

# OLYMPIC COAST 2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



<http://olympiccoast.noaa.gov>

## Tribal Partnership a Model for Ocean Governance



Representatives from coastal Indian Tribes, the State of Washington and the National Marine Sanctuary Program sign an agreement forming government-to-government working relations and the Olympic Coast Intergovernmental Policy Council. Signers are (from left to right): Vivian Lee, Chairwoman, Hoh Tribe; Micah McCarty, Tribal Council Member, Makah Tribe; Christine Gregoire, Governor, State of Washington; Daniel Basta, Director, NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program, Chris Morganroth, Tribal Council Member, Quileute Tribe; Fawn Sharpe, President, Quinault Indian Nation. *Photo: Robert Steelquist*

The sanctuary program enjoys a relationship with Native Americans that is unique among national marine sanctuaries. By treaty, the Quinault Nation, Hoh Tribe, Quileute Tribe and Makah Tribe have rights to many sanctuary marine resources and a strong interest in managing these resources. To provide a forum for discussing ocean management in the sanctuary, program staff worked with the coastal tribes and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission to discuss the intent and proposed structure for an intergovernmental policy council. The council includes the State of Washington as well as the four coastal tribes. A memorandum of agreement signed earlier this year launched this important forum for Ocean policy.

## Fiber Optic Cable Laid to Rest

Pacific Crossing and its contractor Tyco completed reinstallation of fiber optic cables within the sanctuary. The cable provides telecommunication service between the western United States and Japan. The reinstallation was necessary because the original cable installation in 1999 and 2000 did not meet the terms and conditions of the sanctuary permit. The cable placement project resolves six years of dispute between the cable companies and NOAA. Sanctuary staff worked as observers on the cable and monitoring ships as the cable was replaced.

## NOAA Teams With Canadian Government on Spill Response Drill

NOAA and the Canadian Government held a major oil spill drill in the sanctuary to test spill response capabilities of U.S. and Canadian agencies in the event of a natural or man-made catastrophe. These drills are held every two years near the U.S. and Canadian border and are designed to improve spill readiness and learn more about equipment requirements necessary to handle large scale oil spills in open water conditions.

## Deep Sea Coral Exploration Yields New Findings

In June, NOAA researchers returned from a 10-day deep-water coral expedition with dramatic evidence of sponge and coral communities in Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. The project found colonies of the rare stony coral *Lophelia*, numerous other coral species and a rich abundance of invertebrates and fishes, including commercially important rockfish. Deep sea corals and sponges have been identified as a priority research topic for NOAA based on the unique assemblage of species supported and their vulnerability to human activities such as bottom trawling and seafloor disturbances.

The cruise aboard the *McArthur II*, used a remotely operated vehicle to photo-document sponge/coral communities and collect specimens. Results of the cruise are being analyzed in order to guide the sanctuary and fisheries managers as they develop protection measures. The project, conducted in collaboration with NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration, and National Center for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS), also yielded education and outreach materials that are available on the sanctuary Web site.



Corals found in deep water, like the red gorgonian beneath the basket star, give scientists clues to marine life in Olympic Coast sanctuary ecosystem. *Photo: Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary*

**To learn more about these and other accomplishments, visit: [sanctuaries.noaa.gov](http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov)**

## Eyes in the Water: Researchers Catch Low Oxygen Conditions

Using sophisticated sensors mounted on buoys, sanctuary scientists observed several cases this summer where oxygen in the ocean dipped to dangerously low levels, affecting marine life. The news made headlines in Oregon and Washington this year when fishermen began reporting dead crabs in crab pots and coastal residents found dead fish littering their beaches. Staff installed the sensors in May to detect low oxygen levels believed to harm dungeness crab, rockfish and other marine life. Other instruments on the buoys provided data to check upwelling of nutrient-rich



One of the buoys used to mount sensors.  
Photo: NOAA

waters, plankton concentrations that may carry biotoxins, and water circulation patterns in waters out to 300 feet. When researchers analyzed the data, they pinpointed sharp dips in dissolved-oxygen levels that corresponded to the reported fish and crab kills. Sanctuary staff will summarize the annual monitoring results, provide the information to research partners and managers, and continue monitoring in 2007 to determine if this year's results indicate a consistent trend or represent an unusual event.

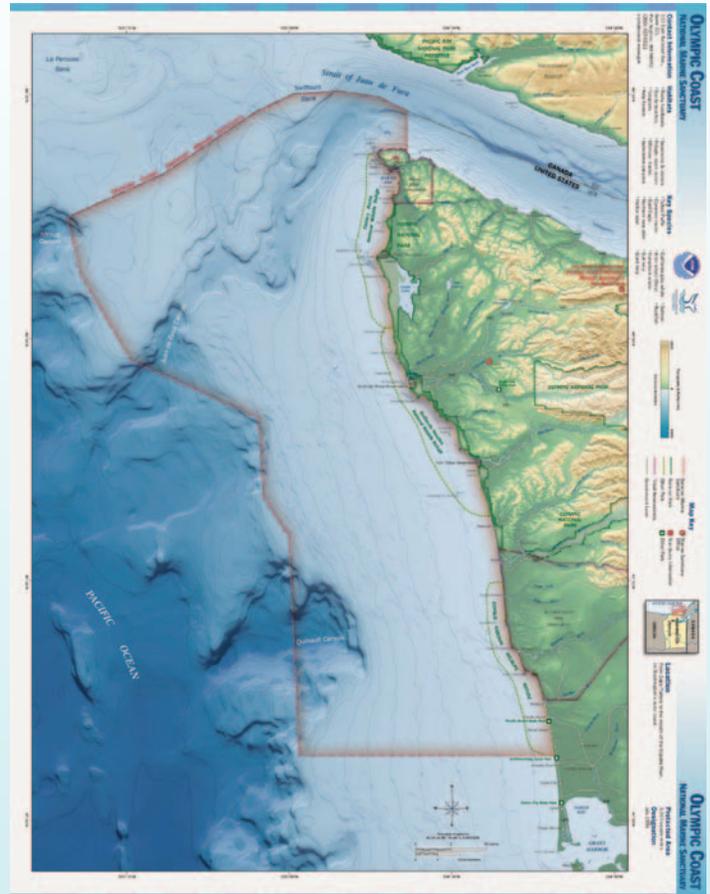


Abbey Island -- one of the rocks and islands that line rugged Olympic Coast.  
Photo: Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary

## Plans for 2007

- Sanctuary staff will begin updating its twelve year-old management plan. The management plan review process will identify needs and opportunities to consider as we develop priorities for the future.
- Results from recent seafloor habitat exploration will be analyzed and presented to fisheries managers and partner agencies. Staff will continue research in deepwater coral habitats and their links to healthy fish population and the conservation of essential habitat.
- Sanctuary staff and the Seattle Aquarium will bridge the distance between Washington's coastal communities and population centers in the Puget Sound region by helping teachers infuse ocean literacy into school curricula and presenting Olympic Coast marine resources through new exhibits at the Aquarium.
- The sanctuary will continue its successful education programs with the Makah Museum, training tribal museum staff and supporting interpretive programs at the museum and at other sites on the Makah Indian Reservation. Over 50,000 visitors are served each summer through this program.

## Sanctuary Maps Now Available



New sanctuary atlas maps depicting physical ocean and land features, other state and federal managed areas and parks, and other basic atlas features are now available on the sanctuary program Web site: [sanctuaries.noaa.gov](http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov).

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