

## **Synopsis and potential projects for a Sea Grant fellow at the California Ocean Protection Council**

The California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) was created by the California Ocean Protection Act (COPA) in 2004. The overall goal of the OPC is to improve the way that California manages and protects its vast coastal and ocean resources by promoting coordination among the state agencies. Through the authority of its member agencies, the OPC is expected to identify and recommend changes to state and federal policies, programs, and laws that hinder effective and sustainable management of ocean and coastal resources. The OPC is also working to coordinate ocean resource management efforts with Oregon and Washington through the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health.

In addition to coordinating ocean-related activities of state agencies, the OPC uses strategic funding initiatives to further policy both regionally and statewide, enhance ocean conservation, and encourage sustainable use of marine resources. To this end, the OPC is working on many projects along the state's coastline and in coastal waters, guided by its five-year Strategic Plan (available at [http://www.resources.ca.gov/copc/strategic\\_plan](http://www.resources.ca.gov/copc/strategic_plan)). Examples of projects funded to date include: benthic habitat and seafloor mapping; ocean and coastal monitoring; innovative approaches to fisheries management; a statewide public ocean awareness campaign; scientific research through the Sea Grant programs; integrated ocean observing planning; and various ecosystem-based management efforts.

The OPC staff, housed at the Coastal Conservancy office in Oakland, is currently involved in developing and managing various large-scale projects and developing innovative policy solutions on marine resource issues, including:

- a collaborative fisheries research institute;
- innovative ideas for improved salmon populations throughout the state;
- eliminating non-point source runoff through better land-use planning and the promotion of low-impact development;
- developing aquatic invasive species risk assessments;
- funding scientific research that directly informs management issues;
- using ocean observation technology in projects on fisheries, climate change and oil spill response, and;
- generating information on sea level rise and other climate change impacts for state and local coastal managers.

Staff also provides recommendations of potential actions to the council such as issue-focused resolutions, policies, and changes to legislation. A Sea Grant fellow with the OPC will support the functions of the council, including agenda setting, policy recommendations, and project development. Specifically, the role of the fellow may include support on the above mentioned large-scale projects and they will also likely have several smaller projects which will be theirs to develop and manage.