Oregon Ocean Science Trust Meeting Summary
Wednesday, April 1, 2026 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Virtually on GoToMeeting
Meeting documents and video recording are posted on the Oregon Ocean Science Trust (OOST) website:
https://www.oregonoceanscience.com/trust-meetings

OOST Members present
Vice-Chair Dr. Karina Nielsen, Dr. Ted DeWitt, Cristen Don; Representative Gomberg

DSL Staff
Caiti Hudson; Alexa Piscanio, Linda Safina-Massey

Interested parties and Presenters
Lisa DeBruyckere, Creative Resource Strategies; Cory Archer, True Wind Collaborative; Stendert Laan, Deltares USA; Travis Miller, LFO, State of Oregon; Jena Carter, The Nature Conservancy; Cathie Rigby, City of Newport; Hayley Brazier

Welcome and Introductions
Vice Chair Nielsen welcomed everyone. Board members, members of the public, and DSL staff introduced themselves.

Approval of January 2026 meeting summary
Did not have a quorum; will be on the agenda for the next board meeting.

Legislative Session – Debrief and 2027 Legislative Session (OOST initiatives)
(Please see the GoToMeeting video for the detailed comments and discussion beginning at the 6:10 minute mark.)

- Vice Chair Nielsen – HB 4097 passed giving OOST the ability to create a 501 (c) (3); we are grateful to Representative Gomberg for carrying this bill for us.
- Representative Gomberg – I carried the bill on the floor of the House in two sentences. Unanimous passage. I won't go into the legislative weeds on this past short session. The important message is that we are looking at budget reductions. We need to be prepared because the next session and maybe the next couple of sessions will have tighter budgets.
- Vice Chair Nielsen – There were several other ocean-related bills.
    - SB 1525 Blue Economy Task Force

    - HB 4134 commonly called 1.5% for wildlife, funds go to ODFW
    - HB 4086 Industrial Symbiosis – there was an initiative related to the 100% Fish program that the Oregon Ocean Cluster is working toward which was removed in an amendment.
- Representative Gomberg –
    - HB 4086 came out of the policy committee and was heard in Ways and Means. Ways and Means leadership eliminated the 100% fish program. Then they sent it to the committee that I co-chaired, in which our committee members stated they did not want the program removed. Instead of putting the fish program back in the bill, they pulled the bill out of our committee, sent it to another committee, and it was passed without 100% Fish. We will be back during the next legislative session to introduce 100% Fish.
    - Another thing in the budget context is that sometimes you're looking at trying to fund things and other times you're trying to make sure that things that have been funded remain funded. The marine reserves is an example of our work to keep the funding for the maritime workforce. These are subtle but important wins.

A 501 (c) (3) for the Oregon Ocean Science Trust – HB 4097

(Please see the GoToMeeting video for the detailed comments and discussion beginning at the 13:03 minute mark.)

- Vice Chair Nielsen – Now that we have the ability to form a 501 (c) (3), what do we do, how do we do it? Also keeping in mind to take our time to make sure it's done correctly.
- Lisa – First and foremost the OOST needs to decide if it wants to create the 501 (c) (3). We had a meeting with DSL last week in which they stressed the need for the OOST to clearly and carefully define the governance structure.
- Committee discussion and input:
    - All agree to move forward in incremental steps
    - The non-profit would very closely follow the mission of the OOST
    - There are numerous examples of other governmental organizations that have similar relationships with non-profits as the fundraising arm.
- Vice Chair Nielsen – We have a clear initial vision of what the purpose should be for the 501 (c) (3). We can move forward with a subcommittee that can work on drafting some purpose statements.
- Committee discussion on potential names for the 501 (c) (3). We do not have a quorum. Present members recommend Oregon Ocean Science Fund.
- Vice Chair Nielsen – Recommend that we form a workgroup of a couple members to work with Lisa to draft a purpose statement, set a timeline for each step, etc.

    - Ted indicated interest.
- Membership of the 501 (c) (3) –
    - At least 2 OOST members
    - Maybe 3 or more members who have expertise in fundraising
- Funding the non-profit in the first two to three years:
    - Karina – Can we use funds that OOST currently has? Do we need to raise funds specifically for non-profit?
        - Lisa – My hope would be that we raise some capacity building funds for the non-profit. Having the West Coast Ocean Action Agenda as the impetus for doing it by a certain time is going to be really helpful.
    - Ted – What do we do when money comes in that does not align with OOST priorities? A donor might say that they want the money to be used for only a specific species in a certain location but that is not a high priority for the OOST. Do we try to steer them to OOST priorities? Or how do we handle that kind of situation?
- Lisa – I am happy to reach out to some state agencies to learn how they conduct their 501 (c) (3) business. I have had conversations with OPRD and Metro on how they make those types of decisions. Maybe the subcommittee can have a "lessons learned" type of conversation for us to learn from other agencies.
- Committee question to DSL regarding contracts and funds; mixing of private money and state money.
    - Caiti – It is complicated. Especially with braided funding and with different types of funding we manage as an agency. Let's have a follow-up on this topic so that I can create a graphic of what it looks like, and we can talk about these contract elements.
    - Board agreement on Caiti's proposal.
- The board and Lisa discussed some topics to consider for the non-profit:
    - Ted – How are we going to fund the non-profit in the long-term? How to keep administrative costs to a minimum so that we have more funds for science? How much do we charge for administrative costs such as 5% or 10%?
    - Cristen – The 5% and 10% are common for overhead costs. We will need to have a set standard with the ability to accommodate a different amount.
    - Karina – There is a challenge of finding the ocean science champions to join the non-profit board.
    - Ted – Will the non-profit be able to access the OOST's contracted services such as communications?
    - Karina – Maybe have a DSL representative on the board to give advice, answer questions, etc. Might be a voting member.

Trust Administrative Items

(Please see the GoToMeeting video for the detailed comments and discussion beginning at the 1:01:50 minute mark.)

- OOST board appointments – update (document shared onscreen)
    - Lisa – We talked with Jean Striaght at DSL regarding staggering member terms. We should start work in May of this year to fill the terms in December; we can change the length of them without any statutory change. Scenario 4 is recommended but can make scenario 3 work as well.
    - Ted – Scenario 3 would accomplish the transition much sooner.
    - Lisa – We also talked with DSL about the addition of board members which does require a statutory change. If the board wants to do this, we would do it in an odd year and it would be fairly simple. However, that would open the Trust to additional inspection and review which can have its pluses and minuses. The four scenarios do not consider an expanded board size.
    - Karina – Suggestion to complete our staggering of terms and building of the 501 (c) (3) before we look at adding more members to the OOST.
    - Lisa – Caiti plans to check with the State Land Board regarding their thoughts on the term changes. The OOST needs to make a decision in May to be on the required timeline to have changes effective January 1, 2027.
    - Board discussion with Lisa on a special meeting versus email to decide on term changes. Decision to meet virtually with email discussion as the back-up if not enough members are able to attend a virtual meeting.
- Status of Trust-funded grant projects to date – Lisa reported that all of the grant projects have been completed except one that has an extended due date of June 2026 due to a significant delay in bringing on a graduate student to start that project. We received great reports from the grant recipients which have boosted our social media exposure. We have a biannual draft report due to the Legislature.
- Review of Trust budget – Lisa provided an overview of:
    - Current contracts start and end dates as well as initial contract amounts and current balances.
    - Cash balance as of 03/19/2026. We are looking at potential sources of funds considering the bleak budget situation with the state that Representative Gomberg conveyed at the beginning of this meeting.
    - Status of funds that the OOST has received from grants awarded to the Trust.
    - Grant applications in process – some include specific work with Tribes.
        - Note that we have been talking with NOAA on their rolling announcements on the potential cooperative grant to build and implement a portion of the Action Agenda. NOAA is currently reviewing the Action Agenda, the website, and the documents that were sent to them. We're talking about alignment with a number of their programs.

Three of them are: Ocean Observing Systems; Fisheries; and one that has a climate piece. We would be looking at fiscal year 2027.

- Grants that OOST is considering applying for in 2026.
- Review of the OOST's unsuccessful grant applications: Oregon Community Foundation $25, 000; Autzen Foundation $25,000; and Blue Convergence $150,000.

Followed by Q&A with board members. Additional discussion on efforts and alignment with other organizations and governments as well as not duplicating work that is being done by others. Examples presented included offshore wind energy efforts on the east coast and ocean science work currently happening in California.

- Lisa noted the importance of smaller donations to support ocean science.

Planning a Fall Legislative "Tour" – Cory Archer and Lisa DeBruyckere ("Legislative Tour" communications document was shared onscreen.)
(Please see the GoToMeeting video for the detailed comments and discussion beginning at the 1:32:42 minute mark.)

- Lisa – We had talked about some type of a Legislative Tour in 2026. We received legislative feedback that it would be beneficial to coincide with another meeting that is already taking place to increase attendance and visibility.
- Cory – Originally, I was thinking of an on-site tour location; however, for the purpose of today's conversation I would like to get the board's feedback on goals and touchpoints.
  - Cory provided additional background and details regarding the goals and format of a tour. (The document that was shared onscreen.)
  - She provided examples of the kind of events that would be very beneficial for OOST to consider. Factors to think about: location and who's already going to be there. Two events that are later this year that might work for OOST are the Oregon Coast Economic Summit and State of the Coast Summit. Cory shared an example of a short, low barrier event/activities that include an OOST board member, an OOST-funded researcher, a panelist discussion, etc.

  Followed by Q&A with board members.
  - Cory noted that the Oregon Coast Economic Summit and State of the Coast Summit are likely to not have the general public in attendance. Something such as an event at an aquarium would be a good place to connect with the public.
  - Representative Gomberg provided his insight on the various events and ideas that were presented. He pointed out that OOST needs a "magnet" to attract the desired audience; think about what would get you to go to an event that is not high on your priority list.
  - Discussion with board members on opportunities for the OOST to present at or join events on the coast as well as in Salem. Now that the capital is

open after years of construction, groups have been setting up tables in the rotunda – something hands on, food, etc. would be a good way to attract people.

Representative Gomberg left the meeting at 2:23 p.m.

Board Member Open Mic

(Please see the GoToMeeting video for the detailed comments and discussion beginning at the 2:03:57 minute mark.)

- None.

The West Coast Ocean Science Agenda – Lisa DeBruyckere

(Please see the GoToMeeting video for the detailed comments and discussion beginning at the 2:05:00 minute mark.)

- Lisa – A reminder to board members that I am posting documents to the OOST intranet. I am providing quarterly updates as well.
- The contract between the West Coast Ocean Science Alliance and the California Ocean Science Trust (OST) was signed last week, in which the OOST is nested underneath. We are expecting to get our subcontract work from the OST within the next two weeks. After the May Tribal Summit in California, we will launch our convenings with the West Coast Ocean Alliance Tribes in June and July. We plan to wrap up in September.
- In the meantime, we have compiled all of the 40 plus documents that we received from federal and state agency representatives in California, Oregon, and Washington. We parsed through those to identify priorities in each one; we have 8 to 10 draft themes. We are now designing a convening with scientists from California, Oregon, and Washington between now and November to vet those priorities. Work on this will continue through December. I will also be reaching out to each of you for your input.
- Discussion with the board regarding:
    - Who the OOST is engaging with from government agencies to scientists.
    - Sharing of ideas on activity/event locations from the south coast to north coast to the capital in Salem.
    - Which types of activities at certain venues will draw an engaged audience.

Public Comment

(Please see the GoToMeeting video for the detailed comments and discussion beginning at the 2:22:57 minute mark.)

- None.

Adjourn

Vice Chair Nielsen adjourned the meeting at 2:38 PM.