

Rocky Habitat Proposal Working Group Evaluation

The Rocky Habitat Management Strategy Initial Proposal Period (June – December, 2020)



Working Group Evaluation

Evaluation by the Rocky Habitat Working Group is intended to be a merit-based process, the final product of which is a packet of recommended proposals and other evaluation materials that is forwarded to OPAC. Following the Agency Feasibility and Completeness Analysis, rocky habitat site designation proposals are forwarded to the Working Group, which will review them and sort them as “**Recommended**” or “**Not recommended**”. Recommended proposals will be made available for a formal 30-day public comment period, after which the Working Group may modify the recommendation prior to submitting the full packet of materials to OPAC for review. The following summary is an aggregate of the rocky habitat proposal evaluations conducted by the Working Group in winter, 2021.

Site Information

Proposed site location: [Cape Blanco](#)

Designation category:

Marine Research Area

Marine Garden/Education Area

Marine Conservation Area

Is this a proposal to *add*, *delete*, or *modify* a rocky habitat site designation?

New Site Designation (addition)

Existing Site Removal (deletion)

Alteration to Existing Site

Name of principle contact: [Brittany Poirson](#)

Affiliated organization(s): [Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans \(PISCO\)](#)

Date of proposal submission: [December 31, 2020](#)

Evaluation Criteria Matrix

The following rubric is a simplified way to objectively evaluate key aspects of rocky habitat site designation proposals that can be assessed categorically. The criteria listed below largely correspond with each section of the proposal questionnaire form. This rubric should be used to evaluate how well the components of the proposal come together, rather than evaluating answers to individual questions in isolation. The rubric can also be used to compare reviewer evaluations and ensure consistency of interpretation across reviewers, and across proposals over time. While this matrix can aid in making final recommendations, as this is a merit-based process, it should not be the *only* criteria by which a final determination is made. As part of the Initial Proposal Process, this is a pilot effort and therefore subject to change for future iterations of the evaluation process.

For each of the criteria below, indicate your selection and add notes as you see fit.

Criteria	Does not meet criteria	Has merit, needs work	Meets criteria
Goals, objectives, or other criteria for site success should be clearly stated and reasonably achievable.			X – Clearly stated, but aligns better with MCA management framework
Measurable results and outcomes should be reasonably measurable and achievable.		X – Would benefit from inclusion of ecological indicators as additional metrics	
Site Uses should be characterized appropriately, with reasonable expectations for potential impacts.			X - Current and projected uses match the site and expectations; potential impacts to beachcombing may be underestimated; boat anchoring and live-feed aquaculture unlikely issues

<p>Key Natural Resources, should be characterized appropriately, including features, values, and anticipated impacts.</p>			<p>X – Well characterized</p>
<p>Regulations & Enforcement should be clearly stated with reasonable expectations.</p>		<p>X – Some of these regulations are inconsistent with existing statute and TSP3 with respect access and uses. High level of restriction likely challenging to enforce.</p>	
<p>Non-Regulatory Management Mechanisms should be clearly stated with reasonable expectations.</p>		<p>X – Heavily dependent on volunteer programs; general capacity concerns for meeting expectations</p>	
<p>Stakeholder Engagement should be characterized appropriately, and include clear and actionable outreach.</p>			<p>X – Proposer made a strong effort for stakeholder engagement in development of proposal</p>
<p>Additional Information should provide relevant context.</p>			<p>X – Research & monitoring efforts already occurring and have for long time; did a good job of reaching out to Tribal Nations</p>

<p>Goals, objectives, management principles, and policies within TSP3 should be adequately addressed and/or advanced.</p>			<p>X – Aligns with the goals, objectives and management principles within the TSP3; focuses on ecological stressors, long-term ecosystem health; doesn't align with MRA management however</p>
<p>Designation and associated changes to regulatory standards or and management practices should be appropriate for the site and reasonably effective to achieve the stated goals.</p>		<p>A bit at conflict with the standard MRA management framework, more aligns with management framework of MCA, provisions on non-living resource removal conflicts with statute</p>	

Questions

Please fill in information and answer the questions below for *each* rocky habitat site designation proposal, and provide a brief summary of your thoughts at the end. Please provide additional information, interpretation, concerns, or context where necessary.

Working Group Evaluation Questions

1. Please answer the following based on the proposed site designation category:

Marine Research Area:

- a. What are the primary scientific research and/or monitoring interests or concerns at this site? *The proposer wishes to utilize the site as a sentinel for long-term monitoring of key issues related to changing ocean conditions, changes in intertidal ecology and disease, increasing human use and impact. While much monitoring has occurred at this site for decades, the proposer seeks to formalize this long-term monitoring with a site designation. Potential species of interest include sea stars, kelp beds, and seabirds.*
- b. What is the history or precedent for conducting or supporting scientific research and/or monitoring at this site? *The PISCO team has been monitoring this site for decades.*
- c. How might this site benefit from scientific research and monitoring protections? *A formal designation may likely support increased research and a greater focus on the site. Monitoring protections will help ensure that the site remains a strong “listening station” and baseline necessary for measuring and identifying key ecological stressors and resilience of species.*

- d. How will ecological integrity be maintained at the site? Maintained through some signage and volunteers who will interact with visitors. Minor site protections support ecological integrity and minimal research disturbance, requiring scientific take permit, should be measured/monitored over time to ensure ecological integrity is not compromised.
 - e. How might the proposed site designation address knowledge gaps in areas of understanding that currently lack adequate data and/or monitoring efforts? The proposer identifies a myriad of data gaps for which the site designation can address – key areas of ocean stressors – ocean warming, disease, hypoxia, ocean acidification, etc., were all outlined as potential knowledge gaps monitoring at this site can support.
2. Regarding the site map(s) provided:
 - a. Is the polygon appropriate for the location (e.g. size, shape, placement, etc.)? The site area is appropriate and tightly ascribed to the coastline. Inclusion of the small pocket beach to the south side of headland seemed potentially unnecessary. There are some gaps between landward boundary of polygon and mean high water shoreline – boundary adjustment may be necessary to include these areas for cohesive management. Extreme low tide projections reveal additional intertidal areas outside seaward boundary that could also be included.
 - b. Does it reflect the goals or intentions of the proposal? Quite well, the area covers the general contour of research in the area and minimizes reach into subtidal habitat.
 - c. What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of this particular shape and placement? The position at the end of the headland and cape makes for challenging access which is both a strength in protecting the site from over-use, but also a weakness in limiting the times and options for access for research. This generally supports a balance of providing for protection but also allowing for limited use and research. Does not offer much protection or opportunity for research in offshore kelp.
3. Are the goals and objectives of the proposal clearly stated, and what are their strengths and/or weaknesses? Generally clearly stated, however, some of the recommended management measures may be at odds with accessibility and continued site use.
4. Will the proposed criteria to evaluate site goals, objectives, or success, be reasonably measurable or achievable? How effective will they be? Yes, however the proposer's metric outcome of "no human caused changes over time" is challenging, particularly for the climate and anthropogenic impacts that are far beyond the site management (ocean warming, OA, etc.).
5. How does the proposal change the status quo of management protections at this site? What are the implications of this change as you see it? The proposer recommends a high level of management prescriptions, well beyond that of a typical Marine Reserve (protecting against the

collection of non-living items in the intertidal as well). In this fashion, it's far from the status quo of management protections at this site; however, some of these recommended management protections may not be necessary in achieving the proposer's goals given the current site use and the accessibility of the site – these management prescriptions may need to be reconsidered.

6. The rocky habitat site proposal process focuses on allowing for adaptable and holistic management at the site level and is not intended to manage on a species-specific level. With this in mind, are the proposed regulatory goals, objectives, outcomes, or changes appropriate for this process? **Yes, however see above comments regarding management recommendations which may not be necessary for the proposed site goals.**
7. Does the proposal indicate whether any of the desired outcome(s) cannot be met with a site designation proposal? (If so, proposers are encouraged to outline their concern or desired regulatory change in a formal letter to OPAC.) **No**
8. Is there any relevant historical or institutional context to this proposed site designation that should be taken into consideration? **Cape Blanco was originally recommended for a Research Reserve designation in the 1994 TSP3. It is a prized research site that has demonstrated some resilience to certain ocean changes and disease over the years.**
9. In what ways does this proposal address and/or further the goals, objectives, management principles, and policies within the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy and/or the TSP writ large? **The proposer well-outlines the policies of the TSP3 that are most relevant, specifically policies A, D, J, L, M, N, O and Q. The proposer provides some relevancy and linkages between RHMS over-arching goals as well.**
10. How would designating this site fit into the broader context of the currently designated rocky habitat sites, and coastwide rocky habitat management?
 - a. Are there other site designations proposals at or near this site that may overlap, interact with, or support this one? If so, what and where are they? **There is a proposal for Blacklock Pt. to the north and the Redfish Rocks Marine Reserve is to the south. They do not overlap and are unlikely to have bearing on this discrete area at Cape Blanco.**
 - b. What are the potential links, considerations, or conflicts between them? **The proposal for Blacklock Point demonstrates intentions to develop volunteer stewardship programs that would support both sites.**
 - c. In what ways does this proposed site designation differ from other proposals that overlap or interact with it? **The proposal has a number of rules and recommended management prescriptions that are more restrictive than that of the Redfish Rocks Marine Reserve and the Blacklock proposal to the north lacks any of these management recommendations.**

11. How might this site designation interact or fit in with the broader coastwide regulatory and management context of all habitats, resources, and designations? The site provides a unique ecological break from north and south key eco-regions. However the highly restrictive management recommendations may be at conflict with the broader coastwide regulatory framework, particularly with respect to collection of non-living resources.
12. What, if any, practical feasibility concerns might you have about implementing the proposed site designation? Some of the management recommendations seem unnecessary from a site goal perspective. There is a high reliance on volunteers and state agencies for some of the non-regulatory recommendations that may need budget allocation. It is also a remote area, so there may be challenges to getting regular volunteers.
13. What are the organizational partnerships involved in this proposal? In what ways have those partnerships contributed to development of this proposal? PISCO – many of the researchers and partners of PISCO supported development of this proposal, as well as neighboring proposers and community members; South Coast Rocky Shores Group, OIMB. It was also demonstrated that Coquille Tribe and Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians were engaged in this proposal development.
14. Are there any additional materials or documents provided? If so, what are they and what is their purpose? Many supporting resources were attached and included within the proposal.
15. Are there any additional site considerations that should be noted? Additional site considerations might be considered around a more flexible designation, or alternatively not implement problematic provisions.

Site Attributes and Reports

Geography

16. Briefly describe how appropriate the area and length of shoreline in the proposed polygon sketch are for the selected designation category and the stated goals. Appropriate, some of the southern portion seemed potentially unnecessary.

Physical

17. Briefly describe how appropriate the distribution of habitat features (such as offshore islands & rocks, substrate types, etc.) in the proposed polygon sketch is for the selected designation category and the stated goals. Appropriate.
18. In what ways does the proposal appropriately address, reflect, or account for the risks associated with potential future sea level rise scenarios? N/A

Biological

19. How well represented by the proposed polygon sketch are the species and/or habitats of interest that are mentioned in the proposal? [Well documented, but would be good to address or potentially include kelp beds more intentionally.](#)
20. How appropriate is the selected designation category and stated goals for the protection of the species and/or habitats of interest? [Appropriate, however, see notes in evaluation about management recommendations for extractive activities.](#)
21. Are there other species, habitats, or natural resources of relevant management concern that were overlooked by this proposal, or could be negatively impacted by the proposed designation? [No](#)

Human Uses

22. What are the most likely human use activities to impact, or be impacted by, the selected designation category and the stated goals? Has the proposer demonstrated how they expect these uses to change in the future? [Yes, however, some of the impacts of the proposed management recommendations may be misunderstood or potentially underestimated.](#)
23. In what ways are the selected designation category and stated goals appropriate for the kinds of human use activities known to occur within the proposed polygon sketch? [See notes above.](#)
24. Are there other human use activities not mentioned in the proposal or site report(s) that could be of relevant management concern for the proposed polygon sketch? [Collection of non-living resources are at conflict with statute for "souvenir collection" on ocean shore. \(ORS 390.705\)](#)

Evaluator Comments and Feedback

In the space below, please provide a (brief) summary of your thoughts on the merits of the proposal, and your rationale for recommendation. If more space is required, please attach additional pages.

[An excellent long-term monitoring and research site, geographically well-positioned to capture a significant shift between eco-regions. Site proximity from access and general challenging nature of intertidal habitat makes for ideal balance between natural protection and opportunity for access and research. Number and level of extractive management recommendations seems unnecessary to achieve site goals. Strong reservations about recommending this site with such stringent management prescriptions. However, if the proposer is amenable to not implementing the additional harvest regulations beyond the standard regulatory framework for a MRA, it would make it a very strong proposal. Proposal should be considered for modification by proponent to align with MRA management prescription.](#)