

April 19, 2021

Dear _____,

Thank you again for agreeing to provide your review of the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary's Condition Report, which focuses on the period 2008–2019. Our staff has identified you as a particularly suitable expert who could provide substantive comments that would improve the document prior to dissemination. We request your written comments by May 21, which provides a little over a month for review.

This is the second application of the Condition Report framework at Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS), and considerable effort has gone into describing the status and trends of resources and ecosystem services in our region since release of the 2008 OCNMS Condition Report. Condition Reports are tools employed periodically by NOAA in an effort to consistently assess the condition and trends of sanctuary resources and ecosystem services within national marine sanctuaries. The report helps identify gaps in current monitoring efforts, as well as factors that may require additional focus and effort in the years to come. The data presented in the report is not meant to be encyclopedic, but rather to help illustrate the state of knowledge and summarize important scientific information currently available to characterize the region in order to inform an upcoming review of the sanctuary's 2011 Management Plan, which is projected to begin in 2022-2023.

Below you will find basic background information about the report and its various interrelated sections, as well as a table of contents that will allow you to move within the document sections easily. While we are able to add material that supports the rationale and rankings determined by workshop participants, we are hesitant to swell the length of the report unless absolutely necessary. Thus, we encourage you to help us trim the document, suggesting areas where material could be removed without compromising the report. We have tried to reduce redundancy by including internal linkages within the document, and will continue to consolidate using that approach.

Major enhancements to the Sanctuary Condition Report framework emerged from this process, thanks to the active involvement of dozens of colleagues from our region, including Coastal Treaty Tribes. For example, experts involved in the OCNMS process have transformed several sections within the Ecosystem Services sections to better encompass perspectives of indigenous communities, incorporate ecological knowledge, and include tribal voices, while creating space for a fuller representation of the reciprocal relationships of humans to their environment.

Background

This condition report provides a summary of the current status and trends of Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary resources and ecosystem services. Status is rated on a scale from good to poor. Trends in the status of resources are also reported, and are based on the time period of 2008–2019. Evaluations of status and trends were made at a workshop in January 2020 by sanctuary staff, in consultation with subject matter experts, based on interpretation of quantitative and, when necessary, non-quantitative assessments and observations of scientists,

managers and users. Therefore, ratings reflect the collective opinion among experts based on their knowledge and perceptions of local problems.

As you review the document, please do so recognizing that the report is much like a summary that is based on site specific data that may not be presented in detail within the report. To the extent possible, references and links to existing data are given, and appropriate summary graphics or data are shown, but original sources are likely to contain much more information than the condition report. Note that once all reviewer comments have been addressed the final report will be copy edited and appropriately formatted to meet the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' publication requirements. Please focus your comments on the substance of the report text and ratings, rather than on the graphical layout.

The resource questions and definitions of ecosystem services rated in the report are consistent across all sanctuaries in the system. The interpretation of the questions by sanctuary staff and participating experts, as well as their responses, are standardized according to the descriptions and explanations provided in Appendix A. We are not requesting your review of this appendix, as these standards were established by the original panel of experts who designed our system-wide monitoring program. We ask that your review focus on the body of the report, Chapters 1-7. We are particularly interested in your expert opinion of our judgments of resource status and trends, the rationales for judgment, and whether you feel that other data could or should have been incorporated into the ratings of status and trends. We welcome any recommendations you may have regarding additional data or information sources that may significantly improve assessments of resource conditions, keeping in mind our desire for conciseness.

Peer Review and Posting of Review Comments

In December 2004, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review (OMB Bulletin) establishing peer review standards that would enhance the quality and credibility of the federal government's scientific information. Among other information, these standards apply to Influential Scientific Information (ISI), which is information that can reasonably be determined to have a "clear and substantial impact on important public policies or private sector decisions."

Current OMB Bulletin guidelines require that reviewer comments, identities, and affiliations be posted on the Department of Commerce (DOC) website:
http://www.cio.noaa.gov/services_programs/prplans/PRsummaries.html.

Reviewer comments, however, will not be attributed to specific individuals. As you know, this is not consistent with traditional scientific peer review standards, which generally call for anonymity. This issue has been raised with OMB, and guidance may change in the future. Until then, we will comply with the published guidelines.

Therefore, by agreeing to be a reviewer for this report, you must agree to allow your comments to be posted on the web, along with those of other reviewers, and have your name and affiliation posted, though the names will not be linked to specific comments.

Conflict of Interest

For this review process, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) adapted the National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) policy for committee selection with respect to evaluating conflicts of interest when selecting peer reviewers who are not federal government employees. Please read the conflict of interest policy ([available here](#)) and complete and return the attached Conflict of Interest form by email to Katie.Wrubel@noaa.gov.

Specific Instructions

The document is available on google drive here:

[Main Google Folder with All Content](#)

1. [Introduction](#)
 2. [Site History and Resources](#)
 - 3a. [Driving Forces](#)
 - 3b. [Pressures](#)
 - 3c. [State of Driving Forces and Pressures \(Q1 - 5\)](#)
 - 4a. [Introduction to State of Resources Section](#)
 - 4b. [State of Water Quality \(Q6 - 9\)](#)
 - 4c. [State of Habitat \(Q10 - 11\)](#)
 - 4d. [State of Living Resources \(Q12 - 15\)](#)
 - 4e. [State of Maritime Heritage Resources \(Q16\)](#)
 - 4f. [Call Out Boxes](#)
 - 5a. [Introduction to State of Ecosystem Services](#)
 - Cultural Ecosystem Services:*
 - 5b. [Consumptive Recreation](#)
 - 5c. [Non-Consumptive Recreation](#)
 - 5d. [Science](#)
 - 5e. [Education](#)
 - 5f. [Heritage](#)
 - 5g. [Sense of Place](#)
 - Provisioning Ecosystem Services:*
 - 5h. [Commercial Harvest](#)
 - 5i. [Subsistence Harvest](#)
 - 5j. [Ornamentals](#)
 6. [Response](#)
- [Appendix: System Wide Monitoring Questions](#)
- [Appendix: Ecosystem Services Definitions](#)
- [Appendix: Water Quality Figures](#)
- [Appendix: Living Resources Figures](#)
- [Appendix: Methods](#)
- [Appendix: 2008 OCNMS CR Ratings](#)

If you are unable to access the report, or wish to review the report as a Word document, please contact Katie Wrubel (Katie.Wrubel@noaa.gov) who is serving as the Point of Contact for this project. Please make your edits and comments in **SUGGESTING mode**. Click on the 'editing' drop down box located at the far upper right corner of your navigation menu and select 'suggesting' from the options. Additional directions for using suggesting mode may be found [here](#), if you need assistance, again, please contact Katie. To Comment in Google Docs, select the items you wish to comment on, click the Comment Box and click "Comment" to save your comment, note this is different from Word in that you cannot just hit enter to submit a comment. Please note that this is a draft report and should not be distributed.

If it's helpful, all documents referenced in this letter are available in this [primary folder](#).

On behalf of the staff of Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, we thank you for taking the time to review this report. I am confident that your assistance will improve the quality of the document so that our management decisions can rely on the best available science and dependable judgments of knowledgeable experts.

Sincerely,