



# The Elakha Alliance

## Reintroduction as a Path to Resilience

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Oregon Ocean Policy Advisory Committee  
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# Overview

A faded, grayscale background image of a sloth and its cub. The sloth is in the center, looking towards the camera, with its long, shaggy fur and large, dark eyes visible. To its right, a smaller cub is partially visible, also looking towards the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape.

- **Elakha Alliance – the who, what, and why**
- **Strategic Approach**
- **Getting to Yes**
- **Question & Discussion**

# The Elakha Alliance

An organization of Tribal, conservation, nonprofit, and community leaders and partners with a shared vision:

*An Oregon coast 50 years from now where our children and grandchildren co-exist with a thriving sea otter population and a robust and resilient marine ecosystem.*



# Our Mission

*To make Oregon's marine and coastal ecosystems and communities more robust and resilient by restoring a healthy population of sea otters to the Oregon coast.*



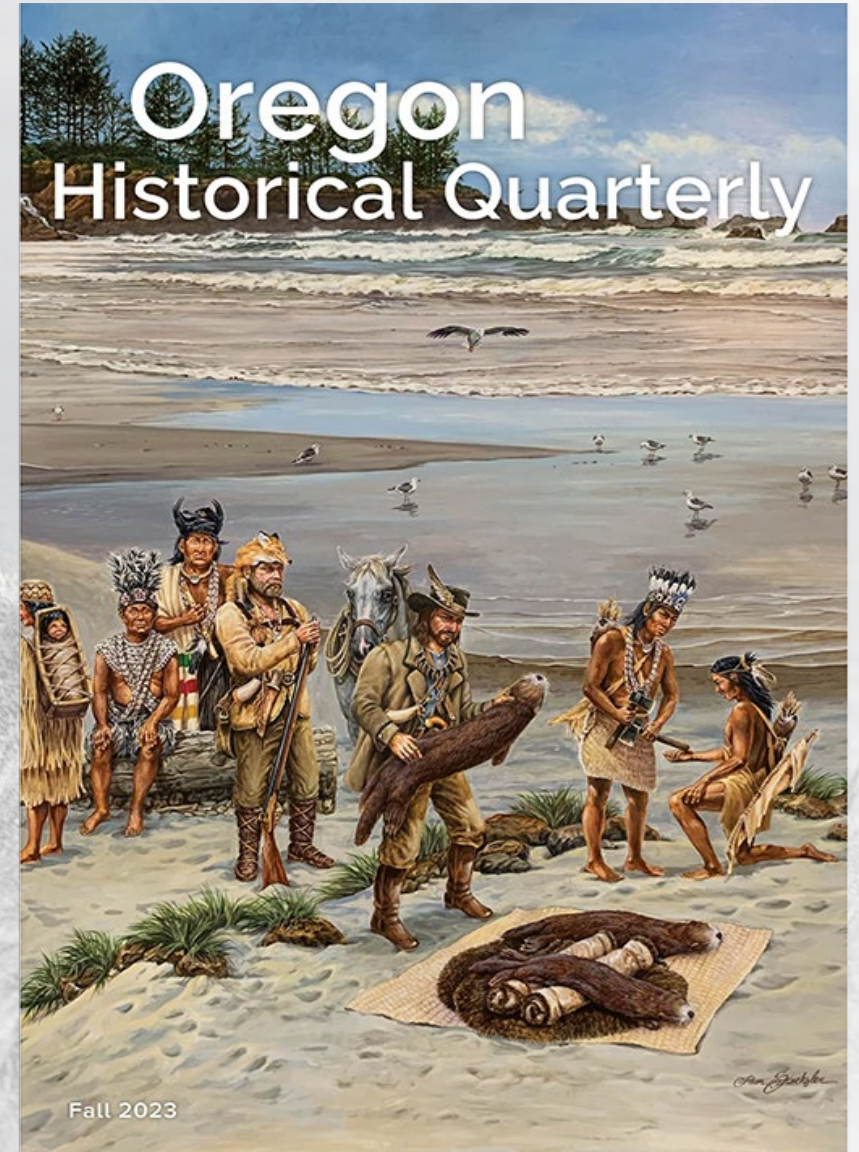
# Why sea otters? Why now?

- Sea otters are a keystone species
  - Critical to the health, diversity, and resilience of Pacific marine and coastal ecosystems
- Multiple benefits from reintroduction
  - Improved conservation status for species
  - Protection/ recovery of kelp and estuarine habitats
  - Restore ecosystem functions and productivity
  - Carbon sequestration and climate change resiliency



# Restoring Cultural Connections

- Sea otters once were central to the culture of coastal Indigenous people
  - Featured prominently in language, ceremonies, and narratives
  - Pelts used for ceremonial regalia; symbol of prestige; source of prosperity, gifts, trade goods
  - Embedded in oral traditions and stories
  - Spiritually important; transitional animal; on similar cosmological plane as humans
- Key participants in ecological systems



# The Role of the Elakha Alliance



- Catalyst and thought leader for considering sea otter reintroduction in Oregon
- Coordinate with OR and regional partners
- Lead with science
- Trusted source of information (not a government agency)
- Developing relationships and understanding interests of community stakeholders
- Building public awareness and support for sea otter reintroduction
- Facilitating Tribal participation



# Strategic Approach

Complete scientific, socio-economic, and public policy assessments necessary to determine the methods for and impacts of restoring and protecting a healthy sea otter population in Oregon.

Build broad public support on the coast and statewide for restoring a healthy Oregon sea otter population.

Work to ensure that Tribal, state, and federal government plans and policies include sea otter reintroduction to Oregon as a priority.

Restore sea otters at carefully chosen site(s)



# Science Based

- Elakha Alliance Feasibility Study
- USFWS Feasibility Assessment
- CA & OR Sea Otter Recovery Simulation (COSORS) model
- Oregon based studies
  - Economic Impacts
  - Travel/ tourism
  - Shark tagging
- Ongoing research
- Sea Otter Conservation II



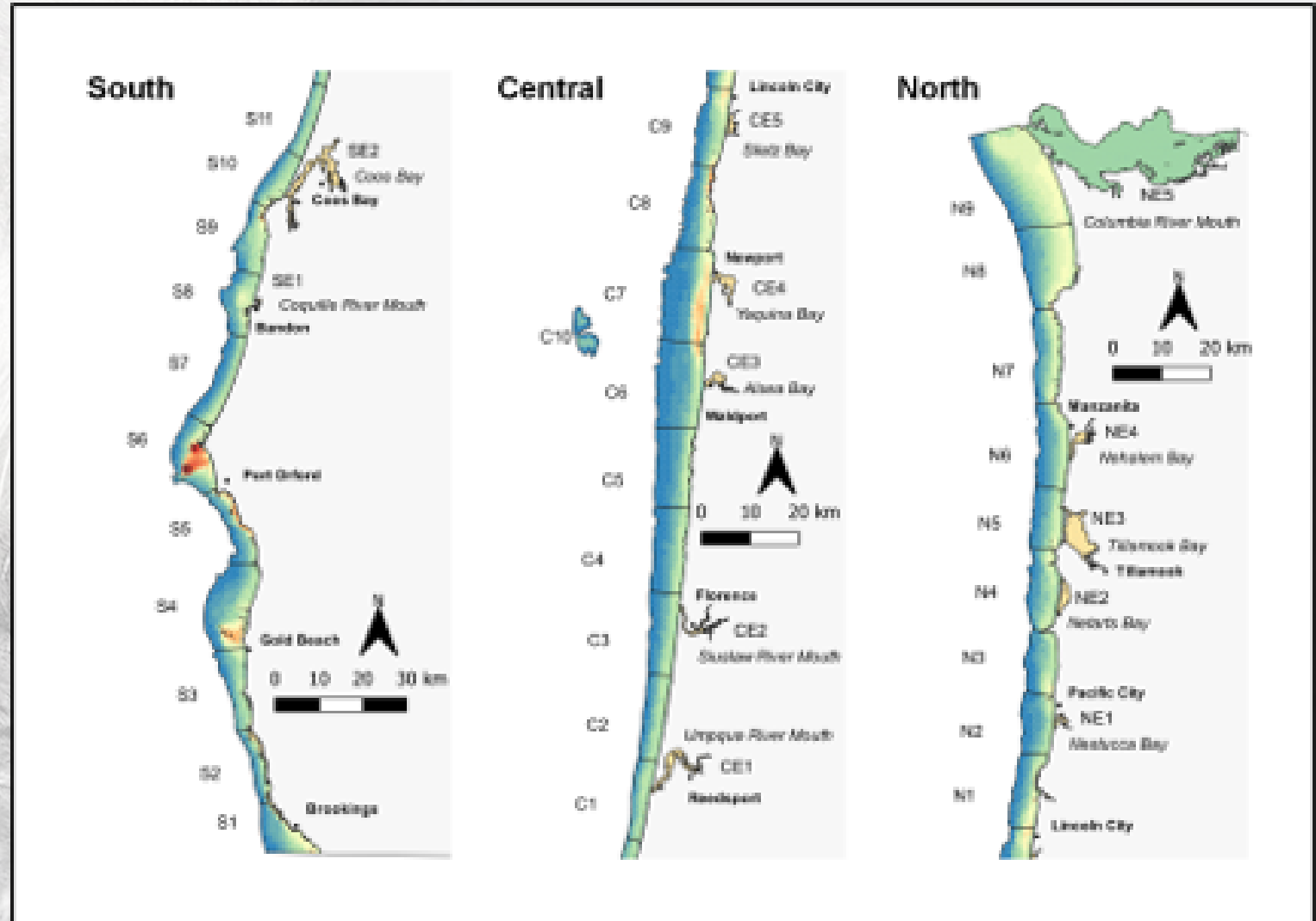
# Feasibility Study Findings



- Sea otter reintroduction in the region is feasible and would result in significant conservation benefits to the species and nearshore marine ecosystem
- Reintroductions are a successful conservation tool
- Reintroducing sea otters to Oregon is likely to succeed, with appropriate considerations
- Estuaries may be an important reintroduction environment
- The return of sea otters will have direct and indirect effects
- Socio-economic factors and regulatory issues must be considered

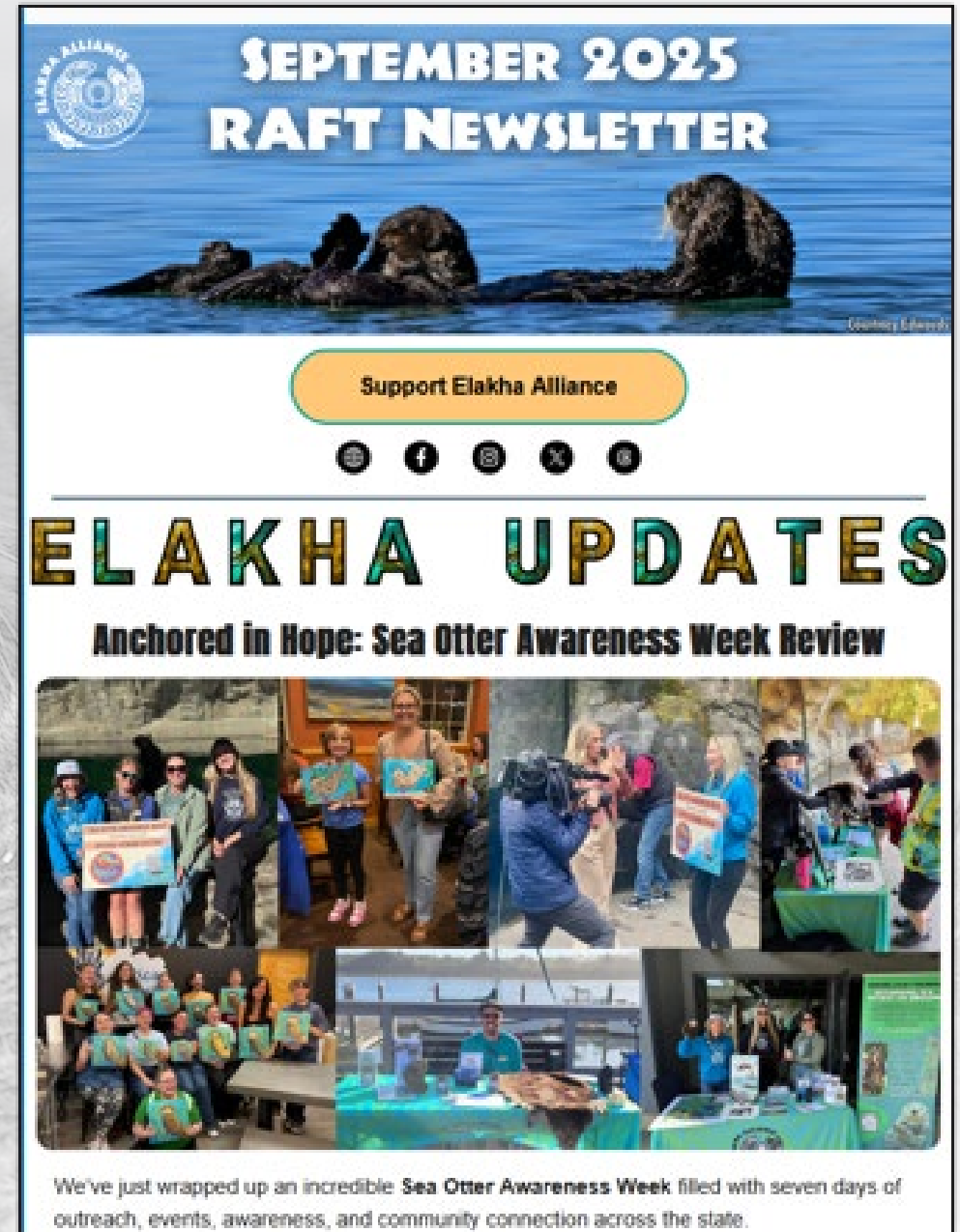
# Stakeholder Engagement

- Mapped model outputs of hypothetical sea otter reintroduction scenarios
- Discussions with commercial fishing stakeholders at 5 ports



# Building Public Support

- Website & social media
  - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube
- Email
  - > 5000 RAFT subscribers
- Events
  - Elakha Alliance Science Symposium, Oregon Otter Beer Festival, trivia nights, youth camps, local events
- Webinars, presentations, school groups
- Media
  - Radio, articles, posters, brochures, art, video
- Stakeholder engagement
  - ODCC, 1:1 meetings, Ports



**SEPTEMBER 2025  
RAFT NEWSLETTER**

Support Elakha Alliance

**ELAKHA UPDATES**

**Anchored in Hope: Sea Otter Awareness Week Review**

We've just wrapped up an incredible **Sea Otter Awareness Week** filled with seven days of outreach, events, awareness, and community connection across the state.

# Lessons Learned

- Partnerships are essential – we can't do this on our own
- Engage with stakeholders early and often
- Staff based in coastal community is critical
- Building and communicating broad public support is needed
- Regular engagement with agency, Tribal, and elected leaders
- Coordination with regional partners



# Still Unknown

- When will sea otters be reintroduced to Oregon?
- What is the timeline?
- Where will they be reintroduced?
- Where will the animals come from?
- Will they be southern or northern sea otters or both?
- How much will it cost?



# Getting to Yes

- Continue collaboration with Oregon and regional partners
- Focused outreach and community engagement; broaden public support
- Filling science, socioeconomic, and policy gaps identified in feasibility reports
- Continued stakeholder engagement
- Support Tribal participation and leadership
- Facilitate Tribal + State leadership for sea otter reintroduction in Oregon

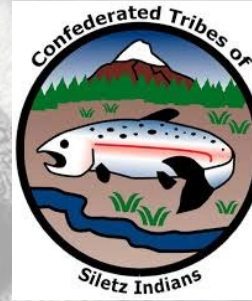
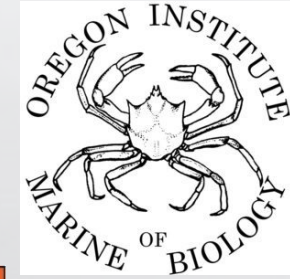


# Opportunities

- America's Ecosystem Restoration Initiative
- Governor's Executive Order 25-26
- Statewide Wildlife Action Plan
- 1% for Wildlife
- Oregon Ocean Alliance
- WCN Sea Otter Fund



# Partnerships



Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition





**Questions?**



**Thank you!**

[www.elakhaalliance.org](http://www.elakhaalliance.org)