

# **Memorandum of Understanding**

## **West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health & West Coast Ocean Observing Systems**

### **October 2012**

*Furthering a shared interest in the effective management of West Coast coastal and ocean resources*

#### **Parties**

The West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health (WCGA) is a state and federal partnership with the goal of protecting and managing the ocean and coastal resources along the entire West Coast, as called for in the recommendation of the US Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission. The Alliance seeks to promote:

- Clean coastal waters and beaches
- Healthy ocean and coastal habitats
- Effective ecosystem-based management
- Reduced impacts of offshore development
- Increased ocean awareness and literacy among the region's citizens
- Expanded ocean and coastal scientific information, research, and monitoring
- Sustainable economic development of coastal communities

The Alliance also underscores the importance of managing activities that affect our oceans in a way that accounts for the relationships among all ecosystem components, including people and other species and the environment in which we all live. Ecosystem-based approaches to management greatly benefit from comprehensive and systematic physical and biological observations of the ecosystem as well as extensive human engagement of those who are a part of, and depend on, the ecosystem.

The West Coast Coastal and Ocean Observing Systems (OOS) are comprised of the Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems (NANOOS), the Central and Northern California Ocean Observing System (CeNCOOS), and the Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System (SCCOOS). The OOS are the regional information coordination entities for the West Coast as part of the United States Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System (IOOS), and they share responsibility for observing the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem. SCCOOS integrates and delivers coastal observations in the Southern California Bight, with collaborators in Baja California; CeNCOOS, from Point Conception to the California-Oregon border; and NANOOS, in Oregon and Washington, with partners in British Columbia. Together, the OOS provide key observations, data, models, and information products that meet unique placebased needs, as well as broader regional stakeholder needs, through collaborations between academic institutions, state and federal agencies, tribal and local governments, private industry, and non-profit organizations. To achieve this, the OOS engage end-users of coastal ocean data and other information to identify priority research and management questions and related requirements for observational data and decision support within the three unique geographies.

As outlined in their September 2011 memorandum of understanding, the West Coast OOS are committed to (1) leading the planning, implementation, operation, and evaluation of a sustained and cohesive coastal ocean observing system for the West Coast of the United States, as part of U.S. IOOS, and (2) promoting the development, interoperability, integration, dissemination, and rapid access to data and data products that meet the needs of a broad group of end users on the West Coast.

#### **Overview**

The WCGA and OOS have a shared interest in the effective management of coastal and ocean resources for the benefit of current and future generations. Further, we have a common geographic focus that includes the ocean and coastal resources along the West Coast states of California, Oregon, and Washington as well as shared priority theme areas, including harmful algal blooms, ocean acidification, surface current mapping, and a regional data network. As such, we have a strong interest in collaborating with each other in these areas, and leveraging human and financial resources to benefit our shared ecosystem.

#### **Methods of collaboration**

Our organizations agree to partner on the following:

1. *Regional priorities*—Every other year, our organizations will meet to identify regional coastal and ocean management themes and priorities. Our organizations will then use these materials in work plans, fund development, and communication processes.

2. *Committee activities*—Our organizations will share OOS and WCGA committee and working group meeting materials (e.g., briefing items, agendas, minutes, reports, etc.).

3. *Joint projects*—Our organizations will jointly support projects of shared interest that are identified during biennial regional priority development, and will share the outcomes and deliverables of these projects with our organizations, stakeholders, and others.

4. *Progress reports*—Our organizations will report to our respective leaders on progress in implementing this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and will solicit suggestions for emerging priorities as well as other collaboration opportunities; which will be considered and incorporated in the regional prioritization process.

### **Modifications**

Proposals to modify the terms of this MOU can be initiated by any Party and are subject to approval of all Parties.

### **Duration and Termination of Agreement**

The duration of the agreement will be for two years. Renewal will be automatic unless specifically cancelled. Termination of the agreement may be initiated by either party in writing with a notice period of 30 days.

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John Laird, California Secretary for Natural Resources, Chair, California Ocean Protection Council

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Richard Whitman, Natural Resources Policy Advisor, Officer of the Oregon Governor

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Bob Nichols, Executive Policy Advisor, Office of the Washington Governor

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NANOOS Executive Director Jan Newton

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CeNCOOS Program Director Leslie Rosenfeld

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SCCOOS Executive Director Julie Thomas