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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**August 16 – December 12, 2023**

*Providing an update on outcomes  
and accomplishments since the  
previous OPC Meeting.*

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## OPC Science Advisor: Ocean Science Trust

Since 2007, the Ocean Science Trust (OST) has served as Science Advisor to OPC and is authorized under the California Ocean Protection Act (COPA) to co-chair the OPC Science Advisory Team (OPC SAT) and provide scientific analysis and advice to OPC. The OPC SAT was established in 2008 to help meet the goals of COPA and offers a critical venue to bring state leaders and scientists together around pressing ocean and coastal challenges. This year, OST convened the SAT on several topics, including feedback on a suite of ocean health indicators that will be included in the 2023 Annual State of California Coast and Ocean Report and presented at the February 2024 Council Meeting.

The ongoing partnership between OPC and OST is critical to advancing COPA and the OPC Strategic Plan to Protect California's Coast and Ocean 2020–2025. The work performed this year continues to embed best available science into the state's policy and management decisions and lays the foundation for the development of a comprehensive California Coast and Ocean Report card in 2025 and will inform critical investments in additional coastal and ocean monitoring. Further information regarding future work and collaboration between OPC and OST is available under [Item 9](#) of the [December 12 Council Meeting Agenda](#).

## Updates by Strategic Plan Goal

### Goal 1: Safeguard Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and Communities in the Face of Climate Change

#### Updated State Sea Level Rise Guidance

OPC anticipates release of the 2023 draft update to the State Sea Level Rise Guidance (Guidance) for a 45-day public comment period by the end of the year. The forthcoming Guidance was produced by OPC, in partnership with the California Ocean Science Trust and a scientific Task Force. This Guidance updates and replaces the [2018 State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance](#), and marks the fourth iteration of statewide guidance since 2010. The purpose of this Guidance is to support state and local decision-makers in incorporating best available science on sea level rise into planning, design, permitting, investments, and other decisions.

The public comment period will include various opportunities for soliciting feedback, including a webinar and three regional in-person workshops. More information will be posted on OPC's website as details are finalized.

## **Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program Launches**

OPC anticipates launching the Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program (SB 1 Grant Program) in mid-December. Ultimately, the goal of the SB 1 Grant Program is to provide funding for local, regional, and tribal governments to develop SLR adaptation plans and implementation projects to build resilience to sea level rise (SLR) along the entire coast of California and San Francisco Bay. In alignment with this goal, the SB 1 Grant Program will support implementation of [SB 272 \(Laird, 2023\)](#), which requires SLR adaptation plans for the outer coast and San Francisco Bay by 2034. The SB 1 Grant Program will offer two tracks of funding: one for pre-planning and planning phases (Track One), and one for the project phase (Track Two). Track One projects will be accepted through a rolling, quarterly, non-competitive process, provided applicants satisfy the SLR Adaptation Criteria ([draft version](#)) and Solicitation Evaluation Criteria. More detailed information can be found on the [SB 1 Funding Webpage](#).

## **Senate Bill 1 Technical Assistance Program - Grant Awarded**

OPC has selected a highly qualified team, led by [Coastal Quest](#), to develop and adaptively manage OPC's first-ever Technical Assistance (TA) program to support the SB 1 Grant Program. The SB 1 TA Program will provide application assistance to local, regional, and tribal governments that represent environmental justice communities applying for sea level rise adaptation planning funding through the SB 1 Grant Program. The team consists of Coastal Quest as the lead project manager, Farallon Strategies, UC Santa Barbara's Ocean and Coastal Policy Center, Cogstone Resource Management, Indigenous Justice, three coastal Regional Collaboratives including BayCAN (Bay Area Regional Climate Adaptation Network), LARC (Los Angeles Regional Collaborative), and SDRCC (San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative) along with North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) and Central Coast Climate Collaborative (4Cs) as informal advisors. An assessment of gaps and priorities for sea level rise adaptation planning in California will be performed to inform the development of the TA Program. TA will be tailored based on the applicants' needs, including but not limited to capacity building and grant writing support. The TA Program is expected to launch in Quarter 1 of 2024.

## **State Agency Sea-Level Rise Action Plan for California: Update and Progress**

OPC is collaborating with the State Sea Level Rise Collaborative (SLR Collaborative) to provide the first annual update to the [State Agency Sea-Level Rise Action Plan for California](#) (Action Plan), as highlighted in the bullets below. Originally released in 2022, the Action Plan is a five-year plan to achieve coastal resilience through comprehensive, coordinated, and collaborative work across state agencies. This Action Plan includes over 80 trackable actions, both regional and statewide in scope. The Action Plan will be updated as a living document in early 2024 to reflect current and

necessary shifts in statewide and regional priorities, actions and progress, and is updated annually by OPC and the SLR Collaborative. Significant progress, delayed actions, and new actions that became relevant in the past year include:

- Of 19 key actions intended to be complete by 2022/2023, eight are complete, six are underway and nearing completion, and five are in beginning phases and in the process of securing funding. Additionally, 12 key actions with a timeline of 2024 or later have been completed and are ahead of schedule with ongoing and continued improvements.
- Among other advancements, OPC made significant progress addressing key actions 3.4 and 7.2, both of which address meaningful engagement and consultation with environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes. This includes the forthcoming SB 1 SLR Adaptation Planning Grant Program, where technical assistance will be offered to applicants that represent environmental justice communities. Additionally, all SB 1 Grant Program projects must include outreach, education, and community engagement, including targeted engagement with environmental justice communities and meaningful consultation with California Native American tribes.
- Actions 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 will be updated to specifically address and support [Senate Bill 272 \(Laird, 2023\)](#). These actions require OPC, California Coastal Commission (CCC), and Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) to establish guidelines for SLR adaptation plans and require all local governments within the coastal zone and SF Bay region to adopt SLR adaptation plans by 2034.

## Goal 2: Advance Equity Across Ocean and Coastal Policies and Actions

### Environmental Justice Advisory Board

In April 2023, OPC approved funding to the [Better World Group Advisors](#) (BWG) to provide guidance and support for implementation of select [OPC Equity Plan](#) priorities for the next three years. Through this effort, BWG will develop and convene an Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJ Advisory Board) that can help provide advice to better address the ocean and coastal needs of California communities. The EJ Advisory Board's overarching purpose will be advising on the needs and perspectives of environmental justice communities, California Native American tribes and tribal governments into state policies, programs, and actions that impact the coast and ocean. Recruitment, including call for applications, for the EJ Advisory Board is anticipated to launch in late 2023 to early 2024.

## Environmental Justice Small Grants Program

OPC has partnered with grantee, [Justice Outside](#), to support the development and administration of OPC's Environmental Justice Small Grants Program. The \$1 million program is a direct action from OPC's Equity Plan and will support investments for organizations to fulfill small and short-term projects across coastal regions that create positive impacts in California's EJ communities ([OPC Equity Plan](#), Strategy 1.3.7) and advance coastal and ocean conservation priorities in [OPC's Strategic Plan](#). The program will include extensive and nontraditional outreach to priority communities, an accessible application process, technical assistance and capacity building for grantee partners, and opportunities to mobilize and join larger environmental justice networks in the state and across the country. The program will begin accepting applications in Spring 2024.

## Tribal Small Grants Program

In January 2023, OPC approved the disbursement of \$1 million to establish a Tribal Small Grants Program to provide dedicated funding to California Native American tribes and tribally led entities in support of work that advances tribes' priorities for conservation, management, and stewardship, as well as the goals in [OPC's Strategic Plan](#) and [Tribal Engagement Strategy](#). OPC's Tribal Small Grants program is part of the [Natural Resources Agency Tribal Nature-Based Solutions program](#) to assist California Native American tribes in advancing multi-benefit nature-based solutions in the coast and ocean. Time-sensitive and shovel-ready applications were due August 28, 2023 and preliminary proposals for the program were due September 29, 2023. Full proposals are due February 2024 with the anticipated notice of proposed awards in early to mid-May 2024.

## Goal 3: Enhance Coastal and Marine Biodiversity

### Once-Through Cooling Interim Mitigation

In 2023, OPC, in consultation with State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) staff, funded Dr. Peter Raimondi to evaluate costs of mitigation projects and to inform an updated interim mitigation calculation for coastal power plants that continue to use once-through cooling technology. The final report, entitled [Recommendations to Update the Interim Mitigation Cost Calculation for Once-Through Cooling Intake Use Leading to Marine Life Entrainment and Impingement](#), considered actual costs of mitigation projects and impacts through 2022 to determine interim mitigation payment recommendations.

The State Water Board released a [Draft Resolution](#) proposing to revise the current calculation to determine interim mitigation payments by once-through cooling power plants and an accompanying [staff report](#) on September 29, 2023. State Water Board, OPC, and State Coastal

Conservancy staff jointly held [two public listening sessions](#) on the proposed revisions to the interim mitigation payment calculation on October 2 and October 5, 2023. A 30-day written comment period ended October 30, 2023. The draft Resolution and proposed interim mitigation calculation update is anticipated to be heard by the State Water Board for consideration and adoption in 2024.

## **Marine Protected Areas**

OPC staff, in partnership with CDFW and California Sea Grant, facilitated two workshops in August and October for the Rocky Intertidal California Collaborative Research Program and habitat groups participating in the MPA long-term monitoring project. Workshops for Sandy Beach, Estuary, and Kelp Forest habitat groups were held earlier this summer. The goal of these workshops was to discuss the results of the [2022 final reports](#) from this project, discuss MPA monitoring priorities moving forward, and ultimately inform the 3-year monitoring package for 2024-2026 found in Item 7 of the December 12 Council Meeting Agenda: [Consideration and Approval for Disbursement of Funds for 2024-2026 Marine Protected Areas \(MPA\) Monitoring](#). OPC staff is currently planning one more workshop for Mid-Depth Rocky Reef, the remaining MPA long-term monitoring habitat group.

OPC staff presented [OPC-funded projects](#) in October 2023 to improve understanding of MPAs and climate resilience at a [Climate Resilience and California's MPA Network Webinar](#) hosted by the MPA Collaborative Network (MPA CN) as part of the [Climate Initiative](#). This webinar opened a series of 14 community climate forums hosted by the MPA CN with the goal of collecting social science data related to climate change impacts which will be shared with agency partners, including OPC and CDFW.

Finally, on August 23, the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) approved a Marine Resources Committee (MRC) recommendation to support a [prioritized list](#), developed by CDFW with input from OPC staff, of 28 adaptive management recommendations and associated management actions originally laid out in [Table 6.1 of the Decadal Management Review](#). OPC and CDFW will work with partner agencies, tribes, coastal communities, and others to implement near-term, medium-term, and long-term recommendations from the Decadal Management Review. The Commission also approved an MRC recommendation to apply what was learned from the first decadal management review to initiate a [process and timeline for considering petitions for MPA change](#). The priority deadline for petitions is November 30 at 5:00pm; however, all petitions received at or by the December 13 Commission meeting will be considered during this adaptive management review cycle.

## **Understanding Connectivity in California's Marine Protected Area Network**

To evaluate performance and efficacy of California's Marine Protected Areas (MPA), as stipulated by the [Marine Life Protection Act \(MLPA\)](#), the authors of an OPC-funded study released a final report (web posting forthcoming) that assessed both ecological and environmental connectivity across California's statewide network of MPAs. To test ecological connectivity, this study created a novel Integral Projection Connectivity Model, built from Species Distribution Models, Regional Ocean Model System (ROMS) simulations, and field-based SCUBA surveys to assess five rocky reef/kelp forest fishes: Black Rockfish, Blue Rockfish, Kelp Rockfish, Kelp Bass, and California Sheephead. The study additionally modeled the movement of particle transport within and among the representative habitat types spanning California's marine environment (rocky intertidal, sandy beaches, shallow subtidal rocky reefs, and varying depths of both rock and soft bottom habitats) to test environmental connectivity. Finally, this study identified high value sites for bolstering connectivity across the state.

The results from this study demonstrate that the spatial design of the California MPA network allows it to function as originally intended; California MPAs form an effective network characterized by high ecological and environmental connectivity. The study also suggests several non-MPA fishing sites benefit and are enhanced by MPA network connectivity across the state.

## **Development of the Kelp Action Plan**

To advance the development of the [Kelp Restoration and Management Plan](#) (KRMP), OPC staff, in collaboration with staff from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) convened the Science Advisory Committee (SAC) for the first time on September 19. This working group is composed of leading kelp forest scientists from academic and tribal institutions across the state and will provide guidance in the form of science needs assessments to inform the KRMP. The SAC will meet in person for two half-day workshops in early December to continue developing a framework for research needs under the KRMP. The Community Working Group (CWG), a statewide group of constituents that will inform a community-oriented perspective for the KMRP, first met in June 2023, and is planning to meet again in early 2024. Both the SAC and CWG will meet quarterly throughout the development of the KMRP. Further information is available in Item 8a of the December 12 Council Meeting Agenda.

## **Plastic Pollution**

In April 2023, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) released the [Draft National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution](#), which is part of USEPA's Series on Building a Circular Economy for All, provides voluntary actions that can be implemented in the United States aimed at

eliminating the release of plastic waste from land-based sources into the environment by 2040. The California Attorney General submitted [written comment](#) on the Draft Strategy with support from OPC and other state agencies to highlight investments and innovations pursued by the State of California to address plastic pollution.

The United Nations Environment Programme, Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee on Plastic Pollution is currently undergoing negotiations to develop a [legally-binding instrument](#) to prevent and reduce plastic pollution. A “[zero draft of text](#)” was released in September 2023, prior to the [third session \(INC-3\)](#), which took place November 13-19, 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya. The [fourth negotiation session \(INC-4\)](#) is scheduled to take place in Ottawa, Canada between April 21-30, 2024.

### **Conserving 30% of California's Coastal Waters by 2030 (30x30): Progress Update**

Since August 2023, OPC staff have connected and continue to meet regularly with community members, academics, non-profits, and NGOs via online meetings and public events. OPC staff attended the [30x30 Partnership Gathering](#) in Riverside from October 11-12 to connect with statewide partners and are in the process of finalizing engagement plans to meet with community members and recreational fishers/boaters at local trade shows, as well as a series of regional workshops. The planned regional workshops will support the public review of the spatial management measure inventory, facilitate discussion, and deepen OPC's connection with local communities. The [30x30 OPC website](#) and [factsheet](#) reflect ongoing plans and activities related to advancing 30x30 for California's coastal waters.

OPC staff, in partnership with OST, are in the process of convening an OPC Science Advisory Team panel to provide scientific guidance to evaluate which existing spatial management measures in California's coastal waters meet the definition and intent of 30x30. The forthcoming technical advisory panel will begin in January and is expected to have early criteria available for public review by late spring of 2024. The panel will provide guidance translating and applying policy goals such as durability, effective management, functional ecosystems, and biodiversity protection to the existing [spatial management measure inventory](#) shared in our September 2023 newsletter. The advisory panel will also make recommendations for filling data gaps and recommended measures that could increase protections to meet the 30x30 definition of conserved.



## Goal 4: Support Ocean Health Through Sustainable Blue Economy

### Offshore Wind

OPC continues to work closely with the California Energy Commission, the Coastal Commission, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and State Lands Commission and CNRA Deputy Secretaries for Energy, Equity and Environmental Justice, and Tribal Affairs on the Draft AB 525 Offshore Wind Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is anticipated to be published by the end of 2023 and scheduled for a vote during a CEC Business Meeting in early 2024. To further engage California Native America tribes on offshore wind, CEC hosted two Intergovernmental Roundtable Workshops on the Central Coast and North Coast on August 24 and November 9, respectively. OPC leadership participated in these workshops and presented during a virtual offshore wind Tribal Informational Session on November 6. On November 1, Congressman Carbajal, Senator Laird and Assemblymember Addis joined the County of San Luis Obispo to host a public information session on offshore wind. OPC staff attended this session.

Since federal OSW leases were issued in June, California leaseholders have been developing communication plans required by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to ensure coordination with agencies, fishermen, and California Native American tribes. In early November, the Coastal Commission announced the [members of the California OSW Fishery Working Group](#), also known as the Condition 7c Working Group. This working group includes representatives from fisheries associations, California Native American tribes, offshore wind leaseholders, and state and federal agencies. The first meeting of this working group is expected to take place in early December; OPC staff will serve in an advisory role alongside other partner agencies.

OPC-funded projects continue to support and inform offshore wind development in California. After [approval by the Council in April 2024](#), OPC competitively selected the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation to implement [the offshore wind environmental monitoring guidance project](#). A budget augmentation for this project is proposed for Council approval at the December 12 Council Meeting to enhance participation, coordination, and outreach in the guidance development (see [Item 10](#)). The OPC-funded Point Blue [offshore wind energy siting model project](#) conducted six workshops in October, collecting feedback from subject matter experts on the impacts of offshore wind on fish, marine mammals and sea turtles, and seabirds. This project aims to identify the areas with the highest wind power generation and the least negative impacts to marine environments, marine life, and ocean users with objective optimization approaches and is set to complete by March 2024.

## Legislation

The following is an update on select coastal and ocean-related bills tracked by OPC staff during the recent legislative session:

**[ACR 46](#)** (Pellerin): California Ocean Day. This measure declared April 11, 2023 as California Ocean Day. Chaptered by Secretary of State. (Res. Chapter 51, Statutes of 2023).

**[AB 3](#)** (Zbur): This bill requires the California Coastal Commission, in consultation with the State Lands Commission, to develop a 2nd-phase plan and strategy for seaport readiness for offshore wind energy developments. Signed by Governor on October 7, 2023. (Chapter 314, Statutes of 2023).

**[AB 45](#)** (Boerner Horvath): This bill would authorize the California Coastal Commission to authorize blue carbon demonstration projects, as defined, in order to demonstrate and quantify the carbon sequestration potential of these projects to help inform the state's natural and working lands and climate resilience strategies. Held in Senate Appropriations.

**[AB 80](#)** (Addis): This bill would require OPC to establish and oversee, in coordination with other unspecified state and federal agencies, a West Coast Offshore Wind Science Entity. Held in Senate Appropriations.

**[AB 225](#)** (Grayson): This bill requires the Department of Toxic Substances Control to update the Homeowners' Guide to Environmental Hazards, with assistance from departments within the Natural Resources Agency, to include new sections on wildfire, climate change, and sea level rise. Signed by Governor on October 8, 2023. (Chapter 420, Statutes of 2023).

**[AB 655](#)** (Petrie Norris): This bill prohibits a person from selling, possessing, importing, transporting, transferring, releasing alive in the state, or giving away without consideration all saltwater algae of the genus *Caulerpa*, except possession for bona fide scientific research. Signed by Governor on July 23, 2023. (Chapter 119, Statutes of 2023).

**[AB 809](#)** (Bennett): This bill requires the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to establish the California Monitoring Program to collect data on anadromous salmonid populations, in coordination with relevant federal and state agencies, to inform salmon and steelhead recovery, conservation, and management activities. Signed by Governor on October 8, 2023. (Chapter 455, Statutes of 2023).

**[AB 953](#)** (Connolly): This bill would require OPC, in coordination and in consultation with various entities, to implement a statewide voluntary vessel speed reduction and sustainable shipping program for the California coast in order to reduce air pollution, the risk of fatal vessel strikes on whales, and harmful underwater acoustic impacts by January 1, 2026. Held in Senate Appropriations.

**[AB 966](#)** (Davies): This bill would require the Division of Boating and Waterways within the State Department of Parks and Recreation, in cooperation with the State Coastal Conservancy, to prepare and submit a joint Legislative report on shoreline erosion control and public beach restoration programs no later than January 1, 2025. Vetoed by Governor on September 30, 2023.

**[AB 1272](#)** (Wood): This bill would require the State Water Board, in consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, to adopt principles and guidelines for diversion and use of water in coastal watersheds, including the development of watershed-level plans to support public trust uses, public health and safety, and the human right to water in times of water shortage. Held on Senate Floor.

**[AB 1407](#)** (Addis): This bill would require OPC, on or before December 1, 2024, to establish acreage-based targets and Kelp Forest and Estuary Restoration and Recovery Framework to restore kelp forests, eelgrass meadows, and native oyster beds with the goal of achieving restoration by 2050. The bill would establish in the State Treasury the Ocean Restoration and Recovery Fund to be administered by OPC to develop and carry out large-scale restoration and enhancement projects. Held on Senate Floor.

**[AB 1628](#)** (McKinnor): This bill would require, on and after January 1, 2029, all new washing machines offered for sale in California for residential, commercial, and state use contain a microfiber filtration system with a mesh size not greater than 100 micrometers. Vetoed [with message](#) by Governor on October 8, 2023.

**[SB 261](#)** (Stern): This bill requires annually, beginning on or before December 31, 2024, a business with annual revenues over \$500 million and that does business in California, to prepare a climate-related financial risk report disclosing the entity's climate-related financial risk and measures adopted to reduce and adapt to climate-related financial risk. Signed [with message](#) by Governor on October 7, 2023. (Chapter 383, Statutes of 2023).

**[SB 272](#)** (Laird): This bill requires all local governments in the coastal zone or San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) jurisdiction to address sea level rise planning and adaptation through a Local Coastal Program (LCP) or Regional Shoreline Plan (RSP) by 2034. The bill would additionally require the California Coastal Commission, BCDC, and OPC to establish

minimum guidelines to achieve consistency in SLR planning by 2029 and prioritize sea level rise implementation funding for local governments with approved sea level rise plans. Signed by Governor on October 7, 2023. (Chapter 384, Statutes of 2023).

**[SB 273](#)** (Wiener): This bill authorizes the State Lands Commission to approve a mixed-use development on the San Francisco waterfront at Piers 30-32 if the State Lands Commission finds, at a properly noticed public meeting, that the mixed-use development is designed to attract the statewide public to the waterfront, increase public enjoyment of the San Francisco Bay, encourage public trust activities, and enhance public use of trust assets and resources. Signed by Governor on October 7, 2023. (Chapter 385, Statutes of 2023).

**[SB 286](#)** (McGuire): This bill establishes the California Offshore Wind Energy Fisheries Working Group, to be convened by the California Coastal Commission, in coordination with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, by January 1, 2025, for the purpose of developing a statewide strategy, by January 1, 2026, to ensure that offshore wind energy projects avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to ocean fisheries to the maximum extent possible. Signed by Governor on October 7, 2023. (Chapter 386, Statutes of 2023).

**[SB 337](#)** (Min): This bill codifies the state goal to conserve at least 30% of state lands and coastal waters by 2030 (30x30). Signed by Governor on October 7, 2023. (Chapter 392, Statutes of 2023).

**[SB 605](#)** (Padilla): This bill requires California Energy Commission, in collaboration with OPC and specified agencies, by January 1, 2025, to commence a comprehensive, collaborative study to evaluate the feasibility and benefits of using wave energy and tidal energy. Signed by Governor on October 7, 2023. (Chapter 405, Statutes of 2023).

**[SB 665](#)** (Allen): This bill would require the California Environmental Protection Agency, by January 1, 2025, to establish a working group of specified state agencies, including OPC, to establish a framework for evaluating novel plastic and plastic-alternative material types as they are developed to inform state policy decisions. Vetoed [with message](#) by Governor on October 8, 2023.

**[SB 704](#)** (Min): This bill prohibits new or expanded oil and gas development from being considered a coastal-dependent industrial facility and would only permit those developments if they are found to be consistent with all applicable provisions of the act. Signed by Governor on September 30, 2023. (Chapter 292, Statutes of 2023).

## Budget

**[SB 101, Budget Act of 2023](#)**. This bill appropriates \$35,000,000 to OPC for grants or expenditures for resilience projects that conserve, protect, and restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems.

**[AB 102, Budget Act of 2023](#)**. This bill appropriates \$50,000,000 to OPC for grants or expenditures for resilience projects that conserve, protect, and restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems. This bill additionally appropriates \$9,500,000 to OPC for an Intertidal Biodiversity DNA Barcode Library and \$54,500,000 to OPC for implementation of Chapter 236 of Statutes of 2021 (Senate Bill 1).

## Personnel Notes



**Staci Lewis, *Marine Protected Areas Program Manager***

Staci Lewis joined OPC in December 2023. She will lead OPC's effort related to California's Marine Protected Area Network. To this position, Staci brings twenty years of experience in ocean policy, coral reef ecology, marine protected areas, and human dimensions of ocean sustainability. She received her doctorate from Stanford University's Emmett Interdisciplinary Program for Environment and Resources and a Master's in Environmental Science and Public Policy from George Mason University. She comes to the OPC from Stanford Center for

Ocean Solutions where she led projects on the socioeconomics of large-scale marine protected areas and digital platforms that empower small-scale fishers. Prior to her Stanford tenure, Staci spent nearly a decade in Washington, D.C. working in various ocean policy positions, including for two NOAA Administrators and as the Senior Policy Manager for the Consortium for Ocean Leadership advocating for federal science policies and investments. Before D.C., she served as a Fulbright Fellow in Barbados focusing on coral reef health and marine protected areas and worked at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab as a manager of four coral reef monitoring projects in three marine protected systems: Florida Keys (USA), Flower Garden Banks (USA), and Bocas Del Toro (Panama). Staci loves camping, hiking, cooking, and gardening with her family.

In early September, Noah Ben-Aderet left OPC to join the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Office of Spill Prevention and Response as a Senior Environmental Scientist. Noah worked with OPC as a Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Program Manager beginning in April 2021. We wish Noah the best in this new role.