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Conclusions



Facing the threat of ocean acidification is no easy feat. Yet Washington has risen to the occasion, setting the stage since the Panel's initial work to make significant strides to protect our economy, coastal communities, and quality of life. The work between 2012 and 2017 of State Legislators, agencies, tribes, local jurisdictions, industry, and nongovernmental organizations has demonstrated impressive collaboration and coordination to combat ocean acidification directly.

In 2012, we knew ocean acidification was occurring and posed a significant threat. However, we did not have the information necessary to take definitive, on-the-ground action. Now we can move forward with action. Our scientists and researchers have focused on tackling the important questions managers and decision makers needed to know the answers to in order to effectively act. We know ocean acidification is occurring at greater severity than anticipated in Washington, humans have contributed significantly to the problem through CO₂ emissions, and we've started to understand how local sources and pollutants exacerbate ocean acidification.

Managers and decision makers are using this new knowledge to great effect. Shellfish growers can use predictive and real-time models of ocean acidification variables to make operational decisions, which has improved cultivation. State agencies are

coming together to share data and identify solutions and strategies to implement on state lands. We have never been better equipped to move forward with on-the-ground action. By combining continued research and new scientific findings in how managers and decision makers address the problem, Washington is poised to take significant strides towards addressing ocean acidification.

Washington has the expertise it needs to respond. We have world-class scientists and organizations that can develop and define new innovative solutions. Our shellfish industry is committed to protecting native ecosystems and the resources they depend on for their livelihood. Tribes are engaging the next generation of resource managers to be informed about ocean acidification and its impacts. Continued coordination and attention on ocean acidification is critical for maintaining Washington's ability to address the issue and show the country and the world what an effective response can look like.

MRAC is focused on how best to efficiently leverage resources, to ensure action on ocean acidification moves forward. Collaboration through MRAC has allowed partners to identify opportunities to work together, and to leverage state funds to secure additional funding from the private sector.

The Time to Act is Now

MRAC has shown that the more we work together, the more successful ocean acidification projects can be. We've proven that collaboration is key to getting the most out of research and on-the-ground programs. Work at shellfish hatcheries highlights this as scientists and industry leaders have come together to collect data, communicate it to managers, and identify new techniques and technologies to implement in order to ensure continued shellfish production and ongoing health of our marine economies.

Collaboration also reduces duplication as it cultivates awareness of each other's work. This allows entities to work together to enhance projects based on individual needs, while coordinating efforts, leading to better use of funding and resources.

It is time to harness these resources and continue to tackle the many challenges to come. It is time to continuing transforming our knowledge into action.



Oyster grounds on Willapa Bay. Photo credit: Benjamin Drummond / benjandsara.com