



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Mike Chrisman, *Secretary for Resources, Council Chair*
 Cruz Bustamante, *Lieutenant Governor*
 Alan Lloyd, *Secretary for Environmental Protection*
 Sheila Kuehl, *State Senator, Ex officio Member*
 Pedro Nava, *State Assemblymember, Ex officio Member*

Ocean Protection Council Priorities and Guidelines for Sea Grant Research Proposals

This document provides guidance to researchers preparing proposals to submit to Sea Grant for possible funding by the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC).

Background

Creation of the OPC was mandated by the California Ocean Protection Act (COPA), which makes specific declarations regarding the preservation of ecosystems and the tools necessary to achieve those protections. Principally, COPA charges the OPC with coordinating the activities of ocean-related state agencies to improve the effectiveness of protection efforts within existing fiscal limitations; establishing policies to coordinate the collection and sharing of scientific data related to coast and ocean resources between agencies; identifying and recommending to the Legislature changes in state and federal law and policy; and providing grants or loans for projects or activities that improve the management and protection of ocean and coastal resources and ecosystems.

At its public meeting on September 23, 2005, the OPC authorized a partnership with California's two Sea Grant programs for the purposes of funding scientific research supporting OPC research priorities. These priorities are defined by the California Ocean and Coastal Information, Research, and Outreach Strategy (IRO)¹, which was adopted at this same meeting. The OPC approved disbursement of \$1,000,000 of tidelands oil revenues to the two Sea Grant programs (\$800,000 to California Sea Grant College Program, \$200,000 to University of Southern California Sea Grant Program) to award and administer grants for high-quality, peer-reviewed, scientific research.

According to reports by the US Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission, ecosystem-based management should be a cornerstone of new ocean policies. Ecosystem-based management is a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to resource management that accounts for the interconnectedness of the entire ecosystem (including humans) with the goal of maintaining ecosystem health, productivity, and resilience so that it can continue to provide essential services. Ecosystem-based management does not focus on a single species, activity, or sector. Rather, it addresses multiple species, habitats, and cumulative impacts, and recognizes the interdependencies of ecological, social, economic, and institutional perspectives.² COPA reiterates California's policy for implementing ecosystem-focused management and emphasizes that governance of ocean resources must be guided by these principles.

Guidelines for Research

The OPC will fund research that meets the priorities defined in the IRO. *The overarching priority for research funded by the OPC in response to Sea Grant's 2006 call for proposals is ecosystem-based management.*

Research projects must address or substantially contribute to management, protection, conservation, or restoration of the State's coastal and ocean resources. These endeavors must support the mandatory provisions of COPA and be consistent with the actions contained in Governor Schwarzenegger's ocean action plan³.

¹ http://resources.ca.gov/copc/InfoResOut_Strategy_final.pdf

² McLeod, K. L., J. Lubchenco, S. R. Palumbi, and A. A. Rosenberg. 2005. Scientific Consensus Statement on Marine Ecosystem-Based Management. Signed by 219 academic scientists and policy experts with relevant expertise and published by the Communication Partnership for Science and the Sea at <http://compassonline.org/?q=EBM>.

³ http://resources.ca.gov/ocean/Cal_Ocean_Action_Strategy.pdf



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Results of funded projects will preferably be disseminated in a product accessible by managers or conveyed to policymakers. Proposed research that includes, benefits, or results in ecosystem-based management applications will be ranked as higher priority during the review process. Research will be considered that involves cross-boundary or regional aspects, such as regional and international coordination. In addition to these considerations, proposals should incorporate the following requirements defined in the IRO:

- Demonstrate how the project can assist, complement, or augment the work of government agencies or private sector interests in their efforts to manage, protect, conserve, or restore coastal or ocean resources;
- Be supported by, prepared in cooperation with, or of expressed interest to a public or private entity involved with the management, protection, conservation, or restoration of coastal or ocean resources; and
- Promote or be of discernible benefit to current or future generations.

Proposals from non-academic research institutions are welcome, and collaborative efforts are preferred. In general, research projects should pertain to the following categories listed in the IRO:

1. Fisheries and Aquaculture
2. Organisms, Habitats, and Ecosystems
3. Coastal Hazards, Shoreline Processes, and Beaches
4. Water, Air, and Sediment Quality
5. Invasive Species

Applicants are encouraged to review the IRO for additional information on the priority needs within each of these categories. Cross-cutting needs that apply to many or all of the categories include monitoring programs, social and economic data, technology and engineering for sustainable coastal industries, and climate change.

Review Process

Proposals will undergo the same review process as all other Sea Grant proposal submissions, including review by the Resources Agency Sea Grant Advisory Panel (RASGAP), which will review proposals for OPC priorities. The OPC will have staff involved in all stages of the review process, including the technical review and final decision-making. Concurrence on the selected research projects will be required from the OPC before funds are awarded.