

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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October 3, 2016

TO: California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties

FROM: John Ainsworth, Acting Executive Director

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report, October 2016

Significant reporting items for the month. [Strategic Plan](#) (SP) reference provided where applicable:

LCP Program Status – North Coast (Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino Counties) (SP Goal 4)

County of Del Norte

Del Norte County has about 49 miles of shoreline extending from the Oregon border to the Humboldt County line. Roughly half is sandy beaches and half is rocks and rugged beaches that provide significant habitat. The coastal zone area totals approximately 64 square miles of the County's 1,230 square miles of total land area and contains the County of Del Norte and the incorporated City of Crescent City. The County contains special rural communities and tribal lands of several Native American tribes. Del Norte County also includes significant forest, agriculture and fisheries resources, state beaches and parks that protect coast redwood habitat and provide access and recreation, and extensive coastal dunes. Key wetland areas are at Lakes Earl and Talawa and at the mouth of the Smith and Klamath Rivers. In addition, the Crescent City Harbor lies just south of the City of Crescent City, and provides significant moorage for commercial fishing and recreational vessels alike.

The Del Norte County LCP has four segments (the County segment certified in 1983, the Harbor Segment certified in 1987, the Lopez Creek segment certified in 1987 and the Point Saint George segment which remains uncertified. The Pacific Shores Subdivision is also an Area of Deferred Certification (ADC). The City of Crescent City LCP has two segments, the Crescent City segment certified in 1983 and the McNamara-Gillespie segment certified in 1984. The City segment, including the Little Mo-Peep ADC and McNamara-Gillespie segment, was comprehensively updated in 2011. The County is working with the Crescent City Harbor District on an update of the Crescent City Harbor segment, expected for submittal to the Commission for certification in mid- 2017.

County of Humboldt

With approximately 180 miles of coastline, plus an additional 102 miles of shoreline along Humboldt Bay, Humboldt County leads the state as the county with the greatest intertidal frontage. The coastal zone area totals approximately 203 square miles of the County's 4,052 square miles of total land area. There are five LCP jurisdictions in Humboldt County: the County and the Cities of Trinidad, Arcata, Eureka, and Fortuna (the City of Ferndale was removed from the coastal zone in 1979). The County's LCP has six geographic segments, each certified between 1982 and 1985, with the exception of three Areas of Deferred Certification (ADCs): Stagecoach Hill and Big Lagoon Estates Subdivision in the North Coast Area Plan segment, and the Trinidad Area Shoreline Lots in the Trinidad Area Plan segment. In January of 2014, the Commission awarded the County an LCP grant of \$29,000 in part to resolve issues related to the ADCs.

Eureka, Arcata, and the Humboldt Bay Region

Humboldt Bay is the second largest natural bay in California and the largest estuary between San Francisco Bay and Coos Bay, Oregon. The bay is a significant harbor for port-related commercial and industrial uses as well as valuable for its ecological, aesthetic, and recreational resources. Historically the bay supported 10,000 acres of tidal marsh habitats. Since the mid-1800s, the majority of the historic tidelands were diked or filled, and today, only 10% of the historic tidal marsh habitat remains. The tidelands and submerged lands of the bay are administered by the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District and the Cities of Arcata and Eureka pursuant to legislative grants.

Humboldt Bay has the unfortunate distinction of being identified as having the highest rate of sea level rise in the State due to active land subsidence associated with the Cascadia Subduction Zone that lies offshore extending from Cape Mendocino to Vancouver Island, Canada. In 2013 the [Humboldt Bay Shoreline Inventory, Mapping and Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment](#), funded by the State Coastal Conservancy, was completed.¹ The assessment found that 50% of Humboldt Bay's 102-mile long shoreline is composed of artificial dike and railroad structures constructed over 100 years ago and in varying stages of disrepair. Some 26 miles of shoreline is rated as highly vulnerable to breaching and/or overtopping under today's higher high tide events. In 2015 the final [Humboldt Bay Sea Level Rise, Hydrodynamic Modeling, and Inundation Vulnerability Mapping report](#) was completed (also funded by the State Coastal Conservancy),² which projects between 2.0 feet and 5.3 feet of relative sea level rise by 2100. Together with the Adaptation Planning Project [Phase 2 report](#),³ the studies show that numerous critical regional assets and coastal resources are located in areas vulnerable to inundation if the shoreline is breached or overtopped, including municipal utility and stormwater infrastructure, state highways and local roads, urban residential and commercial areas, and thousands of acres of agricultural lands.

Both the Commission and the Ocean Protection Council have awarded LCP grants to fund LCP updates in the Humboldt Bay region that include policies addressing SLR and adaptation strategies to address SLR-related impacts and hazards. The OPC awarded a \$250,000 LCP grant to the City of Eureka in 2014 to update its LCP, which was certified in 1984 and partially updated in 1999. The City recently completed a vulnerability assessment (VA) and draft adaptation plan, which Commissions staff is currently reviewing and plans to provide comments on. The Commission awarded a \$54,000 LCP grant to the City of Arcata in 2014 to update its LCP, which was effectively certified in 1986. The City of Arcata has completed both its VA and draft policies for a comprehensive LCP update, which is expected to be transmitted to the Commission for certification in mid-2017. The OPC awarded a \$90,000 LCP grant to Humboldt County in 2014 to update the Humboldt Bay Area Plan segment of the County's LCP, which was certified in 1983. The County currently is building off of the City of Eureka's VA to complete its assessment identifying critical assets at risk in the unincorporated communities around Humboldt Bay. Concurrent updates of the three LCPs is facilitating a regional approach to developing SLR policies and adaptation strategies for the Humboldt Bay region.

In addition to sea level rise issues, Humboldt Bay also is considering changes to many of the land use and zoning designations around the bay. Both the County and the City of Eureka are

¹ [A. Laird 2013](#) is available at the [Humboldt Bay Harbor District's website](#), which also contains links to the GIS data and Google Earth data for viewing shoreline vulnerability and sea level rise inundation maps.

² [Northern Hydrology and Engineering 2015](#)

³ [A. Laird 2015](#)

examining their respective inventories of land designated and zoned for coastal dependent industrial (CDI) uses, and both are considering potentially redesignating/rezoning CDI land to other uses as well as developing LCP policies to allow for interim uses on vacant under-utilized CDI lands. In January of 2014, the Commission awarded the County an LCP grant of \$29,000 in part to complete an inventory of coastal dependent industrial (CDI) sites in the Humboldt Bay Area Plan segment to facilitate development of interim use policies for these currently under-used sites. Recently the County submitted an application for a major LCP amendment that would change the Humboldt Bay Area Plan and coastal zoning regulations to allow for the use of vacant and underutilized CDI land around the bay on an interim basis by a variety of other, non-CDI uses (e.g., general industrial and light industrial uses). This amendment is expected to be brought to the Commission for action in early to mid-2017. In addition, in November of 2014 the Commission awarded a grant of \$35,000 to the County to complete a CDI land inventory and related mapping product and to update policies related to tsunami hazards, since the region is high risk for severe flooding associated with a near-shore tsunami event generated by a major Cascadia earthquake.

Uncertified Areas of Humboldt County

In January of 2014, the Commission awarded an LCP grant of \$29,000 to Humboldt in part to certify the County's three Areas of Deferred Certification in the Trinidad and Big Lagoon areas. Uncertified lands in the two County planning segments (Trinidad Area Plan and North Coast Area Plan) total approximately 1,200 acres and constitute a significant portion of the North Coast District's permit workload. The County Planning Commission has approved draft land use plan designations and zoning districts for these areas, including overlay zones related to geologic hazards and ESHA protection. The County plans to schedule the LCP amendments for action by the Board of Supervisors after receipt of additional feedback on the draft designations, policies, and ordinances from Commission staff.

City of Trinidad

The City of Trinidad has the oldest certified LCP in the state, certified in 1980. The City is on the semi-enclosed Trinidad Bay, both a harbor-of-refuge to transient vessels and home to numerous commercial fishing, charter, and recreational boats. Trinidad is presently in the process of updating its LCP, including policies and standards for resolving issues associated with its one ADC, the Trinidad Harbor and Upland Support Area. In November of 2014, the Commission awarded an LCP grant in the amount of \$80,000 to the City to assist with the preparation of their comprehensive update, with the work program focusing on the resolving the uncertified harbor area, development of policies and procedures for the protection of cultural resources, and identifying adaptation measures for responding to sea level rise and climactic changes. Commission staff has been meeting regularly with the City, who is on target to transmit an LCP amendment application for a comprehensive update to the Commission for certification in April of 2017.

City of Fortuna

Finally, the City of Fortuna has only a portion of a single 3½-acre developed parcel situated in the Coastal Zone. Consequently, given the small physical extent of this area, the City has not undertaken efforts to adopt an LCP and to date has deferred to the Commission's retained coastal development permit authority at this site (City-owned "River Lodge").

Mendocino County

Mendocino County has about 159 miles of shoreline. The coastal zone area totals approximately 145 square miles of the County's 3,878 square miles of total land area and includes the County of Mendocino and two incorporated cities: Fort Bragg and Point Arena. The area also contains

Noyo Harbor (Noyo Harbor District), from which a viable commercial fishing fleet and numerous recreational water craft are based.

The County includes numerous rural coastal communities, and state beaches and parks that provide significant public access and recreation opportunities, from the remote, rugged northern shoreline within the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, to the resort destination / visitor-serving accommodation oriented towns of Mendocino, Little River, Albion, Elk, and Gualala. In addition, substantial agricultural and timberland resources exist along the uplifted marine terraces and within the lower watersheds of the Ten Mile, Big, Albion, Navarro, Garcia, and Gualala Rivers.

The Land Use Plan of the Mendocino County LCP was certified in November 1985. Subsequently two geographic segments were created: the Town of Mendocino segment, at the County's behest in 1990, and the "Pygmy Forest Vegetation" segment, as the result of a judicial ruling in 1995. The Implementation Plan of the "balance" of Mendocino County and thus the LCP was effectively certified in September 1992, followed by the Mendocino Town Plan segment in November 1996. In October 2014, the County submitted a comprehensive amendment to the Town Plan that addresses myriad changes to its visitor-serving accommodation provisions, establishes two new public facility sites, and institutes sustainable development policies for rainwater harvesting and incorporating low impact development design features in new development. In the interest of expediting its certification, is currently conducting local hearings on further refinements to its October 2014 Town Plan update amendment submittal was resubmitted to the Commission for certification review in January 2016. Hearings on the Town Plan Amendment will commence at the Commission's October meeting in Ukiah and are anticipated to be completed by early 2017. The Pygmy Forest Vegetation segment remains uncertified.

The City of Fort Bragg's LCP, originally certified in February 1984, and was comprehensively updated in 2008. The City is also engaged in developing a specific plan based LCP amendment for redevelopment of the 320-acre former Georgia-Pacific California Wood Products Manufacturing Facility. The City of Point Arena's LCP was initially certified in December 1981. A comprehensive update was subsequently certified in August of 2006.







Sea Level Guidance Implementation Outreach (SP 3.1)

Commission staff have been providing regular outreach and training sessions to support implementation of the Commission's Sea Level Rise (SLR) Guidance and in support of LCP Grant work. In September staff participated in several events:

SANDAG's Shoreline Preservation Working Group

On September 1, 2016, Commission staff attended a meeting of SANDAG's Shoreline Preservation Working Group and gave a presentation on the Coastal Commission's Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance. This working group advises SANDAG on issues related to their adopted Shoreline Preservation Strategy and opportunities for beach replenishment in the San Diego County region. Staff's presentation was part of a panel session that also included presentations on the ongoing sea level rise adaptation efforts by the Cities of Carlsbad, Del Mar, and Imperial Beach.

Joint Agency Community Resilience Workshop

Over the course of the last year, Commission staff, along with partners from the Coastal Conservancy, NOAA, USC Sea Grant, and USGS, have been working with FEMA Region 9 to develop workshops designed to engage local government staff and other relevant stakeholders in a discussion about community resilience to hazards and climate change. On September 15th, Commission staff from the Sea Level Rise Team and the Central Coast District Office participated in the first of these multi-agency resilience workshops in San Luis Obispo County. This workshop brought together federal and state agency partners along with local planners, emergency managers, and others from the County and incorporated cities to discuss hazards and vulnerabilities in the community and to learn about tools, guidance documents, and grant programs to support resilience planning (including the Commission's Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance and LCP Grant Program). Commission staff gave a joint presentation with a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Specialist to identify similarities among the goals, planning processes, and outcomes of LCPs and Local Hazard Mitigation Plans. The presentation also sought to identify opportunities for enhancing alignment between these related plans with the goal of leveraging resources to better support proactive sea level rise adaptation planning. FEMA intends to continue this collaborative effort and to host similar workshops in other coastal communities this winter and spring, and Commission staff will continue to be involved in this work.

Meetings and Events

California Coastal Law Conference

On September 22nd & 23rd several current and former Commissioners and Coastal Commission staff participated in a conference hosted by CLE International entitled "California Coastal Law: All Points of View on Legal & Policy Issues". Commissioner Turnbull-Sanders participated in a panel on Civil Rights and Environmental Justice in the Coastal Zone; and Commissioners Bochco and Mitchell, along with former Commissioners Zimmer and Brennan, participated in a panel on Perspectives on the Coastal Decision-Making Process. Commission staff participated in sessions on Sea Level Rise and Climate Change in the Coastal Zone, the Biology of ESHA and Wetlands, Staff Perspectives on the Coastal Process, and Takings and the Coastal Act.

Surfer's Beach Shoreline Protection Project – San Mateo County

On September 2nd, Commissioner Groom, Commission staff, San Mateo County officials, State elected officials and Caltrans celebrated the completion and opening of the Surfer's Beach Shoreline Protection Project. The \$1.8 million project included installing some 175 feet of revetment to protect this heavily used corridor of Highway 1; improving and connecting a formal paved pedestrian path to join segments of the California Coastal Trail; and installation of a staircase down to the beach. The project is also an important adaptation planning project that authorized the revetment for a ten-year period to allow time for a permanent solution to be developed to address erosion in the area for the protection of Highway 1 and the public pathway. The project was made possible through the collaborative efforts of San Mateo County, City of Half Moon Bay, Caltrans and the Coastal Commission.

Coastal Cleanup Day 2016

California Coastal Cleanup Day was held on Saturday September 17th. The Commission along with its many non-profit and local government partners hosted more than 920 individual cleanup sites that day, the most in the history of the event. Results are still rolling in from around the state, but initial reports show that 52,656 volunteers turned out for the cleanup, and removed close to 640,000 pounds of trash and recyclables from our coast and inland waterways.

The cleanup is an immense effort on the parts of our staff, our partners, and thousands of volunteers across the state who lead cleanup sites large and small. Thanks to the Commission for supporting this effort. A special thanks to those of you who were able to join one of your local cleanups: Commissioner Cox, Commissioner Uranga, Commissioner Vargas, Commissioner Turnbull-Sanders, Commissioner Howell, Commissioner Luevano and Commissioner Groom.

We've already begun planning for next year's cleanup, and it's never too early to mark your calendar for Saturday, September 16th for what will be the Commission's 33rd Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day.

California's Coastal Act: The Next 40 Years

On Thursday, November 17 (9:00 am – 6:00 pm) there will be a one day conference entitled **California's Coastal Act: The Next 40 Years**. The event is sponsored by UC Davis, UC Berkeley, UCLA, and Stanford Law Schools and will be held at the Bancroft Hotel across from UC Berkeley. The cost for the event will be \$25 to cover lunch and refreshment costs. The law schools are organizing the agenda and the speakers. Information will be posted for Commissioners and the public on the Commission's web site soon. To maximize public participation and access to the event, the Coastal Commission staff has arranged for the event to be live web-streamed and archived with access on the Commission's website.