



**California Ocean Protection Council (OPC)
Executive Director's Report
June 29, 2016**

The Executive Director's Report provides an update on OPC outcomes and accomplishments since the previous OPC meeting. This report covers February to June 2016¹.

Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1): please see the staff recommendations from today's meeting for further information.

Staffing: In May 2016, Valerie Termini left the OPC to become the Executive Director of the Fish and Game Commission. Valerie led OPC's efforts on fisheries management and so will parlay her OPC experience to her new role. We wish Valerie the best in her new role and look forward to continued partnerships with her.

In March 2016, we welcomed Holly Wyer to our staff. Holly had previously worked for the State Lands Commission where her work focused on industrial and emerging uses in the ocean, including offshore renewable energy. In 2011, Holly earned a master's in Environmental Science & Management from the Bren School at UC Santa Barbara, and she earned a B.A. from Western Washington University in 2008. Holly is leading up the OPC's efforts to improve water quality, including reducing the amount of trash that ends up on California ocean and shorelines.

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

California Seafloor and Coastal Mapping Program: The OPC, USGS, and NOAA formed a state-federal California Seafloor and Coastal Mapping Program Steering Committee in April 2015 to advise these agencies on the priorities for the future of the program. The Steering Committee met for the third time on November 10, 2015 at which point they provided staff with direction to develop 4-5 packages of options for the program at various funding levels. OPC staff is continuing to work with other state agencies to understand their mapping priorities and what products would be of greatest utility to them. Staff anticipate convening the final meeting of

¹The present ED report contains descriptions of OPC grants or contracts that have closed since the last OPC meeting. Each grant or contract is described under the header of the OPC strategic plan issue the work is intended to address.

the Steering Committee in summer 2016 and will produce a document that reflects the Steering Committee's priorities for the future of the program.

Closed grants/contracts within Science-Based Decision-making

California Seafloor Mapping Program (CNRA Agreement #0-07-082): This contract with the US Geological Survey resulted in map products for 30% of the mainland coast. The map products include eleven different sheets of information (e.g. benthic habitat, geology, sediment distribution) that are intended to be more useful to decision-makers and managers than raw bathymetric data alone. The map products are available from the US Geological Survey's website at <http://walrus.wr.usgs.gov/mapping/csmp/index.html>. The raw bathymetric and backscatter data are available from CSU Monterey Bay's website: <http://seafloor.otterlabs.org/csmp/csmp.html>

Strategic Plan Issue Area 2: Climate Change

Update to State Sea-level Rise Guidance Document: OPC is coordinating with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research and other policy and technical experts on updating the State Sea-level Rise Guidance Document, which was last updated in 2013. The update will make the document relevant to local governments, since SB 379 (Jackson) requires local governments to address climate impacts as part of General Plans and Local Hazard Mitigation Plans. The update will also reflect the changing science on sea-level rise.

Sea-level Rise Planning Database and Resources on Cal-Adapt: OPC has granted funds to University of California at Berkeley to develop a searchable database of sea-level rise planning information and to improve the resources on Cal-Adapt on sea-level rise. OPC will be surveying state agencies, ports, airports and utilities on the status of sea-level rise planning activities this summer and at the end of this year, pursuant to AB 2516 (Sea Level Rise Planning: Database).

Implementation of Governor's Executive Order B-30-15: OPC's Climate Policy Advisor is participating as part of the Technical Advisory Group for implementation of Executive Order B-30-15. The Technical Advisory Group is developing an action plan and tool for state agencies to use by the end of 2016 that identifies the climate scenarios and how to conduct planning and investments to take climate change impacts into account according to guiding principles such as prioritizing natural infrastructure and protecting the state's most vulnerable populations.

Update on Safeguarding California: Implementation Action Plans: OPC's Executive Director serves as sector lead for the Oceans and Coastal Resources and Ecosystem Sector for

the [Safeguarding California Plan](#), which presents the state's climate adaptation strategy. OPC led the development of an Implementation Plan for the ocean and coastal sector of the *Safeguarding California Plan*. Public comment was received in December 2015 and OPC staff incorporated feedback provided by the ocean and coastal stakeholder community. The [Implementation Plans](#) were released in March 2016. OPC will continue to function as the sector lead with an upcoming status report this summer, as well as the update to Safeguarding California Plan anticipated in 2017. For more information, see <http://resources.ca.gov/climate/safeguarding/>.

West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science and Policy Efforts: For more information, please see the staff memo presented at the June 29, 2016 meeting.

Strategic Plan Issue Area 3: Sustainable Fisheries and Marine Ecosystems

Update on closure of Dungeness and Rock Crab Fisheries: High domoic acid levels have been detected in many marine species along the California coast, ultimately resulting in the closures of the Rock crab and Dungeness crab fisheries in late 2015. As of early June 2016, the recreational and commercial fisheries for these two species are open except for areas north of Santa Cruz.

Harmful Algal Blooms Working Groups: At the last OPC meeting in February, the OPC directed staff to convene a HAB task force to help address interagency research and scientific needs related to HABs as they occur throughout the ecosystem and in particular, the Dungeness crab fishery. Subsequently, OPC staff tasked California Ocean Science Trust to convene an OPC Science Advisory Team (OPC-SAT) working group to explore harmful algal blooms (HABs) toxins. The first phase of this working group will tackle the short term questions determined by the aforementioned Inter-Agency Harmful Algal Bloom Task Force (Task Force). By July 2016 the OPC-SAT working group will complete a short informational document for submission to the Task Force. This guidance document will provide insight and information to the state on monitoring of marine HABs and seafood sampling efforts. Ocean Science Trust will also develop, in partnership with the Task Force, a fact sheet to be utilized by state managers in communicating about HABs, seafood testing, and monitoring to the public with solicited input from the OPC-SAT working group and key state managers along the west coast.

The second phase of the OPC-SAT working group will focus on an analysis and synthesis of long term impacts of domoic acid in the marine environment. This document will provide state managers information about needed investments to better predict and plan for future HAB events. On April 28, OPC Executive Director Halberstadt presented at the Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture hearing, *Crab Season and Domoic Acid: Lessons Learned*, and

specifically addressed these multiple efforts of OPC staff and their partners over the coming months.

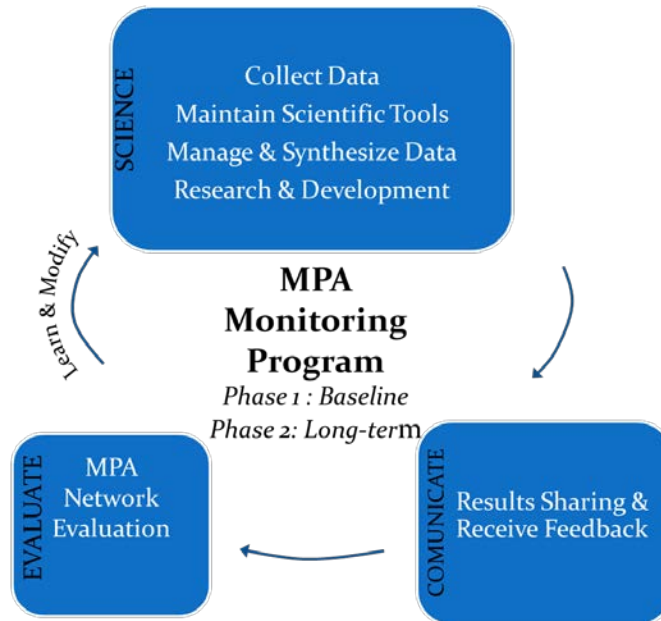
Dungeness Crab Working Group on Whale Entanglements: Last fall, the OPC and CDFW convened an informal working group to further explore short and long-term strategies to reduce the risk of whale entanglements in Dungeness crab fishing gear. The working group developed a Best Practices Guide for Dungeness crab permit holders, which is available here: http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/media_library/2015/08/Best-Practices-Guide_FINAL-10-28-15.pdf. On May 24, CDFW issued a letter to all Dungeness crab permit holders requesting that they implement best practices to reduce whale entanglements; the letter included the Best Practices Guide. The working group is continuing to meet this season to report on implementation of its short-term strategies and develop long-term strategies. The first meeting of the working group is planned for July 13-14, 2016.

Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Plan (FMP): On April 13, 2016, the California Fish and Game Commission (FGC) adopted the California Spiny Lobster FMP to guide future management of the fishery as required by the Marine Life Management Act. This was the culmination of a multi-year effort which included significant involvement from user groups and both agency and academic scientists to develop a comprehensive plan to sustainably manage this important commercial and recreational fishery. CDFW sought an independent assessment of whether the technical components and supporting documents that underpin the proposed reference points and their thresholds prescribed in the FMP are scientifically sound and reasonable given CDFW's currently available data streams and analysis techniques. That review reported that "CDFW produced an FMP that is user-friendly and readable by broad audiences, is well referenced, and incorporates the effects of no-take marine protected areas for the first time in a state-managed fishery."

MPA Monitoring Program: The California Natural Resource Agency has received an ongoing General Fund baseline allotment of \$2.5 million to support long-term MPA monitoring throughout the state beginning in FY 15/16 (funds are administered by the Ocean Protection Council staff). Although this is below the previous estimate of \$1 million dollars per region annually, this is a significant step in funding and will allow for substantive advances in building the long-term MPA Monitoring Program.

Future spending will be guided by Statewide MPA Monitoring Action Plan that will be created during 2016 and early 2017. The development will be led by DFW, OPC and California Ocean Science Trust utilizing a post-doctoral researcher to aggregate the existing science, monitor partner insights and community priorities for monitoring in order to create

a detailed road-map for long-term MPA Monitoring Program. The Action Plan will also include recommendations about how to evaluate the effectiveness and adapt the monitoring in the future if required. Updates on the development process will be posted on OceanSpaces.org.



MPA Monitoring Program Phase 1 Update: Data collection and formal technical reporting of Phase 1 baseline monitoring have completed in the North Central, Central and South Coast MLPA Regions. All information collected, including the raw data and technical reports from these projects can be downloaded and on OceanSpaces.org under the “MPA Monitoring” section of the website. The technical reports available on the site were peer-reviewed and contain a wealth of new insights about the conditions across the coast at the time of MPA network implementation.

A summary highlighting key result from the baseline monitoring for the North Central and Central Coast Regions can be found on OceanSpaces.org. Formal communication efforts have been completed in the North Central and Central regions via workshops, meetings and utilization of traditional and social media outlets to share the results of Phase 1 with the local communities and stakeholders. These efforts have reinvigorated community connections made through the MPA siting process and have established an ongoing dialogue with local communities to ensure wide dissemination of future results and participation in MPA management.

Efforts are underway to share the results of South Coast baseline monitoring. A series of snapshot reports will be release over the next several months and will share highlights from many of the state-funded South Coast MPA baseline projects and beyond. Some snapshot report topics include monitoring of key habitats like the rocky intertidal, kelp and shallow rock, and sandy beach, as well as monitoring results from the northern Channel Islands, where MPAs have been in place since 2003. The snapshot reports will lead up to the launch of the South Coast State of the Region report at the end of 2016 that will share in detail the results of the Phase 1 baseline monitoring of the MPA Monitoring Program. After the release of the report there will be a series of community meetings and the use of other communication tools to ensure wide dissemination of the State of the Region to the south coast community.

The North Coast Region has completed data collection for the majority of the Phase 1 baseline monitoring. Over the next ten months researchers will compile the results into technical reports and upload the raw data to OceanSpaces.org. As with the other Regions, these reports will go through a scientific technical review to ensure that the results are scientifically robust. After the final submission of the technical reports after the peer-review a State of the Region Report will be completed and formalize efforts to the share the results with the north coast community will begin. Those efforts are expected to begin in the summer of 2017.

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

Marine Debris Program: OPC staff has been working with the NOAA Marine Debris Program to develop an updated and expanded *Implementation Strategy for the California Ocean Protection Council Resolution to Reduce and Prevent Ocean Litter* (Strategy). The original Strategy was finalized in 2008 and focused specifically on the Council’s 2007 resolution. Since that time, the State has taken a number of actions to reduce marine debris, including passage of the bag ban and microbead ban, and adoption of the trash amendments. Since the State has taken these actions, updating the strategy would outline a path forward to reduce marine debris for the next several years. Development of an updated Strategy would include a planning process and workshops to allow for stakeholder participation. The updated Strategy would include actionable items for implementation and the first workshop for stakeholder participation would be expected to occur in late 2016 or early 2017.

Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup: In March the Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup (CSMW) which is co-chaired by staff from the OPC and the U.S Army Corps of Engineers finalized Coastal Regional Sediment Management (RSM) Plans for the San Luis Obispo Region and the San Francisco Open Coast. During the course of developing each plan, the CSMW provided several opportunities for public input and discussion. In a nutshell, RSM Plans

create strategies and identify projects to beneficially re-use sediment for beach and environmental restoration, enhancing recreation, promotion of tourism, increasing natural shore protection, and maintaining coastal resilience. Later this summer, consultants will be selected by the CSMW to draft environmental assessments for each RSM plan.

Strategic Plan Issue Area 5: Existing and Emerging Ocean Uses

South Coast Water District Proposed Doheny Desalination Project: At the request of the South Coast Water District, OPC staff facilitated a meeting on May 24, 2016 between the district and state/federal regulatory and land management agencies. The proposed project location is near Doheny State Beach in Orange County. The district is currently preparing a draft environmental impact report. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an early exchange of ideas about the project; it did not commit the project proponents or regulatory community in any way. For more information on this project, please see http://www.scwd.org/projects/doheny_ocean_desalination.asp

Intergovernmental Marine Renewable Energy Task Force: In a May 12th letter to Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, Governor Brown requested formation of an Intergovernmental Marine Renewable Energy Task Force. When constituted, the task force will provide a forum for state and federal agencies to work on issues relating to the siting and permitting of marine renewable energy (MRE) on the federal outer continental shelf in addition to the sharing of information on MRE technology. The Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management (BOEM) which will officiate the task force on behalf of the Department of Interior has already been in contact with Governor's office and OPC staff to discuss next steps in task force formation. (The OPC currently chairs a state work group on MRE.) For more information please see <http://www.boem.gov/press05312016/>.

Other MRE Related Events: On May 25, OPC Executive Director Halberstadt participated in a California Energy Commission workshop on marine renewable energy and on June 9, OPC staff assisted BOEM in holding an interagency meeting on the proposed Trident Wind Project off of Morro Bay.

Related Initiatives

18th Annual California Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photography Contest: In celebration of World Ocean Day on June 8, the 18th Annual California Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photography Contest opened (<http://mycoastalphoto.com>). The contest pays tribute to the amazing California coast and ocean by featuring photos of the scenic coast and Pacific Ocean off California, people and the California coast, or California ocean and coastal wildlife. The

contest is sponsored by the Thank You Ocean Campaign (staffed by OPC and NOAA), the California Coastal Commission, and the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts. Deadline for photo entry is 5:00 pm PDT July 18, 2016. Deadline to vote on photos is 5:00 pm PDT July 29, 2016.