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RE: 2014 Public Education Program Update

At the Coastal Commission meeting of December 11, 2014, the staff of the Public Education Program will update the Commission on our program activities and accomplishments for the past year. This memo provides a summary of these activities and accomplishments.

Background

The Coastal Act lays out the foundations of the Commission's Public Education (PE) Program. The Coastal Commission's Strategic Plan articulates current goals and objectives.

Coastal Act, Section 30012, states that "an educated and informed citizenry is essential to the well-being of a participatory democracy and is necessary to protect California's finite natural resources, including the quality of its environment. Through education, individuals can be made aware of and encouraged to accept their share of the responsibility for protecting and improving the natural environment." This section of the Coastal Act further states that "the Commission shall carry out a public education program that includes outreach efforts to schools, youth organizations, and the general public for the purpose of promoting understanding of, fostering a sense of individual responsibility for, and encouraging public initiatives and participation in programs for, the conservation and wise use of coastal and ocean resources. Emphasis shall be given to volunteer efforts such as the Adopt-A-Beach program."

The Coastal Act also addresses funding for the PE Program. Section 30012 (c) states that "the Commission is encouraged to seek funding from any appropriate public or private source and may apply for and expend any grant or endowment funds for the purposes of this section without the need to specifically include funds in its budget."

The Commission's Strategic Plan addresses PE Program objectives and actions in several sections. Where relevant, this document will point out programmatic links to the Strategic Plan.

2014 Activities

In 2014, the Public Education Program continued to carry out the Coastal Commission's core education and outreach programs, while adding enhancements and developing new initiatives. Working collaboratively with a wide array of organizations and individuals, including non-profits, government entities, schools and other educational institutions, citizen groups, recreational associations, visitor-serving facilities, and businesses, these programs seek to educate and involve Californians of all ages, ethnicities, and income levels, whether they live along the coast or inland. Topics addressed include ocean pollution (including marine debris), habitat restoration, climate change, sustainability choices, wildlife, ocean literacy, and coastal science. Some PE Programs reach the public directly; while others provide coordination support, educational resources, grants, training, and technical assistance to others.

The following description organizes PE Programs according to audiences, beginning with programs that target specific audiences, followed by programs for schools and educators, and programs for general public audiences. The final sections address PE work that involves policy and coordination, and funding sources.

Program Activities and Accomplishments 2014

Programs for Specific Audiences

Beach Wheelchairs

The Coastal Commission is committed to helping *all* visitors to the coast experience the beach firsthand. The Commission's beach wheelchair program aims to ensure that these chairs, which have wide, balloon tires that are able to move across soft sand, are widely available. To this end, the Commission has awarded \$103,000 to a variety of jurisdictions up and down the coast for the purchase of beach wheelchairs, including one for San Onofre State Beach in 2014. In some years this funding has been made in conjunction with matching contributions from the Coastal Conservancy.

The Commission maintains a webpage - <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/access/beach-wheelchairs.html> - that includes a map showing the location of beaches with wheelchairs available for use by the public.

Boating Clean and Green Program

This program is a partnership with the California State Parks-Division of Boating and Waterways. The program educates boaters and provides technical assistance to marinas and local governments to increase the availability of environmental services for boaters.

Clean Boating Kits and the Dockwalker Program. In 2014, the Boating Clean and Green Program developed and distributed 6,700 boater kits. Boater kits are designed to provide boaters with knowledge and tools to reduce their environmental impact. They include information on clean boating practices as well as an oil only absorbent bilge pillow. The kits are distributed by volunteer Dockwalkers. This year staff conducted 12 Dockwalker trainings at various locations throughout the state, and trained more than 160 new volunteer Dockwalkers.

Boat Shows, Boating Events and Clean Boating Seminars. Staff participated in 5 boat shows and boating events and conducted 4 clean boating seminars. These boating events and seminars provide a great opportunity to reach out to over 1500 boaters, conduct face-to-face education about environmentally sound boating practices and distribute boater kits.

Fishing Line Recycling Stations. With support from the BoatUS Foundation, the program has installed a total of 148 monofilament fishing line recycling stations throughout the state since 2009. To date, approximately 1,033 pounds of fishing line have been collected and properly recycled. Stretched out, this line would stretch from San Francisco, California to Rector, Arkansas.

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 2014, the program distributed three issues (10,000 copies each). The newsletter focuses on new trends in clean boating practices and environmental services for boaters.

Marine Expired Flares Working Group. Staff continues to work with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, CalRecycle, California EPA, California Office of Emergency Services, San Francisco Department of Public Health, the Coastal Commission's Water Quality Unit, and Orion (the biggest marine flare producer in California) to explore options for the boating community on where to properly dispose of expired flares. With an estimated 174,026 out-of-date flares generated annually by boaters in California, it is essential to find safe and convenient disposal options.

Marinas and Yacht Clubs Oil Spill Preparedness Workshops. From 2010 to 2012 Boating Clean and Green staff led a working group comprised of representatives from OSPR, the Coast Guard, California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), 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, which among other things developed the Marinas and Yacht Clubs Spill Response Communication Packet. The Packet is designed to help boating facilities access needed information in the event of an oil spill. In 2014, staff, OSPR and CalOES conducted two workshop for boating facilities in San Diego and Redondo Beach to introduce the packet. The workshops were attended by 80 marina and yacht club operators. In addition, staff conducted a boom training in partnership with OSPR and CalOES for the Bay Area and Delta marine industry representatives. This workshop was attended by 36 boating facilities operators. Staff is currently planning additional workshops for Ventura and Long Beach areas (Strategic Plan Action 2.3.2).

Coastal Cleanup Day for Boating Facilities. This year, thirty-eight boating facilities participated in CCD, involving 818 volunteers, who cleaned 48 miles of shoreline and collected approximately 7,032 pounds of trash and recyclables on land and from 154 non-motorized vessels. (Strategic Plan Actions 7.2.4 and 7.3.1)

Programs for Schools and Educators

Waves, Wetlands and Watersheds

Waves, Wetlands, and Watersheds is a science activity guide for teachers, developed by Commission staff in 2003, that addresses topics 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. Connections to the Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards have been made and are available on the website. 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. To date, more than 16,640 hard copies of the book have been distributed (including 5,000 printed and distributed by the City of Los Angeles). Coastal Commission staff has held a total of 89 workshops, directly reaching 1,800 educators.

In the first 11 months of 2014, staff held 4 educator workshops, in El Cajon, Manila, Rancho Palos Verdes, and Santa Barbara, in partnership with San Diego Science Educators Association, the Bureau of Land Management/California Coastal National Monument, Friends of the Dunes, California Regional Environmental Education Network, City of Rancho Palos Verdes, Los Serenos de Point Vicente, and Ty Warner Sea Center. In December 2014, staff will lead a workshop in Long Beach, at the National Science Teachers Association conference. Activities from the book have been adapted for numerous other publications and audiences, and *Waves* has been incorporated into many educator workshops held by other organizations. (Strategic Plan Actions 7.3.3)

New High School Curriculum

During fall 2014, the Commission began work on a new high school curriculum about coastal science, policy, and management in the context of the issues facing the California coast. Staff is working with a curriculum writer funded through a targeted Whale Tail Grant to the California State Parks Foundation. The project-based learning units will be aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core State Standards, and is to be completed by the end of 2015. (Strategic Plan Actions 3.3.3 and 7.3.3)

Schoolyard Cleanup Program

In September 2014, staff launched a new program to provide support to teachers and school groups in doing cleanups on their school grounds. Schools unable to take a field trip to the beach or river for Coastal Cleanup Day or an Adopt-A-Beach event are encouraged to do the important work of preventing litter at the source. Teachers may sign up for the program on the Commission's website, which includes extensive pre-cleanup lessons and teacher resources, detailed cleanup instructions, and post-cleanup analysis guidance. The activities of planning and carrying out the cleanup, collecting and analyzing the data, and communicating and acting on the results are directly connected to the Next Generation Science Standards and support Common Core State Standards as well. (Strategic Plan Actions 7.3.1 and 7.3.3)

Coastal Art & Poetry Contest

This 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, the staff hopes to inspire a greater sense of stewardship for these natural places. Every year, judges select five winners each in art and poetry, and around 40 honorable mentions. Since the contest began in 2003, nearly 24,000 entries have been received from students from all over California.

Following each contest, the winning and honorably mentioned pieces are exhibited at venues up and down the coast. The 2014 contest exhibit locations were Channel Islands National Park Visitor Center in Ventura; Point Reyes National Seashore's Bear Valley Visitor Center in Marin County; the Ford House Museum in Mendocino; and, through January 19, Birch Aquarium at Scripps in La Jolla. Previous years' winners were placed on exhibit during 2014 at Santa Cruz State Beach visitor centers and at Westhaven Center for the Arts in Trinidad, California. Artwork from the Coastal Art & Poetry Contest is used in many Commission publications and throughout the Commission's website.

Kids' Ocean Day Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup

This program takes place in six locations— San Diego, Huntington Beach, Los Angeles, Monterey (where students are bused from Fresno), San Francisco, and Humboldt. In all of the locations, the emphasis of this program is on involving students from underserved schools. The Program includes a school assembly about the ocean, marine debris, and pollution prevention as well as a beach cleanup event. Approximately 6,900 students participated in the 2014 cleanup event, and even more saw the assembly. Formations created by the students on the beaches and photographed from the air featured images of seabirds and messages about keeping the world's one big ocean clean. Photos of the aerial images can be viewed at www.oceanday.net.

Whale Tail Grants Program

The Whale Tail Grants Program distributes funds from the sales and renewals of the Whale Tail License Plate to schools, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies conducting coastal and marine education throughout the state. Since the program began in 1998 through June 2014, the Whale Tail Grants Program has awarded \$89.4 million in grants to 536 different projects. The program targets children and the general public with an emphasis on reaching underserved communities.

There are two categories of Whale Tail Grants: competitive and targeted. Competitive grants are awarded once a year in the early spring and are selected from a large number of proposals that are submitted from all over California. Each proposal is evaluated by staff using 12 criteria previously approved by the Commission. These projects tend to be one to two years in duration. Typically there is enough funding for approximately 15% of the total dollars requested. Staff recently solicited proposals for the 2014/15 round of competitive grants.

Targeted grants are awarded once a year in the fall. These grants are for projects that are important to the Coastal Commission because they are outgrowths of Commission programs and/or fulfill key organizational priorities, yet exceed the capacity of the Commission Public Education staff. In order to extend our capacity to implement priority projects, the Commission partners with high-capacity grantees with aligned missions to carry out these key programs.

In Fiscal Year 2013/2014, the Commission awarded a record \$816,000 to 36 different projects, including three grants in a pilot subcategory for projects addressing climate change and/or ocean acidification (Strategic Plan Action 3.3.3). Examples of funded activities included: bilingual ocean stewardship activities for children and their parents in Salinas; studies about earth science, carbon dioxide emissions, climate change, and renewable resources in City Heights, San Diego; training for docents and naturalists statewide on speaking to the public about Marine Protected Areas; raising and releasing salmon and steelhead trout in Del Norte County; watershed stewardship activities for elementary students in Guadalupe, Santa Barbara County; and measuring the ecological health of urban sandy beaches in southern California and sharing the data with land managers.

Staff developed and continues to share a guidebook to assist grantees and applicants in conducting program evaluation. The guide is titled “Making Your Program Evaluation Work for You – A Manager’s Guide to Evaluating Coastal and Marine Education Programs.” The guide is posted on the our website at <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/plate/wtevaluation.pdf>.

Programs for the General Public

California Coastal Cleanup Day (CCD)

Over the past several years, the Commission staff has expanded outreach and significantly grown the participation in the annual California Coastal Cleanup Day event. The results of this expanded outreach have been spectacular – in 2014, the Coastal Cleanup Day program enjoyed strong turnout and remained the state’s largest single-day volunteer event. A total of 66,292 volunteers took part at one of over 850 cleanup sites around the state in 55 of California’s 58 counties – one of the largest geographic reach the Cleanup has ever achieved. (Strategic Plan Actions 7.2.5 and 7.3.1) This represents a 14% increase in the number of volunteers recruited to be part of Coastal Cleanup Day over 2013.

In addition to its strong support in coastal counties, the Cleanup Program continues 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 2014, 22,794 volunteers cleaned inland rivers and waterways, removing 727,450 pounds of debris, which exceeded the amount of trash recovered at coastal locations significantly. Combined with the coastal counties of the state, Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers removed over 1,129,332 pounds of debris from the state’s coast and inland shorelines. This equaled 17 pounds of debris per volunteer, a huge increase over previous years that speaks to increased efforts in inland counties, where illegal dumping adds a significant amount of weight to the debris totals collected during Coastal Cleanup Day. 98,760 pounds of the debris was recycled, as local coordinators’ relationships with their trash haulers and recyclers continues to strengthen around the state, and indicates that the Program’s year-round messaging about the need for greater recycling and reuse is taking hold.

Looking back over the history of the program helps to highlight the cumulative benefit of this program to the health of our coast and ocean. Since the Coastal Cleanup Day Program’s inception in 1985, over 1.3 million volunteers have helped remove more than 20 million pounds of debris from California’s coast, ocean, and inland shorelines. (Strategic Plan Action 7.2.5)

Coastal Cleanup Day Publicity. Publicizing the Cleanup is always a major aspect of the work that Commission staff undertakes each year. Making sure that the public knows that the Cleanup is coming up and how important it is that they take part is a critical step that allows the Commission to support local partners and increase the connection between the Cleanup and the Commission. In 2014, the Commission worked with an international ad agency, BBDO, on a pro bono basis to develop a new marketing campaign. This campaign showed marine debris in coastal and inland locations that resembled other iconic images. For the beach, a plastic bag trapped on a piece of driftwood resembled a white flag of surrender accompanied by the tagline: “The Beach Can’t Take Anymore.” For the inland waterway, marine debris formed an obvious frown face in a river with the tagline: “Our Waterways Could Use a Pick-Me-Up.” These images and posters proved extremely popular among the local coordinators of the event and the general public as well. The images are available for viewing on the Coastal Cleanup Day webpages, found here: www.coastalcleanupday.org.

BBDO dedicated an enormous amount of time and resources to this campaign. This included the creation of a television Public Service Announcement to support the campaign, along with placement of that TV PSA on various stations across California. The 42-second spot is available for viewing on the Coastal Cleanup Day landing page at www.coastalcleanupday.org. The 30-second version was distributed widely and shown broadly on network and cable stations alike during the week leading up to Coastal Cleanup Day.

Corporate Partners in CCD. The Coastal Cleanup Day Program has enlisted strong corporate partners, which have greatly assisted our outreach efforts. Staff continued our key, ongoing relationship with Crystal Geyser Alpine Spring Water. In addition to their financial support, Crystal Geyser provided free water, primarily in large, gallon-size containers, in 51 Coastal Cleanup regions, covering almost all of the Cleanup volunteers. This is a crucial benefit that helps local coordinators immensely. The Coastal Cleanup Day Program also enjoyed new support from, Rubio’s Fresh Seafood Restaurant and Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, LLP, as well as continuing support from NOAA, CalOES, Oracle, the Whale Tail® Ecoplate, See’s Candies, California State Parks Foundation, Ocean Conservancy, and an array of in-kind and media support from partners around the state.

BYO for CCD. The Commission staff launched a new program in 2010 that has grown significantly since then known as “BYO for CCD.” In recognition of the need to reduce the amount of waste created by the event itself, the Coastal Cleanup Day Program began asking volunteers to bring their own reusable cleanup supplies from home, rather than using the single-use disposable plastic items available at cleanup locations. Whenever possible, the Commission and our partners also provide reusable supplies like buckets and gardening gloves for volunteer use. The initiative has been a great success, as over one-quarter of all cleanup participants brought at least one reusable item from home to the Cleanup in 2010-2012. In 2013, that number increased to one-third of all participants, and this past year it increased again. Staff estimates that one half of all participants in the 2014 Cleanup either brought a reusable item from home, or were able to use reusable Cleanup items provided at their site. As a result, the Commission was able to order 60,000 fewer trash bags for this year’s event than in 2010, and expects to lower those numbers even further in 2015. The initiative is helping to reduce the environmental footprint of the Cleanup while educating volunteers about simple lifestyle changes that cumulatively can have enormous, positive benefits to our coastal and marine environments. (Strategic Plan Action 7.3.2)

CCD Survey. As part of an effort to improve and learn about the overall impact of the Cleanup, staff again conducted a survey of participants in the 2014 Cleanup. The survey elicits information about our volunteers and their experience participating in the cleanup 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. Staff also uses the survey to collect feedback and suggestions.

Over 600 participants responded to the on-line survey. Since it was not a random sample, it is important to consider potential biases of the survey – not everyone heard about the survey (depended on local site coordinator communication), and not everyone is inclined to take an on-line survey. That said, some general trends can be inferred from some of the very strong results. For example, almost all survey respondents (97.7% in 2014) 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.

In addition, the survey showed that participation in the Cleanup dramatically increased respondents' assessment of their knowledge of the causes and impacts of marine debris. 84% of respondents considered themselves either "knowledgeable" or "very knowledgeable" about the causes of marine debris after the event, as opposed to only 63% before the event, a 21% increase. Similarly, 81% of all survey takers considered themselves "knowledgeable" or "very knowledgeable" about the impacts caused by marine debris after the event, as opposed to 65% before the event, an increase of 16%. These findings indicate that the Cleanup is both educational and motivational for many participants.

When asked what other activities the state should pursue to reduce and prevent marine debris, 74% supported more public education about the issue, and 68% supported more volunteer cleanups. These two answers were the top rated among the range of options listed, and indicate that participants strongly support the work of the Commission's Public Education Program.

Adopt-A-Beach Program

The Commission 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 in their local communities. The program has strong participation in the 15 coastal counties and in recent years has expanded into Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Each of our 48 beach managers assists groups in conducting beach cleanups at their "adopted" beach. CCC staff compiles the data that is collected at individual cleanups. Based on reports from Alameda, Humboldt, Los Angeles, Monterey, Orange, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, and Ventura Counties, over 25,500 people volunteered during one of the 919 Adopt-A-Beach Cleanups in 2014, contributing nearly 50,300 volunteer hours. Although not every group tracks the weight of their trash and recyclables removed, those who did collectively removed 20,444 pounds of trash and 1,979 pounds of recycling from our coast and shorelines. (Strategic Plan Action 7.2.5)

Recognition for Beach Adopters. Each group that participates in three or more cleanups (or just one cleanup for school groups) through the Adopt-A-Beach program is recognized on our website and receives a certificate acknowledging their participation in the program and thanking them for their contribution.

Coastweeks

Commission 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 that are connected to the ocean, coast, and inland waterways, occurring throughout the state. In 2014, our on-line calendar included 448 events, more than in any previous year.

Coastweeks is celebrated just after California Coastal Protection Week, which now takes place during the second week of every September. The California Senate established this event in 2012 through Resolution 84, recognizing the 40th anniversary of the passage of Proposition 20.

Community-Based Restoration and Education Program (CBREP)

The Commission staff continued its work on the Community-Based Restoration and Education at Upper Newport Bay, begun in 2001. To date, the program has engaged over 21,500 volunteers, who together have restored more than 15 acres of coastal salt marsh, riparian and coastal sage scrub habitats. Volunteers have planted 23,578 native plants (the vast majority of which were propagated in an on-site native plant nursery) and removed over 47 tons of invasive plant material (not including material left on site).

In 2014, we focused on maintaining and expanding current restoration sites. Volunteers who attended restoration events represented schools, community groups, and corporations through such varied groups as Chapman University, Deutsche Bank, ExplorOcean, Starbucks, AP Environmental Science classes from local high schools, and Scouting troops. We also reached out directly to the community through a presentation that was part of the Orange County Natural History Lecture Series.

The program hired a part-time Restoration Coordinator this year to focus on the management and execution of volunteer restoration events and the restoration site monitoring program. In addition, a partnership with the UC Irvine Center for Environmental Biology provided student "Education and Outreach" interns for our volunteer restoration events. These interns gain valuable experience developing their environmental education skills and enhance the educational value of the events for bay visitors.

In November 2014, the program was awarded a large grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board. The funds will be used to complete a 15 acre restoration project at a site within the Upper Newport Bay, known as Newport Valley. The \$381,000 grant will be spent over five years.

CBREP High School Curriculum. Staff continued to distribute the CBREP 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. Staff 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.

Digging In Guide. 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.

Coastal Photography Contest

In 2014 the Commission continued its successful partnership with the Thank You Ocean Campaign to co-host the 16th Annual California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest. The contest is held entirely online with digital images. Fairmont Hotels & Resorts of California donated overnight stays at luxury hotels for the winners. A panel of judges selected three winning photographs, and online voters selected their favorite as the “viewers’ choice” winner. This year there was a record total of 1,312 entries submitted. The winning photographs, along with 14 honorable mentions, are featured on the contest website, <http://mycoastalphoto.com>.

In 2014 we continued to exhibit a traveling selection of winning photographs. The collection was displayed at the Seymour Marine Discovery Center in Santa Cruz, the lobby of the Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn, the Anaheim Downtown Community Center, and Pipeworks climbing gym in Sacramento. In the fall of 2014, the photographs were combined with previous years’ winners of the children’s Coastal Art and Poetry Contest for a joint exhibit entitled “The Ocean and Me,” which was displayed at two locations in Humboldt County: Westhaven Center for the Arts and the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge visitor center.

On-line and Direct Outreach

COAST4U.ORG. The Commission’s public education web site provides detailed information on all of the programs, contests, and resources that we offer to the public. It includes downloadable curricular materials and hard-copy request forms; a video lending library; a page in Spanish detailing and linking to our many Spanish language resources; and interactive Google maps on topics such as Whale Tail Grant locations, beach wheelchair availability, and available Adopt-A-Beach sites. In the first 10 months of 2014, the Public Education website had approximately 200,000 page views.

Creeks to Coast Directory. The Creeks to Coast Directory, previously our Marine, Coastal, and Watershed Resource Directory, is a fully searchable resource for organizations active in marine, coastal and/or watershed issues within California. Approximately 440 organizations are in the database, including information on their mission, programs, volunteer opportunities, and links to their website and contact details. Organizations can edit their own entries and new organizations can input their data, which is approved by Commission staff before going live on the website. Staff continues to build up the database as a comprehensive collection of organizations that will be useful to researchers, educators, students, and those seeking volunteer opportunities within their community. The Creeks to Coast Directory is on our website at www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/creekstocoast. (Strategic Plan Action 7.3.3)

Environmental Fairs and Events. Each year, staff attends a number of environmental fairs and events, where we staff an educational booth, hand out materials, and talk to attendees. This year we exhibited our education resources and spoke to **2,125** people at **13** events. Our 2014 list of events included Saint Ignatius Enrichment Fair, Monterey Whale Fest, Mendocino Whale Fests, San Jose State Earth Day, Los Angeles Sanitation Districts Earth Day, Earth Day at Drake High School in San Anselmo, Pacifica Earth Day of Action, San Diego County Fair in Del Mar, California State Fair in Sacramento, State Scientists Day in Sacramento, Beneath the Waves Film Festival in Santa Cruz, Olompali Heritage Day in Marin County, and the Friends of San Leandro Creek Environmental Forum.

Policy and Coordination

Public Education staff participates in a number of groups that focus on policy and broad topics of mutual concern related to environmental education, marine debris, and other issues. Participation in these efforts are helpful in a variety of ways – strengthening and expanding networks, sharing ideas and practices, learning about key trends and initiatives. These groups include the California Environmental Education Interagency Network, Community Resources for Science, and the West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health.

The Marine Debris Action Coordination Team (MDACT) of the West Coast Governor's Alliance on Ocean Health, for example, has been active this past year, completing the West Coast Marine Debris Strategy, which will serve as a blueprint for actions to be undertaken by a proposed West Coast Marine Debris Coalition that the MDACT is also working to create and expects to launch in December 2014. Unified by a comprehensive strategy for addressing marine debris along the entire West Coast, the Marine Debris Coalition will be able to support actions at local, state, and regional levels that will have positive results in dealing with the challenge of marine debris. The MDACT also focused on the enhancement of the Marine Debris database, which will help standardize marine debris data collection across the west coast, establish a baseline of marine debris levels, and allow for evaluation of future efforts to address marine debris in the region. The MDACT is now working on incorporating the database into the West Coast Ocean Data Portal that is under development. The Ocean Data Portal has launched, and the team developing the Portal is using the Marine Debris Database as a Use Case Scenario to prove the value of the Ocean Data Portal. The Use Case will launch in 2015. (Strategic Plan Action 2.2.10)

In addition, this year the Public Education staff participated in the Environmental Literacy Task Force (ELTF), established by Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. The ELTF is tasked with developing an Environmental Literacy Blueprint, which will guide the state in improving students' environmental literacy. An environmentally literate citizen has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation, and commitment to work individually and collaboratively toward solving current problems and preventing new ones. The task force began meeting in June 2014 and will complete the blueprint by May 2015.

Funding Sources

All of the funding sources described in this section implement Strategic Plan Action 7.4.6.

Whale Tail[®] License Plate

From its launch in 1997 through October 2014, a total of 225,698 California drivers had purchased the Commission's Whale Tail[®] License Plate, and sales and renewal fees had raised \$80.6 million for environmental programs - \$23.2 million to the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account (CBCEA) and \$57.4 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.

Cleanup Day Sponsorships

The Public Education Program raises funds for California Coastal Cleanup Day through corporate and government partners. A list of sponsorship partners for Coastal Cleanup Day 2014 is included in the section of this report on Coastal Cleanup Day, on page 6.

New Check-off Box for “Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund”

The Governor signed AB 754, authored by Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, into law on September 21st, 2013. Beginning in 2014, California taxpayers had the opportunity to check a box and make a donation to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund in the voluntary contributions section of the state tax return.

Gyro, an award-winning advertising agency with an office in San Francisco, worked with the staff pro bono to create a marketing campaign for the check-off box. The Campaign ran between February and May 2014 and featured a website (www.checkthecoast.org), banner advertisements on websites such as LA Weekly, OC Weekly, and Surflife, advertisements in BART stations in the Bay Area, a video Public Service Announcement, a radio advertisement, and social media. In addition, numerous partner organizations expanded the Campaign’s reach through social media posts and Letters to the Editor.

Gyro has begun work on a pro bono advertising campaign for the Fund for the 2015 tax year, which will launch in January 2016. Funds from donations to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund will support marine and coastal education and stewardship, through the Whale Tail Grants Program.

Other Fundraising Efforts

The Public Education Program encourages donations to support our coastal and marine education programs. To this end, we maintain a “Donate/Shop for the Coast” page on the Coast4u.org website. In addition to making a donation, the public can purchase t-shirts, hats, and posters. A recent addition is our art gallery, which sells prints of selected winners of our photo contest and art contest. These purchases are made through our page on a website called Fine Art America. A portion of the proceeds from these sales goes to the Coastal Commission’s Adopt-A-Beach account at the California State Parks Foundation.