



## Executive Director's Report – July 25, 2018

*The Executive Director's Report provides an update on OPC outcomes and accomplishments since the previous OPC meeting. This report covers May 2018 – July 2018.*

### Funding

All funding opportunities are designed to address the priority issue areas identified in OPC's Strategic Plan.

**Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1):** Item [6a-6b](#) and [6c-6g](#) on the July 25, 2018 OPC agenda include consideration to authorize disbursement of \$8,416,409 to support eight projects that will provide multiple ecosystem benefits and water quality improvements consistent with the requirement of Proposition 1. Additional projects may be brought to the Council for consideration and approval at their October 25, 2018 meeting. If all eight recommended projects are approved at the July 25 meeting, OPC will have approximately \$2,580,000 remaining to award, with an additional (and final) appropriation of \$9,300,000 expected in July 2019.

**Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84):** At its August 2017 meeting, OPC authorized a disbursement of \$7 million to the two Sea Grant programs in California to fund and administer a competitive grant process for scientific research projects to support OPC priorities. The application period for preliminary proposals closed on March 15, 2018 and 240 pre-proposals were submitted. The total amount of funding requested was just over \$53 million. In May and June, review committees met to discuss and score the pre-proposals. 73 applicants were invited to submit full proposals, which are due on August 10, 2018. Recommended projects will be brought for Council consideration and approval at the October 25, 2018 meeting.

Items [4a](#), [5b](#) and [5c](#) on the July 25, 2018 agenda include a request to approve a total of \$3,057,173 of Proposition 84 funds for sustainable fisheries and water quality projects and to support long-term monitoring of California's marine protected area network. If the Council approves these projects, OPC will have approximately \$1.7 million of Proposition 84 funds remaining.

**California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68):** Passed by voters in June, Proposition 68 provides a total of \$56.2 million to OPC - \$35 million to support projects that restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean ecosystems and an additional \$21.2 million to fund projects that increase community and ecosystem resilience to climate change. In July 2018, OPC received the first appropriation of Proposition 68 funds totaling \$20 million, \$10 million for marine ecosystems projects and \$10 million for climate change projects. OPC staff are in the

process of developing grant guidelines for Proposition 68 funds and anticipate releasing a draft for public review in late summer, hosting public workshops through late fall, and bringing final guidelines for Council consideration and approval at the February 2019 meeting.

**California Environmental License Plate Funds (ELPF):** The Governor’s 2018 Budget included a one-time appropriation of \$15 million to OPC to address the threats of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems and the communities that rely on them. [Item 5a](#) on the July 25, 2018 agenda includes a recommendation to approve disbursement of these funds for a sustainable fisheries project that advances innovation in support climate change resilience in fisheries and fishing communities, among other objectives.

**General Fund to Address Whale and Sea Turtle Entanglement:** The Governor’s 2018 Budget also included a one-time appropriation of \$7.5 million to OPC to address whale and sea turtle entanglement. The budget requires that \$1 million of this appropriation be made available for the Marine Mammal Rescue and Rehabilitation Network for the purposes of sea lion and seal stranding rescue activities. OPC staff is currently developing a strategic approach for investing the remaining funds, in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and other stakeholders.

## Staffing

On May 23rd, we welcomed Holly Shand to our staff as an Associate Governmental Program Analyst. Holly will provide contract and grant support to OPC staff and assist with logistics for OPC meetings. Prior to coming to OPC, Holly worked for CDFW’s Marine Region processing grants and contracts. Holly has additional experience with the state’s new accounting system (FI\$Cal) and developing processes and procedures to increase workflow efficiency. Holly also has over a decade’s analytical experience in serious injury claims and settlements.

On June 25th, Nate Marshall began a summer fellowship with OPC. Nate is a rising junior at Stanford University studying Environmental Systems Engineering and focusing on coastal and ocean environments. At OPC, he is primarily working with the sustainable fisheries program conducting research on climate impacts on fisheries. Additionally, Nate is learning about OPC’s other program areas and the work of the Council more broadly. Nate’s fellowship will conclude on September 7th.

On August 17, Sara Briley (2017 Sea Grant Fellow) will be leaving OPC to take a position with CDFW in Long Beach as an Environmental Scientist on their Recreational Fisheries Data Project. Sara will be providing technical support and assistance in research activities to further CDFW’s efforts to collect marine recreational fishing data and manage marine resources. Sara has been an invaluable member of the OPC team, providing critical analytical, scientific, and grant management support for our climate change program, including leading the effort to create a West Coast-wide inventory of ocean acidification and hypoxia monitoring assets. We will miss Sara and wish her the best of luck in her new endeavor.

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

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

## Strategic Plan Issue Area 2: Climate Change

### ***Cross-cutting climate change efforts:***

#### **Global Climate Action Summit**

The Global Climate Action Summit will take place from September 12-14 in San Francisco. The Summit will showcase climate action around the world, along with bold new commitments, to give world leaders the confidence they can go even further by 2020, starting from when they meet at the United Nations COP24 in November. Leaders from state and local governments, business, and citizens from across the globe will share what they have achieved to date and commit to doing more. OPC staff has been working closely with the advisory committee and organizers of the Global Climate Action Summit to integrate global ocean and coastal action ambition into this global climate dialogue. OPC has secured two High Level Ocean Sessions within the Moscone Center at the Summit, and staff, along with an advisory committee on oceans that OPC staff stood up, are exploring ways to integrate the oceans and related commitments, statements of achievement and action into other elements of the Summit program. With help from this oceans advisory committee, OPC is close to finalizing an Ocean-Climate Call to Action document, identifying priority ocean-related climate goals and programming for the Summit and next steps and milestones for the ocean-climate community. The goals in this Call to Action were developed to increase global attention on the importance of the ocean in achieving the vision of Paris Agreement, and to focus global action on priority ocean-related climate mitigation and adaptation measures, and build upon a larger body of work and thinking. This Call to Action document will be released and may be public in advance of the Summit. You can learn more about the Global Climate Action Summit here: <https://globalclimateactions summit.org/>

#### **Fourth California Climate Change Assessment:**

Currently underway, the California Fourth Climate Change Assessment (4<sup>th</sup> Assessment) is the first inter-agency effort to implement a substantial portion of California's Climate Change Research Plan. The research projects of the 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment were made possible through two funding sources, one managed by the California Energy Commission (CEC) and another by the California Natural Resources Agency. In addition to the research projects, with the support of the Ocean Science Trust and OPC's Science Advisory Team, OPC is leading the topical assessment focused on ocean and coasts that will be paired with the other regional assessments of the 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment. The ocean and coastal assessment will support, bolster, and synthesize funded research projects most relevant to climate change impacts to the ocean and coast. More details can be found here:

<http://www.oceansciencetrust.org/projects/assessing-climate-impacts-on-californias-coast/>.

In addition, OPC staff is also leading the ocean and coastal component of the statewide summary of the 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment. The 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment – reflecting all these different components – will be released in late Summer/early Fall of this year.

**California Adaptation Forum:**

The Third Climate Adaptation Forum (<http://www.californiaadaptationforum.org>) will take place August 27-29, 2018 in Sacramento. The Forum gathers the adaptation community to foster knowledge exchange, innovation, and mutual support to create resilient communities throughout the state. The audience will include 700+ elected officials, public and private sector leaders, tribal representatives, nonprofits, community members and organizations, and researchers from a range of sectors. OPC staff will be leading a session at the Forum that will highlight partnerships that have been built to address climate change impacts facing California's coast and oceans and that will draw on thematic areas, strategies, and model examples of the Ocean and Coast report of the 4th Assessment. In addition, the 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment summary reports, including the ocean and coastal report, will be featured at a separate workshop at the Forum. Finally, OPC staff will also be leading a sea-level rise workshop with multiple partner state and federal agencies.

***Ocean Acidification:*****International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification**

OA Alliance members are working together to elevate the issue of ocean acidification and develop OA Action Plans that contain practicable, implementable steps to mitigate causes, to adapt to unavoidable change and to build resiliency in marine ecosystems and the coastal communities impacted by changing ocean conditions. Government members of the OA Alliance are encouraged to create an OA Action Plan that describes their own unique contribution to advancing some or all the goals of the OA Alliance as written in the Call to Action. OA Action Plans will help governments create actionable responses to threats in their regions and will help affiliate members best leverage their expertise and resources on this issue. As a reminder, the OA Alliance registered a voluntary commitment to assist in the creation of 15 OA Action Plans by June 2019 at the United Nations Ocean Conference to Implement Sustainable Development Goal 14.

The OA Alliance looks forward to continuing a productive year, which will include the unveiling of OA Action Plans as they are developed and continued support of our partners in elevating ocean acidification and ocean issues within international climate agreements, frameworks and the UNFCCC process.

For example, the OA Alliance will be hosting two affiliate events at the Global Climate Action Summit. On September 12th, there will be an OA Alliance Member Working Meeting co-hosted by the Ocean Conservancy, and on September 13th, there will be an OA Alliance Affiliate Event Panel titled, "Protecting Coastal Communities and Livelihoods from a Changing Ocean." This panel will provide the opportunity to hear directly from OA Alliance members, including those who are most affected from climate-related changes to ocean conditions and those who have already experienced impacts of ocean acidification directly and have taken proactive steps to mitigate and adapt.

New OA Alliance member announcements are anticipated commitments from the Global Climate Action Summit.

### **California's Ocean Acidification Action Plan**

OPC staff, with support from Ocean Science Trust, is developing California's Ocean Acidification Action Plan as part of California's commitment to the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification. Having concluded the initial process of informal interviews with diverse experts across California and key members of the OA Alliance community, analysis and synthesis of the feedback received is near complete. Drawing from key resources and existing efforts (such as the OA Alliance's OA Action Plan Toolkit, other ocean acidification action plans and California's current ocean and climate policy landscape) we have developed a robust and geographically relevant Action Plan. An early draft of the Action Plan was also reviewed and discussed by the inaugural, annual meeting of the Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Task Force (<http://www.oceansciencetrust.org/projects/oahtaskforce/>) in early June. The final stages of drafting are well underway, with the plan going out for a 30-day public comment period on August 1. The action plan will be highlighted at the Global Climate Action Summit, with consideration and potential adoption by OPC at the October Council meeting. More information about this process can be found here: <http://www.opc.ca.gov/oa-action-plan/>

### **Federal/State Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia (OAH) Monitoring Task Force**

As a reminder, in 2016, the *Joint OAH Monitoring Task Force* of the Pacific Coast Collaborative (PCC) and federal Interagency Working Group on Ocean Acidification (IWG-OA), initiated a process to inventory the OAH monitoring infrastructure on the West Coast from California through Alaska as a guiding recommendation the West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel and key priority for these two state and federal governmental bodies. The intention was to compile a comprehensive list of OAH-relevant field monitoring efforts documenting chemical, physical, and biological trends all along the coast, to ultimately inform the design of a West Coast Integrated OAH Monitoring network and the subsequent strategic investments required to build it.

At this point, the Task Force has assembled information and responses from the monitoring and research community into an inventory, which now contains records from over 125 participants describing over 200 projects along the West Coast. While data collection for the inventory is complete, the Joint OAH Monitoring Task Force is now finalizing the inventory, which will be hosted publicly by fall 2018. Task Force members will meet in early August to evaluate completeness of the inventory and remaining needs before proceeding to the next phase of analyzing gaps in the current monitoring inventory.

In fall/winter 2018, we will convene managers and decision-makers to identify information needs, while jointly conferring with monitoring experts, to conduct a gaps assessment and prioritize areas for improvement to inform future research and monitoring investment. The ultimate goal is to use this inventory as a tool to better inform monitoring decisions, fill critical information gaps, and meet the Task Force's goal of jointly building an integrated monitoring network aimed to address management needs.

### ***Sea-level Rise:***

At the April 2018 OPC meeting, OPC staff presented its implementation strategy for the 2018 State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance. At that time, the staff's strategy included regional outreach workshops that could potentially be conducted in June 2018. Since that time, staff has focused on state agency coordination for Guidance implementation, and now aims to hold regional workshops in the Fall 2018. In the meantime, OPC staff is doing outreach on the Guidance through other forums, including briefings to other agencies (recently, the State Lands Commission and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission), and a presentation at the UC Irvine Coastal Resilience Workshop.

## **Strategic Plan Issue Area 3: Sustainable Fisheries and Marine Ecosystems**

### ***Sustainable Fisheries:***

#### **California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group:**

The California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group (Working Group) continues to support thriving whale populations and a thriving and profitable Dungeness crab fishery along the West Coast. The Working Group piloted a draft Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP) during the 2017-2018 Dungeness crab fishing season in California, which concluded in all districts by July 15, 2018. All aspects of the draft RAMP were voluntary during this pilot phase, and the program was designed to be flexible and responsive to new information, technology, and approaches to reducing the risk of whale entanglements. The Working Group reconvened on July 10, 2018 to conduct a postseason risk assessment evaluation as part of the 2017-18 RAMP Pilot based on four priority factors – fishing dynamics, forage/ocean conditions, whale concentrations and rate of entanglements. Overall, the Working Group expressed support and confidence in the RAMP pilot structure and function. They look forward to working in partnership with commercial and recreational fishermen to continue to develop and refine the program, with the goal to implement the 2018-2019 version of the RAMP during the upcoming Dungeness crab fishing season. The Working Group has an in-person meeting on August 1-2, 2018. For a summary of the postseason risk assessment, previous risk assessments and more information on the RAMP Pilot, please visit the RAMP [webpage](#). For additional information regarding the Working Group, please visit the Working Group's [webpage](#).

#### **Scientific Peer Review Processes for Pacific Herring and Red Abalone Fishery Management Plans:**

OPC funded the Ocean Science Trust to develop [guidance and recommendations](#) for CDFW regarding a suite of scientific peer review options for California's existing and future fishery management needs, focused on review of science supporting fishery management plans (FMPs). This [report](#) was finalized in June 2017 and helped inform CDFW's process of amending the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) [Master Plan](#), particular Chapter 10 of the Master Plan: Best Available Information and Peer Review. As part of the aforementioned grant, OPC has funded Ocean Science Trust to facilitate the scientific peer review processes for the Pacific herring and red abalone FMPs, utilizing the guidance and recommendations from the June 2017 report. OPC and Ocean Science Trust are currently closely collaborating with the CDFW and the California Fish and Game Commission to advance the peer review processes. Additional resources and information for the recreational red abalone fishery peer review

process are available [here](#), and additional resources and information for the herring FMP peer review are available [here](#).

#### **California Fisheries Portal Project:**

In [January 2018](#), the Council approved a project to convene multi-interest roundtable discussions to inform the design and development of an online California Fisheries Portal, which will ultimately serve as a web-based central repository and public interface for marine fisheries information in the state. On May 8, 2018, a webinar was co-hosted by OPC and CDFW to solicit information to inform the development of the California Fisheries Portal. The webinar agenda, PowerPoint slides, and a resulting [Key Themes Summary](#) are available on the California Fisheries Portal project [webpage](#). The goal of this project is to improve the management of the state's fisheries by facilitating implementation of California Ocean Protection Act and the MLMA through providing up-to-date, species-specific information on state fisheries that is publicly accessible and presented in a useful format to inform sustainable use and conservation of California's marine resources.

#### **Marine Landings Database System:**

In [July 2015](#), the Council approved up to \$750,000 for OPC to enter into an interagency agreement with CDFW to develop and implement a marine landings database system. OPC supported the second and part of the third phase of the marine landings database system project and CDFW is concluding the remainder of the third phase internally. CDFW recently announced the availability of this new electronic reporting system for commercial fishery landings, also known as E-tix, which came online on July 1, 2018. CDFW has relied on paper landing receipts since 1933, and this electronic reporting system will allow the transition from manual data entry and management to the electronic reporting and management of all California landing records. Recording and submitting all commercial fishery landings electronically using E-tix is now voluntary and will become mandatory on July 1, 2019. This transition creates efficiencies for the fisheries businesses required to report landings as they will only need to submit data once to meet both federal and state requirements. OPC funding is supporting the transition from management of landings data within the California Fisheries Information System an updated Marine Landings Data System. For additional information on the Fish and Game Commission rulemaking process for commercial fisheries landing requirements, please visit this [webpage](#). For additional information from CDFW regarding procedures and resources for the transition to the electronic reporting system, please visit this [webpage](#).

#### ***Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):***

##### **Once-Through Cooling Interim Mitigation Program:**

The Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team (OPC-SAT) has just released a report entitled "[Ocean Restoration Methods: Scientific Guidance for Once-Through Cooling Mitigation Policy](#)". This report provides scientific guidance on the types of restoration methods that can help offset the harmful effects to marine and estuarine life resulting from seawater intake structures used by coastal power plants (otherwise known as once-through cooling). The findings of this report define the areas impacted as the entirety of State waters (three nautical miles from the coastline) from San Diego to Big Sur, including the waters around the Channel Islands. These findings are informing the grant guidelines for



OPC's Once-Through Cooling Interim Mitigation Program, which will be brought before the Council for consideration and possible adoption at the October 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. The grant guidelines will be available for public comment on August 13<sup>th</sup> for stakeholders to review and provide feedback.

**MPA Monitoring Action Plan:**

CDFW and OPC have released a draft MPA Monitoring Action Plan (Action Plan)<sup>1</sup> that identifies priority metrics, habitats, sites, and species for long-term monitoring to aid in the evaluation of the MPA Network's progress towards meeting the goals of the [Marine Life Protection Act](#). The Action Plan is also concurrently going through a scientific peer review process as well as review by California Tribes and Tribal Governments. Comments on the draft MPA Monitoring Action Plan should be submitted by August 16, 2018 to [R7MPA@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:R7MPA@wildlife.ca.gov). Public, peer, and tribal review comments will be addressed and the Action Plan will be brought to the Fish and Game Commission on October 17-18 and OPC on October 25 for consideration and possible adoption. The Action Plan is a living document and will guide data collection and analysis in preparation for the 2022 Ten-Year MPA Network Management Review. [Item 4a](#) on the July 25, 2018 OPC meeting agenda includes consideration to disburse funds for a competitive grant process to support monitoring projects consistent with the priorities identified in the Action Plan.

**International Union for Conservation of Nature Green List:**

California's MPA Network has been accepted as a candidate for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Green List. The [IUCN Green List program](#) is a recent initiative that aims to promote effective, equitable, and successful protected areas worldwide. Green List [criteria](#) benchmark good governance, sound design and planning, effective management, and successful conservation outcomes. These criteria have strong alignment with the goals specified in the MPA network's founding legislation, the Marine Life Protection Act. The Green List process represents a unique opportunity to bring together a diversity of stakeholders in the evaluation of California's MPA network against Green List criteria. Joining the Green List will provide formal global recognition of California's leadership in ocean management and help to ensure the durability and success into the future. This process also represents an opportunity for California to work with global innovators in marine science, management, and conservation to share lessons from California's success and ensure our adaptive management is informed by the best science available. A 30-day open call for applicants to be part of the Expert Assessment Group for the Green List (EAGL) was completed. Fifty-six applications were received and 17 individuals have been selected by IUCN to be part of the evaluation led by IUCN and a neutral third-party evaluator. Details about the evaluation process can be found [here](#) and the process is on track to be completed by early 2019.

---

<sup>1</sup> [DRAFT MPA Monitoring Action Plan](#) (2018), [DRAFT MPA Monitoring Action Plan APPENDICES](#) (2018)



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

### **Marine Pollution Program:**

#### **California Ocean Litter Prevention Strategy**

Following OPC's adoption of the California Ocean Litter Prevention Strategy (Strategy) at their April meeting, the [document](#) was finalized and posted on the OPC website. OPC staff and California stakeholders are now beginning the implementation process, including scoping projects to effectively implement the Strategy. The first implementation webinar is scheduled for December 2018.

#### **Screening for Contaminants of Emerging Concern in the Southern California Bight**

In April 2018, OPC approved funding for a project to screen contaminants of emerging concern in the Southern California Bight. The grant agreement has been executed and work has begun on the project. Participants in the Southern California Bight Regional Monitoring Program have begun to collect samples, and sample processing for contaminants of emerging concern will begin in the fall.

[Item 5c](#) on the July 25, 2018 OPC meeting agenda includes consideration to disburse funds to convene and facilitate an expert panel to update monitoring recommendations for contaminants of emerging concerns in coastal waters.

## Strategic Plan Issue Area 5: Existing and Emerging Ocean Uses

### **Marine Renewable Energy**

At the request of Governor Brown in May 2016, 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 located 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 in October 2016.

During 2017, OPC staff assisted BOEM and the California Energy Commission (CEC) with outreach efforts on the Central Coast. Currently, outreach efforts are focused on the North Coast. This change in focus reflects the Redwood Coast Energy Authority's announcement that it had assembled a consortium for the purposes of developing a small-scale wind farm off the Humboldt County coast. OPC staff has assisted 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 is scheduled for September 17 in Sacramento.

### **Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Development**

Pursuant to Council action at its April 24 meeting, Chair Laird sent a letter to Speaker Ryan and Congresswoman Pelosi expressing his concerns with two pieces of pending federal legislation pertaining to federal Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas exploration and development. Specifically, bills H.R. 4239 (Scalise) and H.R. 3133 (Johnson) would make broad changes to long established federal laws protecting the marine environment from the effects of oil and gas exploration and development. For example, they would remove core provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act with the purpose of

fast-tracking seismic surveys and other activities in the ocean to facilitate identification of oil and gas deposits in the seabed. Scientific research has shown that these activities can significantly harm marine mammals; e.g., whales and dolphins.