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November 20, 2020

To: Commissioners and Alternates

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Re: 2020 Public Education Program Update

At the Coastal Commission meeting of December 9, 2020, the staff of the Public Education Program will update the Commission with a summary of program activities and accomplishments for the past year. The attached report provides additional information on 2020 activities.



**California Coastal Commission
Public Education Program
2020 Annual Report**



California Coastal Commission Public Education Program 2020 Annual Report

Introduction.....	2
Background	2
Coastal Cleanup Day	5
Adopt-A-Beach	9
Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund Tax Check Off	10
Whale Tail® License Plate.....	10
Whale Tail® Grants	12
Boating Clean and Green	14
Resources for Educators and Students.....	16
California King Tides Project.....	19
Ocean & Coastal Photography Contest	19
Project Grow.....	20
Marine Debris Policy & Coordination.....	22
Beach Wheelchairs.....	23
Other Forms of Public Outreach	24

[Appendix A: Partnerships, page 25](#)

Public Education Program 2020

Introduction

The California Coastal Commission's Public Education Program provides Californians of all ages, ethnicities, and income levels, whether they live along the coast or inland, in urban or rural environments, the opportunity to learn about and connect with California's remarkable coastline. An important focus is on reaching communities that face barriers in terms of access to the coast.

2020 was a year like no other and the Coastal Commission's public education programs were greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many programs were unable to move forward as planned. Staff and grantees responded to the situation by getting creative and adapting programming. With large gatherings and field trips canceled, the focus shifted to providing structure and encouragement for self-directed stewardship activities while emphasizing safety and physical distancing. School programs were adapted to on-line platforms and virtual learning, in-person trainings morphed into webinars, and staff developed new on-line educational resources and programs. This report describes how these changes and shifts unfolded.

Additional information about most of the programs described in this report can be found [online](#).

Background

The California Coastal Act lays out the foundations of the Coastal Commission's Public Education Program. **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." The Coastal Commission's public education programs take many forms including impactful and fun outdoor experiences, stewardship activities, community field science, and artistic expression. The Coastal Commission also supports other organizations in providing educational programs and stewardship opportunities by providing educational resources, grant funding, and training to organizations and individual educators.

The main funding source for these programs is the Whale Tail® License Plate. Since 2014, the Protect Our Coast and Oceans check-off box on the state tax return has raised additional funds for Whale Tail® grants. Corporate contributions and individual donations support the Coastal Cleanup Day Program through our partner, the California State Parks Foundation.

2020 Highlights

- The 36th annual [Coastal Cleanup Day](#) in September looked dramatically different from cleanups in past years. Rather than focus attention on a single day, the Coastal Commission spread activities out throughout the entire month and encouraged volunteers to clean up the coast from their own front doors. Neighborhood cleanups of streets, local parks and creeks, and other natural areas took place all month, all around the state as volunteers responded to the call to action: Help protect our coast from home by removing trash before the rains wash it into storm water systems and out to the coast. More than 3,000 cleanups were recorded, which led the world in cleanup activity during the month. More than 14,000 volunteers participated in these cleanup events, which encompassed the entire watershed, from inland neighborhoods, to shorelines, to on-the-water cleanups in kayaks, canoes, and dinghies.
- The unique challenges of 2020 forced many Whale Tail grantees to delay their projects or reimagine them for social distancing and distance learning. Some organizations transitioned to create engaging and informative videos, hosted community webinars, designed new online curriculum, or shifted to smaller outdoor efforts that could be conducted safely. They have been creative problem-solvers as they determine how best to serve their communities.
- Staff developed new ways to connect with the public through virtual workshops and online resources. The [California Boating Clean and Green Program](#) didn't miss a beat in transitioning from in-person workshops and trainings to a virtual format. Dockwalker Trainings, Clean Boating Webinars, and Oil Spill Response workshops found new on-line audiences.
- The Commission developed a collection of educational resources for teachers and parents engaging in [at-home learning](#), and created a new portal of [Environmental Justice Resources for Educators](#), including a five-lesson unit for middle and high school classrooms. The Commission launched a new [Climate Video Challenge](#) for middle and high school students and awarded the first winner in March.
- [Whale Tail® License Plates](#) sales combined with renewal fees for existing plates provided over \$4.7 million for environmental programs in fiscal year 2019-20. Of this total, \$1.2 million went to the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account, which funds the Commission's public education programs, and \$3.5 million went to the Environmental License Plate Fund for a range of environmental conservation projects.
- The [Protect Our Coast and Ocean fund](#) received over \$401,000 in donations from more than 32,000 individuals from January through September 2020, who "checked the coast" on their state tax forms. These donations support marine education and stewardship through Whale Tail® Grants.



By Jessica Pham, Grade 10

Coastal Cleanup Day

Following Oregon's lead and beach cleanup efforts on California's north coast, California organized its first Coastal Cleanup Day in 1985. Since then, the event has spread throughout the nation and internationally. California is part of the International Coastal Cleanup, organized by Ocean Conservancy, with participation by at least 45 states and over 100 countries.

Ordinarily, the event would take place on a single day in most locations, with volunteers gathering in large numbers at cleanup sites across the state. This year, the traditional cleanup model was not possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Coastal Commission and local organizers sought to keep volunteers safe by discouraging large gatherings and encouraging volunteers to clean the coast from their own front doors. Removing trash from neighborhoods, streets, local parks, creeks, and shorelines prevents it from getting carried by rain and wind through creeks and stormwater systems out to the ocean. Volunteers were encouraged to gather cleanup supplies from home and work with the members of their household with whom they had been sheltering-in-place to clean their neighborhoods.

In addition to cleaning up, volunteers tracked the trash they removed using the Clean Swell app, developed by Ocean Conservancy to mimic the paper data card that has traditionally been used. Clean Swell was an effective method of not only continuing the 32-year record of cleanup data, but also of tracking the numbers of volunteers, number of total cleanups, and miles cleaned during those cleanups. The data feeds into a map-based database, so Commission staff were able to receive real-time feedback on where and when cleanups were taking place and provide weekly updates to the public on our progress.

The adapted cleanup model proved a resounding success. Reports from around the state continue to filter in slowly as of this writing, but thus far 14,331 volunteers took part in at least one cleanup during the month, helping to remove over 148,000 pounds of trash and recycling from more than 3,000 miles. Over 3,200 cleanups were reported on Clean Swell, which was triple the number of the next highest turnout by state or country for the International Coastal Cleanup.

The event enjoyed strong volunteer turnout in both coastal counties and inland areas. Inland cleanups illustrate one of the event's most important messages (especially this year) – that we are all connected to the coast and ocean by our rivers, streams, and storm drains. About one-third of the total volunteers and more than one-half of the debris was from inland cleanups.

The event also took place on the water. Participation in the event has been growing among boating facilities and boating groups, and despite COVID-19, the boating community demonstrated its commitment to keeping our shorelines and waterways clean. Twenty-six boating facilities and boating groups participated in the event with 318 volunteers who collected 3,643 pounds of trash and recyclables on land and from 29 vessels (kayaks, canoes, and dinghies).

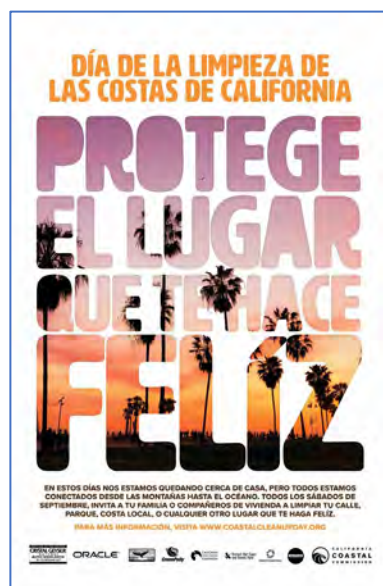
Commission staff developed several new resources to help volunteers understand the model for Coastal Cleanup this year. With help from partners around the state, the Commission developed guidance documents and instructional videos on how to prepare for a neighborhood cleanup and the importance of data collection, available on the Coastal Cleanup [homepage](#). Partnering organizations also developed on-line resources, such as introductions to watershed education, that were used broadly as well.

Data Tells a Story

The data gathered on Clean Swell helped tell the story of the pandemic's impact on our environment. For the first time in the cleanup's history, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) made up a substantial amount of the items removed, landing at number 12 on the list at more than 6,300 individual pieces. The top ten items removed remained as typically expected with the notable exception of plastic grocery bags. The temporary suspension of the statewide plastic bag ban was evident in the cleanup data. After years of falling steadily, plastic grocery bags jumped back into the top ten for the first time since 2016, landing as the sixth most found item.

Event Messages Reach Millions

In addition to engaging and educating participants, the event messages reached millions of Californians through extensive coverage in local newspapers, television and radio announcements and stories, and on social media and other on-line sites. The Coastal Commission also continued its tradition of producing event posters, postcards, and t-shirts. San Francisco-based ad agency Mekanism designed a pro bono campaign (see below) to simulate the experience of looking out a window – a common experience at this point – and dreaming about iconic natural scenes that many of us were missing. The messaging emphasized that we can help protect our natural places no matter where we are.



Corporate Partners in CCD

The Coastal Cleanup Day Program continued to enjoy strong support from corporate sponsors, which enhance event outreach efforts and help fund the event. A key, ongoing partner is CG Roxanne, producers of Crystal Geyser Natural Alpine Spring Water, whose financial support is critical to the success of the program. The cleanup also received support from Oracle and the Whale Tail® License Plate, and in-kind support from SailSport Talk.com, the California State Parks Foundation, and GreenPolly, who donated 100,000 trash bags made with 94% post-consumer recycled plastic.

Volunteers Reflect on their Experience

With assistance from local coordinators, the Commission conducts an annual survey of Coastal Cleanup participants to gain insight into volunteers and their cleanup experience (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). The survey is also a way for volunteers to provide feedback and suggestions. We usually provide an incentive – this year it was a free taco from Rubios.

Over 200 volunteers took the on-line survey. Most people cleaned in their neighborhoods with friends or family members. They picked their cleanup location to improve their neighborhood or community and expressed strong concern over the impact of plastic pollution on wildlife. A big takeaway is that the event is inspiring – 94% of respondents say that participating in the



cleanup makes them want to do more to protect the environment, including actions like continuing to pick up trash, recycling more; and using fewer single-use plastic items. Most (75%) of respondents are return volunteers who participated in past Coastal Cleanup Days, and the survey asks how the cleanup changed them over time. Many expressed that participating made them a more conscientious consumer. As one commenter explained, “a lot of the trash I pick up is single-use so I now no longer purchase/use single-use items because I don't want to add to large amount of waste we already have.” We also heard from people that participating gave them hope, and that “it was quite fun!”



Commissioners Caryl Hart, Katie Rice, and Sara Aminzadeh participating in Coastal Cleanup Month

Adopt-A-Beach

Over the past more than 20 years, hundreds of thousands of California schools, civic groups, businesses, scout troops, families and friends have adopted beaches throughout California. In 2019 alone, over 50,000 people participated in an Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup. The [Adopt-A-Beach Program](#) offers groups an easy way to care for the coast. Volunteers pledge to clean their beach three times over the course of one year. School groups can fulfill the obligation with one cleanup.

As with Coastal Cleanup Day, Covid-19 greatly limited local organizers ability to run organized cleanup programs after the middle of March. Instead, many Adopt-A-Beach coordinators adapted to changed circumstances by moving to virtual programming or encouraging individual cleanups within their communities. For example, in Los Angeles, Heal the Bay hosted virtual “Knowledge Drops” each week in which they organized panels of expert speakers to educate viewers about different aspects of the environment and the Santa Monica Bay watershed. In Pacifica, the Pacific Beach Coalition launched “Street to Beach” cleanups, with volunteers encouraged to adopt the new Coastal Cleanup model in which individuals or households self-organize to clean up around their neighborhood or at the beach if they have safe access to it. Their volunteers have collected over 112,000 cigarette butts to date!

In a normal year, all 15 coastal counties, plus Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, participate in the program. The Commission coordinates 49 Beach Managers from 36 Adopt-A-Beach partner organizations who run the program locally (see Appendix A for organization list). Beach Managers give participants cleanup supplies and educational materials, provide instruction, arrange for trash pickup, and sometimes offer supplemental educational programs and public recognition. Some hold regular “drop-in” cleanups that anyone may attend.

The Commission provides Beach Managers with promotional materials, garbage and recycling bags, disposable gloves, data cards, and pencils. In addition, the Commission offers Adopt-A-Beach groups curricula, activities, and other materials about the importance of keeping our water clean.



Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund Tax Check Off

Beginning in 2014, California taxpayers had the opportunity to check a box and donate to the [Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund](#) in the voluntary contributions section of the state tax return. Donations support marine education and coastal stewardship through the Whale Tail® Grants Program. As of the end of October, contributions to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund during 2020 totaled \$412,810 from 33,073 individuals, a 26% increase over the same time last year.

This year's "Check the Coast" marketing campaign featured Youth Poet Laureate of the US and activist Amanda Gorman; 3-Michelin-Star chef and activist Dominique Crenn; and journalist, film producer, and environmentalist Sachi Cunningham. Photography was donated by Mark Leibowitz (Gorman) and Bill Reitzel (Crenn and Cunningham).

The campaign ran between February and July, and included advertisements in LA Metro stations, SF Muni buses, and on Facebook. In addition, numerous partner organizations helped to spread the word to their constituencies and extended the campaign's reach.



Whale Tail® License Plate

Over the course of fiscal year 2019/20, California drivers purchased 4,416 Whale Tail® License Plates, which combined with renewal fees from existing plates, resulted in close to \$5 million in revenue for environmental programs. Of this amount – \$1.2 million went to the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account (CBCEA), and \$3.5 million went 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, the Whale Tail Grants Program, and other

coastal and marine education programs. The CBCEA has also provided funds to the State Coastal Conservancy. The ELPF funds a variety of state environmental programs. Since its 1997 launch, 260,428 California drivers have purchased the Whale Tail® License Plate, and sales and renewal fees have contributed \$111 million to environmental programs, \$31 million to the CBCEA and \$80 million to the ELPF.

Over the 23 years of the Whale Tail® Plate's history, sales and renewals have provided a steady source of revenue for Coastal Commission education programs and Whale Tail® grants. In recent years, annual sales have declined, reducing the overall revenue available for grants and other educational efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted sales in 2020. Sales dropped significantly during the early months of the pandemic, and again in October, in part due to the DMV's temporary suspension of on-line personalized plate orders as a result of pandemic-related production limitations. Longer term factors include the length of time the plate has been on the market and stiff competition from other specialty license plates. The staff is working to improve Whale Tail Plate sales and seeking alternative revenue sources.

In 2019 the Commission contracted with Radley Studios for a marketing campaign built around a core [Whale Tail® License Plate public service announcement](#) showcasing the California coast and the Whale Tail® License Plate program through the imaginative lens of California's next generation. The campaign features a redesigned website and leverages a consistent message across paid search, social optimization, and targeted advertising coinciding with license plate renewal timing. Creative tactics focus on connecting with audiences emotionally and building sustained interest and support. The Campaign, which will end in early 2021, has generated sales interest, bolstered renewals, and helped mitigate the revenue decline.

In addition to traditional marketing, an important tool for public awareness is seeing the license plate on others' cars. We greatly appreciate all those who have supported this cause by purchasing a Whale Tail® Plate and encourage everyone to participate. Whale Tail® Plates can be purchased at ecoplates.com. Consider a Whale Tail® Plate as a holiday gift this year.



Whale Tail® Grants

The [Whale Tail® Grants Program](#) supports experiential education and stewardship of the California coast and its watersheds. Grants are awarded to schools, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies throughout the state, and emphasize reaching communities that are underserved by coastal experiences and marine education. Funding is provided in three categories (youth programs, programs for the general public, and shoreline cleanup and enhancement), and comes from sales and renewals of the [Whale Tail® License Plate](#) and from voluntary contributions to the [Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund](#) on the state tax form.

In the 22 years since the program began in 1998, the Whale Tail® Grants Program has awarded \$14.2 million to 744 different projects. The need for Whale Tail® Grants consistently exceeds the available funds. In Fiscal Year 2019/2020, the competitive grants program received 109 grant applications requesting more than \$2.5 million and awarded [19 grants totaling \\$391,721](#). Examples of projects funded in 2019/2020 include curriculum and teacher training on Indigenous fire management and Chinook Salmon health in Butte County; environmental education and leadership at a surfing camp for Oakland youth; and a trip to the central coast for youth and young adults from Los Angeles to learn about otters and their habitat. In fiscal year 2019/2020 the Commission also awarded [seven targeted grants totaling \\$266,955](#), including a grant to Youth Outside to provide workshops for Whale Tail® grant recipients on cultural relevancy, equity, and inclusion in environmental education and evaluation.



Volunteers young and old come out for a day of restoration and education co-sponsored by Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation and Whale Tail Grantee Tolowa Dunes Stewards (pre-COVID-19)

Of the 19 projects awarded in the 2019/2020 competitive Whale Tail Grants cycle, 100% target underserved populations. Eleven projects include [Disadvantaged Communities](#) as defined by SB535. Thirteen projects target audiences with a higher-than-state average of Black, Indigenous, and people of color, and 17 target areas with a higher-than-state average percentage of people with below-poverty-level incomes. Five projects serve a federally designated Rural Region. Seven of the funded organizations have annual budgets under \$500,000.

For the Whale Tail® grants awarded in 2018/19 (the most recent year for which most projects have shared results) that served student populations, staff analyzed available demographic data on racial composition. For these grants, 67% of student audience was Latinx, 5% Asian or Pacific Islander, 8% Black, 2% Native American, 4% in another category (often more than one race), and 14% white. Comparing this data to the demographics of the state, the grant programs reached proportionally more Latinx and African American students, and fewer white and Asian American students.



On an adventure with Whale Tail Grantee Ventana Wilderness Alliance (pre-COVID-19)



Taking water samples with Whale Tail Grantee Brown Girl Surf (pre-COVID-19)

Boating Clean and Green

This program is a partnership with the California State Parks that educates boaters about clean and safe boating practices and provides technical assistance to increase environmental services for boaters. Challenges bring new opportunities and due to COVID-19, program staff implemented several new educational strategies in 2020.

Virtual Trainings

After conducting three in-person [Dockwalker trainings](#) early in the year, staff transitioned to virtual trainings due to COVID-19. Staff hosted ten virtual Dockwalker trainings for participants around the state. In addition, staff and partner Dockwalkers distributed 1,738 California Boater kits. Boater kits provide boaters with the know-how and tools to reduce their environmental impact including information on clean boating practices, an oil absorbent pillow, an oil absorbent sheet, and a fuel bib.



California Boater Kit



Boating Clean and Green staff, OSPR and CalOES conducted one in-person [Marinas and Yacht Clubs Oil Spill Preparedness Workshop](#) before shelter in place orders went into effect and then transitioned to a virtual format and conducted two webinars. The workshops introduce boating facilities to the Marinas and Yacht Clubs Spill Response Communication Packet, which helps 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 with 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.

Online Educational Offerings

With in-person boat shows and events canceled, staff focused on online educational campaigns and webinars. Earth Week and World Oceans Day campaigns on social media included homemade videos and content related to clean and safe boating practices about marine debris, sewage, oil and fuel prevention practices, and the CA Boater Kit. As of October 2020, staff conducted two clean boating webinars and will be offering two additional webinars in November.

The Program held a six-week online quiz campaign during August and early September 2020. Weekly incentives included California clean boater kits for randomly selected participants. 5,772 participants took the quiz.

The program distributed three issues of the [Changing Tides newsletter](#) in 2020. The newsletter focuses on new trends in clean boating practices and environmental services and is published by the three chapters of the California Clean Boating Network.

Fishing Line Recycling

Since 2009, the program has installed 300 onshore fishing line recycling stations at piers, marinas, boat launch ramps, and other locations throughout the state. Ten new stations were installed in 2020, and all the locations can be found on an [online map](#). As of October 2020, the stations have resulted in 1,975 pounds of fishing line being collected and recycled. Stretched out, this line would stretch from San Francisco to Yaviza, Panama!



ReThink Disposable Pilot Program

Staff partnered with Clean Water Action on a pilot project to reduce single-use disposables and food packaging in yacht clubs. The [ReThink Disposable Program with six yacht clubs in the Bay Area](#) reduced disposable food ware and packaging at the participating clubs by upwards of 97% and lowered annual trash hauling costs, with average annual savings of \$2,800.

Resources for Educators and Students

The Public Education Program developed several new resources for educators this year. In the spring when schools closed due to the pandemic, staff produced a guide to [Home Learning Resources](#) for K-12 teachers and families. The webpage includes selections from existing Coastal Commission activities and programs that are easy to do at home, as well as newly designed activities. Staff also created a portal for [Environmental Justice Resources for](#)

[Educators](#) which includes recommended practices and discussion agreements for teaching this topic, a collection of streaming videos, guided investigation of the Cal EnviroScreen pollution-burden mapping tool, and a new five-lesson high school unit aligned to California's History/Social Science, Common Core, and Next Generation Science Standards.

In 2020, staff awarded the [first winner](#) in the [Climate Video Challenge](#), answering the question, "How do we come together for the climate?" The next challenge, due March 31, 2021, invites middle and high school students to respond to the question, "What does climate justice look like to me?" The challenge webpage includes entry details, videography tips, and extensive climate change resources.



California Sunset by Yvonne Wang, Grade 6

The 18th year of the Coastal Commission's [Coastal Art & Poetry Contest](#) saw 1,684 entries from K-12 students throughout the state. Ten [winning entries](#) and 30 [honorable mentions](#) were displayed on the Commission's website and as part of a traveling exhibit. The pandemic canceled most of the exhibit venues, but the Ford House Museum in Mendocino was able to open with the exhibit in July and August. The recognized poetry was published in the May 2020 issue of Chapman University's [TAB—The Journal of Poetry and Poetics](#). The next contest entry deadline is January 31, 2021, which for the first time is an online entry process.

Find these and other Coastal Commission educational resources and activities [here](#).

The Awesome Clever Sea Otters by Cassidy Cheng, Grade 2



California King Tides Project

The [California King Tides Project](#) is part of an international effort to help visualize sea level rise by photographing the highest high tides of today. The Coastal Commission engaged partner organizations and members of the public in this community science project in January and February. Organizations up and down the coast held 53 in-person events, and individuals uploaded 759 photos that were [mapped](#) for ease of viewing by planners, scientists, media, students, and other members of the public. The project website includes [resources for educators](#) to incorporate King Tides and sea level rise into their lessons. The next King Tides arrive in California November 15-16 and December 13-15, 2020.



King Tides on San Francisco's Embarcadero

Ocean & Coastal Photography Contest

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lack of access to beaches, the Coastal Commission cancelled its annual California Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photography Contest this year. However, staff continues to offer a traveling exhibit of winning photographs from previous contests. The exhibit was featured at the Arcata Library January through March 2020 and will be shown at the Pacific Grove Art Center in January and February 2021. All of the

winning photographs are featured on the Commission's [website](#). The Commission will most likely hold the contest in 2021.

Project Grow

[Project Grow's](#) work to involve the public in restoration at the Upper Newport Bay was significantly impacted by COVID-19 when public gatherings and school field trips were shut down in March. Modified programming, involving small groups with COVID-19 precautions in place, resumed in September with assistance from OC Habitats, a partner organization that managed volunteer recruitment during the restart phase.

Project Grow's Environmental Leader Program engaged 14 interns from the UC Irvine Center for Environmental Biology, Chapman University, and Saddleback College, who were trained in ecological restoration techniques, environmental education, and leading public events. When public programs were put on hold due to COVID-19, interns transitioned to conducting direct field work to maintain and expand restoration sites.

Coastal sage scrub has dominated Project Grow's restoration work and continues to receive attention in our Newport Valley site. With new funding from local mitigation projects, Project Grow's restoration work is turning toward riparian habitats in Newport Valley. In addition, eradication of a non-native, invasive salt marsh plant, Algerian Sea Lavender (*Limonium ramosissimum*), has also become a priority for this program's restoration efforts. Work to remove Algerian Sea Lavender and restore riparian habitats began in the late summer and will be the primary focus of the program's work through the end of 2020 and into 2021.

Staff continued to distribute the high school curriculum [Our Wetlands, Our World](#) which focuses on the history and ecology of Upper Newport Bay and the role of restoration and stewardship. Staff also distributes [Digging In: A Guide to Community-based Habitat Restoration](#).

Since its inception in 2001, Project Grow has engaged over 26,883 volunteers, who together have restored more than 15 acres of coastal salt marsh, riparian and coastal sage scrub habitats. Volunteers have planted over 27,700 native plants (propagated in an on-site native plant nursery) and removed over 55 tons of invasive plants (not including material left on site).



Volunteers remove invasive Algerian Sea Lavender at Upper Newport Bay, socially distanced under a smoky sky in 2020.

Marine Debris Policy & Coordination

Ground-breaking research in the early 2000s by Algalita Marine Research Foundation and others revealed that the quantity of plastic debris in the ocean was far greater than previously thought. These studies prompted the Coastal Commission to join with them and other stakeholders to develop a statewide plan: “Eliminating Land-based Discharges of Marine Debris in California: A Plan of Action from the Plastic Debris Project.” This plan became the basis of a 2007 resolution by the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC), which set up a Steering Committee chaired by Commission staff to develop an Implementation Strategy. Several policy efforts emerged from this strategy, such as state and U.S. laws banning plastic microbeads in personal care products.

More recent studies have revealed exponential growth in the plastic contamination of the ocean, and projections for that growth to continue. For example, a 2015 study estimated that an average of 8.4 million metric tonnes (over 18 billion pounds) of plastic enters the world’s oceans every year, with projections for triple that figure by 2025. In response to this new information, the OPC launched an effort to revise and update the Implementation Strategy in cooperation with NOAA’s Marine Debris Program. Adopted in April 2018, the new strategy is designed for six years of implementation with re-evaluations every two years. Commission staff served on the steering committee and in June of 2020 helped plan a virtual conference as part of the two-year reevaluation and update process.

A parallel, regional effort involves the states of Washington, Oregon, and California. Launched in 2006 as part of a larger ocean initiative, the Marine Debris Action Coordination Team (MDACT) was chaired by Commission staff and developed a west coast marine debris strategy and the West Coast Marine Debris Database. In 2014, the MDACT transitioned to a new organization, the West Coast Marine Debris Alliance, with a greatly expanded membership. Since then, each state has adopted their own state-specific Marine Debris Action Plan, and the Alliance shifted to highlighting state actions to facilitate communication and collaboration and share “lessons learned” among stakeholders. In 2020 the Alliance hosted a series of webinars to showcase actions undertaken in the three states related to each state’s Marine Debris Action Plan.

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 can move across soft sand, are widely available. To this end, the Commission has awarded nearly \$148,000 over the years for the purchase of beach wheelchairs and storage lockers. The Coastal Conservancy also provides funding for beach wheelchairs.

The Commission maintains a [webpage](#) that includes a map showing the location of beaches with wheelchairs and how the public can borrow them.



Other Forms of Public Outreach

Early in 2020, staff had a booth at the excellent Whalefest Monterey. After that, with in-person fairs and other activities canceled, staff expanded its outreach activities over virtual platforms.

Earth Month. In honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in April, staff celebrated with an Earth Month campaign on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Each week centered around a topic: marine debris, wildlife, climate change, and stewardship, and offered fun facts, history, resources, and ways to (virtually) get involved.

Coast4u.org. The Commission's Public Education web pages provide detailed information on all the programs, contests, and resources offered to the public. They include Coastal Cleanup Day and Adopt-A-Beach information, downloadable curricular materials; a video links page; a page in Spanish highlighting 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. From January 1 to November 3, 2020: Public Education Program webpages had nearly 601,000 page views.

Social Media. Commission social media platforms provide the public with a way to keep apprised of opportunities and events and to interact on topics of mutual interest. Staff 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, provides key information, and thanks sponsors and supporters.

Our numbers are growing on every platform:
(numbers are as of November 18, 2020)

- [Facebook](#): 42,757 followers
- [Twitter](#): 14,986 followers
- [Instagram](#): 4,224 followers
- Constant Contact: 57,914 contacts

Email News Blasts. Using the Constant Contact email service, staff maintains 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 newsletter updates, grant opportunities, cleanup events, contest announcements and awards, as well as new program initiatives and education materials.

Appendix A: Partner Organizations

Note: If you are aware of an omission or correction, please contact us.

<p>Coastal Cleanup Day</p> <p><u>Current Local Coordinators:</u></p> <p>Accelerated Achievement Academy</p> <p>Adopt-A-Highway CALTRANS Maintenance Program</p> <p>Aeolian Yacht Club</p> <p>Alameda County Resource Conservation Department</p> <p>Alameda Marinas</p> <p>Alameda County Clean Water Program</p> <p>American River Parkway Foundation (Sacramento)</p> <p>Ballena Bay Yacht Club</p> <p>Ballena Isla Marina</p> <p>Benicia Water Education Program</p> <p>Big Bear Marina (San Bernardino)</p> <p>Bridgeport Elementary School (Mono)</p> <p>Butte Environmental Council</p> <p>Cache Creek Conservancy</p> <p>Calaveras Big Trees State Park</p> <p>California State Parks</p> <p>City of Berkeley Shorebird Park Nature Center</p> <p>City of Fremont</p> <p>City of Livermore Water Resources Division</p> <p>City of Long Beach El Dorado Nature Center</p> <p>City of Milpitas</p> <p>City of Oakland Watershed Improvement Program</p> <p>City of Pleasanton</p> <p>City of Redding – Community Creek Cleanup Action Group</p>	<p>City of San Leandro</p> <p>COASTWALK</p> <p>Community Creek Cleanup Action Group (Redding, Shasta)</p> <p>County of Orange/OC Parks Volunteer Services</p> <p>County of Santa Barbara, Public Works Department, Resource Recovery & Waste Management Division</p> <p>Delta Conservancy</p> <p>East Bay Regional Park District</p> <p>ECOSLO</p> <p>Environmental Health Institute</p> <p>Explore Ecology</p> <p>Grand Marina</p> <p>Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy</p> <p>Golden Gate National Recreation Area</p> <p>Heal the Bay (Los Angeles County)</p> <p>I Love A Clean San Diego</p> <p>Lake County Department of Water Resources</p> <p>League to Save Lake Tahoe</p> <p>Literacy for Environmental Justice</p> <p>Mendocino Land Trust</p> <p>Napa Resource Conservation District</p> <p>Northcoast Environmental Center (Humboldt)</p> <p>Oakland Marinas</p> <p>Oakland Yacht Club</p> <p>Orange County Coastkeeper</p> <p>Orange County Volunteer Services</p> <p>Port of Oakland</p>
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<p>Premier Mushrooms</p> <p>Putah Creek Council</p> <p>Salmon River Restoration Council</p> <p>San Francisco Department of Public Works</p> <p>San Joaquin County Public Works</p> <p>San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust, Inc.</p> <p>San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program</p> <p>Santa Clara Valley Water District</p> <p>Save Our Shores (Santa Cruz & Monterey Counties)</p> <p>Sierra Nevada Conservancy</p> <p>Silverwood Lake SRA</p> <p>Smith River Alliance</p> <p>Solano County RCD</p> <p>The EcoMedia Compass (Imperial County)</p> <p>The Watershed ProjectU.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Bay Model Visitor Center (Marin County)</p> <p>UC Merced</p> <p>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Black Butte Lake (Glenn County)</p>	<p>U.S. Forest Service Orleans Ranger District (Siskiyou)</p> <p>Ventura County Coalition for Coastal & Inland Waterways</p> <p>Yuba County Dept. of Environmental Health</p> <p><u>Other Coastal Cleanup Day Partners:</u></p> <p>CSU East Bay: Pioneers for Change</p> <p>CSU Channel Islands: Center for Community Engagement</p> <p>CG Roxane Crystal Geyser Spring Water</p> <p>California Department of Public Health, Tobacco Control Program</p> <p>California State Parks Foundation</p> <p>Whale Tail® Ecoplate</p> <p>Oracle</p> <p>Ocean Conservancy</p> <p>Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary</p> <p>Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanct.</p> <p>Cordell Banks National Marine Sanctuary</p> <p>Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary</p> <p>Marine Mammal Center</p>
<p>Adopt-A-Beach®</p> <p>Año Nuevo State Reserve</p> <p>California State Parks</p> <p>Center for Natural Lands Management</p> <p>Channel Islands Beach Community Service District</p> <p>City of Berkeley Shorebird Park Nature Center</p> <p>City of Huntington Beach</p> <p>City of Long Beach El Dorado Nature Center</p> <p>City of Newport Beach</p> <p>City of San Leandro</p>	<p>Boating Clean & Green Program</p> <p>CA Division of Boating and Waterways</p> <p>CalRecycle</p> <p>Contra Costa County Public Works</p> <p>The Bay Foundation</p> <p>SF Bay Conservation and Development Commission</p> <p>Pacific States Oil Spill Prevention Education Team</p> <p>Marine Recreation Association</p> <p>Pacific Inter Yacht Club Association</p> <p>San Joaquin County Department of Public Works</p>

<p>City of San Mateo</p> <p>City of Santa Barbara, Creeks Division</p> <p>City of Ventura, Partners in Progress for a Beautiful Ventura</p> <p>Coastwalk</p> <p>East Bay Regional Park District</p> <p>Eco Warrior Foundation</p> <p>Golden Gate National Recreation Area</p> <p>Heal the Bay</p> <p>San Diego</p> <p>La Conchita Community Organization</p> <p>Marin County Parks and Open Space</p> <p>Northcoast Environmental Center</p> <p>National Parks Service</p> <p>Oosurf.com</p> <p>Pacifica Beach Coalition</p> <p>Point Reyes National Seashore</p> <p>Santa Barbara County Parks Department</p> <p>Santa Cruz County Parks</p> <p>Save Our Beach</p> <p>Save Our Shores</p> <p>Sonoma County Regional Parks</p> <p>Surfrider Foundation</p> <p>The Watershed Project</p> <p>Vandenberg Air Force Base</p> <p>Ventura County Parks</p>	<p>Save Our Shores</p> <p>Southern CA Yachting Association</p> <p>The US Coast Guard Auxiliary</p> <p>The US Power Squadrons</p> <p>The State Water Resources Control Board</p> <p>The Boat US Foundation</p> <p>SF Estuary Project</p> <p>The US Coast Guard Marine Safety Offices</p> <p>Recreational Boaters of California</p> <p>CA Port Captains and Harbormasters Association</p> <p>CA Department of Fish and Wildlife - OSPR</p> <p>Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary</p> <p>Lake Berryessa Partnership</p> <p>Marinas and harbors (approximately 20)</p> <p>Morro Bay National Marine Sanctuary</p> <p>San Francisco Dept. of the Environment</p> <p>Seabird Colony Protection Program (National Marine Sanctuaries-Gulf of the Farallones)</p> <p>US Fish and Wildlife Service</p> <p>Teacher Workshops</p> <p>California Environmental Education Interagency Network</p> <p>California Science Teachers Association</p> <p>California STEAM Symposium</p> <p>Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education</p>
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<p>Adopt a Beach School Program and Kids' Oceans Day</p> <p>Malibu Foundation for Environmental Education</p> <p>I Love A Clean San Diego</p> <p>Marine Science Institute</p> <p>Orange County Coastkeeper</p> <p>Community Action Partnership of Kern</p> <p>Friends of the Dunes</p> <p>National Fisheries Conservation Center</p>	<p>Project Grow</p> <p>Tides Center</p> <p>Orange County Parks</p> <p>City of Newport Beach</p> <p>Newport Bay Conservancy</p> <p>Orange County Coastkeeper</p> <p>CA Department of Fish and Wildlife</p> <p>U.C.C.E. Master Gardeners Program</p> <p>U.C. Irvine Center for Environmental Biology</p> <p>OC Habitats</p> <p>OC Coastkeeper</p> <p>Institute for Conservation Research and Education</p> <p>Chapman University</p> <p>Saddleback College</p>
<p>Marine Debris Policy and Statewide Coordination</p> <p>California Ocean Protection Council</p> <p>CalRecycle</p> <p>Department of Toxic Substances Control</p> <p>California State Parks</p> <p>California Department of Public Health Tobacco Control Program</p> <p>State Water Resources Control Board</p> <p>State Coastal Conservancy</p> <p>California Department of Environmental Protection</p> <p>California Department of Fish and Wildlife</p> <p>California Fish and Game Commission</p> <p>California Office of Environmental Health and Hazards Assessment</p> <p>Caltrans</p> <p>NOAA Marine Debris Program</p> <p>Surfrider Foundation</p>	<p>Marine Debris Alliance</p> <p>Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife</p> <p>Washington Department of Natural Resources</p> <p>NOAA Marine Debris Program</p> <p>NOAA Coastal Services Center</p> <p>Surfrider Foundation</p> <p>Port of Seattle</p> <p>Heal the Bay</p> <p>California Ocean Protection Council</p> <p>Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary</p> <p>Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission</p> <p>Northwest Straits Commission</p> <p>Sea Grant Extension</p> <p>Stillaguamish Tribe</p> <p>Sea Doc Society / UC Davis</p> <p>Oregon Fishermen's Cable Commission</p> <p>Environmental Protection Agency Region IX</p>

