

Selina Heppell, Oregon State University

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Governors need to commit state resources and leverage federal resources for regional research in nearshore waters through competitive grants (example: MARFIN in southern U.S.). Critical research needs include: 1) habitat inventory, 2) connectivity (inshore-offshore as well as long-shore) in populations and biological communities, 3) habitat recovery and resilience especially in response to physical damage, 4) relationships between habitat “quality” and biodiversity or species productivity.