

State of California

Ocean Protection Council

Draft Equity Plan

May 2022



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Bilingual Services

OPC intends on releasing a final version of the Equity Plan in Spanish. If there are any language considerations or requests before then, please contact: Maria Rodriguez at maria.rodriguez@resources.ca.gov.

Servicios Bilingües

OPC tiene la intención de publicar una versión final del Plan de Equidad en español. Si hay alguna consideración o solicitud de idioma antes de esa fecha, comuníquese con: María Rodríguez en maria.rodriguez@resources.ca.gov.

DRAFT

Call to Action

Ocean Protection Council (OPC) is mandated to protect California's coast and ocean for current and future generations. To be successful, our work must be inclusive and reflect the diversity of perspectives and needs of California's communities. This requires intentional and sustained action to ensure our efforts are equitable and provide benefits to all Californians. To achieve this commitment, it is necessary to acknowledge the painful history of genocide against California Native American tribes and the well-documented displacement, prejudices and barriers experienced by tribes and historically marginalized and underserved communities throughout California.

This Equity Plan (Plan) represents OPC's comprehensive commitment to advancing equity across ocean and coastal policies and actions in California and strengthening internal efforts to create a more inclusive workplace at OPC. The Plan outlines priorities, milestones, and outcomes to increase communication and outreach; provide targeted funding and technical assistance; improve staff training and capacity; strengthen environmental justice policies; and further integrate community science and expertise, and tribal expertise and knowledges into decision-making.

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Introduction

Equity and Environmental Justice at California's Ocean and Coasts

California is home to a growing population that is increasingly diverse. At the time of this Plan's adoption, more than 39 million people, or one-eighth of all residents in the U.S., are projected to live in the state – and though no single race or ethnic group represents the majority of California residents, communities of color make up 65% of the state's population. Notably, Latinxs represent the state as the single largest ethnic group since 2014, and more than 10 million of the state's residents identify as immigrants.^{1 2}

Generations of injustices towards California's Native American tribes and communities, people of color, and other marginalized populations through displacement from ancestral lands, discriminatory land use policies, desecration of sacred lands and cultural resources, and concentration of environmental pollution has resulted in inequitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens that still disproportionately burden these communities today.³ Historic inequalities, as well as California's growing population, changing demographics, socio-economic forces, judicial decisions, and policy choices have and continue to shape development patterns and population shifts that widen the disparity gap.⁴

Equitable access to the coast for all Californians is essential, and so is protecting coastal natural resources for future generations. Taking an environmental justice approach to coastal policy requires a fundamental rethinking of who is connected to the coast, and how. For instance, California Native American tribes and communities with cultural ties to the coast depend on access to ancestral lands and waters, sacred sites, and cultural and natural resources to

¹ Johnson, Hans, et al. 2020. "California's Population." Public Policy Institute of California.

<https://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-population/#:~:text=No%20race%20or%20ethnic%20group,according%20to%20the%202020%20Census>

² Yara Simón. "Hispanic vs. Latino vs. Latinx: A Brief History of How These Words Originated." 2018. Remezcla. <https://remezcla.com/features/culture/latino-vs-hispanic-vs-latinx-how-these-words-originated/>

³ CalEPA. 2021. "Pollution and Prejudice." 2021. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f167b251809c43778a2f9f040f43d2f5>

⁴ California Coastal Commission. 2019. *Environmental Justice Policy*. https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/assets/env-justice/CCC_EJ_Policy_FINAL.pdf

maintain their lifeways and traditional practices, yet their unique perspectives are frequently overlooked or undervalued. Environmental justice communities across the country who have been working in this policy arena for decades have noted that wherever low-income communities and communities of color are predominantly concentrated in coastal regions, they are frequently disconnected from the coast itself, by both social and physical barriers.⁵

This Plan is a living document that will guide OPC to develop policymaking and research procedures that incorporate the knowledge, perspectives, needs, and desires of historically underrepresented groups across California. Through the development of equity policies and procedures, OPC, along with other governmental agencies and external partners, can act as changemakers to provide more equitable access to internal policy, engagement, funding and science approaches, in ways that elevate an ocean and coastal system that is vibrant for all. OPC is looking to advance equity across California by uplifting communities, particularly California Native American tribes and environmental justice communities, through internal and external approaches. The Plan is a seminal step for advancing inclusive policy development and helps implement Goal 2 of OPC's [Strategic Plan to Protect California's Coast and Ocean: 2020-2025](#) (Strategic Plan), "Advance Equity Across Ocean and Coastal Policies and Actions."

OPC as a Changemaker for California Coastal and Ocean Policy and Research

OPC's singular position within the California state government offers a unique opportunity to connect community perspectives and needs to influence equitable policy making at multiple scales. OPC, established by the [California Ocean Protection Act \(COPA\)](#), is a Cabinet-level state policy body nested within the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) that implements the Governor's priorities for coastal and ocean policy. Specifically, OPC protects California's coast and ocean by advancing innovative science-based policy and management, making strategic investments, and catalyzing action through partnerships with state agencies and external partners to improve efficiency

⁵ California Coastal Commission. 2019. *Environmental Justice Policy*. https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/assets/env-justice/CCC_EJ_Policy_FINAL.pdf

and effectiveness. These strategies are inclusive of broader management, stewardship, and collaboration with community partners engaging in efforts to protect coastal and ocean health in California. [Appendix A](#) provides additional context on OPC's core functions.⁶

Through the implementation of its [Strategic Plan](#), OPC is embarking on numerous equity initiatives that are simultaneous to the development of the Equity Plan. Collaborative efforts include: OPC's Tribal Engagement Strategy, an initiative to improve consultation and engagement with California Native American tribes, integrate tribal priorities into the conservation and restoration of coastal natural resources, identifying opportunities for increased access, co-management, and ancestral land return, and advance tribal stewardship of California's coastal and ocean ecosystems; and with leadership from the State Coastal Conservancy and Coastal Commission, the development of a "Coastal Access for All" Plan that ensures equitable public access to and along the ocean by 2025.

Collaborative partnerships with state agencies on the forefront of regulatory, policy, and financial decision-making and action around California's coasts and ocean are critical to advance equitable policy and research that is inclusive of community perspectives and needs. This Plan calls for ongoing collaboration with federal, state, tribal, and local governments, universities, research institutions, non-profits, educators, industry, community members, and additional stakeholders to advance collective environmental justice and equity priorities.

About the Equity Plan

The Equity Plan is a guiding document for OPC Councilmembers and staff to help advance equity and environmental justice along the California coast and beyond. By approaching equity as both internal and external efforts for OPC, the Plan proposes measurable actions that empower the agency to create solutions for strategic leadership and partnership, inclusive cultural and recruitment practices, improved engagement and funding distribution,

⁶ [Appendix A](#) provides additional context on OPC's core functions.

comprehensive sourcing of knowledge, and advanced access to ocean and coastal spaces.

The Equity Plan highlights priorities within coastal and ocean policymaking and research that are primed for statewide action. Importantly, the goals, objectives, and strategies proposed in the Plan are a product of a collaborative design process that engaged OPC staff, OPC leadership, and [OPC's Environmental Justice Advisory Group](#), a 13-member group of stakeholder representatives from seven regions across the state. The Environmental Justice Advisory Group, convened by OPC to co-author and facilitate the development of the Plan, is further described in [Appendix B](#).

As OPC's inaugural comprehensive Equity Plan, the Plan recommends strategies to establish the foundation for existing and future needs. During the implementation process, baseline analyses will help inform performance measures, such as benchmarks and other metrics, to provide a systematic process to track progress and accountability. To improve implementation, sustain accountability, and operationalize equity within the organization, OPC commits to biennial assessments to:

- 1) Evaluate progress and conduct reporting; and
- 2) Identify future updates to the Plan (e.g., changes and refinements to recommendations) based on assessment outcomes.

OPC will report on Equity Plan progress and milestones on a quarterly and annual basis respectively leading up to the biennial assessment. OPC may utilize quantitative, qualitative, and anecdotal data as potential metrics to inform reporting.

Equity Plan Goals

OPC's ocean and coastal priorities and the recommendations of OPC's Environmental Justice Advisory Group led to the development of four goals focused on core areas (Engagement, Inclusive Workplace, Policy, and Science) that advance equity and justice within the state and the Council.

Equitable Outreach, Engagement, and Funding

- **Goal 1:** Establish and implement more equitable and sustainable community engagement and funding methods to expand and enhance opportunities for ocean and coastal projects, policies, and research.

Building an Inclusive Workplace and Workforce for California's Coast and Ocean

- **Goal 2:** Create a more inclusive workplace through creative and equitable employee recruitment and retention, building staff fluency on environmental justice, and increasing internal staff capacity.

Designing Equitable Ocean and Coastal Policymaking

- **Goal 3:** Lead equitable ocean and coastal policymaking in California.

Integrating Equity in Coastal and Ocean Science and Research

- **Goal 4:** Lead the state in a comprehensive approach to coastal and ocean science by valuing and integrating broader knowledge sources to enhance the understanding of OPC's areas of research.

These four core areas and corresponding goals and strategies will support the transformative policy and research OPC was designed to facilitate by establishing direct and measurable procedures to advance equity.

OPC Tribal Engagement Strategy

OPC has embarked on a separate but parallel process specific to engagement with California Native American tribes. The OPC Tribal Engagement Strategy, scheduled to be considered for adoption by the Council by the end of this year, will provide a framework for enhanced partnership between OPC and tribes on ocean and coastal matters. The Tribal Engagement Strategy, which was developed through consultation and collaboration with tribes, provides specific actions that OPC will undertake to enhance tribal engagement in all aspects of its work. It further provides OPC's approach to respectfully seeking, discussing, and considering the views of tribes, primarily through robust government-to-government consultation, but also through other engagement approaches as appropriate. OPC's Tribal Engagement Strategy and Equity Plan are intended to be complementary documents. While the Tribal Engagement Strategy is specifically focused on government-to-government relationships with California Native American tribes, this Equity Plan includes and addresses recommendations to support tribal governments and communities outside of the government-to-government context.

Equitable Engagement, Outreach, and Funding

Goal 1: *Establish and implement more equitable and sustainable community engagement and funding methods to expand and enhance opportunities for ocean and coastal projects, policies, and research.*

Many California communities, particularly low-income and communities of color have historically lacked equitable investments in resources, and are persistently excluded from policy decisions that directly impact their environmental health and quality of life. Meaningful community outreach, engagement, and funding are important pathways to mending relationships and establishing partnerships with California Native American tribes and communities, and environmental justice communities. OPC recognizes that following this approach requires CNRA and OPC to provide resources and support in ways that are respectful and proportional to each communities' needs.

OPC holds two significant roles within CNRA that advance meaningful outreach, engagement, and funding opportunities in equity and environmental justice. First, as a convener for all coastal and ocean state agencies, OPC has the ability to identify opportunities and linkages between interagency groups and community partners. Second, as a funder, OPC is further able to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the state resources allocated by OPC and its interagency partners. In 2021, OPC initiated a dedicated pathway for funding environmental justice communities for multi-benefit water quality projects through Proposition 1 funding that resulted in [\\$7.5 million in investments](#). Through this process, OPC staff provided technical assistance and community capacity building opportunities to support proposal development, including guidance for project-specific engagement strategies that emphasize social and economic benefits for communities. OPC has also collaborated with state partners on outreach, media, and public awareness efforts related to California's Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and sea level rise, through a bilingual (English and Spanish) communication campaign that included creation of a new centralized [website](#) and messaging around [The Ocean is Moving In](#).⁷

⁷ Ocean Protection Council. *State of California Coast and Ocean Annual Report 2021*.
https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda_items/20211207/Item5_PublicComment_12.07.21.pdf

Goal 1: Establish and implement more equitable and sustainable community engagement and funding methods to expand and enhance opportunities for ocean and coastal projects, policies, and research.

Objectives:

<p>1.1</p>	<p>OPC will continue to work with CNRA Assistant Secretary of Equity and Environmental Justice to identify capacity needs and develop recommendations for additional resources as needed for environmental justice engagement across all departments and agencies that focus on California's coasts and ocean, including seeking authorization and funding for potential additional positions to support CNRA and OPC equity efforts.</p> <p>Strategies:</p>
	<p>1.1.1 Dedicate staff capacity to implement the OPC Equity Plan and future equity plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Upon adoption in 2022, designate at least one staff member with experience working on equity issues to spend a minimum 50% time on OPC Equity Plan implementation. ● By the end of 2022, include roles and responsibilities related to equity, environmental justice, and community engagement in job descriptions for all OPC staff. ● Annually assess OPC staff capacity and need for additional resources to support ongoing implementation. ● Contingent on annual needs assessment and additional secured funding, determine the need for an additional full-time staff position to coordinate and address ongoing equity and environmental justice needs by 2024. ● Biennially assess implementation of the Equity Plan to track/evaluate progress, conduct reporting, and inform updates to future equity plans.
	<p>1.1.2 Identify agency partner needs and gaps through close collaboration with CNRA and other coastal and ocean state agencies by: 1) coordinating and sharing engagement resources, strategies, and tracking environmental justice initiatives; and 2) addressing systemic challenges related to</p>

	<p>management, science, policy, funding and communications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicate at least one OPC staff member to participate in CNRA's Environmental Justice Working Group. • Continue to participate in NOAA-facilitated Environmental Justice Coastal Interagency Coordination Group and CalEPA Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice.
1.2	<p>Expand and enhance outreach, education, external communications, and knowledge-sharing opportunities through inclusive language and targeted, culturally-responsive engagement with communities and tribes.</p> <p>Strategies:</p>
1.2.1	<p>Seek authorization to compensate community-based organizations, community members, and members of California Native American tribes for their time and expertise provided to OPC as community partners or participants in engagement and outreach opportunities. <i>(See Strategies 1.4.2, 1.4.3, 4.2.3 and Objective 1.4, 1.5, and 4.2 for direct application)</i></p>
1.2.2	<p>By the end of 2023, assess OPC's current and ongoing opportunities for community outreach, engagement, and education knowledge-sharing to establish a baseline to inform benchmarks and other metrics on these efforts to measure future progress and identify potential gaps.</p>
1.2.3	<p>Determine needs and improvements for meeting and material accessibility for the general public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify written translation needs for public-facing documents, and for both written and oral interpretation at Council meetings, workshops and other events where multilingual services are needed. Continue providing all electronic information, and technology shared through webpage communications, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design (ADA compliant).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that public-facing documents, including external communications, materials, and reports are written in plain language⁸, using a coherent and easily readable style. • <i>Actions designed to increase public participation specifically for quarterly OPC Council meetings are described in Goal 3, Strategy 3.3.2.</i>
1.2.4	By the end of 2022, assess internal processes and timelines to create flexibility in establishing meaningful opportunities for communities to engage and/or participate in coastal projects, policies and research.
1.2.5	By the end of 2023, with community involvement, develop a community outreach and engagement plan that outlines guidelines, actions, and timelines for OPC communications with environmental justice communities.
1.2.6	Train staff and collaborate with CNRA partner agencies to adopt asset-based language to describe California communities in all reports and communications.
1.2.7	With community involvement, develop and/or update OPC acknowledgement and signage guidelines to require accessible interpretive signage/materials that recognize historical and environmental significance and utilize culturally-inclusive language and community perspectives.
1.3	Expand and augment support for projects and programs that directly benefit environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes, including multi-sector approaches. Work with environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes to identify meaningful disbursement of funds. Strategies:
1.3.1	By 2023, measure the amount of grant funding allocated for projects and programs that directly benefit environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes to establish OPC's baseline funding.

⁸ As defined by California Government Code Section 6219(a): each department, commission, office, or other administrative agency of state government shall write each document that it produces in plain, straightforward language, avoiding technical terms as much as possible, and using a coherent and easily readable style.

	1.3.2	<p>By 2024, create sustained, multi-year funding opportunities that allow for long-term, flexible investments for environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By 2023, assess OPC's dedicated bond funds and other funding sources to redefine priorities and redistribute resources to ensure equitable budget and dedicated funds are allocated for EJ communities and California Native American tribes. ● By 2024, develop multi-sector partnerships among various stakeholder groups, such as non-profit, private, and public organizations, to secure funding investments for EJ communities and California Native American tribes.
	1.3.3	<p>Fund inland projects both within and led by environmental justice communities and tribes with a land-to-sea connection that improve coastal watershed and public health.</p>
	1.3.4	<p>Fund community-science programs and projects both with and led by environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes.</p>
	1.3.5	<p>Fund education and outreach efforts that directly benefit environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ocean, coast, and watershed education and outreach. ● Explore collaborations with state agencies such as State Coastal Conservancy and Coastal Commission on coastal storytelling and histories funding opportunities. ● Encourage grantees to engage and develop partnerships with schools, school districts, students, youth groups, community and cultural centers, and families.
	1.3.6	<p>Through OPC-funded projects and programs, identify opportunities that optimize local economic benefits for community members through workforce development, youth training and other community capacity-building structures.</p>
	1.3.7	<p>By 2023, create a pilot small grants program with six community-based organizations across coastal regions to benefit small and short-term projects that create positive impact in California's environmental justice and tribal communities.</p>

<p>1.4</p>	<p>By 2023, incorporate community engagement into every project funding opportunity at OPC to ensure OPC projects and actions are informed by community needs.</p> <p>Strategies:</p>
<p>1.4.1</p>	<p>To develop a baseline on community engagement, assess current and past OPC projects since adoption of OPC’s Strategic Plan to Protection California’s Coast and Ocean 2020-2025.</p>
<p>1.4.2</p>	<p>Continue to require OPC projects to identify, budget for, and include community engagement opportunities, when appropriate, and be informed by local community needs, such as by tribes, community-based organizations, or impacted individuals. This could include community-based science work, community workshops, advising on communication of or dissemination of research findings, providing expertise on local context, project location or design, and more.</p>
<p>1.4.3</p>	<p>For each approved-funding opportunity, continue to require OPC staff to engage in at least one site visit with community engagement partners. As time allows, OPC staff will engage with projects through newsletters, community events, and more, as determined by community engagement partners.</p>
<p>1.4.5</p>	<p>Require equitable engagement and collaboration between OPC-funded entities and community partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed a commitment to equity and environmental justice, including principles for meaningful engagement, as part of all OPC funding opportunities and ensure accountability.
<p>1.5</p>	<p>Expand opportunities for environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes to access OPC funding by enhancing grant processes.</p> <p>Strategies:</p>
<p>1.5.1</p>	<p>Review application evaluation criteria and scoring approaches for current and ongoing OPC funding opportunities. Implement updates to prioritize and advance projects both within, led by, or otherwise informed by, environmental justice communities and</p>

		California Native American tribes, that provide meaningful benefits to communities.
	1.5.2	<p>Solicit feedback for improvement from previous and potential grantees on application processes, grant guidelines, and reporting requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey existing and potential grantees regarding barriers to the OPC grant application process. • Update OPC's General Conditions and Budget Guidelines for Grantees to provide clarity, consistency, and flexible guidance for new and existing grantees. • Remain flexible throughout the grant process to support the needs of grantees and communities. • Explore pathways for establishing a peer-to-peer network of previous, existing, and new grantees to serve as a collaborative learning exchange program.
	1.5.3	Expand outreach for each OPC funding opportunity across communities to target community-based organizations, grassroots organizations, and California Native American tribes.
	1.5.4	<p>Expand technical assistance opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create internal roles and/or hire technical assistance experts to work directly with grant applicants. • Identify priority communities in need of technical assistance, including Disadvantaged and Severely disadvantaged communities (DACs and SDACs)⁹, California Native American tribes, and communities that score above 80% on CalEnviroScreen results. • Host workshops, informational sessions, webinars, and dedicated office hours to provide guidance on grant applications and process. • Explore ways to create flexible application processes for communities with limited access to technology.
	1.5.5	Explore opportunities to streamline grant funding processes and EJ projects for community partners across CNRA's coastal agencies by coordinating overlapping efforts and identifying

⁹ As defined by the California Water Code Section 79505.5a: "Disadvantaged community is a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80% of the statewide annual median household income."

		<p>efficiencies. Develop and implement recommendations if feasible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue meeting with state agency coastal partners and CNRA EJ and Equity working groups for resource, insight, and knowledge sharing. (See <i>related Strategy 1.1.2</i>)• By the end of 2022, contribute to recommendations for CNRA's Equity and EJ framework with a focus on the intersection of coastal and ocean issues.• By 2023, with coastal agency partners, develop an implementation blueprint for recommended processes.
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Building an Inclusive Workplace and Workforce for California's Coasts and Ocean

Goal 2: *Create a more inclusive workplace through creative and equitable employee recruitment and retention, building staff fluency on environmental justice, and increasing internal staff capacity.*

California is one of the most racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse places in the nation.¹⁰ However, the field of ocean policy and science does not currently represent the racial or ethnic compositions of the state and the many vibrant communities that rely on California's coastal and ocean resources, environment, and economy.¹¹ Increasing diversity at OPC, and more broadly across the fields of ocean policy and science to reflect the diversity of California, requires state agencies such as OPC to strengthen career pathways that support students and partners not often reflected in these educational and professional tracks.

OPC recognizes that as it aims to build a more diverse workplace, it must parallel this effort with inclusive and sustainable internal policies and practices that consistently advances equity and environmental justice. Internally, this will require applying a racial equity lens to every phase of workforce development to examine practices and policies that may reflect institutional racism and recommending and adopting practices that are more equitable.¹² This approach is most successful when led by agency staff and interagency partners, and informed by the public. OPC and CNRA are committed to increasing awareness of equity and environmental justice within the workplace, supporting the Agency's racial equity efforts, and improving staff capacity for inclusive action.

Opportunities to advance justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) within OPC are critical and achievable. In 2021, OPC staff completed a ten-week, 30-

¹⁰ McPhillips, Deidre. 2020. "Measuring Racial and Ethnic Diversity in America's Cities." U.S. News. <https://www.usnews.com/news/cities/articles/2020-01-22/measuring-racial-and-ethnic-diversity-in-americas-cities>

¹¹ Johri, Shaili, et al. 2021. *Pathways to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Marine Science and Conservation*. Policy and Practice Reviews. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2021.696180/full>

¹² CalEPA. 2020. *Practices to Advance Racial Equity in Workforce Training*. CalEPA. <https://calepa.ca.gov/about/calepa-racial-equity-home/>

hour training program that connected cultural proficiency principles to the values and vision of OPC, and explored intersections, barriers, and bridges to the agency's work. The program, led by Dr. Kikanza Nuri-Robins, was developed specifically for OPC to address internal and external equity efforts across projects and programs. OPC also launched its first-ever paid internship program in 2021, to provide undergraduate college students with the opportunity to work on coastal and ocean science, policy and management efforts in California. The program received wide interest, with more than 140 applications collected for the five positions held.¹³ Building on this success, OPC is looking forward to welcoming five new students as part of the 2022 summer internship cohort.

¹³ Ocean Protection Council. *State of California Coast and Ocean Annual Report 2021*.
https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda_items/20211207/Item5_PublicComment_12.07.21.pdf

Goal 2: Create a more inclusive workplace through creative and equitable employee recruitment and retention, building staff fluency on environmental justice, and increasing internal staff capacity.

Objectives:

<p>2.1</p>	<p>Become a leading organization in the effort to create a more diverse ocean and coastal science and policy workforce throughout the state.</p> <p>Strategies:</p>
	<p>2.1.1 Work with CNRA and other relevant state agencies to create a plan to recruit and retain a diverse workforce by expanding eligibility and accessibility and reducing institutional barriers for applicants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify opportunities to adjust OPC job requirements to expand accepted education qualifications and experience, to consider more diverse skills sets as valid qualifications. ● Identify potential job classifications that allow for more accessibility to a wider pool of candidates. ● Participate in CNRA's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Working Group. ● Partner with CNRA agencies on recruitment strategies that include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinating with CNRA departments to share recruitment resources including recruitment staff ○ Evaluating and implementing HR strategies to expand diverse, equitable and inclusive practices ○ When possible, identifying potential recruitment staff that are well-versed in diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies
	<p>2.1.2 Implement equitable procurement methods to engage more diverse and smaller contractors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Target outreach to California State certified Small Businesses (SB) and Disadvantaged Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBE). ● Embed a commitment to equity and environmental justice as part of all contracts and ensure accountability.

<p>2.2</p>	<p>Strengthen career pathways to OPC through new partnerships and increased organizational visibility.</p> <p>Strategies:</p>
<p>2.2.1</p>	<p>Develop career exploration events and programming for students of community colleges, UCs (University of California), California State universities (CSUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), tribal colleges, and Minority-Serving Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Professional Organizations to engage with OPC –including stipends or other support to ensure equitable access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a pilot outreach program and communications strategy to engage college juniors and seniors. ● Ensure that outreach is geographically diverse and includes non-coastal communities. ● Target three universities serving priority environmental justice communities - across Southern, Central, and Northern California. ● Each OPC staff member to participate in or host at least two (2) ocean science and policy career or education panels annually.
<p>2.2.2</p>	<p>Continue to expand the 10-week paid OPC internship program to help prepare undergraduate college students from diverse backgrounds for careers in coastal management and environmental sciences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to expand OPC's recruitment reach to schools serving or within historically marginalized or less-considered communities, including tribes and communities experiencing financial, transportation, and geographic barriers. ● Continue to formalize a mentor-mentee relationship for each intern. ● Continue to provide pre-determined project options for optimal productivity and work quality for interns' future endeavors. ● Advise and encourage other state agencies to carry out similar internship programs. ● Identify funding pathways to support OPC internship program stipends for required in-person meetings and/or

		travel.
	2.2.3	Partner with California SeaGrant to develop the Community Engaged Internship (CEI) program for undergraduate students in California.
	2.2.4	Develop a 10-year strategy to build relationships with all community colleges, CSUs, UCs, HSIs, HBCUs, tribal colleges, and Minority-Serving STEM Professional Organizations with environmental and marine science programs. By 2025, engage at least two community colleges, two CSUs, one Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) UC, and one HBCU.
2.3		Continue to assess organizational structure and staffing to: 1) identify staffing needs; 2) clarify roles and responsibilities; 3) create a plan to build capacity and support staff; and 4) embed equity and create an inclusive workplace. Strategies:
	2.3.1	Build in formalized equitable practices for new hires to reduce barriers to entry, foster a culture of inclusion, and increase retention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently review standard onboarding process for relevant updates, and add standard racial justice and environmental justice resources by the end of 2022. • Implement flexible location remote work policies. • Create a mentorship program for new hires, connecting them with a more senior staff person who is not their direct supervisor in order to transfer institutional knowledge and provide support during hiring transitions.
	2.3.2	Investigate methods that promote retention of staff and improve those mechanisms, including but not limited to work environment and culture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an anonymous yearly staff survey to gauge attitudes towards organizational culture, capacity needs, onboarding structure, and dedication to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. • Assess and recommend improvements in OPC's HR and administration that can build capacity to support an inclusive workplace for diverse staff. This could be based

		<p>on staff input from the survey described above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore and implement strategies to improve communication and transparency around organizational opportunities for growth, anticipated changes, and constraints.
	2.3.3	By the end of 2022, assess and evaluate institutional barriers for upward mobility at OPC. By 2023, explore and implement opportunities to provide promotional growth opportunities across departments within CNRA.
2.4		<p>Increase opportunities for staff to continue to build their understanding on environmental and racial justice as it relates to California's coasts and ocean.</p> <p>Strategies:</p>
	2.4.1	Identify external professional development opportunities or training related to environmental and racial justice learning opportunities and provide staff stipends.
	2.4.2	<p>By 2023, OPC will develop an implementation plan to standardize equity training for all staff. Implementation actions should include at minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement an equity onboarding training. ● Curate required readings and resources for new staff members, including materials on California Native American tribes. ● Require participation in a cohort-based racial equity training. ● Invest in continued professional development around equity and environmental justice literacy. ● Require implicit bias training. ● Require cultural humility training related to California Native American tribes. ● Include racial equity work/training in job duties.

Designing Equitable Coastal and Ocean Policy Making

Goal 3: *Lead equitable ocean and coastal policymaking in California.*

Many California communities face historical exclusion from policy decisions that directly impact their health and quality of life, as a result of intentional program and process design. These barriers and ongoing inequities are disproportionate according to the racial, economic, and geographic compositions of communities in California, with significant impacts to tribal and environmental justice communities.¹⁴ To address ongoing institutional barriers, state agencies need to meaningfully engage historically underrepresented communities in policy-making spaces.

As outlined in the California Ocean Protection Act, OPC provides cross-jurisdictional coordination, science-based resources, and strategic investments to state agencies and external partners involved in the protection of California's coastal and ocean resources. OPC is therefore committed to developing internal and external partnerships to inform and strengthen policy processes across California's state departments. The agency is further committed to developing and supporting policies that prioritize environmental justice communities by improving access and participation for residents and representatives to the state's decision-making processes.

Key to OPC's approach is empowering community members and other stakeholders to provide comments and meaningful feedback on policies and research, by dedicating space, providing access to policy-making resources, and establishing protocols to integrate feedback actively and responsively. As part of this goal area, OPC outlines the various ways it currently engages to further advance ocean and coastal policy, including new approaches to increase public participation and collaboration.

¹⁴ California Coastal Commission. 2019. *Environmental Justice Policy*.
https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/assets/env-justice/CCC_EJ_Policy_FINAL.pdf

Goal 3: Lead equitable ocean and coastal policymaking in California.

Objectives:

3.1	Adopt an environmental justice policy for California's ocean and coasts by 2023. Strategies:
3.1.1	In partnership with environmental justice communities, tribal communities, and state agency partners, develop an environmental justice policy for California's ocean and coasts that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Involves a collaborative process designed to optimize intentionality, accountability, and improve consistency with existing environmental justice policy frameworks, such as Coastal Commission's Environmental Justice Policy, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Environmental Justice and Social Equity Policies, and CNRA's Environmental Policy;● Identifies objectives that reduce the unique or compounded human health and safety risks in environmental justice communities by reducing exposure to pollution and climate stressors, and expanding equitable access to healthy coastal and natural resources;● Identifies objectives that address regional data gaps and priorities for environmental justice communities and tribal communities;● Explores opportunities to streamline policy-recommendations and programs across coastal interagency partners (<i>see related Strategy 1.1.2</i>);● Promotes coordination between coastal regulatory agencies, and local and county jurisdictions, to advance the equitable implementation of coastal plans, anti-displacement measures, and develop adaptive pathways to build resilience;● Integrates relevant data collected by CalEPA across CNRA partner agencies to guide policies and programs to promote environmental justice policy efforts.

	3.1.2	Coordinate with State agency partners to track implementation of the environmental justice policy for California's ocean and coasts on a quarterly basis.
	3.1.3	Upon adoption in 2022, require OPC staff to consider and provide an explanation of environmental justice implications and/or considerations for each OPC action or funding proposal, where applicable, prior to OPC adoption.
	3.1.4	In coordination with OPC's Equity Program Manager, develop at least one informational session per region to community partners on impacts, development, and implementation of environmental justice policy.
3.2		Support transformative growth and equity awareness of the Council through training opportunities and seeking members that reflect the communities and diversity of California. Strategies:
	3.2.1	Identify and implement strategies to improve the diversity of OPC Councilmembers.
	3.2.2	Require annual equity training for OPC Councilmembers, including but not limited to, cultural humility training, training on historic and current injustices experienced by California Native American tribes, and training on historical redlining practices in California.
3.3		Continue to increase public participation in ocean and coastal policy making. Strategies:
	3.3.1	Create pathways for direct engagement with public members representing environmental justice and tribal communities that can provide recommendations to help OPC best implement the OPC Equity Plan, upon adoption. Seek authorization for compensation and funding to public members and community partners involved in helping OPC accomplish the goals and objectives of this Plan. Create standing agenda item at every OPC meeting to provide updates on progress, Equity Plan

		implementation, or other relevant equity and environmental justice issues at the beginning of OPC meetings.
	3.3.2	<p>Reduce barriers to public participation by increasing meeting accessibility for quarterly OPC council meetings. <i>(See related Strategy 1.2.3)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue providing an option for virtual public participation at Council meetings in a manner consistent with state law, once in-person meetings resume. • Once in-person meetings resume, make Council meetings more geographically accessible across the state by adopting an annual meeting calendar that includes at least (1) Council meeting per year in more inland areas accessible by public transit to allow for greater participation. Explore ways to increase meeting accessibility through technology and adjusting meeting times. • Once in-person meetings resume, seek assistance to ensure adequate technological access for public Councilmembers to participate in quarterly Council meetings, in a manner consistent with state law. • Develop criteria to guide and disseminate informational materials in culturally-inclusive and accessible languages, such as languages spoken by those communities where funding is being prioritized or awarded. • Provide guidance that easily explains the public participation process for Council meetings, including Council protocols, procedures, and public comments.
	3.4	<p>Establish partnerships with environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes to identify regional priorities and implement actions that address the impacts of climate change across California coastal watersheds, including but not limited to sea level rise, coastal flooding, and increased coastal temperatures. <i>(Objective adapted from OPC Strategic Plan, Goal 2, Action 2.2, Target 2.2.2)</i></p> <p>Strategies:</p>
	3.4.1	Develop a regional and community needs assessment for relevant science and research programs at OPC to identify priority needs and actions for California's coast and ocean.

	3.4.2	Facilitate the development of regional working groups, in coastal watersheds, composed of affected community members to collect specific recommendations and feedback for addressing climate change.
3.5	Improve Coastal Access. Strategies:	
	3.5.1	<p>By 2025, in partnership with CNRA, State Coastal Conservancy, California Coastal Commission, State Parks and Recreation, State Lands Commission, and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, develop a “Coastal Access for All” Plan that ensures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equitable public access to and along the ocean, including an improved permitting process for community-based organizations and California Native American tribes, that is inclusive, equitable and prioritizes meaningful engagement; ● Measurable targets for beaches, physical trails and access points; ● Education, transportation, and recreational opportunities; ● Improved access to coastal open spaces and ocean “blue spaces” that provide opportunities for subsistence and pier fishing in areas with higher rates of food insecurity; ● Pathways to increase local agreements and partnerships with conservancies for increased access and co-management of coastal lands and ocean with California Native American tribes; ● Pathways for increased ancestral land return to California Native American tribes; ● Resources to maintain a healthy environment along the coast, such as educational workshops and signage; ● Advanced human health benefits including mental health; ● Coastal access shall be resilient to sea level rise; and ● Increase low-cost visitor accommodation coastal opportunities that are environmentally sustainable.
	3.5.2	Implement and track metrics for Coastal Access Plan with the CNRA Deputy Secretary for Access.

3.6	Advance “Healthy Ocean” policy and science. Strategies:
3.6.1	Through partnerships with environmental justice communities, California Native American tribes, and other state agencies, develop a shared state definition of “healthy oceans” grounded in human health and well-being, ecosystem-based science, and the intrinsic value of ecosystems and species by 2023. This will be used as part of the State of the Coast and Oceans Report Card, to be completed in 2025 (see <i>OPC Strategic Plan Target 2.5.1</i>).
3.6.2	Work with CNRA and its respective agencies and departments to implement Executive Order N-82-20 , California’s “30x30” Initiative, to advance equity and opportunity for all regions of California in the context of conserving ocean biodiversity and supporting human health.

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Integrating Equity in Coastal and Ocean Science and Research

Goal 4: *Lead the state in a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to coastal and ocean science by valuing and integrating broader knowledge sources to enhance the understanding of OPC's areas of research.*

The scientific workforce in the nation currently does not adequately represent the demographic diversity of the general population.¹⁵ This representation reflects a broader, systemic approach to the field of science that has historically excluded Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), lived experiences, and additional forms of cultural knowledge. OPC acknowledges a need to expand science sources to adequately address the scientific needs and goals of California Native American tribes and communities, coastal communities experiencing environmental injustices, and communities that are historically underrepresented in the field of ocean and coastal science. As laid out in the following objectives and strategies in Goal 4, OPC commits to supporting science that enhances the experiences, needs, and understandings of California communities.

OPC advances scientific monitoring, research and analysis to ensure that management, policy and funding decisions are informed by the best available science, including tribal expertise and TEK. OPC's ability to lead on science and science-informed policies is based on partnerships with the academic and research communities, within California and beyond, which includes California's two Sea Grant Programs and OPC's Science Advisory Team (OPC SAT). The OPC SAT, which is administered by OPC's non-profit partner California Ocean Science Trust (OST), is a working group of more than 20 interdisciplinary scientific experts that serves to provide foundational scientific guidance to advance OPC's strategic priorities. This body informs OPC's policy and management decisions.

In recent years, significant progress has also been made toward more meaningful tribal engagement in research efforts, such as MPA management. For example, California's MPA Statewide Leadership Team now includes four

¹⁵ Kozlowski, et al. 2022. "Intersectional inequalities in science." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2113067119>

regional Tribal representatives to ensure that Tribes are directly involved in the development of MPA policy. Additionally, OPC's Tribal Marine Stewards Network, established by four partner tribes (Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, Resighini Rancheria, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians, and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band) and supported by two nongovernmental organizations (California Indian Environmental Alliance and Ecotrust), focuses on MPA monitoring rooted in shared priorities between tribes and the State.¹⁶

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¹⁶ Ocean Protection Council. 2020. *Staff Recommendation: Tribal Marine Stewards Network Pilot Program*. https://opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda_items/20200619/Item6a_TribalMarineStewardsNetwork_FIN_AL.pdf

Goal 4: Lead the state in a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to coastal and ocean science by valuing and integrating broader knowledge sources to enhance the understanding of OPC's areas of research.

Objectives:

<p>4.1</p>	<p>Work with California Native American tribes to implement pathways for the consideration of tribal expertise (including tribal-led research and monitoring) and Traditional Ecological Knowledges in coastal and ocean management decisions, and co-develop research, monitoring, and restoration projects with tribes. <i>(Objective adapted from OPC Strategic Plan, Goal 2, Action 2.1, Target 2.2.1)</i></p> <p>Strategies:</p>
<p>4.1.1</p>	<p>Consistent with OPC's Tribal Engagement Strategy, co-develop and fund research, monitoring, and restoration projects with California Native American tribes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When possible, develop such projects in partnership with tribes rather than seeking to include tribes in projects that are already planned or under way. ● When this is not possible, work with tribes and the research community to identify tribal researchers, including graduate students, interested in partnering with OPC and the academic community on specific projects or initiatives. ● As part of CNRA's "Cutting the Green Tape" initiative, identify ways to improve efficiencies and minimize regulatory burden for tribal-led restoration projects.
<p>4.2</p>	<p>Work with California Native American tribes and community partners such as: community-based organizations, colleges and universities, and research organizations, to consider Traditional Ecological Knowledges, tribal expertise, local knowledge, social science, historical context, and lived experiences into ocean and coastal science, and research.</p> <p>Strategies:</p>

	4.2.1	Coordinate regional consultations with community partners to collect and integrate existing community science and research into OPC projects and programs, as appropriate.
	4.2.2	When possible, include tribal governments and community partners in science and research projects and related funding opportunities to inform research questions. <i>(See related Strategy 1.4.2 and 4.2.3 for application)</i>
	4.2.3	At the early stages of research scoping, develop questions to assess whether inter- and transdisciplinary approaches should be considered or integrated into study. Where applicable, research questions should be designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess potential EJ and equity impacts from research to human populations or affected communities. ● Assess human dimensions by analyzing different ways humans use, experience, value or depend on ocean and coastal resources.
	4.2.4	Augment research budgets to allow potential engagement opportunities from interdisciplinary science backgrounds/disciplines and local/regional community groups, as appropriate. <i>(See related Strategy 1.4.2)</i>
	4.3	Embed representation, consultation, and engagement of environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes in OPC's science and research. Strategies:
	4.3.1	By 2023, work with Ocean Science Trust to conduct an assessment to support the advancement of diverse representation within the Science Advisory Team. This assessment should include at minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demographic composition of the SAT ● Diverse composition of expertise across Strategic Plan goals (coastal/marine science, social science, environmental justice, TEK, engineering, water scientists, etc.) ● Identifies barriers towards a more diverse advisory team

	4.3.2	By 2023, strengthen the OPC Science Advisory Team (SAT) by expanding scientific expertise across a range of disciplines, knowledge types, tribal expertise, Traditional Ecological Knowledges, and institutions or organizations, including experience working with environmental justice communities and/or California Native American tribes.
	4.3.3	Improve accessibility to coastal and ocean research and data by partnering with state agency, community, and tribal governments and communities to develop a public platform that includes data and reports produced and/or reviewed by OPC and state agency partners.
	4.3.4	Organize two (2) community workshops per year per region with environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes and communities to co-develop region-specific metrics and indicators for community health and resilience.

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Appendix A: OPC's Core Functions

(Appendix 3 of OPC's [2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#))

As directed by the California Ocean Protection Act (COPA), OPC protects California's coastal and ocean resources by effectively and strategically providing best-available science to decision-makers, supporting targeted initiatives to protect and restore coastal and marine systems, collaboratively advance policy, and coordinating relevant agency activities across jurisdictional, programmatic, and regional boundaries. OPC uses each of the following diverse categories of tools to identify and implement solutions that improve ocean governance, increase stewardship, and advance scientific understanding necessary to protect and conserve coastal and marine resources and the communities that rely on them.

Ecosystem-Based Governance

California currently faces environmental stressors in a highly siloed manner, often undertaking management approaches for one type of ecosystem, habitat, or geographic area without considering their interconnected nature. For example, our forests are part of watersheds that drain into streams and rivers, which then flow into our estuaries, bays, and coastal waters.

Through COPA, the state charged OPC with providing a unifying lens to preserve, protect, and manage California's unparalleled wildlands and natural resources, from land to sea. OPC accordingly provides guiding principles for ecosystem-based ocean and coastal management, in recognition of the fundamental interconnectedness of humans and natural systems. OPC advances these system-based governance responsibilities through leadership, integration, and coordination of relevant state laws, policies, and institutions.

Sample Actions:

- Convene quarterly meetings of state agency heads with jurisdiction over ocean and coast to ensure coordination and prompt action on pressing issues.
- Ensure ecosystem and biodiversity conservation approaches provide multi-use benefits where feasible, including climate resilience, ecosystem health, carbon sequestration, and public health benefits. Optimize the

economic benefits of various biodiversity conservation approaches, with a particular focus on green jobs and the blue economy.

Science

Science is critical to informed decision-making and is a foundational component of California's initiatives to protect and enhance the health of the coast and ocean. California houses many of the leading environmental researchers and institutions on the planet, with tools including remote sensing, conservation genomics, climate and ecological modeling, and others that, when utilized optimally, help California make more effective policy and management decisions.

Consistent with its charge under COPA, OPC ensures that the best available science is applied to adaptive conservation and management of the state's natural systems.

OPC works to integrate science into California's policy and management decisions by:

1. Funding applied scientific research and monitoring that increases our understanding of ecological, economic and social vulnerability to potential impacts and the efficacy of various conservation and management approaches;
2. Convening scientific experts to synthesize information and develop findings that can root policy development in cutting-edge science;
3. Coordinating with agency, academic, and other partners to identify and address critical data gaps; and
4. Ensuring that conservation and habitat restoration projects use the latest science and restoration techniques, especially with regard to climate resiliency.

Two important partners support OPC in these efforts. First, the OPC Science Advisory Team (OPC SAT), a statutorily created, interdisciplinary team of distinguished scientists, supports OPC's science-based actions and decisions. The OPC SAT identifies emerging environmental and scientific challenges related to the ocean and coast; evaluates the scientific underpinnings and technical merit of state actions and decisions; provides advice and translates

scientific knowledge related to state priorities; and acts as a broader conduit to the scientific community.

Second, the California Ocean Science Trust (OST), a statutorily created, independent non-profit, serves as OPC's Science Advisor and administers the OPC SAT on behalf of OPC. OST's collaborative team helps lead projects and initiatives that draw together diverse perspectives to synthesize, interpret, and share science towards sound policy, funding, and management efforts.

In addition to prioritizing increased understanding of coastal and ocean ecosystems, OPC recognizes the importance of ensuring data from state-funded research projects are available and readily accessible for use by scientists, decisionmakers, stakeholders, and the public.

Sample Action:

- Complete scientific analysis of existing monitoring data to determine the ability of California's marine protected areas to provide ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change. Identify data gaps and fund additional research; recommend management actions to enhance the role of MPAs in improving ocean health and building resilience to climate-driven impacts.

Partnerships

In drafting COPA, the California Legislature identified a need for the state to coordinate governance and stewardship of the state's coastal and ocean systems, particularly given the corresponding—and oftentimes overlapping—mandates and jurisdictions of relevant state regulatory, planning, and conservation agencies. OPC plays a leading role in coordinating the policy direction and efforts of these state agencies to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Among other actions, OPC works to establish and maintain strong relationships with agency leadership and staff, convene needed interagency working groups, collaboratively identify and address data gaps, share fiscal and human resources, and help establish a strategic and ecosystem-based vision for protecting California's coast and ocean.

In addition, OPC leverages state efforts with those of local, federal, and tribal governments; tribal communities; academic and research institutions; non-profits; community groups; fishermen; and other stakeholders. Through working

groups, advisory bodies, and collaborative projects, OPC integrates state activities with the broader management, stewardship, and research efforts of partners outside state government who have professional, personal, and cultural expertise and are equally invested in protecting coastal and ocean health in California.

Sample Action:

- Coordinate and align state agencies, in collaboration with local governments, to provide universal and equitable access to the coast, including consideration of ease and convenience of traveling to and within natural areas, and the quality, health benefits, and educational value of the experience.

Policy

OPC works closely with the Governor's office, the Legislature, and agency partners to craft and implement science-based policies, identify gaps in policy and law, and inform legislation at both the state and federal levels. Consistent with the state's leadership in integrated ocean governance, OPC seeks to align decision-making to protect ocean health by: developing guidance documents and actions plans, mobilizing and coordinating state policy action against threats facing our coast, collaborating with partner agencies to ensure policy decisions are consistent and grounded in the precautionary principle, and identifying and recommending needed changes in state policy and law to the Legislature and the Governor.

OPC is also actively engaged in driving policy at the international level, not only by taking action that provides a model for global efforts, but by establishing goals and guidance to accelerate ocean conservation and adaptation action around the world. One example is the Ocean-Climate Action Agenda developed collaboratively by OPC and non-profit partners to increase ocean-related climate policy ambitions at California's 2018 Global Climate Action Summit.

Sample Action:

- Research law and policy approaches in other states and countries related to climate resilience approaches to land, water, and ocean policy and management decision making, and make recommendations for changes in state and federal law and policy as appropriate.

Funding

OPC collaboratively manages various funding sources towards efficient support of strategic investments in scientific research and monitoring, collaborative policy development, and restoration and other projects that will improve conditions for ocean and coastal ecosystems and California communities. Funding sources include bond funds, General Fund, special funds, and Once-Through Cooling Interim Mitigation Funds.

Sample Action:

- In collaboration with local governments, support pilot projects along the coast that demonstrate the efficacy of various climate adaptation strategies, including nature-based solutions as a preferred approach to building coastal resilience to climate change impacts.

Communication

Regularly updated, relevant data and data products build public and decisionmaker stewardship over our shared coast and ocean. OPC strives to be a leader in open, clear, responsive, communication with partners and stakeholders, and prioritizes inclusive public engagement in all initiatives.

Sample Actions:

- Create a California State of the Coast and Ocean Report Card that will provide regular information and accountability to the public.
- Research and implement communications approaches and tools that help reach a wider audience and constituency, such as outreach in other languages.

Appendix B: The OPC Equity Plan Environmental Justice Advisory Group

The goals, objectives, and strategies proposed in the Plan are a product of a collaborative design process that engaged OPC staff, OPC leadership, and [OPC's Environmental Justice Advisory Group](#), a 13-member group of stakeholder representatives from seven regions across the state.

Members of the Environmental Justice Advisory Group are listed below.

Statewide

José G. González, Latino Outdoors

José González is an experienced and passionate speaker, artist, nature-lover, science communicator and educator who founded Latino Outdoors. Through his work and organization, he aims to build a cross-community network of nature inclusivity groups to connect people of all races, genders, orientations, socio-economic statuses and religions. In addition to Latino Outdoors, he worked in Latino outreach and education for the Tuolumne River Trust, and wrote as the main contributor for the environment desk of Latino News Daily. José holds a master's degree in natural resources and environment from University of Michigan, and a bachelor's degree from University of California – Davis. He is a recipient of the National Wildlife Foundation's National Conservation Education Award, the Kenji Award and the Murie Center's Rising Leader Award. His work has been featured by Outside Magazine, The Hill, Sacramento Bee and NBC News.

Karla Garibay García, Azul

Karla Garibay García is a Project Manager at Azul, who is passionate about working with BIPOC communities at the intersection of environmental and social justice policy. This Spring, Karla will graduate with a Master in Environmental Science and Management with a specialization in Coastal Marine Resources Management from the Bren School at UCSB. Prior to joining Azul, Karla consulted for and lobbied on behalf of conservation, equitable access, and environmental justice nonprofits in Sacramento. Karla has experience in environmental justice, marine conservation, international climate policy, air quality, tropical deforestation, and strategic environmental communication.

Marce Gutiérrez-Graudiņš, Azul

Marce Gutiérrez-Graudiņš is the Founder and Executive Director of Azul, a San Francisco-based grassroots organization that works with Latinxs throughout the Americas to protect the ocean and coasts. Azul interweaves deep cultural fluency and grassroots organizing to secure policy outcomes that helped shape California coastal conservation policy with people at the core and continue to move justice-driven policy nationally – it launched in 2011 as the first U.S. organization devoted to elevating Latinx voices in marine conservation. Marce is also one of five women founders of the Ocean Justice Forum, launched in 2021.

An environmental justice advocate at the forefront of ocean and climate justice policy initiatives, Marce began her career in commercial fishing and aquaculture which ignited a spark in her to halt overfishing farming and fight business as usual in the depletion of fish and marine life. She works alongside community and coalition partners, as well as international ocean-climate activists, to ensure the health and safety of the ocean that sustains us and of the people in proximity to environmental injustices in their coastal and inland communities.

She serves as a member of the California Coastal Conservancy's governing board, is an expert advisory group member for the United Nations Environment Program on Marine Litter and Microplastics and is a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's California Expert Assessment Group for the Green List. She is also on the advisory board of the Ocean Foundation and an advisory group co-chair for Heartwired to Love the Ocean, a project of Goodwin Simons Strategic Research and Wonder: Strategies for Good.

Marce is also an award-winning advocate for her longstanding commitment to marine conservation and community protection work, she has also delivered expert congressional testimony as a witness to the House Natural Resources Committee's Legislative Hearing on the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act of 2021. The Azul team, with Marce at the helm, was instrumental in the California bans on the sale of shark fins and single-use plastic bags. Her thought leadership is visible from local to global-level panels and summits to the opinion and editorial pages of publications including the Washington Post to the UN and Azul's report, *Neglected: Environmental Justice Impacts of Plastic Pollution*.

A native of Tijuana, Mexico, Marce now makes Southern California home with her family.

North Coast

Rhiannon Lewis-Stephenson, Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)

Rhiannon Lewis-Stephenson is a communications and outreach coordinator for the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) in Arcata, CA. In this role, she works collaboratively with community members, agencies, and other organizations to protect important habitats and their inhabitants on the North Coast. Rhiannon firmly believes that everyone should be able to have access to nature and is focused on creating a sustainable and equitable future that values diverse human and ecological communities.

San Francisco Bay and Delta

Michelle Pierce, Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates

Michelle Pierce, Executive Director, has 20 years of experience working in sustainability and social justice. She has professional experience and training in commercial toxics reduction and business sustainability, including managing several projects with the San Francisco Department of the Environment. She is particularly adept at cultural competency and policy design, both of which were nurtured and polished while completing the Global Partners MBA Program. She has an extensive history in environmental justice and activism in Bayview-Hunters Point, and currently serves on task forces and advisory committees for the City's Board of Supervisors and the SF Public Utilities Commission.

Paige Tengeluk, Public Health Advocates

Paige Tengeluk (she/her) was born and raised in Saipan and identifies as Pacific Islander: Palauan. Paige is passionate about decolonizing our lands, cultures, and lifestyles because she is tired of watching Indigenous people and lands being destroyed by capitalism. She has witnessed the effects of climate and environmental racism first hand—from seeing the effects of warming waters on Saipan's traditional food supply; to watching as one of the strongest El Nino events in history that hit Palau in 2016; to learning how her current home in Modesto has been exploited and harmed by the oil and agro-business industries.

A graduate of Modesto Jr. College and San Francisco State University, Paige is active in many environmental justice organizations including: San Joaquin Valley Environmental Justice Steering Committee, Rise Stockton Coalition, CA Pan-Ethnic Health Network's (CPEHN) Having Our Say Coalition, the Asian Pacific

Islander Coalition, and she was selected as a fellow for the 2021 California Ocean & Climate Justice Fellowship.

Monterey Bay/ Central Coast

ileana Brunetti, Santa Cruz Community Ventures

ileana Ortega Brunetti has worked with rural Latino communities in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties for over 15 years. She has extensive cross-sector experience including marine conservation, education, and economic inclusivity. She is a life-long resident of the North Central Coast, and represents the Monterey Bay area.

Santa Barbara/ Central Coast

Teresa Romero, Coastal Band of Chumash

Teresa Romero is an enrolled member of the Coastal Band of Chumash, serves as the Environmental Director for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, is a member Syuxtun Plant Collective, a traditional plant collective focusing on tending, gathering and preparation of traditional plants. Teresa has served on the MPA Statewide Leadership Team as a Tribal Representative since 2019. Teresa has worked for over 20 years assisting Tribal Communities on projects, such as acquiring lands for the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians, protecting Treaty Rights (Little River Band of Ottawa Indians) and preserving traditional cultural knowledge for her Chumash community. Teresa has deep ties to her traditional homelands and the ocean.

Los Angeles/ South Coast

Carlos Morán, Council for Watershed Health

With advanced degrees in social work, Carlos Moran's experience includes designing and implementing high impact strategies that intersect mental health, public health and environmental justice. He regularly engages diverse range of communities to advance place based solutions that drive large scale, multi-benefit investments in Los Angeles' most economically, environmentally and health stressed communities. Carlos also serves as adjunct faculty in the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. where he teaches graduate courses in policy, research & program evaluation, and human behavior.

Patricia Flores Yrarrázaval, Orange County Environmental Justice

Patricia Jovel (PJ) Flores is an activist, scholar, and writer from Santa Ana, California, who has dedicated her life to organizing for a world that holds Black and Indigenous communities, communities of color, and our interconnected environments with care, respect, and dignity. Since graduating with her B.A. in Ethnic Studies from UC Berkeley in 2015, Patricia has worked in labor organizing, environmental justice, immigration law, mental health care, and education, all while continuing to advocate for the rights of incarcerated people and the defense of indigenous sacred sites, and advancing her career as a writer of fiction and poetry.

As Executive Director of Orange County Environmental Justice, Patricia leads campaigns to address environmental lead contamination, water pollution, and climate change throughout the region, by centering the voices of those most impacted by these issues, and by building bridges between local Indigenous communities and communities of color in defense of the water, land, and air that we all call home.

San Diego/ South Coast

Angela Kemsley, WILD COAST

Angela Kemsley is the Conservation and Communication Manager of WILD COAST. Based in San Diego, Angela manages WILD COAST's Natural Climate Solutions program in California, leading blue carbon ecosystem restoration, carbon sequestration studies, and climate action planning. Angela is a social ecologist with a passion for connecting people with their coastal and marine spaces and getting people involved with the conservation of their natural areas.

Lesford Duncan, Outdoor Outreach

Lesford Duncan, MPH, is the Senior Director of Programs at Outdoor Outreach, an organization that, since 1999, has helped over 18,000 youth explore their world, challenge themselves, and discover what they're capable of, promoting positive youth development and resilience. Through their Leadership Program, Outdoor Outreach introduces and prepares diverse youth for career pathways in outdoor recreation, conservation, and advocacy. Lesford has a career background in developing programs, partnerships, and policies that enhance the health and resilience of children and families.

Prior to joining Outdoor Outreach, he consulted for youth development nonprofits, and worked in child welfare, cultural competency and behavioral

health at the County of San Bernardino. Lesford received his B.S. in Biology from the University of Florida, and MPH in Health Policy and Leadership from Loma Linda University. He is also a Senior Fellow with the Atlantic Fellows for Health Equity, ultramarathon runner, and avid hiker and outdoorsman.

Sonia Díaz, Outdoor Outreach

Sonia Díaz is the Public Policy Manager for Outdoor Outreach, an organization that, since 1999, has helped over 18,000 youth in San Diego explore their world, challenge themselves, and discover what they're capable of, promoting positive youth development and resilience. Through their Leadership Program, Outdoor Outreach introduces and prepares diverse youth for career pathways in outdoor recreation, conservation, and advocacy. Sonia received her B.A. in Sociology from the University of Chicago and has spent over a decade in various roles working for nonprofits in the areas of policy advocacy, fundraising and grant writing, nonprofit development, volunteer recruitment, and project management.

She served as a California Senate Fellow and Legislative Aide to State Senator Sheila J. Kuehl where she staffed and analyzed bills covering environmental issues and health policy. She then went on to become the Legislative Advocate for Heal the Bay advancing legislation to protect our oceans from plastic pollution and assisted with organizing advocacy efforts during the map adoption process for the state's marine protected areas (MPAs). She is an avid hiker, ultramarathoner, and enjoys introducing others to new urban trails in the community.

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

The following key terms and definitions, including abbreviations and acronyms, provide readers with a shared understanding on how these terms are defined for the purpose of this document. Definitions are derived from state agency sources unless otherwise noted.

Asset-based language: Language that views the diversity that community members bring, including culture, language, disability, socio-economic status, immigration status, and sexuality as characteristics that add value and strength to communities.¹⁷ Asset-based language avoids words and phrases that look at situations or people from a “deficit” lens that prioritize what might be missing and instead focuses on strengths and potentials.¹⁸

Climate resilience: Climate resilience is the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to climate. Climate resilience is often associated with acute events – like heat waves, heavy downpours, hurricanes, or wildfires – that will become more frequent or intense as the climate changes. However, good resilience planning also accounts for chronic events, like rising sea levels, worsening air quality, and population migration.¹⁹

California Native American tribes: California Native American tribe means a federally recognized California Native American tribe or a non-federally recognized California Native American tribe that is on the contact list maintained by the [Native American Heritage Commission](#).²⁰

California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA): The California Natural Resources Agency oversees and supports more than 26 distinct departments, conservancies, and commissions. Over 21,000 Californians work within CNRA all across the state to meet its mission “to restore, protect and manage the state's

¹⁷ California Department of Education. 2021. *Asset-Based Pedagogies*. California Department of Education. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/assetbasedpedagogies.asp>

¹⁸ HERE to HERE. 2020. *The HERE to HERE Language Guide: A Resource for Using Asset-Based Language with Young People*. HERE to HERE. <https://www.heretohere.org/resource/the-here-to-here-language-guide/>

¹⁹ Center for Climate and Energy Solutions. 2019. *What is Climate Resilience, and Why Does it Matter?* Center for Climate and Energy Solutions. <https://www.c2es.org/document/what-is-climate-resilience-and-why-does-it-matter/>

²⁰ CA Assembly Bill No. 2225 Resource conservation: traditional ecological knowledge: land management plans. 2021-2022

natural, historical and cultural resources for current and future generations using creative approaches and solutions based on science, collaboration, and respect for all the communities and interests involved." OPC is one department within CNRA.

Community partner: In the context of the OPC Equity Plan, community partners include tribes, community-based organizations, colleges and universities, and research organizations.

Community engagement: In the context of the OPC Equity Plan, community engagement entails conducting outreach to, collaborating with, and co-creating with communities to achieve long-term and sustainable outcomes, relationships, and decision-making processes. It also includes the process of working collaboratively with groups of people who are affiliated by geographic proximity, special interests, or similar situations with respect to issues affecting their well-being.²¹

Culture: Culture refers to a system of shared meanings that is expressed through patterns of customs, practices, and thoughts. A person's culture can come from any combination of his, her, or their: age; education level; ethnicity; geographic origin; gender; group history; language; life experiences; religious or spiritual beliefs and practices; sexual orientation; and socio-economic class. Culture is dynamic, changes with time, and is learned and transmitted by members of a particular community.²²

Cultural humility: The practice of self-reflection on how one's own background and expectations impact a situation, of openness to others' determining the relevance of their own identities to any given situation, and of committing to redress the effects of power imbalances.²³

Disadvantaged, Marginalized, Underserved: SB 1000 (Leyva) (Ch. 587, Stats. 2016) added *Government Code Section 65302(h)(4)(A)*, expanding the definition of "disadvantaged communities" for the purpose of general plans to mean "an area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code or an area that is a low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution

²¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

²² Land use: general plans: safety and environmental justice. SB 1000, 2016.
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billHistoryClient.xhtml?bill_id=20152_0160SB1000

²³ American Library Association

and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.”

This Plan uses the terms “disadvantaged”, “marginalized” and “underserved” interchangeably; it intends to encompass not only the definitions contemplated by SB 1000, but also to include other low-income and minority populations that are disproportionately burdened by or less able to prevent, respond, and recover from adverse environmental impacts.

Diversity: The variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. ²⁴

Environmental justice: The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins, with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. ²⁵

The United States has a history of racial discrimination that has persisted in multiple forms. During the 20th century, the civil rights movement sought to secure legal rights that were held but not fully realized by African Americans and other marginalized populations. The concept of environmental justice emerged out of this movement to describe the application of civil rights and social justice to environmental contexts. For example, the cumulative effect of siting a disproportionate number of toxic waste and other hazardous facilities in disadvantaged, urban communities of color has led to disproportionate impacts from pollution and lack of environmental services, such as clean drinking water, clean air, and access to parks and open space.

Environmental justice communities: Communities that are environmentally- and economically-stressed that experience environmental health inequities which contribute to persistent environmental health disparities. *(Based on conversations with the OPC Environmental Justice Advisory Group)*

²⁴ University of California, Office of Diversity and Engagement. “Policies.” Accessed May 2, 2022. <https://diversity.universityofcalifornia.edu/policies-guidelines/>

²⁵ Environmental justice. AB 1826, 2020. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB1628

Equity: This policy uses the term “equity” as defined in the context of social and racial equity, where “equity”,²⁶ refers to the fairness of achieving outcomes for all groups and no one factor, such as race, can be used to predict outcomes.

Inclusive: Environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. Inclusion integrates the fact of diversity and embeds it into core institutional mission and functioning.²⁷

Ocean Protection Council (OPC): The Ocean Protection Council (OPC) was created pursuant to the [California Ocean Protection Act](#) (COPA), which was signed into law in 2004 by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The mission of the OPC is to ensure that California maintains healthy, resilient, and productive ocean and coastal ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations. The OPC is committed to basing its decisions and actions on the best available science, and to promoting the use of science among all entities involved in the management of ocean resources.

Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team (OPC SAT): The Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team (OPC SAT) provides scientific analysis and advice to the OPC and works to ensure that OPC policy and funding decisions are informed by the best available science. The OPC SAT was established in 2008 to help meet the goals of the California Ocean Protection Act, and offers a critical venue to bring state leaders and scientists together around pressing ocean and coastal challenges. The OPC SAT takes on a range of topics with emphasis on state priorities to address issues impacting coastal and marine ecosystems in California.²⁸

Ocean Science Trust (OST): Ocean Science Trust was created by the [California Ocean Resources Stewardship Act \(CORSA\)](#), passed in 2000. Recognizing the value of independent science and the opportunity to better connect the wealth of scientific expertise in academia with policy and management decisions in the state, CORSA mandates the creation of a science trust ‘to seek and provide funding for ocean resource science projects and to encourage

²⁶ The Local & Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity. Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas into Action (2015).

²⁷ University of California, Davis: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. 2020. “Glossary.” <https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/about/glossary>

²⁸ California Ocean Protection /Council. “OPC Science Advisory Team (OPC-SAT).” Accessed May 2, 2022. <https://www.opc.ca.gov/science-advisory-team/>

coordinated, multiagency, multi-institution approaches to ocean resource science'. Every day the Ocean Science Trust team is committed to implementing this important legislation. In the context of the OPC Equity Plan, the Ocean Science Trust is addressed in relation to its role as facilitator of the Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team (OPC SAT).²⁹

Marine Protected Area (MPA, MPAs): Marine protected area (MPA) means a named, discrete geographic marine or estuarine area seaward of the high tide line or the mouth of a coastal river, including any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora and fauna that has been designated by law, administrative action, or voter initiative to protect or conserve marine life and habitat. MPA classifications include marine life reserves (the equivalent of the state marine reserve classification), state marine parks, which allow recreational fishing and prohibit commercial extraction, and state marine conservation areas, which allow for specified commercial and recreational activities, including fishing for certain species but not others, fishing with certain practices but not others, and kelp harvesting, provided that these activities are consistent with the objectives of the area and the goals and guidelines of this chapter.

MPAs are primarily intended to protect or conserve marine life and habitat, and are therefore a subset of marine managed areas (MMAs), which are broader groups of named, discrete geographic areas along the coast that protect, conserve, or otherwise manage a variety of resources and uses, including living marine resources, cultural and historical resources, and recreational opportunities. Marine managed area classifications include state water quality protection area, state marine cultural preservation area, and state marine recreational management area.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM): STEM education encompasses the processes of critical thinking, analysis, and collaboration in which students integrate the processes and concepts in real world contexts of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, fostering the development of STEM skills and competencies for college, career, and life.

Tribal expertise, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK): The knowledge held by indigenous cultures about their immediate environment and the cultural

²⁹ California Ocean Trust. "Science accelerating progress for a healthy coast and ocean." Accessed May 2, 2022. <https://www.oceansciencetrust.org/>

practices that build on that knowledge. Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) includes an intimate and detailed knowledge of plants, animals, and natural phenomena, the development and use of appropriate technologies for hunting, fishing, trapping, agriculture, and forestry, and a holistic knowledge, or “world view” that parallels the scientific discipline of ecology.

TEK can provide a fundamental tool for restoration and conservation management. Before European American contact, Native American tribes managed and stewarded California’s terrestrial and marine resources using traditional ecological knowledge and a wide array of traditional practices and techniques to maintain an environment capable of supporting large, thriving human, plant, and animal populations. Today, tribes continue to use these practices, which vary from tribe to tribe, but are generally focused on ecosystem interconnectivity, respecting the carrying capacity of the land, and viewing humans as an integral part of the environment.³⁰

³⁰ CA Assembly Bill No. 2225 Resource conservation: traditional ecological knowledge: land management plans. 2021-2022