

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

February 9, 2026



New Strategic Plan

Staff recently met to initiate development of the forthcoming Strategic Plan, which staff anticipate bringing to the Commission for discussion by the end of the year. Building on the successes of and lessons learned from the 2016–2020 and [2020–2025](#) Strategic Plans, this early phase of work is focused on setting the foundation for a thoughtful and inclusive process. Staff will initiate a public planning process as the effort proceeds and look forward to hearing from members of the public.

Budget Update

The Governor's Proposed 2026-2027 budget assumes savings related to departments' vacant position funding and reduced operating budgets originally in the 2024-2025 Budget Act to achieve a balanced budget. The savings include eliminating 6,500 vacant positions and decreasing operating budgets by up to 7.95 percent throughout state government.

The Commission's proposed total budget is roughly \$52 million and includes the reduction of 15 vacant positions and \$1,725,000 from special funds. Staff continue to evaluate spending and exercise prudence about committing new funds. The proposed budget includes three budget change proposals submitted by the Commission. The first is for 6 positions and \$2,085,000 from the Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fund in fiscal year 2026-2027 and roughly \$2 million in ongoing funding to support new positions in our Marine Environmental Protection Division to meet the growing demands of the marine oil terminal industry and regulatory mandates. The second is for \$102,000 from the School Land Bank Fund to inspect abandoned mine features on school lands and remediate features that require repair or have been breached. The third is for funding for increased costs associated with renewing the lease for the Commission's Long Beach office.

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Abandoned Vessel Removal

Work to clean up abandoned vessels in the Delta continues. Staff facilitated the removal of 13 of 22 abandoned or derelict barges in Broad Slough, three of which are still in progress. Staff anticipate that the remaining six barges will be removed by the end of June.



Lake Tahoe

Staff met with stakeholders to discuss funding recommendations for projects that support environmental protection and public access at Lake Tahoe using rental revenue generated from Commission-issued leases. This process is made possible through [SB 630 \(Pavley, 2013\)](#), which created the Lake Tahoe Science and Lake Improvement Account, a special state fund dedicated to environmental science, collaboration, and improvement projects at Lake Tahoe. The fund is supported by rental revenue from leases issued by the Commission. The Commission collects the revenue that flows into the Lake Tahoe Science and Lake Improvement Account. And while the Commission does not administer the fund, it contributes to funding decisions and advocates for funding to be used in a way that benefits state sovereign land at Lake Tahoe under the Commission's jurisdiction.

Science Spotlight

Staff remain committed to addressing complex challenges through collaborative decision-making based on the best available science. To that end, staff are actively supporting 30x30, as described in [Executive Order N-82-20](#), which establishes a state goal of conserving 30 percent of California's lands and

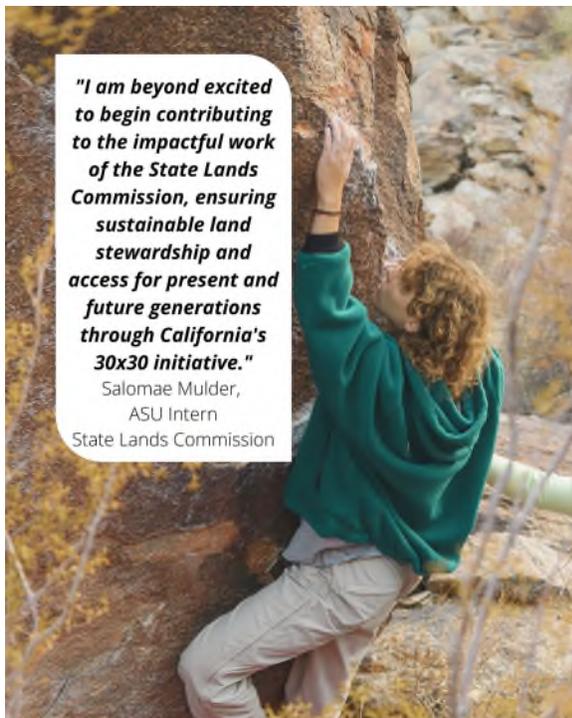
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coastal waters by 2030. Staff have identified nearly 200,000 acres of Commission-managed land as 30x30 Conservation Areas.

Recently, the Commission welcomed Salomae Mulder, an undergraduate in Arizona State University's Sacramento Scholars internship program, who will support staff's efforts to continue using science-based analytical tools to assess areas that may meet 30x30 criteria; help staff develop internal spatial tools to track the Commission's 30x30 Conservation Areas; and identify additional areas that may contribute to 30x30. The Commission also welcomed Dr. Erin de Leon Sanchez as a [2026 California Council on Science & Technology Fellow](#). During her 10-month fellowship with the Commission, Erin will work on several exciting climate change/climate science-associated projects related to the use of Commission-managed lands.



Wildfire Risk Reduction: forest fuel reduction projects

In late January, the Commission and the Truckee Fire Protection District launched the first Commission-managed fuel reduction project in decades. The Prosser Dam Fuel Reduction Project is on school lands near Truckee. The project goals are to improve fire resiliency and forest health and reduce risk to critical

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infrastructure and the community of Truckee from wildfire in a dense 109-acre pine tree forest. This project, the first Commission-managed fuels reduction project in decades, is funded by the School Land Bank Fund and the Truckee Fire Protection District. The Shasta Springs Fuel Reduction project near Weaverville is also ongoing. This project is a collaboration between the Commission and the Trinity County Resource Conservation District, with the objectives of improving fire resiliency and improving oak woodland habitat. Forest material was placed into piles in the fall and are expected to be burned later this winter. Consistent with [California's 2021 Wildfire & Forest Resilience Action Plan](#), staff continue to assess the condition of forested school lands and to identify and treat parcels requiring fuel reduction.

Offshore Wind Energy

Staff, in their capacity as part of the offshore wind energy fisheries working group, participated in the development of a [draft statewide strategy](#) to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to fishing and fisheries as required by [SB 286](#) (McGuire, 2023). The strategy was publicly released in January and presented to the California Coastal Commission by their staff as an informational item earlier this month. The California Coastal Commission will consider adopting the strategy at its April meeting.

City of Newport Beach Granted Lands Management

Staff transmitted its [Report on the City of Newport Beach's Public Trust Lands Management](#) to the City of Newport Beach following the December 2025 Commission meeting. Staff met with City staff in early January to discuss the Report and next steps. City staff conveyed its intent to comply with the Report recommendations and briefed staff on its progress in addressing concerns and its timeline for implementing solutions. Staff will continue to work closely with the City to monitor its progress and will update the Commission at its June 2026 meeting or earlier.

Marine Environmental Protection

Our Marine Environmental Protection Division continues to modernize. Staff sent marine oil terminal operators [letters](#) with information about reporting requirements for repairs, modifications and general MOTEMS compliance reminders, including the effectiveness of the 2025 California Building Code,

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submission requirements for 2026 MOTEMS annual executive summary tables, and, as a part of the Division's goal of going "paper-free," requested electronic-only submittals for most regulatory and MOTEMS submittals. This shift to electronic submittals will increase efficiency, reduce costs, enhance document security, and improve environmental sustainability.

Marine Invasive Species Prevention

Staff updated the Marine Invasive Species Program's public [data dashboard](#) to increase transparency and comply with new statutory requirements and did so more than three months ahead of an April 30 deadline. The data dashboard now includes data summaries for vessel arrivals, ballast water discharges, inspections, and compliance. Staff will update the information semi-annually.

Recently enacted federal legislation, the National Defense Authorization Act, includes language sought by the Commission and championed by Representative Garamendi that will help staff protect marine waters from invasive species introductions. The new provision will enable California and other states to assess the performance of U.S. Coast Guard approved ballast water management systems. The provision would require the U.S. Coast Guard to provide states with performance data on approved ballast water management systems upon request, which would enable states to assess system performance capabilities and the potential risk of species introductions from ballast water discharges. The information could inform policy recommendations to reduce the risk of nonindigenous invasive species introductions in state waters.

In mid-January, Staff participated as a trainer in a two-day Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point risk assessment course and a three-day Train-the-Trainer class in West Virginia. Staff, together with trainers from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service, provided real-world experience related to leverage smart planning to assess and mitigate invasive species invasion risk.



Photo Credit: Theresa Thom, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Methane Emissions Reduction Program

Five wells in the [West Wilmington oil field](#) in Los Angeles County are being plugged and abandoned with [federal grant funding](#) awarded to the Commission. Work on the first well started on January 20. All five wells are expected to be plugged and abandoned by the end of April. Staff is continuing to work with the California Resources Corporation and CalGEM to identify wells leaking methane in other locations that can be plugged and abandoned with the grant funding.

Offshore Oil and Gas Decommissioning

Platform Holly

On January 22, staff released a [Notice of Preparation](#) to prepare a draft Environmental Impact Report for the Platform Holly Decommissioning Project. The public comment period closes on March 6, 2026. Staff scheduled two hybrid (in-person and via Zoom) scoping meetings to receive public comment on the Notice of Preparation. The scoping meetings will be held on February 19 at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. at the Goleta City Hall.



Rincon Island

The Commission's adoption of the Addendum to the Final Rincon Phase 2 Decommissioning Environmental Impact Report last November marked the end of Phase 2 of that project. Phase 2 involved the development and environmental assessment of a remediation plan to decommission and restore aspects of Rincon Island and the onshore facility, including the Coast Ranch Parcel and included preparation of a feasibility study, selecting a decommissioning project, and environmental analysis under CEQA. Phase 2 was preceded by Phase 1, which included plugging and abandoning 70 oil and gas wells and removal of oil processing facilities and most structures at Rincon Island, the onshore facility, and an adjacent parcel. Phase 3 is to implement the decommissioning project. Staff are preparing a scope of work to hire a

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contractor to perform the work and anticipate releasing a contract solicitation and bid soon.

Platform Esther

Platform Esther remains shut down. All wells are offline, and no new oil is being produced. Well abandonments are in progress and expected to be complete in the next few months. The gas pipeline remains operational to handle small amounts of non-commercial gas associated with well abandonment work.

Staff Spotlight

Personnel Updates

Promotions

Congratulations to Adrian Portillo on his promotion to Analyst II; Drew Simpkin, as the newest Public Land Manager I, and Samantha Hodge, Personnel Supervisor.

New Hires

Welcoming Steven Blanset and Zaw Lynn as new Marine Safety Inspectors with our Marine Environmental Protection Division and a welcome back to attorney Patrick Huber.

25-years of State service

Celebrating a career in public service, Ninette Lee and Theresa Haynes recently reached a milestone of a quarter of a century with the state.

Retirement

Wishing Michelle Arriola all the best in retirement.