



August 27, 2014

Dear California Ocean and Coastal Community,

What is a healthy ocean? California has declared its aspirational goals for a healthy ocean in a variety of legislative mandates, yet we have not yet come to agreement—across agencies, commissions, constituents and tribes—what we mean by ‘healthy’. I’ve spoken with many of you on this topic, and learned that while we may use different language, we hold in common a core vision: vibrant and diverse ecosystems and abundant resources that support an economy that depends on them. After many conversations, I’m convinced that we agree on this broad, collective hope and vision for future generations.

There is value in pursuing a shared understanding, or definition, of a healthy California ocean; it brings alignment, creates momentum, and, I suspect, we’ll learn that we’re not far apart in our perspective. Toward this aim, we have opened an amazing dialog on California’s ocean health. In June the Ocean Protection Council’s Science Advisory Team heard from the Governor’s office and agency leadership how ocean health as a concept drives their work, and how a shared conceptual understanding can promote a role for science to merge mandates and create efficiency. There was consensus that this is a unifying idea, one that has the potential to breakdown agency silos and provide for a rich and diverse dialog. I encourage you to read the [proceedings](#) from the workshop. As a next step, the Ocean Protection Council and the Ocean Science Trust are convening a [public workshop](#) on the morning of August 27 that brings together some of the big thinkers who represent diverse views on the topic. I hope you will be able to join us.

While considering our role in promoting healthy and productive oceans, we are challenged with the reality of a changing climate. Again, California is in a leadership role with the recent release of *Safeguarding California Plan for Reducing Climate Risks: an Update to the 2009 Climate Adaptation Strategy* (“*Safeguarding Plan*”). With the release of this plan we are redoubling our efforts to implement adaptation strategies. The *Safeguarding Plan* identifies several actions for Ocean Protection Council leadership, including convening the State Coastal Leadership Group to prepare for sea-level rise and to lead a process to enhance the capacity of entities at multiple scales to more effectively act to reduce risks from sea-level rise, storms and erosion. At the August 27th meeting we will be requesting the Council’s endorsement of both the principles in the *Safeguarding Plan* and in directing staff to take a leadership role in its implementation of ocean issues.

At the August 27th Ocean Protection Council meeting staff will also request the Council’s support for the novel approach undertaken by the State Water Resources Control Board to reduce marine debris. Their draft policy to reduce trash will use storm water permits to control the discharge of debris into water ways, and if adopted, will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the water boards’ permitting. The approach is the first of its kind in the country, and will measurably reduce trash on urban beaches, an outcome that serves ocean health and the economy alike.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you on the 27th for both the morning workshop to advance our conversation on ocean health and of course the Ocean Protection Council meeting in the afternoon. I know some of you will be watching us on the web as well. Drop me a note; I look forward to hearing from you. Catherine.Kuhlman@resources.ca.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine Kuhlman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Catherine Kuhlman
Executive Director
Deputy Secretary for Ocean and Coastal Policy



**California Ocean Protection Council (OPC)
Executive Director's Report
August 27, 2014**

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

Staffing. In late May, the OPC released two job announcements; one for a staff person to lead work on marine protected area (MPA) management and the other to lead efforts on ocean acidification/hypoxia. Interviews were conducted the last week of July and I hope to be introducing two new employees at the Council meeting.

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

Seafloor and shoreline mapping. The OPC is entering its final stage of comprehensively mapping California's seafloor and coast. As part of this effort, we will fill in large bathymetric data gaps for the San Francisco Bay (to be initiated in September 2014 through a partnership with NOAA) and will focus on ensuring that our large and publically-available elevation data sets are easily available through the Internet and functionally employable to end-users (e.g. Coastal Commission analysts, local government planners, etc..)

For more information regarding OPC's Seafloor and Coastal Mapping efforts, specifically with regard to how our accomplishments align with the directives outlined in AB 2125, please see the staff memo for this August 27, 2014 OPC meeting which details our mapping milestones in more detail.

2. Strategic Plan Issue Area 2: Climate Change

State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise. The State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise is comprised of senior management from the Coastal Zone Management Agencies (Coastal Commission, BCDC, Coastal Conservancy), the State Lands Commission (as land and resource owner), and the Ocean Protection Council (OPC). The Leadership Group has begun a pilot project to conduct regional assessments of sea-level rise and identify ways that the Leadership Group can take actions to improve sea-level rise responses and preparedness. Humboldt County was chosen as the pilot for the Leadership Group to learn about existing capacity and actions, identify gaps in adaptation planning, strengthen how state agencies can work together and explore strategies for the future.

Safeguarding California Plan. The *Safeguarding California Plan: an update to the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy* has been released and OPC plays a leadership role in developing an

implementation plan for the oceans chapter, in coordination with the State Coastal Leadership Group on Sea-level Rise and the Coastal and Ocean Working Group of the Climate Action Team. One of the key recommendations is for OPC to work with the Leadership Team in developing a framework for action on sea-level rise. See staff memo for this August 27, 2014 OPC meeting for more information.

OPC's Local Coastal Program Sea-level Rise Grant Program. The OPC received ten applications from local governments and a port authority, requesting approximately \$1.1 million for sea-level rise technical studies and developing new or updating existing Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) or Port Master Plans, consistent with the California Coastal Act. The OPC staff coordinated with the Coastal Commission and Coastal Conservancy on the joint application process for this second round of the OPC LCP Sea-level Rise Grant Program and for the Coastal Commission LCP Planning Assistance Grant Program. The OPC previously awarded \$1.3 million in grants to seven local governments as part of the first round of grants. OPC staff is collaborating with the Coastal Commission and Coastal Conservancy on reviewing the proposals and we anticipate bringing recommendations for project funding at the next OPC meeting on December 3, 2014.

4th California Climate Assessment. OPC staff has been working with other state agencies on identifying high priority climate research projects for consideration for funding as part of the 4th California Climate Assessment, which will develop original, regionally-relevant research to support California's continued leadership on actions to address climate change and safeguard our state's people, economy and resources. The draft scope of work includes six projects related to ocean acidification and hypoxia and sea-level rise. The state of California will be holding three public workshops in August to discuss a proposed scope of work.

West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health's Climate Action Coordination Team. OPC's Climate Change Policy Advisor Abe Doherty and Sea Grant fellow Liz Parissenti have been coordinating with other members of the WCGA Climate Action Coordination Team to develop an online resource for sources of funding for sea-level rise and coastal hazard projects and to develop integrated mapping products at multiple scales for the West Coast that display different scenarios of sea-level rise, storms and shoreline change.

West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel. Convened by the Ocean Science Trust at the request of the Council, the West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel continues to advance relevant, forward-looking products that will support state decision makers in developing cost-effective actions to confront these complex issues. Currently, panelists are writing a series of scientific publications that address priority knowledge needs identified by decision makers.

Further, bringing together ideas from across the panel, as well as garnering the input of other scientists and thought leaders in the field, Ocean Science Trust is leading the development of a 'Research Trajectories' document. This product will lay out the meaningful progress science can make in the next 5, 10, and 20 years, providing decision makers and funders with a vision for the future, and viable pathways to that vision.

Finally, Ocean Science Trust designed and released an upgraded website for the panel. Complete with the latest information on product development, this new site also elegantly articulates the panel's mandate as conferred by the Council and our partners along the West Coast, as well as the panel's vision for linking science with decision making. Visit the new site at www.westcoastoah.org.

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

Marine Protected Areas

MPA Partnership Plan. Public comment on “The California Collaborative Approach: Marine Protected Area Partnership Plan” closed on July 18 and returned fifteen comments from a wide range of stakeholders, including commercial and recreational fishermen, port authorities, NGOs, federal agencies, and individuals involved in marine protected area (MPA) management. The tribal comment period, which was originally intended to close on July 25, has been extended to August 22 to allow time for government-to-government consultation and outreach on the tribal engagement segment of the Partnership Plan. Feedback from both the public and tribal comment periods has been broadly supportive of the partnership approach, and focuses on ways to enhance and clarify roles and responsibilities among groups involved in MPA implementation. Revisions will be considered by the Drafting Committee during fall 2014.

MPA Collaborative Implementation Project. The MPA Collaborative Implementation Project (MPA CIP) has meetings scheduled or projects underway in all fourteen of the MPA collaboratives that comprise the California Collaborative Network.

Common themes that have permeated the collaboratives to this point have included:

1. diversification of collaborative membership, especially efforts to include more tribal and fishing representation;
2. focus on compliance tools such as boundary markers and enforcement trainings;
3. discussion of how to brand MPAs to be more universally recognizable and exciting to the general public; and
4. creation of outreach tools that build upon statewide efforts for consistency while being responsive to and reflective of the needs and interests of each unique area and respective user base.

MPA Monitoring. The OPC in partnership with Ocean Science Trust and California Department of Fish and Wildlife are now in the final stages of putting the pieces in place to build and launch a scientifically rigorous, cost-effective, and sustainable long-term MPA monitoring program in the Central Coast. The draft Central Coast MPA Monitoring Plan was collaboratively developed with extensive input from many, including scientists throughout California and beyond, resource managers, native communities, fishermen, and members of the greater Central Coast ocean community. The draft plan was released for public input in mid-May and the broad, insightful and constructive feedback received has significantly improved the plan. The draft plan underwent discussion at the August 6, 2014 Fish and Game Commission meeting and will be scheduled for adoption at their next meeting in October..

In early July, the [Central Coast Monitoring Survey](#) was released through OceanSpaces. Available through August, this innovative survey will help identify the geographic and temporal coverage of monitoring activities inside and outside of Central Coast MPAs, and the compatibility of those activities with the metrics and priorities outlined in the Central Coast MPA Monitoring Plan. Results from the survey, many of which will be publicly available through an interactive online dashboard, will inform the work plan for MPA monitoring by highlighting potential partnerships and opportunities to build upon existing capacity in the region.

Other MPA outreach efforts. OceanSpaces 2.0 launched in June and reflecting feedback from community members, the new OceanSpaces includes improved navigation, a new technology platform, and expanded themes of content that reflect the state's priorities for ocean resource management. Community members can learn about the topics that are critical to securing healthy and resilient ocean in California, such as MPAs, sustainable fisheries, water quality, and ocean acidification. Developed by the Ocean Science Trust with support from OPC, OceanSpaces offers a central location for California's ocean community to understand and participate in the management dialogues shaping California's ocean health.

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

Marine debris. The OPC staff continues to work with other state agencies on emphasizing the connection between activities on land and the problem of marine debris in the ocean. The State Water Resources Control Board recently released draft proposed amendments to statewide water quality control plans to control trash. These amendments, if adopted, would become the first statewide plan in the nation to reduce the amount of trash entering our waterways. See staff report for this August 27, 2014 meeting for more information on the proposed trash amendments.

As for cleaning up trash that is already present on our beaches and waterfronts, the California Coastal Commission is coordinating California Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 20th this year. In 2013, over 58,000 volunteers removed almost 750,000 pounds of trash and recyclables from California's beaches, lakes, and waterways. Both of these state efforts are tremendously important for improving ocean health, as trash travels via inland waterways and storm drains to eventually end up on the coast and in the ocean. These prevention and removal programs make California a leader in reducing the impact of land-derived marine debris.

The West Coast Governors' Alliance (WCGA) Marine Debris Action Coordination Team is moving forward, with coordination by OPC staff, to build a West Coast Marine Debris Alliance (the Alliance). The Marine Debris Action Coordination Team met in Sacramento in early July, at a workshop organized by OPC Sea Grant Fellow Karen Kayfetz, to finalize the structure and charter of the new group, and to develop an implementation plan and discuss outreach. The Alliance will include members from state and federal agencies, non-profits, academia, and industry. The Alliance will include several workgroups each focused on different topic areas: land-based debris, derelict fishing gear, and outreach and education. The workgroups will engage in networking and information sharing as well as taking on collaborative projects. Oversight for the workgroup projects will fall to WCGA and OPC staff until a grant-funded coordinator is hired for the Alliance.

Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup (CSMW). The California Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup (CSMW), co-chaired by the California Natural Resources Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has begun a series of six facilitated public workshops (up and down the coast) to obtain input/ideas from coastal stakeholders on implementation of ten coastal regional sediment management plans (CRSMPs) that have been developed or are under development. CRSMPs are funded by the CSMW and are developed in collaboration with a local government sponsor. They are intended to establish local/regional consensus-driven sediment management policy and guidance in order to restore, preserve, and maintain coastal beaches and other critical areas of sediment deficit. More information can be found on the CSMW website: <http://www.dbw.ca.gov/csmw/default.aspx>.

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

Desalination. The State Water Resource Control Board (State Water Board) has released a proposed amendment to the California Ocean Plan pertaining to seawater desalination. The State Water Board held a public workshop on August 6, 2014 to provide information and answer questions from the public on the proposed Desalination Amendments and the Draft Staff Report. The State Water Board will also hold a public hearing to receive public input and comments on the proposed Desalination Amendments and the Draft Staff Report. This hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, August 19, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. also at the Cal/EPA Headquarters Building in Sacramento. Adoption is expected in fall 2014.

The Inter Interagency Working Group on Seawater Desalination (IAWG SD)(Please see the following link: <http://www.opc.ca.gov/desal/>) is planning to convene during the early Fall 2014 for a round-robin update on recent events and emerging policy.

Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Development

On July 30, Governor Brown and the governors of Washington and Oregon sent a letter to Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell expressing their strong opposition to the inclusion of any new proposed oil and gas lease sale off the West Coast in the 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program. Pursuant to the federal Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, every five years the U.S. Department of the Interior undertakes a multi-step process to prepare a new Five Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program for all submerged lands on the federal OCS. The tri-state letter was in response to the first step, Issuance of a Request for Information, and will be followed by the development of a Draft Proposed Program. There will be the opportunity to provide additional input during each step of the process leading to the secretarial approval of a final Five Year Plan.

Related Initiatives

Thank You Ocean

The 16th Annual [California Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photography Contest](#) co-sponsored by Thank You Ocean, the California Coastal Commission and Fairmont Hotels had a record number of photo submissions. The contest received over 1,200 entries which exceeded the previous year by roughly 250 submissions.



OPC family member, Nico Vierra, at the 2014 California State Fair's Beach Buddy Adventure exhibit. His sign reads "Thank You Ocean for the hammerhead sharks"

Thank You Ocean also partnered with the California State Fair's Beach Buddy Adventure exhibit and staffed a table at the fair every weekend. An estimated 10,000 to 16,000 visitors attended the exhibit to learn about coastal and ocean issues and conservation tips. The fair started on July 11th and ended on the 27th.

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