



Informational Item

August 15, 2023

Item 4

2023 OPC Summer Interns Update

2023 Summer Interns: Isabella Carreon, Azura Haley, Audrey Jung, Nathan Lee, Alyssa Ng, Veronica Whaley

In summer 2023, 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. Isabella Carreon, Azura Haley, Nathan Lee, Alyssa Ng, and Veronica Whaley were selected for the third year of OPC’s ten-week paid summer internship program, which is focused on providing undergraduate college students with the opportunity to build a foundational background, professional experience, and robust overview of California’s coastal and ocean science, policy, and management work. Audrey Jung joined us through a merit-based award from the Haas Center for Public Service’s Undergraduate Fellowships Program at Stanford University, the sixth 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 as a team and with staff mentors to update the annual State of the Coast and Ocean Report (Annual Report), which is anticipated to be published and presented to the Council in early 2024. This included an update to coast and ocean health indicators focused on sea level rise, ocean acidification and hypoxia, water recycling, coastal access, beach water quality, kelp, and marine mammals. This annual report will help lay the foundation to meet OPC’s long-term goal of developing a more comprehensive State of the Coast and Ocean Report Card by 2025. The interns also had opportunities to participate in programmatic efforts and provide broad agency support, including interagency meetings and communications development.

While the goal of OPC’s summer internships is to provide students with an opportunity to increase their skills, knowledge, and exposure to ocean and coastal conservation in California, the benefit OPC has received from their effort is significant. We look forward to seeing what the future holds for these dynamic and dedicated students who will surely bring positive change to the future of ocean conservation.

Isabella Carreon



Isabella Carreon is a junior at Pomona College studying Environmental Analysis with a focus in Economics. She is passionate about the interdisciplinary aspects of the environmental field, particularly integrating science into climate policy and economics. During her time at OPC, Isabella worked alongside Climate Change Program Manager Ella McDougall on vital projects to enhance coastal resilience to sea level rise (SLR) for jurisdictions along the California coast. She collaborated with Ella and the SLR team to develop SLR Adaptation Planning Criteria and a Technical Assistance Program under Senate Bill 1, aimed at supporting California's coastal SLR adaptation plans.

Additionally, Isabella helped gather data and update the SLR and SLR planning indicators and worked with OPC interns to highlight High Tide Flooding in the 2023 Annual Report.

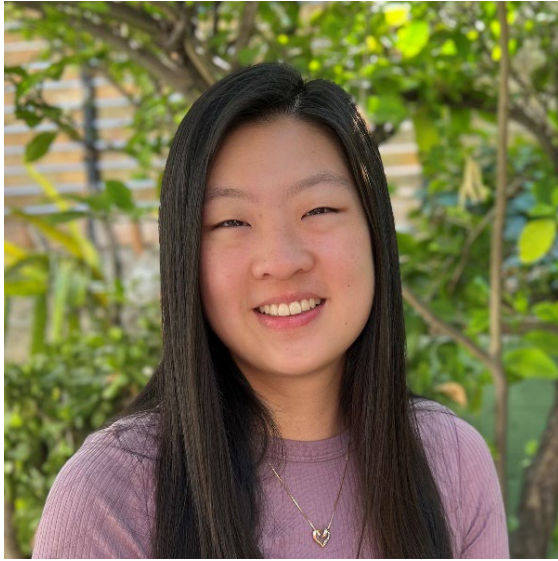
Azura Haley (she/her)



Azura Haley is a rising senior at UCLA majoring in Political Science with two minors in Community Engagement and Social Change and LGBTQ+ Studies. She is passionate about working with communities on climate change and human rights issues and policies. During her time at OPC, Azura worked with Communication Manager Stacy Hayden on various projects to share OPC's work with the public. These included launching an exciting social media campaign to showcase OPC's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan goals and highlight accomplishments across multiple platforms. Azura also helped revamp the OPC website by making partner, grantee, and project directories and

organizing posts to promote OPC's work effectively. Additionally, she worked with Kaitlyn Kalua, OPC's previous Water Quality Program Manager and now Deputy Director, on updating the Wastewater Recycling indicator for the 2023 Annual Report.

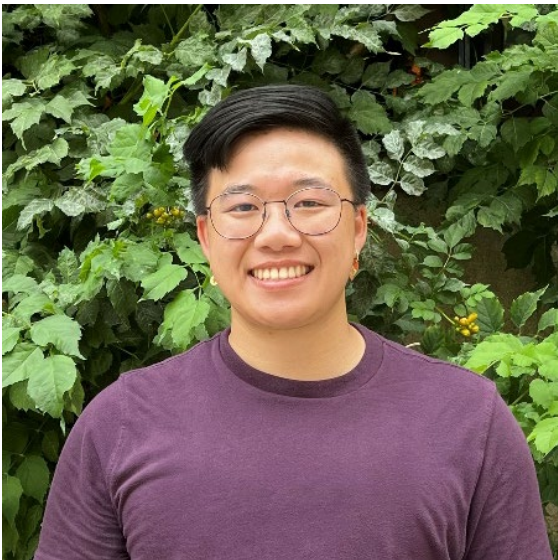
Audrey Jung (she/her)



Audrey Jung is a junior at Stanford University majoring in Environmental Systems Engineering on the Coastal track. She is especially interested in the interaction between ocean ecosystems, climate, and humans, from ocean acidification to oceanography. During her summer with OPC, Audrey worked with Kaitlyn Kalua, OPC’s previous Water Quality Program Manager and now Deputy Director. Audrey focused on several projects, including compiling equity indicators used by California state agencies to support OPC’s Equity Plan implementation, producing a white paper on water quality standards in other states related to nutrient management, and writing a call-out box for Ocean

Acidification Thresholds for the OPC’s 2023 Indicators Annual Report. Audrey and Kaitlyn also collaborated with intern-mentor pair Alyssa Ng and Maria Rodriguez (Climate and Environmental Justice Program Manager) to develop this year’s Beach Water Quality Indicator update in the Annual Report.

Nathan Lee (he/they)



Nathan Lee is a rising senior at UC Davis pursuing a B.S. in Environmental Policy and a minor in English. He is passionate about integrating environmental justice into marine ecology and conservation management. During his summer at OPC, he worked with Michael Esgro, OPC’s Senior Biodiversity Manager and Tribal Liaison, to begin executing OPC’s Tribal Engagement Strategy. Nathan interviewed researchers and tribal leaders to create a best practices document for academic and tribal collaboration. They also wrote a white paper that outlined tribal co-management strategies in California, the U.S., and abroad to guide future efforts for OPC to integrate tribal co-

management into marine protected areas. Additionally, Nathan led the intern team’s work on OPC’s 2023 State of the Coast and Ocean and worked with the West Coast Ocean Alliance to develop this year’s kelp and marine mammal indicators.

Alyssa Ng



Alyssa Ng is a rising senior at University of Southern California majoring in Environmental Studies with a minor in Spatial Studies. She is passionate about environmental justice and is especially interested in how social injustices and human-environment interactions intersect. During her time at OPC, Alyssa worked with Maria Rodriguez, OPC’s Climate and Environmental Justice Program Manager, to further OPC’s environmental justice and equity objectives. Alyssa developed preparatory materials to guide the development of additional Equity Indicators for the Annual Coast and Oceans Report and the 2025 Report Card. She also collaborated with fellow intern Audrey Jung and OPC Deputy Director Kaitlyn Kalua to

develop the Beach Water Quality indicator for the 2023 Annual Report. Additionally, Alyssa worked with Maria and Communications Manager Stacy Hayden to update OPC’s Signage and Communications guidelines to align with OPC’s Equity Plan.

Veronica Whaley



Veronica Whaley attends Los Rios Community College District and Sacramento City College, where she majors in Biology. Following completion of her coursework, Veronica will attend the University of Washington – Seattle to major in Environmental Science and Resource Management, with a minor in Marine Biology. With an interest in environmental education, she approached this internship as an opportunity to learn about public engagement in coastal policy and management. Under the guidance of Coastal Habitats Manager Sreeja Gopal, and with support from Climate and Environmental Justice Program Manager Maria Rodriguez, Veronica

developed a report on the environmental justice and community engagement considerations for OPC’s goal of coastal wetland preservation, and the development of a Wetland Action Plan under OPC’s Strategic Plan to Protect California’s Coast and Ocean, Target 1.1.7. Additionally, Veronica reviewed data concerning the impact of high-tide flooding on under-resourced communities in partnership with fellow intern Isabella Carreon, to be included in the 2023 State of California Coast and Ocean Annual Report.