial and institutional support and coordination to achieve maximum effectiveness.

As part of a strategic communication effort, new and already established locally-based and regionally supported programs are needed to disseminate accurate and timely rocky habitat knowledge and stewardship messages. The principles, policies, and objectives in the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy should be used as a guiding framework for the development of state-funded rocky habitat educational programs. Priority communication messages should focus on visitor best practices, current events, site-based information, experience opportunities, and awareness of threats to Oregon's

coastal rocky habitats. Communication strategies should range from on-site signage to broader-reaching tools such as digital information products and social media campaigns.

Research and monitoring of rocky habitat ecosystems is crucial to understanding human impacts, both immediate and long-term. These efforts will require financial and structural support to assess and inform adaptation to emerging threats to rocky habitat ecosystems (e.g. ocean acidification). Citizen and community science programs are a recommended strategy for engaging visitors to increase their awareness and commitment to protecting rocky habitats while also providing valuable data collection to help inform management.

Education Actions

In addition to general site management principles, this strategy also recognizes that the following actions should be used to build a successful public awareness and engagement component into rocky habitat management:

1. Create a coastwide network and communication strategy that links private, local, tribal, state, and federal education and interpretive programs.
2. Foster existing education programs as needed to ensure they meet management and stewardship goals, and contribute to the understanding and long-term support of Oregon's rocky habitat resources.
3. Support existing education and interpretive programs as well as creation and implementation of new education and interpretive programs to fill gaps.
4. Work with education providers, interested users and groups to plan and implement coordinated educational programs, messaging, and awareness campaigns.
5. Support volunteer-based organizations in the conduct of outreach activities that assist agencies and are consistent with the communication strategy.
6. Use a variety of communication tools including digital and social media to meet the diverse needs of schools, agencies, public facilities, local governments, and non-governmental organizations.
7. Seek additional funding in order to provide financial assistance to agencies and organizations whose education programs support the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy objectives.
8. Work with agencies, researchers, tribal governments, and stakeholder groups to identify and support research and monitoring needs while also developing a

citizen and community science network that engages local communities and visitors.

6. Policies

The policies for rocky habitat management have been crafted to achieve consistency with state goals and priorities. These policies are mandatory and all actions of local governments and state agencies in relation to managing rocky habitat areas and resources shall be consistent with them. These policies are stated within the context of a broader suite of relevant regulations and management measures and, unless otherwise stated, are not intended to negate or supersede those. A subset of these policies are enforceable policies for federal consistency³ review purposes and are specified in Appendix D. Refer to Section B.1. for rocky habitat classifications and definitions.

a. Policy Statement

Oregon's rocky habitats, in the broadest definition, are unique and carry coastwide importance ecologically, economically, culturally, and recreationally. The Rocky Habitat Management Strategy recognizes the importance of these interconnected habitats and the resources within them regardless of designation or recommendation. Therefore, this strategy recommends management actions that protect ecological values and biodiversity within and among Oregon's coastal rocky habitats while allowing appropriate use.

b. Policies

- A. Consistent with Statewide Land Use Planning Goal 19, actions that are likely to affect rocky habitats shall be developed and conducted to conserve marine resources and ecological functions for the purpose of providing long-term ecological, economic, and social values benefits.
- B. Protection of rocky habitat resources (i.e. living marine organisms and their habitat) shall be prioritized over development of non-renewable ocean resource uses.
- C. Education about rocky habitats should be fostered through the implementation of principles outlined in Section A.5.b.
- D. Public access to rocky habitat sites shall be preserved to the maximum extent practicable and minimize user conflict.
- E. Agencies may create temporary access restrictions at individual rocky habitat sites, when necessary, to ensure visitor safety, ensure resource and habitat

³ Federal Consistency: 15 CFR Part 930.

protection, and to manage for user conflicts. Any non-emergency, temporary access restriction must be accompanied by a scientific basis or decision rationale that describes the management concern and the duration of the access restriction.

- F. Standards for designations described in Section D. of this plan shall apply to activities occurring in rocky habitats. Managing agencies shall incorporate management recommendations outlined in Section D. into administrative rule or site management practices.
- G. Managing agencies shall administer regulations, permits and other agreements in a way that considers the long-term conservation of rocky habitats and organisms.
- H. Managing agencies' shall conduct education and information efforts for visitors to rocky habitat areas in a manner consistent with site-based management recommendations, Statewide Land Use Planning Goal 19, and education actions outlined in Section A.5.b.
- I. Harvesting, gathering, or scientific collection of marine plants and animals in rocky habitat areas, where allowed, shall be conducted in a manner that minimizes impacts and disturbance to habitats or other organisms.
- J. Marine development activities, not currently managed by a specific part of the Territorial Sea Plan, that cause significant adverse effects or permanent⁴ impacts to the form or function of submerged rocky habitats, or the fisheries dependent upon them, are prohibited.
- K. Management actions shall consider adaptation and resilience to climate change, ocean acidification, and hypoxia effects on rocky habitat ecosystems, in accordance with relevant state action plans, guidance, or policy.
- L. Foster and promote research and monitoring, compatible with the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy, including effects of climate change, ocean acidification, and hypoxia.
- M. All affected Oregon federally recognized tribes shall be provided the opportunity for consultation regarding any action, including the planning, taking place in the rocky habitat areas.
- N. Impacts to cultural resources⁵ or historic properties in rocky habitats shall be avoided, minimized, or mitigated, in consultation with affected Oregon federally recognized tribes and as determined by the State Historic Preservation Office or Tribal Historic Preservation Office, as appropriate.

⁴ "Temporary impacts" are adverse impacts to waters of this state that are rectified within 24 months from the date of the initiation of the impact. As defined by: OAR 141-085-0510(88).

⁵ Resources vital to or the product of the perpetuation of traditional practices, ceremonies and lifeways.

- O. This plan and its implementation do not affect consent decrees or other agreements between the State of Oregon and any Oregon federally recognized tribe or any state agency policy recognizing tribal rights in rocky habitat areas.
- P. Managing agencies may propose site designations within rocky habitat areas as determined by the best available science.
- Q. Harvest of marine aquatic vegetation is prohibited except as regulated by state agencies for appropriate recreational, scientific, restoration, and educational use.
- R. Development activities occurring within or near an area with marine aquatic vegetation must have no significant adverse effects to the marine aquatic vegetation or its habitat.