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**Ocean Protection Council Approves Up To \$9.2 Million in Grants
For State Coastal and Ocean Improvement Projects**
Two-Day Meeting Continues Today

HALF MOON BAY, Calif. – The California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) has approved grant awards totaling up to \$9.2 million for fisheries and ocean improvement, research and ecosystem management projects statewide.

“These projects represent the kinds of high-quality work necessary to further protect our oceans,” said Secretary for Resources and OPC Chair Mike Chrisman. “Together we will continue to take great strides to enhance ocean management along California’s coast.”

The OPC’s two-day meeting resumes today. Agenda items include a panel discussion about salmon issues in California and a public comment period regarding the staff draft OPC Marine Debris Implementation Strategy that was released in July.

The full meeting agenda and live webcast are available at <http://resources.ca.gov/copc/meetings.html>.

About the Projects:

**Marine Life Management Act Lessons Learned Study – Up to \$250,000
California Fish & Game Commission/California Department of Fish & Game**

The lessons learned study will evaluate the successes and challenges of the implementation of the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA), a state act that strives to conserve the health and diversity of marine ecosystems and marine living resources. The study will consist of three essential components: 1) a survey of MLMA actions to date, 2) a "lessons learned" section that evaluates and compares MLMA actions, and 3) a section identifying management areas in need of improvement.

(more)

“This evaluation will help us do a better job of managing California’s marine fisheries. The MLMA is the most progressive fisheries law of any state, but we need to improve its performance. The outcomes of this study will help us live up to the Governor’s vision for a healthy and productive ocean.”

– *Michael Sutton, member, California Fish & Game Commission; chair, California Fish & Game Commission Marine Resources Committee*

For more information about this project contact Adrianna Shea, (916) 508-5262

**Collaborative Fisheries Research Organization – Up to \$300,000
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission**

The funding will help create a collaborative fisheries research organization in California that will support collaborative research throughout the state. The organization will develop, solicit, and fund projects with the goal of creating partnerships between fishermen and scientists to collect fisheries data necessary to state and regional fisheries agencies.

"We've been promoting collaboration between fishermen and scientists for years. We're pleased the OPC is following our recommendation to institutionalize these relationships that will be so important for fishery and ocean research in the future."

– *Zeke Grader, executive director, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations*

For more information about this project contact Christine Blackburn, (510) 318-1145

**Central Coast Groundfish Project – Up to \$1,006,500
The Nature Conservancy**

The Central Coast Groundfish Project will assess new, sustainable approaches to California’s groundfish fishery in this region. In 2005, The Nature Conservancy partnered with regulatory agencies and trawl fishermen in Central Coast communities to develop a collaborative proposal aimed at reducing the impact of bottom trawling and also purchased several federal permits and vessels from local fishermen to further this effort.

"We thank the Ocean Protection Council for supporting our partnership with fishing communities to help California's Central Coast groundfish fishery provide sustainably-caught local seafood, preserve our fishing heritage and conserve our ocean resources. This funding will be used to run demonstration projects to explore how traditional groundfish harvest methods could be modified to reduce bycatch and habitat impact, test the benefits of cooperative fishing approaches, and improve scientific monitoring and research to help manage California's rich marine resources."

– *Margaret Spring, director, The Nature Conservancy's California Coastal and Marine Program*

For more information about this project contact Kathleen Goldstein, (202) 841-0295

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California Seafloor Mapping Program – Up to \$7,500,000
California Ocean Protection Council Staff

At its Oct. 25, 2007 meeting, the OPC approved the provision of up to \$15,000,000 for the implementation of the California Seafloor Mapping Program to map seafloor substrates, marine habitat types, and bathymetry. This funding authorizes \$7,500,000, the final portion needed to meet the October 2007 provision, for the continued implementation of the program. Complete mapping of the California seafloor (in state waters to three nautical miles offshore) is one goal of the OPC's five-year strategic plan.

“You can't conserve what you don't know you have. Maps have long been a key tool for land conservation; when we have mapped our coastal waters we will have a much greater understanding of our marine resources and will do a better job of protecting them.”

– *Sam Schuchat, executive officer, Coastal Conservancy; secretary, California Ocean Protection Council*

For more information about this project contact Neal Fishman, (510) 590-2925

Climate Change Adaptation Model Pilot Study – Up to \$200,000
Center for Ocean Solutions, Stanford University

California's coastal region is vulnerable to future climate change impacts such as sea level rise, ocean acidification, loss of near-shore habitat and wetlands, water and food supply shortages, and continued increases in precipitation. The Center for Ocean Solutions, based at Stanford University, will develop a climate change adaptation model designed to test the outcomes of policy decisions in relation to climate change scenarios.

"This climate change adaptation model will be designed with and for coastal managers and decisionmakers. As a visualization tool, it will help provide a better understanding of where natural and built assets are most vulnerable to projected climate change impacts. As an interactive model, the tool will compare the effects of various policy options designed to reduce coastal community vulnerability. And, as an analytic tool, it will help discover policy gaps and opportunities. This is exactly the kind of decision support tool coastal managers say they need to address climate change within their own communities."

– *Meg Caldwell, interim director, Center for Ocean Solutions; director, Stanford Environmental & Natural Resources Law & Policy Program*

For more information about this project contact Meg Caldwell, (650) 723-4057

For more information about the OPC visit www.resources.ca.gov/COPC.