

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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# W6a

April 1, 2022

**TO:** California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties

**FROM:** John Ainsworth, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Executive Director's Report, April 2022

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## **Congressional Meetings in Support of Federal FY 2023 Appropriations for CZM Grants**

On March 22-33, Commission staff, along with staff from the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Coastal Conservancy and the three California National Estuarine Research Reserves (San Francisco Bay, Elkhorn Slough, and the Tijuana River) met with 16 California Congressional offices in support of appropriations for California's Coastal Management Program in the FY2023 Federal Budget. The FY 2023 budget request is \$108.5 M for Coastal Management Grants which is an increase of \$29.5 M over last year's budget. This funding represents about 10% of the Commission's budget. Meetings included staff from Reps. Carbajal, Huffman, Jacobs, Levin, Brownley, Peters, Padilla, Vargas, Panetta, Eshoo, Lowenthal, Garamendi, Lee, and Thompson's offices, as well as staff from Speaker Pelosi and Senator Padilla's offices. Staff emphasized the critical importance of federal funding for California's coastal planning, regulatory, enforcement, research, education, and public access programs, particularly in the face of increasing impacts on the coast from climate change and sea level rise. Member offices were highly receptive and supportive to staff requests, and staff look forward to follow-up discussions and opportunities for continued support.

## **New Commission Spanish Language Web Page**

The Environmental Justice unit has been working on creating more Spanish resources in an effort to encourage more participation from Spanish speaking members of the public. Staff recently created a Spanish language landing [page](#) which features important Commission resources that have been translated into Spanish, FAQs, Commission contacts, a subtitled video on how to sign up to speak at hearings and instructions on how to translate our entire website using Google Translate into Spanish and other languages. The page can be found in multiple places on our website including under the "about" heading at the top of our homepage.

## **STEPPE Wildlife Connectivity Advisory Team and Charter**

In early March, members of our Transportation Team joined a core group of staff from Caltrans, CDFW and US Fish and Wildlife Service in forming a Wildlife Connectivity Advisory Team dedicated to developing strategies to advance wildlife connectivity in state transportation plans and projects. Both terrestrial and aquatic wildlife connectivity is an emerging priority for the State and the public, and there is a growing body of science demonstrating how careful transportation planning and project design can lead to a transportation system that is safer both for travelers and for wildlife. While we may be accustomed to thinking of wildlife connectivity in the context of the larger, high-profile wildlife crossing projects that we see around the country, wildlife connectivity is equally relevant to the more run-of-the-mill transportation projects that regularly come before the Coastal Commission, such as slope stabilizations and culvert replacements. By participating in this new team, Commission staff will be collaborating with our agency partners to identify the data and design approaches to best advance wildlife connectivity through careful planning and execution of future transportation projects. Ensuring that connectivity features are considered from a corridor perspective and are built into designs from the beginning will also allow us to permit those projects more efficiently. This team is part of staff's broader coordination effort with Caltrans and our sister resource agencies as participants in the State Transportation and Environmental Partnership for Permitting Efficiency (STEPPE). We look forward to making wildlife connectivity advancements through our ongoing collaboration in this important work.

## **Caltrans District 5 US 101 Gaviota Pass Wildlife Connectivity Study**

In a related effort, over the last year our Transportation Team has been working with Caltrans District 5 on a variety of wildlife connectivity issues in the Gaviota Pass region of Santa Barbara County. An important outgrowth of these discussions is District 5's initiation of a one-year wildlife study that was launched through a virtual kickoff meeting in December 2021 to introduce the project to local and regional stakeholders. At the end of March, District 5 hosted a technical study design discussion with their consultant ICF Jones and Stokes who are leading the study. Members of our Ecology and Transportation Teams participated to learn more about how the study is being designed to provide a robust wildlife habitat connectivity assessment along 6 miles of highway 101 within the Gaviota Pass corridor from approximately Nojoqui Summit to Mariposa Reina. Important components of the study including using systematic camera monitoring and roadkill surveys along with assessments of existing infrastructure and surrounding land use. The spatial and temporal patterns of wildlife movements and roadkill will help ICF identify and generate recommendations for approaches and/or opportunities to enhance safe wildlife passage in the corridor and reduce the risk of wildlife-vehicle collisions.

## **Public Education Program**

### **2022 California Coastal Art & Poetry Contest.**

Ten winners and 43 honorable mentions were selected from nearly 1,600 entries from k-12 students throughout the state. See the results at: [www.coastal.ca.gov/art-poetry](http://www.coastal.ca.gov/art-poetry).

## **The Dockside Podcast.**

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Boating Clean and Green program in partnership with the San Francisco Estuary Partnership launched its new podcast, Dockside, which showcases clean and safe boating. The first episode, “Meet Your Local Harbormaster” profiles three harbormasters (from Marina del Rey, Bay Area and the Delta). The second episode, “Caring About Oil Spills - What You Need to Know” will be launched in May, in partnership with the CA Office of Spill Prevention and Response.

## **Coastal Cleanup Planning.**

At the beginning of March, Public Education staff met with local Coastal Cleanup coordinators to begin planning for the upcoming 38<sup>th</sup> Annual California Coastal Cleanup. While conditions vary across the state and flexibility remains everyone’s top priority, staff was pleased to hear that most if not everyone is planning a return to in-person gatherings for Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Staff will continue to encourage neighborhood cleanups throughout the month of September and look forward to returning to as close to full capacity as possible for the September 17<sup>th</sup> events.

## **Emergency Permits**

### Central Coast District

- G-3-22-0016: emergency authorization to fill a sea cave at the base of the bluff (and below existing bluff armoring) fronting the residence at 3020 Pleasure Point Drive in the Pleasure Point area of Santa Cruz County.

### South Coast Orange County

- G-5-22-0005, Replace four existing steel structural columns supporting units 3, 4, 23,24,33, and 34 on the seaward side of the structure, inland of the pool, install temporary stud walls and shoring during construction, Laguna Beach. Orange County
- G-5-22-0006: Removal of an existing detached 35 foot tall, 24-inch diameter storm drain pipe. Laguna Beach, Orange County.
- G-5-22-0015: Vegetation removal as necessary to reduce the risk of wildfire threat to residential and public structures at City-designated Fuel Modification Zones (FMZ) 20 (7.9 acres) and 21 (12.5 acres), Laguna Beach, Orange County.