

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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May 5, 2025

TO: California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties
FROM: Dr. Kate Huckelbridge, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report

LCP Grant Program

In line with the adopted LCP Grant Program guidelines, I approved a grant of \$59,000 for the City of San Clemente to complete a beach attendance study and to incorporate findings into the City's LCP. The project's objective is to monitor hourly beach attendance at specific beach sites using camera and cellphone data to assess "visitor-sheds", beach visitation patterns, and surf activity, and to complete an economic analysis of beach visitation. The study will also consider sea level rise and adaptation pathways based on the "carrying capacity" of San Clemente's beaches. The City will develop a report summarizing the findings and will prepare a draft of the LCP amendment. The study will incorporate environmental justice considerations into its analysis and will be harmonized with the existing LCP grants.

Coastal Adaptation Engineering Workshop: Nature-Based Solutions

Last Friday on April 25th, Commission staff participated in a workshop with Caltrans District 4 engineers and planners. The workshop was second in a series developed by the Commission's transportation and engineering staff in conjunction with Point Blue Conservation Science, NOAA, and the USGS funded by the NOAA Effects from Sea Level Rise Grant Program. The goal of the workshop was to advance knowledge of the opportunities and challenges of applying nature-based solutions to coastal engineering problems, and to increase the understanding and application of nature-based solutions within Caltrans. The workshop was right here in Princeton, where attendees heard from the engineers and scientists who worked on the Surfer's Beach Sand Restoration project permitted by this Commission in 2023, to think about opportunities to address the long-term adaptation challenges along Highway 1. Commission staff are proud to have helped plan the workshop and look forward to continued coordination with our state and federal partners on nature-based adaptation strategies.

Corps to Career Fair

On April 11th, Commission staff attended the 2025 Corps to Career Fair, which was held in Long Beach. Corps to Career is an initiative of Governor Newsom's broader strategy to create a California for all, furthering economic and workforce development. At the fair, hundreds of talented and diverse California Service Corps alumni are connected to nonprofit, business, and public agency employers, including the Coastal Commission.



UC Davis Policy Clinic – Bridging Ecological Restoration and Environmental Justice

In November, we shared that staff would be mentoring a team of students from the [UC Davis Graduate Program of Environmental Policy and Management](#) during their [20-week policy clinic](#) for a project examining the relationship between ecological restoration and environmental justice in our coastal zone. Participating staff have included individuals from our Ecology, Environmental Justice, Mapping, and Transportation teams, who have met weekly with the students throughout this endeavor. The student team has been composed of five individuals who will soon graduate with their Master's degrees – Zsofia Adamkovics Larson, Maya Lewis Burgess, Nathan Ling, Sean Marks, and Maya Willyard. Each have contributed from their rich backgrounds and experiences as well as a clear desire to serve the public. The clinic commenced in January 2025 and will conclude in early June. Altogether, the team has pursued three threads of interdisciplinary research, which will summarily provide the agency with a foundation from which to grow and advance our thinking

and progress around environmental justice issues. In particular, the student team has taken on:

- investigations regarding the facilitation of more equitable access to healthy ecosystems and their services through policy analysis;
- the valuation of such access by disadvantaged communities through literature reviews and interviews; and,
- a geospatial study of past Commission authorizations for mitigation projects compensating for habitat impacts relative to disadvantaged communities through GIS analyses.

As the policy clinic approaches its final weeks, we will welcome the student team to provide the Commission with a brief update on their research and preliminary findings.

Public Education Program

Coastal Art & Poetry Contest

The Public Education Unit recently announced this year's Coastal Art and Poetry Contest results. We had more than 2,200 entries from students across California, and ten winners and forty honorable mentions were selected. The recognized artwork and poetry will go on to be part of a traveling exhibit for the remainder of the year, starting at the Robert J. Lagomarsino Visitor Center at Channel Islands National Park in Ventura during May and June. Contest results and information about the traveling exhibit can be found on our webpage: www.coastal.ca.gov/art-poetry/

New Dockside Podcast episode

California State Parks and the California Coastal Commission's Boating Clean and Green Program released a new podcast episode. In this [episode](#), we are joined by Don Anderson (District Captain for the District 11 Northern Region) and Susan Webb (Commander for the Greater Sacramento America's Boating Club-US Power Squadrons) to talk about the origin of each of these organizations, their mission, roles and services they provided to recreational boaters and water enthusiasts.

Whale Tail Grant Justice Outside Trainings

On April 22nd, the Public Education team partnered with Justice Outside to provide a virtual workshop on "Equity Centered Curriculum & Program Development" to Whale Tail Grantees. Twenty-four participants from nineteen organizations explored how to mitigate biases and move toward equity and inclusion in program delivery. This was the first of five free Justice Outside trainings for Whale Tail Grantees centered on equity in programming and organization management. Upcoming training topics include program evaluation, justice-centered marketing, and human-centered storytelling.

Youth Mentoring

Jessica Lie, our Whale Tail Grants and Education Programs Analyst, will support the EmpowerHer Institute's Youth Philanthropy Project by serving as a panelist and youth mentor for members of their Youth Advisory Board. These middle and high school girls will be leading a project to offer mini grants to youth-serving organizations across Los Angeles County. EmpowerHer is a current Whale Tail Grant recipient, but this philanthropy project is funded by the Frieda C. Fox Foundation.

Staff Retirements

Tom Luster

We celebrate the retirement of Tom Luster, who served for over 24 years as a Senior Environmental Scientist in the Commission's Energy, Ocean Resources and Federal Consistency Division. During his time at the Commission, Tom consistently took on some of the most controversial and important projects and topics, including desalination, nuclear waste storage, and the siting and operation of coastal power plants. Tom never shied away from following the facts where they lead and developing strong, defensible recommendations based on the protection of coastal resources called for in the Coastal Act.

As a Commission scientist, Tom worked to effectively protect some of the coast's least appreciated and most fundamentally important organisms. He developed expertise in plankton, microscopic plants, larvae and eggs that are the source of marine productivity and without which the more charismatic species and habitats we all know and love would not exist. His insight into the importance of plankton as the base of the marine food chain developed into a widely recognized and valued expertise on the environmental impacts of industrial seawater use, including key contributions to the science of calculating and mitigating for those impacts. This work has doubtless led to a legacy of protection that includes billions of individual marine organisms and hundreds of acres of habitat.

Throughout his career, Tom also went above and beyond his professional responsibilities to represent and passionately advocate for his environmental scientist colleagues across the state when the situation called for it and mentored countless staff over the years. The list of those he helped train and guide includes several members of the Commission's Executive and management teams. He has been key to their development and success at this agency, both by generously sharing his knowledge and by modeling the professional scientific excellence and analytical rigor that makes a successful Commission staff environmental scientist. Tom's tireless, head-down, no fuss, yet good-humored approach to his work and his consistent level of achievement have always been deeply appreciated.

We would like to thank Tom for his decades of service and wish him many years of happy retirement!

Emergency Permits:

South Central Coast District

G-4-25-0017 – Emergency permit issued to Ventura Port District for one-time removal of windblown sand from roadways, parking lots, pathways, sidewalks and redistribution of sand on beach.

G-4-24-0023-W – Emergency Permit Waiver for Goleta West Sanitary District in Santa Barbara County for emergency cleanup activities and repair of wastewater pipeline in November, 2024 in response to pipeline break and spill of approximately 10,000 gallons of untreated sewage to prevent impacts to water quality and sensitive habitat areas.

South Coast District

G-5-25-0013 – Emergency permit issued to Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) to address the threat of damage to the railroad tracks by wave erosion from storms and king tide events (Areas 1 and 2) and to address damage and prevent further damage caused by landslides (Area 3). The emergency permit approved the placement of 900 tons (600 cy) of 3-ton sized rock immediately seaward of the railroad tracks between MP 203.83 and MP 203.90 (Area 1); placement of 6,750 tons (4,500 cy) of 3-ton sized rock immediately seaward of the railroad tracks between MP 204.00 and 204.40 (Area 2); placement of 240,000 cy of sand over the rock in Areas 1 and 2; and demolition and removal of remaining portions of the damaged Mariposa Pedestrian Bridge (Area 3), grubbing, grading, and site preparation.

G-5-25-0016 – Emergency permit issued to the Catalina Yacht Club to replace six 12-inch diameter ACZA-treated Douglas Fir timber piles with plastic wrapping and repair two 12-inch diameter ACZA-treated Douglas Fir timber piles with plastic wrapping that were detached and damaged during a recent storm event.

San Diego District

G-6-25-0004-W – On March 19, 2025, The University of California, San Diego (UCSD) moved boulders and sediment and regraded the existing emergency access road in response to a bluff failure that occurred above the emergency vehicle accessway at Black's Beach to restore emergency services.

G-6-25-0006-W– Emergency permit waiver issued to the City of Encinitas for temporary closure of the D Street public access staircase beginning on April 8 due to corrosion and the loss of structural integrity, and for in-kind replacement of the staircase's steel hardware.

G-6-25-0020 – Emergency permit issued to the Mission Bay Yacht Club to dredge approx. 20 cu. yds of sand that has built up under an existing marina dock following storm drain flows and placement of the sand on the adjacent beach to avoid damage to the dock.

Energy & Ocean Resources Unit