

Advisory committee members selected to advance West Coast Ocean Initiative

August 18, 2025



Administrators of the nation's two national ocean science trusts said they have taken a key next step in the development of the West Coast Ocean Science Action Agenda by announcing initial appointments to an advisory committee.

The committee will provide strategic oversight and validation of coastwide agenda implementation, emphasizing fairness, representation, and balance of voices needed to deliver on ocean science priorities for the coming decade.

As the U.S. West Coast faces the impacts of a changing climate - including heatwaves, coastal storms, changing ocean chemistry, and sea-level rise - advancing scientific knowledge and solutions is critical. The agenda will identify shared science priorities and co-create science funding structures that can deliver on these needs.

Laura Anderson, Chair of the Oregon Ocean Science Trust, expressed support for the agenda and advisory committee members that will contribute to its success. "Ocean science protects lives, fuels innovation, and strengthens coastal economies," said Anderson. "We're excited to welcome advisory committee members to

this region-wide initiative to bring to the table unique voices and perspectives that will help us deliver a robust agenda.”

The trusts are partnering with the West Coast Ocean Alliance and the West Coast Ocean Tribal Caucus to authentically listen to Tribal science priorities and lift those into the shared priorities identified in the agenda.

“The West Coast Ocean Alliance, including its membership of tribal and state governments from throughout the region, is very much looking forward to the opportunity to share their ocean science priorities,” West Coast Ocean Alliance Executive Director John Hansen said. “The advisory committee will play an essential role in providing accountability to inclusively listening and learning, and demonstrating how all government partners can be heard in a meaningful way.”

As the trusts expand partnerships in Washington, additional members will be welcomed to the Advisory Committee to ensure appropriate consideration of shared science priorities from the breadth of the U.S. West Coast.

“It is an honor to partner with the members of the advisory committee,” California Ocean Science Trust Executive Director Liz Whiteman said. “They bring an incredible diversity of perspectives and experience in the science-to-policy sector. I look forward to learning from their expertise to collectively realize the vision of the agenda.”

Advisory committee appointments:

- Becky Smyth, recently with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Dr. Clarissa Anderson, Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System
- Dominique Kone, Blue Convergence Fund
- Kate Wing, Intertidal Agency
- Dr. Jan Newton, University of Washington and Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing System
- Dr. Matthew Gribble, University of California, San Francisco
- Dr. Priya Shukla, Strategic Earth Consulting
- Dr. Rod Fujita, Ocean Innovations Consulting
- Dr. Roxanne Beltran, University of California, Santa Cruz
- Sabrina Lopez, PhD Student, Coastal Climate Resilience Fellow
- Dr. Will White, Oregon State University

As part of the application process, advisory committee members shared perspectives on their diverse interests associated with U.S. West Coast ocean and coastal research needs. Ensuring historically

underrepresented voices are included in agenda strategies, considering strategies that address both threats and opportunities facing the U.S. West Coast, developing strategies that lead to actionable science, and leveraging funding across federal, state, and philanthropic sources, were a few of the concepts expressed by potential members.

For example, Becky Smyth, recently with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and selected for the advisory committee, emphasized the urgency of the effort.

“The advancement of this West Coast Ocean Science Action Agenda comes at a critical time,” Smyth said. “With the dual challenges of rapidly changing ocean conditions due to climate change and other pressures and the decrease in funding for research and science, this science action agenda can help us envision the needs and opportunities for important research to understand and sustain our valuable West Coast ocean resources.”

To view information about each advisory committee member, visit <https://www.oceanscienceagenda.org/advisory-committee>.

To track progress implementing the Action Agenda, visit <https://www.oceanscienceagenda.org>.