

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

45 FREMONT, SUITE 2000
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105-2219
VOICE AND TDD (415) 904-5200
FAX (415) 904-5400



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To: Commissioners, Alternates, and Interested Parties

From: Christiane Parry, Public Education Program Manager
Annie Kohut Frankel, School Education Coordinator
Sylvie Lee, Grants Program Coordinator
Eben Schwartz, Statewide Outreach Manager
Vivian Matuk, Environmental Boating Program Coordinator
Matt Yurko, Restoration Education Program Manager
Leah Henry, Development and Communications Associate
Luna Taylor, Management Services Technician

RE: 2015 Public Education Program Update

At the Coastal Commission meeting of Friday, December 11, 2015, the staff of the Public Education Program will update the Commission on program activities and accomplishments for the past year. This memo provides a summary of these activities and accomplishments.

Background

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

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

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

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

2015 Activities

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

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

Program Activities and Accomplishments 2015

Programs for Specific Audiences

Beach Wheelchairs

The Coastal Commission is committed to helping *all* visitors to the coast experience the beach firsthand. The Commission's beach wheelchair program aims to ensure that these chairs, which have wide, balloon tires that are able to move across soft sand, are widely available. To this end, the Commission has awarded \$109,000 to a variety of jurisdictions up and down the coast for the purchase of beach wheelchairs, including one on Catalina Island and one at the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center in 2015. In some years this funding has been made in conjunction with matching contributions from the Coastal Conservancy.

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

Boating Clean and Green Program

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

Clean Boating Kits and the Dockwalker Program. In 2015, the Boating Clean and Green Program developed and distributed 7,000 boater kits. Boater kits are designed to provide boaters with knowledge and tools to reduce their environmental impact. They include information on clean boating practices as well as an oil only absorbent bilge pillow. The kits are distributed by volunteer Dockwalkers. This year staff conducted 11 Dockwalker trainings at various locations throughout the state, and trained more than 154 volunteer Dockwalkers.

Boat Shows, Boating Events and Clean Boating Seminars. Staff participated in three boat shows and boating events and conducted ten clean boating seminars. These boating events and seminars reached over 1300 boaters.

Fishing Line Recycling Stations. With support from the BoatUS Foundation, the program has installed a total of 203 monofilament fishing line recycling stations throughout the state since 2009. To date, 1,084 pounds of fishing line have been collected and recycled. Stretched out, this line would stretch from San Francisco to Cloverdale, Indiana!

CA Stow It, Don't Throw Project. Staff is working with the Stow It, Don't Throw It Project to implement a project to build and distribute portable fishing line containers in California. Students create the containers using used tennis ball cans. The cans are then distributed to fishermen to hold old fishing line until they can get to a recycling collection site or a secure trash can. This year students constructed 1,000 containers, which were distributed to fishermen by the students, Boating Clean and Green staff, and partners.

Changing Tide Newsletter. The Changing Tide is the quarterly publication of the three chapters of the California Clean Boating Network (a forum of members of from the boating industry, government agencies, and environmental groups). In 2015, the program distributed three issues (8,000 copies each). The newsletter focuses on new trends in clean boating practices and environmental services for boaters.

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

Marinas and Yacht Clubs Oil Spill Preparedness Workshop. The Marinas and Yacht Clubs Spill Response Communication Packet was developed by a working group led by Boating Clean and Green staff and was comprised of representatives from Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR), the Coast Guard, California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), the Port Captains and Harbormasters Association, Marina Recreation Association, the Clean Marinas Program, Pacific Inter-Yacht Club Association, and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. The Packet is designed to help boating facilities access needed information in the event of an oil spill. In 2015, Boating Clean and Green staff, OSPR and CalOES conducted one workshop for boating facilities in Los Angeles to introduce the Packet. The workshop was attended by 40 marina and yacht club operators (Strategic Plan Action 2.3.2).

Coastal Cleanup Day for Boating Facilities. This year, thirty-six boating facilities participated in California Coastal Cleanup Day, involving 628 volunteers, who cleaned 48 miles and collected 10,847 pounds of trash and recyclables on land and from 87 vessels (kayaks, canoes and dinghies). Thirty-one percent of the volunteers brought their own reusable cleanup supplies. (Strategic Plan Actions 7.2.4 and 7.3.1)

Programs for Schools and Educators

Curriculum Resources

The coastal commission supports teachers in educating about our coast and ocean through curriculum resources in print form and online. During the first ten months of 2015, the Coastal Commission's webpages specifically for teachers received more than 7,400 visits.

Waves, Wetlands, and Watersheds is a science activity guide for teachers, that addresses topics such as endangered species, marine debris, coastal geology, water use, and water quality. This popular guide is aligned to California State Standards for third through eighth grades, and includes Community Action lessons adaptable for all ages up to and beyond grade 12. Copies of *Waves* are available free to California educators. The book can also be downloaded from our website, as can Spanish translations of the student handouts. To date, more than 16,780 hard copies of the book have been distributed (including 5,000 printed and distributed by the City of Los Angeles). Coastal Commission staff has held a total of 89 workshops, directly reaching 1,800 educators. (Strategic Plan Action 7.3.3)

In September 2014, staff launched the **Schoolyard Cleanup Program** to provide support to teachers and school groups in doing cleanups on their school grounds. Schools unable to take a field trip to the beach or river for Coastal Cleanup Day or an Adopt-A-Beach event are encouraged to do the important work of preventing litter at the source. Teachers may sign up for the program on the Commission's website, which includes extensive related lessons and teacher resources, detailed cleanup instructions, and post-cleanup analysis guidance. The activities of planning and carrying out the cleanup, collecting and analyzing the data, and communicating and acting on the results are directly aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and support Common Core State Standards as well. Teacher workshops on the impacts of marine debris in the context of the Schoolyard Cleanup Program were held in 2015 at the Contra Costa County STEAM Colloquium in San Ramon, the California Science Teachers Association annual conference in Sacramento, and the California STEM Symposium in Anaheim. So far this school year, teachers have reported more than 3,000 students taking part in this program. (Strategic Plan Actions 7.3.1 and 7.3.3)

Work continues on a **new high school curriculum** about coastal science, policy, and management in the context of the issues facing the California coast. Staff is working with a curriculum writer funded through a targeted Whale Tail Grant to the California State Parks Foundation. The project-based learning units will be aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core State Standards, and will be completed in 2016. A teacher workshop previewing material from the new curriculum was enthusiastically received at the California Science Teachers Association 2015 conference in Sacramento. (Strategic Plan Actions 3.3.3 and 7.3.3)

Coastal Art & Poetry Contest

Open annually to California students in kindergarten through 12th grade, this contest's goal is to encourage youth to reflect on the beauty and spirit of California's beaches and ocean, and inspire a greater sense of stewardship for these natural places. Every year, judges select five winners each in art and poetry, and around 40 honorable mentions. Since the contest began in 2003, more than 26,300 entries have been received from students from all over California.

Following each contest, the winning and honorably mentioned pieces are exhibited at venues up and down the coast. The 2015 contest exhibit locations were Channel Islands National Park Visitor Center in Ventura; Point Reyes National Seashore's Bear Valley Visitor Center in Marin County; the Ford House Museum in Mendocino; and, through January 31, Birch Aquarium at Scripps in La Jolla. Previous years' winners were placed on exhibit during 2015 at the State Capitol in Sacramento. Contest prizes were provided in part by Rubio's Restaurants, Acorn Naturalists, and Aquarium of the Pacific. The Tabula Poetica program at Chapman University provided judging assistance. Artwork from the Coastal Art & Poetry Contest is used in many Commission publications and throughout the Commission's website.

Kids' Ocean Day Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup

This program takes place in six locations: San Diego, Huntington Beach, Los Angeles, Monterey (where students are bused from Fresno), San Francisco, and Humboldt. In all of the locations, the emphasis of this program is on involving students from underserved schools, and often it provides the opportunity for a child's first visit to the beach. The Program includes a school presentation about the ocean, marine debris, and pollution prevention as well as a beach cleanup event. Approximately 6,700 students participated in the 2015 cleanup event, and even more saw the assembly. Aerial art formations created by the students on the beaches and photographed from the air featured images of sea animals and messages encouraging people to "unite for the ocean." This year, at a binational event, the students from San Diego held their cleanup at Borderfield State Park and were joined on the other side of the border fence by a group of youth in Tijuana. Photos of the aerial images can be viewed at www.oceanday.net.

Whale Tail Grants Program

The Whale Tail Grants Program distributes funds from the sales and renewals of the Whale Tail License Plate to schools, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies conducting coastal and marine education and stewardship programs, throughout the state. Since the program began in 1998 through June 2015, the Whale Tail Grants Program has awarded \$10.1 million in grants to 572 different projects. The program targets children and the general public with an emphasis on reaching underserved communities.

There are two categories of Whale Tail Grants: competitive and targeted. Competitive grants are awarded once a year in the early spring and are selected from a large number of proposals that are submitted from all over California. Each proposal is evaluated by staff using 12 criteria previously approved by the Commission. These projects tend to be one to two years in duration. Typically there is enough funding for approximately 15% of the total dollars requested. Staff recently solicited proposals for the 2015/16 round of competitive grants.

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

In Fiscal Year 2014/15, the Commission awarded \$754,000 to 36 different projects, including four grants in a subcategory for projects addressing climate change and/or ocean acidification (Strategic Plan Action 3.3.3). Examples of funded activities included: educational boat trips for youth from Santa Cruz, Port Hueneme, and Lawndale; climate change education and carbon reduction activities in San Diego and the Marin Headlands; marine life monitoring in Avila Beach; creative storm drain labeling in Arcata; aligning an ocean science curriculum to the Next Generation Science Standards at UC Berkeley; and an interactive exhibit on ocean health at the California State Fair.

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

Programs for the General Public

California Coastal Cleanup Day (CCD)

Over the past several years, the Commission staff has expanded outreach and significantly grown participation in the annual California Coastal Cleanup Day event. The results of this expanded outreach have been spectacular – in 2015, the Coastal Cleanup Day program enjoyed strong turnout and remained the state’s largest single-day volunteer event. A total of 68,353 volunteers took part at one of over 900 cleanup sites around the state in 54 of California’s 58 counties – the largest geographic reach the Cleanup has ever achieved. This represents an increase in the number of volunteers recruited to be part of Coastal Cleanup Day over 2014. (Strategic Plan Actions 7.2.5 and 7.3.1)

In addition to its strong support in coastal counties, the Cleanup Program continues to recruit participants from inland areas to clean creeks, rivers and lakes. These volunteers help to illustrate one of the event’s messages – that we are all connected to the coast and ocean by our rivers, streams and storm drains. In 2015, 24,318 volunteers cleaned inland rivers and waterways (a 7% jump from 2014), removing 778,160 pounds of debris, which was more than twice the amount of trash recovered at coastal locations. Combined with the coastal counties of the state, Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers removed 1,142,997 pounds of debris from the state’s coast and inland shorelines. This equaled 16.7 pounds of debris per volunteer, a huge increase over previous years that speaks to increased efforts in inland counties, where illegal dumping adds a significant amount of weight to the debris totals collected during Coastal Cleanup Day. It also indicates another continuing impact of the state’s drought, as volunteers along inland shorelines were able to reach legacy debris that had been under water in previous years.

Looking back over the history of the program helps to highlight the cumulative benefit of this program to the health of our coast and ocean. Since the Coastal Cleanup Day Program’s inception in 1985, almost 1.4 million volunteers have helped remove more than 22 million

pounds of debris from California's coast, ocean, and inland shorelines. (Strategic Plan Action 7.2.5)

Coastal Cleanup Day Publicity. Publicizing the Cleanup is a major aspect of the work that Commission staff undertakes each year. Making sure that the public knows that the Cleanup is coming up and how important it is that they take part is a critical step that allows the Commission to support local partners and increase the connection between the Cleanup and the Commission. In 2015, the Commission continued a campaign originally developed in 2014 by an international advertising agency, BBDO. This campaign showed marine debris in coastal and inland locations that resembled other iconic images. In 2015, Commission staff worked with a well-known Los Angeles photographer, Mark Liebowitz, and Radley Studios, LA to develop another image to supplement this campaign. On a beach, this year's new photo showed seaweed littered with debris that spelled out the letters "SOS," with a tagline that read "The coast needs our help." Staff also continued to use the popular inland waterway image of marine debris forming an obvious frowny face in a river with the tagline: "Our Waterways Could Use a Pick-Me-Up." These images and posters proved extremely popular among the local coordinators of the event and the general public as well. The images can be viewed on the Coastal Cleanup Day webpages, found here: www.coastalcleanupday.org, where one can also view the Public Service Announcement developed for the event by BBDO.

The Commission's newest effort to publicize Coastal Cleanup Day was a summer-long project to map every single cleanup location in California to provide volunteers a seamless method for finding a cleanup location near them. Working with the Commission's IT staff and a summer intern brought on specifically for this task, Commission staff researched the locations of every cleanup site, gathered the information necessary for volunteers to know how to register for that site, and then mapped the cleanups using the template previously developed by the Commission for its "Your Coast" beach access map. The new map was a powerful and valuable tool for volunteers and organizers across the state, and now that the groundwork for this map has been laid, future updates will be much simpler and quicker.

Corporate Partners in CCD. The Coastal Cleanup Day Program once again enlisted strong corporate partners, which greatly assisted our outreach efforts. Crystal Geyser Alpine Spring Water continued as lead sponsor for the event. In addition to their financial support, Crystal Geyser provided free water, primarily in gallon-size containers, in 51 Coastal Cleanup regions, covering almost all of the Cleanup volunteers. This is a crucial benefit that helps local coordinators immensely. The Coastal Cleanup Day Program also enjoyed new support from Orchard Supply Hardware, a critical partner that was able to provide buckets in many key locations, helping to reduce the amount of single-use disposable bags used by the Cleanup. These partners joined continuing sponsors Rubio's Fresh Seafood Restaurant, NOAA, CalOES, Oracle, the Whale Tail® Ecoplate, Union Bank, See's Candies, California State Parks Foundation, Ocean Conservancy, and an array of in-kind and media support from partners around the state.

BYO for CCD. The Commission staff launched a new program in 2010 that has grown significantly since then known as "BYO for CCD." In recognition of the need to reduce the amount of waste created by the event itself, the Coastal Cleanup Day Program began asking volunteers to bring their own reusable cleanup supplies from home, rather than using the single-

use disposable plastic items available at cleanup locations. Whenever possible, the Commission and our partners also provide reusable supplies like buckets and gardening gloves for volunteer use. The initiative has been a great success and has grown each year it has been in place, as more volunteers hear the message and more local coordinators gather enough reusable supplies to make the plastic bags and gloves unnecessary. Staff estimates that one half of all participants in the 2015 Cleanup either brought a reusable item from home or were able to use reusable Cleanup items provided at their site. As a result, the Commission has been able to order 150,000 fewer trash bags over the past 3 years. The initiative is helping to reduce the environmental footprint of the Cleanup while educating volunteers about simple lifestyle changes that cumulatively can have enormous, positive benefits to our coastal and marine environments. (Strategic Plan Action 7.3.2)

Coastal Cleanup Day Survey. As part of an effort to improve and learn about the overall impact of the Cleanup, staff again conducted a survey of participants in the 2015 event. The survey elicits information about Cleanup volunteers and their experience participating in the cleanup e.g. how they heard about the event, whether participating in the event raised their awareness, and how they expect the experience to affect future behavior regarding the environment. Staff also uses the survey to collect feedback and suggestions.

Over 350 participants responded to the on-line survey. Since it was not a random sample, it is important to consider potential biases of the survey – not everyone heard about the survey (depended on local site coordinator communication), and not everyone is inclined to take an on-line survey. That said, some general trends can be inferred from some of the very strong results. For example, almost all survey respondents (85.7% in 2015) report that participating in the event motivated them to take specific actions to protect the environment, such as educating others, picking up street and beach litter, reducing their use of single-use disposable items, etc.

In addition, the survey showed that participation in the Cleanup dramatically increased respondents' assessment of their knowledge of the causes and impacts of marine debris. 85.5% of respondents considered themselves either "knowledgeable" or "very knowledgeable" about the causes of marine debris after the event, as opposed to only 67.8% before the event, a 17.7% increase. Similarly, 85% of all survey takers considered themselves "knowledgeable" or "very knowledgeable" about the impacts caused by marine debris after the event, as opposed to 70% before the event, an increase of 15%. These findings indicate that the Cleanup is both educational and motivational for many participants.

When asked what other activities the state should pursue to reduce and prevent marine debris, 73% supported more public education about the issue, and 66% supported more volunteer cleanups. These two answers were the top rated among the range of options listed, and indicate that participants strongly support the work of the Commission's Public Education Program.

Adopt-A-Beach Program

The Commission staff has continued to improve the Adopt-A-Beach Program, connecting volunteers with the resources they need to organize their own cleanups and become environmental stewards in their local communities. The program has strong participation in the 15 coastal counties and in recent years has expanded into Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Each of our 48 beach managers assists groups in conducting cleanups at their “adopted” beach, helping to bring more than 25,000 people to an Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup in 2015, contributing nearly 50,300 volunteer hours. (Strategic Plan Action 7.2.5)

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

Coastweeks

Commission staff serves as the California coordinator for Coastweeks. California celebrates Coastweeks starting on Coastal Cleanup Day and over the following three weeks. The staff creates an online calendar of events that are connected to the ocean, coast, and inland waterways, occurring throughout the state. In 2015, our on-line calendar included 364 events.

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

Community-Based Restoration and Education Program (CBREP)

The Commission staff continued its work on the Community-Based Restoration and Education Program at Upper Newport Bay, begun in 2001. To date, the program has engaged over 22,500 volunteers, who together have restored more than 15 acres of coastal salt marsh, riparian and coastal sage scrub habitats. Volunteers have planted 32,000 native plants (the vast majority of which were propagated in an on-site native plant nursery) and removed over 48 tons of invasive plant material (not including material left on site).

2015 programming worked on maintaining and expanding current restoration sites. Volunteers who attended restoration events represented schools, community groups, and corporations through such varied groups as Chapman University, Occidental University, PIMCO, Bank of America, Pacific Life, Master Gardeners, AP Environmental Science classes from local high schools, and Scouting troops.

This year, staff stepped up efforts to recruit and train college interns, who act as leaders for our community habitat restoration events. These students receive training in volunteer event management, environmental education, and ecological restoration techniques. Making use of student interns has allowed the program to increase its regular program offerings to include an event focused at high school students and a habitat restoration series that offers committed volunteers a series of ecological restoration and environmental science classes combined with restoration field work. Total events open to the public now number 10 each month not including exclusive programs scheduled upon request by school and corporate groups. The recruitment and training of these student leaders increases our capacity to act as a resource for engaging the community with their local environment and ways they can protect and restore it.

Program staff also continued to develop a restoration site monitoring report that details the first three years of data collected on our current active work site, called Newport Valley. The report will share details about the successes and challenges of our restoration work, and will detail native and invasive plant coverage as well as the evidence of wildlife, human impacts, and soil quality. Staff will use the findings to adjust restoration plans as needed to improve future success. The monitoring report will be updated each year as new data is collected. The initial report is scheduled to be made public by the end of December 2015.

CBREP High School Curriculum. Staff continued to distribute the CBREP high school curriculum, called “Our Wetlands, Our World”. The curriculum is aligned to the State Science Content Standards, and focuses on the history and ecology of Upper Newport Bay; the effects of urbanization, invasive species and loss of biodiversity; and the importance of restoration and stewardship. Staff continued to make available “Our Wetlands, Our World” activity kits to allow teachers to borrow materials needed for each activity, and to support use of the curriculum in the classroom and at the Upper Newport Bay.

Digging In Guide. The CBREP also continued to distribute “Digging In: A Guide to Community-based Habitat Restoration.” The Guide explains the basic steps of information gathering, site selection, project implementation, monitoring, maintenance, and working with volunteers.

Ocean and Coastal Photography Contest

In 2015 the Commission continued its successful partnership with the Thank You Ocean Campaign to co-host the Annual California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest. The contest is held entirely online with digital images. Fairmont Hotels & Resorts of California donated overnight stays at luxury hotels for the winners. A panel of judges selected three winning photographs, and online voters selected their favorite as the “viewers’ choice” winner. This year there was a total of 1,003 entries submitted. The winning photographs, along with 13 honorable mentions, are featured on the contest website, <http://mycoastalphoto.com>.

In 2015 staff continued to offer a traveling exhibit of a selection of winning photographs. The collection was displayed at the State Capitol Building, the Santa Maria Public Library, and the Fairmont hotel in Newport Beach, and it will be at the Topanga Public Library in December.

On-line and Direct Outreach

COAST4U.ORG. The Commission’s public education web pages provide detailed information on all of the programs, contests, and resources the program offers to the public. They include downloadable curricular materials and hard-copy request forms; a video lending library; a page in Spanish detailing and linking to our many Spanish language resources; and interactive Google maps on topics such as Whale Tail Grant locations, beach wheelchair availability, and available Adopt-A-Beach sites. In the first 10 months of 2015, the Public Education web pages had approximately 329,000 page views.

Environmental Fairs and Events. Each year, staff hosts an educational booth at a number of environmental fairs and events, handing out materials, and talking to attendees. This year, staff exhibited education resources and spoke to **3,201** people at **16** events. Our 2015 list of events included Monterey Whale Fest, San Francisco International Ocean Film Fest, Berkeley Bay Festival, Ventura Earth Day, San Diego EarthFair in Balboa Park, San Jose State Earth Day, Los Angeles Sanitation Districts Earth Day, Oakland EcoFest Sustainability Festival at Laney

College, State Scientist Day at the State Capitol, California State Fair Beach Buddy Adventure in Sacramento, Sunset Elementary School Environmental Fair, Bureau of Land Management's Discover the Coast event in Point Arena, California Science Education Conference in Long Beach, the Bay Area Science Festival at AT&T Park, California's 48th Annual Native American Day, and the Plastic Pollution Symposium in Monterey.

Policy and Coordination

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

The Marine Debris Action Coordination Team (MDACT) of the West Coast Governor's Alliance on Ocean Health, which Commission staff has chaired since 2008, had an eventful year in 2015. Having completed the West Coast Marine Debris Strategy in 2014, which will serve as a blueprint for actions to be undertaken to address marine debris collaboratively over the coming years, the MDACT transitioned to become the West Coast Marine Debris Alliance. As a new entity, the Marine Debris Alliance will be able to grow its membership to include a broader cross-section of the marine debris community in California, Oregon, and Washington, and to undertake actions that will support efforts at local, state, and regional levels. The Marine Debris Alliance continues to seek new funding and expanded membership as it expands its role in 2016 to undertake specific projects that can support the ongoing marine debris work taking place along the West Coast. (Strategic Plan Action 2.2.10)

Public Education staff also participated in the Environmental Literacy Task Force (ELTF), established by Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. The ELTF was tasked with developing an Environmental Literacy Blueprint, which is designed to guide the state in improving students' environmental literacy. An environmentally literate citizen has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation, and commitment to work individually and collaboratively toward solving current problems and preventing new ones. The task force began meeting in June 2014. The Blueprint was released in September 2015, and can be viewed [here](#). It emphasizes that environmental education can no longer be considered "nice-to-have" and non-essential. It is a right of all students, and is vital to the future of the planet.

Funding Sources

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

Whale Tail[®] License Plate

From its launch in 1997 through September 2015 (the most recent data available), a total of 232,587 California drivers had purchased the Commission's Whale Tail[®] License Plate, and sales and renewal fees had raised \$85.6 million for environmental programs - \$24.5 million to the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account (CBCEA) and \$61.1 million to the

Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF). Each year, the legislature appropriates funds from the CBCEA to the Coastal Commission to carry out Coastal Cleanup Day, Adopt-A-Beach, and other coastal and marine education programs, including grants to nonprofits and local agencies. The CBCEA also funds projects of the State Coastal Conservancy. The ELPF funds a variety of state environmental programs.

Cleanup Day Sponsorships

The Public Education Program raises funds for California Coastal Cleanup Day through corporate and government partners. A list of sponsorship partners for Coastal Cleanup Day 2015 is included in the section of this report on Coastal Cleanup Day, on page 7.

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

Beginning in 2014, California taxpayers had the opportunity to check a box and make a donation to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund in the voluntary contributions section of the state tax return. Funds from donations to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund support marine education and coastal stewardship, through the Whale Tail Grants Program.

The fund raised \$241,040 the first year, which had no minimum total contribution requirement. Beginning in 2015, the fund must raise an amount established by the Franchise Tax Board, in order to stay on the tax form for the following year. In 2015, the fund was required to raise a minimum of \$250,000 to stay on the tax form in 2016. The fund met this requirement and has raised \$275,704 through October 2015. As a result, it will remain on the tax form in 2016.

Gyro, an award-winning international advertising agency, worked with the staff pro bono for the past two years to create marketing campaigns for the tax check-off box. The latest campaign ran between February and May of 2015 and featured a website (www.checkthecoast.org), banner advertisements on websites such as Sunset.com, KQED.org, OC Weekly, and Surfline, advertisements in BART stations in the Bay Area, billboards in San Francisco, banners in Santa Monica Place, a radio advertisement, Google AdWords, and social media, including ads on Facebook and Twitter. In addition, numerous partner organizations expanded the Campaign's reach through social media posts.

Other Fundraising Efforts

The Public Education Program encourages donations to support coastal and marine education programs. To this end, staff maintains a “[Donate/Shop for the Coast](#)” page on the www.Coast4u.org website. In addition to making a donation, the public can purchase t-shirts, hats, and posters. The site links to an [on-line art gallery](#) where the public can purchase framed prints of selected winners of the photo contest and art contest. Greeting cards, throw pillows, tote bags, and shower curtains printed with the images are also available for purchase. A portion of the proceeds from these sales goes to the Adopt-A-Beach account at the California State Parks Foundation, which is managed by Public Education staff.