

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 Lookout](#)

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: [Dawn Villaescusa](#)

Affiliated organization(s): [Audubon Society of Lincoln City](#)

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 – Goals are appropriate, and highlight existing protections well. Additional clarity may be needed for site criteria. Main change is proposed education programs. Focus on cliff-nesting seabirds may be outside purview of TSP3 goals. |
| Measurable results and outcomes should be reasonably measurable and achievable. | | | X – Clearly stated and well outlined and achievable. Relies heavily on community investments and collaborative capacity, both which have provided for some level of metrics. Unclear agency roles and who will conduct monitoring. |
| Site Uses should be characterized appropriately, with reasonable expectations for potential impacts. | | | X – Well characterized with reasonable expectations. Some foresight for future uses, particularly water-based activities and harvest, may need further evaluation and discussion |

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|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Key Natural Resources, should be characterized appropriately, including features, values, and anticipated impacts.</p> | | | <p>X – Well characterized and linked to key managing state agency strategies. Common murre colony presence not consistent year-to-year, however.</p> |
| <p>Regulations & Enforcement should be clearly stated with reasonable expectations.</p> | | <p>X – R15 leaves high discretion to ODFW and should be evaluated against the goals of the proposal. Some proposed uses may be at-odds with goals of proposal. Otherwise, clearly stated with reasonable expectations. Some improvement needed to address metrics and measures for enforcement.</p> | |
| <p>Non-Regulatory Management Mechanisms should be clearly stated with reasonable expectations.</p> | | <p>X – These were excellently outlined but may very well be too ambitious (and some of the education recommendations may be better combined). Appreciated the outline structure, especially as they were linked to further development of plans for accountability and timelines. Symposium idea is good, unique.</p> | |
| <p>Stakeholder Engagement should be characterized appropriately, and include clear and actionable outreach.</p> | | | <p>X – Strong outreach and letters of support. Concerns were clearly outlined and actionable. However, concern than some fishing groups (e.g. Garibaldi fleet, Dorymen’s Assn.) may not have been engaged.</p> |

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|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Additional Information should provide relevant context.</p> | | | <p>X – Strong linkages with to existing state strategies.</p> |
| <p>Goals, objectives, management principles, and policies within TSP3 should be adequately addressed and/or advanced.</p> | | | <p>X – Goals, objectives, and policies within the TSP were adequately addressed and clearly stated. Ties to original 1994 site recommendation.</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>X – While designation is highly appropriate for the site, some of the regulatory standards and management practices are discretionary and may be at odds with some goals.</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 Conservation Area:

- a. What are the primary conservation priorities or concerns at this site (i.e. species, habitats, public use, etc.)? 1) protect migrating and nesting seabirds on both north and south facing cliffs; 2) protect seal haulouts (places where seals rest and reproduce) during critical reproductive seasons; 3) create opportunities for the thousands of annual visitors to Cape Lookout to learn more about the area's natural resources – and how to enjoy them safely and responsibly; 4) educate recreational users such as boaters, paragliders, and drone enthusiasts about the need to keep an appropriate distance from seabird colonies during nesting season to avoid disruption and nest failure; and 5) Preserve Cape Lookout in its natural state for all to enjoy.
- b. What are the specific management objectives relating to the concerns above? See above. Maintain limited site access, impose some limits on invertebrate harvest, no take of marine aquatic vegetation.
- c. What are the proposed management measures to help reach these objectives? What is the provided rationale for these measures, and is it appropriate? This proposal emphasizes education, stewardship, and active community engagement as mechanisms to protect rocky habitat natural resources while providing appropriate use. Site access will be maintained as consistent with the land manager's policies and directives. The proposal recommends no change to coastwide commercial and recreational fish harvest regulations. The proposal recommends closure within the plan area for some invertebrate species. Harvest of clams, Dungeness crab, red rock crab, mussels, piddocks, scallops, squid, shrimp, and sand crab will remain open subject to coastwide regulations. ODFW may identify additional invertebrate species for harvest that would be consistent with an ecosystem-based management approach. Sea urchins may be commercially harvested according to coastwide regulations. Reduction in the purple urchin population as a habitat restoration method for kelp forest should also be considered. Additionally recommends restricted kelp harvest.
- d. In what ways would the proposed site management prescriptions limit adverse impacts to habitat and/or wildlife? This is a little unclear for the regulatory recommendations, but a bit clearer for some of the non-regulatory recommendations - monitoring over time will be required to determine efficacy of these measures, and may involve community science efforts. Further discussion and evaluation of how regulatory measures will support site goals is needed.

2. Regarding the site map(s) provided:
 - a. Is the polygon appropriate for the location (e.g. size, shape, placement, etc.)? **Yes**
 - b. Does it reflect the goals or intentions of the proposal? **Yes, but it may not capture all of the kelp bed.**
 - c. What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of this particular shape and placement? **Unique habitat transitioning from an isolated and currently protected upland forest, isolation of intertidal provides for some natural protection, cliffs provide both an opportunity for interpretation but also a potential safety consideration. Significant bird habitat and adjacent upland cultural uses and history is significant.**
3. Are the goals and objectives of the proposal clearly stated, and what are their strengths and/or weaknesses? **Yes. The goal of the proposal was well outlined with associated objectives and aligned with the TSP3.**
4. Will the proposed criteria to evaluate site goals, objectives, or success, be reasonably measurable or achievable? How effective will they be? **See comments within matrix – many of the recommendations linked to the objectives were excellently outlined, but may be overly ambitious. They are however measurable and achievable. Some new management measures will require time and monitoring to fully understand how effective they will be at achieving the site goals (e.g. drone and boater education), particularly as these uses change and evolve into the future.**
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? **While the proposal has many status quo qualities in not expanding harvest restrictions on many popular-to-harvest species in a relatively difficult to access rocky habitat area, preservation and conservation of existing site conditions (status quo) is the stated goal and one of the TSP3. The implications of this change in designation will be directly related to the community and state investments and collaborative capacity in executing the proposed monitoring and management actions.**
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, highly. There is great consideration in this proposal for adaptive management, deference to ODFW in harvest regulations and evaluation of other state strategies and opportunities (kelp and Governor’s directed Oregon Climate Adaptation Framework, Nearshore Strategy, etc.) Note reliance on Camp Meriwether for interpretation, but as camp diversifies there may be need for additional outreach as well. Also, limited access to south side of cape could change in the future, and would need to adapt to that.**

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.) **The proposal does seek to make some recommendations around invasive species, climate, and a number of other areas more broadly to the TSP3 and a coastwide context.**
8. Is there any relevant historical or institutional context to this proposed site designation that should be taken into consideration? **Yes. In 1935 State Parks Superintendent Samuel Boardman acquired 950 acres from the U.S. Lighthouse Service as the first step in establishing Cape Lookout State Park. Boardman envisioned the cape as a natural history preserve. In 1975, Cape Lookout was registered as a Natural Heritage Conservation Area in the Oregon Natural Heritage Plan in recognition of its nesting colonies of seabirds and old-growth Sitka Spruce forest. In 1994, the rocky habitat on the south side of the cape was recommended for designation as a Habitat Refuge, but was never implemented.**
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? **Site-specific ecosystem-based management that provides long-term ecological, economical, and social benefits to the natural resources at Cape Lookout and within the county. Education and stewardship are emphasized in this proposal as means for protecting rocky habitat and biological communities while allowing for use and enjoyment, enhances appreciation and fosters personal stewardship of rocky habitats**
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? **National Wildlife Refuge within outer boundary; intertidal overlaps with National Heritage Area - these are likely complimentary. Site stands out for being removed from other sites to some extent, so adds a great connectivity link for intertidal organisms.**
 - b. What are the potential links, considerations, or conflicts between them? **Likely complimentary, sharing of resources and integration of planning required for any new designations to realize collaborative success. Good linkage for stepping stone connectivity perspective for intertidal organisms and for protecting seabird habitat. Thus, it pairs well with Cape Meares and Three Arch Rocks NWR to the north.**
 - c. In what ways does this proposed site designation differ from other proposals that overlap or interact with it? **Focuses on protection of northernmost noted kelp bed, and to support management for the kelp habitat.**
11. How might this site designation interact or fit in with the broader coastwide regulatory and management context of all habitats, resources, and designations? **A significant headland, and a heritage site with ecological area, the proposal designates a habitat linkage between other rocky**

headlands, all which align well with TSP3. It utilizes existing coastwide regulatory framework in a site-specific strategy and does not conflict with existing management areas.

12. What, if any, practical feasibility concerns might you have about implementing the proposed site designation? **No feasibility concerns given the limited nature of management measures recommended. Recommendations may need to be scaled back and managed adaptively to meet expectations and intended goals.**
13. What are the organizational partnerships involved in this proposal? In what ways have those partnerships contributed to development of this proposal? **Lincoln City Audubon – a high number of partnerships between State and Federal agencies, NGOs, and private partners were well described in the proposal and the proposal’s success will rely heavy on this collaborative capacity. Measures for sustaining collaborative capacity were addressed, but may need more work to be realistic.**
14. Are there any additional materials or documents provided? If so, what are they and what is their purpose? **Yes. A number of documents provided for rationale of management measures, demonstration of existing site uses, and linkages to other state plans/strategies.**
15. Are there any additional site considerations that should be noted?

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. **Appropriately surrounds length of headland.**

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. **Appropriately covers extent of intertidal rocky habitat and some subtidal habitat within the extent of the cape.**
18. In what ways does the proposal appropriately address, reflect, or account for the risks associated with potential future sea level rise scenarios? **This is well discussed in the proposal via adaptive management and within the broader climate change context (R5, Scientific Knowledge section, etc.)**

Biological

19. How well represented by the proposed polygon sketch are the species and/or habitats of interest that are mentioned in the proposal? **Information was well provided for and consistent with SeaSketch reports.**

20. How appropriate is the selected designation category and stated goals for the protection of the species and/or habitats of interest? An MCA is the appropriate designation for the diversity and importance of this site.
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? Site visitor intercept (education), stewardship activities, may increase, restricted harvest may impact some existing harvest. Some foresight for future uses, particularly water-based activities and harvest, may need further evaluation and discussion. The unique kelp habitat feature may draw more interest in research and diving over time, particularly given the role of SAV in OAH issues. Some concerns for drones as site is tough to access on foot so there could be more reliance on tech exploration
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? This will need to be evaluated over time. Some of the regulatory recommendations that allow for certain harvest may one day begin to impede upon conservation goals of site if increased consumptive pressures occur – adaptive management should provide for this opportunity, but monitoring and evaluation over time will be important to maintain expectations and of site goals.
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? Jet skis, stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, scuba, and other water activities (some of these mentioned) may very well be presently growing at this site, particularly given its prominence as a headland. It was noted from the Working Group that Cape Lookout is important safe harbor for vessels. However, the proposal should not impact those activities.

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.

This proposal's strengths and merits build heavily off of the geographic and intrinsic ecological values of the site, its heritage, and to some degree, cultural uses. Conservation and preservation of the site leans heavily on an adaptive strategy that currently does little to change site protections today, but may provide for important future stewardship and conservation of the site – particularly given some of the recommended education and outreach. All of this relies heavily on a collaborative capacity in order to minimize impact on natural resource agencies. However, many of the recommendations will require long-term planning and some mutually agreed upon benchmarks for success, which may create additional time for agencies. This proposal has strong merit for evaluation, given certain conditions are met and mutually agreed upon expectations are well laid out with timeline and criteria for evaluation.



OCMP

Initial Proposal Period

While little public use currently, the rocky intertidal areas are representative of the region and along with the noted kelp beds, are deserving of protection. The site rounds out protection for Cape Lookout SP and nearby protected sites (offshore islands and Cape Meares, plus Three Arch Rocks NWR). Would be a sensible addition to the protected intertidal areas on the north coast, and the lee (south) side is critical for a number of species, including the existing kelp bed.