

Message From Coastwalk Board President

Gregory Fearon

This past year, Coastwalk board and staff have worked hard to advance our mission. Ensuring the right of all people to reach and responsibly enjoy the California coast hasn't been the easiest challenge. It has to be done in a variety of ways, few of which have resources available for our use. So we've had to be very creative, and continually appeal to a dedicated core of volunteers whose time and knowledge are invaluable.

Guided by those efforts, we've been able to utilize a Coastal Conservancy grant dedicated to the placement of signs on the existing segments of the California Coastal Trail, and our ongoing Summer Walks in coastal counties, to further our mission's objectives. As anyone with a state grant over these past two years will tell you, it's been a partnership no one should have had to endure. We're lucky to be working with such patient and dedicated Conservancy staff, who have kept our existence and needs in their hearts as they responded to state freezes and cuts. In the months when we were being paid, we were able to meet our grant objectives and work with lots of local agency planning staff and coastal volunteers on exciting new stretches of the Coastal Trail. Additionally, our Summer Walks program's recent innovations have given it a new crop of fresh faces, who joined the many regulars who make the annual outings so wonderful and exciting.

And our advocacy efforts on behalf of ensuring that the California coast remains accessible and enjoyable have resulted in our review and response to many agenda issues at the Coastal Commission, local planning entities, and up and down the coast. On the beaches, we could be seen leading large rallies to protest the resumption of commercial whaling by the International Whaling Commission, to protest offshore coastal oil exploration and support alternative energy promotion, and to efforts to gather signatures for, and pass, a proposition establishing a trust fund for the operation and maintenance of our state parks.

But as you can imagine, we are very disappointed that Prop 21 did not pass. Although more than 3 million Californians believed in stepping up for their state parks by creating this new long-term sustainable funding source, unfortunately we did not prevail. Coastwalk California will reignite our energy and pursue greater efforts to protect and preserve our State Parks. The coalition of supporters statewide that rallied around this effort was inspirational. The fight to protect our state parks and ensure that they will remain available, accessible and enjoyable to all Californians will continue. Thank you again for your support for Prop 21 and for your ongoing support for California's state parks.

Finally, we've been working to get the ability to communicate with all of you more effectively. For far too long our website hasn't been as easily accessed and updated and our coastal trail mapping site has needed more detail. We haven't had the means to send targeted newsletters on coastal issues, and topics you said you were interested in, and we haven't been able to keep good track of our members and donors. The board has made this a priority and we are raising \$10,000 more than we have already pledged in order to fund these projects. I contributed \$5,000 more toward that goal, and will be asking any of you who support our mission to help us reach that goal.