

Draft Marine Spatial Plan



Sunrise at Rialto Beach
Olympic National Park, Clallam County
photo by: Katrina Lassiter

Learn more at:

www.msp.wa.gov

Timeline

May 2017:

- Release draft plan and environmental documents.
- Public comment period

Summer 2017:

- Respond to comments
- Finalize and adopt plan

CONTACT

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Marine Spatial Plan for Washington's Pacific Coast

A draft Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) for Washington's Pacific Ocean Coast will be available for public comment in May. The draft MSP provides:

- Guidance for new ocean uses along Washington's Pacific coast, such as renewable energy projects and offshore aquaculture.
- Baseline data on coastal uses and resources to capture current conditions and future trends.
- Requirements and recommendations for evaluating new ocean uses through different phases of project review, consistent with existing laws and regulations.
- Recommendations to protect important and sensitive ecological areas and existing uses like fishing.

Plan Recommendations

The draft MSP is an important tool: 1) to assist state agencies and others in evaluating and engaging in proposals for new ocean uses; and 2) to guide potential applicants as they develop those proposals.

Draft plan recommendations include:

- Identifying ecologically-sensitive areas in state waters where off-shore development would be presumptively excluded.
- Excluding industrial-scale renewable energy development from state waters. Evaluating other projects on a case-by-case basis.
- Creating a process for enhanced coordination with stakeholders and among governments.
- Requiring data, information, and plans for proposed projects. Detailing effects to people, communities, and the environment that need to be evaluated, including state standards and policies that need to be met.

The MSP study area, outlined in red below, extends to offshore to a water depth of 4200 feet (700 fathoms) and covers areas in state waters (out to 3 nautical miles) and federal waters (from 3 to 200 nautical miles). It also includes coastal estuaries.



Non-project EIS

A separate, draft non-project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will also be available for public comment. It focuses on evaluating the environmental impacts of creating a marine spatial plan versus not having a plan. It does not examine detailed impacts of a specific ocean use. Further examination would occur when an applicant seeks permits for a project.

Aerial photo of Benson Beach near Cape Disappointment.



Informing and Influencing Decisions in Federal Waters

The plan also provides information to assist the state in reviewing and influencing federal activities that may affect Washington’s ocean resources or uses, including those proposed in federal waters.

After the state adopts a final plan, Ecology will submit the plan to be included as part of Washington’s federally-approved Coastal Zone Management Program.

What’s in the Plan?

The plan has five major parts:

- **An overview**, including background and MSP purpose.
- **A summary of current conditions and trends** including: ecology, socio-economics, archeological and historic resources, and existing and potential new ocean uses.
- **Details about spatial analyses** including methods and outputs examining ecology and human uses in the study area.
- **A MSP management framework** that covers process and substantive requirements tied to existing state laws and policies. This section also provides requirements and recommendations for new ocean uses, including spatial designations and recommendations.
- **Maps and appendices** including maps of existing ocean uses and ocean resources and more detailed information.

Planning Process

A team of state agencies including the Washington State departments of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, and Natural Resources is developing the state plan, guided by a state law.

Funding from the state legislature enabled state agencies to gather baseline information, carry out mapping, conduct research and analyses, develop a website and online tools, perform outreach and engagement, and produce the plan. Scientists and topical experts reviewed the data in the plan.

Throughout the planning process, the state agencies sought input from the Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council, marine resource committees, and local, tribal and federal governments. In addition to dozens of Advisory Council meetings, the state involved the public in the planning process including conducting workshops, making presentations to groups, attending community events and taking public comments.