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RE: 2017 Public Education Program Update

At the Coastal Commission meeting of Thursday, November 9, 2016, 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 update report will point out programmatic links to the Strategic Plan.

2017 Activities

In 2017, 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, income levels, and physical abilities, whether they live along the coast or inland, with a particular emphasis on reaching Californians who are underserved in terms of access to the coast and to marine education programs.

Topics addressed include ocean pollution (including marine debris), habitat restoration, climate change, sustainability choices, wildlife, ocean literacy, coastal science, and policy. Some PE Programs reach the public directly; while others provide coordination support, educational resources, grants, training, and technical assistance. Here are a few of the highlights of 2017:

- The 32nd Annual **California Coastal Cleanup Day** on September 16, 2017, attracted 61,280 volunteers who collected 658,278 pounds of debris. There were a record 1,005 cleanup sites spread across 55 counties – the broadest geographic range in the event’s history.
- Staff launched an eight week **Online Clean Boating Quiz** campaign over the summer, to increase awareness among California boaters of the importance of clean boating practices related to oil, fuel, hazardous waste, sewage and marine debris, and regulations associated with these potential sources of boat pollution.
- **California Coastal Voices**, a new Coastal Commission curriculum for middle and high school students that focuses on coastal science, policy, and management in the context of issues facing the California coast, was officially launched with a series of teacher workshops.
- Staff hosted a **Webinar** in October for prospective grantees on how to apply for a **Whale Tail Grant**, as part of an effort to enhance outreach for the benefit of less experienced applicants.
- Celebration of the **20th anniversary of the Whale Tail® License Plate**, with a media campaign, and a beach cleanup event in conjunction with Heal the Bay on October 21st. Almost a quarter of a million plates have been sold to date, raising \$27.4 million for the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account (CBCEA), which provides funding for Whale Tail Grants, cleanup programs, and Coastal Conservancy projects, and \$69.1 million to the Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF).
- Staff collaborated with the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) and others on updating and revising the **California Ocean Litter Strategy**,

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 2017

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 over \$135,000 to a variety of jurisdictions up and down the coast for the purchase of beach wheelchairs. In 2017, this included a new chair for Ocean Beach in San Francisco, which up to now has never had one. 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 about clean and safe boating practices 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 2017, the Boating Clean and Green Program developed and distributed 8,100 boater kits. Boater kits are designed to provide boaters with knowledge and tools to reduce their environmental impact, and include information on clean boating practices as well as an oil only absorbent pillow and a fuel bib. The kits are distributed by partner Dockwalkers. This year staff conducted 13 Dockwalker trainings at various locations throughout the state, and trained more than 200 Dockwalkers.

Boat Shows, Boating Events, and Clean Boating Seminars. Staff participated in two boat shows and boating events and conducted eight clean boating seminars, which altogether reached over 1,000 boaters.

Fishing Line Recycling Stations. Since 2009, the program has installed a total of 243 stations, located throughout the state. The stations and their locations can be seen at: <http://goo.gl/maps/5zF5F>. To date, 1,480 pounds of fishing line have been collected and recycled. Stretched out, this line would stretch from San Francisco to Westfield, Massachusetts!

CA Stow It, Don't Throw Project. Staff continued working with the Stow It, Don't Throw It Project to implement a project to build and distribute portable fishing line containers using used

tennis ball cans. The fishing line containers are created by students and then distributed for free to fishermen to hold old fishing line until they can get to a recycling collection site or a secure trash can. Since 2015, students from 50 schools have constructed 4,640 containers, which were distributed to fishermen by the students, Boating Clean and Green staff, and partners.

On-Board Fishing Line Recycling Program: Staff worked with partners to expand the availability of onboard fishing line recycling containers. The program began as a pilot in 2014, in partnership with the Santa Barbara Harbor, and its charter vessel, Stardust. Currently, two Santa Barbara charter boats have onboard recycling containers.

Based on this pilot project, staff worked with the Greater Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries to implement this program in the Bay Area. To date, in total the program has worked with 14 charter companies and installed 18 on board fishing line collection containers. Sixty-one pounds of fishing line have been collected and recycled by the On-Board Fishing Line Recycling Program.

Changing Tide Newsletter. This newsletter focuses on new trends in clean boating practices and environmental services for boaters statewide. It is published jointly by the three chapters of the California Clean Boating Network (a forum of members of from the boating industry, government agencies, and environmental groups). In 2017 the program distributed three issues of the newsletter (8,000 copies each).

Marinas and Yacht Clubs Oil Spill Preparedness Workshops. The Marinas and Yacht Clubs Spill Response Communication Packet is designed to help boating facilities access needed information in the event of an oil spill. The Packet was developed by a working group led by Boating Clean and Green staff and 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. .

In 2017, Boating Clean and Green staff, OSPR and CalOES conducted a workshop for boating facilities in Marina Del Rey to introduce the Packet. The workshop was attended by 25 marina and yacht club operators (Strategic Plan Action 2.3.2).

Coastal Cleanup Day for Boating Facilities. This year saw a significant expansion of boater involvement in Coastal Cleanup Day, with double the number of boating facilities participating and almost triple the number of volunteers. Sixty-four boating facilities participated, involving 1,966 volunteers, who cleaned 90.5 miles and collected 26,375 pounds of trash and recyclables on land and from 258 vessels (kayaks, canoes, and dinghies). (Strategic Plan Actions 7.2.4 and 7.3.1)

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Workshops. In order to increase awareness about the impact of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and prevent their spread, staff and partner organizations offered three workshops in Discovery Bay, Stockton, and Benicia, attended by 61 people. Workshops participants learned how to take action and prevent spreading AIS by inspecting and cleaning equipment and watercraft. The workshops were co-hosted by California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, and UC-Davis Romberg Tiburon Center.

Online Clean Boating Quiz. Staff launched a pilot project to educate boaters in the San Joaquin Delta about clean boating practices through an online Clean Boating Quiz. The success of the pilot spurred an eight-week statewide quiz campaign from June 26th to August 20th, 2017.

The goal of this online clean boating quiz is to increase awareness among all California boaters of the importance of implementing clean boating practices related to oil, fuel, hazardous waste, sewage and marine debris and regulations associated to these potential sources of boat pollution. In addition, the program wanted to reach out to those boaters staff can't reach out at boat shows, boating event or through the help of the partner Dockwalkers.

Digital banner ads and social media promoted postings resulted in 2,856 quiz completions, which included 1,748 passing. Visitors who answered incorrectly received correct information to facilitate learning. Each week during the eight-week campaign, staff randomly selected 25 incentive recipients for either inflatable lifejackets or clean boater kits. The quiz is available [here](#).

Programs for Schools and Educators

Curriculum Resources

The Coastal Commission supports teachers in educating students about California's coast and ocean through free resources in print and online, teacher training workshops, and other programs. From January 1 through October 15, 2017, the Coastal Commission's webpages specifically for teachers received more than 103,200 pageviews.

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 was created for third through eighth grades. The book is available free to California educators, both online and in hard copy, with student handouts in Spanish if needed. Since first published, 17,212 hard copies of the book have been distributed (including 5,000 printed and distributed by the City of Los Angeles). Teacher workshops highlighting *Waves, Wetlands, and Watersheds* were presented in 2017 by Commission staff in Richmond and Santa Rosa. (Strategic Plan Action 7.3.3)

The Schoolyard Cleanup Program provides support to teachers and school groups to do 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 (or those who want to expand their efforts) 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 Schoolyard Cleanup Program were presented during 2017 in Santa Rosa and in Sacramento at the California Science Teachers' Association conference. Since the program's launch in fall 2014, teachers have reported 9,554 students taking part. (Strategic Plan Actions 7.3.1 and 7.3.3)

In 2017, staff launched **California Coastal Voices**, a curriculum for middle and high school teachers, focusing on coastal science, policy, and management in the context of issues facing the

California coast. The project-based learning units are aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core State Standards and encourage students to get involved in issues of importance to their community. The six-unit book is available as a PDF along with associated web pages containing extensive online resources such as slide shows, data sets, and videos. Teacher workshops on California Coastal Voices have been presented in Sacramento, Palm Springs, Ventura, Hayward, Seaside, Newport Beach, and a San Diego event is planned for November 18. (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 2003, students from all over California have submitted 31,304 entries to the contest.

Each year's winners and honorable mentions are shown in a traveling exhibit at venues up and down the coast. The 2017 contest exhibit locations are Point Reyes National Seashore's Bear Valley Visitor Center in Marin County; the Ford House Museum in Mendocino; Channel Islands National Park Visitor Center in Ventura (through mid-November); and, December through late-January, the Seymour Center in Santa Cruz. Selections from past contests were displayed in front of the Governor's office at the State Capitol in February and at the San Leandro Main Library in August. Contest prizes for 2017 were provided in part by 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 its website.

Kids' Ocean Day Adopt-A-Beach School Assembly Program and Beach Cleanup

This Program includes a school presentation about the ocean, marine debris, and pollution prevention, as well as a beach cleanup event. It 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. Approximately 8,000 students participated in the 2017 cleanup event, and even more saw the assembly. Students also sat in formation on the beaches to create images and text photographed from the air; in 2017 this "aerial art" featured marine animals accompanied by a "Come Together" message. Photos of the aerial images can be viewed at www.oceanday.net.

Whale Tail Grants Program

The Whale Tail Grants Program awards funds to schools, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies conducting coastal and marine education and stewardship programs throughout the state. The funding for these grants comes from the sales and renewals of the Whale Tail[®] License Plate and beginning in FY2015/16, also from voluntary contributions to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund on the state tax return form. Since the program began in 1998 through June 2017, the Whale Tail Grants Program has awarded \$11.7 million in grants to 654 different projects. The program targets both children and the general public with an emphasis on reaching underserved communities.

Projects awarded Whale Tail Grants take place in a broad range of California cities located up and down the coast, on the Channel Islands, and from some inland locations as well. This geographic diversity can be seen on an interactive [online map](#) on the CCC website showing all grants that have been awarded throughout the Grants Program's history (Figure 1).

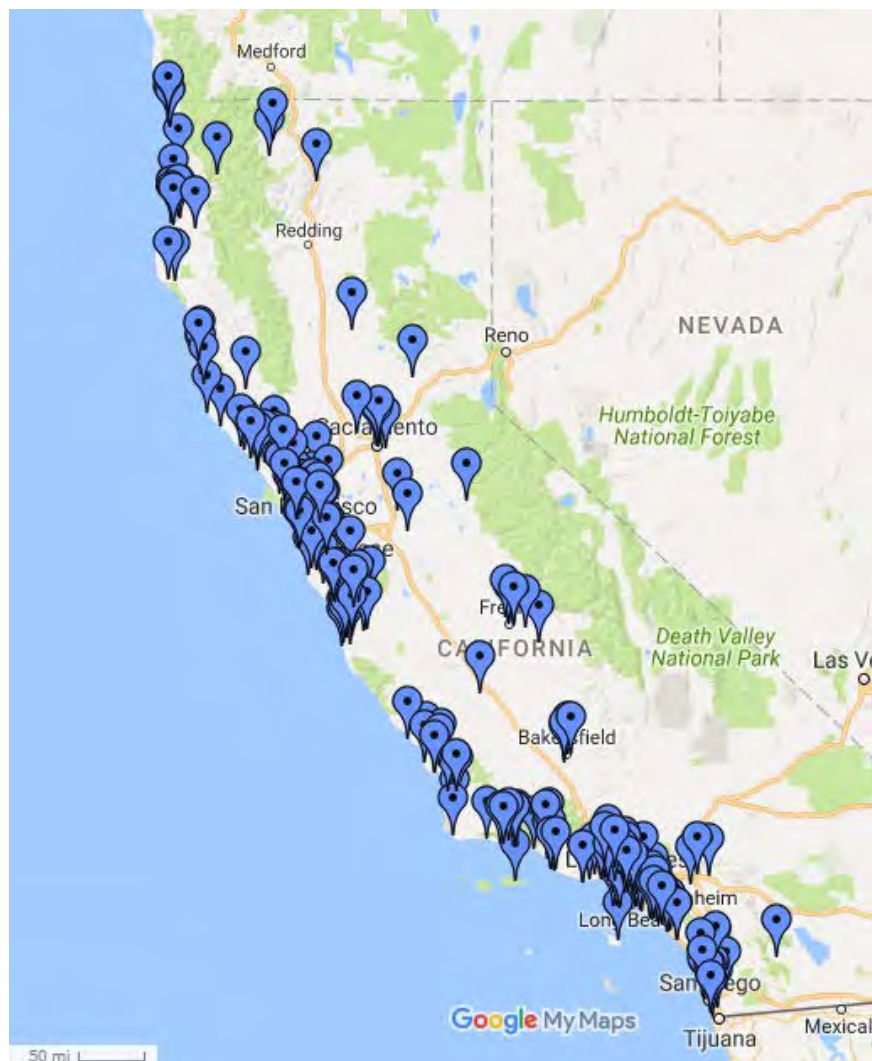


Figure 1-Map of Whale Tail Grants Awarded to Date

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 2017/18 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 2016/17, the Commission awarded a record \$868,000 to 42 different projects, including several in a subcategory for projects addressing climate change and/or ocean acidification (Strategic Plan Action 3.3.3). Examples of funded activities included: coastal habitat restoration and education by students in Santa Cruz; public outreach and microtrash cleanups to protect California condors in Big Sur; an ocean literacy outreach program using tidepool animals in Orange County; and a public exhibit about orcas, marine mammal communication, and marine debris in Fort Bragg.

In an attempt to make applying for a Whale Tail grant easier for organizations without extensive fundraising capacity, the staff recently offered a one-hour webinar providing instruction and helpful tips for completing a Whale Tail grant proposal. The presentation was well-attended and received positive feedback. The staff presented the webinar live and also posted a recording of the session, as well as all the presentation notes, for those unable to attend the live session.

Staff analyzed the ethnic diversity represented by people served through the Coastal Commission's Public Education grantmaking. For Whale Tail grants awarded in 2015/16 (the most recent year for which most projects have already shared results), nine of the 38 grants served the general population and the other 29 grants served targeted student groups, mostly underserved student groups (Figure 2).

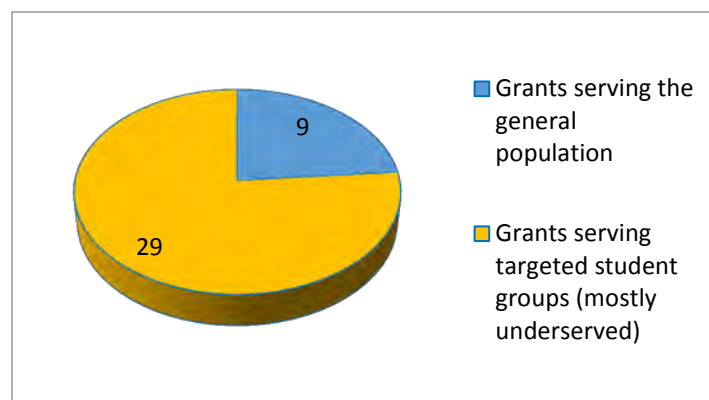


Figure 2-Grants Awarded in Fiscal Year 2015/16

Of these 29 grants reaching primarily underserved student groups, 85% of the participants were non-white. Specifically, an estimated two-thirds of the students were Latino, 7% were Asian or Pacific Islander, 6% were African-American, 3% were Native American, 3% were in another category (often more than one race), and 15% were Caucasian. (Figure 3)

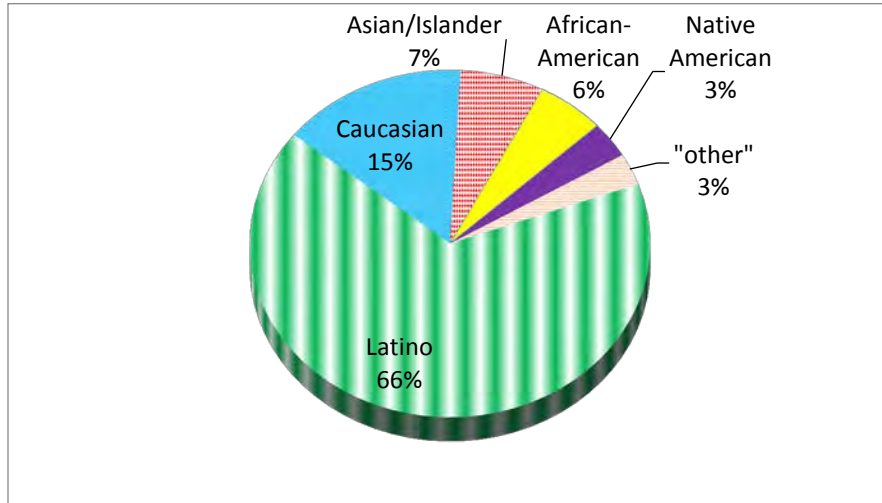


Figure 3-Composition of Whale Tail grantees reaching primarily underserved student groups

Comparing this data to the overall ethnic makeup of the state in 2015 (Figure 4), in 2015/16 the program reached proportionally more students from Latino populations (66% of target audiences versus 39% in population), more Native Americans, fewer students of Asian or Pacific Islander descent (7% versus 14% in population), fewer Caucasian students (15% versus 38% in general population), and an equivalent proportion of African Americans.

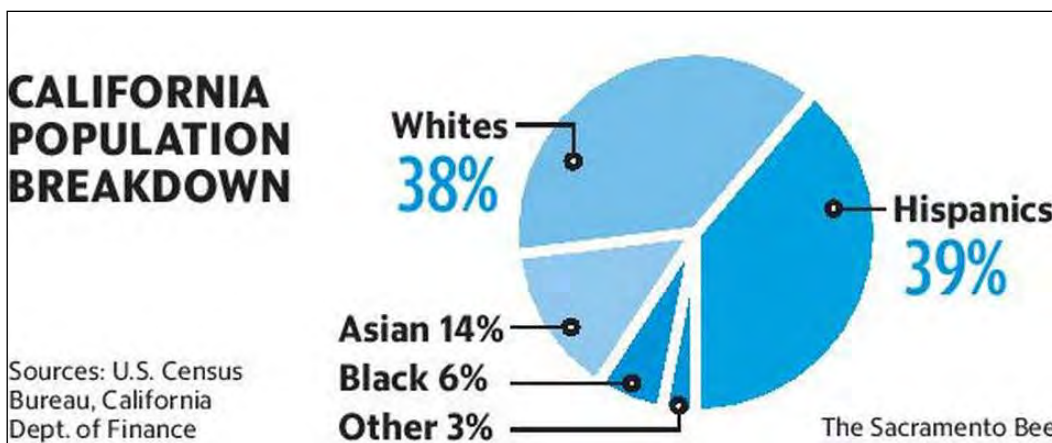


Figure 4-State Population in June 2015

Programs for the General Public

California Coastal Cleanup Day

Over the past several years, the Commission staff has expanded outreach and significantly grown the annual California Coastal Cleanup Day (CCD) event. In 2017, the Coastal Cleanup Day program hosted the most cleanup sites across the broadest geographic range in its history: 1,005 individual cleanup locations across 55 counties. A total of 61,280 volunteers took part in the event, maintaining the cleanup's status as the state's largest annual volunteer event. (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 2017, 18,958 volunteers cleaned rivers and waterways within inland counties, removing 348,155 pounds of debris, while many more cleaned inland shorelines within the coastal counties. Combined with those coastal counties, Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers removed 658,278 pounds of debris from the state's coast and inland shorelines. This equaled about 8 pounds of debris per coastal volunteer versus almost 195 pounds per volunteer within the inland counties, a discrepancy that speaks to differences in the types of items cleaned up at inland versus coastal cleanups. Inland cleanups are more often dealing with illegal dumping of large items, whereas coastal areas yield mostly single use disposables and small pieces of plastic.

Somewhat surprisingly, the total amount of debris removed reported thus far is the lowest recorded during the cleanup since 1995, when just over 37,000 volunteers participated. Although staff cannot say for certain what is responsible for this drop in debris weight, a combination of public education efforts combined with California's many new regulations regarding trash – especially new stormwater regulations – doubtlessly played some role.

Looking back over the history of the program helps to highlight the cumulative benefit of this program to the health of the coast and ocean. Since the Coastal Cleanup Day Program's inception in 1985, almost 1.5 million volunteers have helped remove over 23 million pounds of debris from California's coast, ocean, and inland shorelines. (Strategic Plan Action 7.2.5)

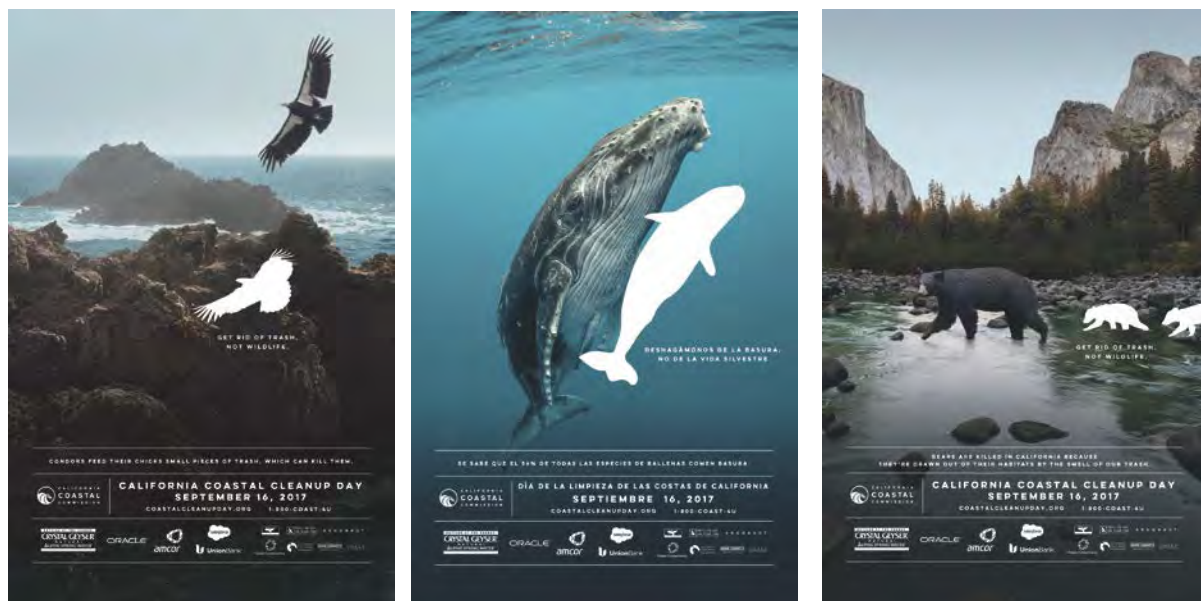
Coastal Cleanup Day Publicity. Making sure that the public knows that the cleanup is coming up and how important it is that they take part, and telling the story of the cleanup to the media are ways Commission staff promotes broad participation, supports local partners, and gains positive publicity for the event and for the Coastal Commission. Media stories about the Cleanup are also educational and serve to remind readers to take environmentally-friendly action.

Staff conducts outreach through press releases, media interviews, and by producing and distributing cleanup campaign posters, postcards, and on-line messaging. Media outlets provide the cleanup with extensive coverage, with hundreds of stories in newspapers, on-line publications, on radio and tv, both before and after the event.

Cleanup participants are surveyed each year to better understand their motivations for helping. The impact that marine debris has on wildlife is consistently the number one reason that volunteers participate. So, in 2017, the Commission undertook a new publicity campaign that focused on the the harm that marine debris can cause to wildlife, no matter where they may live.

The Commission worked with a pro bono ad agency, Argonaut, to develop a campaign that created a strong and direct connection between trash and harm to wildlife, under the tag line “Get rid of trash, not wildlife.” (See examples below.) Three different animals were featured in the print pieces, with several more produced digitally, representing environments across California to better convey the scope of the cleanup. The campaign was powerful and eye-catching, and was well received by local coordinators and volunteers alike across the state.

Campaign posters and postcards were printed in both English and Spanish, and distributed to local coordinators across the state. Thanks to help from various multi-lingual Commission staff, the three images above and the additional four digital-only images were also translated into Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, allowing for outreach into additional communities. Staff and local coordinators also shared the images widely across social media, and can be viewed on the Coastal Cleanup Day webpages, found here: www.coastalcleanupday.org.



Staff continued to refine a new tool for publicizing and growing the Cleanup – the Commission’s on-line map showing every cleanup location in California. The 1,005 sites mapped this year were the most ever publicized during the cleanup. The map was a powerful and valuable tool for volunteers and organizers across the state, providing a simple, one-stop approach to connecting volunteers with their cleanup location.

Corporate Partners in CCD. The Coastal Cleanup Day Program once again enlisted strong corporate partners, which greatly assisted 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 29 Coastal Cleanup regions, covering most Cleanup volunteers. This is a crucial benefit that helps local coordinators immensely. Crystal Geyser was joined by continuing sponsors Oracle, the Whale Tail® Ecoplate, Union

Bank, California State Parks Foundation, Ocean Conservancy, along with new sponsors Amcor and Salesforce, and an array of in-kind and media support from partners around the state.

BYO for CCD. In an effort to reduce the amount of waste created by the event itself, volunteers are urged to bring their own reusable cleanup supplies from home, rather than relying on the single-use disposable plastic items available at cleanup locations. Staff has also been encouraging local organizations to seek donations of buckets and reusable gloves whenever possible. The BYO for CCD initiative 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. In 2017, about one-quarter of all participants brought a reusable item to the cleanup, and an additional one-quarter were able to use buckets and other reusable cleanup items provided at their site.

The initiative is helping to reduce the environmental footprint of the cleanup – staff has ordered about 200,000 fewer single-use plastic trash bags over the past four years than it would have otherwise - while educating volunteers about simple lifestyle changes that cumulatively can have enormous benefits to coastal and marine environments. (Strategic Plan Action 7.3.2)

CCD Survey. Staff again surveyed Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers about their experience in order to continue to improve the event and learn about the overall impact of the cleanup. Results from the survey are still coming in as of this report, so staff will provide a verbal update during the November meeting presentation.

Adopt-A-Beach Program

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 50 beach managers assists groups in conducting cleanups at their “adopted” beach, helping to bring more than 45,000 people to an Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup in 2017, contributing nearly 112,500 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 the Commission’s 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. Staff creates an online calendar of events that are connected to the ocean, coast, and inland waterways, occurring throughout the state. In 2017, the on-line calendar included 400 events.

Community-Based Restoration and Education Program

The Commission staff continued its work on the Community-Based Restoration and Education Program (CBREP) at Upper Newport Bay, begun in 2001. To date, the program has engaged

over 24,800 volunteers, who together have restored more than 15 acres of coastal salt marsh, riparian and coastal sage scrub habitats. Volunteers have planted over 26,600 native plants (the vast majority of which were propagated in an on-site native plant nursery) and removed over 51 tons of invasive plant material (not including material left on site).

2017 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, Saddleback College, UC Irvine, Newport Bay Conservancy, Master Gardeners, First Church of Christ, Army Corps of Engineers, Corona del Mar High School, and the Girl Scouts.

Staff continued building its program to recruit and train college interns, who act as leaders for community habitat restoration events. Students from diverse backgrounds receive training in volunteer event management, environmental education, and ecological restoration techniques. In 2017, CBREP engaged 15 interns from UC Irvine Center for Environmental Biology, Chapman University, and Saddleback College. The recruitment and training of these student leaders increases the program's capacity to act as a resource for engaging the community with their local environment and ways they can protect and restore it. The students receive real world experience as environmental leaders in their community.

Program staff continues to monitor and report on the last five years of data collected on the current active work site, called Newport Valley. Annual reports share details about the successes and challenges of this restoration work, and detail native and invasive plant coverage as well as the evidence of wildlife, human impacts, and soil quality. Report findings are used to adjust restoration plans as needed to improve future success.

Staff continued a partnership with the UC Irvine Center for Environmental Biology to conduct an ecological experiment studying the effectiveness of planting seeds versus seedlings in the coastal sage scrub ecosystem. In conjunction with the ecological experiment, the experience of volunteers was also recorded throughout the experiment in order to understand the drivers and pitfalls of a successful community-based restoration program. In fall 2017, staff began working with Chapman University students and faculty (as well as university laboratory resources) to examine carbon and nitrogen cycling through the Newport Valley restoration site. This deeper examination of the site will provide further evidence to the success of the program's restoration effort and inform future restoration actions. Partnerships like these benefit both CBREP and the universities' efforts to educate students and build knowledge about our coastal ecosystems and their human inhabitants.

CBREP High School Curriculum. Staff continued to distribute the CBREP high school curriculum, called "Our Wetlands, Our World." The curriculum 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 2017 the Commission continued its successful partnership with the Thank You Ocean Campaign to co-host the Annual California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest. Fairmont Hotels & Resorts of California donated overnight stays at luxury hotels for the winners. A panel of judges selected three winning photographs and 11 honorable mentions, and online voters selected their favorite as the “viewers’ choice” winner. This year there was a total of 600 entries submitted. All of the winning photographs are featured on the contest website, <http://mycoastalphoto.com>.

Staff continued to offer a traveling exhibit of a selection of winning photographs. In 2017, the collection was displayed at the State Capitol Building, the Cesar Chavez Central Library in Stockton, San Leandro Main Library, Sol Treasures Arts and Cultural Enrichment Center in King City, as well as the Petaluma Regional Library of Sonoma County.

Other Forms of Public Outreach

Coast4u.org. The Commission’s public education web pages provide detailed information on all of the programs, contests, and resources offered to the public. They include Coastal Cleanup Day and Adopt-A-Beach information, downloadable curricular materials and hard-copy request forms; a video lending library; a page in Spanish linking to available Spanish language resources; Whale Tail Grant guidelines and application; how to purchase a Whale Tail® License Plate or donate to the Protect Our Coast and Ocean Fund; clean boating information; and interactive maps on topics such as Whale Tail grant-funded project locations and beach wheelchair availability. In the first nine and a half months of 2017, the Public Education web pages had 365,444 page views.

Social Media. Public Education social media platforms provide the public with a way to keep apprised of opportunities and events and to interact on topics of mutual interest. PE uses social media to raise awareness, share content, invite participation, communicate about programs, and help build a constituency centered on coastal stewardship and conservation. Through social media, staff builds and strengthens connections with other like-minded organizations and keeps our supporters engaged. Staff shares partners’ posts, thanks sponsors and supporters, and celebrates pro bono advertising campaign teams.

Our numbers are growing on every platform: (as of October 16, 2017)

- Tumblr: 96 posts
- Facebook: 20,826 people like our page
- Twitter: 21,600+ Tweets/ 11,100+ followers
- Instagram: 1,047 posts/1,943 followers
- Constant Contact: More than 30,300 contacts in Public Education-related lists

Environmental Fairs and Events. Each year staff hosts educational booths at a variety of events encouraging coastal stewardship, environmental awareness, and marine education. This year we introduced several new activities bringing together creativity, science, and new ways to think about coastal issues such as ocean acidification and plastic pollution.

This year staff attended 16 events and spoke to 2,642 people. Our 2017 list of events includes Monterey WhaleFest, Santa Barbara Earth Day, Ventura County Office of Education Educators, Salesforce Ocean Day, Sunset Elementary Water Fair, Community Resources for Science Teachers in Oakland, CSUEB STEM Career Fair in Berkeley, CSUEB STEM Career Fair in Hayward, Los Angeles Sanitation District's Earth Day, San Diego County Fair Whole Life Festival, San Diego Creative Youth STE(A)M Fair, California State Fair Whale Tail exhibit, Santa Clara Arbor Day, State Scientist Day at the State Capitol, California Science Education Conference in Sacramento, California's 50th Annual Native American Day.

Email News Blasts. Using the Constant Contact email service, we maintain a mailing list of subscribers who have signed up via fairs, Coastal Cleanup Day, and our website to keep in touch. Our targeted messages include; quarterly updates, grant opportunities, cleanup events, contest announcements and awards, as well as any new program initiatives and education materials.

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 Marine Debris Alliance.

The Marine Debris Alliance (formerly known as the Marine Debris Action Coordination Team of the West Coast Governor's Alliance on Ocean Health), which commission staff has chaired since 2008, continued its efforts to coordinate and collaborate work on marine debris along the West Coast. In 2017, the Alliance completed work on a number of initiatives, including a project to assess the usability of NOAA's Marine Debris Tracker app in an effort to both help NOAA improve the user experience of the app and increase data collection across the West Coast and beyond. The Marine Debris Alliance continues to seek new funding and expanded membership as it continues to meet monthly in 2018. (Strategic Plan Action 2.2.10)

Commission staff has also been actively collaborating with the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) on their efforts to update and revise their California Ocean Litter Strategy, first

passed in 2008. Over the past 9 years, there has been significant progress made on actions listed in the initial strategy, so with help from NOAA's Marine Debris Program, the OPC initiated an update early in 2017. Staff was asked to assist as part of the planning team for these revisions. Two workshops were planned, with the first taking place in May, 2017, at which over 40 participants helped generate a list of new priorities and actions. A second workshop in mid-November will focus on refining and finalizing the actions and priorities. The OPC is expected to vote to accept the new strategy at their January meeting.

Funding Sources

The main sources of revenue for the Public Education Program is the Whale Tail[®] License Plate and the Protect Our Coast and Oceans tax check off. In addition, pursuant to 30012 (c) and via a partnership with the California State Parks Foundation, the Program raises funds through grants, corporate contributions, and other funding efforts. All of the funding sources described in this section implement Strategic Plan Action 7.4.6.

Whale Tail[®] License Plate

2017 marks the 20th anniversary of the Whale Tail[®] License Plate. From its launch in 1997, through September 2017 (the most recent data available), a total of 245,212 California drivers had purchased the Commission's Whale Tail[®] License Plate, and sales and renewal fees had raised over \$96.6 million for environmental programs - \$27.4 million to the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account (CBCEA) and \$69.1 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 has also provided funds to the State Coastal Conservancy. The ELPF funds a variety of state environmental programs.

Over the 20 years of the Whale Tail Plate's history, sales and renewals have provided a steady source of income to these programs. However, in the past few years, annual sales have begun to decline, reducing the overall revenue available. A number of factors are likely responsible, including the length of time the plate has been on the market and competition from other specialty license plates (for example, the black and yellow "Legacy" plate has been extremely popular, with over 325,000 plates purchased in the 2 ½ years since its release).

Staff is working to improve sales through marketing and publicity. The 20th anniversary was an opportunity to celebrate the Whale Tail Plate and publicize its accomplishments through media stories. Staff worked with Heal the Bay and a public relations consultant to generate publicity and to host a 20th anniversary celebration as part of the Nothin' But Sand Beach and Creek Cleanup in Playa Del Rey on October 21, 2017. The event attracted over 700 participants, who cleaned the beach and were treated to Whale Tail cookies, a raffle, and other prizes. Numerous newspapers, radio shows, and television morning programs covered the Whale Tail License Plate anniversary, in the LA media market and beyond, in both English and Spanish media outlets.

In addition, the Coastal Commission continued the "Do the Whale Tail" campaign in the summer of 2017, which includes a Public Service Announcement in the form of a "tongue in cheek"

instructional dance video featuring actor Jeremy Sisto. The PSA was run in select movie theaters in coastal areas of Orange County, Los Angeles County, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, and San Francisco, during July 2017. Staff placed ads on the Santa Monica Big Blue Bus and Golden Gate Transit in the Bay Area, and purchased on-line ads on Surflin, The Inertia, Google, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. In addition, PE social media platforms helped to spread the word as did partner organizations.

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.

As of the end of September, contribution to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund for the 2016 tax year (i.e. taxes filed in 2017) totaled \$161,004. Although more contributions will come in October through December, this amount is much lower than would be expected based on past years’ contributions. As it turns out, all of the Voluntary Contribution Funds on the California State tax form experienced a sharp decrease in contributions this year. The reason is that Turbotax, a popular online tax preparation service, made changes to its software program that made it much less likely a taxpayer would see the opportunity to make a donation to the voluntary contribution funds. As a result, all of the Voluntary Contribution Funds saw a sharp decrease in donations.

For those funds, such as the Protect Our coast and Oceans Fund, that have a minimum contributions threshold they must meet to remain on the tax form, the situation put them in jeopardy of not meeting the threshold. In response, AB111 was passed, which made the minimum contributions threshold zero dollars for donations made during 2017 (2016 tax year). The minimum contributions threshold will be \$250,000 for donations made during 2018 (2017 tax year).

This years’ “Check the Coast” marketing campaign featured well-known Californians from various sectors, such as Luna Blaise (actress, singer), Ron Finley (gangsta gardner, ecolutionary), William McNulty and his dog Okie, (US Marine Veteran); Alysia Reiner (actor, activist); Nik Sharma (food writer, cook, photographer); and Tiffany Shlain (filmmaker, author). Photography was donated by Mark Leibowitz and Dan Escobar.

The campaign ran between February and May of 2017 and included “out of home” and online components. Check the Coast ads were seen in downtown San Francisco BART stations, on BART trains, and on buses in Marin, San Francisco, and Santa Monica. On-line ads were geo-targeted and selected based on performance in past campaigns. Ads ran on Surflin.com, The Inertia, OC Weekly, LA Weekly, Google AdWords, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
www.checkthecoast.org

In addition to staff posting extensively about the campaign on PE social media platforms, many of the well-known Californian’s who were featured in campaign images used their own platforms to champion the coast and ocean and encourage donations to the fund. In addition,

numerous partner organizations posted on social media on behalf of the campaign, which greatly extended its reach.

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 2017 is included in the section of this report on Coastal Cleanup Day, on page 13.

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 more, printed with the images are also available for purchase.