



cascade head

BIOSPHERE COLLABORATIVE



2023-02-07

Representative Ken Helm, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
900 Court St. NE, H-490
Salem, OR 97301

RE: House Bill 2903, Oregon Marine Reserve Program

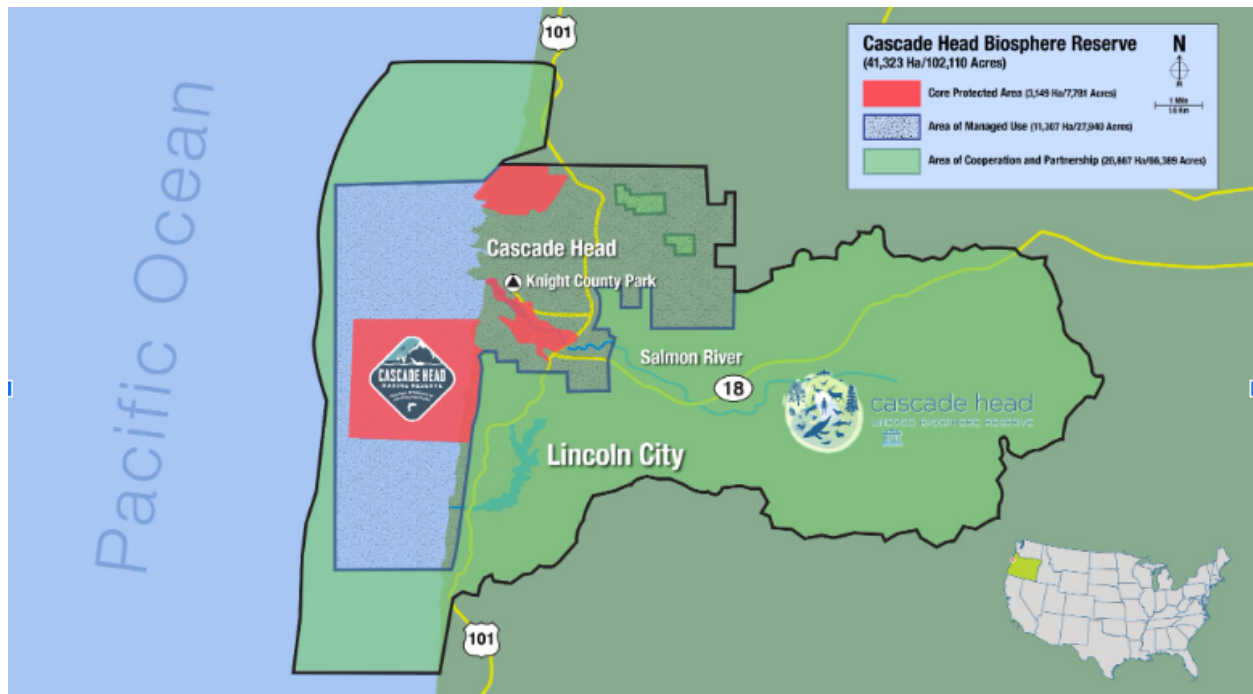
Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water Committee:

The Cascade Head Marine Reserve and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) serve as "Living Laboratories" for understanding our ocean's ecological health and biodiversity. Current data collected within the reserve provide scientists insight into fisheries health and our changing climate, including impacts from Ocean Acidification & Hypoxia. Continuing the research opportunities afforded by the protections will benefit future generations, including providing a long-term data set for which ocean-based policy decisions can be made. This will be possible with continued protection and adequate funding, such as provided in HB 2903 sponsored in a bi-cameral, bi-partisan way by our local Representative David Gomberg, local Senator Dick Anderson, and others.

Statewide & International Designation: Subsequently, and as a result of the State of Oregon's 2014 establishment of the Cascade Head Marine Reserve and Marine Protected Areas, the offshore waters are also now recognized by the United Nations as part of the UNESCO Cascade Head Biosphere Region. Originally established in 1976, the Cascade Head Biosphere Region included upland forests, riverine and estuarine complexes. Through a locally led reauthorization process for the biosphere region, the footprint of this international designation was expanded to include the whole Salmon River watershed, most of Lincoln City, and the Cascade Head Marine Reserve and MPAs¹. Notably other biosphere regions failed to reauthorize, leaving Cascade Head as Oregon's last remaining biosphere region, and one of only 28 across the United States.

¹ UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme. Website.
<https://en.unesco.org/biosphere/eu-na/cascade-head>

While a non-mandatory designation, the international acclaim highlights the biodiversity present in our Land-Sea continuum. The designation is however of importance not only for the ecology, but for the social and economic values it provides as demonstrated by the embrace of the UNESCO designation by the City of Lincoln City² and others. In fact, modern biosphere regions are specifically created for how they can achieve the 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS³ for which member states of the United Nations pledged in 2015. This requires thoughtful approaches to development, anchored in science, such as is provided through the Oregon Marine Reserve program.



Map of the UNESCO Cascade Head Biosphere Region including the Cascade Head Marine Reserve and MPAs

Community Support and Participation: Following the UNESCO reauthorization, a community group -- *Cascade Head Biosphere Collaborative* -- was formed to provide outreach and education about the area, including the Marine Reserve. Using a unique form of Natural Arts and Sciences, we have been actively raising awareness of the importance of the Marine Reserve and MPAs to science and to our community. Being a tourist destination, the benefits derived from a marine reserve on our shores can be shown in the interest and participation of our many activities and offerings. Sold-out events for nature printing, excursions, and community-science projects that are tied directly to the marine reserve are just a few examples. Large attendance of our lecture series and community education classes are other examples. Further, an exhibit at the Oregon Coast Aquarium titled “Thanks be To The Sea” featuring the

² Explore Lincoln City. Website. 2022.

<https://www.oregoncoast.org/things-to-do/beach-water/biosphere-reserve/>

³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development. 17 Sustainable Development Goals. 2015. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Marine Reserve and many of its keystone species has been viewed by over 1.2 million people and is one of their crowd favorites, evidence of the general public's interest and support of the reserve and its function.

In addition, through partnerships with the USFS, OSU Marine Studies Initiative, the Oregon Coast Aquarium, The Nature Conservancy, and ODFW, we are engaged in supplemental, community-science-led research within the reserve. Through the 4CAST Project (Coastal Climate Change + Community Art, Science & Tradition Project) we are studying four habitats from tree to sea. We are also using "*Art to Illuminate Science*" as a way of creating a more inclusive community and understanding of climate change and its impacts⁴. The Cascade Head Marine Reserve is an integral part of that work, serving as one of the major habitats unifying the 4CAST Project and its partners.

Ultimately, as hopefully has been demonstrated, the Oregon Marine Reserve program serves multiple purposes beyond just the value of its intent determined a decade prior. Given its proven and compelling value, we submit to the committee that the program should remain a high priority for the state, accompanied by adequate funding for its continued implementation.

Please support HB 2903. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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⁴ 4CAST Project.Website. 2023. <https://www.4castproject.org/>