
CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION



2024
YEAR IN
REVIEW

www.coastal.ca.gov



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Message from our Director



**Dr. Kate
Huckelbridge**

“ California’s coast is more than a natural and recreational treasure — it embodies the values that define our state. Ensuring that all people can access and enjoy a shoreline that is healthy and resilient. This reinforces our collective commitment to inclusion, connection, and shared stewardship. I’m proud to help champion these principles.

Over the past year, our agency has worked diligently to uphold these ideals — advancing equitable access, protecting coastal ecosystems, and supporting communities as they adapt to the impacts of climate change. The stories and accomplishments highlighted in this report are a testament to the passion and perseverance of our staff, partners, and the public we serve. Together, we are shaping a coast that will be inclusive and thriving for generations to come.

”

Executive Summary

Protecting the coast through access, resilience, and responsible development

The California Coastal Commission maintained focus in 2024 on its core mission of promoting public access and protecting sensitive habitats while also allowing for responsible new development in the Coastal Zone.

The agency cleared the way for **nearly 1,000 units of new housing**, many of which included value-added conditions to address flooding and erosion hazards, preserve threatened habitats, promote environmental justice and protect shoreline access. The agency also continued to support coastal accessibility by approving new local regulations for short-term vacation rentals and supporting lower-cost rooms in hotel projects.

The Coastal Commission also continued to build on its strong partnership with local governments, which approved nearly 80% of all **Coastal Development Permits (CDPs)** in 2024. The agency provided financial and technical assistance and planning grants to cities and counties while meeting regularly with local staff and officials to discuss projects, including how best to streamline local planning and regulation in coastal areas. Meanwhile, the agency's 12-voting Commissioners exercised their appellate authority sparingly, taking jurisdiction over just 1% of the nearly 1,500 locally approved coastal permits.

Government efficiency proved a top priority for the agency throughout the year. This was reflected in **faster processing times** for approving CDPs and amending **Local Coastal Programs (LCPs)**, achieving an average of just 38 days and 54 days respectively, as outlined in the agency's new Key Metrics Report.

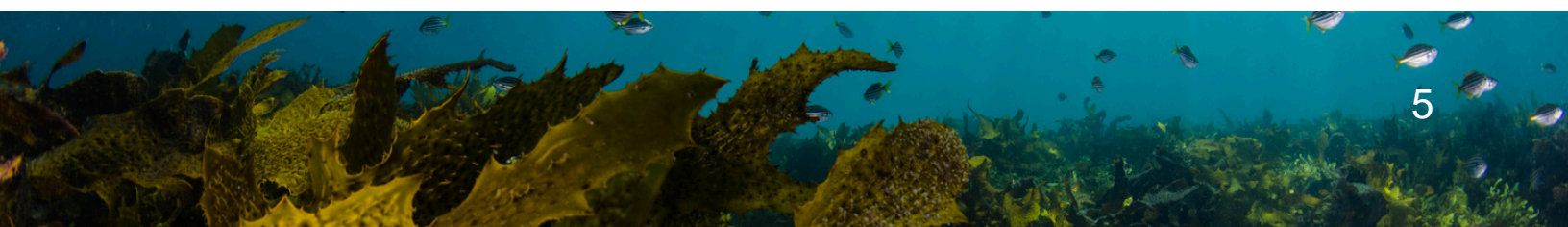
Bicycle and pedestrian upgrades were a major priority in 2024. The agency continued its successful partnership with the **California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)** ensuring that crucial road repairs and upgrades also included trails, sidewalks and bike paths. Major multi-modal projects were approved at the University of California at Santa Barbara and along sections of Highway 101 and Pacific Coast Highway.

The bedrock of the agency's core mission continued to be public access. Major accomplishments included securing upgraded hiking trails at the Estero Americano Coast Preserve in Sonoma County and removal of a locked gate on public property near the Rocky Point Restaurant in Big Sur. Enforcement efforts played a key role in helping to safeguard access at these and other locations, as well as events, such as the Huntington Beach Air Show and the Big Bang on the Bay in Long Beach.

Meanwhile, the Commission prioritized efforts to prepare local communities, particularly vulnerable, often lower-income neighborhoods for the long-term impacts of increased coastal erosion and flooding as sea-level rise accelerates. This included **providing millions of dollars in technical-assistance grants** to local governments to prepare for storm surges, crumbling infrastructure and other disasters. The agency also facilitated new sand replenishment projects and approved targeted armoring to protect critical public infrastructure.

The Commission adopted **new sea-level rise guidance** for local governments, incorporating the principles of Environmental Justice. The document outlines the need to plan for adaptation, including in some cases, the landward relocation of homes and other structures, not just to preserve the state's iconic beaches and public trust resources, but to protect public safety, particularly for marginalized communities with limited resources to withstand the impacts of climate change. As part of this ongoing effort, the agency hosted its Local Government Working Group in September, which included a constructive dialogue between Commissioners and public officials from many coastal jurisdictions.

The Coastal Commission also continued its commitment to public education and engagement in 2024. Most notably, the agency helped coordinate and promote the **40th anniversary of Coastal Cleanup Day**, the **largest annual volunteer event in the country**. In September, tens of thousands of Californians scoured more than 750 sites, removing nearly 200 tons of trash and recyclables before winter rains could wash the pollution out to sea.



2024 KEY METRICS

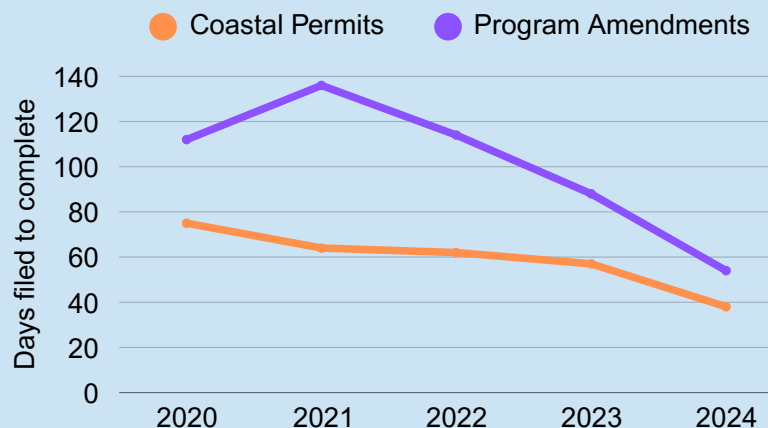
Coastal permits are approved by **local governments** and the **Commission** for development in the Coastal Zone. These permits ensure that projects meet the **Coastal Act**, which **protects public access** to beaches and other shorelines across California.

86% of Commission decisions in 2024 were expedited through **waivers, consent agendas** and other means.

Less than **4%** of **1,479** **LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISIONS** were appealed to the Coastal Commission in 2024. Only a **single project** was denied.

The Coastal Commission's processing was

2X FASTER
in **2024** than 2020.



In 2024, the Commission approved

549 PROJECTS
consistent with the **Coastal Act**.

Access the full [Key Metrics Report for 2024](#).

HOUSING



Clustering new housing projects in urban areas is a core principle of the Coastal Act, which prioritizes the preservation of rural, agricultural and open space areas. The Coastal Commission found several opportunities throughout 2024 to support projects in existing developed areas along the coast, including **housing for lower-income and working-class families**. In these cases, the agency sought to balance environmental and public access protections with the need to provide shelter amid skyrocketing housing costs and widespread gentrification of environmental justice communities.

Commissioners approved more than 150 new housing projects, totaling 290 units. These are in addition to more than 900 housing projects approved by local governments. The Commission also approved several LCP amendments necessary for the construction of another 630 units, of which 150 were designated affordable. It's important to remember that local governments approved nearly 80 percent of all coastal permits in 2024, exercising wide authority over zoning and other land-use regulations.

In 2024, the Commission did not deny any housing projects, consistent with its longstanding approach of supporting housing development that meets the requirements of the Coastal Act. As in past years, the agency prioritized working closely with applicants to reach mutually acceptable outcomes.

MAGNOLIA TANK FARM



Rendering

BELLA MAR



Rendering

Key Approvals & Commission Enhancements

Los Osos Sustainable Development Plan (San Luis Obispo County):

- After decades of a building moratorium, the Commission helped shepherd a sustainable development blueprint that balances environmental protection with housing needs. The plan promotes water recycling and groundwater recharge while safeguarding sensitive habitat, enabling the first new housing in the area in decades.

Magnolia Tank Farm (Huntington Beach):

- The Commission played a critical role in advancing climate adaptation planning by requiring key environmental studies and protections. This enabled approval of 250 housing units, including 50 affordable units, despite complex issues related to sea level rise and a nearby landfill.

Newport Beach Accessory Dwelling Unit Reforms:

- In one of the coast's most housing-constrained cities, the Commission approved LCP changes to expand **accessory dwelling units (ADUs)** development. By increasing height and size limits and removing restrictive design and ownership rules, the Commission helped unlock new pathways for affordable rentals.

San Diego Local Coastal Program Amendment & Zoning Changes:

- The Commission approved an LCP amendment for a 380-unit apartment complex with 100 affordable units, and approved zoning changes for 18 single-family homes and 36 ADUs. These approvals reflect the Commission's role in facilitating infill development in urban coastal areas.

Farmworker Housing in Bolinas

(Marin County):

- By upholding the local government's approval, the Commission enabled the construction of 27 RV pads with utility hookups to house farmworkers — supporting agricultural communities while maintaining coastal protections.



Rendering

VENICE DELL
HOUSING PROJECT

Santa Barbara County Local Coastal Program Update & Encinitas Housing:

- The Commission approved updates to streamline multifamily housing approvals under California’s density bonus law and cleared the way for 42 new homes in Encinitas, demonstrating its support for efficient, policy-aligned housing production.

“Local governments approved nearly 80 percent of all coastal permits in 2024”

Venice Dell Affordable Housing (Los Angeles):

- The Commission approved a 120-unit, 100% affordable housing project across from Venice Beach — a rare opportunity for affordable oceanfront living. It worked closely with the city and developer to preserve public coastal access, including the only small craft boat launch to the Venice canals.

To help the public better understand its role in coastal housing, the Commission launched a new [Affordable Housing Webpage](#). This resource includes case studies, planning tools, and a story map on California’s exclusionary housing history, supporting local governments and communities in promoting equitable housing along the coast. The webpage is also available [in Spanish](#).

Explore the
Affordable Housing
Storymap



VISITOR-SERVING ACCOMMODATIONS



Throughout the year, the Coastal Commission continued to support coastal visitation through the approval of new hotels and hostels, as well as thoughtful regulations for the permitting of **short-term rentals (STRs)**. Hotel projects can increase the public's access to the coast, especially when they include **lower-cost accommodations**. The agency held a robust discussion in July with commissioners and members of the public on the most effective ways to provide affordable lodging for working families.

Key Approvals & Commission Enhancements

Review the Commission's LCP Actions on Short-Term Rentals (through April 2024)



American Tin Cannery Hotel (Pacific Grove, Monterey County):

- The Commission worked closely with the developer to integrate affordability and equity into the project, securing 18 lower-cost rooms and 64 hostel-style beds. It also negotiated a first-of-its-kind commitment to provide free accommodations annually for underserved youth and community groups — broadening access to the coast for those who might not otherwise afford it.

Dana Point Harbor Revitalization (Orange County):

- The Commission's modifications to the plan ensured the preservation of existing lower-cost lodging, while enhancing public access and recreational opportunities. The agency's involvement helped balance economic revitalization with the public's right to enjoy the coast.



Rendering



Watch the July Briefing
on Lower-Cost
Accommodations



Cruz Hotel (Santa Cruz):

- The Commission added significant public value by requiring 20 lower-cost rooms, 150 free room-nights annually for underrepresented groups, and four off-site workforce housing units. It also secured a \$5 million in-lieu fee to fund up to 16 affordable cabins nearby and ensured the inclusion of free public amenities, making the project a model for inclusive coastal development.

Marin County LCP Amendments:

- The Commission helped craft a balanced STR policy that reflects the unique needs of communities — increasing STR caps where appropriate to support tourism, while reducing them in areas where housing pressures are most acute. This nuanced approach supports both public access and housing stability.

Sonoma County Coastal Zone Regulations:

- By approving the county's first STR regulations, the Commission helped establish a foundational framework for managing vacation rentals in the Coastal Zone. The new rules promote transparency and accountability through licensing and permitting, while preserving flexibility for future adjustments.

TRANSPORTATION

The Coastal Commission worked throughout the year to **increase multimodal transportation and expand coastal trails**, while also ensuring that highways and other critical transportation infrastructure are properly maintained and prepared for the increasing impacts of sea level rise. This included close coordination with Caltrans to respond to flooding and erosion driven by climate change.

Commission staff collaborated with Caltrans on a suite of long-range adaptation projects in vulnerable areas such as the Eureka-Arcata corridor, Gleason Beach, Bolinas Lagoon, Pescadero, Surfers Beach, Scott's Creek, and Highway 1 from Oxnard to Santa Monica. This state partnership also created new opportunities to expand active transportation options — such as walking and biking — while **promoting affordable recreation and public access** along the coast.

Key Approvals & Commission Enhancements

Pacific Coast Bicycle Corridor (Orange County):

- The Commission approved significant upgrades to a 10-mile bicycle lane along state Route 1 between Huntington Beach and Seal Beach. This project enhances safe, low-impact coastal access for cyclists and pedestrians in a high-use corridor.

Highway 101 Upgrades (Del Norte County):

- The Commission approved repairs and ADA-compliant crosswalks at a popular tourist destination, ensuring safe and inclusive access while maintaining the scenic and environmental integrity of the North Coast.

UC Santa Barbara Bicycle Infrastructure:

- The Commission fast-tracked the expansion of bicycle facilities on campus, adding 294 new bike parking spaces and upgrading a major bike path. These improvements support sustainable transportation for thousands of students and staff near the coast.



Looking Down on Highway 1
Carol Murdock

Monterey-Salinas Transit SURF! Busway Project

- The Commission approved a 4.5-mile express bus lane on an abandoned rail line in Monterey County, expanding affordable coastal access for inland communities. The project also includes a new transit stop and 60 acres of dune restoration at Fort Ord Dunes State Park — demonstrating how mobility and habitat restoration can go hand in hand.

Highway 101 Multimodal Improvements (Pismo Beach):

- The Commission approved a project to stabilize and widen the highway, while securing a suite of multimodal features including a mobility hub, transit stops, bike parking, and EV charging stations — advancing climate-friendly coastal transportation.

Bridge Replacements with Active Transportation Enhancements

- The Commission approved upgrades to several key bridges — Lagunitas Bridge (Point Reyes Station), Camino Del Mar Bridge (Del Mar), and Santa Monica Pier Bridge — that improved structural safety while adding pedestrian and bicycle lanes, expanding non-vehicular access to the coast.



Bixby Bridge Sunset | Big Sur | Marcin Zajac | Honorable Mention
2024 California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest

PUBLIC ACCESS



Access to California's shoreline is one of the Coastal Act's core policies. This can take many forms, from building new trails and bike paths to providing scenic overlooks and restrooms to the creation of new programs that connect underserved communities with the coast and ocean. 2024 was a banner year for expanding opportunities for the public to experience the coast through CDP conditions, enforcement actions, and long-range planning.

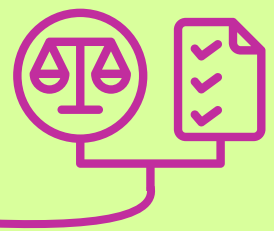
In June, the Commission celebrated the groundbreaking for the 7.5-mile North Coast Rail Trail Project in Santa Cruz County. Part of the **California Coastal Trail (CCT)** this is one of five bicycle and pedestrian paths making up the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network and will stretch from Wilder Ranch State Park to the town of Davenport. The Commission has been actively engaged in the planning and expansion of public access around Monterey Bay since it successfully intervened in early efforts to convert the land underneath the rails to high-rise hotels and luxury condominiums in 1979.

The CCT received another boost when the Commission approved the installation of new bicycle lanes along a 7.3-mile stretch of Highway 1 between the city of Half Moon Bay and the Moss Beach in San Mateo County in November.

The Commission also approved in November improvements for hikers and kayakers at the Estero Americano Coast Preserve in Sonoma County. The plan includes upgrades and additions to about 5 miles of existing trails and the installation of a kayak haul-out and a permanent public restroom. The Wildlands Conservancy nonprofit purchased the 547-acre property in 2016 to promote conservation and public access while still maintaining its historic agricultural uses.



Estero Americano



ENFORCEMENT

Even the strongest environmental laws are only effective when backed by robust enforcement. Since gaining the authority in 2021 to impose administrative penalties for all types of Coastal Act violations, the Commission has significantly accelerated the pace of resolution. In 2024, the Commission fully resolved 19 enforcement cases, many involving complex restoration orders and financial penalties. At the same time, 155 new cases were reported, underscoring the ongoing need for additional enforcement resources.

Key Enforcement Actions and Commission Enhancements

Rocky Point Restaurant (Big Sur):

- The Commission issued a consent restoration order requiring the property owner to expand public access and visitor-serving amenities at one of California’s most iconic coastal destinations. The Commission’s enforcement team uncovered illegal actions by prior owners — including a locked gate, “no trespassing” signs, and habitat destruction — and worked with the new owner to secure free parking, hiking trails, ADA-compliant restrooms, EV chargers, and scenic viewing areas.

Huntington Beach Air Show (Orange County):

- In response to concerns about restricted public access during the high-profile event, Commission staff engaged in months of dialogue with the city and event organizers. The resulting agreement preserved the event while securing free beach access corridors, 100 free tickets for underserved youth, and flight restrictions to protect sensitive wildlife at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve.



Huntington
Beach Air
Show
Pacific
Airshow

Dockweiler State Beach Dune Restoration (Playa del Rey, LA County):

- The Commission approved a consent restoration order requiring a property owner to restore six acres of dune habitat after illegal bulldozing in 2019. The Commission's swift cease-and-desist order halted further damage, and staff negotiated a plan that included habitat restoration and new public access signage.

Sable Offshore Pipeline Violation (Santa Barbara County):

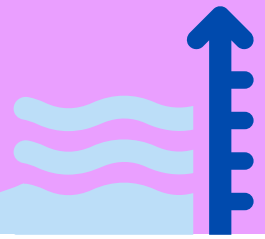
- The Commission issued a cease-and-desist order in October to Sable Offshore LLC after the company began excavation and grading along a corroded oil pipeline without a Coastal Development Permit. The work spanned public and private lands near the site of the 2015 Refugio Beach Oil Spill, which impacted over 100 miles of coastline, closed two popular parks, killed marine wildlife, and wreaked havoc on the local economy.
- This enforcement action highlights the Commission's role in protecting coastal resources from legacy oil infrastructure by requiring that environmental safeguards are in place before work begins.

Child's Play
Seaside, Cardiff State Beach |
Third Place Winner

2024 California Ocean & Coastal
Amateur Photography Contest



SEA LEVEL RISE



California continued to grapple with the impacts of climate change in 2024, from devastating fires to record-breaking temperatures to eroding beaches and bluffs. The stakes are extremely high as the state forges a path into an uncertain future.

One of the most pressing concerns for the Coastal Commission has been how best to preserve precious beaches, wetlands, and other shoreline ecosystems in an era of accelerating sea level rise.

Slowing down the impacts of beach erosion by placing sand on beaches is one key strategy. The agency approved a 25-year extension of a sand replenishment program in Solana Beach. At the same meeting the Commission also approved a 10-year sand replenishment plan in San Clemente and concurred with a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project to dredge up to 8.25 million cubic yards of sand from Channel Island Harbor in Ventura County and place it on Silver Strand Beach and Hueneme Beach.

70% of California's beaches could be lost by 2100 due to storms and rising ocean levels.

Source: The U.S. Geological Survey estimates

Preserving the state's sandy shorelines will require action on several fronts, from restoring dune systems, estuaries, and watersheds to phased relocation of structures threatened by coastal erosion. The agency has also supported the strategic placement of seawalls and other hard structures to temporarily protect critical public infrastructure while planning for its long-term future.

The Commission continues to acknowledge the importance of targeted coastal armoring, especially for protecting public infrastructure. This includes the seawall approved to protect San Francisco's coastal wastewater treatment infrastructure along the shoreline. The Commission also approved the use of a temporary rock revetment to protect campsites at San Elijo State Beach Campground.

However, seawalls can exacerbate erosion and result in significant beach loss. A state appeals court affirmed in September the Commission's authority to restrict armoring for structures built after the Coastal Act was passed in 1976. The ruling in the case brought by the Pacific Legal Foundation on behalf of the Casa Mira Homeowners Association settled a long-standing debate about the Commission's authority to approve or deny seawalls.

The Commission continued throughout 2024 to encourage local governments to plan for sea level rise adaptation at a broader scale. Staff presented new statewide guidance for sea level rise adaptation to facilitate enhanced coastal planning pursuant to SB 272 (Laird, 2023). The guidance incorporates the Ocean Protection Council's most recent projections for rising seas in California and provides clarity for local governments to translate that data into local adaptation policies.

The Commission subsequently hosted a workshop in Monterey to discuss these and related issues. Elected officials from Humboldt, Pacifica, San Luis Obispo, Ventura, Santa Barbara and Imperial Beach gathered to share their insights and discuss various planning approaches for addressing escalating coastal erosion and flooding.

Such discussions are also taking place at major universities. For example, the University of California at Santa Barbara incorporated sea-level rise adaptation into its long-range development plan for the campus. The plan, spearheaded by Charles Lester, a former Coastal Commission executive director and now director of UCSB's Ocean and Coastal Policy Center, was approved by commissioners.

The state Legislature supported responsible development of offshore wind in California by creating 11 new planning and scientific positions at the Commission to assist with interagency coordination, as well as planning and project review activities associated with offshore wind and associated port development. The Commission also helped advance efficient review of offshore lease development, approving a request by Atlas Wind to conduct seafloor surveys for potential future electric cable routes in state waters off San Luis Obispo County.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



2024 marked the 5-year anniversary of the adoption of the Coastal Commission **Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy**. These EJ policies were included in the agency's new **Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance**, which helps guide decisions on CDPs and LCPs. The Commission also published **Resources for Addressing Environmental Justice through LCPs**, a document to help local governments integrate EJ in their planning, offering strategies to mitigate development impacts and promote fair coastal access.

In 2024, the Commission increased its number of state-certified bilingual employees from two to four, providing translation services for publications, public comment and other types of engagement during its monthly public hearings and other meetings.

The Commission also launched a **Coastal California Environmental Justice Mapping Tool**, which combines environmental and demographic data to help engage impacted communities and screen project proposals for potential impacts to EJ communities.

Environmental Justice means the “**fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins, with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.**”

California Coastal Act Section 30107.3

The mapping tool was developed to assist applicants, analysts, and the public with the implementation of the Commission's Environmental Justice Policy.



The Commission approved changes to Sonoma County's coastal land-use plan that included a strong emphasis on incorporating EJ policies, such as considering how parking fees impact public coastal access for low-income residents.

The agency supported put its full weight behind efforts to address the ongoing Tijuana River sewage crisis impacting working class communities in southern San Diego County. Commission staff held monthly public briefings on the issue and provided a full presentation on the water quality and ecological impacts of the pollution flowing over the border from Mexico into the United States.

The Commission sent letters to President Joe Biden and the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission urging the declaration of a state of emergency and funding to improve wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure on both sides of the border. The following month, President Biden signed a federal funding bill allocating \$250 million to repair and expand an international wastewater treatment plant in San Diego, which services Tijuana.



Tolowa
Dunes
Stewards

Whale Tail
Grant
recipient

TRIBAL CONSULTATION



The Coastal Commission approved the agency's Tribal Consultation Policy in 2018, outlining procedures for meaningful engagement between staff and tribes. The policy recognizes that the entirety of the Coastal Zone was originally indigenous territory and designates liaisons in each district office. All planning and permitting decisions at the Commission require consideration of tribal cultural resources, including sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places and objects with cultural value to a native tribe in California.

The Coastal Commission found that an appeal of Humboldt County's approval of a demolition project in the community of Bayside raised a substantial issue with the Coastal Act, specifically related to consultation with Wiyot Tribes.

The Commission found that the approved development didn't provide reasonable mitigation measures for impacts to archaeological and tribal cultural resources.

The Commission also approved the installation of Middle-Mile Broadband Network infrastructure along highways in Del Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino counties.

Not only did the project include robust provisions for tribal consultation and archaeological monitoring, but it's expected to provide fast and reliable internet to many tribal communities.

The Commission approved an amended project in Eureka for phased development of the Tuluwat Village World Renewal Ceremony, building new structures using traditional methods and materials. The project called for constructing two redwood plank dress houses, a temporary ceremonial dance wall, informational signage, temporary-use floating dock, pedestrian paths, vault toilet and dining pavilion.

“

Tuluwat Village on the northeastern end of the island hosted a World Renewal Ceremony to ask the creator's blessings for all people and the land for the coming year with tribal members gathering from the other Wiyot villages that lined Humboldt Bay.

Staff Report Permit No. 1-08-017-A2

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PUBLIC EDUCATION



The Coastal Commission continued its commitment to public education through many different events and programs in 2024. These included California Coastal Cleanup Day, California King Tides Project, Adopt-A-Beach®, Kids' Ocean Day, Dockside Podcast and the annual Coastal Art & Poetry Contest. The agency also helped facilitate educational opportunities through its annual allocation of Whale Tail® Grants, which prioritize communities facing barriers to coastal access and experiential learning.

Coastal Cleanup Day turned 40 on September 21, reaching a major milestone as the largest volunteer event in the country. To mark the event, the Commission's mapping unit produced an online storymap honoring the public stewardship of the state's coastal and inland waterways. Coastal Cleanup Day 2024 achieved its largest geographic reach to date, with 696 cleanup sites across 57 of California's 58 counties. All told, about 47,000 volunteers removed nearly 200 tons of trash and recyclables from coastal and inland shorelines.



The competitive **Whale Tail Grant program** recorded one of its most successful years since its inception in 1998, **awarding 60 grants impacting more than a million participants**. The grant program, which is the state's oldest outdoor access and education program, prioritizes applicants who serve communities facing barriers to coastal access, education and stewardship opportunities.



Click on the image to see more aerial artwork!

Kids' Ocean Day was held in May at beaches around the state. This popular annual event brings children to the beach, often for the first time, to spend a day learning about the ocean, playing in the sand and participating in beach cleanups. While at the beach, they create aerial artwork which can be viewed at oceanday.net.

The agency's Boating Clean and Green Program, a partnership with California State Parks, continued to educate boaters about safe and sustainable boating practices and provide training and technical assistance to increase environmental services for boaters. The program serves between 8,000 and 10,000 boaters and water enthusiasts annually.

A new cohort of environmental educators, known as Dockwalkers, were trained in 2024 to educate boaters at marinas, launch ramps and events. Throughout the year, **Commission staff trained 219 Dockwalkers** through training courses and refresher classes. Partners and staff distributed thousands of boater kits that provide boaters with know-how, tools and products to reduce environmental impact associated with boating.

The Official WHALE TAIL® License Plate

Buy a plate. Protect the beach. Roll with the Whale Pod.

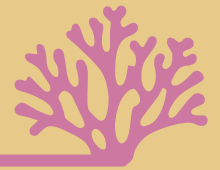


GET YOURS NOW

Why a WHALE TAIL® plate?

Your DMV WHALE TAIL® Plate fees protect and restore the California coast and ocean. Your money goes towards things like curbing ocean plastic pollution, restoring habitat for animals, supporting beach access, and teaching kids to become coastal stewards. The WHALE TAIL® Plate funds non-profit groups doing important education and conservation work, provides free resources for educators, and empowers volunteers to take action to protect the coast.

HABITAT



Protecting sensitive coastal habitats like dunes, wetlands, estuaries and woodlands is one of the Coastal Act's most important mandates. **California has lost 95% of its historic coastal wetlands and an even higher percentage of coastal dunes**, making those habitats that remain some of the most rare and valuable in the state. The Commission protects these areas through permit conditions, land-use provisions, enforcement orders, easements and deed restrictions. The goal of these actions is to build a resilient web of interconnected habitats that can thrive for generations.

Key Approvals & Commission Enhancements

Marine Debris Removal (National Marine Sanctuaries):

- The Commission provided streamlined approval for a project led by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation to remove large marine debris, including a sunken aircraft and abandoned fishing vessel. The effort supports habitat recovery in federally protected waters and demonstrates the Commission's commitment to collaborative marine stewardship.



Montaña de Oro State Park

Elk Detection and Wildlife Safety System (Humboldt County):

- The Commission approved a first-of-its-kind wildlife protection system along Highway 101, including elk detection sensors, solar-powered warning signs, and speed monitoring equipment. The project, developed in partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Cal Poly Humboldt, aims to reduce vehicle collisions and protect wildlife corridors.

Ellwood Mesa Habitat and Access Improvements (Santa Barbara County):

- The Commission approved a 60-acre restoration and public access plan for the Ellwood Mesa Open Space and Sperling Preserve. The project includes monarch butterfly habitat restoration, trail upgrades, and a new footbridge — balancing ecological restoration with public enjoyment.

Butterflies Galore
Goleta | Julie Freedman
Honorable Mention

2024 California Ocean &
Coastal Amateur
Photography Contest



San Joaquin Marsh Reserve Enhancement (Orange County):

- The Commission approved a proposal by UC Irvine to improve wetland habitat within the San Joaquin Marsh Reserve, a 200-acre wetland complex. The project enhances biodiversity and supports long-term ecological research and education.

Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (Central Coast):

- The Commission voted to support the creation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, the first Tribal-initiated sanctuary in the U.S. Spanning 7,600 square miles, the sanctuary will protect Chumash cultural and natural resources from offshore drilling and seabed mining.

Eel River Estuary Restoration (Humboldt County):

- The Commission approved the restoration of marsh and wetland habitat in the Eel River Estuary, including the removal of outdated water control infrastructure. The project enhances habitat connectivity and climate resilience in one of California's most important estuarine systems.

Marine Debris Mitigation Funding (Statewide):

- As part of a permit for a new trans-oceanic fiber optic cable, the Commission required a \$230,000 mitigation payment to fund the removal of lost fishing gear and marine debris. These funds support ongoing efforts to protect rocky reef habitats and promote responsible ocean use.



The Coastal Commission continued in 2024 to provide publicly accessible maps and other visual tools to advance the agency's mission and further the work of federal, state, and local partners. The mapping unit's cartographers expanded their use of online tools, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) while also enhancing staff's ability to create and share their own custom web maps and applications, supporting the creation of story maps and other presentations.



Sea World | Sophia Wang
Grade 4-6 Winner | [2024 K-12 Coastal Art Contest](#)

One of the most fundamental questions regarding the Coastal Act is, **'Where is the Coastal Zone boundary?'** The public can now answer that query directly using the new [Coastal Commission GIS Open Data Portal](#). Viewers can zoom in to definitively determine whether properties and projects are in the Coastal Zone. Other similar interactive tools on the agency's website include maps for the [California Coastal Trail](#) and one for [coastal public access points](#).

The mapping unit also developed and [published an interactive map](#) as part of the agency's implementation of new housing laws in areas vulnerable to sea level rise. The online map allows the public to identify areas in the Coastal Zone that meet the geographic eligibility requirements for SB 9 (Atkins, 2021), which allows for ministerial consideration of lot splits and development of up to two residential units in single-family residences.

The Commission certified the post-certification LCP map for the city of Oxnard, a major milestone for the city. These maps show the local government's coastal permit jurisdiction, as well as areas where projects are geographically appealable to the Commission and where the Commission retains direct coastal permit jurisdiction. Similar mapping is underway for Sonoma County as well as the cities of Del Mar, San Diego, Pacifica, San Francisco and Morro Bay.

RETIREMENTS

In 2024, the Coastal Commission bid a bittersweet farewell to six invaluable colleagues who have dedicated their careers to public service and coastal protection in a wide variety of ways. Their institutional knowledge and professional experience cannot be replaced, but they have done a remarkable job preparing the next generation of Commission staff for success. We thank them for their service, wish them all the best and will miss them dearly.

Tamara Doan joined the agency as an intern in 2006, taking on a full-time role the following year as a water quality analyst. In the years leading up to her retirement, Doan helped run the transportation program.

Darryl Rance left the agency after 31 years of service, most notably as the lead technical specialist for the mapping unit. He was the agency's foremost expert on jurisdictional and boundary determination.

Nuria Lima joined the Commission in 2021, working as a personnel specialist in the human resources department.

Greg Benoit dedicated nearly three decades to the agency, starting as an intern and later joining the mapping unit. He was known for fostering an environment of collaboration and trust.

Chris Parry retired after nearly four decades of state service, 35 of which were with the Commission. For the last 28 years, she managed the agency's public education team.

Margaret Chew dedicated 40 years to the Commission. As the agency's account manager, Chew was known for her hard work, integrity and staff mentoring.

Their contributions will be forever felt by all who visit California's magical shoreline.



*Who's Looking at Who | Catalina Island | Robin Riggs | Honorable Mention
2024 California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest*