

## CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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# TH-4

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To: Commissioners and Alternates

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RE: 2010 Public Education Program Update

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At the Coastal Commission meeting of December 15, 2010, 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 2010, 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 educate and involve Californians of all ages, ethnicities, and income levels, whether they live along the coast or inland.

In addition to reaching the public directly, 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, climate change, ocean literacy, and other marine and coastal topics.

## Program Activities and Accomplishments 2010

### Programs for the General Public

- Over the past several years, the Commission staff has expanded outreach and significantly expanded participation in the **annual California Coastal Cleanup Day** event. The results of this expanded outreach have been spectacular – in 2010, the Coastal Cleanup Day program again broke records for volunteer participation, the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row of record-setting turnout. 82,442 volunteers took part in one of over 800 cleanup sites around the state, a jump of 2,000 volunteers over the previous record and a jump of close to 65% since 2007. 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 2010, 26,542 volunteers cleaned inland rivers and waterways, removing 676,000 pounds of debris. Combined with the coastal counties of the state, Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers removed over 1.2 million pounds of debris from the state's coast and inland shorelines, providing an enormous benefit to the health of our coast and ocean. While the total amount of debris removed is staggering, it happily represents a drop from our record debris totals, set in 2008. For two years in a row now, the Coastal Cleanup Day program has seen more volunteers removing less trash from our state. We hope this is the beginning of a long-term trend toward reduced debris in our environment.

- **The Coastal Cleanup Day Program** has enlisted strong corporate partners that have greatly assisted our outreach efforts. We continued a strong, ongoing relationship with Crystal Geyser Spring Water. In addition to their financial support, Crystal Geyser provided water to 58,000 volunteers in 28 different counties. This is a crucial benefit that helps local coordinators immensely, especially during the 2010 Cleanup when temperatures at many cleanup locations around California hit record highs. The Coastal Cleanup Day Program also enjoyed continuing support from Whole Foods Market, Oracle, Nature's Path, See's Candies, KPMG, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, a new sponsorship from Waste Management, and an array of in-kind and media support from partners around the state.
- 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 introduced in 2010 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.
- In 2010, the **Coastal Cleanup Day Program** again 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 900 survey responses. We have preliminary results from the 2010 survey, and final results from the 2009 survey. The 2009 survey indicated that our volunteers are 2/3 female, and about 2/3 Caucasian. Our coordinators have been working to increase outreach to communities of color and 2010 results show a modest improvement in the ethnic diversity of our participants. There is more work to be done here. Both surveys show that the event increases participants awareness of the causes of and impacts of marine debris, and almost all participants (94% both years) report that participating in the event motivated them to take specific actions to protect the environment, such as educating others, picking up street and beach litter, reducing their use of single-use disposable items, etc.

- 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 all 15 coastal counties, plus Alameda County in the San Francisco Bay Area. Each of the confirmed 39 beach managers assists groups in conducting at least three cleanups per year at their “adopted” beach. Due to better reporting methods and increased publicity surrounding the program, 2010 saw a nearly 200% increase in participation. Based on reports from Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Sonoma Counties, over 50,000 people volunteered during one of the 1,065 Adopt-A-Beach Cleanups held in 2010. In comparison, in 2009, we recorded 687 cleanups, involving over 29,000 volunteers. The significant increase in volunteer participation is due in large part to better reporting methods implemented in 2010. Adopt-A-Beach Managers are now asked to provide specific details about the cleanups including the date of the cleanup, the number of volunteers who participated, and the number of pounds of debris removed. This allows for effective facilitation of the program, and also allows Commission staff to recognize volunteer groups for their continued participation and stewardship.
- The staff continued to meet 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.
- For the first time, the Commission conducted an **Adopt-A-Beach Regional Conference**, held in Southern California in March 2010. This one-day conference was attended by eight of the more active Beach Managers in the Southern California region who shared Best Management Practices for successful Adopt-A-Beach programs. Topics discussed included the importance of data collection, successful publicity efforts, how to expand the program to include environmental education and return stewardship, and how to convey essential safety information to volunteers.
- The staff serves as the California coordinator for **Coastweeks**. California celebrates Coastweeks starting on 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 2010, our on-line calendar listed 304 events. Between August 2 and October 24, the Coastweeks web pages received more than 10,000 page views.
- The Commission staff continued its work on the **Community-Based Restoration and Education Program (CBREP)** at Upper Newport Bay, begun in 2001. To date, over 15,000 volunteers have planted over 18,100 native plants (over 3/4 of which have been propagated in an on-site native plant nursery) and removed nearly 28 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 2010, we worked on maintaining and expanding current restoration sites. One special project included transporting volunteers by boat to remove invasive plants on an island in Newport Bay dedicated to the endangered California least tern and its sandy nesting habitat. Volunteers

attending our restoration events represented schools and corporations through such varied groups as the University of Redlands Alumni, Cal Poly Pomona Landscape Architecture students, and MillerCoors. We reached out to the community by making public presentations which promoted habitat restoration and our program to groups, including the California Higher Education Sustainability Conference, Sherman Library and Gardens, Irvine Ranch Conservancy, and local homeowners associations.

- 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. We continued to make available “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 2010, staff held workshops to introduce the Guide and connect local groups conducting community-based restoration in Palo Alto, Humboldt, and twice in Newport Beach. Staff also collaborated to lead a workshop focusing on the development of a native plant nursery for use in community-based habitat restoration.
- 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](http://www.coastforyou.org). In 2010, we continued to distribute thousands of 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. In the first 11 months of 2010, 294 people took the pledge online. A special pledge is available for classes and youth groups that includes teacher background for each action.
- For the past seven years, the Commission has been a regional partner with the Monterey Bay Aquarium in its **Seafood Watch Campaign**. The Commission staff distributed 43,500 Seafood Watch pocket guides in 2010. 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 2010 the Commission held its twelfth **annual coastal photography contest**. A panel of judges selected four prize-winning photographs from 780 entries, making this year’s group of participants the second-largest to date. The winning photographs, along with 14 honorable mentions, are featured on the Coastal Commission’s website. The first-place winner was featured in several local newspapers. 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. Between its publication date in 2003 and November 2010, 15,098 hard copies of the book have been distributed (including 5,000 printed and distributed by the City of Los Angeles). The Coastal Commission staff has held a total of 67 workshops (nine in the first ten months of 2010), directly reaching 1,341 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 continued to maintain the on-line **Marine, Coastal and Watershed Resource Directory**. 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, 14,582 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 San Francisco Bay Model in Sausalito, the San Mateo County Office of Education, 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 2010—San Diego, Huntington Beach, Los Angeles, Monterey (where students were 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 2010 event, and many more saw the assembly. Aerial art images created in the sand by the students at the event featured a

“Sustain Life” message, reflecting the importance of healthy marine life as well as the U.N. Millennium Development Goal to ensure environmental sustainability. Photos of the aerial images can be viewed at [www.oceanday.net](http://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 2010, the program developed and distributed 8,921 boater kits and conducted 11 statewide Dockwalker volunteer trainings where more than 150 new volunteers were trained to conduct face-to-face boater education about clean and safe boating practices. This year volunteer Dockwalkers donated over 700 volunteer hours educating boaters about clean boating practices and distributing boater kits while visiting marinas, boat launch ramps, boat shows and events. The program also developed new educational materials, including 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. The Program continued to set up monofilament fishing line recycling stations in areas with the highest recreational fishing activity throughout the state, an effort that was launched in 2008, in partnership with the Boat US Foundation. In 2010, nine new stations were installed for a total of 41. To date, 370 pounds of fishing line have been collected.
- The **Boating Program** continued its partnership with the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation (SMBRF). 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 addition, staff worked with the SMBRF to produce the “Southern California Boater’s Guide”, 3rd Edition. This guide offers valuable information about the numerous recreational opportunities available within Southern California harbors, conveniently features boat safety and proper maintenance, and offers environmentally sound boating tips
- In 2010, the **Boating Program** continued working with the City and County of San Francisco Department of the Environment. This year, the Program distributed 11,000 copies of the San Francisco Bay Area Clean Boating Map at boat shows and boating events. Due to its popularity, a new updated map will be printed in 2011. This free map features locations of marina-based pollution prevention services.
- 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 2010, we distributed three issues (11,000 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 facilitated two meetings of two of the three chapters of the CCBN.

- This year the **Boating Program** started a partnership with the Radio Disney Team Green. The purpose of this partnership is to provide boaters with safety tips on how to keep California waterways clean through radio announcements and community events.
- The **Boating Program** started the California Marine Expired Flares Working Group. Staff is working with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, CalRecycle and the Coastal Commission's Water Quality Unit on exploring boaters' disposal options for expired flares. Based on research conducted by the Boating Program, only 13 counties' household hazardous waste collection centers collect marine and aerial expired flares. With an estimated 174,026 out-of-date flares generated annually by boaters in California, it is essential to find proper and convenient disposal options for boaters in California.
- The **Boating Program** also started the San Francisco Bay Area Marinas and Yacht Clubs Oil Spill Preparedness Working Group. This working group is comprised of representatives from OSPR, the Coast Guard, Cal EMA, the Office of Emergency Services, the Port Captains and Harbormasters Association, Marina Recreation Association, the Clean Marinas Program, Pacific Inter-Yacht Club Association and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. This working group will help to develop a list of involved agencies and their contact procedures, and identify resources available to marinas and yacht clubs. The resources and information developed by the working group will be available to all the marinas and yacht clubs in the Bay Area. A long term goal for this group will be to plan a future oil spill drill for marinas and yacht clubs on the Bay.
- 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: 12,637 - gallons of used oil (not including oil filters and oil absorbents); 7,450 – pounds of used oil filters; 5,225 – pounds of used oil absorbents; 1,527 - pounds of oil absorbent polypropylene fiber recycled; approximately 350 - gallons of used oil reclaimed from used oil absorbents; 395 - additional gallons of used oil reclaimed from used oil filters and 1,852 marine engine batteries collected.
- The Commission staff continued its work on the **Ocean Protection Council's (OPC) Marine Debris Steering Committee**. In 2010, after a brief hiatus while the OPC brought a new Executive Director on board, the Steering Committee began meeting again with renewed enthusiasm and new membership. The committee continued to focus 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 prioritizing 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. Due to budget constraints, the committee met only once in person during 2010, but will continue its efforts in early 2011.

- Commission staff continued to chair the Marine Debris Action Team for the **West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health (WCGA)**, 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. The Marine Debris Team held a successful workshop on Derelict Fishing Gear in March 2010 in Seattle, Washington, the proceedings from which provided the basis of a section of the comprehensive West Coast Marine Debris Strategy the team will be completing in 2011. The Marine Debris Team was also awarded a grant of \$100,000 by the Executive Committee of the WCGA, funding that will support two more workshops in the first half of 2011. These workshops will allow the Team to collaborate on the development of the West Coast Strategy and launch a tri-state Marine Debris Alliance, which will carry out the strategy once the Team's work is complete.
- Commission staff is also co-chair of the Ocean Awareness and Literacy Team of the **WCGA**, 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 2010, the Ocean Awareness and Literacy Team conducted a needs assessment survey of educators in the tri-state region, to determine obstacles to and opportunities for integrating ocean literacy in schools.

## General Outreach

- The Commission maintains a **web site** for its public education programs at [www.coastforyou.org](http://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. In 2010, the Public Education website received almost 65,000 page views.
- 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 2010, we attended 14 fairs, reaching over 5,000 people.

## Whale Tail Grants Program

As of June 2010, the Whale Tail Grants Program has awarded \$6.66 million in grants to 405 different projects. 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 2009/2010, the Commission awarded \$704,000 to 36 different projects.

### **Whale Tail License Plate Funds**

As of October, 2010, more than 193,000 California drivers had purchased the Commission's Whale Tail License Plate, and sales and renewal fees had raised \$56 million for environmental programs - \$16.5 million to the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account (CBCEA) and \$39.5 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**

We will be updating the Commission on the status of the new Whale Tail License Plate design at the December Commission meeting.