



CAPS SCIENTISTS

CAPS Members on Front Line of Coronavirus Battle

by Margarita Gordus, President

In early March, you probably saw video and photos of the Grand Princess cruise ship floating in the water just off the California coast. It carried 2,422 guests, another 1,111 crew members, and a deadly, unwelcomed passenger, the novel coronavirus that triggers COVID-19.

The luxury liner quickly became a high-profile symbol of the global fight to defeat the viral pandemic. Meanwhile, a few miles north at the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) Richmond labs, State Scientists -- many of them CAPS members -- took on a crucial molecular mission: identify which passengers were infected with the virus so that they could be appropriately quarantined, observed, and treated.

Of course, this was not the first time that government officials in a crisis have turned to the skill, knowledge, and experience of State Scientists.

Right now, CAPS members working for the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) are battling HLB, or citrus greening disease. The infection has already devastated Florida's citrus industry and threatens the same to our state's annual \$1.12 billion orange crop.

CDFA veterinarians have been fighting a strain of Newcastle disease that poses a threat to the state's vast poultry industry. In partnership with federal and local health authorities, some 1.2 million chickens have been eradicated so far, in an effort to contain the infection. The Department is entering its third year of monitoring and responding to the disease.

CAPS members working for the Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) were key investigators and witnesses in the conviction of an oil company whose

ruptured pipeline in 2015 contaminated Refugio State Beach and left tar balls on beaches throughout Southern California. Last month, the company agreed to a settlement requiring it to implement safeguards for its national pipeline network and pay more than \$60 million dollars in penalties and cost reimbursements.

State Scientists protect our public health; inspect imported and exported agriculture products; identify consumer goods that contain toxic substances; fight invasive species of fish, animals, and plants; and much, much more.

"Science Matters" isn't just CAPS' catchy phrase. It's the truth. We live it every day. And science doesn't matter without scientists."

When science shapes sound policy and makes our world better, it can be easy to overlook. We don't think about polio anymore because Salk's vaccine worked.

Shoppers buy produce, meat, and dairy goods expecting they will be safe to consume. We appreciate the beauty of a sandy beach, but how often do we think about the science-based policies and laws that preserve it?

The coronavirus pandemic has thrust State Scientists into the foreground. Of the 46 samples collected on the Grand Princess and flown to the Richmond lab for testing, 21 came back positive. As of this writing, 103 passengers tested positive for the coronavirus, and two died. And, sadly, that is just the tiniest fraction of lives affected and lost as the virus has spread. I, like you, am doing my part in following the guidance from our scientists at CDPH to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

"Science Matters" isn't just CAPS' catchy phrase. It's the truth. We live it every day. And science doesn't matter without scientists.



State Scientists are deployed in the aftermath of wildfires to assess toxics left behind.

CAPS Bargaining Presentation Photo Highlights

Your CAPS Bargaining Team met with CalHR’s Team on March 5 at CAPS’ headquarters in Sacramento. The all-day meeting included a detailed presentation on how State Scientists protect public health, guard California’s environment, ensure the safety of California’s agriculture, and defend its natural resources. These photos were a small part of that presentation.

During Governor Newsom’s Shelter in Place Order, face-to-face bargaining meetings have been put on hold. Bargaining will resume once normal business resumes. Please follow developments through CAPS weekly emails and CAPSule.



A Toxic Substances Control scientist at the Environmental Contaminant Lab in Berkeley checks for contaminants in human tissue and fluid samples.



Toxic Substances Control staff wearing personal protective equipment check barrels of unknown chemicals/contaminants.



A Department of Fish & Wildlife Environmental Scientist releases a desert bighorn ram in the Trilobite Wilderness near his capture location.



A Food & Agriculture Veterinarian (General) vaccinates a dairy cow against TB.



State Scientists are a linchpin in wildlife rescues during toxic spills and natural disasters.



A Toxic Substances Control scientist at the Environmental Contaminant Lab in Berkeley checks for contaminants in human tissue and fluid samples.



A Food & Agriculture Veterinarian (Meat Inspection), explains to a specialty butcher how to process meat according to cultural or religious custom while still adhering to food safety principles and state law.

FISH AND WILDLIFE	692	SACRAMENTO	1744
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH	487	LOS ANGELES	216
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE	455	CONTRA COSTA	203
WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD	295	ALAMEDA	132
TOXIC SUBSTANCE CONTROL	217	FRESNO	120
WATER RESOURCES	211	ORANGE COUNTY	107
PESTICIDE REGULATION	197	SAN DIEGO	87
DEPT RESOURCES RECYCLE RECOVERY	174	RIVERSIDE	68
ENERGY COMMISSION	173	YOLO	66
PARKS AND RECREATION	131	HUMBOLDT	56

State Scientists in some 81 classes in 43 different series comprise Bargaining Unit 10. This table shows the 10 departments that employ the most State Scientists and the 10 counties with the highest number of Unit 10 employees working within those boundaries.



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL SCIENTISTS

455 CAPITOL MALL, SUITE 500
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 420
Sacramento, CA

CAPSule (ISSN 10446230) is published monthly by the California Association of Professional Scientists, 455 Capitol Mall, Suite 500, Sacramento, CA 95814. Periodicals Postage Paid at Sacramento, CA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: 455 Capitol Mall, Suite 500, Sacramento, CA 95814-2483.

What's Inside?

**CAPS Members on
Front Line of
Coronavirus Battle
by Margarita Gordus,
President**

**CAPS Bargaining
Presentation Photo
Highlights**

To CAPS Members:

The public health crisis confronting our state, our nation, and the world will be solved because of the invaluable work and tireless dedication of scientists. Meanwhile, CAPS members are protecting California's public health, environment, agriculture, and natural resources -- even during this challenging time. CAPS urges you to take all steps necessary to protect yourself and your loved ones. If you are not deemed to perform essential duties, but are otherwise denied telework, please contact CAPS via email (caps@capsscientists.org).

We are proud to represent Unit 10 State Scientists who apply their knowledge and skills daily to benefit all of us.

Thank you. Be safe.

In Solidarity,

The CAPS Board of Directors

