



**California Ocean Protection Council (OPC)
Executive Director's Report
November 1, 2017**

The Executive Director's Report provides an update on OPC outcomes and accomplishments since the previous OPC meeting. This report covers August 2017 – November 2017¹.

Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1): On June 29, 2016, the Council approved \$7,414,534 in Proposition 1 funds for eight projects to improve water quality through pollution source reduction and habitat restoration/enhancement. Staff has finalized the grant agreements, all projects are underway, and a brief update on the status of several of these projects will be provided at the November 1, 2017 OPC meeting. Additionally, OPC staff is recommending adoption of Updated Grant Guidelines for its Proposition 1 Grant Program to improve the program and strengthen alignment with OPC priorities. For details, including a timeline for Round 2 solicitation, see the [staff recommendation](#) for Agenda Item 4.

Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84): On October 17, 2016, the Council approved \$6,024,956 in Proposition 84 funds for 16 projects supporting OPC's priority areas of climate change, marine protected areas, marine pollution and sustainable fisheries. Staff has finalized 14 grant agreements, with the remaining 2 grants close to being finalized. A brief update on the status of several of projects underway will be provided at the November 1, 2017 OPC meeting. Additionally, at its August 2017 meeting, the OPC authorized a disbursement of \$7,000,000 to the two Sea Grant programs in California to fund and administer a competitive grant process for scientific research projects to support OPC priorities. For details on the priority topics for this process, along with a program timeline, see the [staff memo](#) for Agenda Item 7.

Staffing: Given the current and anticipated future severity of climate change on California's coastline and marine ecosystems and the need for increased science and policy solutions in support of Governor Brown's focus on addressing this issue, OPC's climate change program is expanding. OPC recently posted a job announcement for an Environmental Scientist position in our climate change program. The application deadline for this job closed on October 10, 2017.

Additionally, in October 2017, Jenn Phillips was promoted to Senior Environmental Scientist. Jenn, who has worked for OPC since April 2015, has been leading our work on climate

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

adaptation and mitigation, sea-level rise, ocean acidification, among other issues. Jenn will continue to lead our climate change program while mentoring staff and fellows supporting OPC's ocean-related climate priorities. Congratulations to Jenn on this well-deserved promotion.

We continue to make progress towards hiring an Associate Governmental Program Analyst and anticipate filling this position by mid-November.

Updating OPC's Strategic Plan: OPC staff is in the process of developing our 2018-2023 strategic plan. This succinct and focused plan will highlight OPC's program priorities, goals and actions to guide our efforts over the next five years (2018-2023). We anticipate bringing the draft strategic plan to the January 31, 2018 Council meeting, followed by a public comment period to solicit stakeholder input. We anticipate bringing the final strategic plan to the Council for adoption in April 2018.

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

Science-based decision-making is integrated into all of our priority program areas; please see below for more details.

Strategic Plan Issue Area 2: Climate Change

Ocean Acidification:

PCC/IWG-OA Integrated Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia (OAH) Monitoring Task Force

On August 29, 2017 members of the ocean acidification and hypoxia (OAH) monitoring community met in Tiburon to discuss the current extent of OAH monitoring in California and how to improve our monitoring network to be more responsive to management needs. The meeting was led by California members of the Integrated Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia (OAH) Monitoring Task Force, which was founded by the Pacific Coast Collaborative Subcommittee on Ocean Acidification and the federal Interagency Working Group on Ocean Acidification (IWG-OA), and includes members from California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and Alaska. One of the major goals of the monitoring task force is to assemble details of current OAH monitoring efforts into a comprehensive inventory that can be mapped to better understand current monitoring capacity on the West Coast. The inventory identifies not only where, but also *how* we are monitoring ocean acidification and its impacts, to understand whether we have the monitoring infrastructure in place to be able to answer questions needed to manage ocean acidification impacts. In particular, managers need to know where and when ocean acidification is occurring, what is contributing to OAH, what effect is OAH having, and what can be done about it. Building a comprehensive inventory of the monitoring efforts in effect now will allow the science and management community to make better decisions about how to improve our monitoring network (e.g., where to add additional sensors, where to improve quality of current sensors) to better understand and prepare for changing ocean conditions.

OPC staff and additional members of the California monitoring task force have assembled active maps showcasing where and how well we are currently monitoring OAH in California, with the help of monitoring practitioners across the state. OPC staff shared these maps with the OAH monitoring community at the August 29 meeting and discussed issues to consider in assessing whether current monitoring efforts meet management needs. The California members of the monitoring task force are currently incorporating feedback from the meeting and adding additional information to improve the inventory. Once the inventory is complete, the task force will bring the California OAH monitoring community together again to identify monitoring gaps to ensure California's monitoring network is comprehensive. Meanwhile, the full monitoring task force is working on integrating these inventories within California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and Alaska, to develop a comprehensive understanding of monitoring gaps on the West Coast. In early 2018, the full monitoring task force will bring together state and federal policymakers and scientists to evaluate the existing inventory of monitoring efforts to identify and attempt to fill critical gaps in OAH monitoring along the West Coast, which is a key recommendation from the West Coast OAH Panel.

Ocean Acidification International Alliance at Our Ocean Conference in Malta

The International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification (OA Alliance) announced at the Our Ocean conference in Malta in early October that its members will work to enhance action on ocean acidification (OA) through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at COP23 and COP24, and ensure that steps to mitigate the harmful effects of OA are included in future OA Action Plans. Founding members of the OA Alliance, which include Chile, France, the Canadian Province of British Columbia and the U.S. West Coast states of Washington, Oregon and California, will work to include new language on ocean acidification mitigation and adaptation commitments in international climate decisions, as part of the OA Alliance's voluntary commitment at the Our Ocean Conference. The OA Alliance also announced a goal of developing 15 new member Ocean Acidification Action Plans by 2019. Ocean Acidification Action Plans will include a range of government and civil society actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and other contributors to ocean acidification, as well as address impacts of ocean acidification by including actions governments can take to adapt and build resilience locally to the ongoing changes in ocean conditions.

The OA Alliance was first announced at the 2016 Our Ocean Conference in Washington, D.C., and has grown to 48 members (see below), including national governments ranging from Chile to Iceland to New Zealand and Tuvalu, as well as states like California and New York, tribal nations, cities, researchers and other non-governmental organizations. The OA Alliance's purpose is to increase awareness of the real impacts of ocean acidification on coastal communities, advance action to reduce OA and mitigate the effects of OA through political commitment and resources, acknowledging the significant economic threat OA poses to countries that depend on coastal resources like fish and shellfish.

At the Our Ocean conference, the OA Alliance held a side meeting of current and interested members. Ambassador Torres of Chile discussed actions to reduce or mitigate OA in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) associated with the Paris Agreement. Other recommended actions for member countries include:

- Develop national inter-agency working groups on ocean acidification with experts from different fields (e.g., fisheries and aquaculture, conservation, tourism, finance);
- Evaluate socio-economic vulnerabilities and potential impacts of OA on fish- and shellfish-dependent communities and tourism sectors;
- Mandate risk assessments for species at risk;
- Build ocean resilience and protect marine biodiversity as a means to safeguard marine ecosystems from the impacts of ocean acidification (e.g., establish MPAs);
- Identify and protect key habitats that play a crucial role in climate change mitigation and adaptation (e.g., mangroves and seagrass beds), and;
- Reduce local sources of acidification (e.g., improve wastewater treatment, minimize non-point source runoff, inform farmers of best practices for nutrient management).

The OA Alliance will be represented at COP23 in mid-November, and will be hosting a side event at COP23 as well as participating in Oceans Action Day. For more information on that as well as the full list of members, visit <https://www.OAalliance.org>.

The OA Alliance team at Our Ocean announcing their Voluntary Commitment:



Current Members of the OA Alliance as of November 1, 2017:

Government Members

- The Province of British Columbia
- The State of California
- The Republic of Chile
- Cross River State, Nigeria
- The French Republic
- Iceland
- City of Imperial Beach, California
- The State of New York
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- The State of Oregon
- The Province of Quebec
- Quileute Nation
- Quinault Indian Nation
- The Suquamish Tribe
- United Arab Emirates
- The City of Vancouver, Canada
- The State of Washington



Affiliates

- Association Monégasque sur l'Acidification des Océans (AMAO)
- California Coastkeeper Alliance
- California Ocean Science Trust
- Center for Ocean Solutions
- Hakai Institute
- Hog Island Oyster Co.
- Intake Works LLC
- J. Hunter Pearls, Fiji
- Joint Ocean Commission Initiative
- Marine Stewardship Council
- Monterey Bay Aquarium
- The Nature Conservancy
- Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
- Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
- New Zealand Ocean Acidification Community
- Ocean Networks Canada
- Ocean Conservancy
- Ocean Sanctuaries
- Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association (PCSGA)
- Scripps Institution of Oceanography
- Surfrider Foundation
- Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute
- Taylor Shellfish Farms
- University Cote D'Azur, France
- University of Otago
- Vigilant
- We Mean Business
- Washington Ocean Acidification Center (WOAC)
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)



Sea-level Rise:

After a series of workshops and outreach in late spring and summer, OPC staff has finished the initial draft of the Update to the State of California Sea Level Rise Document (Guidance). Staff is vetting it with political and policy leaders, and key coastal state and federal management agencies and aims to initiate a 30-day public comment period in mid-November. OPC staff is on track to bring the final version of the Guidance to the January 2018 OPC meeting for review and approval. OPC staff is also working closely with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to host sea-level rise planning and funding resources on the [State's Climate Adaptation Clearinghouse](#).

To comply with [AB 2516](#) (Gordon, 2014: Sea-level rise planning: database), OPC initiated the second of two yearly surveys with state agencies, ports, airports and utilities on the status of sea-level rise planning activities in March and April of this year, to update the current version of the [Sea-level Rise Planning Database](#). The survey closed in mid-September and results will be posted soon.

The king tides are upon us once again in California. OPC is a partner of the California King Tides Project, a collaboration of several state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations raising awareness of threats to California's shoreline communities and ecosystems. The Project works with local partners to hold educational events and recruit citizen scientists to take photos of their local beaches, harbors, and wetlands during king tides. These extreme high tide events can provide a glimpse into the potential impacts of future sea level rise to coastal communities and infrastructure and help planners prepare for different sea level rise scenarios. The best photos are of well-known landmarks or places already at risk for flooding or with sensitive coastal infrastructure or habitat. The king tides this year are taking place December 3-5 and January 1-2. To learn more about the Project, see some of the photos collected over the years, or become a partner visit www.california.kingtides.net.

Strategic Plan Issue Area 3: Sustainable Fisheries and Marine Ecosystems

Sustainable Fisheries:

Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group

The Working Group met on September 27-28, 2017 to continue developing solutions to reduce the risk of whale entanglement in the Dungeness crab fishery and to support thriving whale populations along the West Coast and a thriving and profitable Dungeness crab fishery. In May 2017, the group identified the need for a risk assessment tool to facilitate continual, collaborative evaluation of the risk of entanglement, as well as identified mitigation options that allow for a collaborative recommendation to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding options to reduce risk of entanglement. This evolved into the draft Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP). During the September meeting, the group agreed on a structure, function, and tools to be used within the draft RAMP. The program will be tested as a pilot during the 2017-2018 Dungeness crab fishing season, and is designed to be flexible and

responsive to considering new information, technologies, and approaches to reducing the risk of entanglements. All aspects of the draft RAMP will be voluntary during this pilot phase. The Working Group will continue to support and be involved in collaborative research projects designed to inform the RAMP. The Working Group will continue to share information about their progress, including the RAMP and associated pilot, with commercial/recreational fishermen, decision-makers, and the broader public. For more information, visit the Working Group's [webpage](#).

Information Gathering Projects & the Marine Life Management Act Master Plan for Fisheries

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and partners are in the process of amending the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) Master Plan for Fisheries, which is a planning document that guides management efforts on highest priority species as well as describes the specific tools and approaches to be applied in achieving the goals of the MLMA. OPC is supporting various projects which develop tools and recommendations to be considered during the Master Plan Amendment Phase including: developing an ecological risk assessment tool; developing guidance and recommendations for CDFW peer review processes related to fisheries management; and the development of socioeconomic guidance for fisheries management. Elements of these projects have been incorporated into an Initial Draft of the Master Plan Amendment (2018 Master Plan), which is available for Tribes and stakeholders to review and submit comments by Thursday, Thursday 9th at 5pm at this [webpage](#).

Dungeness Crab Task Force

The Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF) met on October 16-18th via a conference call. The DCTF reviews and evaluates Dungeness crab fishery management measures and provides its recommendations to the Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture (JCFA), the Fish and Game Commission (FGC), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). During the October meeting, the Task Force discussed the commercial Dungeness crab trap limit program, and the long-term organizational structure and funding of an industry-representative body to inform management and priorities of the Dungeness crab fishery beyond 2019 (when many Dungeness crab related Fish & Game codes will sunset). The DCTF also discussed and provided recommendations regarding various sun-setting Fish and Game Code sections related to the Dungeness crab fishery, as well as discussed other priorities and initiatives related to the Dungeness crab fishery. An update on the Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group's draft, voluntary RAMP program was also provided. Recommendations will be compiled into a report and sent to the JCFA, FGC and CDFW by January 2018.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):

Collaborative Network and MPA Statewide Leadership Team MOU

After many thoughtful collective discussions, an MOU was created to formalize the relationship between the Collaborative Network and the MPA Statewide Leadership Team in support of ongoing management of California's MPA network. This MOU was an important step to create a venue for mutual support and sustained partnership. We have received signatures from all 14

Collaboratives and all but one federal Leadership Team member. We have are on track to have the final signature by the end of the year.

Collaborative Network Small Grants Program

Building off the MOU, OPC released a call for proposals in June for its Collaborative Network Small Grants Program, which closed on September 1, 2017. The Small Grants Program provided the opportunity for each Collaborative to apply for a \$10,000 grant plus an additional \$5000 provided by a philanthropic donor to work on regional or statewide projects. All 14 Collaboratives submitted proposal. The Grant Review Committee was made up of representatives from different agencies, bringing together a wide range of expertise and outlooks on the statewide priorities of the [MPA Management Program](#). The Committee's recommendations were presented to the Leadership Team on October 11 and the Collaboratives will be notified of the outcome on November 1, 2017. Funds will be disbursed by November 30, 2017 and the projects will begin December 1, 2017.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Marine Protected Area (MPA) Program Summit

On October 9 and 10, staff from ODFW and CDFW's MPA Programs met in Crescent City to discuss management efforts and progress. Although Oregon's system of 5 MPAs were not designed to be ecologically connected as California's 124 MPAs were, many similarities in the goals of each state's founding MPA legislation were identified. Key points of discussion included developing opportunities to align monitoring methods, leveraging resources between northern California and southern Oregon, and coordinating on the system-wide management reviews, which are scheduled in California in 2022 and in Oregon in 2023. Staff from both programs committed to ongoing collaboration and another in-person summit in the spring of 2018.

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

Marine Pollution Program:

California Ocean Litter Strategy

At its October 2016 meeting, the OPC approved funding for California Sea Grant to help update OPC's 2008 OPC Strategy to Reduce and Prevent Ocean Litter (Strategy). OPC is also partnering with staff from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Marine Debris Program, the California Coastal Commission, and Surfrider Foundation on this update.

In May 2017, OPC and NOAA hosted a stakeholder workshop to solicit input on the priorities that should be including in the updated Strategy. On September 14, the draft Strategy was released for a 30-day public comment period, with comments received from stakeholders ranging from non-profits to the plastics industry. These comments will be summarized and then discussed during the November 15-16 workshop in La Jolla, where stakeholders will revise and further develop the Strategy and volunteer to take a lead or partner role in implementing proposed actions. OPC staff anticipates bringing the Strategy to the Ocean Protection Council for adoption in 2018.

Microfiber Leadership Summit

OPC staff and Council Member Michael Brown participated in a two-day summit at U.C. Santa Barbara dedicated to sharing information and developing a roadmap to address microfibers as an environmental contaminant. The summit was co-convened by the Bren School and the Ocean Conservancy. The majority of the participants were from academia and the outdoor/athletic apparel industry. The Bren School has agreed to draft proceedings that will include a summary of information shared and a roadmap to help guide future actions; e.g., research, communications, innovation.

Strategic Plan Issue Area 5: Existing and Emerging Ocean Uses

Marine Renewable Energy

At the request of Governor Brown, the Director of the federal Bureau Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) established a BOEM California Task Force to facilitate education, coordination and consultation on leasing and permitting for, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of, renewable energy projects on the California outer continental shelf. OPC staff assisted the Governor's office and BOEM staff in organizing the kick-off meeting for the Task Force which was held in Sacramento the fall of 2016. Following this meeting and over the last several months, OPC staff have been assisting BOEM and the California Energy Commission (CEC) with outreach to local communities, fishermen, scientists, tribes, environmental groups, and the maritime industry. In addition, OPC staff have been assisting the CEC in locating relevant data sets for the offshore wind planning process that is being conducted at the request of the Task Force. A second Task Force meeting will be announced after this planning process has been completed, most likely early 2018.

Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup

OPC staff presented the finalized Coastal Regional Sediment Management Plan (CRSMP) for the Eureka Littoral Cell (Humboldt Bay Region) to the board of the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District at its meeting on September 28th. The board adopted the CRSMP at its subsequent meeting on October 12th. In a nutshell, CRSMPs discuss strategies and identify projects that will beneficially re-use sediment for beach and habitat restoration, enhancing recreational opportunities, increasing natural shore protection, and maintaining coastal resilience. OPC will work with the Harbor District and other local partners in implementing the CRSMP. OPC staff presented an update on the status of the California Sediment Master Plan at the annual conference of the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association.