

## New Investments in Oregon Ocean Science Research

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The Oregon Ocean Science Trust (OOST) has awarded \$1.1 million in state funding to ocean researchers to help Oregon better understand and monitor and ocean changes. The funding was made available as a result of HB3114, which passed during the 2021 legislative session, and allocated the funds to the Oregon Ocean Science Trust (OOST) to address ocean acidification and hypoxia (OAH) and the risks it poses to the state's economy and ecosystems. Through competitive grants, the funds have been distributed to marine researchers.

“We have completed our competitive bid process to award all of the funding the 2021 Oregon Legislature allocated for these important ocean issues, and we're excited to track and share the results of these important research projects,” said Laura Anderson, Chair of the Oregon Ocean Science Trust.

The funding by the 2021 Oregon Legislature addressed [priority actions in Oregon's OAH Plan](#). The grant funding that has been awarded to date will address OAH in a variety of ways, from developing best management practices that help conserve and restore submerged aquatic vegetation while supporting healthy shellfish populations and aquaculture, to better understanding ecosystem function in subtidal and intertidal marine reserves.

“Oregonians will have a better understanding of the science that drives changes in our ocean and estuaries, which will inform steps everyone can take to ensure we have healthy marine ecosystems for coastal economies and Oregon fisheries.” said Caren Braby, OAH Council Co-Chair.

OAH Council Co-Chair Jack Barth added, “Understanding factors that contribute to ocean acidification and low oxygen levels in water is critical for ocean and estuary conservation and management. The results from these research projects will improve our understanding of changes in oceans and estuaries, and inform conservation and management strategies to mitigate these changes.”

In March of 2022, the OOST awarded grants to:

- Dr. Tarang Khangaonkar and colleagues from the University of Washington along with partners from the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, the University of Oregon, and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians to

evaluate the interaction of water quality and eelgrass in Coos Bay using a biophysical model. A total of \$131,126 will enhance Oregon's ability to inform estuarine conservation and management.

- Dr. Melissa Ward and colleagues from San Diego State University and partners from Oregon State University to develop science-based management practices for co-management of Oregon submerged aquatic vegetation and shellfish. A total of \$170,520 will support the conservation and restoration of estuarine submerged aquatic vegetation while supporting shellfish aquaculture and native shellfish populations.

In February of 2002, the OOST awarded grants to:

- Dr. Francis Chan of Oregon State University to enhance subtidal and intertidal OAH monitoring at Oregon's Marine Reserves. A total of \$385,088 will guide future state investments that protect ecologically important places in Oregon's Territorial Sea.
- Dr. Robert Cowen of Oregon State University Hatfield Marine Science Center to establish a long-term OAH monitoring station in Yaquina Bay, including data collection and dissemination system. A total of \$97,407 will help Oregonians understand impacts of ocean change in an important economic, research, and management hub for Oregon.
- Dr. George Waldbusser of Oregon State University to map the dynamics of OAH in the Yaquina Bay estuary and the related biological responses in native Olympia oysters. A total of \$174,989 will expand scientific knowledge on an ecologically and culturally significant species that is potentially vulnerable to ocean change.
- Pathways Collaborative to develop messaging that helps the public understand the science, impacts, and solutions associated with ocean acidification and hypoxia. A total of \$63,376 will empower coastal communities to take informed actions that contribute to a more robust future using positive, solutions-oriented messaging.

For more information on each project, and to track the progress of each project during the next two years, visit [www.oostoahrfp.com](http://www.oostoahrfp.com) and the [OOST website](#). The OOST will announce additional competitive grant opportunities and awards for applied OAH research, management, and communications in the coming months as a result of House Bill 5202, which provided \$1,000,000 in additional funding added to the OOST research grant program by the 2022 Oregon Legislature. The funds will be used for science and monitoring on nearshore keystone species, including sea otters, nearshore marine ecosystems, kelp and eelgrass habitat, and sequestration of blue carbon.

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