

Socioeconomics of Washington’s Outer Coast and Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary: Importance & Satisfaction of Natural Resources and Facilities

Background

A recent analysis of socioeconomic survey data provides new insight into the importance and satisfaction along the Outer Coast of Washington State and within the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS). The report **Importance / Satisfaction Ratings for Natural Resource Attributes, Facilities and Services in the Coastal and Ocean Areas of the Outer Coast of Washington State**, is the result of a partnership with NOAA’s National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS), Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), Ecotrust /Point97and Washington State, and estimates the attitudes of Washington residents recreating in the study area.

Respondents were asked to rate several environmental characteristics and access to facilities along the Outer Coast based on their level of importance and satisfaction. The level of importance was rated on a scale of 1 – “Not Important” to 5 - “Extremely Important”. Satisfaction was rated on a scale of 1 – “Terrible” to 5 - “Delighted”. In 2013 and 2014, Washington State respondents could also answer “don’t know” or “not applicable” for both importance and satisfaction. These ratings can be used individually to inform decisions and better understand what users value or they can be used together to determine where management is doing a good job or where improvement is needed.

How to read the matrix?

By comparing the importance and satisfaction ratings, management can identify which areas need improvement, where they are doing well, and where resources could be redirected. The figure to the right shows the importance/satisfaction matrix and how priority areas are identified. For example, something with relatively high importance and relatively high satisfaction such as clean water and unobstructed natural views would get a *keep up the good work*. Alternatively, something with relatively low satisfaction and relatively high importance like invasive species and volunteer efforts would indicate management should focus more resources on that area.

Importance/ Satisfaction Matrix for OCNMS and 2-km Inland Buffer
A guide for Management

Importance	Relatively More Important	<p>Concentrate Here (Relatively More Important, Relatively Less Satisfied)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Invasive Species Abundance of fish and sea life to view Volunteer efforts 	<p>Keep up the Good Work (Relatively More Important, Relatively More Satisfied)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Clean water Special protected areas Natural views Cleanliness of beach and shore Beach and shoreline access Uncrowded conditions
	Relatively Less Important	<p>Low Priority (Relatively Less Important, Relatively Less Satisfied)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to view large wildlife from the shore or a boat Ability to see whales from shore Historic preservation Handicap facilities Public restrooms 	<p>Possible Overkill (Relatively Less Important, Relatively More Satisfied)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Clear Water Presence of starfish Parking Undeveloped campgrounds or areas on beach for camping
		Relatively Less Satisfied	Relatively More Satisfied
		Satisfaction	

What are the key findings?

Based on respondents who use OCNMS including a 2 km inland buffer, another area that may require additional focus includes the abundance and diversity of fish and sea life. Respondents reported that abundance was more important than diversity. However, in both categories respondents were not satisfied. If satisfaction is not improved, it is possible that respondents may eventually switch to recreate in other areas that provide them with greater satisfaction.

Why is this important?

The results of this research will inform management about areas they can improve or where there may be some public misperceptions. For example, if respondents are reporting something is relatively unimportant to them, but from a scientific perspective it is imperative for a healthy ecosystem, outreach efforts might become a management priority.

What should I know?

A healthy environment provides us with various recreational opportunities. Knowing what respondents find important, such as clean water, clean beaches and natural views of wildlife, informs how they will use resources and what they find most valuable.

For example, some of the most common activities in OCNMS with a 2 km inland buffer were sightseeing and wildlife viewing. Washington households reported the beaches and shoreline access and uncrowded conditions are important to them and they are satisfied with them.

What about facilities?

Respondents also answered questions about facilities that are on the Outer Coast. Those who use the Outer Coast reported that parks and specially protected areas are important and they are also satisfied with them.

Respondents reported that bathrooms, parking, garbage cans and signage at trailheads and other access points are important and they are satisfied with them. However, maps, brochures and other tourist information was rated as unimportant.

More Information:

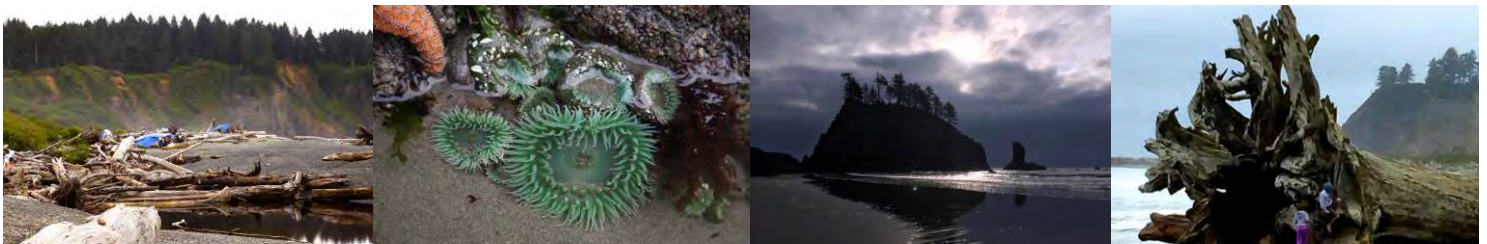
A complete copy of the report is available at:
<http://sanctuaries.woc.noaa.gov/science/socioeconomic/olympiccoast/rec-importance.html>

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This map shows the extent of the study area stretching along the Outer Coast of Washington and along the Strait Juan De Fuca.



<http://sanctuaries/noaa.gov/science/socioeconomic/olympiccoast/recreation.html>