

Ocean Task Force Has a Big, Deep Blue Job Ahead

Local News

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BELLEVUE, Wash. - Washington already has a major effort underway to clean up Puget Sound, while a task force member from the *Marine Conservation Biology Institute* in Bellevue, thinks a national policy will offer a much-needed fresh approach to the problems.

"When we thought about the oceans, we would think about individual activities - dredging, fishing, or shipping - and as

Norse says the U.S. has the largest ocean area of any nation in the world, and there are plenty of reasons to do a better

"Half the oxygen you breathe is generated by the oceans. They provide - oh, a sixth of the world's animal protein. They protect our shorelines, and more people live in the coastal zone than anywhere else."

According to the *Pew Environment Group*, there are 20 federal agencies and about 140 laws related to ocean management. Chris Mann, a senior officer at *Pew*, says a new national policy should help streamline that management.

"If you're standing on a piece of land, you know who the steward is; you know who to go to for management. Nobody owns and controls the ocean, so what we must have is a coordinating mechanism among the many agencies whose activities affect the ocean."

Mann says the oceans also support more than two million jobs in the U.S.

The only task force meeting sites on the West Coast have been in Anchorage and San Francisco, but Elliott Norse says Washingtonians shouldn't take it personally; comments can still be made online.

At www.mcbi.org there's a link to the comment page for the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force.