



Crabber-Towboat Lane Agreement Meeting Minutes

March 11th, 2022

10:00 am – 12:00 pm (virtual)

wsg.washington.edu/crabber-towboat

In attendance:

- Dan Ayres, Washington Dept Fish and Wildlife
- Dale Beasely, Columbia River Crab Fishermen's Association
- Samantha Borth, National Weather Service
- Kelly Corbett, Oregon Dept Fish and Wildlife
- Kevin Decker, Washington Sea Grant
- Jim Dunlap, Dunlap Towing Company
- Jeffrey Ferguson, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin Office of Coast Survey
- Jamie Fuller, Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife
- George Galasso, NOAA Olympic Coast Marine Sanctuary
- Chris German, US Coast Guard
- Amanda Gladics, Oregon Sea Grant
- Sara Gultinan, Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management
- Jennifer Hagen, Quileute Nation
- Commander Brendan Harris, US Coast Guard
- Whitney Hauer, Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management
- Daniel Joram, Nobletec
- Dan Jordan, Columbia River Bar Pilots
- Jenna Keeton, Washington Sea Grant
- Alden Lundy, Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management
- Sean Macduff, Washington Sea Grant
- Scott Mazzone, Quinault Indian Nation
- Scott McMullen, Oregon Fishermen's Cable Committee
- Briana Muhlestein, National Weather Service
- Peter Nelson, Dunlap Towing
- Brian Nieuwenhuis, National Weather Service
- Paul, tugboat master Canada/Astoria
- Frank Pendleton, Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management
- Jill Smith, Oregon Dept of Fish and Wildlife
- Travis, mate for Seaspan Tug and Barge
- John Veentjer, Marine Exchange Puget Sound, Puget Sound Harbor Safety Committee

Key action items in red



Partner Updates:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Dan Ayres

Daniel.Ayres@dfw.wa.gov

The state Dungeness Crab season started on December 1, 2021 and fishing has been good. To date, fishers harvested a high volume of crab, landing 13.9 million pounds. The associated ex-vessel value of this catch was \$78 million. On May 1, commercial fishers will experience a 300-pot limit to reduce risk of whale entanglement. Any gear in the water after May 1st found without a summer permit tag will be eligible for WDFW's gear recovery program. WDFW is piloting an electronic monitoring program for the state fishing fleet. This program will allow WDFW to know where fishing gear is located and a requirement for all commercial boats to have this electronic monitoring on board will be in place by the 2023-2024 fishing season. This location information will benefit crabber-towlane agreement to see if gear has been mistakenly placed in towlanes and who the gear belongs to. Scott Mazzone added the Quinault Indian Nation is also having a good season and landed just over 3 million pounds of Dungeness Crab.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Jill Smith

jill.m.smith@state.or.us

To date, the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab fishery landed 16.3 million pounds of crab with an associated ex-vessel value of \$85.3 million. Additionally, whale entanglement mitigation measures will begin on May 1st which includes reducing pot limits to 20%, requiring fishers to have summer tags on their pots by May 1, and enforcing a 40-fathom depth restriction. Jill shared that ODFW hears complaints from fishermen about bar pilots sending large barges through the crab grounds. Through conversation with Dan Jordan (Columbia River Bar Pilots), Jill will begin sharing Dan's information with crabbers who wish to discuss barge traffic. Additionally, Dan mentioned ships intend to use deep channels where fishing isn't prominent.

National Weather Service, Briana Muhlestein

briana.muhlestein@noaa.gov

Marine Updates*: West Coast Buoys, Marine-Coastal /Long-Period Swell Partner Email briefing, changes to Forecasting, Weather-Ready Nation Marine Ambassador Program, Coastal tornadoes and ENSO correlation, Interactive Marine Threshold Tool, Wave Height and Wind Speed/Gusts/Direction Contingency Tables

*PDF presentation is attached to minutes

Comment: Add Strait of Juan de Fuca as a point of interest

Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management, Whitney Hauer

Whitney.hauer@boem.gov

Updates*: Offshore Wind Energy Planning Efforts in Washington and Oregon, [ORO Wind Map](#), Proposed Call Areas in Oregon and Proposed Schedule

*PDF presentation is attached to minutes



Comment 1: The outside towlanes are not included in the Oregon Call Area analysis. Towlanes are only identified in crab grounds which means some functional towlanes (but not formal towlanes) are missing because there is no crabbing in that area. AIS vessel traffic shows a functional route through the proposed call area, showing vessel traffic from various ports. A navigation route through a potential wind farm may be necessary if the Oregon call area remains in place.

BOEM Response: Need to discuss this issue more offline. Public comments could come from this group about how much beyond the established towlane this group would want a call area to be avoided for further consideration.

Comment 2: BOEM will provide more illustrative and detailed information on type of mooring system in future meetings.

Comment 3: It would be helpful to get dimensions in miles instead of kilometers. If a transit lane were to be implemented in a call area, it would need to be a wide lane.

US Coast Guard Update: Commander Harris

Brendan.J.Harris@uscg.mil

USCG is moving forward with Pac-PARS comments and data. USCG is leaning towards moving forward with administrative process of formally regulating the agreed upon towlanes to become federally regulated fairways. Any changes to the towlanes should be made ASAP.

Discussion: crab pots set in towing lanes

Group comments: both parties (crabbers and tug/tow operators) need to pay attention to where they are operating and keep crab pots out of the towlanes as tug/towboats travel within the towlanes. Tugboats can try to get pot tags when it is safe to do so. Pre-season hold inspections may be the best way to educate fishermen about the towlanes (ex: WSG flier). There is a need and desire for more outreach and education about the towlanes.

University of Washington Towlane Compliance Mapping Project update

Dr. Sunny Jardine, jardine@uw.edu and Leslie Nguyen with University of Washington's School of Marine and Environmental Affairs are creating an interactive map to look at areas around towlanes of interest and depict compliance rates with these agreements with vessel traffic data and fishing traffic data.

Partner Updates

-Jennifer Hagen: buoys off Destruction Island both were broken. The equipment is still out there, and Jennifer can give coordinates to those who are interested.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, November 1st at 11:00am

Hopefully this meeting will be a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting in Astoria and on Zoom.