



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The position of the Elakha Alliance on the designation of Oregon rocky shores habitat

Siletz, OR - Oregon's intertidal and subtidal rocky habitats are of potential importance to a future sea otter population. They offer 1) the needed substrate for bull kelp, 2) complex habitat for many otter prey species, and 3) refuge from winter storms. However, the third-party scientific feasibility team investigating the possibility of an Oregon reintroduction, is just beginning its work, and has yet to identify specific areas for releasing animals, rocky or otherwise.

Sea otter biologists can predict which habitat areas may be suitable for sea otters but the animals themselves will decide which habitat areas to use over time. Among the many challenges of returning sea otters to Oregon is the degradation and loss of kelp forest habitats as well as other environmental changes we do not fully understand. We believe that protecting all rocky habitat areas will help to preserve options for returning sea otters. We commend the work of the Ocean Policy Advisory Council's Rocky Habitat Working Group in highlighting the values of these habitats and in promoting their protection.

