



California Water Quality Monitoring Council



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Secretary for
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Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
c/o DOI Office of the Secretary, Environmental Policy and Compliance
333 Bush Street, Suite 51
San Francisco, CA 94104

MONITORING COUNCIL ENDORSES MARINE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Dear Ms. Helix:

The California Water Quality Monitoring Council whole heartedly supports the long-term commitment of the Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network (MARINE) to monitor and assess the health of one of California's critical shoreline habitats. Your long-term coordination of the efforts of over 30 Federal, State, local and tribal governmental agencies, universities, and private organizations to determine the health of our rocky intertidal habitats and to make this information available to the decision makers and the public through an accessible, understandable web-based platform are truly remarkable achievements.

MARINE was highlighted as a high priority monitoring program in the Monitoring Council's initial recommendations to the Secretaries of the California Environmental Protection and Natural Resources agencies, and again in our recommended Comprehensive Monitoring Program Strategy for California. MARINE had embraced several key components of a successful monitoring, assessment, and reporting program, including:

- Sustaining a cooperative workgroup staffed by issue experts representing key stakeholders, from both inside and outside state government
- Asking and answering a clearly defined set of questions about status and long-term trends, as defined by an interagency Steering Committee
- Effectively evaluating and then resolving monitoring design, coordination, and data access problems and working to enhance and coordinate those efforts so as to improve the delivery of data and information to resource managers, researchers, and the public
- Through an interagency Science Panel, developing a standardized set of core indicators and methods used to monitor rocky intertidal habitats; this permits the resulting data and information to be brought together in a

meaningful way to assess both status and trends, including the early warning of abnormal ecosystem conditions

- Creating and maintaining a unified data management system available to researchers, resource managers, and the public
- Clearly communicating goals and monitoring/sampling protocols through the MARINE website (www.marine.gov) and numerous joint publications and reports available on the website
- Sustaining funding for monitoring programs from multiple partners
- Conducting education and outreach to involve additional partners and to further increase awareness of the values and need for protection of rocky intertidal resources

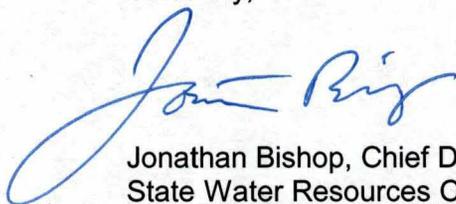
These accomplishments have resulted in a sound and robust monitoring and assessment program for California's rocky intertidal habitats. This program allows state agencies and other users to obtain an increasingly detailed understanding of the extent and condition of rocky intertidal habitats, and the impacts of both natural and anthropogenic stressors on those habitats. Information arising from MARINE's programs are increasingly being incorporated into a number of critical resource management and assessment programs, including Marine Protected Areas, Areas of Special Biological Significance, Federal Mussel Watch, Marine Invasive Species, rapid oil spill impact assessments, and Natural Resource Damage Assessments.

Since becoming involved with the Monitoring Council, MARINE has worked to further enhance its assessment and reporting efforts by

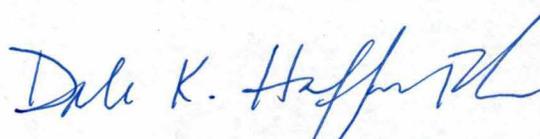
- Striving to develop multi-metric indices of intertidal community health that will allow condition to be categorized and federal and state agencies to assess measures to reduce impacts to intertidal habitats,
- Developing a rocky intertidal web portal that will deliver information in a readily understandable manner to a wide range of audiences, including researchers, resource managers, and the public, and
- Planning for the release of a "Condition of the Rocky Shore" report.

The Monitoring Council believes that these developments demonstrate MARINE's commitment meeting the State's goals of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of California's monitoring and assessment efforts, and improving the delivery of information to decision makers and the public via the internet, as required by California Senate Bill 1070.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Bishop, Chief Deputy Director
State Water Resources Control Board
Monitoring Council Co-Chair
Representing Cal/EPA



Dale Hoffman-Floerke, Deputy Director
Department of Water Resources
Monitoring Council Co-Chair
Representing the Natural Resources Agency

cc: Matthew Rodriguez, Secretary for Environmental Protection
John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources