



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

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June 28, 2013

Dear California Ocean and Coastal Community,

I am excited to announce that Amy Vierra has agreed to be the new OPC deputy. Amy, who has been working on ocean policy for the past six years in the Secretary's office, brings a passion for the ocean and a deep knowledge of ocean programs. As a graduate of the Goldman School of Public Policy, with a second Master's degree from UC's Energy and Resources Group, Amy is well suited to help lead OPC's staff. As you will find, she has an amazing ability to manage the many moving pieces related to the ocean program, we will all be relying on her skills in the coming years.

As we start the summer of 2013 there are a number of amazing initiatives underway. At our June 28th meeting we will energize the dialog on marine debris. The response to our request for information on programs and projects to reduce marine debris has been incredible and has allowed us to put together a snapshot of the work that is going on now. I believe the dialog at the workshop will propel us as an ocean community to new and innovative actions to eliminate marine debris.

OPC, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Fish and Game Commission, has begun work on a comprehensive statewide implementation strategy for managing and financing marine protected areas (MPAs). The work of establishing a management structure is dry public policy work but it is been shown to be vital in assuring success. We are looking forward to beginning the public process in July. I hope everyone will get a chance to enjoy the MPAs this summer and to use that experience to sustain the commitment to developing a long-term implementation plan for the state.

We are also working with our partners to develop a road map on how we will roll out the California Sustainable Seafood Initiative. This has led to a broader discussion of how California can administer a more comprehensive fishery management program. OPC, DFW and OST are partnering to leverage knowledge and funds in support of California's fisheries with a key goal of speeding up the development of Fishery Management Plans by conducting rapid assessments. The initial rapid assessment has selected 11 fisheries to investigate as a first cut to not only see how they align with MSC certification standards, but to also identify data, management and fishery improvement projects that could lead to a more sustainable future for California fisheries, even if MSC certification is not pursued. This work has the potential to fundamentally change our approach to fishery management.

Of course, we continue to work on issues related to sea-level rise and climate change, ocean acidification and rolling out the Coastal Geoportal. There is an amazing amount of innovative work underway. As I write the demolition of our office space is set to begin, making room for our Ocean Protection staff in Sacramento. Exciting times, and a lot of work to do, and I hope everyone makes the time to go to the beach!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine Kuhlman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Cat Kuhlman
Executive Director



**California Ocean Protection Council (OPC)
Executive Director's Report
June 28, 2013**

The Executive Director's Report provides an update on OPC outcomes and accomplishments since the previous OPC meeting. This report covers March 2013 to June 2013.

Transition of Staff and Resources from the State Coastal Conservancy to the Natural Resources Agency

As mandated in the FY2013-2014 budget trailer bill, AB 77, OPC staff and funding has been transferred from the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) to the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) effective July 1, 2013. In anticipation of this change, SCC and CNRA staff have been preparing over the course of the past year for this transition, including the installation of cubicle workspace at CNRA to accommodate the transferring employees. I am excited to begin working as a unified team in Sacramento with our OPC colleagues and wish to express my thanks to Sam Schuchat and Mary Small of the SCC for helping to make this transition a smooth one.

Related to the transfer of staff, Amy Vierra has been selected as the first line supervisor for the expanded program at CNRA. Amy as served as an ocean and coastal policy analyst with CNRA for over six years and prior to that, served as a consultant to the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative for the Central Coast. Amy holds as Masters from the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley and an undergraduate degree in ecology from UC San Diego.

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

Seafloor and shoreline mapping. We continue to collect important geospatial data and information to improve our knowledge and better understand our dynamic coast. OPC has developed a collaborative partnership with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, California State University Monterey Bay and industry mapping firms to begin collecting bathymetric data of shallow portions of San Francisco Bay to address a key gap in mapping. Data collection is anticipated to begin late this summer. This data will help model flood risks from waves, storms and sea level rise and will improve resiliency to inundation from sea level rise around the Bay. In addition, we believe this data will assist wetland restoration projects in the San Francisco Bay and the Living Shorelines Project, which is an innovative sea-level rise adaptation project using native oyster beds and eelgrass.

The CA Coastal Data Merge project, a highly collaborative project to merge the many large elevation data sets along the CA coast, is now two-thirds of the way complete. The types of data being merged include topographic lidar, bathymetric lidar, and acoustic and multibeam seafloor data. The final product will be a 1 meter digital elevation model for the entire CA coastline.

Please also see staff report regarding the Ocean Science Trust and the informational item regarding the progress in developing the geoportal.

2. Strategic Plan Issue Area 2: Climate Change

Please see the staff report on ocean acidification and the informational item regarding the sea-level rise outreach strategy

John Laird was the opening speaker at Select Committee on Sea Level Rise and CA economy. Secretary Laird outlined the need for action. I followed the Secretary presenting how the Ocean Protection Council has been working on sea level rise issues.

Additionally I gave a presentation at the Beckman Center in Irvine on bridging the science of ocean acidification with the needs of policy makers and resources managers.

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

Marine Protected Areas. The OPC continues to lead, facilitate and fund the implementation of California's marine protected areas (MPAs). In April, the North Coast MPA Baseline Program request for proposals was released, with proposals due to the California Sea Grant program in mid-August. A bidders' conference was held on May 9th in Eureka for prospective applicants to discuss the RFP, ask questions, and connect with others interested in participating in the Baseline Program. The conference was well attended by a diverse pool of prospective applicants. The MPA Monitoring Enterprise also recently hosted several community discussion sessions throughout the North Coast region for interested participants to meet, discuss proposal development, and ask questions of the MPA Monitoring Enterprise team.

In addition to leading efforts in monitoring, the OPC is engaged in efforts to demonstrate and communicate the benefits and importance of California's MPAs. The [Thank You Ocean](#) campaign (a partnership between the State of California and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and the [Ocean Communicators Alliance](#), have completed two successful MPA communication workshops in San Francisco and Monterey, CA. These workshops are a part of a three series workshop along Northern California aimed at discussing and increasing the dissemination of four key messages about MPAs in California. These workshops were designed after an initial, similar workshop held in April, 2012 in Southern California. The last workshop in this series is slated for July 12th in Eureka, CA. Workshop proceedings from the San Francisco workshops can be found online at:

http://www.thankyouocean.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/130529_NCC_OCA_MPA_Workshop_Report_FINAL.pdf

Pacific leatherback sea turtle summit. We are excited to be working with our federal, NGO and Indonesian partners to help join in the first Pacific Leatherback Sea Turtle Summit to be held in Monterey October 14-16th. This summit will lay the foundation for an ongoing relationship between California and Indonesian officials to address ongoing threats to the Leatherbacks continued survival. Endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtles nest on Indonesian beaches and swim over 6,000 miles to the California Coast, including Monterey Bay, to feed on brown sea nettle jellyfish. The Leatherback Summit will bring together the leadership necessary to foster bi-national collaboration between California and TAMBRAUW-Indonesia toward mutual conservation goals to address conservation and recovery efforts of the endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtle. The Summit will strengthen communication, and address threats to leatherbacks and help ensure continued participation between

both entities to help recover this iconic species. The Summit is scheduled to coincide with the annual Pacific Leatherback Conservation Day (Oct 15) as established by the legislature and Governor Brown in the passage of AB 1776 in 2012.

Please also see the informational item regarding the Shellfish Initiative.

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

Marine Debris. We are pleased to be hosting a workshop on marine debris following today's OPC meeting. Of particular focus is a draft report issued by the OPC "[Marine Debris: A Snapshot of Work in California.](#)"

I gave a presentation to the Assembly Select Committee on Coastal Protection, on how OPC has approached marine debris, highlighting the need to new approaches including extended producer liability programs.

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

Desalination. The OPC continues to coordinate an interagency workgroup on seawater desalination where a main focus on the group is the State Water Resources Control Board's pending policy on desalination. The OPC has also convened meetings between state and federal regulatory and land management agencies and the proponents of the proposed Santa Cruz/Soquel desalination facility. At the request of the project proponents, these meetings were convened as way to exchange information early in the environmental review process. There is an understanding among participants that information exchanged does not commit either the regulatory agencies to a particular position in the review process nor does it commit the project proponents to making particular changes to the project.

Public engagement

We continue to support opportunities for public engagement as well as partnerships with fellow state agencies. For the third year, the [Thank You Ocean](#) campaign has partnered with the California Coastal Commission (CCC) to hold an amateur [photo contest](#) to pay tribute to California's spectacular coast and ocean. The 15th Annual California Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photography Contest began Monday, June 24th and runs for six weeks. The contest allows for a wide participation, by holding a "viewers' choice" award, where anyone can vote on photographs posted on the contest website, along with "judges' choice" awards. The contest features great prizes from Fairmont Hotels, Hornblower Cruises and Events, and the Aquarium of the Pacific. We are excited to see how contestants capture the beauty of our coasts and oceans, and encourage you all to participate!

Please also see the item under "Sustainable Fisheries and Marine Ecosystems, MPAs" regarding workshops to increase the effectiveness of our communication about MPAs.

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