

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

455 Market Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94105
FAX (415) 904-5400



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April 7, 2023

TO: California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties

FROM: Dr. Kate Huckelbridge, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report, April 2023

Non-Competitive LCP Local Assistance Grants

In October 2021 and November 2022, in conjunction with additional LCP Grant Program updates, the Commission approved a non-competitive grant application process by which grant proposals for up to \$500,000 could be approved by the Executive Director and announced at the following Coastal Commission meeting. The following non-competitive grants were approved over the past month:

- City of Santa Barbara, \$243,000: The City of Santa Barbara is proposing to complete an amendment to the Airport segment LCP LUP to incorporate sea level rise adaptation policies. This project is considered Phase C of the City's larger sea level rise and LCP update project and will build off of other grant-funded work. The overarching goal of the project is to prepare the Airport and the public for increased storm surges, erosion, and flooding while continuing to provide critical transportation services and coastal resource protection for the next 30 years. This specific grant will incorporate the adaptation options assessed in earlier phases into an Adaptation Plan report and Final LCP update and include continued community engagement. Sea level rise LCP policies will ensure consistency with the Commission's Critical Infrastructure Guidance.

Environmental Justice Year in Review available

The Environmental Justice Year in Review has been posted to our website and can be found [here](#). This document is an annual report that highlights the agency's progress and accomplishments related to environmental justice, equity, and tribal affairs. Please check it out!

Environmental Justice and Sea Level Rise Advisory Group

The Commission received financial assistance from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to develop policy guidance on addressing environmental justice, equity, and sea level rise in LCP grant deliverables, such as vulnerability assessments, adaptation plans, and draft LCP policies on sea level rise. To ensure meaningful engagement and community input is integrated throughout the policy, the Environmental Justice Unit invited community leaders throughout California to advise staff on the development of this policy guidance. Eight individuals were selected to participate in the environmental justice and sea level rise advisory group and will be paid a stipend to provide input on the larger public engagement plan, background literature review, and policy outline development. The eight individuals come from a range of experiences and geographies along the coast:

- Adam Canter, who is the Director for the Wiyot Tribe's Natural Resources Department in Wig (also known as Humboldt Bay);
- Allene Villa, an EJ advocate with the Oceano Beach Community Association;
- Cameron Yee, who works with CAUSE organizing working-class immigrant communities in Oxnard;
- Charming Evelyn, who is the Sierra Club Co-Chair of California Water Committee and Vice Chair of EJ & Social Justice Committee for the Angeles Chapter;
- Delaney Alamillo, who is the Director of Community Nature Connection that connects Angelenos to nature through transformative outdoor experiences;
- Lesly Gallegos-Stearns, who works with Casa Familiar in San Diego at the intersection of environmental justice and air quality advocacy and education;
- Naama Raz Yaseef, who is the Community Engagement Management at The Watershed Project, a Bay Area nonprofit that connects disadvantaged communities to their watersheds; and
- Orion Camero, who is an Oakland-based multi-medium arts-activist focused on coalition-building for climate change movements.

First Quarterly Environmental Justice (EJ) Partner Call with Commission Executive Director and Other Agency Staff

The Environmental Justice Unit launched a quarterly environmental justice (EJ) partner call with our Executive Director and other agency staff. The purpose of this meeting and future calls is to enhance meaningful engagement and create an open line of communication between EJ partners and Commission staff. These calls will also further the staff's implementation of the Commission's EJ Policy, particularly commitments and implementation action items related to meaningful engagement.

The first meeting occurred on Thursday, March 30 from 1-2:30pm PST, where we welcomed fourteen EJ organizations to meet the Executive Director, engage in a Q&A session, and help brainstorm future EJ partner calls.

Annual Washington DC Meetings of the Coastal States Organization and NOAA Program Managers

In late March, I traveled to Washington, D.C. with our Federal Programs Manager, Ashley Reineman, for the annual meetings of the Coastal States Organization and NOAA Program Managers. Discussions during the meetings covered a range of issues, including the status and plans for federal resilience funding and project implementation across the coastal states coming out of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. Staff from the Commission, the Coastal Conservancy, and the San Francisco Bay, Elkhorn Slough, and Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserves also met together with staff in California Congressional offices in support of appropriations for California's Coastal Management Program in the FY2024 Federal Budget. Meetings included staff from Reps. Carbajal, Huffman, Levin, Brownley, Peters, Panetta, Eshoo, Khanna, Garamendi, Lee, and Pelosi's offices, as well as staff from Senator Feinstein 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 of staff requests, and staff look forward to follow-up discussions and opportunities for continued support.

Wildfire Resilience Coordination Site Visit

On March 22nd, seven staff members including representatives from our Statewide Planning Unit, Ecology Group, Legal Unit, and North Coast District joined the Board of Forestry, Cal Fire, other agency and academic partners, landowners, and other interested parties on a day-long tour of timber harvest areas in Humboldt County. The purpose of the tour was to facilitate collective understanding and discussion concerning proposed amendments to the Board's Forest Practice Rules, specifically including regulations of Coastal Zone Special Treatment Areas (STAs), which have not been updated since first established in 1977. STAs are defined under the Coastal Act whilst their establishment followed Commission recommendations to and by the Board of Forestry, based on identified visual, recreational, and natural resource values. The proposed changes are intended to revise existing timber stocking standards to reflect improved technical insight already employed elsewhere in the state, and would expand allowable silvicultural methods within STAs to include the creation and maintenance of shaded fuel breaks and defensible space, variable retention harvesting, and the use of alternative prescriptions when meeting specific criteria. Broadcast burning would also be allowed as a fuel hazard reduction tool. The joint outing resulted in significant co-education of respective mandates and goals, technical insights, and appreciation for the many opportunities that are available for working together to advance the State's overall goals around wildfire resilience and working lands. Our staff looks forward to continued engagement with the Board on these regulatory changes as well as broader coordination across all wildfire resilience issues; however, a key challenge remains the Commission's lack of funding for fire-related work. Staff are actively exploring opportunities to augment staff capacity through partnerships with the Board and others and welcome the Commission's guidance and assistance in this pursuit.

Integrating Nature into Risk Science & Insurance Workshop

On March 16-17th, staff from the South Central District attended a workshop called “Integrating Nature into Risk Science & Insurance.” It was hosted by the California Ocean Science Trust, the UC Santa Cruz Center for Coastal Climate Resilience, the California Department of Insurance, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The workshop explored how both insurance and nature-based adaptation strategies can play roles in reducing risk and advancing coastal resilience to climate change, as well as how these tools can be used to advance equity. Talks covered subjects like incentivizing adaptation, improving risk science, and using nature to reduce risks.

Coastal Art & Poetry Contest Winners announced

Ten winners and 40 honorable mentions have been selected for the 2023 California Coastal Art & Poetry Contest for k-12 students. More than 2,200 entries were received this year. The art and poetry will be exhibited at several locations up and down the coast through 2024, and the poetry will be published in the May 2023 issue of Chapman University’s poetry journal. See all of the poetry, art, and artist statements at www.coastal.ca.gov/art-poetry/mm23/winners2023.html.

New Dockside Podcast episode released

Learn about plastic pollution in California and what California is doing about it, including new programs that could help stem the tide of trash entering our waterways and oceans each year in the latest episode of Dockside, [now streaming](#). Dockside is produced by California State Parks, the Coastal Commission, and the SF Estuary Partnership. It is available on all major podcast platforms.