

California Ocean Science Trust Announces Appointment of Dr. Eric Riggs and Dr. Mike Beck to Board of Trustees

California Natural Resources Secretary appoints university leaders to unique science-policy bridging organization

SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES, July 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The California [Ocean Science Trust](#) (OST) is pleased to announce that California Secretary for Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot has appointed Dr. Eric Riggs and Dr. Michael (Mike) Beck to its Board of Trustees. Representing the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) systems respectively, these distinguished leaders bring deep expertise in marine STEM education and coastal climate resilience to OST's mission of supporting and bringing science to the decisions shaping the future of California's coast and ocean.

"Climate change is rapidly redefining our coast and ocean. Timely access to objective, trusted science advice is critical to protect and restore these ecosystems and ensure an equitable future for California's communities," said Dr. Alexis Jackson, Chair of the OST Board of Trustees. "Dr. Riggs and Dr. Beck will add welcomed expertise as we work together to advance science-based solutions for a resilient coast and ocean future".

Dr. Riggs currently serves as the Dean of the College of Natural Resources & Sciences at Cal Poly Humboldt. He is recognized for his deep expertise in broadening access to marine STEM education, with a particular focus on engaging tribal communities and addressing the experiences of minoritized groups in field-based learning.

Dr. Riggs is a past president of the American Geosciences Institute and the National Association of Geoscience Teachers. Prior to his current role, he held leadership positions at Texas A&M University, including Associate Dean for Diversity and Climate in the College of Geosciences, where he championed innovations in professional development and online learning. Nominated by the CSU Office of the Chancellor, he is committed to fostering the scientific leadership necessary for a resilient coastal future.

"The OST is uniquely positioned to connect science with decision-making," says Dr. Riggs. "I'm excited to collaborate with colleagues across California to represent the CSU and continue creating ways for students to contribute to research that supports healthy coastal and marine

ecosystems and communities."

Dr. Beck joins the board as the Director of the Center for Coastal Climate Resilience and the AXA Chair of Coastal Resilience at the University of California, Santa Cruz. His research focuses on reducing risks to people, property, and nature by integrating science into policy and practice.

Before his current role, Dr. Beck spent 20 years as the Lead Marine Scientist for The Nature Conservancy. He has an extensive national and international profile, having advised government agencies in the U.S., Germany, the U.K., the Philippines, and the World Bank, while collaborating with major global insurance and risk management firms like AXA, Munich Re, and Lloyd's of London. Nominated by the University of California Office of the President, his appointment underscores California's commitment to science as a guide for durable climate solutions.

"It is an honor to advise and support the work of the Ocean Science Trust" says Dr. Mike Beck. "As a past partner and collaborator, I have great respect for the highly professional work that OST does in translating science to guide policy. I look forward to helping advance this work, which is more critical than ever for ensuring the resilience of our coasts for the nature and people of California."

"We are honored to welcome Dr. Riggs and Dr. Beck to the Board," said Dr. Liz Whiteman, Executive Director, OST. "Their combined experience in workforce development and climate resilience science will be invaluable as we continue to invest in actionable solutions for California's most pressing ocean and coastal challenges".

About California Ocean Science Trust (OST)

California Ocean Science Trust strengthens the bridge between scientific research and sound ocean management. Created by state legislation, OST supports and brings world-class science and innovation together with state and federal policymakers to accelerate progress toward a healthy and resilient coast and ocean.

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