

## Introduction

At the 2012 West Coast Governors Alliance (WCGA) Executive Committee (ExComm) Meeting in Sacramento, the WCGA set a course to align the capacity and funding constraints of the WCGA with its organizational structure and the priority ocean issues shared by the three states.

Below is a proposal for action based on outcomes of this meeting, including a brief summary of meeting decisions, relevant justification, and recommended actions for ExComm and teams to take towards successful implementation of priority objectives.

## Reorganization of WCGA Action Coordination Teams

In August of 2012, the WCGA Sea Grant Fellows interviewed WCGA Chairs/Co-Chairs<sup>1</sup> of 11 Action Coordination Teams (ACTs) to inform a discussion by the WCGA Executive Committee about the current activity level, outcomes, and future action items of the teams. Survey questions focused on achievements of each ACT/highest priorities in coming year; support for each ACT—by WCGA and home agency; funding; existing and emerging challenges; current activity level of each ACT; and recommendation on the future of each ACT.

WCGA ACT chairs commented that all see utility in the work they have done, but acknowledge that work is hindered by a lack of funding, lack of clear direction from the WCGA Executive Committee (ExComm), and a need for renewed state support. They also expressed a desire for realism.

### Recommendations:

- Group the ACTs into two categories: Action Teams and Coordination teams [note: the difference between these two types of teams and the criteria for designation is described below]. Review and adapt this structure on a biennial basis to be responsive to shifts in accomplishments, policies, changing priorities; and availability of resources.
- In addition, sunset three of the existing ACTs.

## Action Teams and Coordination teams

The Executive Committee seeks to find the appropriate balance between regional ocean and coastal health priorities and the reality of capacity and funding constraints. In addition, the WCGA seeks to fill a niche to conduct initiatives that complement existing entities. To prioritize actions and issue areas, the WCGA developed criteria to identify the ACTs that warrant direct involvement and support of the Executive Committee. Other issues areas and actions, while still important to the overall implementation of the 2008 WCGA Action Plan and foundational principles of the WCGA require less oversight by the WCGA Executive Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> In one instance (IEA ACT), the POC for the ACT was interviewed instead of the ACT Chair.

### *Action Teams*

Action Teams will represent the highest priorities of the WCGA and the three Governors, have active projects with forward momentum, warrant regional relevance and attention, and present an opportunity for the WCGA to leverage investments. To be an Action Team, the team will need to delineate clear and realistic deliverables for actions in their work plan. In turn, the ExComm will provide guidance on the work plan, help prioritize actions within the work plan, and identify clear deliverables. Although the ExComm acknowledges that future funding will likely be limited, it also commits that it will make efforts to allocate available funds to Action Team priorities. Action Teams will establish a regular mechanism of reporting to ExComm on progress as well as challenges.

#### **Expectations of Action Teams**

- Work plan with clear deliverables, budgets, timetables, leadership, and metrics for success
- Action team members agreeing to a brief mission statement, membership, operating procedures, and mechanisms and intervals of communication
- Standard and regular reporting to ExComm (quarterly) through participation in ExComm calls and/or quarterly reports
- Maintain adequate, active membership and representation (consider requiring 3 state representatives, 1 a representative from a group such as Sea Grant, federal and tribal representation)

#### **Expectations of ExComm**

- A state ExComm member (or more likely staff member) becomes “champion” for each Action Team, following progress and working closely with ACT Chairs/Co-Chairs and helping communicate benefits to the ExComm [this role is in addition to a POC]
- Guidance to prioritize work plan actions and define deliverables
- Assistance in recruiting and maintaining appropriate membership
- Consideration for distribution of available funding and assistance from WCGA coordinator in soliciting outside funding

### *Coordination teams*

Coordination teams provide a useful forum for information sharing, lessons learned, and coordinating efforts across the three West Coast states related to specific ocean health issues. Each Coordination teams will adopt a unique mission/purpose that aligns with the foundational principles of the WCGA/2008 WCGA Action Plan. WCGA will consider requests for letters of support for initiatives and outside grant applications. The WCGA will also support Coordination teams by providing common communication forums through the WCGA website and listserv, conference lines, and webinars if requested.

#### **Expectations of Coordination teams**

- Coordination team members agreeing to a mission statement, membership, operating procedures, and mechanisms and intervals of communication

- Members participate in good will to share information including relevant activities in each of the three states and by tribes, federal initiatives and opportunities, and other public, private or non-profit efforts.
- Report information and status of the Coordination team to ExComm twice annually
- Respond to calls for information from ExComm (as needed but on a limited basis). For example, providing expertise for WCGA responses to the NOC.

#### **Expectations of ExComm**

- Provide feedback to Coordination team when requested
- Endorse letters of support for initiatives and outside funding opportunities
- Provide a forum for communication under the banner of WCGA
- WCGA Coordinator “check-in” with Coordination team Co-Chairs to assess communication frequency and provide updates to ExComm

#### **Recommendations:**

- Affirm the roles and responsibilities (outlined in the WCGA charter) of the Chair/Co-Chair with each ACT Chair/Co-Chair.
- Role of the POC for Action Teams should remain the same (as outlined in the WCGA charter) and underscore importance that the POC is a member of Executive Committee staff, participates on monthly Executive Committee phone calls, and participates in all calls of the Action Teams
- Because the WCGA may not be able to allocate staff resources to every team in the form of a POC, the WCGA Coordinator should convene regular check-ins with the chair of each Coordination team to be sure that they are meeting once annually, receive updates from the Coordination team, and receives updates from ExComm.

#### **Designation of ACTs as Action Teams or Coordination teams**

##### **Action Teams (AT)**

##### ***Climate Change***

Climate change, and more specifically, adaptation and mitigation strategies for sea level rise, is a high priority issue for all three West Coast states. The Climate Change ACT successfully leveraged expanding the geographic scope of the National Academy of Sciences study “*Sea-Level Rise for the Coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington: Past, Present, and Future (2012)*”, that is an integral part in the Climate Change ACT’s work plan. The ACT obtained grant funding independently to host a series of workshops along the coast to foster the integration of timely climate change science into policy, management, infrastructure investments and adaptation strategies. This active group continues to implement work plan actions related to sea level rise along the West Coast through creative funding and leveraging resources.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Review and refocus remaining work plan tasks in coordination with CC AT chairs to reflect the nature of the actions (sea-level rise and adaptation)
- Consider alternative nomenclature: Sea-Level Rise Adaptation Action Team
- Coordinate efforts with the Pacific Coast Collaborative

### ***Marine Debris***

Marine debris is one of the highest priorities of the WCGA and on the radar of the three governors. The Marine Debris ACT is currently finalizing the Marine Debris Strategy, moving forward with the Marine Debris Database, and forming the Marine Debris Alliance. The Marine Debris ACT has an active and motivated core team that meets via phone calls several times per month. The WCGA invested \$100,000 from NOAA FY10 funding and the WCGA should leverage these past resources. A regional approach to marine debris will be important to sharing lessons learned and making progress in this arena on the West Coast. The Marine Debris Action Team intends to disband upon creation of the Marine Debris Alliance (anticipated in 2013).

#### **Recommendations:**

- ExComm and AT work to finalize the West Coast Marine Debris Strategy
- Develop a pathway for transition to the West Coast Marine Debris Alliance
- Determine the appropriate relationships between the West Coast Marine Debris Alliance and the WCGA

### ***Regional Data Framework***

The need for increased access to and more efficient discovery of ocean and coastal data has been well-articulated as the states recognize the importance of best available science in decision making, their investments in data collection, and need for regional scale information in light of the National Ocean Policy. The Regional Data Framework ACT attempts to fill this gap by linking people and information systems on the West Coast together using new technologies and tools to leverage resources and increase efficiencies. The RDF ACT is currently overseeing the first phase (\$116K) of work towards accomplishing these goals and is anticipating additional funding (\$625K) from the NOAA ROPFP to complete the second phase of work. A regional framework for data sharing and analysis will provide a better understanding of patterns of ecology and human use at the scale of the California Current for coastal and marine planning, policy development, and resource management.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Provide support, guidance, and feedback for RDF developing NOAA ROPFP FY11 and FY12 work plans, contractor and coordinator selection
- Provide guidance on which AT/CT the RDF should work closely with on developing tools for the Data System
- Review, potentially revise, and endorse the RDF AT work plan after public comment process
- Review state membership where fellows or temporary employees are representing state activities
- RDF AT needs to continue consultations with all AT/CTs, especially those that are transferring tasks to RDF AT work plan

### **Remaining Coordination teams (CT)**

#### ***Integrated Ecosystem Assessments***

Ecosystem-based management (EBM) is a rapidly developing approach to holistically managing living and non-living resources in the coastal and marine environment. Integrated Ecosystem Assessments (IEAs) are a scientific process and tool for achieving EBM. By measuring ecosystem status and evaluating current and potential management strategies, IEAs help people understand tradeoffs associated with various social, economic and environmental goals. All three states are engaged in EBM and IEAs at various scales. The IEA CT is a forum for improving development and implementation of IEA along the West Coast.

**Recommendations:**

- Consider reviewing membership and appointing new leadership for the group
- Add representation from California to the CT
- Leverage IEA CT to promote EBM and IEA science through education and outreach to engage a broader public
- Support coordination and leveraging of NOAA California Current IEA and R-IEA efforts
- Focus IEA development on bridging science-management gap, emphasizing translation of sound science to informed decision making

***Ocean Awareness and Literacy***

The OAL ACT functions independently and the chairs organize monthly phone calls that foster communication about education throughout the region, most recently regarding the next generation science standards for the United States.

**Recommendations:**

- ExComm continue to use the OAL CT to remain informed of ocean education initiatives on the West Coast
- Continue to endorse OAL CT recommendations on Next Generation Science Standards
- Utilize the OAL CT for future outreach and education efforts

***Renewable Energy***

The responsible development of offshore renewable energy has been a high priority of the WCGA at different points over the last 5 years. The Renewable Energy ACT has completed the majority of their work plan tasks aimed at providing tools and information necessary for that development. At this point, increased workloads associated with marine spatial planning in the three states means that this group is functioning as a communication mechanism between the states and federal agencies regarding state and federal planning efforts for offshore renewable energy.

**Recommendations:**

- Guide transfer of regional data sharing tasks to RDF AT
- Continue to support RE CT communications and coordination as they relate to West Coast states and Bureau of Ocean Energy State OCS Renewable Energy Task Force
- Use RE CT as a vehicle for coordinating information on the development of NOAA/BOEM Pacific Region Ocean Uses Atlas project

***Seafloor Mapping***

Seafloor mapping (SFM) data is foundational to understanding patterns of ecological resources and helping inform marine management decisions. All three states have invested heavily in the

collection of this data in recognition of its importance. The Seafloor Mapping ACT has completed most of their work plan, despite few outside resources. Currently, the ACT functions as a communication forum for its member activities and uses the WCGA banner to demonstrate state-federal partnership.

**Recommendations:**

- Be responsive to SFM CT requests for letters of support for continued support of seafloor mapping on West Coast
- Guide SFM CT in transfer of data visualization tasks to RDF AT

***Spartina Eradication***

WCGA identified eradication of invasive *Spartina* as a priority and eradication of invasive species is inherently regional in nature. This group has had significant success in its goals, and eradication is complete in the majority of areas. The *Spartina* ACT does have quarterly calls – organized by the POC – to discuss the status of eradication in each state, share lessons learned, and arrangements for equipment sharing. Existence under the banner of WCGA has been beneficial for the ACT; for example, the three states wrote a successful letter to EPA asking the agency not to ban imazapyr, a non-selective herbicide used to eradicate *Spartina*.

**ACTs to Sunset**

***Polluted Runoff***

The Polluted Runoff ACT is completing a final task associated with the West Coast Low Impact Development (LID) Portal and will work to coordinate the portal with the Regional Data Framework. After completing this task, the ACT will sunset.

***Sediment Management***

Sediment management (SM) remains an issue of concern for all states. The SM ACT offers an opportunity for the WCGA to access experts and remain connected to state level initiatives. However, the group requires restructuring to function in a communication capacity, including revisiting membership, leadership, and frequency of communication. The SM ACT has grant deliverables for FY '10 funding that must be completed by March 2013.

**Recommendations:**

- Ensure this ACT has completed and reported on its final funded task by March 2013, after which the ACT will sunset

***Sustainable Coastal Communities***

The broadness of the group's work plan and the diversity of membership prompted a practical decision to sunset the Sustainable Coastal Communities ACT as it is structured today. However, the principles of economic development, sustainable marine resources, and green ports and marinas are foundational to the mission of the Alliance, and the promotion of sustainable coastal communities as the "ultimate goal" of the Alliance's work should be reflected in the update of the 2008 Action Plan.

**Recommendations:**

- Message the importance of sustainable coastal communities; all communication about “sunsetting” this ACT should include text about its importance and next steps for inclusion
- Incorporate all infrastructure-related tasks into the work of the RDF AT, including the progress of the collaborative efforts between the SCC and University of Washington
- WCGA take a more active role as a steering committee member for the National Working Waterfronts Network
- Consider **infrastructure, communication and education, and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture** as key elements of the SCC work plan to incorporate in the WCGA’s

### **Further Recommendations for ACT Restructuring**

- Develop specific deliverables and work plans for top 3 Priority ACTs (by January 2013)
- Continue ExComm communication to existing ACTs, and solicit feedback regarding proposed new structure
- Governors endorse and announce new structure and priorities to ACTs and West Coast stakeholders via listserv
- Polluted Runoff ACT West Coast Low Impact Development (LID) Portal will be incorporated into Regional Data Framework AT
- Transfer Seafloor Mapping and Renewable Energy ACT tasks that relate to data visualization and access to Regional Data Framework AT

### ***Overarching next steps***

- Develop work plan for the 2013-14 Action plan update
  - The Action plan update should be updated. Recommend a subcommittee from ExComm to develop an outline for Fall 2013, with a final action plan by Spring 2014)
  - Clearly address sustainable communities in the larger “vision” within the Action Plan update, stating the importance of sustainable communities and how each focus area fosters those coastal economies and communities
- Develop mission/purpose for each AT and CT, in coordination with chairs and co-chairs
- Consider renewal of WCGA Sea Grant fellows to help keep AT/CTs moving forward.
- Consider how to incorporate “sustainable coastal communities” into an overarching theme of the WCGA (i.e. the West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health and Sustainable Coastal Communities)