

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

455 Market Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94105-2421
Voice: (415) 904-5200
WEB: WWW.COASTAL.CA.GOV



W6a

December 8, 2025

TO: California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties

FROM: Dr. Kate Huckelbridge, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report

Hollister Ranch Coastal Access Program Planning

Last month, the Coastal Commission, State Lands Commission, Coastal Conservancy and State Parks hosted 3 public workshops to gather suggestions from the public regarding a public access program for Hollister Ranch located in Santa Barbara County. If you couldn't attend last month's workshops, which were held in Santa Barbara and online, or if you have more comments to share, you can still provide feedback through our post-workshop survey. The comment period is open until December 19. Visit the HRCAP webpage at: <https://ascent.mysocialpinpoint.com/HollisterRanchCoastalAccess>

Coastal States Organization

On October 27-30, Federal Programs Manager Megan Hall attended the fall meeting of the Coastal States Organization in Cape May, New Jersey. The Coastal States Organization comprises representatives from all federally approved coastal management programs nationwide, convening twice a year in person to discuss shared coastal management challenges and opportunities. Topics discussed at the meeting include organization budget, updates on federal funding and regulatory changes, coastal management program funding strategies, coastal resilience lessons learned across states, and building partnerships across sectors.

Wetland Recovery Project's (WRP) Director's Group

On December 4th, I attended the annual meeting of the Wetland Recovery Project's (WRP) Director's Group in Costa Mesa, CA. The Director's Group includes the directors of 18 state and federal agencies that coordinate with one another regarding the protection, restoration, and enhancement of Southern California's coastal wetlands. At this year's meeting, chaired by Commissioner Eckerle, the Director's Group endorsed the implementation of the WRP's Regional Monitoring Program. The Regional Monitoring Program will provide comparable

monitoring information among the region's coastal wetlands, which is critical for evaluating whether the goals and objectives of the WRP Regional Strategy are being achieved, informing future funding decisions, and protecting past investments in wetland restoration. Commission Staff Ecologist Corey Clatterbuck and Federal Programs Manager Megan Hall served on the Monitoring Program's core development team. The Director's Group was also briefed on the status of the WRP Work Plan and the State Coastal Conservancy's Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program, discussed common challenges of funding, permitting, and managing coastal resilience projects, and attended a site visit to the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Project, a 103-acre restoration project the Commission permitted in March 2025. More information about the WRP and the Regional Monitoring Program is available at <https://scwrp.org>.

Elkhorn Slough Corridor Resiliency Project

In conjunction with a King Tides event on the morning of December 4, Commission transportation staff attended a site visit to the Elkhorn Slough as part of the Technical Advisory Committee for the Highway 1 Elkhorn Slough Corridor Resiliency Project. This Resiliency Project is led by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy and the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve. The Elkhorn Slough is one of California's most important estuary ecosystems and is crossed by critical transportation networks in Highway 1 and a major rail corridor that currently serves Amtrak and potentially future state expanded rail networks. The study will evaluate climate change vulnerabilities and adaptation alternatives for Highway 1 and the rail corridor, which is currently completely underwater during major tidal events like a king tide. See below for more information on the Commission's King Tides photos project.



View of overtopped active rail corridor at Elkhorn Slough.



Regulatory Impacts on Housing Availability and Affordability

On November 6, Deputy Executive Director Madeline Cavalieri participated in an informational hearing held in Sacramento by the Assembly Select Committee on Regulatory Authority, entitled “Regulatory Impacts on Housing Availability and Affordability.” Madeline, along with representatives from several other state agencies, provided a panel discussion on the successes and challenges in promoting housing development and affordability through their respective regulatory programs. In her comments, Madeline highlighted a number of the Commission’s efforts to promote housing, particularly affordable housing, in the coastal zone through its planning and regulatory functions. Also represented on the panel was the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), who spoke about their highly productive coordination with the Coastal Commission in advancing housing production in the coastal zone.

Public Education Program

Whale Tail Grants

On November 6, 2025, Public Education staff led a webinar for prospective Whale Tail Grant applicants to walk through the application process. 237 people attended the webinar. You can find the webinar recording, presentation slides, and script as well as the grant guidelines and application materials, on the [Whale Tail Grants webpage](#). The application deadline for Whale Tail Grants is December 15, 2025, at 8pm California time.

California King Tides Project

King tides are the highest projected tides of the year, and this community science project asks the public to safely photograph them to help us better understand what’s vulnerable to coastal flooding now and what will be vulnerable to sea level rise in the near future. On December 2 at noon staff presented a [webinar](#) on king tides and the California King Tides Project,

including tips for how to take a good king tide photo. This season's king tides are December 4-6 and January 2-3. Learn how to participate, and find out about dozens of local community events being held around the king tides, on the [King Tides Project webpage](#).

Expired Marine Flare Collection Events

In November 2025, Alameda County, Del Norte County, West Contra Costa County, Marin County, Santa Cruz County, City of Santa Barbara, Ports of LA and San Diego, and City of Oceanside, partnered with the California Product Stewardship Council, CalRecycle, California State Parks and Coastal Commission's California Boating Clean and Green Program to collect expired marine flares and educate residents about marine flare management safety, including the advantages of reusable distress signals, to protect California communities and the local environment. With 70% of the sites reporting, 500 participants disposed of 8,300 expired marine flares (approx. 4,600 pounds) at these events.

Boating Education Virtual Meeting

On December 4, the California Boating Clean and Green Program lead an educational virtual meeting with topics including the Golden Mussel, marine mammal care and the Marine Mammal Center, the required California Boater Card, and the Dockwalker environmental education program.

Dockside Podcast

In our [latest podcast episode](#), we dive into the world's largest marine mammal hospital — The Marine Mammal Center! Learn about its mission, rescued species, common injuries, and how you can help report animals in distress. This podcast is produced by the California State Parks and the California Coastal Commission. This podcast is also available in all the following streaming platforms, including Spotify, Apple Podcast, iHeartRadio, Amazon Music, and Pandora.

California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest

The 26th annual [California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest](#) winners were announced in early November. Winning and honorably mentioned photos featured the beauty found along the California coast, and you can view them all on the contest [webpage](#). An exhibit comprised of previous winning photos is currently being hosted at [Sol Treasures gallery](#) in King City through the end of January.

"As Above, So Below," Drake's Beach, Point Reyes National Seashore, by Leslie Curchack



Leslie Curchack



"The High Ground," Striped shore crab at La Jolla Cove, by Ahmad Alomar

Environmental Justice Program

Coastal California Futures: Equity, Resilience, and the Permitting Process

On November 3rd and 4th, the Environmental Justice Unit and Statewide Planning Unit hosted two webinars to support the implementation of the Commission's updated Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance. Each session drew over 50 participants, including local governments and members of the public. The webinars focused on the Local Coastal Program and Coastal Development Permit process and how to incorporate the needs of communities historically excluded from decision-making and disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards when planning for sea level rise. As a reminder, the updated guidance is available on the Commission's website.

Environmental Justice Program 2024 Year in Review Published

We are pleased to share that the Commission's Environmental Justice Unit has published its 2024 Year in Review. The report highlights the ongoing integration of the principles of environmental justice throughout the Commission's work, ensuring that efforts to protect and enhance the coast are done equitably and with consideration for all communities. The full report is [now available](#) on the environmental justice webpage of our website.

50th Anniversary of the Coastal Act!

2026 will mark the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Coastal Act. We are working on a variety of events, actions and materials to celebrate this important milestone. These include a website overhaul; a new 50th Anniversary logo; a social media campaign highlighting public access wins, coastal community storytelling, and educational materials explaining the Coastal

Act and why it matters; a coastal public access highlight tour to coincide with the Commission's hearings; a CNRA speaker series with Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot; an event on California Ocean's Day, and hopefully, a 50th Anniversary beach celebration. We will share details on each of these items early next year. In the meantime, enjoy the holidays and get ready to celebrate in the new Year!

Staff Updates

Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship Awardee working in the CCC Enforcement Program.

The California Lawyers Foundation and the Environmental Law Section, sponsor a Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship Program. This very competitive program provides law students from diverse backgrounds with the chance to gain hands-on experience in governmental or public interest environmental law organizations across California. This fellowship program is designed to foster diversity in environmental law, enabling students from diverse backgrounds to break into the field and build lasting careers. Fellows join a community of peers and attorneys dedicated to creating an impact in environmental law in California.

We are proud to say that our most recent Headquarters Enforcement legal intern, Amina Khribeche, came to us from this program and has been contributing to the work of our enforcement program, with skill and an unflappable good nature. She is pursuing her J.D. at the University of San Francisco School of Law, where she expects to graduate in 2026.

Retirement of Vanessa Miller

Vanessa Miller is retiring from the Coastal Commission after an incredible 32 years of service to the Coastal Commission and to the state of California. Vanessa began her career at the Commission in 1993 as an office assistant. She worked her way up through several positions in the Executive Unit, including Office Technician, Executive Secretary I and II and ultimately into her current role as an Associate Governmental Program Analyst. In this position, Vanessa served for many years as the Commission's Hearing Manager, responsible for the smooth and efficient operation of the Commission's monthly hearings and in maintaining a complete public record of all hearing actions. Her unique people and organizational skills have been instrumental in the successful planning, management and documentation of countless Commission hearings. Importantly, Vanessa has been a beloved colleague of her fellow coasties. Known for her crafting, storytelling and incredible voice, she has been a consistent and steadying presence in the San Francisco office and a key member of the Commission road show. We will miss her dearly but wish her joy and contentment in her retirement.