



**Informational Item**  
September 14, 2021

**OPC 2021 Summer Interns**  
Jenn Eckerle, Deputy Director

In summer 2021, OPC hosted a cohort of six interns who helped advance priorities in [OPC's Strategic Plan to Protect California's Coast and Ocean](#) while gaining meaningful professional experience within state government. Bella Alvarado, Mairin Culwell, Madhu Garimella, Nayre Herrera, and Claudia Sanchez-Rea were part of OPC's first-ever ten-week paid summer internship program, which was focused on providing undergraduate college students with the opportunity to build a foundational background and robust overview of California's coastal and ocean science, policy, and management work. Molly Glickman joined us through a merit-based award from the Haas Center for Public Service's Undergraduate Fellowships Program at Stanford University, the fourth year of an ongoing partnership between OPC and Stanford. During this informational item, each intern will provide a brief presentation on their projects. Additional details about their background and professional interests can be found below.

During their internship, each student worked closely with a staff mentor and had the opportunity to participate in programmatic efforts including interagency meetings, reviewing grant proposals, and conducting bill analyses. In addition to providing this broad agency support, OPC's summer interns were responsible for leading specific projects with discrete deliverables that will directly support OPC's policy work related to tribal stewardship, sea-level rise adaptation, equity and environmental justice, offshore wind development, microplastics, and marine protected areas. Furthermore, the cohort worked together on a collaborative project, each contributing sections to OPC's first Annual Coast and Ocean Report, to be finalized by OPC staff later this year.

While the goal of OPC's summer internships was to provide students with an opportunity to increase their skills, knowledge and exposure to ocean and coastal conservation in California, we received tremendous benefits from working with these six curious, intelligent, motivated students over the last ten weeks. We are impressed with their fearlessness and resilience, grateful for their efforts, and truly inspired by this next generation of ocean champions.

### BELLA ALVARADO

Bella Alvarado is a rising senior at UCLA majoring in Environmental Science with a minor in Environmental Systems and Society. During her internship, she worked with Dr. Justine Kimball, Senior Program Manager for OPC's Climate Change Program, on floating offshore wind development in California. She evaluated the impacts to marine life and fisheries and identified priority research needs to fill data gaps. She developed a whitepaper summarizing available information and potential impacts on marine life, fisheries and the tribal consultation process.



### MAIRIN CULWELL



Mairin Culwell is a junior at UC Berkeley pursuing a simultaneous degree in Political Science and Society and Environment with a concentration on global environmental politics. On campus, Mairin is involved in a student-led sustainable consulting group, [BEACN](#), which has sparked her interest in the intersections of policy, management, and business in tackling environmental issues. In these projects, Mairin is particularly interested in solutions to plastic waste through collaboration between government and businesses for launching reuse and social responsibility. This interest in plastic pollution has also been the focus of her work this summer as she joined the water quality

team in helping to develop the California Microplastics Strategy. Throughout her ten weeks at OPC, Mairin researched current methods and technologies to monitor microplastics and developed case studies that highlight businesses leading the way in source reduction and management of microplastics.

### **MADHU GARIMELLA.**

Madhulika (Madhu) Garimella is an undergraduate senior at UC San Diego (UCSD) where she is majoring in Environmental Systems with a focus in ecology, behavior, and evolution and she is completing a minor in economics. She has a special interest in environmental policy specifically within the realm of environmental justice. She has worked as a campaign coordinator for a wide range of environmental campaigns with the group CalPIRG Students. Over the course of this



summer, Madhu worked closely with Maria Rodriguez, OPC’s Wetland Program Manager, on equity, environmental justice, and wetlands. She aided in the solicitation and reviewal for Prop 1 grants, collated resources and developed policy recommendations on next steps to address toxic sites vulnerable to sea-level rise; and created summary documents to inform the development of wetlands principles.

### **MOLLY GLICKMAN**



Molly Glickman is an undergraduate junior at Stanford University pursuing a major in Marine Biology and a minor in Political Science. Her long-held interest in ocean science coupled with her recent exposure to environmental policy has led to a special interest in the intersection of science and governance. She currently works as a Research Assistant at Stanford's Hopkins Marine Station in a lab that studies the ecology of resilience to climate change in kelp forests. During her internship with OPC, Molly assisted with the development of a statewide strategy for addressing the threat of microplastics on coastal and ocean ecosystems. She worked with the climate team on microplastic pollution research, facilitated feedback from OPC’s science

partners, and worked closely with OPC intern Mairin Culwell to draft and revise key sections of the microplastics strategy.

### NAYRE HERRERA

Nayre Herrera is an undergraduate senior at Humboldt State University (HSU) where she is majoring in Environmental Science and Management with a focus in Planning and Policy. She has a special interest in water management and conservation and is also completing a minor in Water Resource Policy. She is a student assistant for the HSU Sea Level Rise Initiative (<https://humboldtslri.org/>) which serves as a regional research



hub for SLR adaptation and mitigation efforts on the North Coast. She has an interest in working collaboratively with communities, local governments, tribes, and NGOs to develop place-specific solutions for SLR in rural settings such as Humboldt County. Over the course of the summer, Nayre worked with OPC Marine Ecosystems Program Manager and Tribal Liaison Michael Esagro to develop recommendations to expand the scope and scale of the Tribal Marine Stewards Network and identify methods for an assessment of the impacts from sea level rise on culturally significant resources.

### CLAUDIA SANCHEZ-REA



Claudia Sanchez Rea is a graduating senior at California State University Northridge (CSUN) where she is majoring in general biology. She has a special interest in marine conservation and environmental education, and she aspires to help provide equitable environmental education to underprivileged communities. Claudia has an ongoing undergraduate research project with the Silbiger lab at CSUN where she is researching heat wave effects on competitive interactions between coral and macroalgae, and she is working with her campus's Institute of Sustainability to develop a free phone application for locating food pantries. Over the course of the summer, Claudia

worked with OPC Marine Protected Areas Program Manager Lindsay Bonito to compile data on the socioeconomic effects of MPA implementation on non-consumptive stakeholders, providing background research identifying assessment methods that will inform the upcoming 2022 MPA Decadal Management Review.