

# Executive Summary

## **Introduction**

Rocky shores are a defining feature of Oregon's 362-mile-long coast. Tidepools, cliffs, rocks, and submerged reefs form a rich and diverse ecosystem along 161 miles of Oregon's shoreline. These rocky shores, particularly the 82 miles of rocky intertidal habitat, attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. People use the areas to play, for science research, to perform traditional tribal activities, to harvest food and to teach and learn about nature. The number of people using Oregon's rocky shores is increasing, and the ways people are using the areas are changing.

## **Purpose**

The Oregon Legislature mandated that the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) be a key manager of Oregon's intertidal rocky shores. This document reviews those management responsibilities. It provides information to help inform OPRD decisions, as well as other agencies' decisions about rocky shores.

This document includes:

- Background information on the rocky shores, explaining why they are important ecologically, economically, and socially
- Management considerations
- Recommendations for balancing recreation, conservation and sustainability

In keeping with the goals set forth in the Ocean Shore Management Plan, management of this resource should attempt to:

- 1.) Balance recreation with resource protection
- 2.) Help the public enjoy and understand the rocky shores

## **Background**

In 1987, the Oregon Legislature directed natural resource agencies to form an Ocean Resources Task Force to prepare a plan for Oregon's ocean. The Ocean Resources Management Task Force (OORMTF) compiled policy recommendations in the Oregon Ocean Resources Management Plan (also known as the Oregon Ocean Plan), which was completed in 1990. The plan's goals are to conserve all marine resources, protect marine habitats and preserve fragile, vulnerable, unique, and critical marine communities and habitats (OORMTF, 1991). The Oregon Ocean Plan identifies management needs for Oregon's territorial sea and makes suggestions for sensitive marine bird and mammal habitats and rocky intertidal areas (OORMTF, 1991).

In the Oregon Ocean Plan, the OORMTF lays the groundwork for a detailed, management-oriented plan for the territorial sea. The 1991 Oregon Legislature established the Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC) to advise the governor as well as state coastal resource management agencies on coastal issues. One of the council's primary duties is to create and maintain a

plan for Oregon's territorial sea (ORS 196.443). The territorial sea is the waters and seabed extending three geographical miles seaward from the coastline in conformance with federal law (ORS 196.405).

OPAC and state and federal natural resources agencies created the Territorial Sea Plan (TSP). In 1994, OPAC published the TSP. The Rocky Shore Management Strategy (RSMS) is part of the TSP.

That same year, the Oregon Coastal Management Program adopted the TSP, including the RSMS. The Oregon Coastal Management Program is part of the National Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program, a partnership between the federal government and U.S. coastal states and territories, authorized by the federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) is responsible for Oregon's Coastal Management Program. For the purposes of the Territorial Sea Plan, Oregon's territorial sea includes the ocean shore recreation area which is the land lying between extreme low tide of the Pacific Ocean and the line of vegetation (OPAC, 1994).

The RSMS was the first step toward a plan that would encompass all of Oregon's nearshore ocean and coast. The RSMS proposes six management categories for Oregon's rocky shores: marine garden, habitat refuge, research reserve, marine shore, not yet designated, and priority rock/reefs.

OPAC dissolved in 2002. Since the TSP's inception, few things have been done to assess its effectiveness and/or the implementation of its plans. The Oregon Legislature reconstituted OPAC and it reconvened in 2005. It has focused on marine reserves planning and the governor's effort to pursue National Marine Sanctuary status for the Oregon coast.

More people are using Oregon's coast than ever before. That, combined with the governor's desire to pursue marine protected areas in Oregon waters and new scientific information on rocky shores ecosystems, makes a review of rocky shores management in Oregon timely.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) awards state agencies grants for a coastal zone management project of their choice. NOAA awarded OPRD and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation (DLCD) money to develop an interagency assessment of Oregon's rocky shores. This report is the result of the fellowship project, which began in August 2004.

### **Summary of Key Recommendations**

- Recommendations to OPRD regarding each of the thirty-nine TSP sites
- Recommendations to the federal and state agencies that share management of Oregon's rocky shores
- Overall recommendations

- The Devil’s Punchbowl survey report and the Marine Intertidal Macroalgae Management report (see appendices) include additional recommendations.

Coastal Indian Tribes along the Oregon coast include the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw, the Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz. The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon is not directly on the coast but is composed of members who were traditionally part of coast-based tribes, including the Tillamook and Nestucca (Grand Ronde, 2006). Oregon’s tribes, each their own sovereign government, have treaty-protected gathering rights that should be considered (in consultation with the tribes as appropriate) when making natural resource management decisions.

### **Research Recommendations**

- ❑ Work with non-profit groups, universities and volunteers to conduct baseline and issue-focused research on rocky shores ecosystems. For many sites, these data are not available. Data are kept in different places and are not easy for natural resource managers to use. Research should measure the impact of human recreation on Oregon’s rocky shores. Work with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to develop methods for long-term monitoring. Monitoring should begin at:
  - Popular research reserves that also are believed to have high visitation, such as the south cove of Cape Arago
  - Sites that the TSP has designated “not yet designated” such as Seal Rock and Cape Falcon
  - Sites where ODFW has not adopted the TSP designations and/or prescriptions
- ❑ Examine sites with and without restrictions on collection to determine collection pressure and target species.

### **Education Recommendations**

- ❑ Coordinate non-profit groups, volunteers and others to deliver interpretive programs at popular sites. Interpreters could inform visitors about the rocky shores and protect the areas.
- ❑ Continue to fund OPRD interpreters. Consider adding interpretive rangers as use increases and patterns change.
- ❑ Review, replace, and add rocky shore interpretive signs.
- ❑ Develop personal-use seaweed collection guidelines, and inform the public about them.

### **Management Recommendations**

One of the TSP’s main problems is that it relies on state and federal agencies to carry out its proposals. The TSP expressly points out that OPAC will not implement its strategies.

OPAC is an advisory body. However, most of the designations and many of the prescriptions are not being implemented by the responsible agencies.

Therefore, OPRD should:

- ❑ Complete and implement site-specific management plans for rocky shores sites.
- ❑ Incorporate the TSP management objectives and prescriptions into any new and/or revised coastal park plans, such as master plans, natural resource management plans and interpretive plans.
- ❑ Apply the same rules to intertidal algae (seaweed), kelp and seagrasses as apply to intertidal invertebrates in ODFW specially-managed intertidal areas (e.g., marine gardens, research reserves, and habitat refuges). This includes:
  - Prohibiting intertidal algae (seaweed), kelp, and seagrass collection in marine gardens and habitat refuges. Although informally enforced by OPRD staff, the prohibition of intertidal algae (seaweed) collection is not a formal rule, nor is it mentioned on signs. As interest increases, both recreational and commercially, sites without protections are likely to be targeted for intertidal algae collection.
  - Prohibit collection of intertidal seaweeds, kelp, and seagrass from research reserves without an OPRD scientific research permit.
- ❑ Decide whether management of marine plant resources within and next to state parks and the rest of the ocean shore will differ.

### **Recommendations for other agencies**

- ❑ Contrary to TSP recommendations, ODFW allows collection of many species, including shellfish, at several intertidal research reserves. This potentially interferes with the research objectives for which these “reserves” were developed. ODFW should review its policies on these specially managed areas.
- ❑ The Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) should consider not issuing subtidal kelp harvest permits within or next to current or proposed special management areas, including marine gardens, research reserves and habitat refuges.