

CALIFORNIA OCEAN
PROTECTION COUNCIL

Staff Recommendation
June 8, 2006

California Public Ocean Awareness Campaign

Developed By: **Rebecca Pollock**

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Consideration of the California Public Ocean Awareness Campaign and possible 1) determination that it is a high priority project and 2) authorization for the council Secretary to take actions necessary to provide up to \$110,000 for its implementation.

NEAREST OCEAN or COASTAL LOCATION: Statewide

AGENCY OR ENTITY RECOMMENDING PROJECT: California Resources Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Sanctuary Program, State Coastal Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Letters of Support

Exhibit 2: April 28, 2006 Ocean Communicators Alliance Workshop Report

Exhibit 3: Members of the Ocean Communicators Alliance (as of April 28, 2006)

Exhibit 4: Ocean Communicators Alliance May 2006 Newsletter

RESOLUTION:

“The Ocean Protection Council finds pursuant to Sections 35600, *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code that the California Public Ocean Awareness Campaign, as herein described, is of high priority for ocean conservation and authorizes the Council Secretary to take actions necessary to provide up to \$110,000 for its implementation.”

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Over the past year, a committed group of communications professionals have been developing a program to assist the public in understanding and addressing ocean and coastal conservation issues in California. The Ocean Communicators Alliance has developed a multifaceted approach to educating the public about the ocean and its stewardship. Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council (council) determine that the California Public Ocean Awareness Campaign is a high priority project and authorizes the council’s Secretary to take actions needed for its implementation.

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The need for public ocean awareness

A February 2006 analysis conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) found that the California public is substantially interested in ocean and coastal protection, but lacks knowledge about current efforts to conserve the ocean and how they can assist these efforts. According to the survey report, nine out of ten Californians feel the quality of the beach and ocean is personally important to them, as well as to the overall quality of life and economy in the state. Eighty-five percent of residents surveyed perceive ocean and beach pollution to be a serious problem. Further, “eight in 10 Californians say they are interested in learning more about the ocean and marine life.”

The need for enhanced public outreach was recognized in the Governor’s Ocean Action Plan, *Protecting Our Ocean: California’s Ocean Action Strategy*, and was included in the California Information, Research and Outreach Strategy adopted by the council in September 2005. Aspects of the outreach campaign were discussed during periodic briefings by staff to the council. Specifically, the need for this campaign was called for in:

- Action 7 of the Ocean Action Plan, which calls for California to launch an ocean and coastal stewardship media campaign. The plan emphasizes the need to work with members of government, academia, industry, and non-governmental organizations to help inform citizens about their role in protection and managing ocean and coastal resources.
- Action 9 of the Ocean Action Plan, which calls for revitalization of the California Ocean and Coastal Environmental Access Network (CalOCEAN). The ocean awareness website – a critical component of the campaign defined below – will be one element of the enhanced ocean web portal to provide information regarding organizations and marine and coastal issues.
- Recommendation 6 of the council’s Information, Research and Outreach Strategy, which calls for California to build a public outreach strategy in cooperation with federal, state, and local partners. This recommendation specifically identifies the California Ocean Communicators Alliance as the entity to move this initiative forward.

The Ocean Communicators Alliance

To comply with these policy directives, the State of California and NOAA’s National Marine Sanctuary Program have assembled the California Ocean Communicators Alliance, a network of over 170 professionals with expertise in communicating ocean and coastal issues (see Exhibit 3). The Alliance has worked with government agencies, academia, industry, and non-government organizations to begin designing an ocean and coastal stewardship media campaign.

The Alliance has held three workshops over the last year in southern, central, and northern California to identify the objectives of the campaign and assist with developing messages. The Southern California Ocean Communicators Workshop was held in Long Beach on April 28, 2005, at the Aquarium of the Pacific. The seventy-five communications professionals that attended identified ocean messages and formed the Alliance. The Northern California Ocean Communicators Workshop was held in San Francisco on February 10, 2006, at the California Academy of Sciences. Participants refined the ocean messages identified in Southern California and recommended elements for the California Public Ocean Awareness Campaign. The third workshop sought to convene the entire Alliance in Monterey on April 28, 2006 at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Attendees participated in preliminary discussions about the campaign’s tagline possibilities and the various components necessary to implement the campaign, described below.

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Objectives

To satisfy the directives of the state's Ocean Action Plan and Information, Research and Outreach Strategy, the objectives of this collaboration are:

- To provide access to information about ocean conservation issues
- To instill in the public a sense of their personal relationship to the health of the coast and ocean, and
- To engage citizens in stewardship actions

To accomplish this, the campaign will deliver a poignant and consistent message with an emotive and recognizable brand identity, and will direct citizens to the ocean awareness website. The website will provide an apolitical overview of the issues imperiling the ocean and coast, a list of simple stewardship actions for individuals to engage in, and links to additional sources of information regarding local, regional, state, and national ocean protection and management efforts. There is tremendous support for moving forward with this campaign (letters of support are attached as Exhibit 1).

Raising Public Ocean Awareness in California

The California Public Ocean Awareness Campaign will reach the public through a statewide multi-media strategy. The campaign will be launched at the California and the World Ocean conference in September 2006, to take advantage of the press and publicity associated with this international event.

With limited funding, the campaign will rely heavily on donated space for television, radio, newspapers, and magazines, leveraging free communication vehicles to broadcast the message and utilizing the Ocean Communicators Alliance and their media contacts for support. At a minimum, members of the Alliance will apply the message tagline and brand identity to products they share with their target audiences. In this way, a consistent message is received by a larger audience statewide, through media outlets that are appropriate to each target audience.

In part because of this application of the campaign message, a specific target audience has to be honed. The initial audience identified is rather broad: adults age 25-49, families with children, the socially and physically active, and those within proximity of the ocean. Because members of this broader audience (even when narrowed down) are not necessarily targeted by the Alliance, the campaign must be supplemented by purchased media time. The high impact launch will run advertisements and public service announcements (PSAs) at the preferred time and place, guaranteeing the message delivery.

Because of the complexity of organizing a multifaceted effort with several partners and funding sources, and the requisite of repeated avenues for receiving constructive input by contributors (i.e., the Ocean Communicators Alliance), the campaign is being approached in multiple phases.

Phase I

Phase I has already been completed. This phase included the initial background research, consideration of themes and audience, and creation of initial messages for agreement by the Ocean Communicators Alliance. This phase culminated at a workshop held on April 28, 2006 where a San Francisco-based consultant, The Hive Advertising, presented the results of the background research, discussed possible target audiences, and provided potential, acceptable taglines for the campaign's message. Participants submitted comments on the taglines, and

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divided into workgroups to approach various proposed elements of the campaign, including the website, film and video, traditional media outlets (e.g., newspaper and television), other outreach and education opportunities, and ideas for the campaign's evaluation process. The workshop report is attached as Exhibit 2.

Phase II

Phase II of the campaign is twofold: by the California and the World Ocean conference in September 2006, 1) develop the campaign brand identity and produce various media materials, and 2) design and build the website. Following the high-visibility launch at the conference, the campaign's momentum is anticipated to encourage various private partners to provide supplementary funds for additional media buys (the purchase of advertising space, e.g. time on radio and television), such as in cities that were not targeted initially. Therefore, following the conference staff may return to the council for additional support to bolster the growth of the campaign.

To launch the campaign in September requires several immediate steps: completion of a focus group survey to select a tagline; creation of the campaign brand identity; and conceptualization of the print materials and PSAs. A strategy will be devised defining where, when, and how advertising will be placed. Care will be exercised to ensure none of these messages imply political or ballot-oriented suggestions. In addition, as the campaign's main objective is to drive traffic to the ocean awareness website, the web pages must be designed and built in advance of the launch. The final component is the media buy, which by necessity will be based upon corporate donations and available funding from partners.

The website is at the heart of the campaign. The State has agreed to host the website, which will contain a summary of key ocean issues, "action items" for California citizens, and links to more information. All campaign products will be available as well: visitors may download PSAs, videos, advertisements, and materials. As the public's portal to ocean information, the website will ultimately be a component of the revitalized CalOCEAN site (the aforementioned recommendation in the Governor's Ocean Action Plan).

Funding for Phase II will support the minimum campaign launch scenario. In sum, this includes:

- The focus group survey to finalize the tagline
- The creative process to design the brand identity
- The production of a 60-second television PSA package
- The design and construction of the website
- Artwork to be used for traditional media exposure (advertisements for television, newspapers, magazines, and radio) and outdoor and event-style dissemination
- A minimum media buy (based on additional funds, source to be determined)

At the conclusion of Phase II, the State will have all of the pieces necessary to continue with a larger media drive should funds become available subsequent to the September launch. Further, the Ocean Communicators Alliance will use this adaptable toolchest to disseminate the message through their communication vehicles.

The Grantee

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization associated with

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the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program, is a well-suited grantee for this project. Through their partnership with the federal National Marine Sanctuary Program, the Sanctuary Foundation works to protect, preserve, and promote the invaluable ocean resources of the nation's marine reserves, and is the only non-profit organization dedicated solely to enhancing education programs and outreach efforts for marine sanctuaries. The involvement of the Sanctuary Foundation was integral to the expedient completion of Phase I of the campaign. Likewise, The Hive provided many hours of pro bono assistance for the campaign's initial development, and was the consultant under contract with the Sanctuary Foundation for the first phase of the project. Their input into the project to date on messaging and marketing has been insightful and indispensable.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Possible Funding Sources:

Phase I – completed

Ocean Protection Council (administrative)	\$22,000
<u>NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program</u>	<u>\$20,000</u>
Total Project Cost for Phase I	\$42,000

Phase II – current recommendation

Ocean Protection Council	\$110,000
NOAA National Ocean Service	\$25,000
NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program	\$45,000
NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program:	
<u>Hollings Grant to Conservancy (<i>pending</i>)</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>
Total Project Cost for Phase II	\$205,000

Other potential sources:

Resources Legacy Fund Foundation (<i>proposal submitted</i>)	\$100,000
Corporate sponsors	\$TBD

To complete Phase II of the project, staff anticipates using \$110,000 of Environmental License Plate funds, appropriated to the Coastal Conservancy for Ocean Protection Council purposes pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21190.5. The Conservancy will enter a grant agreement with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. The Foundation has agreed to charge no more than ten percent in project management fees.

An additional \$95,000 of funds will be provided by NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program and National Ocean Service. In total, these funds will support the campaign design and launch, and the creation of the website. Further, the National Marine Sanctuary Program has committed significant in-kind support, including the staff time of two employees. This in-kind support is not captured in the funding sources table above because it does not contribute to direct project costs.

The website will be hosted without charge by the California Environmental Resources Evaluation System (CERES).

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Private sources of additional funding are currently being pursued. A proposal requesting \$100,000 is presently under consideration by the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation. These funds will assist with securing initial media buys to support the campaign's launch.

Donated media space will be heavily depended on for television, radio, and newspaper space, as well as promotional and pro bono sources of support from corporate sponsors. Using the resources of partnerships and established constituencies, the Ocean Communicators Alliance can also contribute in-kind services to the campaign, by disseminating a consistent message to their public audiences, reaching thousands – if not millions – of people through established communication avenues.

CONSISTENCY WITH CALIFORNIA'S OCEAN ACTION STRATEGY:

In 2004, the need for ocean and coastal stewardship was highlighted in the release of California's Ocean Action Plan. Specifically, the proposed project is consistent with action items 7 and 9. Action 7 calls for California to launch an ocean and coastal stewardship media campaign by working with members of government, academia, industry, and non-governmental organizations. According to this action, the campaign would at a minimum include a series of public service announcements to inform citizens about their role in protecting and managing ocean and coasts. Action 9 is to revitalize the California Ocean and Coastal Environmental Access Network (CalOCEAN) website. The new website associated with this campaign will be one component of the enhanced ocean web portal.

The proposed project is also consistent with recommendation 6 of the California Information Research and Outreach (IRO) Strategy, which is to build a public outreach strategy in cooperation with federal, state, and local partners, through working with the National Marine Sanctuary Program and the Ocean Communicators Alliance to launch a campaign at that California and the World Ocean conference in September 2006. Recommendation 4 of the IRO is to improve access to and coordination of ocean and coastal information, in part by determining an ideal Internet-based information system. The proposed project will be an initial step in satisfying this recommendation, with future work on the larger ocean portal to follow in the near future.

Subsequent to these recommendations, strategies to promote public ocean awareness are objectives and key actions listed in the council's five-year Strategic Plan.

CONSISTENCY WITH OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL'S INTERIM PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

Mandatory Criteria

- 1. Furthers the following statutory purposes and policies of the Ocean Protection Act:**
 - **Improves management, conservation, and protection of coastal waters and ocean ecosystems:** The campaign will inform citizens across the state about these issues and how they can assist with conservation and protection of the ocean and coast through individual actions.
 - **Encourages those activities and uses that are consistent with sustainable, long-term protection and conservation of ocean and coastal resources:** The website that is the

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focus of the campaign will identify activities that the public can do to protect the coast. It will also list groups in California that provide opportunities for education or to volunteer.

- **Promotes aesthetic, educational and recreational uses of the coast and ocean:** The campaign illustrates for the public their connection to the ocean and coast, for health, pleasure, and the economy. It promotes stewardship of the resources through the actions of individuals so that aesthetic, educational, and recreational uses will endure.
 - **Improves the health of fish and fosters sustainable fisheries in ocean and coastal waters:** The campaign aims to affect improvement in the health of these resources over time by capturing the attention of citizens statewide and providing them with information on why the ocean and coast are imperiled, how everyone is connected to them, and what each individual can do to make a difference,
 - **Benefits or furthers existing state programs or legislative mandates:** The project supports programs of state coastal management agencies by providing comprehensive outreach to impact the stewardship behavior of the public toward ocean and coastal resources. For example, this may boost participation in the Coastal Commission's annual Beach Clean-up Day and bolster support for ocean education in school curricula, an effort currently underway by CalEPA through the Education and the Environment Initiative.
2. **Consistent with the purposes of the funding source:** See Project Financing Section above.
 3. **Has demonstrable support from the public:** The 170 members of the Ocean Communicators Alliance, who represent a statewide constituency of ocean educators and media personnel, support this project. Letters of support were received and are attached in Exhibit 1. The NOAA National Ocean Service and the National Marine Sanctuary Program staunchly support this project.
 4. **Relates directly to the ocean, coast, associated estuaries, and coastal-draining watersheds:** The campaign focuses on the connection of people statewide, living on the coast or inland (based on funding available to further expand the campaign's reach), to ocean and coastal resources.
 5. **Has greater-than-local interest:** The message of the project is intended to be shared statewide, and although the method of sharing the message may differ based on locale and audience (i.e., coastal versus inland watersheds; adults versus children), the overall objective is to inform the public on threats facing the ocean and coast and what each individual can do to make a difference.

Additional Criteria

1. **Helps implement the California Ocean and Coastal Information, Research, and Outreach Strategy and other priorities of local, state or federal advisory groups, or scientific or policy reports, adopted by the council:** The project helps achieve a recommendation in the Information, Research, and Outreach Strategy, and is directly related to the priorities adopted by the council, including sharing information through the Internet, the goals of the California and the World Ocean Conference, and general public ocean education.
2. **The project would not occur without Council participation:** In a time of limited availability of federal and state funds for resource management and enforcement, a public campaign to introduce stewardship behavior by citizens is critical to the future health of the

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ocean and coast. A campaign of this scale requires a significant commitment to public outreach and education. With the council's contribution to initiate the launch of the campaign, it is anticipated that ample donated media time and advertisement/public service announcement space, the support of pro bono and volunteer assistance, and additional leveraged monies from federal government and private philanthropies will follow.

3. **The project has an element of urgency (there is an immediate threat to a coastal/ ocean resource from development or natural or economic conditions, a pressing need, or a fleeting opportunity):** The campaign launch will be greatly benefited by the large scale of publicity associated with the California and the World Ocean conference in September. Therefore, creating the campaign identity, building the website, and securing media space must commence immediately.
4. **The project helps resolve more than one issue:** In addition to public outreach and encouraging stewardship of the ocean and coast, this project begins to address the State's goal of a comprehensive ocean information website by creating the initial pages providing resources for the public.
5. **The project includes a contribution of funds or services by other entities:** Council funds will be matched by funds and in-kind support from the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program, as well as private foundations, industry and public participants.
6. **The project is ready to implement (grantee or contractor will start and finish the project in a timely manner):** All necessary components (grantee, subcontractor, volunteer leaders for various campaign elements) are in place to begin work and timely funding would allow the campaign to be ready for launch in September. The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, members of the Ocean Communicators Alliance, CERES, and The Hive Advertising are all poised to begin work on the campaign and the associated website.
7. **The project involves a combination of local, state, or federal agencies or is a public/private partnership:** The National Marine Sanctuary Program, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, members of the Ocean Communicators Alliance, CERES, and The Hive Advertising are all committed to the project. Corporate sponsors such as Wired magazine have expressed serious interest in supporting the campaign and will be pursued. Private funders are also currently being approached to provide additional funding.