

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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September 8, 2026

TO: California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties

FROM: Dr. Kate Huckelbridge, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report

Senate Transportation Subcommittee on LOSSAN Rail Corridor Resiliency

On August 12th, Peter Allen, the Commission's Statewide Transportation, Access, and Mobility Manager, participated in an informational hearing held in Sacramento by the Senate Transportation Subcommittee on LOSSAN Rail Corridor Resiliency. Peter was part of a lineup of agency speakers, along with representatives from the State Transportation Agency and regional rail operators, that discussed the recent [multiagency report](#) to the Legislature on enhancing coordination, management, and performance of the LOSSAN rail corridor. As part of his presentation, Peter highlighted several recommendations for increasing reliability and resiliency along the corridor. Peter also emphasized the importance of protecting public coastal access along the rail corridor and the urgent need for local transportation agencies to make progress on realignment of several vulnerable segments of rail line.

Swim California

On August 25, Commissioners Chris Lopez and Ann Nothoff, along with Coastal Access Program Manager Linda Locklin, spoke at an event presented by Catherine Breed, who is currently swimming the length of the California coast. Catherine was hosted by Hopkins Marine Station in Pacific Grove, and the Coastal Commission was a partner to the event. Catherine spoke of her determination to swim every day regardless of the ocean conditions. She has crossed the half-way mark and expects to reach the Mexico border in late October.



Public Education Program

To Save Our Coast Panel

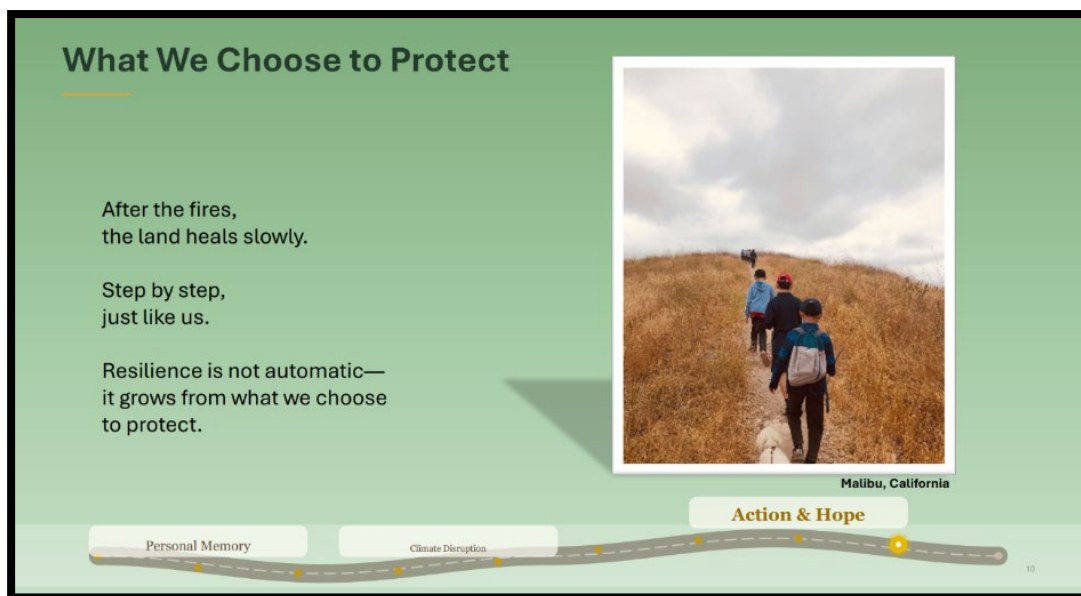
On Wednesday, August 26th, Public Education staff participated in a panel of speakers accompanying a showing of *To Save Our Coast*, the documentary recounting the passage of Prop 20. Organized by The Watershed Project in Richmond, the panel included Commission staff, a community resilience organizer, and a community activist. Speakers focused on the current challenges facing the coast and what members of the audience can do to continue the legacy of the students and activists that helped pass the Save the Coast Initiative in 1972.

California Coastal Cleanup Day

Over this past month, Public Education staff have attended and spoken at numerous organizing meetings in preparation for the 42nd Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day. Community organizations and local government agencies are making their final preparations for the event. We invite all of you to join tens of thousands of other Californians on September 19th for the Commission's signature volunteer event! Select your cleanup location and find everything you need to know at coastalcleanupday.org. There are cleanup sites located across the entire state, so no matter where you live, you can make a difference for California's creeks, rivers, lakes, neighborhoods, and beaches, and protect the ocean.

Climate Storytelling Contest

We recently announced the winners and honorable mentions of the 2026 [Climate Storytelling Contest](#). The contest invited California middle and high school students to answer the following prompt through a narrative essay, podcast, or photo essay: What are your feelings about climate change? How could those feelings lead to action? [View all the winning entries.](#)



From "When Healing Depends on Power in a Changing Climate," from a photo essay by Jerry Chang

Environmental Justice Program

Youth Programming Special Conditions Project

The Commission hosted Brian Shah as a Summer intern from Stanford University. His main project looked at how permittees are interpreting and implementing Special Conditions that require youth educational programming for under-resourced communities. Brian will be presenting key findings from his research to the Commission this month.

Staff Mentoring Program

Stemming from our internal Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work, back in 2024 a team of Commission staff launched a voluntary mentorship program to support new and early-career staff development, provide a place for experienced staff and retirees to share knowledge and career advice, and build a stronger sense of community between staff across the state. Over the past 3 years, 63 mentors and 81 mentees have participated in the program, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants. Mentees appreciated learning about how other offices and units within the CCC operate and the opportunity to have dedicated time to talk about challenges and achievements outside the normally fast-paced CCC environment. Mentors found value in helping new staff navigate daunting workloads, reflect on work life balance, and the opportunity to share 50 years of Coastal Commission history.

Staff Acknowledgments (promotions/retirement)

Commission Interns

Over the last few months, the Coastal Commission bid farewell to interns across our teams and units. Earlier this year, in the Statewide Planning Unit, Celeste Han from the University of California Davis evaluated how state housing laws interact with local coastal programs. Also in our Statewide Planning Unit, Brian Shah from Stanford University researched transfer of development rights programs for coastal hazards and evaluated the effectiveness of youth programming special conditions in permits.

In the Environmental Justice Unit, Clarity Cooper, from UC San Diego, assisted in the tracking of programmatic work, reviewing condition language, and supporting our 50th Anniversary campaign on social media.

In our Technical Services Unit, Hana Pezzaglia from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and the CSU COAST program worked with the Commission's Mapping and Ecology Units to create a geospatial tool to support staff analyses of authorized vegetation management work intended to bolster wildfire resilience. This product provides a foundation for understanding where various treatments are occurring and the ecosystems that these treatments may affect.

The Commission's Headquarters Enforcement Unit in San Francisco was thrilled to have three law student interns helping us on our cases this summer, Chloe Bennett and Kat Lane from UC Law San Francisco, and Sophia Kimble from Berkeley Law.

Finally, in the South Coast Enforcement Unit, Daphne Crother from Southwestern Law School catalogued extensive private encroachments into a wetland in Newport Beach, researched tidelands grant information for the area, and drafted correspondence to start the process of removing the encroachments and restoring wetland habitat and function.



Share your Coastal Memory

As one aspect of our celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Coastal Act, we are hoping that the public will share some of their personal experiences with the coast. We are collecting coastal memories to use on social media and our website to illustrate the connections we have to our coast. They can be brief or more involved, and pictures or even short videos will help paint a more vivid picture. Memories can be submitted anonymously. Please visit [this page](#) to upload your story and help us understand how the Coastal Act has impacted you.

Here's one recently added coastal memory to share, from "Mitch": I appreciate the Coastal Act every time I ride my bike directly to my favorite beach in Carlsbad, taking a public path that had previously been gated off by a nearby property owner. The Commission required the gate to be opened, making it possible for me and countless others to easily access this beach.

From Act to Action: The First 50 Years of Coastal Protection

As part of our many initiatives to celebrate the Coastal Act's 50th Anniversary, Commission staff will be spotlighting key program achievements and a public access success at each monthly hearing. The goal is to educate the public, honor the Act's legacy, and highlight the Commission's ongoing work to protect California's coast. We will continue to show our Coastal Access Spotlight series to the Commission for the rest of this year, as well as post the videos on Instagram and YouTube via the Commission's website: <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/access/highlights.html>

Public Access Spotlight:

This Spotlight features a forested trail to a "secret" beach" north of Trinidad in Humboldt County. Watch the video to learn more about how to find this beach and the adventures you will enjoy along the way.

Recognized by the City of Carpinteria

On August 24th, the City of Carpinteria issued a proclamation to recognize the 50th anniversary of the California Coastal Act and celebrate five decades of coastal stewardship, public access, environmental protection, and community partnership. South Central Coast District Supervisor Jacki Phelps accepted the proclamation on behalf of the commission.



BEACH CELEBRATION! As a reminder, we have confirmed the time and place for the Commission's 50th anniversary beach celebration. It will be held in Long Beach, on October 10 at Junipero Beach. The event will be free of charge and open to the public for an afternoon of music, entertainment, speakers, and activities to celebrate 50 years of coastal protection. So, mark your calendars now, plan your public transit routes, and stay tuned for updates.
