



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources, Council Chair
Matt Rodriguez, Secretary for Environmental Protection
John Chiang, State Controller, State Lands Commission Chair
Fran Pavley, State Senator
Toni Atkins, State Assemblymember
Geraldine Knatz, Public Member
Michael Brown, Public Member

February 26, 2014

Item 2

Dear California Ocean and Coastal Community,

2014 is off to a fantastic start! Fostering a healthy ocean presents us with incredible challenges and opportunities. We continue to be guided by our 2011 Strategic Plan and are bumping it up a notch to use the metrics of a healthy ocean as our lodestar. Our greatest challenge is the changing climate, and our greatest asset for the ocean is our network of marine protected areas. Everything we are working on needs to be evaluated through these lenses, and we will explore both in our meeting today.

We are deeply immersed in the state's response on adaptation to climate change, and leading the West Coast on ocean acidification and hypoxia. The *Safeguarding California Plan: An Update to the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy* has been released in draft. This document outlines the issues and opportunities for the state, and includes a chapter on the coastal and ocean environment. My staff and I have made presentations on this plan at several events; including last week's San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission meeting. The comments we've received at this meeting and others will be very helpful in framing the state's response. One early action has been the engagement of OPC with the Coastal Zone Management Agencies and the State Lands Commission to discuss principles and areas for improved coordination on adaptation. Climate change adaptation efforts are also ramping up on the national level with President Obama's Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, upon which Governor Brown serves as a member. OPC staff is working with Natural Resources Agency staff to provide the task force with the most up-to-date scientific information, lessons learned from our experience as a national leader in climate adaptation, and recommendations for national policy changes.

Our marine protected areas (MPAs) are thriving. California's core team of state agencies (OPC, CDFW, CF&GC, and CalOST) has been joined by the Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks). The addition of Parks signals an important step forward in integrating other state agencies into the network. At today's meeting you'll receive a briefing about "The California Collaborative Approach: Marine Protected Area Partnership Plan", developed in partnership with CDFW, CF&GC staff, and CalOST with support from Blue Earth Consulting. This document, when completed, will identify how tribes, local and federal government, fishermen, and the public can come together around MPAs in new and innovative ways. Last week, I traveled to southern and central California to engage tribal governments in a discussion about the Plan and to hear from them about how they would like to be involved in MPA management, and ocean issues more broadly. We have a lot to learn from California's original coastal people, and we have the opportunity to engage in new and meaningful partnerships with them.

We also are eager to continue sharing the recently released Coastal Geoportal with new users. OPC staff is hard at work in implementing the strategic plan in the areas of fisheries management, marine debris, and sediment management. We are lucky to have welcomed two amazing Sea Grant fellows, Karen Kayfetz and Liz Parissenti, to our team in mid-January. We have an incredible team, and I am honored to work with them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine Kuhlman".

Cat Kuhlman
Executive Director



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**California Ocean Protection Council (OPC)
Executive Director's Report
February 26, 2014**

The Executive Director's Report provides an update on OPC outcomes and accomplishments since the previous OPC meeting. This report covers December 2013 to February 2014.

1. Strategic Plan Issue Area 1: Science-Based Decision-making

Sea Grant Fellows. The Ocean Protection Council and the California Sea Grant Program are sponsoring eight fellows this year who will be working for the following agencies:

- Ocean Protection Council (two fellows- marine debris and policy generalist),
- State Coastal Conservancy,
- Department of Fish and Wildlife (two fellows – marine division and aquaculture program),
- Coastal Commission,
- State Lands Commission, and
- State Water Resources Control Board.

The California Sea Grant science policy fellows funded in whole or in part by OPC will carry out work to help implement actions identified in the OPC's strategic plan under the themes of climate change, sustainable fisheries and ecosystems, land-sea interactions, ocean uses, and science-based decision-making. The Sea Grant fellows who have been assigned to OPC are Karen Kayfetz (Romberg Tiburon Center/SFSU) and Liz Parissenti (Stanford University). Karen Kayfetz will be primarily working on the issue of marine debris, at both the state and West Coast regional scale through the West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health. Liz Parissenti will be focusing on implementation of the marine protected areas established under the Marine Life Protection Act and helping OPC to continue to strengthen relationships with tribes and tribal communities. The fellows assigned to the other host agencies will carry out ocean and coastal related management tasks as assigned by staff of those agencies.

Seafloor and shoreline mapping. The CA Coastal Data Merge project is complete at last. This highly collaborative project merged the many large elevation data sets along the CA coast such as topographic LiDAR and seafloor mapping data into one seamless map of the California's offshore and onshore coastline. The final maps (1-meter digital elevation models for the entire CA coastline) were delivered to OPC staff in January, and will be available to the public via NOAA's Digital Coast website and linked to the California Coastal Geoportal within the next few months.

California Coastal Geoportal. Since the launch of the California Coastal Geoportal (<http://portal.gis.ca.gov>) last September, the website is averaging approximately 500 hits a month. OPC staff continue to develop training videos to be debuted this spring for use in outreach to Geoportal users and staff expect portal use to continue to increase after these are released. OPC

staff abstracts have also been accepted for the Monterey Bay Marine GIS User Group meeting and CalGIS Conference in April.

2. Strategic Plan Issue Area 2: Climate Change

President's Climate Preparedness and Resilience Task Force – Governor Brown is a member of President Obama's Climate Preparedness and Resilience Task Force, which was convened to develop recommendations on how the Federal government can better support State, local, and tribal governments in achieving resilience through Disaster Preparedness, Built Systems, Natural Resources and Agriculture, and Community Development and Health. OPC staff worked with staff of other agencies to develop recommendations for the Natural Resources and Agriculture Working Group for the Task Force on providing actionable strategies that can be implemented through existing federal agency authorities related to impacts to coastal communities from storms, erosion and sea-level rise and impacts to ocean and coastal ecosystems from climate change.

West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel. The West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel met for the first time in late November and has started developing several products to provide state-level decision-makers with the knowledge needed to evaluate and develop action plans for these complex issues. The science panel is convened under the leadership of the California Ocean Science Trust and Oregon Institute of Natural Resources, and consists of a team of 20 experts from California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. The OPC called for the creation of the science panel last year, and we are excited to collaborate with our West Coast partners on this endeavor. More information about the science panel and their work can be found at <http://westcoastoaah.org/>. Please see more information about West Coast-wide efforts to address ocean acidification and hypoxia under related initiatives below.

Letter to President Obama and Prime Minister Harper regarding Ocean Acidification. On December 11, 2013, Governor Brown, Governor Kitzhaber (OR), Governor Inslee (WA), and Premier Christy Clark (BC) sent a letter to President Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Harper urging increased federal funding for ocean acidification research. The letter was prompted by the Pacific Coast Action Plan on Climate and Energy, which specifically calls for action on ocean acidification. The letter initiated key conversations with NOAA and White House Council on Environmental Quality staff to strengthen the relationship between federal agencies and West Coast entities dealing with the impacts of ocean acidification.

Safeguarding California Plan: An Update to the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy. OPC staff are working in collaboration with Ann Chan, the Deputy Secretary for Climate Change with the Natural Resources Agency, on public outreach for the draft of the oceans and coastal resources chapter of the *Safeguarding California Plan: An Update to the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy*. A public review draft was released in December 2013 and OPC staff members have participated in public meetings seeking input on the draft document. A final version is anticipated by spring of 2014.

State Coastal Leaders Partnership on Sea-level Rise. OPC staff have been in discussions with senior management at the Coastal Zone Management Agencies (Coastal Commission, SF Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Coastal Conservancy) and with the State Lands Commission about the formation of a partnership with OPC, collaborating with other state agencies through the Climate Action Team and with non-state partners to reduce risks from sea-level rise,

storms and erosion. We are excited by this new partnership that we believe will strengthen California's response to sea-level rise. See staff memo for today's meeting for more information.

California Adaptation Forum. OPC staff members are part of the steering committee and review committee for the California Adaptation Forum, which is a collaboration between the Local Government Commission and the State of California and is affiliated with the National Adaptation Forum. The forum will meet August 19-20, 2014 and a call for proposals will be announced February 20th, with a March 20th deadline. The goals of the forum are to build California's climate adaptation capacity by enhancing practitioner networks and by mobilizing action; feature cutting-edge policies, projects, programs and partnerships; and to enable stakeholders to form a community of practitioners and leaders committed to addressing California's adaptation needs. For more information on California Adaptation Forum please visit <http://www.californiaadaptationforum.org/>

3. Strategic Plan Issue Area 3: Sustainable Fisheries and Marine Ecosystems

Marine Protected Areas

MPA Partnership Plan. The OPC continues to facilitate and fund the implementation of California's marine protected areas (MPAs), coordinating diverse partners to ensure that the management and science efforts on MPAs is collaborative and effective. The OPC is in the final stages of drafting "The California Collaborative Approach: Marine Protected Area Partnership Plan". The Partnership Plan is an overarching guide for state agencies and other partners (including: federal, regional, local and tribal governments, tribal communities, NGOs, academic groups, and the private sector) on how to engage in MPA management through a partnership-based approach. The Partnership Plan will be open for a public comment and a tribal comment period in the next few months. The OPC and partner agencies are in the process of conducting statewide tribal outreach on the Partnership Plan, to understand and anticipate how California tribes envision partnership with the state in the management of MPAs. More information about progress developing the plan will be provided during Item 5 of today's agenda.

MPA Collaborative Implementation Project. The MPA Collaborative Implementation Project (MPA CIP), a part of OPC, is working to foster a statewide network of county-based councils dedicated to inter-agency communication and on-the-ground implementation of MPAs in California. "Community Collaboratives", as these groups are known, provide a localized, comprehensive approach to implementation by bringing together local experts and authorities in the areas of: 1. education and outreach, 2. enforcement and compliance, and 3. research and monitoring.

The MPA CIP acts as a liaison between the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), other state agencies, and local agencies to help structure multi-member community partnerships that are better able to communicate the unique needs and goals of each respective sub-region..

There are currently fourteen collaboratives identified along the coast of California in various stages of development. With funding from the MPA CIP, examples of initial implementation projects include a harbor interpretive kiosk, an MPA research symposium, an outreach evaluation process for underserved communities, county-wide MPA brochure and fish guides, and MPA enforcement

training. The statewide MPA collaborative network will communicate and share resources with each other and appropriate state agencies via annual regional forums.

MPA Monitoring. Monitoring the performance of the MPA network is continuing with OPC support. In the North Coast region, the Baseline Program Management Team (CDFW, OPC, MPA Monitoring Enterprise and California Sea Grant) announced 11 projects that will be funded by the OPC to develop a baseline of ocean conditions and human uses in the region. The projects will be conducted by scientists, fishermen, tribes, and citizens groups from 32 different organizations across the region. Four tribal governments (Smith River Rancheria, InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council, Trinidad Rancheria and the Wiyot Tribe) are involved in monitoring projects. The final eleven projects were selected from 17 proposals reviewed by both technical and local experts.

In the Central Coast, OPC staff is working with CDFW and the MPA Monitoring Enterprise on updating the Central Coast Monitoring Plan and planning for ongoing monitoring in the region. OPC staff participated in a series of community gatherings held in the region to learn about local interest and priorities for continued MPA monitoring in the region.

Other MPA outreach efforts. The Thank You Ocean campaign has received a California Coastal Commission Whale Tail grant of \$9,708 to develop electronic MPA training handbooks for docents and naturalists. More information about the campaign follows.

4. Strategic Plan Issue Area 4: Coastal and Ocean Impacts from Land-Based Sources

Marine debris. Sea Grant Fellow Karen Kayfetz has joined the staff of the OPC and will be coordinating efforts to address marine debris priorities as outlined by the Council in your November 2013 review and discussion of the OPC report, *Marine Debris: A Snapshot of Work in California*. The first major action will be to reinvigorate the California Marine Debris Steering Committee. The OPC staff will also be working with state agencies to promote unified messages related to trash reduction and cleanup efforts.

The West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health (WCGA) has been advancing actions outlined in the Marine Debris Strategy released last year. In particular, substantial progress has been made on the recently launched [West Coast Marine Debris Database](#). The database is the first of its kind in the nation. The goal of the database is to consolidate and publish all of the beach cleanup event and derelict fishing gear data collected along the West Coast in one central location. The WCGA is also working to implement a use-case scenario to visualize information within the Marine Debris Database in conjunction with other pertinent data that would help to tell the story of marine debris on the West Coast. The data portal would provide a tool to identify and analyze patterns and trends in marine debris, for example, habitat, ocean currents, bathymetry, etc. Finally, efforts are underway to broaden coordination of marine debris work on the West Coast through the formation of a Marine Debris Coalition.

Coastal Sediment Management. The California Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup (CSMW), co-chaired by the California Natural Resources Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), is currently working with local and regional governments, NGOs and consultants to develop coastal regional sediment management plans (CRSMPs) for the majority of the California coast. Each CRSMP is intended to formulate locally relevant consensus-driven sediment management policy and guidance in order to restore, preserve and maintain coastal beaches and

other critical areas of sediment deficit. Regional sediment management will sustain recreation and tourism, enhance public safety and access, and restore coastal sandy habitats. Progress on CRSMP development is advancing as follows:

Completed CRSMPs:

- San Diego, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties: environmental documents for implementation completed
- Southern Monterey Bay: Environmental document preparation to begin

Currently under development:

- San Francisco Open Coast: draft CRSMP to be released for public review in Spring 2014, with outreach and governance support from Association of Bay Area Governments
- Los Angeles County, Orange County, Eureka/Humboldt Bay region, San Francisco Central Bay: drafted and under review by CSMW management committee
- Northern Monterey Bay: Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary will provide outreach and governance support for CRSMP effort
- Morro Bay/San Luis Obispo: San Luis Obispo Council of Governments has committed to providing outreach and governance support.

The CSMW is currently planning six facilitated public stakeholders meetings throughout coastal California to inform and present different portions of the California Sediment Master Plan (SMP). It is important to note that the SMP is not one document per se, but a body of work consisting primarily of CRSMPs, informational and scientific reports, and computer-based tools.

Additionally, CSMW has contracted with the Ocean Science Trust to provide peer review services for CSMW-commissioned documents prepared to assess and recommend appropriate mitigation measures for impacts associated with typical sediment management activities that might be recommended in CRSMPs.

5. Strategic Plan Issue Area 5: Existing and emerging ocean uses

Desalination. OPC staff continue to participate in the Seawater Desalination State Interagency Working Group. The State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) pending draft policy on desalination and brine discharge has been the issue most actively discussed by this working group.

Related Initiatives

West Coast Ocean Data Portal. The West Coast Governors Alliance recently launched the West Coast Ocean Data Portal (<http://portal.westcoastococeans.org/>). Building off existing state and federal portals (including the newly launched California Geoportal) this portal curates information to help users easily find what they need. It will help managers, researchers, and the general public discover data relevant to West Coast ocean issues such as tracking sources and patterns of marine debris, adaptation to sea-level rise, understanding impacts of ocean acidification on our coasts, and marine planning. This is a first step in creating a suite of analysis and communication tools to help connect data and people to inform issues unique to the West Coast region.

Thank You Ocean. The [Thank You Ocean](#) campaign, a partnership between the state of California and the federal Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, is currently running a six month Facebook social media campaign and has approximately doubled the number of “likes” on [Thank You Ocean’s community page](#). Every day, Thank You Ocean circulates great ocean photos, items of interest, and information that other organizations can share on their social networks. The Facebook page currently has 33,749 and started at 17,542 “likes” in mid-November. The campaign also received a California Coastal Commission Whale Tail grant of \$9,708 to develop electronic marine protected area training handbooks for docents and naturalists.

If you would like more detailed and specific information regarding the initiatives we have covered, please contact me at catherine.kuhlman@resources.ca.gov.