

Rocky Habitat Site Proposal Final Recommendation

The Rocky Habitat Management Strategy Initial Proposal Process (2020-2021)

Proposed Site

Site Name: Oregon Kelp Forests Marine Research Area

Site Map: http://seasket.ch/y0uvvr4X_7

Proposal Materials: <https://bit.ly/383xSWD>



Final Recommendation

This document summarizes the site proposal evaluations conducted by the Rocky Habitat Working Group. The summary below represents an evaluation and recommendation synopsis for the Oregon Kelp Forests Marine Research Area. During evaluations, the agencies and Working Group identified considerations for potential recommendation by the Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC). Consideration are those aspects of a proposal, identified through the evaluation process, which the Working Group believes should be addressed to facilitate implementation of the designation as proposed. These considerations were outlined in draft initial recommendation summaries, which were made available for a 30-day public comment period. Proposers were invited to submit written responses to the initial recommendations, and present their proposals and responses in the April 29, 2021 Working Group meeting. Following discussion with proposal presenters, the Working Group deliberated and crafted their final recommendations.

Final Recommendation: *Not Recommended (consensus)*

Summary of Considerations

The Rocky Habitat Working Group identified the implementation considerations listed below for the proposed Oregon Kelp Forests Marine Research Area. Any potential recommendation from OPAC should address these considerations as outlined in the following summary to ensure that implementation of the proposed site is a) consistent with state agency authority and coastal policy, b) appropriately inclusive and representative of stakeholder interests, c) reasonably achievable within the existing framework of rocky habitat site management, and d) in balance with the merits and goals of the proposed site.

Any potential recommendation for implementation of this site should address the following considerations:

- The proposal does not meet the completeness and sufficiency standards to facilitate proper proposal review

This proposal focuses on broad-based, coastwide management of kelp forests, and is not specific to any particular rocky site. While there is broad recognition of the importance and timeliness of addressing management of kelp forests in Oregon's territorial sea, the provisions and activities proposed do not fit into the framework of the rocky habitat site-management designation process.

However, many of the recommendations potentially have merit for application in a coastwide context outside of a site-specific designation, particularly with respect to research, partnerships with recreational diving groups, and exploratory management programs for kelp conservation. The Oregon Kelp Alliance is already focused on similar recommendations, and site-by-site considerations may be relevant for future designations provided research, monitoring, and management is adequately supported and well understood.

Where possible, the Working Group supports addressing the considerations and concerns above through statewide and site-specific non-regulatory management plans, where appropriate, with a focus on volunteer monitoring, interpretation, education, and awareness efforts. Additional considerations for potential recommendation include the other merits and perspectives identified above and in the full packet of evaluation materials, in balance with the proposed site goals.