

50th Annual Zeke Grader Fisheries Forum – October 1, 2025

Presenter Biographies

Wade Crowfoot – Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency

Wade Crowfoot serves as California's Natural Resources Secretary, leading efforts to conserve California's environment and natural resources. He has served as Secretary since 2019 and advises Governor Newsom as a member of his cabinet.

Secretary Crowfoot oversees an agency of over 26,000 employees spread across 27 departments, office, commissions, and conservancies. His agency is charged with stewarding California's forests and natural lands, rivers and water supplies, and coast and ocean. It also protects natural places, wildlife and biodiversity, and helps oversee the state's world-leading clean energy transition.

Secretary Crowfoot is leading efforts to achieve Governor Newsom's ambitious environmental vision, including a commitment to conserve 30 percent of California's land and coastal waters by 2030. He oversees billions of dollars of public investment to protect people and natural places from climate change impacts, and has led efforts to navigate California's record-breaking droughts, floods, and wildfires. Secretary Crowfoot has also initiated a new era of partnerships with California Native American Tribes and is shifting how the agency operates to better support all California residents and communities.

Secretary Crowfoot has been on the frontlines of environmental leadership throughout his career. He served in Governor Jerry Brown's Administration as deputy cabinet secretary and senior advisor to the Governor, driving climate action. He led the non-profit Water Foundation to build water resilience across the American West. He spearheaded efforts to establish and defend California's landmark climate change policies as West Coast regional director for the Environmental Defense Fund. As an environmental advisor to then-San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, he helped establish many first-in-the-nation urban environmental policies. Secretary Crowfoot received a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a master's degree from the London School of Economics.

Wade grew up in Michigan spending summers at a YMCA camp and in the woods around his family's remote cabin in Northern Ontario. He moved to California in the mid-1990s and discovered backcountry camping with friends. His first time in the redwoods at Big Basin State Park is still one of his defining California moments. He loves to camp with his wife and daughter and learn new things in the outdoors, currently including fly fishing and soon backcountry skiing. He says his best days in as Natural Resources Secretary are spent outdoors with local groups that are conserving land and connecting people to nature.

Charlton Bonham – Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Charlton “Chuck” Bonham is the director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. He was originally appointed on September 6, 2011, making him one of the longest-serving directors in the department’s 152-year history.

The department’s mission is to manage California’s diverse fish, wildlife, plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and their use and enjoyment by the public. As one of the oldest and largest state fish and wildlife agencies in the country, with approximately 3,000 employees and a \$860 million budget, the department is the primary agency charged with managing California’s unequaled habitat and wildlife biodiversity.

Prior to his appointment, Bonham served in several roles for Trout Unlimited for over ten years, including as the organization’s California director and as a senior attorney. He was responsible for developing, managing, and implementing Trout Unlimited’s programs in California, including the California Water Project, Sportsmen’s Conservation Project, and various other restoration and watershed projects.

Bonham has also served as a gubernatorial appointee on the board of directors of the Delta Conservancy, whose mission is to conserve, sustain and enhance the cultural, agricultural, recreational, wildlife, and natural habitat resources of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta region, as well as develop and promote sustainable protection, management, and stewardship programs through research and education.

Bonham received his J.D. and Environmental and Natural Resources Law Certificate from the Northwestern School of Law of Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. He was also a Peace Corps Volunteer in Senegal, West Africa.

Barry McCovey, Jr. – Fisheries Director, Yurok Tribe

Barry McCovey Jr. is the Fisheries Director for the Yurok Tribe and a dedicated advocate for salmon restoration, tribal sovereignty, and ecological stewardship in Northern California. A lifelong resident of the Klamath River, McCovey’s deep connection to the river began in his youth, fishing in areas like Blue Creek—then off-limits under private timber control. These formative experiences shaped his commitment to protecting and restoring his people’s ancestral lands and waterways.

Over more than two decades with the Yurok Tribe’s fisheries program, McCovey has served as a technician, biologist, and now director. Under his leadership, the department has focused on restoring salmon populations, revitalizing riparian habitats, and addressing ecological threats such as dam barriers and climate change.

George Bradshaw – President, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations

George Bradshaw is a life-long fisherman based out of Crescent City California. Owner of F/V Swan, he fishes Dungeness crab, salmon, tuna and rock cod. He serves as the President of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Association and as a member of the statewide Dungeness Crab Task Force.

Charlie Schneider – Senior Project Manager, California Trout (CalTrout)

Charlie Schneider was raised by loggers in the forests of Northern California. He holds a Master of Natural Resources degree from Oregon State University and a graduate certificate in fisheries management. Charlie currently leads CalTrout’s efforts to remove two obsolete dams in the Eel River and is also part of CalTrout’s policy team. He lives in Petaluma with his wife and two sons.

Dr. Craig Shuman – Marine Region Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Dr. Craig Shuman is the Marine Region Manager for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife where he directs the Department’s marine science and policy activities in ocean waters off California’s coast. He earned a doctorate in Environmental Science and Engineering from UCLA and a Master’s Degree in Biology from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Prior to joining the Department, Dr. Shuman served as the Marine Advisor to the California Fish and Game Commission, worked in the nonprofit sector, and worked as a consultant where he focused on coastal wetland restoration, water quality, citizen monitoring programs, corporate sustainability, and communications.

Lisa Damrosch – Executive Director, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations

Lisa Damrosch’s dedication to commercial fishing is deeply rooted in her family’s history. Her family has fished commercially from Half Moon Bay, California, since the late 1800s, and today, her son continues the tradition as a fifth-generation commercial fisherman. This fuels Lisa’s passion for advocating on behalf of the commercial fishing industry and fighting for a productive future for working fishermen and communities that depend on them.

As Executive Director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations (PCFFA), she leads advocacy, policy, and organizational efforts on behalf of California commercial fishing families. Under her leadership, PCFFA has reaffirmed its purpose to be led by the active fleet and to serve as the voice of commercial fishermen. PCFFA is committed to being part of the solution and advancing initiatives focused on reasonable, science-based fisheries policies that safeguard the cultural, economic, and food security contributions of commercial fishing to California.

Lisa serves on the California Dungeness Crab Gear Working Group and, following 10 years of running local lost gear recovery programs, is now launching the statewide Fishermen's Gear Recovery Network through PCFFA. She works alongside fishermen as a member of the Bridge Group to advance salmon and water management policies that will result in increased abundance of harvestable salmon in the ocean. She also serves on the board of Seafood Harvesters of America, representing California fisheries at the national level.

Dick Ogg – Commercial Fisherman, Bodega Bay California

Dick was adopted and brought to the United States at a very young age. Dick was taught to fish by his grandfather, who was a Native American belonging to the Ponca Tribe in Oklahoma. From that beginning, Dick moved to California and settled in Sonoma County some 64 years ago and never left. Dick has had the good fortune to fish and dive along our coastline for more than 47 years. While fishing, Dick has also been an electrical contractor and the supervising electrician for Sonoma State University for 31 years. Retiring 20 years ago. Dick has lived in Bodega Bay since 1999 and doesn't plan on moving, at least in this lifetime. Dick wants nothing more than to see the fishing industry thrive and continue to provide a sustainable resource to the public.

Kate Kauer – Associate Director, Oceans Program, The Nature Conservancy

Kate is the Associate Director for the Oceans Program for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in California and leads TNC's North America fisheries strategy seeking to improve fisheries management to support healthy and resilient ecosystems and communities. Kate leads collaborative research projects and policy initiatives to expand the use of electronic technologies in fisheries and builds partnerships to improve decision-making using better data. Previously, Kate was a Fisheries Project Director at TNC responsible for overseeing the California Groundfish Project, managing a portfolio of fishing assets and developing nonprofit fisheries trusts. Kate serves as an advisory committee member for the Local Fish Fund in Alaska and the California Groundfish Collective, holds a non-voting seat on the California Dungeness Crab Task Force, and is a member of the Groundfish Electronic Monitoring Advisory Committee at the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Kate holds a B.A. in biology from Dartmouth College and a Master's in Environmental Science and Management from the Bren School at the University of California Santa Barbara.

Jenn Eckerle – Executive Director, California Ocean Protection Council

Jenn Eckerle is the Deputy Secretary for Oceans and Coastal Policy at the California Natural Resources Agency and Executive Director of the Ocean Protection Council (OPC). Jenn serves as a key advisor to the Governor and the Secretary for Natural Resources and directs policy, scientific research, and critical partnerships to increase protection of California's coast and

ocean. Jenn served as OPC's Deputy Director from December 2016 to October 2022. Before joining OPC, Jenn spent eight years as an Ocean Policy Analyst for the Natural Resources Defense Council, where she conducted technical analysis and developed policy recommendations to advance ocean conservation. Prior to that, she was a Coastal Program Analyst for the California Coastal Commission and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. Jenn earned an M.S. in Marine Biology from the Florida Institute of Technology and a B.S. in Biology from the University of Vermont.

Monica LeFlore – Science Officer, Ocean Science Trust

Monica LeFlore designs and implements coastal and ocean management projects to develop policy solutions guided by science. She is committed to strengthening the science-policy nexus through interdisciplinary collaboration, inclusive processes, and strategic project management. Monica is motivated by the idea that a responsibly managed ocean and coast benefits everyone by providing resilient marine resources and equitable access to coastal spaces. Monica currently leads OST's restoration working group in partnership with the Ocean Protection Council, the organization's research collaboration on climate-adaptive fisheries management, and OST's work on exploring the role of federal fishery disaster relief into the future. Beyond her current project portfolio, Monica is committed to supporting early career professionals and students in the ocean science and management space and is dedicated to creating professional spaces for collaboration where participants feel welcome, seen, and valued.

Prior to joining the OST team in 2022, Monica worked on endangered species protection and conducted research on improving the probability that small-scale science will benefit conservation.

Monica holds an M.S. in Environmental Policy and Management from University of California, Davis and a B.S. in Environmental Studies from University of California, Santa Barbara. She is based out of Monterey Bay.

Dr. Marissa L. Baskett – Professor, University of California, Davis

Dr. Marissa L. Baskett is a professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy at the University of California, Davis and Associate Director of Research at the UC Davis Coastal and Marine Sciences Institute. She received her BS in Biology from Stanford University in 2001 and her PhD in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Princeton University in 2006. Her research focuses on modeling ecological and evolutionary responses to global environmental change. While researching a wide range of biological topics from life history evolution to ecosystem resilience, she develops theory relevant to conservation management decisions, particularly in marine systems. She currently serves on the California Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team, serves on the Australian Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program Intervention Risk Review Group, and is co-chair of the California Kelp Restoration and Management Plan Science Advisory Committee.

Rachelle Fisher – Administrator, California Dungeness Crab Task Force

Rachelle Fisher is a Principal at Strategic Earth Consulting, a multi-disciplinary firm that specializes in effectively linking science and policy with community outreach and engagement. Since 2009, Ms. Fisher has worked with California fishing communities, state agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and resource managers to arrive at fisheries management decisions that are informed by robust science and grounded in local and experiential knowledge. She has worked with the California Dungeness Crab Task Force since its inception, and during that time, has provided administrative support, strategic planning, facilitation, and project management support to the Dungeness crab industry. Ms. Fisher is a California Sea Grant Fellowship recipient and holds a B.S. in Biology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a Master of Advanced Studies in Marine Biodiversity and Conservation from Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego.

Darren Mierau – Chair, California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout

Darren is the North Coast Program Director and newly appointed Science Director for California Trout. Darren has chaired the CACSST since 2017, has served three terms on the Fisheries Grant Program Peer Review Committee, contributed to Director Bonham's Restoration Leader's Committee, and is dedicated to implementing the Governor's Salmon Strategy leading to dam removal on the Eel River. He is a native Californian now living in Arcata with his wife and two sons.

Dr. Liz Whiteman – Executive Director, Ocean Science Trust

Dr. Liz Whiteman is the Executive Director of the California Ocean Science Trust (OST), a nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating progress toward a healthy and productive ocean future for California. Created by state legislation, OST bridges the gap between cutting-edge scientific research and sound ocean management. Liz has over a decade of experience working at the science-policy interface in California on topics ranging from marine protected areas to sea-level rise and ocean acidification. Trained as a marine ecologist in the UK, Liz also spent a decade in the Caribbean, promoting science-informed decisions for fisheries and protected area management. Liz received her PhD from the University of East Anglia, UK.