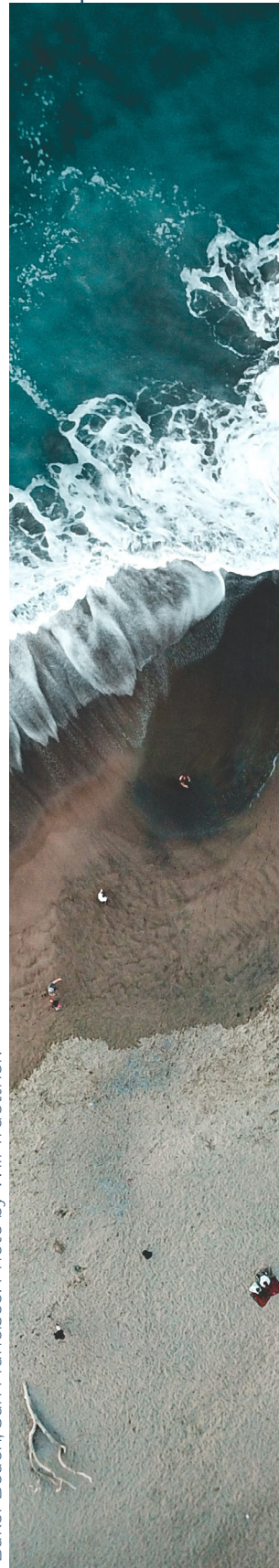




YEAR IN REVIEW 2021

California Coastal Commission

Table of Contents



3	Welcome
5	Sea Level: Up, Up, Up She Rises
8	Public Access
10	Environmental Justice
12	Advances in Local Coastal Planning
17	Healthy Habitats for Coastal Species
21	Public Education: Inspiring Stewardship through Learning
24	Enforcement Highlights
28	By the Numbers: Annual Workload Roundup
29	Mapping and GIS
30	Aquaculture
31	Transportation Program
34	Partnerships: Stronger Together
40	Behind the Scenes: HR and Business Services
41	Happy Trails, and Auld Lang Syne
42	Where We Go From Here
44	In Memoria



“Everybody had a hard year.
Everybody had a good time.”

~ John Lennon

Newport Beach. Photo by Yanapi Senaud.

The 21st year of the 21st Century was extraordinary in the extreme, ushered in by a violent insurrection in our Nation’s Capital, and concluding with the new Omicron variant reminding us all that pandemic-life will be continuing into the New Year, regardless of vaccine status. In California, the 2021 culture was crystallized in the form of a spectacularly failed bid to recall Governor Newsom; the Commission saw an unprecedented number of bills seeking to eliminate its authority over specified types of projects; and an October oil spill off of Newport Beach slicked the waters and fouled the beaches from Ventura to San Diego.

And yet, the new Biden administration appointed the most diverse Cabinet in American history and passed an infrastructure bill that addresses long-deferred priorities from coast to coast. Governor Newsom defeated the recall with a resounding margin; California found itself awash in a record-breaking, \$75 billion surplus; and the Coastal Commission experienced one of the most successful legislative, fiscal and policy years in its history, with an historic budget augmentation, two of the most significant Coastal Act amendments in decades, and several bold actions to resolve long-standing, pernicious coastal controversies.

The Commission continued to meet remotely, with May marking the one-year anniversary of 100% remote public Zoom hearings, but District offices opened partially for a limited return to the workplace. The option for hybrid home/office work schedules allowed staff to reconnect with long-time colleagues, and welcome new ones who had been hired and on-boarded entirely online.

But what a difference a year makes.

One year prior, economic forecasts for the state ranged from dismal to devastating, leading to pay cuts, staff reassignments, and other cutbacks for public agencies. The Commission's chronic staffing shortages were compounded by a requirement for all state workers to take two days of unpaid leave each month, reducing both salaries and overall 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, and redistribution of their workload to their remaining colleagues.

Yet as spring turned toward summer in 2021, the Legislature found itself grappling with the happy problem of how to allocate an unexpected \$75 billion budget surplus. A SWAT Team of Commissioners and staff swung into action to make sure the Coastal Commission was not overlooked. When all the wrangling was done, the Commission netted an additional \$31 million for LCP planning grants, and \$10 million for the Whale Tail Grant program, to be spent over five years. In addition, Congress approved a much-needed increase in federal Coastal Zone Management funding, which netted the Commission \$3,034,000 for the 2021-22 fiscal year--an additional \$68,500 increase over the prior year. This funding will be essential in addressing several critical projects included in the Commission's latest 309 Assessment & Strategy, approved by NOAA in February for guiding the next five years of federal investment. And in July, the entire agency celebrated the return of the seven staff heroes who volunteered as contract tracers.

Amid the record breaking heatwaves, wildfires and king tides and the challenge of remote governance, (or perhaps because of it), the Commission's work felt more important than ever. In a world awash in misinformation and government gridlock, the Commission's monthly meetings consistently stood out as oases of objective, science-based analysis and respectful civic discourse, informing progressive policy decisions reached through constructive dialogue. In December, the Commission's "peaceful transition of power" was a unanimous and uneventful hand-off from 3-term Chair Steve Padilla to Vice Chair Donne Brownsey with congratulations all around, and reminder that this is what democracy looks like.

Left: Former Coastal Commission Chair, Steve Padilla, who held the position for 3-terms. Right: New Chair, and former Vice Chair, Donne Brownsey.



Sea Level: Up, Up, Up She Rises



Malibu, Los Angeles County. Photo credit Tyler Schiffman.

In addition to the significant, \$31 million budget augmentation that will accelerate sea level rise planning grants for local communities over the next five years, the Legislature passed SB 1 (Atkins), a significant Coastal Act amendment addressing both planning and funding for sea level rise planning. For the first time, the Coastal Act now identifies resiliency planning for sea level rise as a statewide priority, and gives the Commission the mandate to avoid, minimize and mitigate its impacts in permit and planning decisions. The bill also authorizes the annual expenditure of up to \$100 million per year in grants to local and regional governments to update land use plans and implement projects.

The Commission took several important steps toward preparing the California Coast for increased resiliency in a changing climate throughout the year.

The most significant of these was the publication of an important resource for coastal management planners, practitioners and decision-makers, titled “[Critical Infrastructure at Risk: Sea Level Rise Planning Guidance for California’s Coastal Zone](#)”. Adopted by the Commission in November, the advisory document provides local governments and the public with information and recommendations for how cities and counties can address sea level rise issues related to transportation and water infrastructure in their Local Coastal Programs (LCPs). It includes consideration of nature-based solutions, environmental justice and phased adaptation.

The Guidance was a multi-year planning effort funded by NOAA, and was developed in close coordination with Caltrans and State and Regional Water Resources Control Boards, as well as the Ocean Protection Council, State Lands Commission, State Parks, Coastal Conservancy, Office of Planning and Research, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission and Department of Insurance and numerous local government partners.

In December, the Commission adopted a suite of [Sea Level Rise Adaptation and LCP Update Documents](#) developed by the Local Government Working Group, which is comprised of representatives from the California State Association of Counties, the League of California Cities, and Commissioners Groom and Wilson. Over the past two years, this group has worked together to explore challenges and develop solutions to better address the shared local and state responsibility of sea level rise planning. This work has recently resulted in several work products including a framework for a phased approach to LCP updates; a call for regional approaches; an elevation and concurrence process; and a reference document of resources for SLR planning. These documents will provide more clarity and certainty for all parties involved in the continuing effort to stay ahead of the coastal resilience planning curve.

Notable among the 2021 Sea Level Rise Planning Grant successes were the comprehensive Land Use Plan (LUP) updates for the cities of Morro Bay and Half Moon Bay. Due to the extensive, up-front collaboration with city planners and Coastal Commission staff, both were approved as submitted with no suggested modifications, which is rare for an LUP Update. Half Moon Bay's LUP includes forward-thinking policies that focus on non-armoring alternatives that also protect and improve sensitive habitat, and provides updated metrics regarding infrastructure capacities, stronger policies for protecting public viewsheds, and a new Environmental Justice policy. Morro Bay's LUP now includes model hazard policies that explicitly define the date of "existing structure" as built before 1/1/77, and not redeveloped since, further clarifying the definition of the much-debated term.

Rockaway Beach, Pacifica, San Mateo County. Photo by Alan Grinberg.



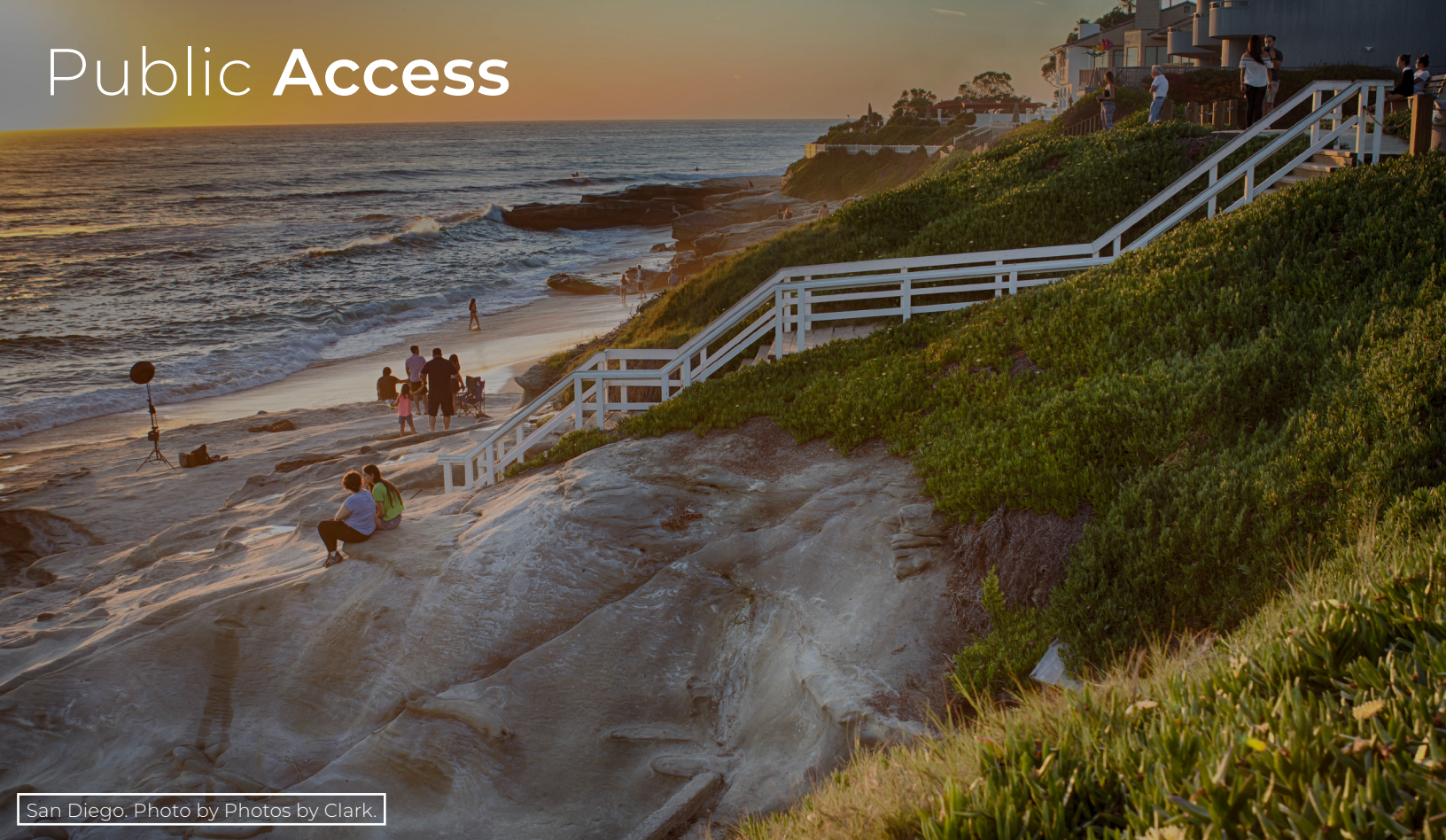


Left: Sweet Springs Nature Preserve, Los Osos, San Luis Obispo County. Right: Morro Bay State Park Marina, San Luis Obispo County. Photos from the California King Tides Project.

In September the Commission held a fascinating informational briefing on the relationship between sea level rise and rising groundwater tables. A team of scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey and University of Arkansas have developed a new statewide dataset illustrating how sea level rise can also cause coastal groundwater to rise. This dataset is now hosted on Point Blue Conservation Science’s “Our Coast Our Future” website alongside existing USGS data on sea level rise flooding, erosion, and shoreline change. Rising groundwater is a less-widely acknowledged but significant factor in resiliency planning as it can’t be constrained by shoreline armoring and has the potential to flood communities from below, compromising foundations, reducing storm water capacity, and damaging buried infrastructure. Groundwater hazards have long been included in the analysis of coastal hazards in Commission regulatory items, but these analyses – particularly with regard to how future groundwater tables could be impacted by sea level rise – have often been limited by data availability. This informational briefing demonstrated how this new statewide dataset was developed and how it can be used in hazard analyses moving forward.

There is no better way to visualize the effects of sea level rise than experiencing a King Tide in a familiar coastal area.

King Tides are the highest high tides of the year, about a foot or two higher than average high tides. With that same increase in sea levels anticipated within the next few decades, the flooded roads and trails, submerged beaches and parks, and inundated infrastructure provide snapshots of our future. To help the public understand our coast’s vulnerability to climate change, the Commission organizes the annual [California King Tides Project](#), which invites people to take and share photos of these extreme high tides each winter during the highest tides of the year. The Coastal Commission engaged partner organizations and members of the public in this community science project in January and December of 2021, and the first three days of January 2022. Partner organizations held 26 local community events, and individuals from Crescent City to Imperial Beach uploaded 1,401 photos that were [mapped](#) for ease of access for planners, scientists, media, students, and other members of the public. At least 40 unique articles, television and radio segments about the King Tides Project were published throughout California during December 2021, reflecting the high level of interest in this natural phenomenon and growing concern for what it reveals.



After the painful decision last summer to the [authorize temporary beach closures](#) for local governments and other coastal land managers in order to temporarily limit or prohibit beach access to slow the spread of the Corona virus, it was rewarding to track the subsequent reopening of those beaches as vaccination rates crept upwards and mask mandates did their intended job. Under normal circumstances, closing public beaches and visitor-serving facilities would be antithetical to the Commission's core mandate for public access. But to protect public health and safety, the Commission agreed to allow temporary access restrictions, as long as they were limited to the minimum extent necessary, and consistent with public health department guidelines.

Fortunately, all beaches have now been reopened, as well as most campgrounds, visitor centers, and similar facilities.

In May, the Coastal Commission and Coastal Conservancy released a digital map that for the first time shows all the existing sections of the [California Coastal Trail](#), a project three years in the making and one that will be critical to completing the rest of the trail. The map is available for free download for members of the public to use for finding public access points, or zoom into trail alignments to see details such as parking, pathways and stairs. Planners can see where it may be possible to address gaps in the trail via permitting and planning opportunities. The online map allows users to view the name and length of each trail segment, city in which it's located and the trail steward for each section. Viewers can also determine which segments are multi-use, pedestrian, or bike-only, and where there are significant connecting trails. The project was completed in collaboration with Caltrans, State Parks and many and local agencies.

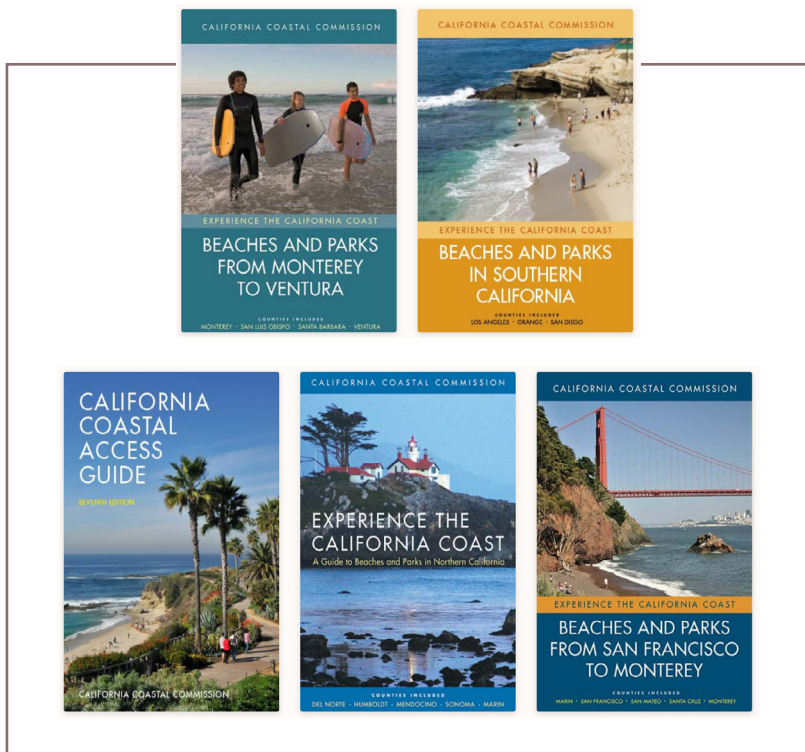
In July, the Commission was honored to learn that a documentary film supported by the Whale Tail® License Plate Grant program won an LA-Area Emmy Award. The film, “[California Coast: Within Sight, Scent and Sound of the Ocean](#)” was the vision of Rigler Creative, and is the culmination of a multi-year project to reveal the stories behind California’s famously public coastline. It covers past history and current challenges as it weaves together footage and stories from the [California Coast video series](#) and the [California Coastal Trail video series](#).

In August, a nonprofit group, The Internet Archive, completed a project to scan all five of the Commission’s [Coastal Access Guide](#) books which are now posted online. In addition to being available for free, an added benefit of the digital version is that the Guides are more accessible to the visually impaired. Plans for a Spanish version are underway.

In November, the Commission hosted a day-long workshop to hear public input and provide feedback on the highly-anticipated public review draft of the [Hollister Ranch Coastal Access Program](#). Mandated by the passage of [AB 1680](#) in 2019, the draft program, when completed and adopted, will establish a framework for public access

to and along the fabled Hollister Ranch coastline in Santa Barbara County. Working with the State Coastal Conservancy, State Parks, and the State Lands Commission, the interagency team spent the first half of the year completing the public outreach phase of the process. After hearing from stakeholders and hundreds of interested members of the general public, the team integrated the feedback into a suggested program that will provide accessible and equitable access opportunities, while protecting natural and cultural resources and respecting private property. After a 7-hour public discussion, the team is now tasked with revising the document in response, after which the Commission will be holding a public hearing to consider final approval.

The final access accomplishment for the year occurred in December, with a conditional concurrence on the Federal Highway Administration’s North Santa Cruz County Rail Trail project. This 7.5 mile addition to the 32-mile rail “spine” of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail will extend the trail from Wilder Ranch State Park to the south, all the way to the town of Davenport. When completed, the trail will provide for a contiguous 50 miles of spectacular California Coastal Trail that spans the length of Santa Cruz County, as well as enhanced parking areas to facilitate access. The trail will be constructed within an existing railroad right-of-way, which may be revived in the future for light recreational or commuter rail use. The Commission’s concerns about a small segment of the trail that will require armoring was met by the applicant’s agreement to enter into a memorandum of agreement with the Coastal Commission to provide final and as-built plans, monitoring, alternatives reassessment, and triennial reports to the entire Commission on the status of the shoreline protective device. Providing maximum public access in an age of sea level rise is forcing difficult conversations about how to reconcile the necessity for managed retreat with the demand for important public recreational amenities.



Environmental Justice



Golden Dream. Art by Jennifer Kim, Grade 11

Throughout the year, the Commission continued to advance its commitment to coastal justice through the application of its Environmental Justice Policy to permits, appeals and LCPs. Working with Commission staff and stakeholders, the cities of Morro Bay and Half Moon Bay amended their LUPs to include their first-ever EJ policies. Environmental justice considerations were also included in the Coastal Act findings to support an LCP amendment for the County of San Mateo to allow for a 100% affordable housing project while balancing the protection of coastal resources. Environmental justice findings in staff reports are becoming more common, and staff recommendations are increasingly including provisions to address structural inequities. Staff reports for the [Belmont Pool and Aquatic Center](#) in Long Beach, the amended the operating permit for [Oceano Dunes Vehicle Recreation Area](#), the [Rancho Palos Verde automated license plate reader](#), the [Campland consent order](#) and the Critical Infrastructure Guidance all included extensive EJ findings. In the case of the Belmont Pool, the Commission added a special condition requiring the City to conduct extensive outreach and engagement with Long Beach's underserved communities and submit a revised equitable public access plan. In Oceano, the requirement to phase out OHV use on the dunes will provide significant air quality, traffic, and beach access improvements to the small rural town of Oceano that has been bearing those disproportionate burdens for decades. The Campland resolution included \$50,000 worth of free access to the resort for underserved communities. And the Commission found Substantial Issue on the Palos Verdes appeal, based on the chilling effect that license plate readers impose on public access, particularly for people of color.

An appeal of a proposed [commercial development in Long Beach](#) on a former industrial site raised both environmental justice and tribal/cultural concerns for the Commission. Through tribal consultation, the Commission learned that the Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians had nominated a large portion of the area, including the entire site of the proposed development, as Sacred Lands in 2019. The NAHC confirmed the area as Sacred Lands due to the location of the prehistoric village of Puvungna. The Commission approved the project with special conditions requiring the dedication and restoration of 1.81 acres of open space and a Tribal Access Plan to ensure the local tribal members have access to the area for religious and ceremonial gatherings, resource and material gathering, and other tribal uses.

Internally, staff made additional progress toward ensuring the Coastal Commission is an equitable, inclusive workplace that reflects and values the diversity of California as a whole.

The Environmental Justice Unit rebranded the Commission's Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) as the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Plan to better align with other state agencies who are also advancing JEDI plans , and made steady progress implementing its goals throughout the year.

Working with the Commission's Human Resources Division and Senior Management Team, the EJ Unit drafted equity and inclusion language that will now be added to every employee's official duty statement, which outlines each employee's scope of work. Duty statements for planners and enforcement analysts will also include a reference to EJ as part of their required policy analysis work. Updating duty statements across the agency is an important, tangible manifestation of the Commission's expectation that JEDI principles will be integrated into the workplace at every level and shows that it is a priority for the agency.

As of April, the Commission started providing in-house Spanish translation services for documents and interpretation of public comment at Commission meetings because for the first time in the agency's history, two staff positions were reclassified to receive bilingual pay for providing Spanish language services. Thanks to two staffers with Spanish language fluency who were selected and passed state certification requirements, the Commission has created a new Spanish language access program. Members of the Spanish-speaking public who are unable or uncomfortable addressing the Commission in English now have the option to speak in their first language, which is important for accessible public participation.

The EJ and Communications team also worked with UCSB Bren School students to create two videos and an [infographic](#) aimed at inspiring and showing members of the public who don't usually participate [how to sign up and participate in hearings](#), and information on the [history of the Coastal Act](#).

In December, the Commission announced its launch of the Peter Douglas Environmental Justice and Tribal Affairs Coastal Planning Internship Program, which will offer paid internships at the Commission for college students, including those attending Community College. Named in honor of the Commission's late Executive Director who championed a similar program in the 1980's, this program will provide enhanced career opportunities for interns from non-traditional backgrounds, with the intent of building a more diverse workplace that includes the perspectives and experiences of a wide variety of qualified applicants.

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. They are the living policy links between the state and local governments. The Coastal Commission works closely with 76 coastal local governments (15 counties and 61 cities) to manage the coast across 126 planning segments. A total of 96 of those segments are now fully certified, which leaves 30 segments still outstanding. Fifty-seven (57) jurisdictions are fully certified and issuing coastal development permits for all of their authorized segments, while another six are issuing permits at least one certified segment. That leaves 12 local governments wholly uncertified with no LCP for any part of their jurisdiction. The Commission has been steadily encouraging these last remaining holdouts to get certified, while also working diligently to update existing LCP policies to address sea level rise and avoid localized hazards.

Short Term Rentals

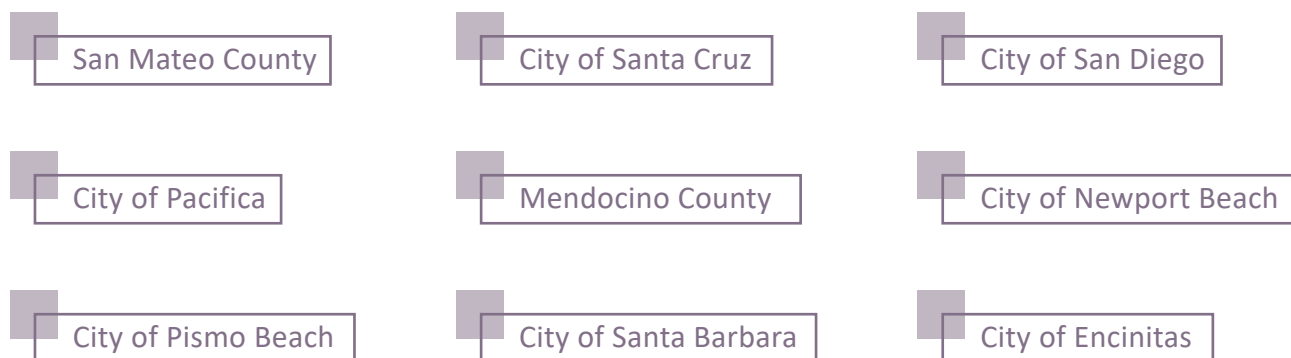
The Commission reached consensus with five more coastal cities on how to regulate vacation rentals (STRs) in their jurisdictions. While STRs provide additional options for coastal visitors and financial profits for owners, they also reduce permanent housing stock, contributing to the state's housing shortage and essentially hollowing out entire neighborhoods in some popular destination areas. This issue has been the subject of numerous Commission briefings and round-table discussions over the decades, with passionate and compelling arguments on both sides. Resolving the controversy requires close attention to local context, and problem-solving that accounts for all points of view.

Each ordinance or program was crafted to respect the unique aspects of the community, striking a balance between providing reasonable options for visitors while ensuring that residential use remains the primary land use in neighborhoods. They all featured some combination of hosted “home stays,” grandfathering in existing STRs, allowing new STRs only in commercial or visitor-serving areas, and/or caps on the number of STRs that can be allowed in specific areas. By tailoring each policy to reflect the unique community character and priorities of each jurisdiction, the Commission helped the following jurisdictions achieve a good balance between the needs of coastal visitors and residents:



Housing and ADUs

Another nine jurisdictions brought their LCPs into compliance with evolving state law that mandates the streamlining of the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) approval process and eases site requirements in order to encourage their construction. Because the new requirements do not supersede or lessen the effect of the Coastal Act, the best way to meet the intent of both laws is to amend LCPs to specify how streamlining measures will be implemented in a way that also protects coastal resources. While LCP amendments require an initial investment of time, the clarity they provide once certified saves time and money going forward for applicants, and reduce confusion for the public. In 2021, the Commission approved ADU-related LCP amendments for the following jurisdictions:



But ADUs are only a small part of the coastal affordable housing conundrum. The single biggest impediment to increasing coastal housing affordability is the Commission’s lack of jurisdiction over the issue directly. It has long been one of the Commission’s top legislative priorities to reinstate the original Coastal Act policy protecting and providing for affordable housing in the coastal zone. In 2021, the Commission came closer than ever to achieving that goal, through the introduction of [AB 500 \(Ward\)](#). Although this hard-fought legislation stalled in a Senate policy committee late in the session, it remains an active measure in 2022. The Commission will continue to advocate for its passage in the coming year.

Meanwhile, the Commission continues to analyze housing proposals under the Coastal Act in a manner that also encourages affordable housing whenever possible. In some southland communities, the Commission has been seeing a pernicious loss of affordable housing through the conversion of existing duplexes and triplexes to large single family homes. These older multi-family residences are some of the last affordable options in the rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods of Venice and elsewhere. Through Coastal Act policies protecting community character, the Commission has been doing what it can to preserve density in the form of ADUs. In 2021, the Commission considered 32 different proposals involving multi-family demolitions to make way for single family homes. In most cases where the Commission took action, the applicant was required to construct one or more ADUs as part of the project design. While ADUs don't always provide the same level of housing opportunity as a separate apartment, they do at least maintain the potential to maintain density and lower-cost housing options.

Venice, Los Angeles County. Photo by Veeterzy.



For instance, in February, the Commission acted on application stemming from a [2020 appeal of a project in Venice](#). The City of Los Angeles had approved the demotion of two existing duplexes, to be replaced with a single family residence, for a net loss of three housing units. The Commission upheld the appeal, and required a [redesign of the project](#). The applicant returned with a new project that would reconstruct [both duplexes](#) and add two Junior ADUs (JADUs) for a net increase of two housing units, setting a positive precedent of maintaining or increasing the number of dwelling units on already-developed lots in residential neighborhoods.

In March, the Commission approved the [rezone of an 11-acre property for a 100% affordable project](#) in San Mateo County between Half Moon Bay and Montera. While the zoning change reduces the overall density of the site, it more than doubles the number of affordable units proposed under the previous zoning. When completed, the project will provide 71 affordable units, a community building, recreation areas and publicly available open space.

In April the Commission approved the [Balboa Avenue Station Specific Plan](#) – an amendment to the City of San Diego’s LCP that will allow for increased development density on a 210-acre site adjacent to the Balboa Avenue trolley station in the communities of Pacific Beach and Clairemont Mesa. The increased residential densities, mixed use zoning and transit-oriented development coincide with the opening of the Mid-Coast Trolley Blue Line extension. In addition to density of up to 109 units per acre, the plan provides for open space, light industrial and flood control areas. The Commission’s approval included a suggested modification incorporating a development impact fee for future projects to help fund traffic mitigation measures, such as a community shuttle.

Fire

Protecting homes and communities from catastrophic wildfire damage, while maintaining healthy coastal watersheds and diverse ecosystems, requires careful planning and a science-based approach to vegetation management. Fortunately, the two goals are not mutually exclusive. As it turns out, healthy native ecosystems are naturally fire resilient, and some risk management protocols can also function as restoration actions. The Commission’s climate-resilience planning activities are increasingly including the consideration of wildfire. The Commission participated in the review of the California Statewide Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP), which was developed under the direction of the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF) and in cooperation with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFIRE) to reduce wildfire with a range of actions being implemented by the State to respond to California’s wildfire challenges. The Commission contributed additional steps to achieve Coastal Act consistency through a coastal overlay model that “sits on top of VTP” with additional standards applicable in the coastal zone.



Alisal Fire, Santa Barbara County. Photo by Glenn Beltz.



In July the Commission took several actions to advance ecologically sound fire resiliency policy in high-risk areas of the coastal zone. The first was a wildfire-related [Public Works Plan \(PWP\) for the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District \(RCD\)](#), which dovetails with the CalVTP. The Santa Cruz County Forest Health and Fire Resilience Plan PWP/VTP will allow the RCD to help facilitate the planning, review, and authorization of vegetation treatment projects within the County's coastal zone to improve forest health, restore ecosystems, and increase wildfire resilience.

The second was the [San Mateo County PWP /VTP](#) to establish vegetative clearance standards throughout the County's coastal zone. Commission staff worked with County staff, CalFire, and the San Mateo County RCD to address fuel hazard reduction projects. Also in July, the Commission Certified an [LUP amendment for the Santa Monica Mountains](#) in Los Angeles that provides additional fire prevention policies while still protecting public campgrounds and safe recreational use of Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Area.

In October, the Commission approved the [Upper Salinas Las Tablas Central Coast PWP/VTP](#), which covers the privately owned Covell forest in Cambria. The fire resilience regimen mimics natural fire processes and prioritizes the removal of invasive species, and diseased and dying trees to recreate pre-logging, pre-suppression conditions. This is accomplished with streamlined review that is Coastal Act compliant.

All four of these plans were accomplished with no additional funding or staff resources, an impressive, though unsustainable accomplishment for the Commission's limited planning staff.

Healthy Habitats for Coastal Species

Ellen Finch

Protecting and restoring coastal habitats and the special species that depend on them is more important than ever, as climate change, pollution and invasive species exacerbate threats to vulnerable ecosystems.

The Commission took several bold actions in 2021 to resolve long-standing, pernicious coastal controversies, clearing the way for significant restoration and long-term protection of several iconic coastal landscapes that have been in steady decline due to human-caused impacts.

In January, the Commission approved the creation of the [Los Cerritos Wetland Mitigation Bank](#), opening the door for accelerated restoration of this important Southland estuary. Mitigation banks are financial tools that allow applicants to reduce permitting delays by proactively obtaining environmental mitigation in advance. The Los Cerritos wetland complex is made up of both freshwater and brackish coastal salt marsh at the mouth of the San Gabriel River in Long Beach, and has been the site of oil and gas development since the early 20th Century. The Los Cerritos Wetland mitigation bank will provide for comprehensive wetlands and habitat restoration, unique public access opportunities, consolidation of oil operations offsite, and will transfer ownership of a substantial portion of Los Cerritos Wetlands into the public domain.

Oceano Dunes. Photo by Jay Mantri.



In March, the Commission took a decisive action to protect coastal resources and environmental justice at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (ODSVRA) in San Luis Obispo County through a [major amendment to the operating permit](#). On a unanimous vote, the Commission voted to phase out the use of recreational off-highway vehicles on the beach and dunes, in favor of a new area for street-legal car camping on the beach. This will still allow for family-friendly beach camping and recreation in a safe and more inclusive environment that allows both the town and the species to thrive. During the interim period, the new permit calls for measures to permanently expand and protect snowy plover and least tern habitat, reduce traffic, protect Arroyo Grande Creek, and reduce wildlife disturbances by eliminating recreational night driving. Multiple lawsuits have been filed against both State Parks and the Coastal Commission, and it will likely be several years before the situation is fully resolved. But the Commission's action was an historic step forward in a decade's long effort to address what is arguably the longest-running Coastal Act violation in state history.

In April, the Commission authorized a major amendment to the [Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan](#) through its federal consistency review authority. The amendment is the first major update to 28,000-acre Park's guiding document that includes new standards for the beef and dairy ranch operations at the seashore, as well as Tule elk management. Both cattle and elk are competing for the same resources, causing conflicts between ranching operations and the needs of wildlife. The plan amendment withdrew approximately 2,000 acres from cattle grazing, imposed water quality requirements, expanded areas designated for resource protections and implemented measures to reduce conflicts and improve habitat for elk. While the plan amendments will not eliminate conflicts between ranching and Tule elk, it will give the National Park Service additional tools to better manage that conflict and the Seashore generally, including a new agreement with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria to incorporate the tribe's traditional ecological knowledge into the management of park resources.

Point Reyes National Seashore. Photo by Stephen Leonardi.





Ocean Ranch. NOAA photo.

In May, the Commission approved a permit and concurred in a Federal Consistency determination that will allow NOAA’s Restoration Center to undertake the [restoration of 850 acres of wetlands, sloughs and dunes](#) in the Eel River Wildlife Area at Humboldt Bay. The former agricultural lands known as Ocean Ranch are historic estuarine brackish wetlands that have been diked and drained in the past to support cattle grazing. But levee failures and salt water intrusion have rendered the land unsuitable for agricultural use. Restoring the tidal prism, removing invasive species, and enhancing dune function will improve biodiversity, recreational opportunities, and coastal resilience to sea level rise. Public access and cultural resources will be protected throughout the restoration activities, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife will monitor the restoration on Ocean Ranch for a period of five years, and provide annual reports to the Commission.

Also in May the Commission approved an amendment to the City of San Diego’s LUP for Fiesta Island. The [Mission Bay Park Master Plan](#) will allow for improvements to the mostly undeveloped 470-acre island, including a salt marsh restoration area and improvements to a 30-acre least tern nesting area that will create a direct connection between the upland nests and water foraging areas. Fiesta Island is popular for a variety of coastal recreation activities, and the Commission’s action ensures that recreational uses can continue in a manner that also allows the least tern nesting area to function successfully.

Fiesta Island. Photos by John Gibbons, SDUT.



In December, the Commission authorized a controversial [program to eradicate the invasive house mice](#) that are threatening the ecological future of the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge. The mice prey on native plants, invertebrates, salamanders and birds, including the endangered ashy storm petrel, and disrupt the behavioral pattern of migratory burrowing owls. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plans to conduct two aerial applications of rodenticide pellets to the islands in an effort to exterminate 100% of the house mouse population. Although numerous steps will be taken to reduce risks to non-target species, there is no way to completely prevent unintended consequences. Nobody relishes dumping poison in a National Marine Sanctuary. But because there is no other proven method for eradicating rodents from islands, the Commission narrowly voted to concur with the proposal. The Commission included some additional water quality protocols, monitoring and reporting requirements, and will be reviewing a variety of project plans prior to the project's start. This was an extremely difficult decision for the Commission, and one it expects will ultimately provide significant long-term restoration benefits.



Farallon Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Photo by Alan Grinberg.

Inspiring Stewardship Through Learning



2021 was another year of adaptation and creative response to changing and uncertain circumstances for the Public Education Unit as its grantees struggled to navigate the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on education programs. In-person programming was able to resume in some cases. In other cases, virtual programming and self-guided stewardship activities continued, and in most cases, there was a hybrid combination. A bright side of the COVID-safe strategies is that they were not constrained by geography, expanding overall accessibility for some programs and providers.

As many FY 2019 [Whale Tail grant](#) recipients had to revamp and extend their projects in response to COVID-19 pandemic challenges, the competitive grants cycle took a pause in 2020-21. Public Education Program staff used the hiatus to work with [Justice Outside](#) to review and revise the grant process to improve accessibility and increase equity for California organizations. Revised guidelines were launched in the fall, just in time to coincide with a \$10 million funding bump received through the 2021-22 State Budget, to be spent over five years.

As restrictions on gatherings lifted later in the year, local organizers started resuming clean-up activities in some locations. Most significantly, the 37th annual [California Coastal Cleanup Day](#) took place on September 18th, marking the Commission’s return to in-person events after the 2020 hiatus. While still limited in scope and capacity, coordinators around the state organized over 450 cleanup sites, and hosted 36,289 volunteers on the traditional third Saturday of September.

CALIFORNIA COASTAL CLEANUP 2021

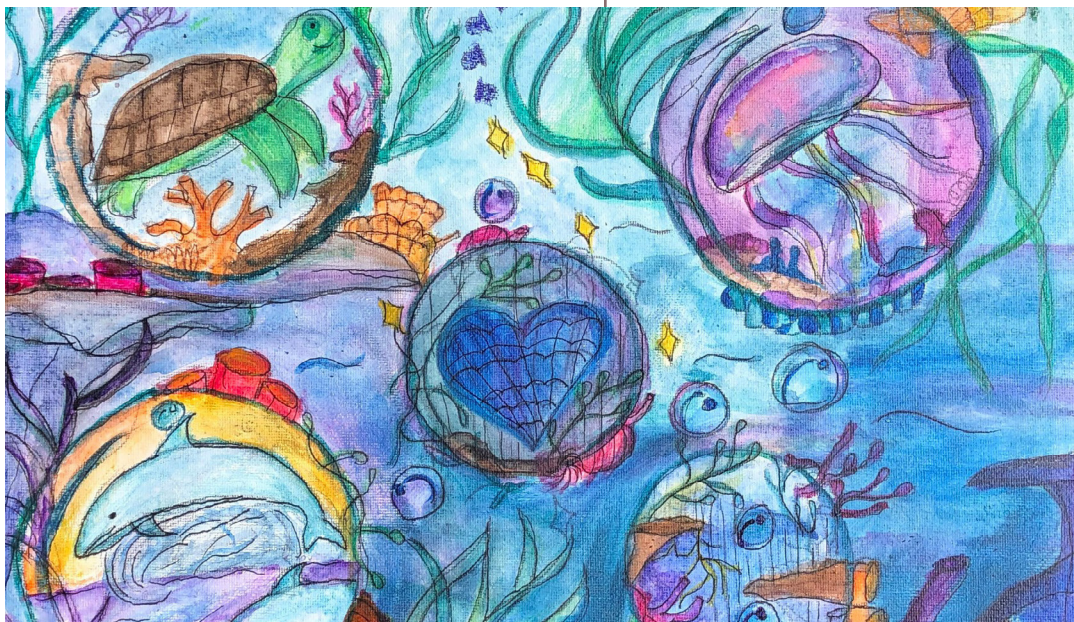
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 18TH AND ALL MONTH LONG

PROTECT
YOUR
HAPPY
PLACE

PHOTO BY D. KAY RENICK

In addition, the Commission continued to encourage neighborhood cleanups of streets, local parks, and other natural areas throughout the month, an effort that began in 2020 and will continue for the foreseeable future. The neighborhood cleanup model helped the Commission reach into new areas of the state and engage participants for whom the scheduled cleanup day may not have been convenient or accessible. Hundreds more cleanups were recorded, and California once again leads the world in cleanup activity over the month of September, with 29,098 volunteers taking part. Reports from around the state continue to filter in, but as of this writing they helped to remove over 321,673 pounds of trash and recycling.

The 27th Annual Kids Ocean Day event went virtual this year, but 7,000 students still turned out to take part in six Adopt-a-Beach cleanups around the state. Partner organizations I Love a Clean San Diego, Orange County Coastkeeper, Malibu Foundation, Marine Science Institute, and Friends of the Dunes provided on-line presentations to students in cities up and down the coast over Zoom and organized a collective ocean art contest. Students were invited to submit original art illustrating what they love about the ocean. Instead of the traditional aerial beach art messages, all of the individual entries were incorporated into a giant, inspirational [online mosaic](#), featuring the overall winner of the art contest.



Winner of the 27th Annual Kids Ocean Day Program art contest. Art by Tracy Nguyen, 6th Grade, Garden Grove.

The [California Boating Clean and Green Program](#) (jointly implemented with the California State Parks) hosted 13 virtual Dockwalker trainings for 226 participants. In addition, staff and volunteers distributed 6,000 California Boater Kits. Boater Kits provide boaters with the know-how and tools to reduce their environmental impact including information on clean boating practices, oil absorbent pillows, oil absorbent sheets, and fuel bibs. Boaters also made a big showing at Coastal Cleanup Day, this year, with 39 boating facilities and groups participating and 1,160 volunteers collecting 17,708 pounds of trash and recyclables on land and from 169 kayaks, canoes, and dinghies.

Drivers purchased 4,908 [Whale Tail® License Plates](#) in fiscal year 2020-21. These sales combined with renewal fees for existing plates provided over \$4.4 million for environmental programs in fiscal year 2020-21. Of this total, \$1.2 million went to the Coastal Commission's California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account (CBCEA), which funds the Commission's public education programs, and \$3.2 million went to the statewide Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF) for a range of environmental conservation projects. Since its launch in 1997, the Whale Tail® License Plate revenue has totaled \$117 million (\$33 million to the CBCEA and \$84 million to the ELPF). The [Protect Our Coast and Ocean fund](#) ticked up with an almost \$50,000 increase from the previous year, receiving \$445,163,000 in donations from more than 30,632 individuals from January through October 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](#)).



Volunteers pulling iceplant in the dunes. Big Sur Land Trust (2021 Whale Tail Grantee) Photo.

Enforcement Highlights



The Commission's Enforcement Unit is charged with ensuring that all new development is carried out consistent with the Coastal Act. This includes compliance with permit conditions as well as 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 cooperation 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.

But any environmental law is only as strong as
the ability to enforce it.

Coastal protection took a giant leap forward in 2021, thanks to a bill carried by Senator Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica), and signed into law by Governor Newsom-- [SB 433](#), which took effect January 1, 2022. The new law extends the Commission's administrative penalty authority to apply to all types of Coastal Act violations, providing both a significant incentive for violators to quickly resolve existing violations, as well as a strong deterrent for creating new ones. Previously, the Commission could only assess penalties for violations relating to public access. But because of the overwhelming success of that policy, as described in the [Commission's 2019 report](#), a nearly unanimous, bi-partisan majority of the Legislature voted to extend the authority to the whole program. Although the Commission will need additional staff to bring the full effect of this policy to bear on many of the unresolved violations in the nearly 3,000 case backlog, the ability to assess admin penalties will be a game changer for many high priority enforcement cases going forward.

District Enforcement Work

As in prior years, the majority of violations in 2021 were resolved voluntarily without the need for penalties or Commission action. A total of 22 cases were fully resolved, however, the number of backlogged violations remains dauntingly high, at 2,846 open cases. Resolved cases ranged from removing fake “No Parking” signs to reining in rogue security guards. Many of these cases were worked out in coordination with district planning staff as a way to resolve existing violations in the context of pending permit applications.

As one example, the Commission worked out a creative solution with the Bel Air Bay Club in Pacific Palisades combining the follow-up to four emergency permits issued in 2018-2020, with resolution of earlier violations that discouraged public access. The Club had constructed permitted and unpermitted sand berms on public and private beach areas to protect the club’s structures from storm surge, and also employed security guards to prohibit access to beach areas that actually belong to the public. The need for sand berming should be significantly diminished due to recently completed groin repairs. However, the Commission settled on a revised design for future sand berms that will reduce impacts to habitat and public access, should the need for such berms arise in coming years. As part of the final outcome, district enforcement staff negotiated conditions to provide that the club will initiate a training program for their security guards to prevent future such impacts on legal public access, and to provide \$382,000 to the Boys and Girls Club of West San Gabriel Valley for a program that introduces sailing and water safety to underserved youth in Los Angeles County. Both of these became permit conditions and therefore enforceable in the future.

Boys and Girls Club of Venice Sailing Program. Photo by JR Dzubak.



Another creative resolution occurred in September, when the Commission heard an appeal that also involved a [violation related to unpermitted tree trimming](#) in the city of Long Beach that destroyed important nesting and roosting habitat for wading birds, including great blue herons. The City of Long Beach agreed to plant numerous trees that will be suitable for heron nesting, and, in order to provide more immediate nesting opportunities while those new trees mature, to also install nesting platforms at two locations near wetlands in the city. This past fall, great blue herons started to roost on the platforms at both locations, which is a promising sign that they'll build nests on the platforms once breeding season arrives later this winter.

Roosting heron on platform. Photo by Robert Hamilton, Hamilton Biological, Inc.



The Monarch Bay Club provides a third example of these hybrid resolutions. In June, the Commission authorized a permit amendment resulting from a previously resolved violation at the Monarch Bay Club in Dana Point. The Club had been conducting unpermitted grading and sand berming on state tidelands, removing tidal wrack, blocking and altering stream flows and artificially breaching Salt Creek. In 2021 the Club was asked the Commission to extend its [Management Plan](#) implementation permit, which would otherwise have expired in June. Collectively, the permit amendments provided for Coastal Act compliance, restoration of the area, and additional actions as mitigation for the prior violations through reduced wrack disturbance and ongoing monitoring of shorebird habitat.

Escondido Falls Trail, Malibu, Los Angeles County. Coastal Commission photo.



In Malibu, enforcement staff continued to make significant progress obtaining compliance with a permit that requires construction of a public hiking trail leading to Escondido Falls. Several property owners had failed to construct the trail as required, but most of the trail was completed in 2021 at enforcement staff's direction, including the most critical piece, the trailhead at Pacific Coast Highway. A public access signage plan has been approved by staff and signs are soon to come.

Headquarters Enforcement Work

The most significant case of the year arose out of San Diego's popular Mission Bay, and was another poster child for the benefits of administrative penalties. The Campland/Mission Bay RV Resort violation involved decades of blocked access to public tidelands along the north shore of Mission Bay. Leases issued by the city for these two private luxury camping facilities required not only public access to the shoreline but also 31 public parking spaces and signs indicating the general public was welcome. Unfortunately, not only were these minimal provisions not carried out, the lessees had posted "Private Beach" and "Private Property" signs, built a fence across the beach, claimed private use of a neighboring public park and hired security guards to keep the public out.

In 2020, the Commission worked with the lessees to voluntarily remove the illegal signs. However, the Commission continued to receive reports that the public parking spaces were being used for the paying customers, and guards were telling people that the public was not allowed into either facility. A review of their website confirmed they were still promoting the facilities as having a "private beach."

In September, the Commission issued a [Consent Cease and Desist Order](#) that requires full compliance with the lease terms, plus additional signs to specify what areas are public, a new employee training program, and new website text clarifying that the area is available for public use. A \$250,000 administrative penalty was augmented by a commitment to funding \$50,000 worth of free overnight camping for underserved families (including transportation, camping gear and access to all resort amenities), removal of a fence that blocks access from the adjacent public beach, a new public restroom at Mission Bay RV Resort, public access to an existing restroom at Campland, and a marine debris reduction program to reduce plastic pollution at both resorts. The total combined value of the public amenities plus the free camping program is estimated to be in excess of a value of \$1 million to the public.

Enforcement Litigation

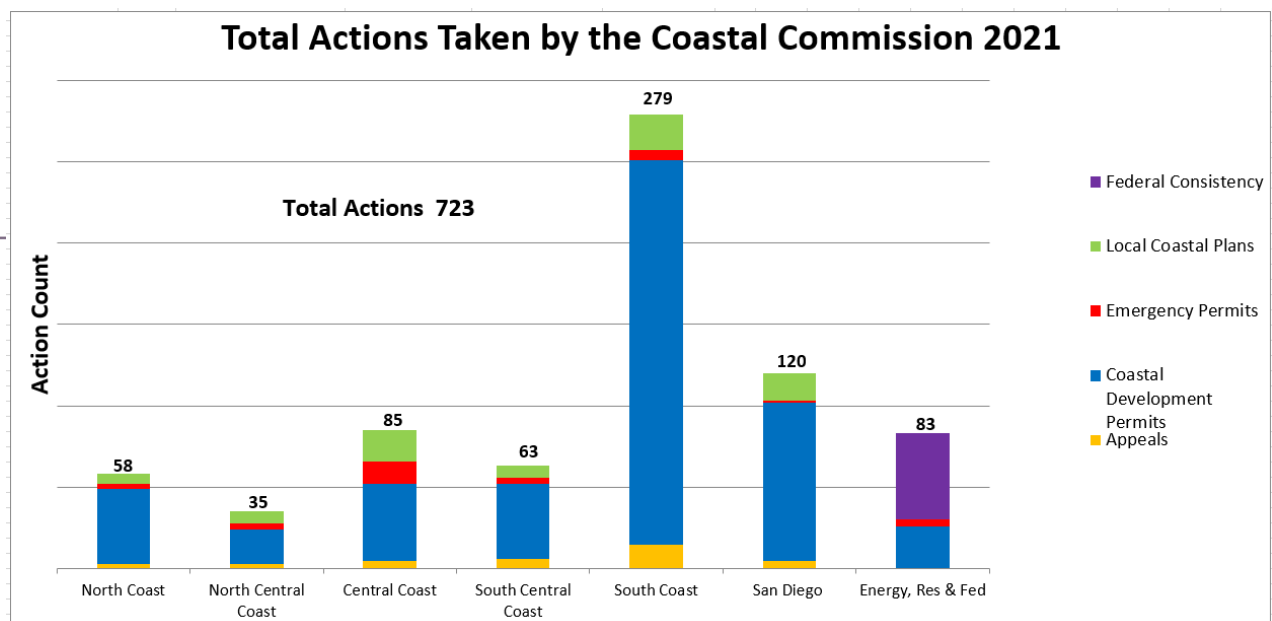
Finally, the enforcement unit is also heavily involved in litigation involving enforcement cases, and this portion of the enforcement work was extremely active in 2021. The Court of Appeals found for the Commission in two important published enforcement cases involving contested restoration orders: Lent and 11 Lagunita. Both cases had to do with public access, and included administrative penalties. Lent was a beachfront vacation rental home in Malibu that was actively blocking a recorded access easement while advertising its "private beach". The 11 Lagunita case involved an unpermitted home remodel in Laguna Beach that relied illegally on an 11-foot tall, 80-foot long sea wall. In both cases the Court of Appeals upheld the Commission's assessment of administrative penalties and overall enforcement and deliberative process.

By the Numbers: Annual Workload Roundup

Not surprisingly, the Commission's workload ticked up in 2021, as a vaccinated state began to carefully test the "new normal". The Commission received 2,604 submittals over the course of the year, (an increase of 245 items over 2020) and acted on a total of 723 permits, appeals, LCP amendments and federal consistency items, compared with 620 actions the previous year.

As usual, workload in the Commission's South Coast District office in Long Beach outpaced all of the other district offices, accounting for nearly 40% of actions statewide, and more than twice as many as the next busiest district office. This is due to the large number of uncertified jurisdictions within the regional boundaries of the South Coast office. With no LCP in place for the cities of Los Angeles, Pacific Palisades, Santa Monica, Torrance, Hermosa Beach, Seal Beach, Sunset Beach, San Clemente, and several unincorporated areas of Orange County, the Commission continues to issue coastal development permits (CDPs) for 14 LCP segments in the Southland.

Certified local governments stayed busy as well, issuing 1,144 coastal development permits, 795 of which were appealable to the Commission. Of these, 37 were actually appealed, for a 4.6% rate of appeal statewide. The Commission found Substantial Issue (SI) in 11 of these, and No Substantial Issue (NSI) in 26.



Graph of total action taken by the California Coastal Commission in 2021.



Monterey Bay Trail, Pacific Grove. Photo by Gavi Virabyan.

The Commission's Mapping/GIS Unit continues 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. The Public Education department uses 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. In 2021, the California King Tides Project mapped dozens of events and received over 4000 photo submissions from the public showcasing extreme high tides in their communities. The Mapping Unit was also instrumental in developing the [Critical Coastal Areas Map Viewer](#), the Environmental Justice Mapping tool, set to debut in early 2022, and the [California Coastal Trail Map](#).

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 public.

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 February, the Commission certified the County of San Diego [Permit and Appeal Jurisdiction Map](#), depicting the areas within the County of San Diego that are subject to the Commission's permit and appeal jurisdiction following the recent certification of the County's LCP.

The Mapping Unit assisted with the significant task of upgrading and migrating the Commission's Coastal Data Management System (CDMS) to a hosted cloud environment. The new CDMS is more user-friendly and works with any modern browser with improved GIS and mapping capabilities. Staff can now access permit histories via parcel and address location information through an improved mapping interface in a more efficient way.

Aquaculture



Chula Vista Reef Balls. Photo by Port of San Diego.

The Commission greenlighted the first open-ocean kelp farm in federal waters in October, when it concurred with a consistency determination for the [Ocean Rainforest Pilot Project](#). Approximately 4 nautical miles off the coast of Santa Barbara, this temporary installation will test the cultivation of native giant kelp (*Macrosystis Pyrifera*) which has been decimated by ocean warming and an explosion of predatory sea urchins. The project will be in place for two years, during which kelp will be harvested every 2-3 months on the 16-acre plot. Regular independent third-part monitoring will ensure the ongoing integrity of the installation, and a marine debris management program will minimize the loss of gear into the environment.

Safeguards for marine mammals, commercial fishermen and water quality were also built in to the Commission's approval.

Closer to shore, the Commission approved an amendment to the Port of San Diego's Port Master Plan (PMP) to allow for an innovative nature-based adaptation project in the form of a [native oyster reef "living shoreline"](#) adjacent to the Chula Vista Wildlife Refuge. This pilot project will provide important information on the ability of artificial reef balls to protect the shoreline from erosion while also providing habitat for native oysters, increasing marine biodiversity and improving water quality. Working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Coastal Conservancy, the Port began installing the reef balls in December and will closely monitor the reef for five years to determine its effectiveness.

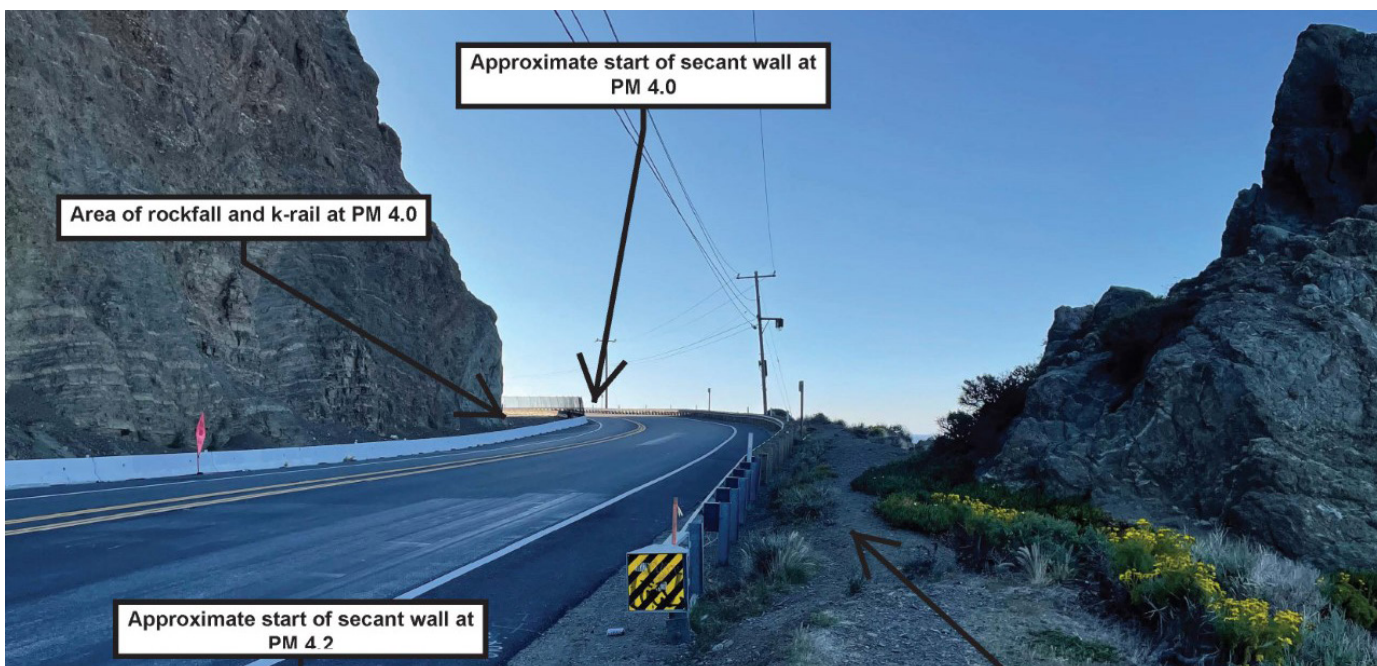
Transportation Program



The Commission's Transportation Program serves as the agency's dedicated staff for coordinating and reviewing transportation networks in the coastal zone, in relation to Coastal Act policies and certified LCPs. Two primary functions of the Transportation Program are to coordinate with state, regional, and local partners in the planning, design, and implementation of multi-modal transportation systems within the coastal zone; and to facilitate the regulatory review of proposed transportation projects. This work has helped to promote more predictable and streamlined reviews of transportation plans and projects, and has resulted in numerous legacy projects up and down the coast.

This year, after 15 years of planning, the Gleason Beach Highway Roadway Realignment Project, broke ground in September: a model of interagency coordination for managed retreat.

Developed by Caltrans, Sonoma County and the Commission, and approved by the Commission in 2020, [this project realigns an iconic section of highway](#) under extreme threat from sea level rise, relocating 0.7-miles Highway One between Bodega Bay and Jenner. In addition to building an 850' bridge over Scotty Creek, complete with bicycle lanes and a separated pedestrian bridge and walkway, 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.



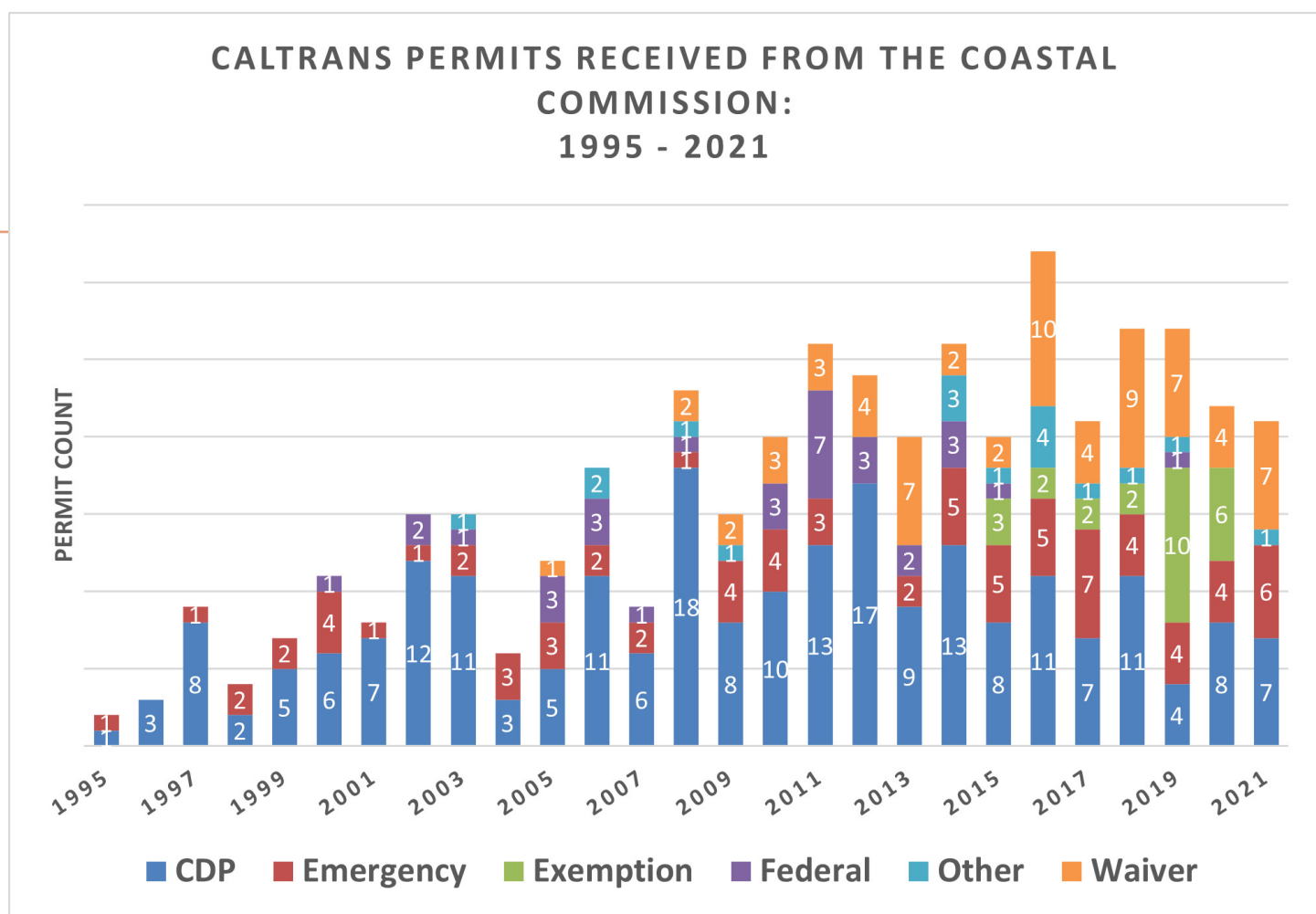
Rendering of Pudding Creek Bridge (top) in Mendocino County. Sycamore Canyon Secant Walls, Point Mugu State Park (bottom). Caltrans Photos.

Over the course of the year, the Commission processed 21 regulatory approvals of Caltrans' transportation-related actions. Two significant projects were the Sycamore Canyon Secant Walls in Point Mugu State Park and the Pudding Creek bridge replacement in Mendocino County. As with most complex projects, these approvals required extensive special permit conditions involving the submission and review of technical and other supporting documents, which also adds substantially to the Transportation Program's overall workload. Commission and Caltrans staff also collaborated extensively on ongoing planning efforts, including the development of their new guidance for addressing sea level rise through all phases of their project development processes.

In 2021, Commission staff signed an updated [Memorandum of Understanding](#) regarding the Development and Implementation of the [Statewide Advance Mitigation Initiative](#) (SAMI). Staff continues to participate in the development of [Regional Advance Mitigation Needs Assessments](#), as well as the establishment of a mitigation bank in Mendocino County.

The Commission continued to enhance permitting efficiency through participation in the Transportation Permitting Task Force. Pursuant to AB 1282 (Mullin, 2017), the Task Force delivered a report to the Legislature in 2020, with 40 recommendations for improving efficiency in delivering needed infrastructure projects while furthering the missions of both transportation and environmental protection agencies. Throughout 2021, an interagency working group pursued four initial recommendations, including those 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; improving how Caltrans responds to emergency repairs; and, developing a structured process for early engagement of resource agencies with Caltrans during their project development process.

In recognition of the magnitude of these interagency accomplishments and the unique and successful partnership, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) invited Commission and Caltrans staff to provide a [briefing to the United States Congress in September 2021](#) the lessons learned through the partnership, showcasing what nature based infrastructure looks like in the context of transportation.



Caltrans permits received from the Coastal Commission from 1995 to 2021.

Partnerships: Stronger Together



Art by Mandy Mok, Grade 9.

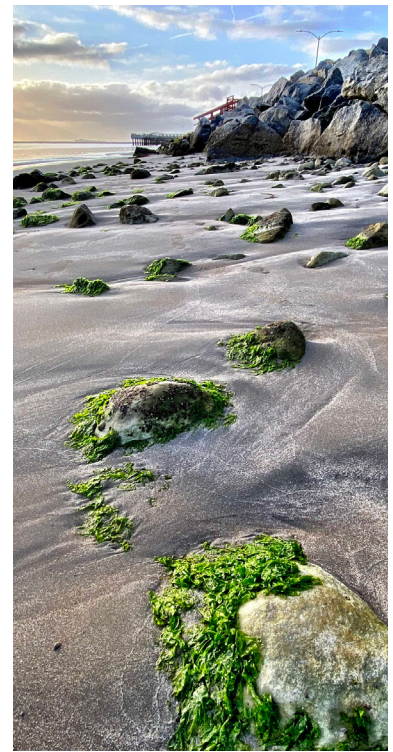
None of the Commission's accomplishments occur in a vacuum. We couldn't carry out our work without consistent collaboration with our state and federal agency partners, including California Native American tribes, the State Lands Commission, Caltrans, Housing and Community Development, the Ocean Protection 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



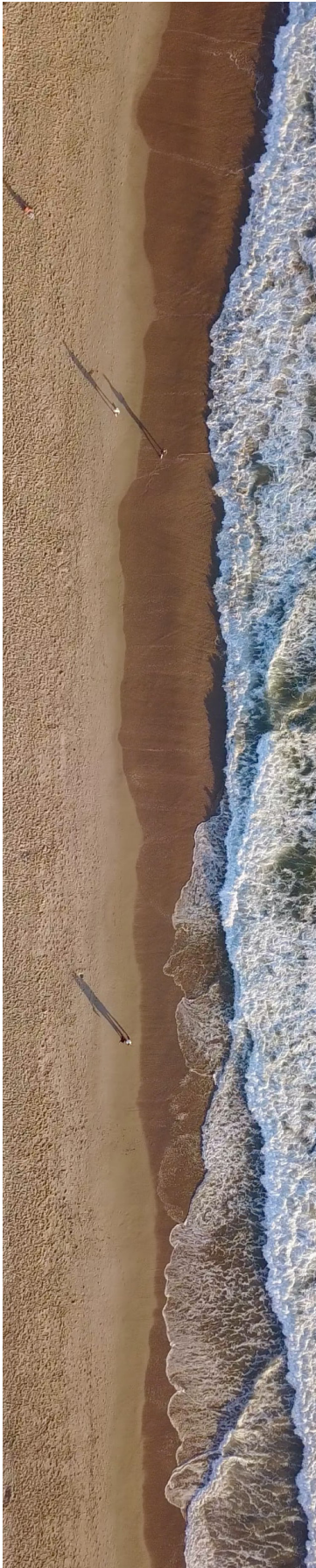
COASTAL HAZARDS AND SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT

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

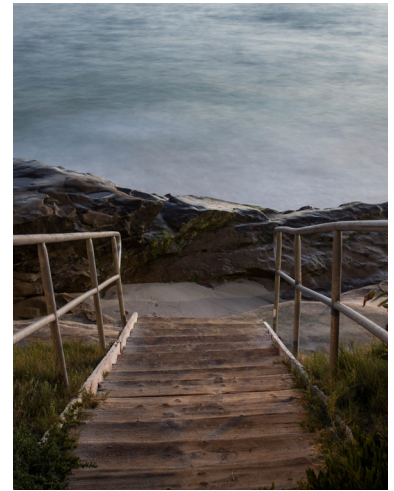
Topanga Lagoon TAC

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

Photo Captions and Credits

Page 35, from top to bottom: Cabrillo Beach, San Pedro, Los Angeles County. Photo by Dianne Gowder. | California Highway 1. Photo by Carl Newton. | Bowling Ball Beach, Mendocino County. Photo by Michael Shea.

Page 36: Venice Beach, Los Angeles. Photo by Bart Jaillet.

Page 37, from top to bottom: San Diego. Photo by Photos by Clark. | Offshore wind. Photo by Shaun Dakin.

Page 38, from top to bottom: Huntington Beach. Photo by Vincent Nguyen. | La Jolla. Photo by Photos by Clark. | Ocean Beach. Photo by John Rice.

Page 39: Scripps Beach. Photo by Susan Perez.



Behind the Scenes: HR and Business Services

Lighthouse Field, Santa Barbara. Photo by Brian Weis.

The quiet, essential work of the Commission's administrative staff takes place largely out of the public eye, but the agency literally could not function without the daily support of the Human Resources (HR), Accounting, and Fiscal and Business Services staff. These are truly the unsung heroes of this Commission. They are the folks who ensure the Commission is in compliance with the myriad and constantly changing state requirements for everything from the filing of Form 700s, COVID reporting and testing protocols, emerging Telework policies and Telework Agreements to making sure staff is paid, rents and other bills are paid, and necessary equipment is purchased. Accounting and Fiscal and Business Services staff continued to face numerous budget and accounting challenges associated with [implementing the state's relatively new Fi\\$Cal system](#). The HR Unit staff, in addition to responding to ever-changing COVID rules and protocols, is facing new and time-consuming testing and hiring challenges because our workforce is changing and growing.

The agency would come to a halt without the talented, committed, and dedicated staff of these three units.

This year the HR Unit completed the state-mandated [Workforce Plan](#), a complex and labor-intensive task that is updated every five years to account for projected needs and changes to the Commission's staffing needs. The Commission is currently facing significant workforce challenges due to the retirement of some of its most senior and experienced staff. While the Commission continues to draw a vibrant, engaged, and talented workforce committed to its unique coastal protection mission, it is becoming more difficult to recruit and retain a competent workforce due to competition from the private sector and local governments who offer similar positions similar at substantially higher salaries and comparable benefits. Workforce plans help organizations plan for and address changes in strategic direction and the human capital required to meet organizational goals. The Commission's Workforce Plan was informed by its Strategic Plan and Racial Equity Plan goals. The goal of the Commission's Workforce Plan is to ensure that the organization has the right number of people with the right skills in the right jobs at the right time. The plan will help the Commission implement initiatives to attract and sustain a diverse, skilled, and creative workforce that is prepared to perform the agency's rewarding, challenging and important coastal protection work.



Happy Trails, and Auld Lang Syne

Santa Barbara. Photo by Joe Kerns.

The outgoing tide of the Silver Tsunami continues to sweep through the Coastal Commission's staff ranks. In 2021 the Commission bid a [heartfelt farewell](#) to another 7 of its beloved, long-term staff as they transitioned into their richly-deserved retirements. There is no way to fully replace their institutional knowledge and experience, or to fully repay them for their collective contribution to California's coastal protection legacy. The inevitable result of having so many dedicated public servants who have committed their entire professional careers to coastal protection is that they leave a big hole when they go. And there are more coming. Of the Commission's approximately 182 staff members, 47 are currently eligible for retirement. We thank them for their service, wish them all the best, and we will miss them each and every day. Their contributions will be forever appreciated by all who visit California's magical, magnificent 1,200 mile shoreline.

Allison Dettmner | Chief Deputy Director
| 32 Years

Deborah Lee | Coastal Program
Manager, San Diego District | 43 Years

Melisa Arellano | Personnel Specialist,
Human Resources | 32 Years

Susan Craig | Coastal Program Manager,
Central Coast | 21 Years

Bob Merrill | Coastal Program Manager,
North Coast | 40 Years

Henry (Sharif) Traylor | Enforcement
Officer | 32 Years

Mike Watson | Coastal Program Analyst
II, Central Coast | 28 Years

Where We Go From Here



Crescent City. Photo by Timothy Dickinson.

While nobody can predict what the coming year will bring, we can anticipate some of the more consequential items that will be coming before the Commission in 2022.

The state has declared the development of offshore wind to be a major priority, and the Commission will be playing a central role in that effort. Over the next year, staff will be participating in a significant statewide planning effort to implement [AB 525](#), as well as scheduling Commission federal consistency determination hearings on two specific offshore wind energy lease areas, one offshore of Humboldt and one offshore of Morro Bay.

Staff also anticipates that several desalination proposals and water supply projects will come before the Commission in 2022, including new facilities proposed by 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, and the Poseidon facility in Carlsbad.

The Commission's Transportation Program staff will continue to coordinate with Caltrans on project delivery and permitting. Major projects are anticipated to include the replacement of several historic bridges in the North Coast and Big Sur, in addition to the replacement of bridges that are vulnerable to sea level rise. Transportation Program staff will also contribute to Caltrans' ongoing planning efforts, such as the Santa Monica to Oxnard Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan, the Gaviota Curve Wildlife Connectivity Study, and Caltrans' Sea Level Rise Guidance Update, as well as ongoing efforts related to advance mitigation and active transportation. In addition to its permitting and planning workload, Transportation Program staff will continue to participate in the State Transportation and Environmental Partnership for Permitting Efficiency (STEPPE) working groups, as well as the Caltrans-led Coastal Development Permit Modernization Project (CAMP), which will assist Caltrans staff in understanding the requirements and complexities of the Coastal Act and coastal permitting process.

SANDAG's Del Mar Bluffs Stabilization Project 5; the U.S. Navy's Old Town San Diego Re-development Project; and a commercial, onshore salmon farm on the shores of Humboldt Bay will also likely come before the Commission.

Here's hoping for a better, brighter 2022, 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.



Moss Landing, Monterey County. Photo by Mark Bickerstaff.

In Memoria



It is with great sorrow that the Commission notes the passing of Sharif Traylor—long-time Enforcement Officer for the Central Coast District and a state employee for 32 years. Colleagues will forever miss his warm and friendly personality, sense of humor, and his love for and knowledge of sports and music. His contributions to the Central Coast will not be forgotten.