TSP Part Three Proposal Process Evaluation Survey Response Summary

Who took part in the surveys?

Four out of 12 Working Group members took part in the Working Group survey. Of the respondents of the proposer/public survey: 40% (n=6) were proposers, 46.67% (n=7) were members of the public, and 13.33% (n=2) were working group members.

General themes which emerged from both surveys

Time

Many respondents from both surveys reported issues regarding time. Time spent researching, corresponding, clarifying, writing, and reviewing as well as a feeling that the timeframes were too short to refine or evaluate the proposals. Common themes regarding time were:

- The proposal development and proposal evaluation processes are lengthy.
- Much of the time spent in preparing the proposals was spent in research, writing, and outreach.
- Much of the time spent in evaluating the proposals was spent reading proposals and supporting materials.
- Not enough time dedicated in the process to develop or refine proposals.
- Correspondence for research, outreach, or agency clarification took a lot of time.
- The pandemic lengthened the time for all outreach aspects.

Evaluation criteria

There was a general sense of confusion over what the evaluation criteria were for the proposals and that the proposals were not evaluated using the same criteria or a rubric. There were also concerns that the evaluation process was changing during the time proposals were being evaluated. Common themes regarding the evaluation criteria were:

- Evaluators did not use a rubric for evaluating the proposals.
- The evaluation criteria were not the same across the board for all proposals.
- The evaluation process was changing as it was being implemented.

Agency involvement

Respondents from the proposer survey commented several times on the lack of agency support in developing their proposals. This was often cited as being due to agency representatives and working group members attempting to remain impartial. Respondents from the Working Group survey cited agency involvement and understanding other agencies' perspectives as important aspects of their final recommendation decisions.

Working Group Survey Results

Proposal materials and evaluation

- The elements of the proposal materials valued most by respondents were the application itself, the management measures, and the agency feasibility analysis.
- The elements least valued were the support letters and any redundant information.
- Respondents found the ability of a proposal to achieve its stated goals and to implement regulations to be some of the most challenging elements to evaluate in the proposals.
- Streamlining the application process to reduce redundancy, having a page limit on submitted materials, and having workshops for proposal writers to understand the process and criteria were suggested as steps which would help the evaluation process.
- A clear understanding of how a proposed site fits within the overall landscape context and how proposed regulations address a need were stated by respondents as elements of proposals which would have made their recommendation decisions easier.
- The respondents found the discussions in the working group centered on other agencies' concerns were influential on their recommendation decisions.
- The respondents stated the findings from the Agency Feasibility and Completeness Analysis helped them determine if a proposed site designation and proposed regulations were able to be enforced.
- Better planning and a clearer process of voting for the working group were put forth as methods to increase confidence in respondents' final recommendations.
- A maximum of between 4 and 8 proposals were suggested for future proposal cycles.
- One respondent was neither confident nor not confident in their final recommendation decisions, and two respondents were somewhat confident in their decisions.
- Respondents stated consultation between the Working Group and agency representatives should not be necessary if the Agency Analysis is done correctly but did suggest workshops between agency representatives and proposers would be beneficial.
- Respondents suggested increases to agency funding to be able to address issues such as wildlife disturbances, lack of public education/awareness, capacity issues.

Proposer/Public Survey Results
Background and motivation of respondents

- 46.67% (n=7) of respondents had very little or no knowledge of, or experience with, the Oregon Territorial Sea Plan's Rocky Habitat Management Strategy prior to becoming involved with a site designation proposal. 6.66% (n=1) had some knowledge or experience and 46.67 (n=7) had good or excellent knowledge or experience.
- The primary motivating factors for respondents spending time developing a proposal were firstly protecting habitats or biodiversity (53.33%, n=8), then applicability to the respondent's job (33.33%, n=5), and lastly being a concerned citizen (13.33%, n=2).

Rocky Habitat Mapping Tool

- Regarding the level of difficulty in using the Rocky Habitat Web Mapping Tool, two respondents found it easy to use, three found it somewhat easy, three found it neither easy nor difficult, and three found it somewhat difficult. (Responded: 11 Skipped: 4).
- Positive comments for the Tool included:
    - Easy to use.
    - Nice visuals, maps, and graphics.
- Critical comments of the Tool included:
    - Formatting limitations.
    - Only allows a single author.
    - Some data layers were not accessible, and some data was "bad."
    - Not compatible with other GIS programs
    - File naming protocol makes it difficult if you have multiple proposals.

Proposal development and evaluation experience

- Researching/gathering information & understanding rules, regulations, and policies were commonly cited as the most challenging aspects of proposal development by respondents, although outreach and engagement, writing, developing management recommendations, and communicating with agency staff were also mentioned as challenging. (Responded:10 Skipped:5).
- Understanding the evaluation process and understanding Working Group decision-making were regarded as the most challenging aspects of the proposal evaluation process by most respondents, with communicating with agency staff, Working Group members cited slightly less. (Responded:12 Skipped:3).
- Critical comments for proposal development and evaluation included:
    - Time intensive
    - Outreach to scientists took a long time.
    - Historic documents had to be sought out.
    - Outreach was difficult due to politics.
    - Some information asked for was not used in evaluation.
    - Agency representatives were not available.
    - Proposal requirements were extravagant, time consuming, vague, redundant.
    - Proposers were not allowed to present their proposals.
    - No formal response to formal letter
    - Process was changing.
    - No consistent evaluation process.
    - Evaluation criteria were not established before proposals were submitted.
    - Lack of communication between agency staff, Working Group members, and proposers.

Rocky Habitat Site Management Designation proposal process development

- Points of clarity respondents asked for regarding the Rocky Habitat Site Management designation proposal process included:
  - How will the continuing consultation process work?
  - Is the agency going to implement objective evaluation metrics?
  - Who/how will the work be done moving forward without a Work Group and designated agency staff/fellow?
  - How will the designations be implemented and supported by on the ground activities?
  - How will State Parks respond to the designations and what will they do to implement them?
  - What sort of enforcement will be put in place?
  - How will educational sites be supported?
- Additional criteria for the Agency Feasibility and Completeness Analysis respondents suggested agency staff should consider when analyzing future proposals included:
  - Protection of Biodiversity and giving more attention to wildlife than extractive activities.
  - Ecological rating of habitat destruction.
  - An overall evaluation of the Oregon's rocky habitats from an ecological perspective should be conducted to update the information that led to the initial Strategy.
  - Impacts to adjacent upland areas and offshore pinniped haul out sites of increasing visitation.
  - Access issues to sites including safety.
  - History of conservation proposals at the site.
  - Public use of the site over time (and projected future).
  - Willingness of the public to voluntarily steward the site.
  - A formal readiness assessment should be considered for fully developed proposals.
  - DLCD should consider inviting the public to submit a Pre-application readiness review for initial screening and feedback.
  - Site merit: natural resource values and value to users.
  - Proposal value with respect to community education and recruitment for stewardship of coastal ecology and wildlife health.
- Additional criteria for the Working Group Evaluation respondents suggested members should consider when analyzing future proposals included:
  - Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity.
  - The severity and scope of keystone habitat destruction.
  - History of conservation proposals at the site.
  - Public use of the site over time (and projected future).
  - Willingness of the public to voluntarily steward the site.
  - Ensure that criteria questions are based on management need (not whether proposers included certain info).

- There are criteria in the Oregon Rocky Shores Natural Resources Inventory that are still relevant (e.g. intertidal overuse, marine wildlife conflicts) that could be referred to develop new evaluation criteria questions.
- Recommend considering evaluation criteria question(s) specific to climate change concerns.
- Break down each RHMS principle and policy into an evaluation question.
- Recommend using individual management principles and policies as the criterion and a scoring rubric to measure how well the proposal achieves the criterion.
- Proposal value with respect to community education and recruitment for stewardship of coastal ecology and wildlife.
- Examples of elements of the process which surprised respondents the most included:
  - No proposers chose to modify existing sites.
  - The lack of organized scientific and regulatory information from the State provided to site proposers.
  - That the working group expected proposers to be experts in regulations and downgraded proposals for lack of that expertise.
  - That agency representatives at the working group were not able to make decisions based on conversations and shifting proposals in working group meetings but could only agree to what had been authorized by their superiors.
  - That budget and staffing limitations were used as a reason to not implement designations.
  - The fishing communities' claim to have been left out of the process at the 12th hour despite several years of outreach and requests for them to come to the table to participate.
  - The compressed timeframe for evaluation.
  - How thorough the vetting process is.
  - Apparent lack of coordination with USFWS at the Mack Arch site for upland issues.
  - Apparent lack of involvement with OR State Parks for access issues.
  - The failure of some working group members and OPAC members to grasp the difference between MCAs and Marine Reserves.
  - The failure and perhaps unwillingness of some working group members and OPAC members to reach out to proposal writers for clarifications before they spoke publicly of their understanding of a particular proposal.
  - In at least one case, the spreading of misinformation by some working group members and OPAC members.
  - That the evaluation criteria had not been established prior to December 31, 2020, the deadline of submitting proposals.
  - By how much the WG's discussions of our proposals veered off course.
  - The lack of quantifiable criteria being applied in a consistent manner.
  - The initial rollout of updates to the rocky habitat plan said the public was being allowed input, but that isn't what happened.
  - Chaos and inconsistency.

- Most respondents (n=10) think their proposals would have received different initial or final recommendations had consultation with agency representatives and Working Group members been included as a necessary element of the proposal process (Responded:14 Skipped:1)
- Some suggestions from respondents on what they think further consultation should include for the six proposals the Working Group recommended for such consultation included:
    - Don't leave out a Formal Letter process completely.
    - Address the parts of proposals that were problematic in a small group setting.
    - Having a volunteer program should not be a threshold or requirement in order to designate a site.
    - The review should focus on the aspects of the proposal that the working group identified as needing further work.
    - Consultation with participants regarding scope and focus of areas.
    - Suggest using the term evaluation rather than consultation. There should be some concrete reasons set out for why each of the proposals needs further evaluation.
    - The group should be larger than the small number of people who wrote the proposal and should include people familiar with the sites, and agency reps who manage the sites.
    - The outcome of the evaluation for sites in the education category should include a realistic assessment of whether a volunteer education group is likely to be practical at the site on a regular basis.
    - Evaluate them after Section E and Appendix C are finalized (with full public input) and approved by OPAC.
    - Meet with each of the proposers individually and provide them with frank advice on how to strengthen their proposals to help ensure that OPAC votes to recommend them at its spring 2022 meeting.
    - DLCD should analyze if the responses to considerations satisfactorily address those considerations.
    - A workshop should be held to foster a dialogue between proponents and agencies on how unresolved issues can best be addressed in a manner satisfactory to all parties. The workshop can also document any issues that cannot be resolved. An addendum to the proposal can be attached to those documents discussions at the workshop.
    - The proposals should be evaluated on established, quantifiable, transparent and replicable criteria. The criteria should be equitable and science based. These criteria may differ from criteria for evaluation during the maintenance period as the proposal form is likely to be modified.
    - The decision process regarding recommendations to OPAC should be clearly defined (who, what and how) prior to evaluating the six proposals.
    - There should be a consultation between the proposers and the agencies to determine alignment with them.

- o Clear alignment or misalignment with the stated criteria should be established rather than the haphazard application to the various proposals. New criteria should be imposed by mutual agreement only.
- o The relative importance of criteria should be established, perhaps with a weighting system to establish a final score and a cut-off point for final approval.
- o Proposal adjustments should be permitted where proposal elements can reasonably be added or subtracted.
- o Final approval or disapproval should be accomplished by June, 2022.

- Several cross-cutting or coastwide issues were identified by the proposals (e.g. wildlife disturbances, lack of public education/awareness, capacity issues etc.) that exist in many rocky habitat regions of the coast.

  Respondents suggested the following recommendations for how these issues should be addressed:
  - o We need to limit access to rocky habitat regions of the coast. Perhaps a permit system?
  - o "Yikes, the coastwide issues examples cited in this question didn't even mention the coast-wide kelp forest crisis. As a starting point there should have been two TYPES of proposals allowed. (1. site-specific (2. coast-wide."
  - o These might be well addressed by a sub-committee in OPAC with outside help from agencies and the public/stakeholders.
  - o Would like to see tribal interests much better represented in this effort as well as in future rocky habitat proposals.
  - o Funding for involvement would be necessary for a more comprehensive effort.
  - o Statewide rocky habitat outreach, education, interpretation, and enforcement program.
  - o Ongoing review process with uniformity and education being the keys.
  - o Signage and clear standard approaches to issues (i.e. wildlife disturbance/harassment).
  - o These common issues are topics where the state agencies and/or OPAC can and should set a vision and articulate needs for the future.
  - o Agency capacity needs to be built to address these issues, either directly or through the use of volunteers.
  - o Addressing the benefits of a declining human population growth rate and developing and a human population growth policy/plan.
  - o Encouraging the use of certain easy accessible sites and improving programming, funding and access at these sites that to become the "go to places" for tide pooling.
  - o I recommend state staff read the solutions outlined in these proposals, as there are some excellent plans for addressing these issues.
  - o They need to be addressed within both site-based management and coastwide programs.