



Orca Regulations Communications Advisory (ORCA) Group Meeting 1 Summary

Photo courtesy of NOAA

Meeting Details

Date	Wednesday, March 13, 2024
Time	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM, PDT
Location	Zoom Webinar
Link to Agenda	https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/about/advisory/orcag/orca-group-meeting-1-agenda.pdf

Follow-up Action Items

- Ross Strategic will update Mural exercise based on the ideas that were generated during the meeting and will share out to ORCA Group Members to populate offline.
- Ross and WDFW will coordinate on developing background materials of past WDFW communications tactics to be shared with the ORCA Group.
- Ross will coordinate with the ORCA Group on scheduling the remaining four ORCA Group meetings.

Summary of Meeting Topics and High-level Discussion Points

Introductions

Shelby Thomas (Ross Strategic) opened the meeting and welcomed the Orca Regulations Communications Advisory (ORCA) Group Members and the members of the public who registered to observe to the first meeting, and then turned it over to Nate Pamplin (WDFW) for introductory remarks from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). After Nate's remarks, the other members of the WDFW team introduced themselves and were followed by the Ross Strategic facilitation team. The session was concluded with brief introductions from the ORCA Group members.

ORCA Group Purpose and Process

Shelby provided an overview of the ORCA Group's purpose, process, and desired outcomes as well as a summary of the new vessel regulations and legislative actions that lead to the creation of the group. After Shelby's overview, Susan Hayman (Ross Strategic) summarized the ORCA Group purpose and foundational legislative and WDFW authorities. She then reviewed working together norms as detailed in [WDFW's Advisory Group Handbook](#) and norms that were raised by ORCA Group members during the one-on-one conversations that Susan and Shelby had with ORCA Group members in preparation for the meetings.

Effective Communication

Shelby started this session by providing a reminder of what the ORCA Group's purpose and desired outcomes are before starting a conversation with the ORCA Group members on how they think the

group can easily assess effective communications approaches. Highlights of this conversation are as follows:

- Multiple members raised that the ORCA Group should first work on defining the end goals for the WDFW communications efforts with regards to the new vessel regulations.
- One member expressed the need to build in an evaluation component into the group's efforts since consistent evaluation of the effectiveness of the communications tactics will alert WDFW to the need to pivot tactics.
- Members raised concerns with the initial communication criteria idea of "Alerts people to presence of SRKW" since this could be counter-productive, especially in the South Sound, to SRKW disturbance reduction by spotlighting their location and encouraging boaters seeking them out. Other members shared that the "ship has sailed" on this concern since there are already existing groups that share this information.
- Multiple members agreed that the ORCA Group should not be 'reinventing the wheel' with their efforts, there should be a strong emphasis on making existing communications programs, like Be Whale Wise, and tactics more effective.
- The importance (and challenges) of enforcement of the new vessel regulations was stressed by multiple members, although the role of WDFW Enforcement is not within the ORCA Group's scope.
- Coordination of communications tactics and messaging of other federal and Canadian regulations with state regulations would help reduce confusion among boaters.

Current Communication Efforts and Gaps

Aaron Provencio (WDFW) provided an overview of the current and past communications tactics that WDFW has used for SRKW vessel regulations. He provided statistics on the print, audio, digital, and television advertisements that WDFW has run and shared potential future communications tactics that WDFW is considering. Aaron concluded his presentation with an overview of the budgets for communications tactics for the current and future fiscal years that the ORCA Group will be advising WDFW on the allocation of. After Aaron's presentation, Shelby asked the ORCA Group members if they had any questions or observations for WDFW, highlights of this discussion are as follows:

- Members asked what level of confidence WDFW has that previous communications tactics reached their intended target audience.
 - The advertisements were targeted based on demographic information, WDFW will confirm the targeting information with their partners and determine if they are able to share this information with the ORCA Group. The effectiveness of communications tactics is one of the areas that WDFW is hoping the ORCA Group will be able to help them determine. Particularly, where more specific impact data (beyond "impressions") is not available.
- ORCA Action Events and Conservation District-sponsored Orca Days were shared as potential venues for sharing new vessel regulation information and testing communications tactics.
- Speaking at yacht clubs or to power squadrons were shared as potential opportunities to directly reach boaters and as a place to start a dialogue with this community.

- Members requested any background market research done for past WDFW communications tactics to be shared with the ORCA Group to help them understand what data informed these decisions.
- The distribution of printed materials with the current regulations at boat launches and other water access points was stressed as an immediate action, since members have observed out of date regulations at these locations that are misinforming boaters.
- A member that has been involved with the Be Whale Wise campaign shared that, based on recent surveys of boaters, the campaign has very high recognition among boaters but a lower percentage of them knew the current vessel regulations. Stressing the importance that current programs like Be Whale Wise have in their brand recognition and could serve as a partner for this effort.
- The idea of sharing current vessel regulations with boat registration renewal notices was discussed among members as a potential way to reach boaters directly and they would be more likely review the regulations when they have time in their own houses as opposed to reading a sign at marina. However, it was shared that these notices are no longer physically mailed to boaters and that current Department of Licensing practice is to just send a reminder email to boat owners at the beginning of the season electronically. Additionally, sending the SRKW vessel regulations to all boaters would probably not be the best allocation of resources since it was shared that a majority of boaters in Washington do not recreate in the Puget Sound or Salish Sea due to their boat size or geographic location.
- A member requested a presentation from the boating community on what they believe effective communications tactics to help inform the group.
- The establishment of sub-groups within the ORCA Group was floated by members as a way to have focused discussions on discreet topics to help achieve results with the short timeline.

Susan reviewed the Mural exercise and noted that a link would be distributed for members to work on before the next meeting. She said that ideas captured at this meeting would be prepopulated before sending out to members.

Public Comment

While thirteen people registered to provide public comment, only one of these individuals was still present on the call to provide comment. This person shared that the questions that they had for their public comment were answered during the meeting and that they were encouraged by the information shared during the meeting.

Meeting Attendees:

Name	Organization	Attendance
Web Hutchins	NA	---
George Harris	Northwest Marine Trade Association	X
Erin Gless	Pacific Whale Watch Association	X
John Boyd	Western Prince	X
April Rebollo	NA	X
David Willis	Recreation Boaters Association of Washington	---
Donna Sandstrom	The Whale Trail	X
Justine Asohmbom	Washington State Department of Ecology	X
Chairman Thomas Wooten	Samish Indian Nation	X
Tisa Annette	Puget Sound Orcas	X
Stephanie Raymond	Orca Network	X
David Bain	The Orca Conservancy	X
Frances Robertson	San Juan County	X
Nate Pamplin	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	X
Julie Watson	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	X
Aaron Provencio	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	X
Ben Anderson	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	X
Shelby Thomas	Ross Strategic	X
Susan Hayman	Ross Strategic	X
Alec Ege	Ross Strategic	X

ORCA Group Members:

April Rebollo	Frances Robertson	Stephanie Raymond
David Bain	John Boyd	Tisa Annette
Donna Sandstrom	Justine Asohmbom	Tom Wooten
Erin Gless	George Harris	

Project Team Members:

Aaron Provencio, WDFW	Nate Pamplin, WDFW	Susan Hayman, Ross Strategic
Alec Ege, Ross Strategic	Shelby Thomas, Ross Strategic	
Ben Anderson, WDFW		
Julie Watson, WDFW		

Members of the Public:

Allison Morgan	Chris Allen-Rich	Deborah Giles
Baggio Ma	Chris German	Emma Giesbrecht
Betty Conley	Courtney Kelley	Fred Felleman
Brie Anderson	Dante Aubert	Grace Ferrara
Cheryl Lahr	David Valteau	Heather Nicholson

Isaac Simonelli
Jasmine Myers
Jason Bell
Jeannie Bucher
Jill Clogston
Joe Olson
Kathleen Callaghy
Kersti Muul
Kevin Bartoy
Leonard Landon
Lisa Hoang
Lorena Landon
Lovel Pratt

Margaret Woodbridge
Mark Pedelty
Miguela Marzolf
Mollie Segall
Nancy Brand
Q Shay
Rachel Lagafuaina
Rein Attemann
Ruth Morales
Samiksha Gulrajani
Sara B
Sarah Geist
Stacey Crofoot

Staci Cahill
Stephanie Raymond
Steve Smith
Susan Shindell
Tammy Sierp
Tara Galuska
Tara Galuska
Todd Hass
Todd Myers
Vaness McNeill
Victoria Flood
Wendell Bunch
Whitney Neugebauer