



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

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Item 2

June 10, 2014

Dear California Ocean and Coastal Community,

One of OPC's key drivers is to develop and maintain meaningful partnerships—we are more effective in harnessing our collective resources and managing our state's ocean and coastal resources when we work together. It is an exciting time to be working on marine issues as our ocean community draws together with a shared vision for a healthy ocean. At today's workshop and at the OPC meeting we will be reinforcing our commitment to partnerships as together we undertake the management of our marine protected areas (MPAs). These are not paper parks, not lines on a map; rather, our MPAs serve as focal points where communities come together to celebrate and study California's diverse marine environment.

Marine protected areas are one of the key tools we are using to conserve our ocean ecosystems and understand the effects of climate change. Today we will share why it is critical that we continue our investment in MPA monitoring and how that investment also serves to grow our understanding of the impacts of climate change. On the 11th of June the OPC-SAT, under the leadership of the Ocean Science Trust, will tackle an exploratory discussion on ocean health as a science-informed, unifying management concept. I expect a robust and informative discussion that will inform future actions by the Council.

At the February 2014 OPC meeting, there was a briefing on the "The California Collaborative Approach: Marine Protected Area Partnership Plan." I'm pleased to share that a draft of the plan is now out for public comment. OPC staff has worked for several months in concert with colleagues from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Fish and Game Commission, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and Ocean Science Trust in developing this document. The "Partnership Plan" shares our vision and approach for a partnership-based model for managing California's network of MPAs. When I began my tenure as OPC's executive director in 2012, it was clear to me that the MPA designation process had generated a tremendous amount of energy among local groups who wanted to contribute to the successful stewardship of these unique areas. The Partnership Plan and the community "collaboratives" described within will harness that incredible energy. The Partnership Plan also recognizes the unique role that tribal sovereign governments and tribal communities have in ocean and coastal resource management. This summer, I will continue to build bridges with tribal governments and communities in the context of the Partnership Plan. More information about the Partnership Plan is contained in the following pages and on our website.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you on the 10th and 11th. These will be two action-packed days where cutting edge ideas for conserving and enhancing ocean resources for all of us—fishermen, tribes, conservationists, and everyone who cares about our ocean—will be discussed and moved to implementation.

Sincerely,

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

Catherine Kuhlman
Executive Director



**California Ocean Protection Council (OPC)
Executive Director's Report
June 10, 2014**

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

Staffing. Daniel Santillano joined the staff of the OPC in March 2014 as an environmental scientist. Daniel is currently finishing his doctoral work at the Max Planck Institute in Germany where he studied how hydrocarbon resources in continental margin sediments fuel biological communities. His undergraduate degree is from the College of Natural Resources at UC Berkeley, after which he worked in forest ecology with Zapotec tribes in Oaxaca, Mexico, as a Fulbright Scholar. Daniel's portfolio includes seafloor and coastal mapping, the California Geoportal, and desalination.

Clare Waldmann is departing the OPC in mid-June to pursue the Robert Bosch Foundation Fellowship Program where she will spend a year in Berlin, Germany. Clare will continue working on coastal and marine protection and climate change at a German federal ministry and an environmental think tank. Clare began her career with the OPC in 2011 and has been an indispensable member of the team, most recently serving as the staff lead on ocean acidification and baseline marine protected area (MPA) monitoring.

The OPC recently released two job announcements; one for a staff person to lead work on MPA management and the other to lead efforts on ocean acidification/hypoxia. Applicants must be eligible for hire from the Coastal Program Analyst I or II lists. Interested applicants are encouraged to submit their materials as soon as possible. More information can be found at <https://www.jobs.ca.gov/>, choose "Resources Agency" under "Department" in the search function.

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

Seafloor and shoreline mapping.

Work to acquire more detailed bathymetric and habitat maps of the San Francisco Bay will ensue summer 2014 with our partners at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Cutting-edge robotics tools are being designed as part of this effort to enable near-shore mapping to occur where ships equipped with sonar have traditionally had difficulty navigating.

With respect to the merge of the topographic/bathymetric data sets completed fall 2013, OPC staff have explored new methods to visually explore the high-quality data in three-dimensions, which may enable state agency analysts and academic scientists to more accurately acquire a better picture of coastal geomorphology as it changes over time.

California Coastal Geoportal. OPC staff have been conducting outreach about the Coastal Geoportal to diverse audiences, including the Monterey Bay Marine GIS User Group and at the CalGIS conference in April. OPC staff have also developed training videos now available on the

OPC website with updated information about OPC's leadership in developing the [Coastal Geoportal](#). OPC will continue to conduct outreach on the Coastal Geoportal and work to add in key datasets, such as products from the California Seafloor Mapping Program.

2. Strategic Plan Issue Area 2: Climate Change

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

West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel. The West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel is continuing to develop several products to provide state-level decision-makers with the knowledge needed to evaluate and develop action plans for these complex issues. Products to be released over the next year include an FAQ document, scientific publications, and technical summaries. More information about the science panel and their work can be found at <http://westcoastoah.org/>. OPC staff are also gearing up for meetings among West Coast leadership and NOAA and USEPA to deepen links on national policy, research, and funding.

Request for proposals for ocean acidification and hypoxia research. OPC and California Sea Grant, in close collaboration with the California Ocean Science Trust and the West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel, recently released a request for proposals for research related to impacts of ocean acidification and hypoxia on California's coastal ecosystems. This call is intended to solicit short-term projects to address research and monitoring needs relevant to managers' questions about ocean acidification and hypoxia in California. Project selection will take place over the summer, and 2-3 projects will be recommended for OPC concurrence at the August 27, 2014 OPC meeting. The funding source is remaining funds from the February 29, 2008 OPC authorization to disburse funds to the University of California Sea Grant program to fund research that directly supports the OPC's strategic plan.

State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise. OPC has convened the State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise consisting of senior management of the Coastal Zone Management Agencies (Coastal Commission, BCDC, Coastal Conservancy), the State Lands Commission (as land and resource owner), and the OPC. The Leadership Group met in March and May to discuss and coordinate sea-level rise policy issues and is beginning a regional assessment of sea-level rise preparedness initiatives and to identify gaps and opportunities for leveraging resources. This group has the potential to be a powerhouse for streamlining policy development and projects, vastly enhancing California's response to the effects of sea-level rise and extreme weather events on the coast.

Local Coastal Program Sea-level Rise Grant Program. OPC staff collaborated with staff from the Coastal Commission and the Coastal Conservancy to issue a joint announcement and application

process for grant funds available to support Local Coastal Program (LCP) planning. The OPC's contribution is approximately \$1.2 million for the second round of the LCP Sea-level Rise Grant Program. The OPC previously approved approximately \$1.3 million for seven projects supporting local governments to do work that supports LCP updates specifically to address sea-level rise, including sea-level rise modeling, vulnerability assessments, and adaptation planning and policy development. The Coastal Commission's LCP Planning Assistance Grant Program has \$1 million available for updating and certifying LCPs, which may include updates to address impacts of climate change and sea-level rise. Applications are due July 7, 2014. This grant program has demonstrated the pent up need for funding for communities to address sea-level rise through local control and zoning.

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

Marine Protected Areas

MPA Partnership Plan. "The California Collaborative Approach: Draft Marine Protected Areas Partnership Plan" was released for public comment early last week. The Partnership Plan is an overarching guidance document, developed under the leadership of Ocean Protection Council in cooperation with several state agencies, which promotes a partnership-based model for managing California's network of MPAs. Focused on a shared vision of linking agencies and organizations across geographic and jurisdictional scales, the Partnership Plan aims to tap into the existing energy, expertise, and resources at the local scale through a network of state-wide community collaboratives.

A workshop on the MPA Partnership Plan is scheduled to take place on the morning of June 10, just before the meeting of the Ocean Protection Council. The workshop is intended to provide an opportunity for the public to interact in an informal manner with the state agency authors, including the OPC, Fish and Game Commission, Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Parks and Recreation, California Ocean Science Trust, and MPA Collaborative Implementation Project.

Public comment will be accepted through July 18, 2014 (longer comment period is provided for tribal governments). The plan and accompanying information can be found at <http://www.opc.ca.gov/>.

MPA Collaborative Implementation Project. The MPA Collaborative Implementation Project (MPA CIP) has now initiated the development of all fourteen MPA community collaboratives along the coast of California from San Diego to Del Norte County. MPA CIP is facilitating the grassroots development of each collaborative by:

- Assisting in identifying and reaching out to a broad range of participants;
- Hosting the first series of meetings;
- Providing context and means for interfacing with the managing agency and other collaboratives, regionally and statewide; and
- Offering support in setting up fiscal sponsorships and procuring collaborative grants.

In addition to acting as the liaison to the statewide network of MPA community collaboratives, MPA CIP is also working to identify themes and support projects that have statewide application and appeal. These currently include:

- Countywide enforcement trainings for local officers
- Land-based boundary markers for offshore users in remote locations
- Surveillance cameras for MPA monitoring and enforcement
- MPA reporting and notification apps targeting ocean users
- Online research notification/local permitting form

MPA Monitoring. Monitoring the performance of the MPA network is continuing with OPC support. The North Coast MPA Baseline Program kick-off workshop was held in early March, marking the official launch of the program. Baseline projects have started collecting field data and identifying opportunities for collaboration with other projects.

The first of a series of reports on the results of the North Central Coast MPA Baseline Program was released in May. [The Regional Snapshot](#) shares a snapshot of ecological and socioeconomic conditions of the region, based on baseline monitoring data collected inside and outside marine protected areas (MPAs) from 2010 – 2013. This is the first in a series of reports that will share findings, results and next steps for the monitoring of the North Central Coast regional network of MPAs, with further integrative reports coming in 2015.

[A draft updated Central Coast MPA Monitoring Plan](#) is now available for public input. The California Ocean Science Trust and California Department of Fish and Wildlife led updating of the Central Coast MPA Monitoring Plan to reflect input from scientists, resource managers and stakeholders for the next phase of MPA monitoring in the Central Coast. More information will be provided during Item 5.

Through a related effort, OPC staff attended a workshop of the California Citizen Science Initiative to develop guidance for connecting citizen science with MPA monitoring, and building community around citizen science in the Central Coast.

Data collection as part of the South Coast MPA Baseline Program is now complete, and final reports and integrative projects are now underway.

Other MPA outreach efforts. OceanSpaces.org, the online platform for communicating and sharing information about MPA monitoring, will be re-launched soon. The online community was developed by the Ocean Science Trust with support from OPC, and will be updated in response to user feedback, including a new site look, usability and navigation, and new features for OceanSpaces members.

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

Marine debris.

The West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health (WCGA) has been advancing actions outlined in the Marine Debris Strategy released last year. Efforts are currently focused on the formation of a West Coast Marine Debris Coalition, to broaden coordination of marine debris work on the West

Coast. Work continues to make the West Coast Marine Debris Database a robust resource for state and federal agencies and other groups interested in beach cleanup and derelict fishing gear removal data. OPC staff have been working to increase awareness of the database, recently by presenting about the database at a major coastal management conference Headwaters to Oceans in San Diego.

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

Desalination.

The current drought has undoubtedly generated considerable challenges in allocating limited water resources to the various entities throughout the state. Increasing California's water portfolio to include desalinated waters from marine sources has been of great interest to coastal communities, such as Santa Cruz, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Huntington Beach, among others. The OPC, in collaboration with the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board), participated in a briefing by the City of Santa Barbara on May 21, 2014, as they seek to reactivate the Charles Meyer Desalination Plant, which was constructed in response to the severe drought from 1986 to 1991. Due to sufficient freshwater supplies ensuing in 1991, the facility has since remained in long-term storage mode for reactivation when necessary. Discourse focused on the proposed efforts by the proponents to minimize impacts to marine organisms during both intake and brine disposal.

The Inter Agency Working Group (IAWG) on seawater desalination also expects to resume in the near future to discuss various policy issues. In addition, various sub-groups of the IAWG are being proposed in order to address more policy, technological, or siting matters concerning desalination facilities or mitigation in a more targeted manner.

Related Initiatives

West Coast Ocean Data Portal. In May, the West Coast Governors' Alliance on Ocean Health (WCGA) was awarded the Ocean's Special Achievement in GIS (SAG) award in recognition of their work to develop the [West Coast Ocean Data Portal \(WCODP\)](#). The portal increases access and connectivity of West Coast ocean data and people to facilitate regional ocean management, policy development, and planning. The award is presented by Esri, a leading Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software company, in recognition of the WCGA's leadership, contribution and innovation in advancing ocean health and awareness.

Progress continues on a marine debris use case for the WCODP. This project will highlight functionality of the portal by combining diverse datasets to elevate our understanding of marine debris on the West Coast. OPC staff are contributing guidance to this project and helping with the incorporation of new datasets. The use case project is set to launch this summer.

Thank You Ocean. The 16th [Annual Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photo Contest](#) co-sponsored by Thank You Ocean, the California Coastal Commission, and Fairmont Hotels of California launches on June 9th and will be open for six weeks. The contest features photographs that reflect the importance that the coast and ocean has for California residents and the role that the Natural Resources Agency, Ocean Protection Council, and Coastal Commission have played in preserving coastal and marine resources.

The Thank You Ocean campaign recently unveiled a sustainable seafood media campaign that included Celebrity Chef, Cat Cora, promoting sustainable seafood choices that are healthy for the ocean. The campaign encouraged the public to join Cat Cora in helping to protect fish populations and marine habitat by choosing only sustainably caught seafood and asking businesses and restaurants to support ocean-friendly seafood.



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