

# Rocky Habitat Site Proposal Final Recommendation

The Rocky Habitat Management Strategy Initial Proposal Process (2020-2021)

## Proposed Site

**Site Name:** Coquille Point Marine Garden

**Site Map:** [http://seasket.ch/y0uvvr4X\\_7](http://seasket.ch/y0uvvr4X_7)

**Proposal Materials:** <https://bit.ly/3kFGYhy>



## Final Recommendation

This document summarizes the site proposal evaluations conducted by the Rocky Habitat Working Group. The summary below represents an evaluation and recommendation synopsis for Coquille Point Marine Garden. During evaluations, the agencies and Working Group identified considerations for potential recommendation by the Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC). Consideration are those aspects of a proposal, identified through the evaluation process, which the Working Group believes should be addressed to facilitate implementation of the designation as proposed. These considerations were outlined in draft initial recommendation summaries, which were made available for a 30-day public comment period. Proposers were invited to submit written responses to the initial recommendations, and present their proposals and responses in the April 29, 2021 Working Group meeting. Following discussion with proposal presenters, the Working Group deliberated and crafted their final recommendations.

**Final Recommendation: *Recommended (consensus)***

## Summary of Considerations

The Rocky Habitat Working Group identified the implementation considerations listed below for the proposed Coquille Point Marine Garden. Any potential recommendation from OPAC should address these considerations as outlined in the following summary to ensure that implementation of the proposed site is a) consistent with state agency authority and coastal policy, b) appropriately inclusive and representative of stakeholder interests, c) reasonably achievable within the existing framework of rocky habitat site management, and d) in balance with the merits and goals of the proposed site.

Any potential recommendation for implementation of this site should address the following considerations:

- No need for subtidal invertebrate harvest restrictions
- Additional clarification of metrics of site success
- Clear expectations for agency coordination, support, costs for volunteer stewardship program
- Reconciliation of final site boundaries

The original 1994 Territorial Sea Plan recognized the Coquille Point site as “well-suited” for education and awareness programming opportunities, with a focus on protecting the high diversity of nesting seabirds present. The site is a high visibility, high use area, adjacent to Coquille Point, a unit of the Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge, in the city of Bandon. The shore area is accessible via trails and two stairways, and intertidal rocks and nearshore seawalls are easily viewed from the beach. A nearby U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) office manages National Wildlife Refuge land at the headland and offshore islands, and coordinates volunteer stewardship and education programs with local organizations such as Shoreline Education for Awareness (SEA).

Overall, this is a strong, well-written proposal with straightforward, practical goals. Site goals are focused on raising awareness of the unique and sensitive nature of the site, and communicating stewardship oriented site use when visiting. On-site volunteer interpreters presently promote continued stewardship, protection, education, and enjoyment of the site to help meet these goals and to protect the ecological resources and biodiversity by encouraging lawful, appropriate human activities. There is active management at Coquille Point headland by USFWS to maintain accessibility and support the educational program. The concerns expressed in the proposal are primarily focused on using community education about proper site use to reduce wildlife disturbance, particularly to nesting seabirds and harbor seal pupping areas. The proposal links continued use and education to support existing wildlife disturbance measures, efforts to protect the biodiversity of the intertidal area, and reduce trampling. There were substantial outreach and engagement efforts made in development of this proposal, with strong support expressed by the local community. The proposal has also received endorsement from the City of Bandon planning commission. As a high profile and use area with a demonstrated conservation need, there is ample opportunity to maintain volunteer and financial capacity for continued site support.

The existing stewardship efforts have a well-established (>30 yrs.) track record of existing site-specific programs through formal partnerships with USFWS, and a ready volunteer workforce to do the work proposed. The proposal aligns well with a Marine Garden/Education Area management prescription, and the existing rocky habitat management designation framework. However, extending those restrictions into the subtidal area would not address an identified need since the primary human use

impact to invertebrates is only in the intertidal area. Impacts to existing users is likely to be minimal given opportunities for rocky habitat harvest within walking distance to the north and the south. The proposer acknowledges that measurements of success created by designation as a Marine Garden may not be easily determined through species-specific criteria, however they suggest efficacy of outreach and enforcement efforts as the primary measures of success. Additional coordination with agencies will be necessary to define expectations and roles for programmatic support. Volunteers conducting on-site education would need to be properly vetted and trained to conduct outreach activities appropriately. The vetting process may be likely to include background checks, which would need to be coordinated with the appropriate agencies.

The extent of the proposed area is appropriately discrete, allowing for focused education, enforcement, and monitoring. However, inclusion of harvest regulations in the subtidal habitat as proposed would be more comprehensive than most other existing rocky habitat designations and require strong justification for implementation. Slight boundary adjustments were made during the evaluation process, to clarify proposer intent (see below). The proposer expressed a focus on rocks that were accessible at low tides, and that had seabird colonies or harbor seal pupping areas. DLCD coordinated with the proposer to adjust the SE boundary to fully include several smaller rocks where kayakers and other small watercraft have been observed approaching the rocks, or that may potentially be accessible at the most extreme low tides. However, final site boundaries will need to be reconciled with the involved agencies to ensure site goals are balanced with proper site access, use, and management.

Site boundary adjustments clarified during Agency Analysis:



Original site boundaries



Updated site boundaries

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Where possible, the Working Group supports addressing the considerations and concerns above through statewide and site-specific non-regulatory management plans, where appropriate, with a focus on volunteer monitoring, interpretation, education, and awareness efforts. Additional considerations for potential recommendation include the other merits and perspectives identified above and in the full packet of evaluation materials, in balance with the proposed site goals.