



PISCO

Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans

www.PISCOweb.org

January 16, 2009

Jay Rasmussen, Interim Director, Oregon Sea Grant
Penelope Dalton, Director, Washington Sea Grant
Russ Moll, Director, California Sea Grant
Linda Duguay, Director, University of Southern California Sea Grant

Via electronic mail to WestCoastSeaGrant@oregonstate.edu

RE: PISCO Comments on the draft report “West Coast Regional Marine Research and Information Needs”

Dear Directors Dalton, Duguay, Moll, and Rasmussen,

The Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans (PISCO) commends the efforts by the Sea Grant programs in Washington, Oregon, and California to develop a West Coast Regional Marine Research and Information Plan. The goal of this work is to “address marine science needs and ocean management on an ecosystem level and focus resources on research where there is the greatest opportunity for change.”¹ The PISCO consortium supports these efforts to coordinate science and management across state boundaries, which will greatly enhance management and protection of the rich marine resources in the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME). As this process continues, PISCO is pleased to offer any support, knowledge, and expertise that will help toward these goals and the stated priorities within the plan.

PISCO is a consortium of thirteen marine research scientists and over one hundred staff and postdoctoral and graduate students at four academic institutions along the US west coast. The following are comments from PISCO on the document entitled “West Coast Regional Marine Research and Information Needs.”

General Comments

1. The document accurately identifies three cross-cutting themes. In similar ways, the research and information topics are also closely interconnected. Progress and success in any one topic will strengthen progress in another. For example, the research and information needs outlined in Topic 5 “Marine Ecosystem Structure and Function” have

¹ From <http://seagrant.oregonstate.edu/research/RegionalPlanning/>

the potential to form a platform of ecosystem-based understanding, which is key for other highlighted topics. To the maximum extent possible, Sea Grant should elucidate the interconnectedness among all topics and identify activities that will (a) connect the science between the different topics, (b) ensure efficient and effective multi-jurisdictional and coast-wide collaboration and coordination, (c) allow adaptation and refinement of research and information needs, and (d) determine long-term funding sustainability.

2. Sea Grant should consider adding “Coordination and planning” as a cross-cutting theme. Although implicit to the success of this project, all topics require coordination across jurisdictions and subject areas. To achieve the goals outlined in this plan, Sea Grant should place a high priority on supporting programs and activities that strategically cultivate coordination and progress across broad disciplinary and geographic ranges.

Specific comments

Page 4, lines 28-33: PISCO looks forward to more information about the process for developing the next phase of this process, which will “develop a research and information plan, a separate document that identifies regional priorities to guide initiation and investment in natural and social science research that will provide decision makers with the best-possible science for wise policy and resource-management decisions.”

Page 5: The draft document provides summaries of major US ocean reports. We recommend that the recently released Joint Ocean Committee Initiative’s report, *One Coast, One Future: Securing the Health of West Coast Ecosystems and Economies*, is (a) reviewed for consistency with this Sea Grant document and (b) summarized.

Page 6, lines 12-19: While it is true that many of PISCO’s activities focus on specific habitats of the inner shelf California Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME), the consortium also conducts research that extends well-beyond these specific habitats. Please use the following description of the PISCO program: “The Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans (PISCO) is a consortium of scientists from four universities – Oregon State University, University of California Santa Cruz, University of California Santa Barbara, and Stanford University – which conducts ecosystem-based science in the productive, nearshore portion (<10 miles from shore) of the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem. PISCO combines research with sustained monitoring and active outreach to communities, managers, and policy makers.”

Page 16, lines 16-32: (a) Ecological Metadata Language (EML) should be included as a currently accepted data storage standard. (b) In addition to the activities highlighted in the paragraph, data management solutions for interoperability among programs should be identified and supported.

Page 32, lines 24-51 and Page 33, lines 3-9. This section describes hypoxia as an emerging ocean health topic and describes the different processes that contribute to hypoxia in estuaries and along the open ocean coastline. It is important to recognize that federal research programs have not traditionally funded hypoxia research in the ocean along the US west coast. Thus, there is a funding gap for supporting the work to understand causes and impacts of this type of hypoxia.


In conclusion,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the draft document. We look forward to future discussions as the planning proceeds. For more information about the PISCO program and these comments, please contact Kristen Milligan at (541)737-8862 or Kristen.Milligan@science.oregonstate.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristen Milligan". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Kristen Milligan,
Program Coordinator, Oregon State University

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adrienne Sutton". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Adrienne Sutton,
Assistant Director of Strategic Planning, Oregon State University