From: Larry Basch
To: TSP comments
Subject: Public comment re: Blacklock Point and Crook Point-Mack Reef MCA proposals
Date: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 5:46:00 PM

Dear Rocky Habitat Working Group,

I am in strong support for designation of Blacklock Point and Crook Point-Mack Reef as Marine Conservation Areas under the OR Rocky Habitat Management Strategy. I am also in strong support of all current proposals coastwide being reviewed fairly and transparently by the Rocky Habitat Working Group in a timely way using objective evaluation criteria and for them to communicate effectively, early and often with the public including proposal writing groups.

Contrary to what the Rocky Habitat Working Group wrote in their initial considerations of the proposals, Blacklock Point and Crook Point-Mack Reef are not inaccessible. A number of marked trails coming from the east, south and north make Blacklock a hiking destination. The most popular and shortest trail starts at the Cape Blanco airport. Blacklock Point is on the Oregon Coast Trail, which sees more and more hikers every year. Designating Blacklock Point and Crook Point-Mack Reef as Marine Conservation Areas will alert outdoor enthusiasts that these are special sites, encouraging respectful use of the intertidal area and wildlife like the Black Oystercatcher, who depend on them. Crook Point-Mack Reef Is just off Highway 101 and is easily reached by a short beach walk from the north on daytime low tides.

These sites are gaining in popularity each year. The designation of Marine Conservation Areas does not necessarily shine a spotlight on unknown places. The Oregon coast has few secret spots anymore and we will be smarter to think ahead and plan for increased human activity before it is too late. The situation on the ground is not “build (or designate) it and they will come.” Rather, it is “Build (or designate) it or not, they will come no matter what.”

These proposals aim to increase public awareness of the fragility of and threats to rocky shore habitats and provide recommendations for how to manage the impacts caused by increasing visitation and ocean warming. The public has spoken, the status quo of limited agency capacity and budget is not going away anytime soon. Therefore we need effective on the ground site management to protect coastal resources and visitors. The only viable approach to fill the gap between site goals and needs and increasing human use and resource threats is application of the proposed non regulatory management measures, as soon as possible.

Non-regulatory management measures recommended in the proposals for Crook Point and Blacklock Point including getting volunteer eyes on site, increased volunteer training for public education, monitoring of resources and human uses (or misuses like impacting wildlife) and new signage make sense and are feasible. Volunteers working cooperatively with and in support of site land management agencies to maintain or restore the rocky habitats that are so crucial to our environmental and economic future could save the state money and empower citizens to make good choices and act as stewards when visiting rocky shores.

I encourage the Rocky Habitat Working Group to do the right thing and recommend both site proposals for approval by OPaC and the LCDC.

Sincerely,

Larry Basch, Ph.D.