

Executive Summary

Why a Marine Spatial Plan?

The marine waters along Washington's Pacific Coast contain abundant natural resources and diverse habitats that support biological diversity and resilience of the marine ecosystem. These resources support multiple public uses that benefit the economies and cultures of nearby communities as well as the entire state. The citizens of Washington, as well as the Native American tribes that have rich histories and treaty-protected interests along the coast, strongly depend upon marine resources and will continue to do so into the future.

Potential new ocean uses such as offshore wind energy or offshore aquaculture could adversely affect these important ocean resources and uses. Multiple, overlapping jurisdictions and authorities create additional challenges for coordinated decision-making and proactive planning.

The Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) for Washington's Pacific Coast helps address these challenges by providing a tool to protect ocean resources and uses, to guide potential applicants as they develop proposals for new ocean uses, and to assist state agencies and others in evaluating and engaging in those proposals more effectively.

The Marine Spatial Plan Study Area

The MSP Study Area consists of marine waters of the Pacific Ocean adjacent to Washington's coastline from the intertidal zone out to the continental slope. It extends from ordinary high water on the shoreward side out to a water depth of 700 fathoms (4,200 feet) offshore and from Cape Flattery on the north of the Olympic Peninsula south to Cape Disappointment at the Mouth of the Columbia River. The Study Area includes two large estuaries: Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay. It covers approximately 480 nautical miles of coastline and spans 5,839 square nautical miles (7,732 square statute miles).

The northern coastal portion of the Study Area contains mostly rocky coast with several coastal rivers, rocky outcrops, and pocket beaches. The northern portion of the Study Area overlaps with the Usual and Accustomed Areas of four treaty tribes and the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. Adjacent uplands are rural, consisting mostly of Olympic National Park land and tribal reservations of the Makah, Quileute, and Hoh tribes and the Quinault Indian Nation.

The southern coastal portion of the Study Area generally has sandy beaches and includes Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor. Several small cities and towns are located along the southern coast, as well as the Shoalwater Bay Tribe's reservation. Uplands in the southern area are largely managed private and public timber lands and agriculture.

Washington's Pacific Coast is rural and less developed than other areas of the state. Coastal communities in this area are very dependent on natural resources, recreation, and tourism. Studies conducted as part of the planning process gathered information on existing ocean uses,

including participation rates in ocean uses, patterns of use, current and future trends, and the contribution of ocean uses to the coastal and state economies. Some summary statistics include:

- In 2014, commercial (non-tribal) fisheries landed a total of 129 million pounds into Washington's coastal ports with an ex-vessel value of \$93 million. 700 commercial vessels participated in fisheries landings in the Study Area, with 299 vessels licensed in Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Pacific, or Wahkiakum County.
- Commercial (non-tribal) fishing and primary seafood processing support 1,820 total jobs and \$77 million in total labor income in coastal counties adjacent to the MSP study area. Their total statewide contribution is 2,830 jobs and \$117 million in labor income.
- Annual recreational fishing effort in the study area, between 2003 and 2014, averaged 47,000 trips on charter vessels and another 98,000 trips on private vessels. In 2014, trip-related expenditures for coastal recreational fishing generated over \$30 million in coastal spending, supported 325 jobs in coastal counties, and contributed \$17 million in labor income.
- Shellfish aquaculture in Pacific and Grays Harbor counties provides an estimated 572 direct jobs, supports 847 total jobs, and generates \$50 million in total labor income in the coastal region alone.
- Washington residents took an estimated 4.1 million trips to Washington's coast in 2014, with nearly 60 percent indicating their primary purpose was recreation. These trips generated an estimated \$481 million in expenditures. In the coastal study area, recreation trip-related spending by Washington residents is estimated to support 4,725 jobs and \$196.8 million in labor income within the coastal economy.
- Recreational razor clamming generates between 275,000 and 460,000 digger trips each season and provides between \$25 million and \$40 million in tourist-related income to coastal communities.
- The MSP Study Area supports shipping and trade, particularly ship traffic among ports along the West Coast and from ports in Washington across the Pacific Ocean to countries in Asia. The Port of Grays Harbor's marine cargo activities supports 1,524 total jobs (including 574 direct jobs) and generates over \$130 million in total income.
- Washington State hosts a large military presence with over 46,000 active duty military personnel, including 10,000 active duty Navy (2016). Due to the large military installations nearby in Puget Sound, the US Navy actively trains and tests in the MSP Study Area.

Existing Patterns of Uses and Resources

To improve understanding of the Study Area, many planning projects gathered and developed data on patterns and intensity of existing ocean uses and resources. These data are displayed in over 50 individual plan maps (Appendix A) and in an online, interactive mapping tool (www.msp.wa.gov). Geospatial (GIS) analyses were conducted to aggregate and further explore the combined patterns in the data, including ecological modelling of seabirds and marine mammals, an Ecologically Important Areas analysis, and a Use Analysis (see Chapter 3 for more details).

Figure 1 below displays a combination of existing high intensity uses by commercial and recreational fishing (non-tribal), shipping, known cultural sites, and recreation. Areas of high ecological importance are also included in the figure (also referred as ecologically important area

“hotspots”). Everywhere within the Study Area is highly used by at least 1 to 3 existing ocean uses or resources. Most of the Study Area is highly used by at least 4 and up to 14 existing uses or resources. In particular, the most heavily used areas include the continental shelf break, the Juan de Fuca Canyon in the north, and much of the southern area from the nearshore to about 15-20 miles offshore, especially near the entrances to Grays Harbor and the Columbia River.

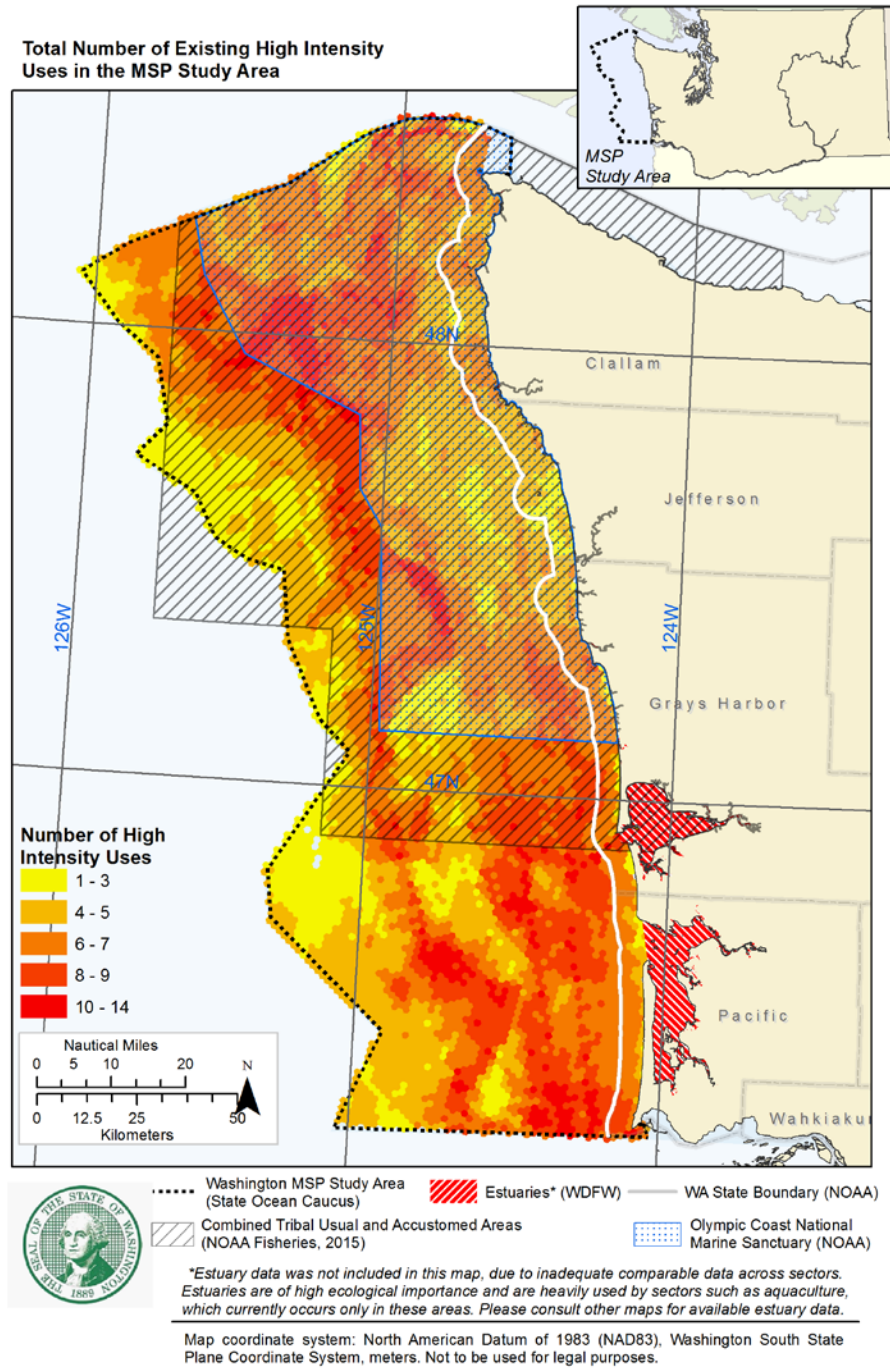


Figure 1 - Number of Existing High Intensity Uses in the MSP Study Area

What's in the plan? How to use the plan?

The MSP provides information and guidance intended for use throughout the development of new ocean use proposals along Washington's Pacific Coast. It assists agencies and others in evaluating and engaging in proposals for new ocean uses and guides potential applicants as they develop those proposals.

The draft plan provides:

- Guidance for new ocean uses along Washington's Pacific coast, such as renewable energy projects and offshore aquaculture.
- Baseline data on coastal uses and resources to capture current conditions and future trends.
- Requirements and recommendations for evaluating new ocean uses through different phases of project review, consistent with existing laws and regulations.
- Recommendations to protect important and sensitive ecological areas and existing uses like fishing.

The information in the MSP will also assist the state in reviewing and influencing federal activities that may affect Washington's ocean resources or uses, including those proposed in federal waters.

How to use the plan

The plan's information provides potential new ocean use applicants, governments, and others with the ability to:

- Understand other known activities, resources, interests, designations, and authorities that may conflict with or complement a proposal.
- Identify appropriate parties to discuss the proposal with prior to submitting an application.
- Understand issues, information, effects, and requirements to be addressed during the project review process.
- Identify potential ways to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts to marine resources or existing ocean uses, including alternative locations and configurations of projects.

The MSP also provides a wealth of baseline information that may be helpful to a variety of people or groups interested in understanding Washington's Pacific Coast, conducting further research or monitoring on specific topics, assessing future changes in conditions, or performing other types of planning.

Outline of Plan Contents

The plan's major sections include:

- An overview, including purpose, scope, planning process and background on federal and tribal management in the MSP Study Area (Chapter 1).
- A summary of current conditions and trends of the MSP Study Area, including: ecology, socio-economics, archeological and historic resources, existing ocean uses, and potential new ocean uses (Chapter 2).
- Details about spatial analyses including methods and outputs examining ecology and human uses in the Study Area (Chapter 3).

- A MSP management framework that covers process and substantive requirements tied to existing state laws and policies (Chapter 4). It provides overall guidance and recommendations for applicants, agencies and third parties on using the plan in practice, including:
 - Identifying ecologically-sensitive resources in state waters to protect from adverse effects of offshore development.
 - Defining policies in state waters to protect fisheries from long-term significant adverse impacts of offshore development and to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to avoid and minimize adverse impacts to fisheries.
 - Detailing the data, information, and plans necessary for proposed projects. Specifies the effects to people, communities, and the environment that need to be evaluated, including state standards and policies that need to be met.
 - Creating a process for enhanced coordination with stakeholders and among governments.
 - Evaluating projects on a case-by-case basis. Recommending industrial-scale renewable energy development as likely incompatible in state waters.
- Issues and recommendations on the plan provided by the Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council (Chapter 5).
- Maps and appendices including maps of existing ocean uses and ocean resources and more detailed information (Appendices).