

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

45 FREMONT, SUITE 2000
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105-2219
VOICE AND TDD (415) 904-5200
FAX (415) 904-5400



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To: Commissioners and Alternates

From: Christiane Parry, Public Education Program Manager
Annie Kohut Frankel, School Education Coordinator
Sylvie Lee, Grants Program Coordinator
Eben Schwartz, Statewide Outreach Manager
Vivian Matuk, Boating Program Coordinator
Matt Yurko, Restoration Education Program Coordinator
Adrienne Bosler, Restoration Program Assistant
Shannon Waters, Program Assistant
Kristi Cho, Administrative Assistant

RE: 2009 Public Education Program Update

At the Coastal Commission meeting of December 9, 2009, the staff of the Public Education Program will update the Commission on program activities and accomplishments for the past year. This memo provides a summary of these activities and accomplishments.

In 2009, the Public Education Program continued to carry out its mission to *“protect and restore California’s coast and ocean by teaching, inspiring, and empowering the public to take environmentally positive action.”* Working collaboratively with a wide-range of non-profits, government entities, educational institutions, citizen groups and businesses, the Program continued to work on expanding its reach to involve Californians of all ages, ethnicities, and income levels, whether they live along the coast or inland.

The Program emphasizes “experiential learning” – providing opportunities for both school children and the public at large to experience the coast and ocean first hand. The Program provided educational resources, grants, and technical support to local programs and teachers to cultivate public education efforts on marine debris, ocean pollution, habitat restoration and other marine and coastal topics.

Program Activities and Accomplishments 2009

Programs for the General Public

- Over the past several years, the Commission staff has expanded outreach, and significantly expanded participation in the **annual Coastal Cleanup Day** event. One focus has been to recruit participants from inland areas to clean creeks, rivers and lakes. These volunteers help to illustrate one of the event’s messages – that we are all connected to the coast and ocean by our rivers, streams and storm drains. In 2009, 24,199 inland volunteers cleaned

inland rivers and waterways, removing 600,000 pounds of debris. These volunteers combined with volunteers in coastal areas to achieve record turnouts for the Cleanup Program – a total of 80,508 volunteers participated in the effort statewide in 2009, a jump of more than 7,000 volunteers over the event's previous record for volunteer turnout, set in 2008, and a 60% jump participation levels over the past three years. This dramatic increase over the past few years indicates that the event's messages about ocean stewardship and marine debris prevention are taking hold in the public consciousness.

- **The Coastal Cleanup Day Program** has enlisted strong corporate partners that have greatly assisted our outreach efforts. We continued our presenting sponsorship partnership with Whole Foods Market and continued an ongoing relationship with Crystal Geyser. Whole Foods helped spread the word about the Cleanup via signage and other promotions in its markets in northern California. Whole Foods also dedicated a "5% Day" in September, donating 5% of a day's sales (totaling more than \$109,000) to support the Cleanup effort. In addition to financial support, Crystal Geyser provided water to 36,000 volunteers in 34 different counties. This is a crucial benefit that helps local coordinators immensely.
- An additional benefit of establishing **Coastal Cleanup Day** relationships with corporate partners is our ability to positively influence their business practices. One example of this is Whole Foods Market's move in 2008 to eliminate the use of plastic grocery bags at their stores, a decision at least partially influenced by their participation in Coastal Cleanup Day. Another exciting example is one about to be introduced by Crystal Geyser -- a completely recyclable bottle cap that stays attached to the water bottle, with no plastic parts that need be completely removed. Crystal Geyser developed this bottle cap as a direct response to their involvement with Coastal Cleanup Day and at the urging of Commission staff, in recognition of the large contribution plastic bottle caps make to our overall marine debris problem and the impact they have on our environment. Crystal Geyser plans to introduce the bottle cap widely in 2010.
- In 2009, the **Coastal Cleanup Day Program** surveyed Cleanup participants to gain information about our volunteers e.g. how they heard about the event, whether participating in the event raised their awareness, and how they expect the experience to affect future behavior regarding the environment. We used an on-line survey tool, as well as person-to-person surveys in some locations, to collect over 1,000 survey responses. We are in the process of analyzing the results, which will be used in planning the 2010 event.
- 2009 marked the **25th Anniversary of Coastal Cleanup Day**. In honor of this milestone, event sponsors Whole Foods Market and Sunset Magazine hosted a celebration at the Aquarium of the Bay on September 17, 2009. The event celebrated the achievements of Coastal Cleanup Day's 25 year history and honored eleven Coastal Heroes – individuals who are leaders and innovators, and who have played pivotal roles in the protection of our coastal and marine resources. They included: Pierce and Keely Brosnan (actor, journalist, and activists), Serge Dedina (Wildcoast), Patty Donald (Shorebird Park Nature Center), Peter Douglas (California Coastal Commission), Gary Griggs (UC Santa Cruz), John Hanke (GoogleOceans), Bill and Mel Lane (Sunset Magazine), Senator Alan Lowenthal, Julia Louis-Dreyfuss (actress and activist), Julie Packard (Monterey Bay Aquarium), and Linda Sheehan (Coastkeeper Alliance). The event was attended by over 350 guests.

- The staff has continued to improve the **Adopt-A-Beach Program**, connecting volunteers with the resources they need to organize their own cleanups and become environmental stewards. The program is active in the 15 coastal counties, plus Alameda County in the San Francisco Bay Area. Each of the confirmed 39 beach managers assist groups in conducting at least three cleanups per year at their “adopted” beach. Data collected from two organizations with very active programs - Los Angeles’ Heal the Bay and San Diego’s I Love A Clean San Diego - show that in 2009, 687 cleanups were conducted in these two counties, involving over 29,000 volunteers and removing 77,246 pounds of debris from our shorelines. Some programs have begun to engage volunteers in inland cleanups in order to stop waste at its source and educate the public about watershed pollution prevention. Although cumulative state-wide results are not currently available, dialogue with Adopt-A-Beach managers has shown that the program has found success throughout the state. The Commission is working to implement reporting methods to collect cleanup data and results from all Adopt-A-Beach managers in order to be able to provide comprehensive results in the future.
- The staff met regularly with its **Adopt-A-Beach Advisory Council**, a group of Adopt-A-Beach managers, to discuss publicity, outreach, and new ways to engage volunteers.
- The staff serves as the California coordinator for **Coastweeks**. California celebrates Coastweeks starting on the third Saturday in September (Coastal Cleanup Day) and over the following three weeks. The staff creates an online calendar of events throughout the state that are connected to the ocean, coast, waterways, or water in general. The public can access the events by date or by the county in which they take place. In 2009, our on-line calendar listed over 200 events.
- The Commission staff continued its work on the **Community-Based Restoration and Education Program (CBREP)** at Upper Newport Bay, begun in 2001. To date, 13,200 volunteers have planted 19,000 native plants (half of which have been propagated in an on-site native plant nursery) and removed 53 tons of invasive plant material (not including material left on site). In the process, volunteers have restored over thirteen acres of coastal salt marsh, riparian, and coastal sage scrub habitats. In 2009, we focused on capacity building for the program. With the help of volunteers, we built a new, expanded native plant nursery in a space previously occupied by office trailers. The new nursery includes a covered workspace for volunteers twice the size of the original workspace and room for 3,500 plants in 1-gallon pots to grow on benches under a shade cloth. We anticipate that the new native plant nursery will be able to provide all the plants necessary for the volunteer restoration events each year. We also hired a part-time Restoration Program Assistant to manage the new nursery, lead Steward Day plant propagation events and assist at monthly volunteer restoration events around the Upper Newport Bay.
- The **CBREP** continued to distribute its high school curriculum, called “**Our Wetlands, Our World**”. The curriculum is aligned to the State Science Content Standards, and focuses on the history and ecology of Upper Newport Bay; the effects of urbanization, invasive species and loss of biodiversity; and the importance of restoration and stewardship. In 2009, we began distributing “Our Wetlands, Our World” activity kits to allow teachers to borrow materials needed for each activity, and to support use of the curriculum in the classroom and at the Upper Newport Bay.

- The **CBREP** also continued to distribute “**Digging In: A Guide to Community-based Habitat Restoration.**” The Guide explains the basic steps of information gathering, site selection, project implementation, monitoring, maintenance, and working with volunteers. In 2009, staff held workshops to introduce the Guide and connect local groups conducting community-based restoration in Santa Barbara, Long Beach, and Oakland.
- The **Coastal Stewardship Pledge** is an online program that encourages Californians to make a commitment to taking specific personal actions to protect our coast and ocean. Once they have followed through on their commitment, they receive a certificate of participation and a free canvas tote bag. The goal is to encourage people to consider the health of the coastal environment in all their choices throughout the day. The Pledge can be reached through the Commission’s Public Education website at www.coastforyou.org. In 2009, we printed and distributed 20,000 bookmarks featuring a coastal scene on one side and several tips from the Pledge on the other side, directing people to access the full pledge online.
- For the past six years, the Commission has been a regional partner with the Monterey Bay Aquarium in its **Seafood Watch Campaign**. The Commission staff distributed over 20,000 Seafood Watch pocket guides in 2009. The pocket guide is a convenient reference for making sustainable seafood choices, and we have increased the number that we distribute (in both English and Spanish) each year of our participation.
- In 2009, the Commission held its eleventh **annual coastal photography contest**. A panel of judges selected three prize-winning photographs from over 700 entries, as well as the winner in a new humor category. The winning photographs, along with 14 honorable mentions, are featured on the Coastal Commission’s website. The Commission has used many of the winning photographs in publications and other educational pieces.

Programs for Schools and Educators

- **Waves, Wetlands and Watersheds, a science activity guide for teachers** that the Commission staff developed in 2003 addresses issues such as endangered species, marine debris, coastal geology, water use, and water quality. The guide is aligned to the California State Science Content Standards for third through eighth grades, and includes Community Action lessons adaptable for all ages up to and beyond grade 12. Copies of *Waves* are available free to California educators. The book can also be downloaded from our website, as can Spanish translations of the student handouts. Staff periodically conducts teacher workshops throughout the state on the *Waves* guide. Between its publication date in 2003 and November 2009, 14,228 hard copies of the book had been distributed (including 5,000 printed and distributed by the City of Los Angeles). The Coastal Commission staff has held a total of 57 workshops, directly reaching 1,145 educators. Activities from the book have also been adapted for numerous other publications and audiences, and *Waves* has been incorporated into many educator workshops held by other organizations.
- The Commission staff has maintained an on-line “**Marine, Coastal and Watershed Resource Directory**” since 2001. The Directory contains detailed information on organizations that address the California coast and its watersheds. Included in each entry is the mission statement of the organization; contact information; a link to the organization’s

website; and descriptions of educational materials, programs, internships and volunteer opportunities offered. The directory is one of the ways the Commission encourages Californians to become involved with the coast at a local level. More than 400 organizations are included.

- **The Commission's Coastal Art & Poetry Contest** is open annually to California students in kindergarten through 12th grade. By encouraging youth to reflect on the beauty and spirit of California's beaches and ocean, we hope to inspire a greater sense of stewardship for these natural places. Each year, four winners each in art and poetry are selected in several grade categories, and around 30 honorable mentions are recognized. Since 2003, 12,169 entries have been received from students from throughout California. Following each contest, the winning and honorably mentioned pieces are exhibited at venues up and down the coast. The contest has been exhibited at the Moorpark Art Festival, the Sanchez Art Center in Pacifica, Coyote Point Museum in San Mateo, the Muth Interpretive Center in Newport Beach, the Ford House Museum in Mendocino, and Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro. Some of the children's artwork is currently on display at the Commission's main office and district offices. Artwork from the Coastal Art & Poetry Contest is used in many Commission publications and throughout the Commission's website.
- **The Kids' Ocean Day Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup** program was held in six locations in 2009 – San Diego, Huntington Beach, Los Angeles, Monterey (students bused from Fresno), San Francisco, and Humboldt. In all of the locations, the emphasis of this program is on bringing the program to students in underserved schools. The Program includes a school assembly on marine debris and other ocean threats as well as the beach cleanup event. Approximately 7,000 students participated in the 2009 event, and many more saw the assembly. Photos of the aerial art images created in the sand by the students at the event can be viewed at www.oceanday.net.

Programs for Specific Audiences and Multi-agency Efforts

- The Commission's **Boating Clean and Green Program**, a partnership with the Department of Boating and Waterways, has continued to educate boaters and provide technical assistance to marinas and local governments to increase availability of environmental services for boaters. In 2009, the program continued its statewide boater education, developing and distributing 6,000 boater kits and conducting nine statewide Dockwalker volunteer trainings where more than 134 new volunteers were trained to conduct face-to-face boater education about clean and safe boating practices. The program also developed educational materials to promote clean and safe boating practices throughout the state. New resources include a booklet titled "The Environmental Boating Laws Every Recreational Boater Should Know", and a statewide list of locations where boaters and the general public can properly dispose of expired flares. In partnership with the Boat US Foundation, in 2008 the Boating Program launched an effort to set up 32 monofilament fishing line recycling stations in areas with the highest recreational fishing activity throughout the state. Over 172 pounds of fishing line have been collected this year.
- In response to the impact of aquatic invasive species in California waterways, **the Boating program**, in partnership with the Sea Grant extension program, the US Fish and Wildlife Services, and California Department Fish and Game, is conducting a series of invasive

species workshops throughout the state to promote practices to prevent the spread of these species. We have held eight workshops with more than 280 participants to date.

- The **Boating Program** continued its two-year partnership with the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation. One of the main components of this project was to install pollution prevention services at marinas in southern California, including two oil absorbent exchange centers in Long Beach – at the Alamitos Bay Marina fuel dock and the Shoreline fuel dock. The program also worked on improving the existing City of Los Angeles oil absorbent collection centers at the San Pedro and Wilmington marinas.
- In 2009, the **Boating Program** assisted the City and County of San Francisco Department of the Environment to implement a California Intergraded Waste Management Board Used oil Grant. The main components of this partnership were to: 1) Establish four free oil absorbent exchange centers in San Francisco at Hyde Street Pier, San Francisco Marina, South Beach Harbor and Fisherman's Wharf and 2) develop 2,000 boater kits and 12,000 copies of the new San Francisco Bay Area Clean Boating Map.
- The **Boating Program** continued producing the northern California insert of the "Changing Tide" newsletter. The Changing Tide is the quarterly publication of the three chapters of the CCBN (California Clean Boating Network – a forum of members of from the boating industry, government agencies, and environmental groups). In 2009, we distributed three issues (10,000 copies each). The newsletter focuses on new trends in clean boating practices and environmental services for boaters. Each issue showcases a different boating destination. The Program also facilitates the quarterly meetings of two of the three chapters of the CCBN.
- The **Boating Program** completed its partnership with Contra Costa County in implementing the second phase of its marinas and boating program: the 'Keep the Delta Clean Program'. The second phase of this program included the direct installation of needed pollution prevention services (certified used oil collection centers, oil absorbent exchange centers, cigarette butt containers, recycling bins, pet waste stations and informational kiosk), at key marinas in the Delta region, in addition to a strong boater education program. To date, the estimated amounts of hazardous materials collected through the pollution prevention services mentioned above, are: 10,535- gallons of used oil (not including oil filters and oil absorbents); 6,390 – pounds of used oil filters; 3,787 – pounds of used oil absorbents; 1,126 - pounds of oil absorbent polypropylene fiber recycled; 320 - gallons of used oil reclaimed from used oil absorbents; 166 - additional gallons of used oil reclaimed from used oil filters and 1,527 marine engine batteries collected.
- The Commission staff continued its work as Chair of the **Ocean Protection Council's (OPC) Marine Debris Steering Committee**. In 2009, the Steering Committee focused on continuing its work on the Implementation Strategy for the OPC's marine debris resolution. The Implementation Strategy was adopted by the OPC in November, 2008, and since then, the Steering Committee has focused on administrative actions it can take to support the full realization of this strategy. The committee continues its work through a process of information sharing and collaboration, as well as supporting legislative efforts that are intended to enact the Implementation Strategy.

- Commission staff is chairing the Marine Debris Action Team for the **West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health**, signed by the Governors of California, Oregon and Washington in September, 2006. The Marine Debris Action Team is seeking ways in which the three states can work together to solve common marine debris problems. Commission staff is also co-chair of the Ocean Awareness and Literacy Action Team, which is developing a plan to better integrate marine science and ocean literacy principles into state science curricula, and to foster increased ocean awareness generally. In 2009, both teams issued draft strategies for public comment, and are in the process of refining and finalizing those plans based on comments received.

General Outreach

- The Commission maintains a **web site** for its public education programs at www.coastforyou.org. The site describes all of the programs, contests, and resources that we offer to the public, including a Spanish language web page. In 2009, we redesigned the webpage to be more user-friendly. We also added a donations page for the Coastal Cleanup Day and Adopt-A-Beach programs, and are in the process of setting up a system for accepting credit card donations on-line.
- Each year, we attend a number of **environmental fairs and events**, where we staff an educational booth, hand out materials, and talk to attendees. In 2009, we attended 12 fairs, reaching over 8,000 people. We also created a new Public Education brochure.

Whale Tail Grants Program

As of June 2009, the Whale Tail Grants Program has awarded \$5.9 million in grants to 369 different projects. The Whale Tail Grants fund schools, nonprofit organizations, and local governments to conduct a wide variety of coastal and marine education projects. The program targets children and the general public with an emphasis on reaching underserved communities. In Fiscal Year 2008/2009, the Commission awarded \$743,000 to 40 different projects.

Whale Tail License Plate Funds

As of October 2008, more than 185,000 California drivers had purchased the Commission's Whale Tail License Plate, and sales and renewal fees had raised \$50 million for environmental programs - \$15 million to the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account (CBCEA) and \$35 million to the Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF). Each year, the legislature appropriates funds from the CBCEA to the Coastal Commission to carry out Coastal Cleanup Day, Adopt-A-Beach, and other coastal and marine education programs, including grants to nonprofits and local agencies. The CBCEA also funds projects of the State Coastal Conservancy. The ELPF funds a variety of state environmental programs.

Whale Tail License Plate Design Contest Update

The Coastal Commission held a contest for a new design for its Whale Tail License Plate in 2009. We will be updating the Commission on the status of the contest at the December Commission meeting.