From:	Susan Mates
To:	TSP comments
Subject:	Protections for critical rocky habitats
Date:	Tuesday, March 30, 2021 12:00:49 PM

To: Rocky Habitat Working Group and the Ocean Policy Advisory Council
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Re: Protections for critical rocky habitats

I have been carefully watching your process to update the management and protection plans for Oregon's rocky habitats. The lack of communication between agencies and the public has, unfortunately, expanded the politicization of this undertaking.

I am asking that you redeem the process by doing the following:

- Give your strongest consideration for the proposals that have received the most stakeholder and community support: Ecola Point MCA, Chapman Point MCA, Cape Lookout MCA, Cape Foulweather MCA, Coquille Point MG, Blacklock Point MCA, Cape Blanco MRA, and Crook Point/Mack Reef MCA. These all have clear long-term goals and objectives, and have expert input to back them up.
- Clear up any misrepresented information in the initial site proposal evaluation summaries that may have been used to rank proposals or are now available. This is a timely consideration so that working groups re-evaluation of proposals is operating from the most current and correct information.
- Ensure that the proposal evaluations are not based on funding or capacity concerns. These proposals were designed for long-term efforts toward improving site management, and funding or capacity concerns were not to be a defining element.
- As your work proceeds, please use an objective evaluation rubric, like those used by other state and federal agencies. Doing so would remove much of the element of the politicization that has plagued this project.

These sites especially have my heart:

Cape Lookout:
Cape Lookout was one of my first introductions to the rocky coastline of Oregon when I arrived here from the Midwest forty years ago. The hike out to the point of the head became an annual trek in March for whale-watching, and my son grew up with memories of traversing that trail.
We memorized its peekaboo views and racked up family points for wildlife sighted. We loved the mystery of knowing there was a sea cave just below where we perched to watch the whales. And we loved knowing it was a home for Marbled Murrelets, even though we have never been lucky enough to spot one.
Since Measure 37 was passed, we have watched so much of our beautiful shoreline fall to chainsaws and be developed. That process has made me treasure the pristine habitats that remain at Cape Lookout all the more. As population growth here puts ever greater pressures on iconic places like Cape Lookout, change to protect it cannot come too soon.

Ecola Point:
Whenever my spirits need a lift, I head to Ecola Point. I love the trail to Indian Beach, and the tide pools and other riches that can be found there on the beach. It was the first place I ever watched, breathless with awe, as barnacles swept the water for food in a shallow tide pool. It's being loved to death though, and I have been one of the guilty ones as it is the first place I think of when out-of-town guests show up.
I have been watching the news concerning our ocean's changes with increasing alarm, including the recent NOAA-funded study of Dungeness crabs. I moved to Oregon 40 years ago, and have taken note of how empty the tide pools are compared to 1979.
I am encouraged that sea stars seems to be making a comeback after suffering from the mysterious wasting disease that had decimated their population. But I have watched in horror as parents show their children how to pry

creatures from the rocks, and I cringe every time I witness some off-leash dog splashing in those fragile areas, or hear the crunch of a barnacle shell breaking under some unwitting visitor's boot.
From increasing acidity, declining oxygen levels, and an ever-lengthening list of marine life we know to be impacted, it is clear we don't have time to wait on these issues.

Chapman Point:
When I visit the coast, I prefer to stay at Cannon Beach or Oceanside. That's because Chapman Point is so dear to me. Besides the fabulous views and waves crashing among the wonder-producing rock formations, the seabird nesting colonies there draw me. I am content to sit for hours with my binoculars and spotting scope, watching the interactions between the birds, especially the murres.
It breaks my heart to read how those murres and others are starving. With sea surface temperatures steadily increasing, they need our help desperately. Offering the wildlife in this special area is one small thing we can do to begin alleviating these prob

Tillamook Head:
I am an avid hiker, and Tillamook Head remains one of my top all-time favorite places to hike, in every kind of weather. I can't imagine a more beautiful place, and one so filled with wildlife and history. My heart lifts when I come to one of those perfect vantage points for bird watching, especially if I can spot one of the black oystercatchers with their distinctive orange beaks.
I love knowing that the tide pools below are where they and their chicks forage for food. That makes it even harder to witness how some people seem to find it irresistible to climb the rocks, and in such a fragile area.

These precious areas are struggling with so many issues, many of which seem to be out of our control. Offering the protections, though, is one thing we can control. Please give them the strongest protections possible, even - or maybe especially - if it means less access for admirers like me.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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