

**OREGON MARINE RESERVE COMMUNITY TEAMS  
CAPE PERPETUA, CAPE FALCON AND CASCADE HEAD**

**FACILITATOR OBSERVATIONS**

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The following has been prepared by the neutral facilitators of the Oregon Marine Reserves process, based upon their observations of the process to develop recommendations for marine reserves over a total of 37 meetings of the Cape Perpetua, Cape Falcon and Cascade Head community teams between January and November 2010. The purpose of these observations is to share a professional facilitator's perspective of lessons learned from this process.

Given the inherent controversial nature of the process, reaching consensus recommendations with the Cape Perpetua and Cascade Head community teams has to be viewed as a significant accomplishment. The marine reserve area forwarded for consideration by OPAC to the Cape Falcon community team provided little area for negotiation among community team interest groups and, as a consequence, the challenge to achieve consensus was greater with this group than with the other two community teams.

Despite the inability to reach consensus with all three community teams, we believe that the process overall worked well. A variety of factors contributed to the **success of the process**. Chief among these are:

- An incredible commitment and dedication among community team members to the process. The continuity in participation over the 11-month process is particularly noteworthy.
- Agency staff committed to providing the best service that it could, given limited time and resources.
- Co-chairs who represented differing perspectives but were committed to the process and took leadership roles in forging compromises and seeking consensus.
- The willingness, in most cases, of community team members to “work across the aisle” and between meetings to understand interests/positions and offer solutions.
- A clearly articulated date for completion of the community teams' deliberations. Our experience in numerous similar processes suggests that key decision-making always occurs at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour in a process, no matter its length.
- ODFW leadership and consistency in articulating expectations of the community teams and sideboards for decision-making. Although certain members may have disagreed with the direction given by ODFW, having a consistent voice to articulate the policy sideboards was essential to remaining focused on the charge to the community teams.

- Defining roles, process and expectations for behavior through community team charters. Establishing early expectations for conduct at the meetings provided the facilitator a key tool for keeping behavior in check and meetings on track. For the most part, community team members should be commended for their behavior and their avoidance of personalizing disagreements.
- Rotating meetings among communities, which facilitated the opportunity for local residents and business interests to participate.
- The commitment to provide neutral facilitation services, which helped provide a comfortable, open and balanced forum for deliberations.

Regarding **community team composition**, the facilitators feel that the size and interest group representation of the teams was appropriate. Because the purpose of marine reserves is research, having scientific community membership proved to be invaluable. Although scientific community representatives in general were reluctant to engage initially, they became critical players in developing scenarios for analysis and recommended marine reserves. Science representatives played a pivotal role in reminding the teams of the function of marine reserves and the need to meet minimum size and spacing standards in order to fulfill that purpose.

Our only real criticism of the composition of the community teams was the inclusion of OPAC members. With few exceptions, these members were unable to divorce themselves from the prior OPAC decision-making and engage in an open-minded, consensus-building frame of mind. Additionally, we believe it was a mistake to invite individual OPAC members to offer personal perspectives on the committee's deliberations rather than simply providing the community teams with the record of its deliberations.

The consistent emphasis on striving for consensus was a hallmark of **the decision-making process**. As a testament to a consensus-driven process, reverting to voting was limited to only the most critical decision points in the process. One criticism is that interest group representatives did not appear to communicate well with their fellow members in some cases, suggesting that we could have been more directive earlier about that responsibility. An additional complication was the repeated attempts of outside interest groups to interfere in the conduct of decision-making, most notably in how voting would be conducted.

Although it consumed valuable committee deliberation time, the **public input** received at community team meetings proved to be an important source of experiential information. It also clearly demonstrated the differing perspectives on marine reserves. For future processes, we recommend more emphasis on written comments and establishing limited timeframes for public comment from the outset.

Our primary **critique of the process** was the failure to adequately design the process before it was implemented, resulting in an overly ad-hoc approach to successive steps in the process. Because the initial steps in this type of process set the tone for the remainder, it is critical to have a clear game plan for how to move through a process

from initiation to completion (while recognizing that adaptive management is essential in any successful process). We cannot stress strongly enough the need to hire a facilitator before initiating the process and to engage the facilitator in process design. Typically, a critical first step is an assessment in which the facilitator can interact one-on-one with staff and interest groups to identify interests/issues prior to convening the full group; unfortunately, we were not afforded that opportunity in this instance.

As a consequence, the need for and role of the facilitator became a matter of debate. This created a lack of clarity and differences of opinion about **facilitator and co-chair roles** that limited our ability to fully facilitate the process and colored the relationships we had with the co-chairs. In the future, facilitator and co-chair roles need to be very clearly defined before initiating the meetings. It is our professional opinion that a controversial, multi-interest process such as this benefits from having meetings fully run by the facilitator, rather than dividing duties between the facilitator and co-chairs. At the same time, we also believe that the personality of the facilitator is critical and that such a process does not lend itself to an overly directive, dominant personality.

We previously acknowledged the commitment of agency **staffing** to the service of the community teams. However, it is clear that staff resources were stretched thin trying to serve three committees at once, particularly while also being committed to other duties. As a consequence, meeting materials were typically not distributed well in advance of meetings, and too often at the meetings.

The community teams were not particularly well served by the agency's **information gathering and sharing process**. Given the limited timeframe, it would have been more productive to have developed products for the community teams to react to rather than to initiate information gathering with an open-ended query as to what information was desired. Background biological and socioeconomic information should have been developed either prior to initiating the process or at least as an initial task and should have focused more on the specific geographic areas being considered for marine reserves. Regional and statewide socioeconomic information in particular was overly generic and of little utility to the decision-making, leading to unproductive discussions about its significance and validity. Site-specific socioeconomic information was more valuable to the community teams and would have been even more so if it had been available earlier in the process. Of positive note was the effort by Cascade Head community team members to collect local experiential information in order to better understand the effects of a marine reserve. As in any process, there is never enough information for some people; in this process, the demand for additional information became a distraction and a tool for delay in the decision-making process.

A few miscellaneous items of note:

- The likelihood that implementation details could have been fleshed out if team members had begun across the aisle/between meeting interactions to understand interests and offer compromises earlier in the process.
- The inability to electronically post the video recordings of community team meetings on the project website.

- The need to establish community teams' expectations for meeting summaries early in the process.
- The confusion among all parties about the protocols for information sharing/posting.
- Preparing FAQs or other information pieces to explain the project purpose, purposes and functioning of marine reserves and MPAs, and other relevant topics.
- The effect of scheduling back-to-back meetings on the ability to adequately prepare for successive meetings.

In conclusion, facilitating three independent but interrelated, highly controversial processes at the same time has been one of the most challenging and most rewarding assignments we have had in our professional experience. We cannot speak highly enough of the commitment of the individuals involved from both the community teams and the agency. We view the process as a success and a testament to Oregon's commitment to public process.