

This Comment on the West Coast Governors' Agreement web site is from:
Name: Dr. Chris Goldfinger
State(s): Oregon

Regarding Topic Areas:

- * Clean coastal waters and beaches
- * Habitat protection and restoration
- * Ecosystem-based management
- * Offshore development
- * Ocean awareness and understanding
- * Scientific information, research, and monitoring
- * Sustainable economic development
- * Other

Comment/Suggestion:

Nearly all the goals outlined in the draft documents pertaining to the WCGA require far more information about the near shore ocean that is available at present. Good decision making in all 7 areas of all three states (and more) requires a new and sustained effort to understand the geography, the processes, and the biology of the near shore seas. Our understanding of these things today is dim, and our efforts to make headway in such diverse areas as ecosystem based management, ocean wave energy, and improved tsunami models is currently hampered by the lack of such information. We can realistically make little progress on these goals without these efforts.

The first, and most basic level of information is the seafloor of the territorial seas of the three states. Without bathymetry and habitat mapping, no ecosystem based management is possible, no tsunami models can be developed, no wave energy sites can be chosen thoughtfully, and the list goes on and on. National, State, and local agencies all want to move toward these goals, and are generating plans to do so, but for decades, the plans come to nothing because of the near complete lack of basic information on which to base the plans. Planning is easy, but generating the hard information to power the plans is not.

California has made significant steps toward solving this fundamental problem by first recognizing that it was unlikely that Federal agencies would solve the problem any time soon. They therefore allocated state funds to do seafloor mapping, and before very long, will have their state waters mapped and interpreted. Washington has also taken similar steps, though mostly in Puget Sound, and on a more limited basis. Oregon has not taken any concrete actions to put similar work into motion, though efforts led by the Universities spawned a legislative effort that ultimately did not succeed in 2007.

I urge both Oregon and Washington to get in the game and solve this problem as California has done. Basic mapping will happen sooner or later, and sooner is both cheaper, and more effective at achieving the goals of the WCGA. The political will is there, and may not be for long. Basic mapping is a one time thing that will allow the full range of ocean health and management activities to take place. Without it, the WCGA will remain just a nice idea that never went anywhere.

Dr. Chris Goldfinger
Director, Active Tectonics and Seafloor Mapping Laboratory
College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences
Oregon State University
1 541 737 5214 fax 1 541 737 2064
gold@coas.oregonstate.edu
<http://activetectonics.coas.oregonstate.edu>
mail Ocean Admin Bldg 104, Corvallis OR 97331, USA