

2023-2024 Annual Report



OREGON OCEAN
SCIENCE TRUST

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A Message from the Trust Board Chair

Growing up on the Oregon and Washington coast, the ocean has always been part of my life. I carry this connection forward with a deep sense of responsibility in my role as Chair of the Oregon Ocean Science Trust. Through the lens of a commercial fishing family and then as a seafood business owner, I've seen firsthand how coastal communities rely on strong science to sustain livelihoods, protect ecosystems, and adapt to change. I'm honored to share this report on the Trust's progress as we work together toward a future where both people and the ocean can thrive.

Our progress is grounded in a clear set of beliefs about the role of science in shaping Oregon's ocean future. These principles guide everything we do:

- **Good decisions start with good science.** Whether it's managing fisheries, preparing for coastal hazards, supporting marine industries, or protecting ocean ecosystems, science is the foundation for sound policy, responsible use, and long-term resilience.
- **Oregon needs science that serves.** At the Trust, we invest in applied research with purpose—science that solves problems and supports people. Our work generates the data, insights, and tools needed by coastal planners, tribal nations, fishermen, business owners, and state leaders. We are laser-focused on delivering knowledge that can be used, today and into the future.
- **The value of ocean science is not abstract.** It protects lives, fuels innovation, and strengthens coastal economies. In an era of climate disruption, it is essential infrastructure—just as vital as roads, ports, and energy systems. Our coastal communities deserve the best information available to plan, adapt, and thrive.
- **Oregon has a special responsibility to steward the ocean on behalf of the nation.** The ocean provides nutritious, sustainable food, helps cool the planet through carbon sequestration, and supports global biodiversity. These benefits transcend state borders and serve people across the nation and around the world.

Looking ahead, we are proud to be a co-leader, with the California Ocean Science Trust, in the emerging **West Coast Ocean Science Action Agenda**, an opportunity to move beyond fragmented, state-by-state approaches to a comprehensive region-wide approach that amplifies the greatest ocean and coastal science and data needs and priorities. This initiative gives us the chance to build a unified strategy for ocean science investment—one that secures the infrastructure, talent, and innovation our region needs to lead in the blue economy and safeguard our shared ocean legacy.

Thank you for your partnership and support. The work ahead is ambitious—but with science, strategy, and shared purpose, Oregon is ready to lead.

Warm regards,



Laura Anderson

Our Board

VOTING MEMBERS



Chair Laura Anderson
Founder, Local Ocean Seafoods (Newport, OR)



Dr. Keith Wolf
KWA Ecological Sciences & Documentary Films (Portland, OR)



Dr. Karina Nielsen
Director, Oregon Sea Grant (Corvallis, OR)



Dr. Theodore DeWitt
Marine Ecologist (Seal Rock, OR)



Cristen Don
Swell Consulting (Newport, OR)

NON-VOTING MEMBERS



Representative David Gomberg (Central Oregon Coast)



Senator Dick Anderson (Lincoln City, OR)

STAFF



Lisa A. DeBruyckere
Director of Strategic Initiatives and Programs (Salem, OR)

Advancing Ocean and Coastal Science in Oregon

About The Trust

Established by the Oregon State Legislature in 2013, the Oregon Ocean Science Trust (OOST) secures and distributes funding to promote ocean and coastal knowledge, research, and monitoring to ensure the sustainable use of Oregon's resources, enhance coastal resilience, and support long-term ocean health for all Oregonians. The OOST operates at the nexus of physical, biological, and social and economic research, bringing the three together to holistically synthesize data and knowledge of our ocean and coastal resources.

Our Priorities

To date, the OOST has furthered important work to assess marine reserves, study ocean acidification and hypoxia, and collect information about Oregon's important nearshore resources. In 2023, the OOST hosted a summit that convened leading thinkers in ocean and coastal policy, management, and research to assess priorities and opportunities for the coming years. Based on this summit, the OOST has identified three key priorities:



Improve our understanding of changing ecosystem and species conditions.

Characterize shifts in ecosystem structure and function, species life history, and biodiversity hotspots.



Enhance social well-being and resilience of ocean and coastal communities.

Better understand the relationship between community well-being and coastal economy, including historic, current, and future ocean and coastal uses.



Operate the OOST with the highest standards of accountability, seeking long-term sustainable funding and capacity to achieve our mission.

Conduct the work of the OOST in a fiscally-responsible manner, emphasizing actionable and transdisciplinary science and knowledge that informs ocean and coastal policy and management issues.



Identify Priority Research Needs

Identify the highest priority ocean and coastal research needs in Oregon while enhancing the state's capacity to deliver on these priorities by facilitating collaboration among scientists and investigators and their respective organizations.

Key progress includes:

- Conducted an inventory to inform understanding of both synergies and gaps relative to Oregon's ocean and coastal research needs.
- Convened a summit of more than 50 Oregon ocean and coastal researchers and policy makers in 2023 to identify the highest priority ocean and nearshore research priorities and key science questions for Oregon.

Support Priority Ocean and Coastal Research

From 2022-2023, the Trust disbursed almost \$2 million in competitive grants for ocean acidification and hypoxia (OAH) as well as nearshore ocean and coastal research while taking steps to diversify the Trust's funding portfolio.

OAH projects funded by the Trust:

- \$385,088 – Intertidal and subtidal OAH monitoring at Oregon's marine reserves to improve understanding of the risk and persistence of OAH while sustaining decadal time-series observations at Cape Perpetua.
- \$97,497 – OAH monitoring at Yaquina Bay, Oregon to collect climate data to share real-time and via a public exhibit at the Hatfield Marine Science Center.
- \$131,126 – Ecosystem modeling of submerged aquatic vegetation to understand the dynamics of pH, dissolved oxygen, and eelgrass in Coos Bay.
- \$170,521 – Develop recommendations for maximizing the abundance of wild and cultured shellfish and submerged aquatic vegetation in Oregon's estuaries and develop best management practices to cultivate shellfish while supporting estuarine health.
- \$174,989 – Assess the life cycle impacts of OAH on shellfish species important to Oregon.
- \$63,376 – Develop a strategy to communicate with the public about OAH impacts, science, and solutions.

Nearshore ocean and coastal research projects funded by the Trust:

- \$181,000 – High-resolution seafloor mapping of nearshore habitats of the Rogue River Reef Complex, which supports the largest remaining kelp beds in Oregon.
- \$193,341 – Monitoring kelp communities in transition along the Oregon coast to address how the ecological characteristics of rocky reef habitats differ.
- \$169,815 – Quantifying juvenile dynamics of important fishes along Oregon's nearshore to characterize important recruitment habitat and inform stock assessments.
- \$190,422 – Assess the impacts of climate change on rocky shore macrophyte assemblages to inform whether climate warming may lead to chronic or sudden changes in abundance and reproduction.
- \$150,000 – Conduct trophic modeling of Oregon's nearshore reefs to forecast the consequences of management activities along Oregon's coast.
- \$10,000 – Assess nearshore data management, portals, and hubs to identify the most scientifically sound and effective approach for enhancing data access, storage, dissemination, and archival for Oregon nearshore ocean data.

Seek Sustainable Funding and Diversify the Funding Portfolio

Continued to advance legislation in the Oregon Legislature to support long-term, state-based funding for ocean and coastal science. While funding was not secured this session, we built critical momentum, deepened legislative engagement, and clarified a pathway for future investment.

The Trust collaborated with the California Ocean Science Trust to launch the West Coast Ocean Science Action Agenda (see "A Peek at the Next Two Years" section of this report) to build a robust and diversified funding portfolio.



A Peek at the Next Two Years

Deliver the West Coast Ocean Science Action Agenda

The primary focus of the Trust in 2025 and 2026 is to work with the California Ocean Science Trust and partners in Washington to deliver the West Coast Ocean Science Action Agenda, mobilizing support for the aligned public-private investments in infrastructure, technology, and workforce development that is necessary to deliver on those priorities. To develop the agenda, we will seek input from coastal communities, scientists, academic leaders, and legislators, who care deeply about supporting a healthy, resilient, and productive ocean through science-based management and policy. Through a series of high-level convenings, a coastwide action agenda will be developed that describes shared priority ocean and coastal science needs. Enhanced funding to the region will put science to work to accelerate progress toward a vision of a healthy, equitable, and productive ocean future.

In 2024, the Trusts launched the agenda, created a website (<https://www.oceanscienceagenda.org/>), and conducted outreach to inform federal, state, and local governments, coastal Tribes, academics, policy makers, and others about the importance of the initiative and its aim to address the most compelling ocean and coastal issues facing our generation. Key next steps include creating an advisory committee for the initiative (July 2025), then working with coastal entities to plan for subregional convenings in locations along the West Coast (2025-2026). Shared priorities will be compiled, and an implementation plan developed to identify potential sources of funding to support the needed research (late 2026).

Expand the Size of the Trust Board

Additional Board capacity will enhance the ability of the Trust to operate and expand as well as add fundraising and other capacity.

Seek Capacity Building and Other Grants to Build a Diversified Funding Portfolio

Efforts will be made to solicit federal and state, private, and other funds to develop a sustainable, long-term funding portfolio.

Partners Make a Difference

Our partnerships enable us to have a greater impact and work in coordination on ocean and coastal science across the state and region. Thank you to:



**Oregon Department
of Fish & Wildlife**



Funders and Donors

The following entities and individuals have contributed in-kind and financial support to the Oregon Ocean Science Trust during the past two years. Thank you to:

- Builders Initiative
- Charles Scott Baker
- Laura Anderson
- Lisa DeBruyckere
- Oregon Ocean Conservation Fund
- Oregon Coast Visitors Association
- Oregon Department of State Lands
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- Surfrider Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Theodore DeWitt
- William Chadwick



How You Can Support the Trust

The more we know about the ocean, the more we appreciate its impact on our lives.

Each of us has a special place along the Oregon coast – a favorite beach to take a stroll, a coastal campground to make annual memories with family, a choice local seafood restaurant, a place to catch the sunset, or watch the ocean during winter storm surge events. Regardless of the location, Oregonians love our coast and ocean.

The Oregon Ocean Science Trust works to strengthen the knowledge of this special place by providing grants that go directly to scientists who further our understanding of the species and habitats that make the Oregon coast unique.

The Trust is one of only two national ocean science trusts dedicated to investing in coastal and ocean science and monitoring to help us better understand our marine life and habitats and the threats these important resources face.

During the last three years and with the support of the Oregon Legislature, the Trust has invested almost \$2 million to support science and monitoring projects that monitor changes in ocean chemistry and learn how marine life responds to low oxygen conditions (<https://www.oregonoceanscience.com/funded-research-projects-oah>), assess the health and abundance of Oregon's nearshore species and habitats (<https://www.oregonoceanscience.com/nearshorereseach>), and inform ways to reduce the effects of human activities on those species and habitats.

The Oregon Community Foundation accepts donations on behalf of the Trust. If you would like to make a donation to directly support ocean and coastal science in Oregon and enable the Trust to continue to serve Oregon's coast and ocean, you can make a tax-deductible charitable contribution to:

**Oregon Ocean Science Trust Fund
(Fund ID 431308)**

Oregon Community Foundation
530 Center Street NE, Suite 230
Salem, OR 97301



DONATE ONLINE

You may also donate online by using the QR code or visiting this link: <https://bit.ly/4n9gyYf>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the OOST and sign up to receive updates on funding opportunities:

- Visit OregonOceanScience.com
- Email OOST@OregonOceanScience.com
- Follow us @OceanSciOR on LinkedIn and Instagram

