

Olympic Coast Sanctuary report is 'first step' in addressing effects of climate change

April 18 2013

A new report on the potential effects of climate change on NOAA's Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary uses existing observations and science-based expectations to identify how climate change could affect habitats, plants and animals within the sanctuary and adjacent coastal areas.

It also outlines new management recommendations for the sanctuary, and sanctuary officials called it the first step toward addressing them.

They also said the report issued by the sanctuary, *Climate Change and the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary: Interpreting Potential Futures*, will provide a foundation of information and identify key issues facing the sanctuary.

"Climate change poses an increasingly grave threat to the health of the ocean, and its impacts will be felt in [marine protected areas](#) like the Olympic Coast sanctuary," said Carol Bernthal, sanctuary superintendent. "This report begins our work to develop management strategies that will help us anticipate potential challenges and adapt to the changing marine environment through sound science, [public outreach](#), and partnerships."

According to the report, climate change could affect the sanctuary through increases in sea level; [extreme weather events](#) such as winds, waves, and storms; and [coastal erosion](#) from those events. The report also says the region may experience an increase in ocean acidity and

water temperature, as well as more extreme weather patterns, including Pacific Northwest regional rainfall increases triggering 100-year magnitude floods.

Prepared and edited by Washington Sea Grant and sanctuary staff, the new [climate report](#) is the outcome of more than a year of intensive collaboration among subject matter experts representing 27 agencies, organizations and academic institutions.

The authors also made recommendations for future action for sanctuary management, including focus on public education, information gathering, and policy and management strategies. Scientists, educators, natural resource managers, and communicators will continue to work together to outline regional next steps forward.

The Climate Change Impacts Report is available at:

http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/conservation/cc_ocnms.html

Provided by NOAA Headquarters

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