



Irene Hong
2020 Honorable Mention
Coastal Art & Poetry Contest

Year in Review 2020

California Coastal Commission





Sutro Baths. Photo credit: Charlotte Gibb

California Coastal Commission

2020 Hindsight: The Year in Review

If you would rather not spend much time re-living 2020, you're not alone. Who could have known the new decade would usher in a global pandemic claiming hundreds of thousands of American lives, throwing millions out of work and devastating California's robust economy? Three months into the year, the Commission's Chair tested positive for COVID-19, after experiencing symptoms at the March meeting. Overnight, Commission offices were closed, site visits were cancelled, and staff and Commissioners were advised to self-quarantine for 14 days.

Fortunately Chair Padilla recovered fully, becoming one of the state's first public officials to publicly share his [personal story](#) of surviving this dangerous illness. But shortly after his initial diagnosis, as the pandemic escalated, and the Governor issued state-wide shelter in place orders, triggering a massive, immediate, statewide transition to remote work and

virtual meetings that continues today. In April, the Commission made the unprecedented announcement that it was cancelling its regularly scheduled monthly hearing for the first time in its 47-year history. This was necessary to work out the technical aspects of conducting virtual public hearings supported by a staff transitioning to a 100% work from home schedule. While not seamless, the shift to virtual hearings has been completely successful, thanks to the indefatigable tech team at AGP Video, the Commission's Information Services unit, a staff team of virtual meeting managers, and a combination of ingenuity, patience and humor on the part of the Commissioners, staff, and a forgiving public.

In June, the Commission's chronic staffing shortages were compounded by a new requirement for all state workers to take two days of unpaid leave each month, effectively reducing agency productivity by 10%. This was followed by an Executive Order for all departments to contribute 5% of their workforce to the state's COVID-19 tracing team, resulting in the temporary reassignment of seven Commission staff. The volunteers who stepped forward to fulfill this critical need are heroes among their colleagues, who are now shouldering the additional workload despite a 10% cut in hours and pay.

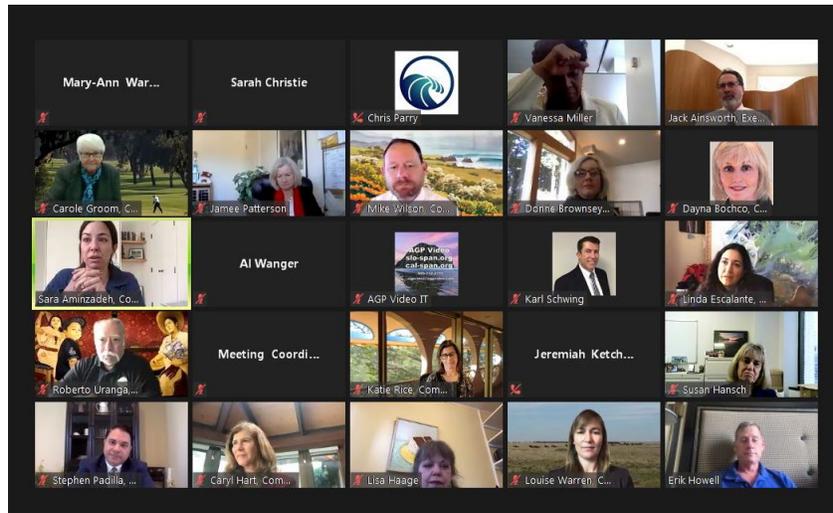
As spring turned toward summer, the Pandemic worsened. With schools, restaurants and businesses closed, the stir-crazy and the defiant turned to California's beaches in record numbers for respite and a last grasp at normalcy, in many cases flouting "social distance" mandates. This triggered emergency beach closures in some regions of the state, outraging beach goers and vaulting the issue of public access squarely into the middle of the Culture Wars, just as racial justice protests began to escalate and acrimonious political fights marked the run-up to a historic presidential election.

As the year wore on, California shattered all previous records for heat waves and wildfires, causing wide-spread evacuations and claiming lives, structures, and millions of acres, including the homes of some current and former staff. Tens of thousands of Californians again sought refuge at the coast, from the choking smoke that blanketed the entire state. "Purple air" entered our public lexicon and our cell phone apps.

Are we there yet?

Nevertheless, we persisted. It has been noted that opportunity rides the wind of every crisis. Looking back over the entire arc of the preceding year, it's clear that 2020 was also a petri dish of resourcefulness, resilience, and willingness to go above and beyond the call of public service, with surprising silver linings for coastal protection, environmental justice and new ways to serve the public in challenging times. The crisis fostered interagency teamwork, and COVID has deepened the Commission's collaborative relationships with the administration, local governments and sister agencies, from CalFire to HUD. The virtual work space, though far from ideal, has created new opportunities for increased public participation. And the urgency of the transformation has led to technology upgrades and innovative efficiency measures at a scale and pace that would never have been possible otherwise.

While nobody could have predicted the ways in which our work would be transformed by the pandemic's fallout, neither could we have predicted the myriad ways in which the Coastal Commission would rise to meet those challenges in ways that have strengthened and enhanced California's coastal program.



Environmental Justice

The year began on an optimistic note, as the Environmental Justice Unit, in collaboration with EJ community leaders, conducted two full days of training on implicit bias, equity and inclusion for all Commission staff. The training sessions were integral to helping agency planners understand how to implement the recently-adopted EJ Policy, as well as advancing the goal of integrating EJ goals and principles throughout the agency's internal work and culture.



EJ Training. Photo credit: CCC

As the Commission's fluency in these issues increases, we are finding new opportunities to advance EJ principles, from simple projects such as requiring [bilingual interpretive signs](#) and educational components about [Black history](#) in new development projects, to hosting all-staff discussions about race and equity, and drafting complex EJ analyses that lift up voices of underserved residents and take a closer look at the impacts of proposed projects on their communities. Collectively, these public and private conversations are helping to promote a deeper understanding of how the Commission can do its part to help dismantle institutional racism and reverse historic development patterns caused by exclusionary land use decisions and patterns of development in the coastal zone.

A few examples of how analyzing the equitable distribution of benefits and burdens are informing Commission actions include an application by the City of Pacifica to re-authorize a [parking fee program](#) and allow for beach parking lot maintenance activities. After considering how the project would impact lower-income populations, the Commission added a condition for the city to create the “Pacifica Resource Pass” for families whose beach access could be negatively affected by rate increases.

In July, the Commission heard an appeal of a [48-lot subdivision](#) on 14 acres in Encinitas. The four affordable units were initially going to be clustered on a corner of the complex with capped, contaminated soil. The project included two private parks for residents within the complex, but there was no provision for public coastal access, even though the site is located between the first public road and the sea. After a public discussion of these issues, the Commission worked with the applicant on a re-design that moved the four affordable units away from the toxic site and disburses them more evenly throughout the subdivision, and also includes a public trail along the northern perimeter of the site, providing new access to Batiquitos Lagoon.

In Orange County, a proposal to [re-design Dana Point Harbor](#) would have reduced the number of public slips by 389, while increasing the number of private slips available for yacht club members and enlarging many of the remaining slips to accommodate bigger, more expensive vessels for a higher fee. The Commission approved the project, which also included needed upgrades to the existing facility. But to offset impacts to lower-cost recreational opportunities, the Commission required the applicant to work with local partners to create and implement an outdoor environmental education program for underserved youth in Orange County that will exist for the lifetime of the development.



Small craft at Dana Point Harbor

In September, staff recommended denial of the [Cal Am desalination project](#) in Monterey County, due to its impacts on ESHA and public access, projected sea level rise impacts, and identification of a feasible and less environmentally preferable alternative available to meet the region’s water needs. The proposed project also would have had significant impacts on the disadvantaged communities of Marina, Seaside and Sand City, which were the most detailed EJ findings staff has researched to date. Although the applicant withdrew the item shortly before the hearing, the comprehensive analysis validated the local residents’ lived experience of struggling to survive economically in a coastal community that historically has received a disproportionate share of industrial development. Cal Am is working on revisions to the proposal.

Focused discussion of environmental justice has begun to increase the participation of marginalized groups at Commission hearings. Switching to virtual hearings made meetings more accessible to those with the technology and experience to follow the new procedures for remote testimony. Yet staff continued to hear from underserved stakeholders that the process was still confusing. To facilitate a smoother transition to virtual meetings, staff listened to EJ groups’ suggestions on how to improve the Zoom meeting procedures and instructions. The Commission’s [homepage](#) now makes the

process more easily accessible to first-time users, and agendas include more simplified directions and contact information for Spanish-speakers to connect with a staff person who can answer questions by phone or email. The Commission has also purchased the necessary equipment to produce short instructional videos which will be available in early 2021.

Internally, staff made steady progress implementing the Commission's Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) throughout the year. The agency's racial equity team conducted an internal staff survey to better understand where the Commission needs to focus additional training, created an on-boarding packet for new employees.

As protests and outrage mounted across the nation over the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmed Arbery and countless other unarmed Black Americans, the EJ Unit responded to staff's growing anxiety and grief by launching a series of interactive Racial Equity Discussions (the RED series) open to all staff seeking a safe space to discuss the complicated history of racial issues in America. In response to several questions and requests, EJ team leaders compiled an internal resource library of books, articles, documentaries and other materials for staff seeking to deepen their understanding of race, equity and systemic discrimination. Executive leadership authorized staff to review and discuss these materials to fulfill personal development hours during the work day as appropriate.

The key goals and objectives of both the REAP and the Commission's EJ Policy were incorporated into the new Environmental Justice and Equity Section of the [2021-2025 Strategic Plan](#), adopted unanimously by the Commission in November 2020. The Strategic Plan provides the bridge between the outward-facing EJ Policy that informs the Commission's public actions, and the internal, structural commitments of the REAP that will guide institutional reforms for a more inclusive, diverse, equitable workplace for all.

Public Access Meets Public Health

Initial statewide shelter in place orders made an exception for socially distanced outdoor activities, and encouraged solo or socially-distant outdoor activities. This thrust California beaches into the vital but unexpected role of providing mental health services for stressed-out Californians seeking solace and a sense of normalcy. Unfortunately, as more and more people flocked to the beaches, social distance requirements were often ignored.

With all State Beaches and campgrounds closed until further notice, more and more people congregated on city and county beaches. As Labor Day approached, temperatures began to climb and news reports of record-breaking crowds, packed towel to towel in large groups prompted the



Cayucos Beach, pre-COVID. Photo credit: Danna Dykstra-Coy

Governor to limit or prohibit state beach gatherings on holiday weekends, and local park districts struggled with whether and how to close their beaches to the public. Many local governments contacted the Commission requesting the ability to temporarily limit or prohibit beach access to protect their constituents and slow the spread of the virus.

Under normal circumstances, closing public beaches and visitor-serving facilities would be antithetical to the Commission's core mandate for public access. But in these extraordinary times, the [Executive Director authorized temporary closures](#) to protect public health and safety, provided that access would be limited to the minimum extent necessary, and consistent with public health department guidelines. Over the next several weeks, the Commission issued approximately 100 permit waivers for temporary beach and facility closures and maintained a [public data base](#) which was widely used by the press to keep the public informed on the [status](#) of their local beaches. Fortunately, by the end of the year most beaches had reopened, with the exception of campgrounds, visitor centers, and similar facilities.



Hollister Ranch Public Access Workshop, Goleta. Photo Credit: State Coastal Conservancy

Just prior to the shutdown, the Commission officially launched the much-anticipated public planning process mandated by [AB 1680 \(Limón\)](#) to create new coastal access at Hollister Ranch in Santa Barbara County. Working with the State Coastal Conservancy, State Parks, and the State Lands Commission, the interagency team convened the first in a planned series of public workshops in February in Goleta. More than 170 people attended the 2-hour session to provide input on every aspect of the future access

program. At the time, nobody realized this would be the only “in-person” workshop of the year. After COVID travel restrictions were instituted just one month later, the team shifted gears and developed a strategy for moving ahead with a “virtual” planning process, circulating 3 on-line surveys, and team putting together a 17-person Working Group with members of diverse backgrounds and perspectives, such as activists, ranch owners, tribal leaders, surfers and representatives of underserved communities. The Working Group convened three times before the end of the year, conducted a site visit, and adopted planning objectives and evaluation criteria. The statutory deadline to complete the access plan is April, 2022, with some level of public access by April 2021. COVID-related delays make these deadlines increasingly ambitious, but sticking as close to them as possible remains the team’s primary goal.

Sometimes the best way to provide a public access is to just preserve the status quo. That’s what happened in February, when the Commission unanimously denied a permit request from Union Pacific to install a [chain link fence across a ½ mile section of rail road right of way](#) in Pacific Grove. Built in 1879, the former rail way has long-since been decommissioned, and is now a well-developed and widely used multi-modal public access trail around Monterey Bay. The segment in question is an undeveloped portion that provides a well-worn dirt path linking the terminus of the developed trail with the Del Monte Forest. The Commission found that interfering with public access would be inconsistent with the public access policies of the Pacific Grove Land Use Plan, and the trail remains open for the public.



Photo credit: Surfrider Foundation

In August, another denial preserved Fisherman’s Wharf at Channel Islands Harbor in Oxnard. The Ventura County Harbor District was asking the Commission to override the City of Oxnard’s LCP to allow a developer to construct a mixed use, residential/commercial project on what is now public space. Although this was an unfortunate situation where two local governments had not been able to reach a common agreement, the Commission’s denial clears the way for a more appropriate project that puts a higher priority on public access and recreational opportunities, and ideally includes a wider range of housing opportunities.

Sea Level—It’s Still Rising, and We’re Still Here

Thanks in no small part to the Commission’s Sea Level Rise Subcommittee, in May the Commission was one of several agencies to adopt a set of [Statewide Planning Principles for Aligned State Action](#). Developed through an unprecedented inter-agency planning effort convened by the Secretary of Natural Resources and the CalEPA Secretary, the group included the State Controller’s office and 17 state agencies convened for the purpose of guiding unified, effective action toward sea level rise resilience for



Avalon, Catalina Island. Photo credit: Surfrider Foundation

California’s coastal communities, ecosystems, and economies. The adopted Principles are also consistent with and complementary to the Coastal Commission’s ongoing work to address sea level rise, and align state actions in six main areas:

- Develop and use the best available science
- Build coastal resilience partnerships
- Improve resilience communications
- Support local leadership
- Strengthen coastal resilience
- Learn from implementing coastal resilience projects.

Later in the year, the Commission made additional progress in collaborative planning with local governments by adopting a [Joint Statement of Shared Sea Level Rise Principles](#), developed in collaboration with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the League of California Cities (League) and consistent with the aforementioned Statewide Principles. These principles were developed over the year through the Local Government Working Group which is made up of a Commission subcommittee and local elected officials from CSAC and the League. While these principles won’t resolve every area of disagreement, this joint statement identifies a set of guiding principles, and acknowledges the challenges, opportunities, and necessary actions associated with proactive and effective sea level rise adaptation for California’s coastal communities. The Joint Statement is consistent with and complementary to the Coastal Commission’s ongoing work to address sea level rise. It focuses specifically on what the three entities can do to address sea level rise, specifically relating to Local Coastal Program (LCP) policy development, adaptation planning, and project decision making.

In the Spring of 2020, Coastal Commission staff worked with Graduate students from the University of California Santa Barbara Brenn School to develop an interactive story map and a new infographic to help the public better understand the science of sea level rise, what’s at risk, and what we as a society can do about it. Fortunately for us, two talented students, Shelby Johnson and Adrienne Hewitt, selected this topic as their Capstone

Project, which is designed to give students hands-on experience with a science-based communications project. They presented their final version to the Commission in August, and the [Sea Level Rise Story Map](#) is now posted on the Commission's website.



Battery Point Lighthouse, Crescent City. King Tides Project

King Tides are the highest high tides of the year, about a foot or two higher than average high tides, corresponding to the 1-2 foot rise in sea level expected during the next few decades. King Tides are not caused by sea level rise, but they do provide a window to what higher sea levels will look like. The Commission is the lead agency in the [California King Tides Project](#), which helps people visualize how sea level rise will impact their lives in the future by inviting them to take and share photos of the highest high tides of the year. The Coastal Commission engaged partner organizations and members of the public in this community science project in January and February. Organizations up and down the coast held at least 61 in-person events, and individuals uploaded nearly 2,300 photos that were [mapped](#) for ease of access for planners, scientists, media, students, and other members of the public. It also expanded the photo collection process, and added resources for educators and parents to find ways to [incorporate King Tides into student learning](#), through the [Climate Video Challenge](#), and elementary-level science journal downloadable in English or Spanish.

The Commission also continued to forge ahead with the hard work of not just planning, but actually implementing adaptation principles. Fifteen years in the making, the [Gleason](#)

[Beach Highway Roadway Realignment Project](#), approved by the Commission in November, was a model of interagency coordination for managed retreat. Relocating 0.7-mile stretch of Highway One between Bodega Bay and Jenner, the design developed by Caltrans, Sonoma County and the Commission realigns an iconic section of highway under extreme threat from Sea Level Rise. In addition to raising and relocating the highway eastward, the project includes an 850' bridge over Scotty Creek, complete with bicycle lanes and a separated pedestrian bridge and walkway. In addition to moving the highway from harm's way for at least 100 years, the project will improve riparian habitat and fish passage in Scotty Creek, secure new public beach access, construct a new segment of the California Coastal Trail and remove damaged structures and associated rubble from the beach and bluff. Construction is slated to begin summer of 2021.



Proposed bridge over Scotty Creek, which elevates and realigns Highway 1.

Photo credit: California Department of transportation

Another example of managed retreat was the compromise worked out with the Ritz Carlton's Bacara Resort in Santa Barbara County. Although a previous permit required the hotel to provide a public access trail to Haskell's Beach along with several amenities such as a snack bar and bathrooms, the hotel had a history of non-compliance. Meanwhile, sea level rise was rendering some of the development unusable, and threatening sections of the trail. In November, the Commission approved a [permit amendment](#) to relocate the trail, demolish the unusable snack bar structure and replace it with a mobile food truck, and resolve multiple outstanding violations.

By the Numbers: Annual Workload Roundup

One might assume that COVID restrictions would have translated into a significant reduction in the Commission's workload in 2020. But that was not the case. Despite the economic slowdown, the Commission received 2,359 submittals over the course of the year, and acted on a total of 620 permits, appeals, LCP amendments and federal consistency items. This is only about 18% lower than the total number of action items in 2018 and 2019.

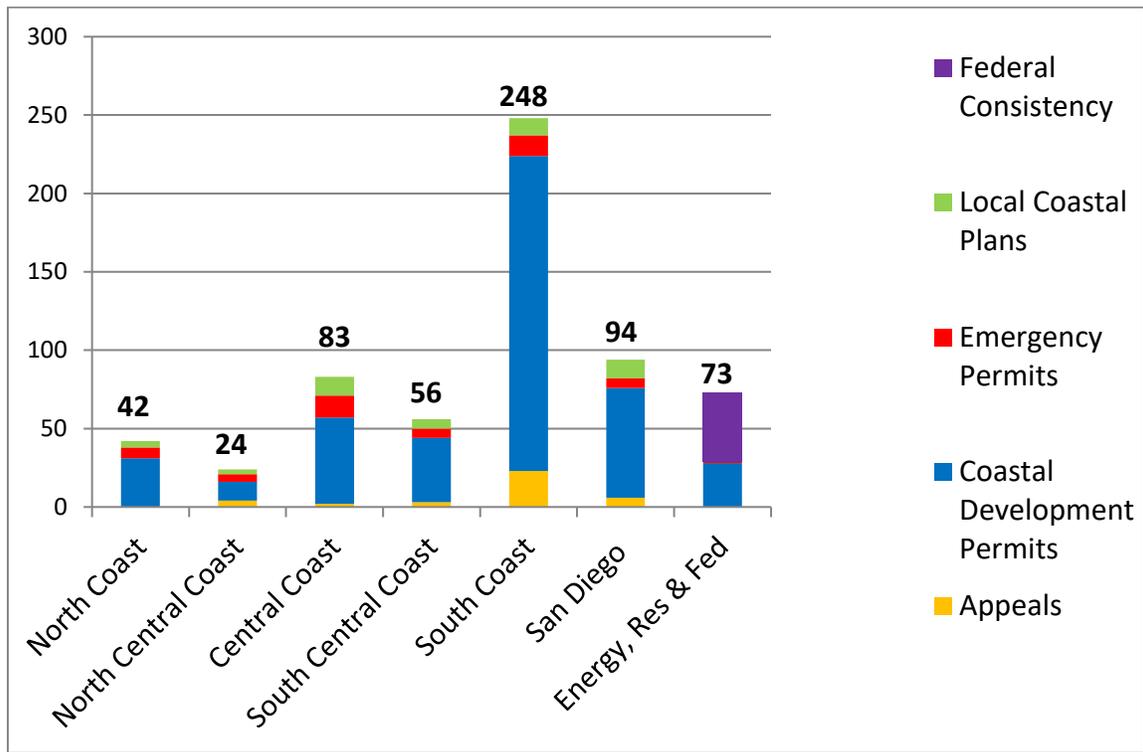


Figure 1. Total Commission actions by district.

As usual, workload in the Commission’s South Coast District office in Long Beach outpaced all of the other district offices, accounting for 40% of all submittals and actions. This is due to the fact that the largest number of uncertified jurisdictions, including the City of LA, are within the jurisdictional boundaries of the South Coast office.

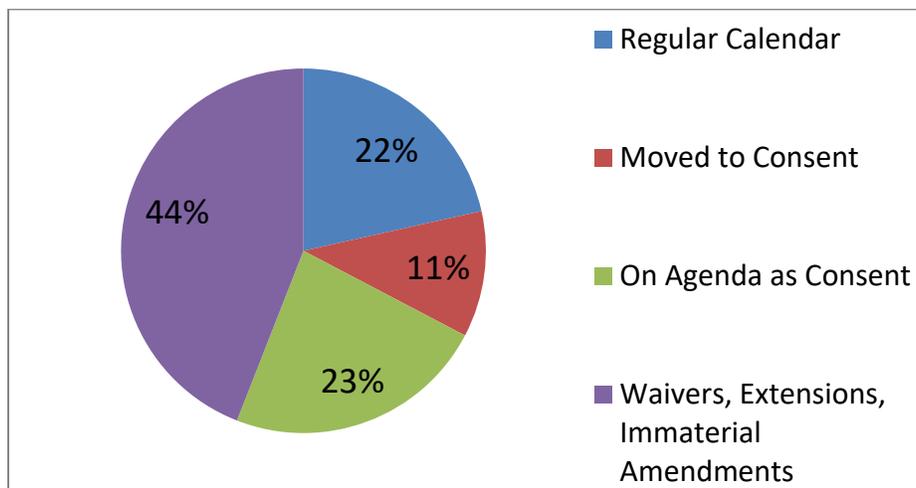


Figure 2. 2020 Regulatory actions processed under Commission Calendars

Certified local governments stayed busy as well, issuing 1,031 coastal development permits, 957 of which were appealable to the Commission. Of these, 38 were actually

appealed, for a 6% rate of appeal statewide. In addition, both local governments and the Commission issued a greater number of permit waivers in 2020, largely from the number of local government requests to temporarily close public beach and park areas due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Fortunately, access has been fully or partially restored to all of these previously closed areas.

Advances in Local Coastal Planning

Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) are the local blueprints for Coastal Act policies, implementing statewide resource protection policies in a locally specific context. Although certified LCPs allow cities and counties to assume more local control through the issuance of their own coastal development permits, not all jurisdictions have completed their LCPs as required by the Coastal Act, and Commission still remains the permit authority in several areas.

In 2020, the County of San Diego became the most recent coastal county with a certified LCP when the Commission's approved the [San Diego County Implementation Plan](#). All of California's 15 coastal counties are now issuing their own coastal development permits through certified Local Coastal Programs, an important milestone for California's Coastal Management Program. This brings the total number of certified jurisdictions up to 63, with 31 segments still outstanding.

Local Coastal Programs are living documents that must be updated as needed to respond to changing needs and circumstances, particularly in light of sea level rise and climate change. In October, the Commission certified a comprehensive update to a stand-alone segment of the City of Long Beach's LCP that was originally certified in 1980. [The South East Area Specific Plan](#), or SEASP, repealed and replaced the previous segment, revising and expanding it in several key areas. It prioritizes lower-cost accommodations over higher cost accommodations; requires 25% of new higher cost hotel rooms to be provided at a lower cost; sets in-lieu fees for lower cost rooms, which are only required if providing 25% of the rooms at lower cost is infeasible, at \$100,000 per room plus land costs; establishes 1977 as the date for defining an "existing structure"; requires preparation and certification of community-scale and/or City-wide sea level rise adaptation plans; adds policies that will allow for and encourage more affordable residential density in non-hazardous areas; disallows new or expanded oil production uses unless already approved by the Commission; certifies the previously deferred Los Cerritos Wetlands area and adds wetland habitat and ESHA protection policies, including requiring 100 foot buffers between new development potential wetlands or ESHA; adds a Tribal, Cultural, Archeological and Paleontological Resource section that addresses the importance of tribal cultural



Los Cerritos wetlands

resources; adds a Natural Resources Chapter with policies to protect sensitive habitat areas; and generally strengthens Chapter 3 policies throughout the document. This significant LCP amendment involved substantial state/local coordination to protect coastal resources, promote local livability, and enhance visitor-serving amenities.

Also in October, the Commission approved a new waste water treatment facility at [Lawson's Landing](#), a popular low cost campground in Marin County. This was the final chapter in a long-running planning effort to resolve decades-old enforcement issues involving illegal development and antiquated septic systems at this environmentally sensitive and visually spectacular site. The original after-the-fact permit was issued in 2011, with measures to protect habitat, water quality and agricultural soils while still providing for overnight camping, public access and recreational opportunities. Designing the wastewater management center in manner that does not impact water quality, habitat or public access required extensive technical site planning. The newly approved wastewater system will allow for the construction of bathrooms and showers, replacing existing porta-potties, greatly enhancing the recreational experience.



Lawson's Landing

The Commission made good progress with several coastal cities grappling with how to regulate vacation rentals (STRs) in their jurisdictions. While STRs provide additional options for coastal visitors and financial profits for owners, they also reduce permanent housing stock, hollowing out entire neighborhoods in some popular destination areas. This has been an issue of long-standing controversy before the Commission for decades, with opponents pushing for local bans on STRs, while hosts, hosting platforms, and realtors arguing that the practice should be expanded.

The Commission worked out a series of creative compromises with the cities of [Laguna Beach](#), [Oxnard](#), [Torrance](#) and [Carmel-by-the-Sea](#). Each ordinance or program was crafted to address the unique aspects of the city, striking a balance between providing reasonable options for visitors while ensuring that residential use remains the primary land use in neighborhoods zone exclusively for this use. They all featured some combination of allowing hosted “home stays,” grandfathering in existing STRs, allowing new STRs only in commercial or visitor-serving areas, and caps the number of STRs that can be allowed in specific zoning or geographic areas. By tailoring each policy to reflect the unique community character and priorities of each jurisdiction, the Commission helped these coastal cities achieve a good balance between the needs of coastal visitors and those of residential neighborhoods.

In addition, Torrance became the first coastal city *without* an LCP to seek and receive a coastal development permit from the Commission for its short term rental ordinance. While only a small part of the city is located in the coastal zone, the city wanted to make sure that its program was consistent with the Coastal Act. In December, the Commission approved [the permit](#) with modifications that would allow for more hosted stays, and it is now pending concurrence the City.

Healthy Habitats for Coastal Species



Photo credit: Dante Vasco

Protecting and restoring coastal habitats and the special species that depend on them is more important than ever, as climate change rapidly transforms ecosystems in myriad ways. From sea level rise and floods to wildfires and droughts, environmentally sensitive habitats in the coastal zone are under increasing pressure. Fortunately, Coastal Act policies protecting these areas are some of the strongest in the country, and an October [Executive Order from Gavin Newsom](#) to advance efforts to preserve the state's biodiversity underscored the urgency of protecting California's natural and lands and watersheds from the growing climate crisis.

In July, the Commission took a decisive action to protect snowy plovers at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (ODSVRA) in San Luis Obispo County through a consent [Executive Director's Cease and Desist Order](#) (EDCDO) to limit ongoing beach grading activities and other activities. Although the park, which is the only California



Photo credit: Gary Meredith

beach that allows off-road recreational vehicles, had been closed to vehicles since March due to the pandemic, grading of the beach and fore dunes continued, along with other measures intended to discourage the endangered snowy plover from expanding its habitat into the riding areas during nesting season. The EDCDO prohibited non-essential activities harmful to the birds through the end of the October nesting season. State Parks reopened the park to street legal vehicles on October 30, with plans to return to previous levels of use in phases, while simultaneously pursuing a Habitat Conservation Plan and a Public Works Plan to guide future access management at OSDVRA.



Oceanco Beach during vehicle closure. Photo credit: Caron Krauch

The Commission has been working closely with the State Lands Commission to [permit the abandonment, clean-up and removal](#) of several major oil and gas structures in SB and Ventura Counties this year. Some of these older wells were improperly capped, and have been leaking into the marine and coastal environment for decades. In September, the Commission approved a permit to address not only the well abandonment, but also several outfalls and shoreline structures in Summerland, Goleta, Mussel Shoals and Solimar. The permit conditions included temporary parking to provide access, and protections for marine wildlife, water quality and eelgrass habitat.



Summerland decommissioning barge. Photo credit: State Lands Commission



San Dieguito Restoration in process. Photo credit: Marathon Construction

The Commission also worked closely with Caltrans and SANDAG all year to design a [restoration project at San Dieguito Lagoon](#) that would improve approximately 154 acres of coastal wetland and upland habitat, construct a mile of public trail, relocate existing utility poles and enhance nearby beaches in San Diego County. Approved in November, the project is intended to provide mitigation for future infrastructure projects contained in the North Coast Corridor Public Works Plan, and will enhance the effectiveness of several adjacent restoration and public access projects.



Coral Tree, Long Beach. Photo credit: California Coastal Commission

While most of the Commission's actions to preserve and enhance habitat are taken on a landscape scale, sometimes the environment needs protection one tree at a time. That was the case in October when the Commission approved an [appeal](#) by the Sierra Club and Citizens About Responsible Planning. The groups appealed a project in Long Beach that would have cut down an enormous, heritage coral tree used for nesting by local shorebirds, asserting that it was not a threat to public safety, and that the proposal to install LED lights and other features would deter nesting in nearby trees. The Commission agreed, citing an LCP policy that prevents tree removal if active nests have been observed within the last 5 years, noting that the city's tree removal and excessive trimming has been an ongoing issue of concern for the Commission. In approving a revised permit for some associated work, the Commission also required an independent arborist review and ED approval for any future proposed trimming of the tree.

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The Commission's final action for the year was to concur with the consistency determination for Phase I of the BLM's [Management Plan for Cotoni-Coast Dairies](#), a 5,800 coastal property near the town of Davenport in Santa Cruz County. Purchased in 2014 by the Trust for Public Lands (TPL), it is now part of the [California Coastal National Monument](#) created by President Clinton in 2000 and expanded by President Obama in 2017. Since that time, BLM conducted extensive public outreach for the preparation of a Management Plan, which will be implemented in phases. The final version reflects input from the Commission on Phase I activities, with no fees charged for public access, biological monitoring for each phase of the plan, an adaptive management approach to balance and manage public day-use, cattle grazing, resource protection and restoration, and Native American cultural access for traditional practices. The northwestern section of the property was burned during the CZU Lightning Complex Fire, and residents in the surrounding area are understandably concerned about increased risk of future fires from increased public access and recreation. No fire grills will be installed in day-use areas and campfires will be prohibited year-round. Cattle grazing on approximately 2,200 acres of Cotoni-Coast Dairies will manage fuel loads, reduce non-native species, and improve wildlife habitat.



Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument

Public Education: Cultivating Awareness, Inspiring Stewardship



Whale Tail Grantees: Brown Girls Surf Día de los Muertos beach outing.

The Commission awarded \$657,015 in [Whale Tail® grants](#) to 35 projects for educational activities like beach field trips, habitat restoration projects, watershed clean ups, science supplies and curriculum, and SCUBA education research outings, with an emphasis on reaching underserved communities. A few examples of funded projects include: student lessons and teacher training on Indigenous fire management and

Chinook Salmon health in Butte County; environmental education and leadership at a surfing camp

for Oakland youth; and a camping trip for youth and young adults from Los Angeles to learn about otters and their habitat. The Commission worked with Youth Outside to provide training in cultural relevancy, equity, and inclusion for Whale Tail® grantees.

But understandably, the unique challenges of 2020 forced some grantees to delay or redesign their projects. With large gatherings and field trips canceled, staff and grantees responded to the situation by getting creative and adapting programming to fit the moment. Some organizations transitioned to creating engaging and informative videos, hosted community webinars, designed new online curriculum, or shifted to smaller outdoor efforts that could be conducted safely. School programs were adapted to on-line platforms and virtual learning, in-person trainings morphed into webinars. The Commission's grantees have been creative problem-solvers as they determine how best to serve their communities.

The Commission staff's focus shifted to providing structure and encouragement for self-directed stewardship activities while emphasizing safety and physical distancing, and developing new on-line educational resources and programs.

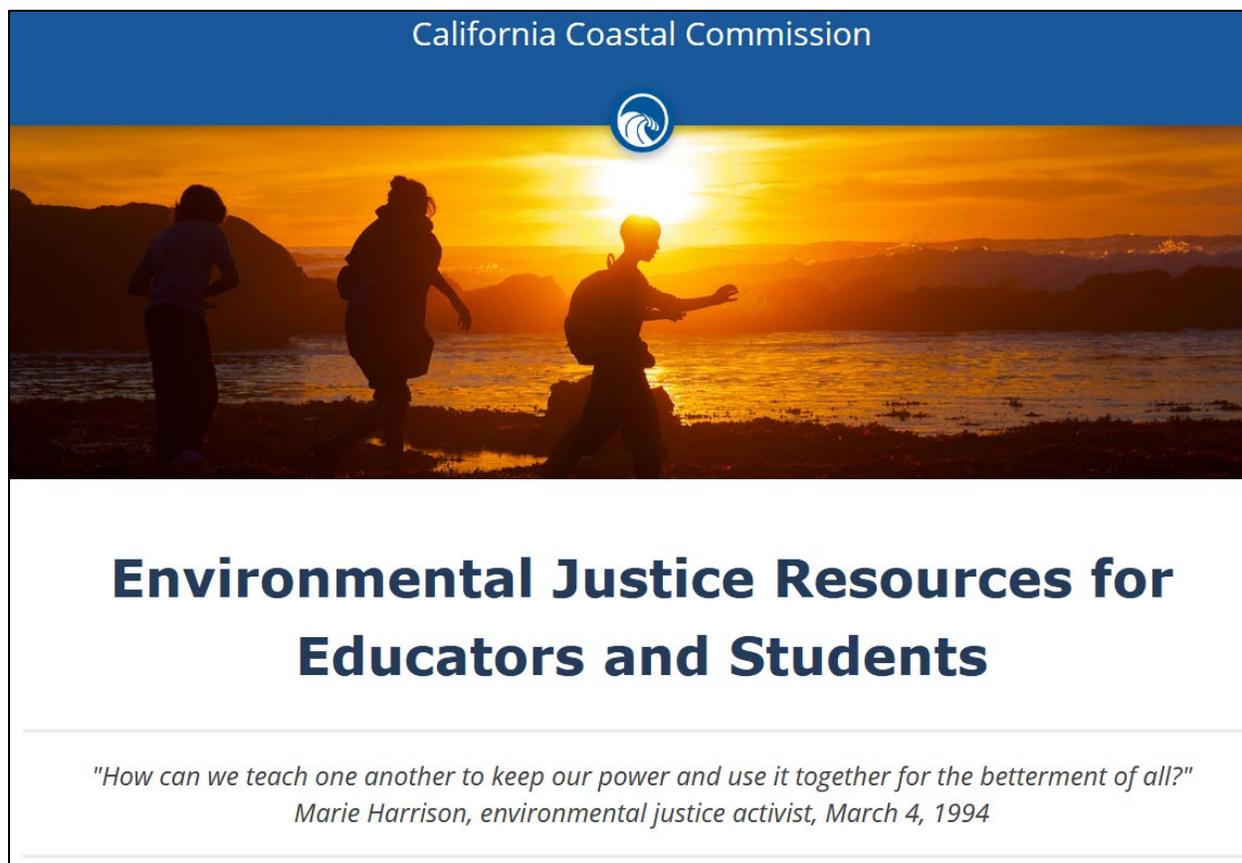
To help with the "virtual" school year, staff compiled a collection of educational resources for teachers and parents engaging in [at-home learning](#), and a new portal for [Environmental Justice Resources for Educators](#), including a five-lesson unit for middle and high school classrooms. The Commission also launched a new [Climate Video Challenge](#) for middle and high school students and announced the [first winner](#) in March.

The 36th annual [Coastal Cleanup Day](#) in September looked dramatically different from cleanups in past years. Rather



Art contest winner Awesome Clever Sea Otters, Cassidy Cheng

than focusing on a single day, the Commission spread activities out throughout the entire month, encouraging volunteers to clean up the coast from their own front doors. Neighborhood cleanups of streets, local parks and creeks, and other natural areas took place all month, all around the state as volunteers responded to the Commission's call to action.



New Coastal Commission Publication: [Environmental Justice for Educators](#)

Volunteers were encouraged to use a data collection app called Clean Swell to record their participation and the trash items they removed. More than 3,000 cleanups were recorded, which far and away led the world in cleanup activity during the month. Close to 13,000 volunteers participated in these cleanup events, which truly encompassed the entire watershed, from inland neighborhoods, to shorelines, to on-the-water cleanups in kayaks, canoes, and dinghies. While participation levels certainly weren't at the level they would have been during a "normal" year, thousands of Californians demonstrated their desire to give back to our environment, with many planning to continue DIY cleanups throughout the year.

The [California Boating Clean and Green Program](#) (jointly implemented with the California State Parks) created a series of virtual trainings and webinars to replace its usual in person workshops, including Dockwalker trainings, oil spill response communication webinars, and clean boating webinars. Over 5,000 boaters took an online clean boating quiz. Ten new California Fishing Line Recycling stations were

installed for a total of 300 stations statewide, which recycled 1,975 pounds of fishing line.

Drivers purchased 4,416 [Whale Tail® License Plates](#) in fiscal year 2019-20. These sales combined with renewal fees for existing plates provided over \$4.7 million for environmental programs. Of this total, \$1.2 million went to the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account, which funds the Commission's Public Education Programs, and \$3.5 million went to the Environmental License Plate Fund for a range of environmental conservation projects. Since its launch in 1997, Whale Tail® License Plate revenue has totaled \$111 million (\$31 million to the CBCEA and \$80 million to the ELPF). The [Protect Our Coast and Ocean fund](#) received over \$401,000 in donations from more than 32,000 individuals from January through September 2020, who "checked the coast" on their state tax forms. These donations support marine education and stewardship through Whale Tail® Grants.

Visit www.coast4u.org to learn how to get involved, view winning coastal art and photography, and learn about the Whale Tail® License Plate, the Protect Our Coast and Ocean fund tax checkoff, and other ways to support the Commission's public education work. Stay connected on CCC social media channels ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)).



Emily Li

Enforcement Highlights

The Commission's Enforcement Unit is charged with ensuring that new development is carried out consistent with the Coastal Act. This includes both compliance with permit conditions as well as addressing unpermitted activities and structures. Working directly with alleged violators, local governments and other public agencies, over 90% of the cases resolved by the Commission are done with the agreement and consent of the land owner. Achieving this level of cooperation takes a significant amount of time and resources, but the resulting settlement agreements provide long-lasting public benefits while avoiding costly litigation.

As sea levels rise and beaches narrow, population continues to rise, increasing demand for public beach space. Yet coastal access and recreation is also threatened by illegal private encroachments into public beach space. Coastal Act polices and environmental justice principles emphasize the need to fully protect existing public beach areas for public use by all. In 2020, the Commission's enforcement unit continued to place a high priority on resolving public access violations.

In February, the Commission approved a [Consent Cease and Desist Order](#) and [Administrative Penalty](#) directing the Tivoli Cove Homeowners' Association in Malibu to unblock a Commission-required beach accessway up and over a revetment, build a previously-required public stairway, and remove hazardous boulders and other debris that had fallen onto the beach and into the surf.



Boulders to be removed at Tivoli Cove.

The design of the original revetment blocked access to the other side of Latigo Beach. Decades ago, the Commission required a permit condition for a public pathway up and over the revetment, including stairways and access signs, so that the public could reach the other side of Latigo Beach. However, the Tivoli Cove HOA failed to maintain one of the stairways, rendering it unusable to the public, and privatized the other stairway for their exclusive use. As boulders from their revetment migrated onto the public beach, the cumulative impact of these violations compounded, resulting in a significant loss of public access.

The Commission's resolution of this violation included removing the unpermitted development, constructing and maintaining a public beach access path and stairway, removing all concrete blocks, rebar, pipes, boulders, and other debris on the adjacent public beach, regardless of its origins. Tivoli Cove HOA also agreed to provide a beach shower, drinking fountain, benches, and interpretive signs, and to maintain them and provide them for public use, at their expense.

In June, the Commission issued consent orders to the [City of Newport Beach](#) and dozens of beachfront homeowners to resolve numerous longstanding coastal access violations consisting of private encroachments on public beach. Homeowners had essentially extended their yards, including landscaping, hardscaping, outdoor furniture and other amenities, onto public land, including sensitive dune habitat, claiming it as private space.



Newport Beach private encroachments to be restored to sandy beach

Through the Commission's consent orders, the City and homeowners collectively agreed to remove all unpermitted encroachments from the beach, restore native habitat, and remove any future encroachments. The homeowners agreed to pay, in aggregate, an administrative civil penalty that totals just over \$1.7 million to improve public access opportunities and restore coastal habitats.

In November, the Commission approved a [Consent Order](#) involving the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). To replace 220 power poles near Pacific Palisades, the utility had conducted extensive grading without a coastal development permit, damaging sage scrub and chaparral habitat in the Santa Monica Mountains without a permit. In addition to installing erosion control measures and implementing a long-term monitoring plan, LADWP will restore the nine acres it bulldozed within the coastal zone and 17 acres outside the zone. The city also agreed to pay \$1.9 million in fines.

Mapping and GIS

The Commission's Mapping/GIS Unit has continued its efforts to implement ArcGIS Online, a web-based mapping and analysis platform that provides access to creative online tools, maps, data and other online content to create and share custom web maps and applications. Enhanced data sharing has increased collaboration across the agency as well as with our partners. One popular feature is the Story Map, which communicates complex information to the public in a visually creative format. In the summer of 2020, the Statewide Planning Unit published [Sea Level Rise in California: Planning for the Future](#); a Story Map that showcases the Commission's efforts and dedication to addressing sea level rise and integrating sea level rise into the Commission's planning and decision making processes. The Public Education department also used Story Maps to create the [California King Tides Project Story Map](#) which presents a geographic view of citizen science data of extreme high tides in an interactive and engaging way. So far, the California King Tides Project mapped 61 events and received over 2,300 photo submissions from the public showcasing extreme high tides in their communities. Moving forward, the Mapping Unit is dedicated to utilizing latest developments in GIS technology to best support agency staff, our federal, state, and local partners, and the general public.



Mission Bay, King Tide Project

Post-certification maps are an essential component of LCPs, and the Mapping Unit works closely with local governments to ensure that these maps are accurate, current, and publicly accessible. In March, the Commission certified the city of Pacific Grove's [Permit and Appeal Jurisdiction Map](#), depicting the areas within Pacific Grove that are subject to the Commission's permit and appeal jurisdiction following the recent certification of the

city's LCP. In May, the Commission approved revisions to the City of San Buenaventura's [Permit and Appeal Jurisdiction Map](#).

The Commission also accomplished a significant milestone by completing the dual permit maps for the City of Los Angeles. These maps, referred to as the Coastal Development Permit Program maps, will be the basis of the City's Post LCP Certification Permit and Appeal Jurisdiction maps once the city has a certified LCP.

Aquaculture

Throughout the year, the Commission conducted extensive public outreach to complete the [CDP Application Guidance for Aquaculture and Marine Restoration](#), which was finalized in December. The guidelines incorporate feedback from interested parties, state and federal agency staff, and key stakeholders solicited throughout development of the document. The guidance was a requirement of SB 262 (McGuire, 2019), which the Commission supported as a positive step toward the agency's goal of increasing state and federal agency coordination, regulatory certainty and improving the industry's understanding of and compliance with Coastal Act policies and procedures.

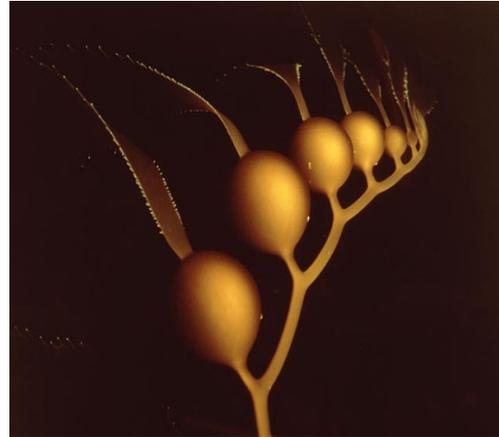


Photo credit: Richard Lang

In addition to meeting the requirements of SB 262, the application guidance is intended to help applicants for marine aquaculture and restoration projects effectively navigate the CDP application process and provide partner agencies and other stakeholders with a better understanding of the Commission's CDP process as well as opportunities to coordinate with Commission staff.

Transportation

The Commission views interagency coordination as integral to improving the efficiency of government and achieving better outcomes in our work to protect California's coast and ocean. The Commission has built a particularly strong relationship over the years with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) aimed at promoting important public access and transportation projects consistent with Coastal Act and LCP policies. Through multi-year interagency agreements, Commission staff has worked with Caltrans Headquarters as well as Caltrans' six coastal District Offices to continue to provide a safe, sustainable and resilient transportation system. In 2020, Caltrans and the Commission renewed their Interagency Agreement for another five years, enabling the Commission to recruit new Transportation Program staff, including a Senior Environmental Scientist who will focus on mitigation issues relating to transportation projects, such as Caltrans' new Advanced Mitigation Program.

This overall interagency coordination facilitated the coordinated review of Caltrans planning documents throughout the year, including District climate change vulnerability

and adaptation plans, Regional Advanced Mitigation Needs Assessments and Active Transportation Plans. In addition, the Transportation Team processed several major transportation infrastructure projects in 2020, such as, the [Gleason Beach Highway Roadway Realignment Project](#), and the [restoration project at San Dieguito Lagoon](#) mentioned earlier in this report.

Over the past year the Commission also continued participating in the AB 1282 Transportation Permitting Task Force, consisting of the State Transportation Agency, Natural Resources Agency, CalEPA, California Transportation Commission, Caltrans, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Resources Control Board, Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Commission. Under the AB 1282 legislation, the Task Force's mission was to explore ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of permitting for transportation projects while protecting our state's natural, historic, and cultural resources. The Taskforce's Final Report was delivered to the Legislature in October and makes 40 specific recommendations across six categories for delivering needed infrastructure projects while furthering the missions of both transportation and environmental protection agencies. Through 2020, the Taskforce continued with working group meetings to pursue four initial recommendations, including ones aimed at incorporating resource considerations into Caltrans cost/benefit analyses, expanding Caltrans' Corridor Management Plan guidelines to address environmental factors such as sea level rise, and improving how Caltrans responds to emergency repairs.

Also in 2020, Commission staff continued discussions with Caltrans and other partners to expand multi-modal opportunities within the coastal zone. With the support of the interagency agreement, Commission and State Coastal Conservancy staff completed extensive collaborations to prepare GIS maps of the California Coastal Trail that will allow Caltrans and other partners to more comprehensively address completing the Trail through planning and project processes. Work will continue in 2021 for making this information available to the public.



Photo credit: Charmaine Coimbra

Partnerships: Coastal Act

As always, the Coastal Commission carried out its visionary mandate in close collaboration with its state and federal agency partners, including California Native American tribes, the State Lands Commission, Caltrans, Housing and Community Development, the Ocean Protection Council, the State Coastal Conservancy, State Parks, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, California State Water Board, Cal EPA, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, CalFire, California Board of Forestry, the California Natural Resources Agency, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Department of Interior, National Park Service, US Navy, The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Along with our local government partners, these public agencies each play a unique role in ensuring coastal resources are protected and enhanced for the welfare of present and future generations. Despite chronic staffing shortages, the Commission continued to participate in numerous multi-agency committees, task forces, panels and working groups statewide.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE

- California Coastal Sediment Management Working (CSMW) Group
- Caltrans Integrated Planning Team (IPT) Sea Level Rise Working Group
- Climate Change Action Coordination Team
- Coastal and Ocean Working Group of the Climate Action Team (CO-CAT)
- Humboldt Bay Natural Shoreline Infrastructure TAG
- Public Trust Coordination Group
- Safeguarding California Climate Action Team (SafeCAT)
- State Agency Sea Level Rise Leadership Team
- West Coast Governors Alliance Action Coordination Team

COASTAL HAZARDS AND SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT

- California Geological Survey Tsunami Policy Working Group
- California Geological Survey Tsunami Technical Advisory Panel
- North-Central California Coastal Sediment Coordination Committee
- Sand TAC for San Francisco BCDC
- Southern California Dredged Material Management Team
- Southern Monterey Bay Opportunistic Beach Nourishment Program TAC

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT, STATE AND FEDERAL

- Coastal States Organization Ex-Officio Representatives
- Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) Advisory Committee
- USC Sea Grant Advisory Board
- West Coast Regional Coastal Zone Programs and National Estuarine Research Reserve Managers Work Group
- Federal-State GIS Informational Meetings
- SF Estuary Geospatial Working Group

ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- Beach Ecology Coalition
- Board of Forestry Cal VTP Implementation Working Group
- California Natural Resources Agency Sea Grant Advisory Panel
- California Natural Resources Agency Statewide Monitoring Coordination Group
- California Wetlands Monitoring Group
- Caltrans Advanced Mitigation Program Interagency Team
- Contaminated Sediments Task Force
- Fish Passage Advisory Councils (FishPACs) for Northern California, Bay Area, Central Coast, and Southern Steelhead
- Goleta Slough Management Committee
- Integrated Watershed Restoration Program TAC for San Mateo, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties
- Interagency Review Teams for wetland mitigation banking
- Loma Alta Slough Wetlands Enhancement TAC
- Los Cerritos Wetlands TAC
- NOAA Ocean Acidification Resilience Project Advisory board

- Ocean Protection Council Estuary Marine Protected Area Mgmt Advisory Council
- Ormond Beach Restoration Committee
- Interagency Pesticide Working Group
- Santa Cruz County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy TAC
- Seabird Protection Network
- Southern California Wetlands Recovery Group
- Topanga Lagoon TAC
- U.S.F.W.S. Oregon Silverspot Butterfly Working Group
- Wetlands Recovery Project Wetlands Managers Group

JOINT ENFORCEMENT

- Santa Monica Mountains Enforcement Task Force
- Mendocino County Environmental Crimes Task Force
- Del Norte Environmental Crimes Task Force
- Humboldt County Environmental Crimes Task Force
- Humboldt County Code Compliance Working Group

ENERGY AND OCEAN RESOURCES

- California's Critical Coastal Areas Program (Joint Lead Agency)
- CDFW Aquaculture Development Committee
- California Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force
- Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Group
- Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Regional Working Group
- Diablo Canyon Independent Peer Review Panel
- Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- Interagency Oil & Gas Platform Decommissioning Working Group
- Joint Strategic Advisory Committee for Ca Coastal Ocean Observing System
- Monterey Bay NMS Advisory Council
- OSPR Technical Advisory Committee
- Ports of San Diego, Long Beach, LA, Hueneme, SF and Humboldt Harbor Safety Committees
- Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System
- Statewide Advisory Committee on Cooling Water Intake Structures
- Statewide Marine Protected Area Leadership Team

PROJECT-SPECIFIC WORKING GROUPS

- Arana Gulch Adaptive Management Working Group TAC
- Broad Beach Restoration Project TAC
- LOSSAN San Diego Regional Rail Corridor Working Group
- ODSVRA Technical Review Team
- ODSVRA TRT Scientific Subcommittee
- Russian River Estuary Management Advisory Management Panel
- Scott Creek Lagoon Restoration TAC
- Senior Technical Advisory Committee for BCDC
- Surfers Beach Technical Advisory Group

PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION

- Hollister Ranch Public Access Interagency Working Group
- Gleason Beach Coastal Access Task Force
- AB 1282 Transportation Permitting Taskforce
- Barriers to Coastal Access Working Group
- Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council
- California Coastal Trail Working Group
- Caltrans IPT Public Access Working Group
- Lower-Cost Visitor-Serving Working Group

PUBLIC EDUCATION

- California Environmental Education Interagency Network
- Pacific Oil Spill Prevention Education Team

WATER QUALITY

- California Nonpoint Pollution Control Program (Joint Lead Agency)
- California's Critical Coastal Areas Program Interagency Working Group
- Marinas and Recreational Boating Interagency Coordination Committee
- Ocean Protection Council Plastic Pollution Steering Committee
- West Coast Marine Debris Alliance
- US EPA's Regional Response Team Region 9 Applied Response Technology Workgroup

Headquarters Office Move

After 27 years at 45 Fremont Street in San Francisco, the Coastal Commission now has a new address. In August, the San Francisco Headquarters/North Central District Office completed its transition to 455 Market Street. Office moves always require a significant effort on the part of all affected staff, but relocating the agency headquarters during a pandemic under shelter in place orders presented additional challenges, particularly when it involves a location that is accessible primarily by public transit. Commission



Photo credit: CCC

Management worked out a rotating schedule to enable staff to pack their offices safely while minimizing travel and time inside. The I.T. unit worked tirelessly to migrate all systems to the new building in a manner that minimized disruption for the public as well as on the staff production schedule. Although the office was necessarily closed for several days, the agency was largely able to maintain continuity due to the fact that staff was already working from home.



For Auld Lang Syne

The Commission bid a bittersweet farewell to 10 valuable, long-term staff in 2020, as they transitioned into well-deserved retirement. All of these committed public servants contributed in lasting ways to California’s coastal protection legacy, dedicating a significant portion of their lives to the cause. Their institutional knowledge is irreplaceable. Their collective contribution will remain on permanent display along California’s 1,200 mile shoreline. And although COVID-19 prevented the send-off they deserved from their colleagues, we look forward to a combination celebration/reunion when it’s safe to travel again.

These departures are the latest manifestation of a longer-term trend, the “Silver Wave” of retirees: of the Commission’s approximately 182 staff members, 59 are currently eligible for retirement. We thank them for their service, we will miss them each and every day, and wish them all the best.

- Susan Hansch – Chief Deputy, 46 years
- Mark Delaplaine - Coastal Program Manager, 44 years
- Jeff Staben - Administrative Assistant II, 40 years
- Larry Simon – Federal Consistency, 33 years
- Jay Banaag - Information Technology Associate, 30 years
- Diana Chapman - Associate Governmental Program Analyst, 28 years
- Clarita Tagab - Management Services Technician, 21 years
- Doug MacMillan - Research Data Specialist II, 20 years
- Gabe Buhr - Coastal Program Manager, 12 years
- Owen Omphua - Associate Business Management Analyst, 11 years

Where We Go From Here

After two full years of preparation and review, the Commission unanimously adopted the [2021-2025 Strategic Plan](#) in November. Complied with significant public input, its 9 goals, 50 objectives and 199 specific actions will guide the Commission's actions on priority focus areas



Photo credit: Bonnie Ernst

over the next five years. It's an aspirational document that considers how the Coastal Act can best protect coastal resources in a rapidly changing California, and it will require additional staff and funding resources to fully achieve all of its objectives. But it is an essential document for making the case for those resources, and will be a touchstone for staff, commissioners and the public to reference when considering future Commission efforts and initiatives.

While nobody can't predict what 2021 will bring, we can anticipate some of the more consequential items that will be coming before the Commission Staff anticipates that several desalination proposals will come before the Commission in 2021, including new facilities proposed by Cal-Am on the Monterey Peninsula, Poseidon in Huntington Beach, South Coast Water District at Doheny Beach (Orange County), and the Cambria Community Services District (San Luis Obispo County), as well as modifications to existing facilities on Catalina Island, the Poseidon facility in Carlsbad, and the City of Santa Barbara's facility.

BOEM is also pursuing leasing in federal waters for offshore wind development. In October 2018, BOEM issued a Call for Information and Nominations requesting information and expressions of interest for three offshore Call Areas in Northern and Central California. The Call closed at the end of January 2019, and staff anticipates BOEM will submit a federal consistency determination on potential lease areas in mid-2021.



Photo credit: Elizabeth Levy

Other significant project proposals likely to come before the Commission in 2021 include: the Pt. Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan Amendment for beef and dairy ranch operations and management of Tule elk; State Parks' Public Work Plan for Oceano Dunes, the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge program to

eradicate invasive house mice; a Management Plan for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary; the Federal Highway Administration North Santa Cruz County Rail Trail project; SANDAG's Del Mar Bluffs Stabilization Project 5; the U.S. Navy's Old Town San Diego Re-development Project; Implementation of the NOAA and CDFW Garcia River Estuary Enhancement Program; NOAA's proposal for restoration of coastal dunes and wetland habitat at the Eel River estuary; and, potentially, a five year NPDES General Permit for Offshore Oil and Gas Platforms and two industrial scale fish farms, one in federal waters offshore of San Diego and another along the shore of Humboldt Bay.

Here's hoping for a better, brighter 2021, with an end to the Pandemic, a national turn toward civility, a resurgence of empathy and creative responses to climate change, sea level rise and all the other challenges facing our coast and ocean. The coast is never saved, it's always being saved by the people and partner agencies that care about its irreplaceable resources.

In Memorium



Diana Chapman



Gabe Buhr

This report is dedicated to the memory of former Commission staff Diana Chapman (Santa Cruz office) and Gabe Buhr (San Diego office). We will forever miss their good humor, compassion, integrity, dedication and kindness. Their contributions to this agency over their combined 40 years of service enabled us to achieve the kind of successes chronicled above. Diana and Gabe, we love you, and you will always be with us.



A fitting tribute to Gabe's peerless contributions to the multi-year efforts on the I-5 San Diego North Coast Corridor Public Works Plan, the San Dieguito Nature Bridge has been dedicated in his honor.



Photo credit: David Kerbyson