

# Marine Life Protection Act Initiative



## Applying Lessons Learned from Past Marine Protected Area Processes

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**Presentation to the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group**

**October 6, 2008 • El Segundo, CA**



# Overall Approach

- Take stock of past planning efforts, process choices, and results
  - Reports by M. Harty/D. John, J. Raab, CONCUR Inc.
- Learn from experience in each region
  - Includes detailed feedback from regional stakeholder group members and interviews with MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
- Improve process for MLPA South Coast Study Region



# Initiation and Design of the Process

- Lessons learned from Channel Islands process
  - Consultation with stakeholders is an important step in marine protected area (MPA) planning process
  - Leadership by state and federal agencies and available funding kept Channel Islands process on track
  - Increased communication between stakeholders and scientists was desired



# Initiation and Design of the Process

## Lessons learned from MLPA Initiative process

- Strong legislative mandate created clear goals for MLPA implementation; master plan created structure
- MOU between State of California and RLFF created strong funding mechanism
- Strong initiative team (including California Department of Fish and Game and contractors) propelled work to completion
- Increased dialogue between task force and regional stakeholder group was desired



# Key Policy Guidelines

- Lessons learned from Channel Islands process
  - Important to engage all agencies with overlapping and/or adjacent jurisdiction
  - Participants and public need to understand decision-making process so they know when and how appropriate to provide comments
  - Goals and objectives are critical for planning MPAs



# Key Policy Guidelines

- Lessons learned from Channel Islands process
  - Failure to enforce groundrules resulted in one group member resigning and lack of consensus on single MPA proposal
  - Consensus on single proposal may be unrealistic goal for stakeholder group with diverse interests
  - Consensus on single proposal is not needed for CEQA or NEPA; range of alternative proposals needed



# Key Policy Guidelines

## Lessons learned from MLPA Initiative process

- Clarity on intended work product essential for regional stakeholder group success
- Important to keep focus on policy objectives of MLPA
- Task force plays key role in setting and refining policy guidance
- Focus on developing alternatives instead of consensus keeps process moving and gives policy-makers range of options



# Stakeholders: Selection & Guidance

- Lessons learned from Channel Islands process
  - Critical to include broad range of stakeholders
  - Facilitation important to maintain open communication





# Selection of / Guidance to RSG

## Lessons Learned from MLPA Initiative process

- Important to establish and apply selection criteria for regional stakeholder group membership
- Helpful to appoint regional stakeholder group members with broad knowledge of study region, experience in collaborative planning
- Cross-interest work teams contributed to progress and successful completion of regional stakeholder charge



# Types of MPAs Used in Planning

- State marine reserve
  - No extraction area
- State marine park
  - No commercial extraction area
- State marine conservation area
  - Allows or limits recreational and/or commercial extraction



# Types of MPAs Used in Planning

- Lessons learned from Channel Islands process
  - A variety of different types of MPAs allow flexibility in planning
  - Different types of MPAs may be used to meet different goals and objectives
  - Conservation areas have been more difficult to enforce and more difficult for users to understand than marine reserves



# Types of MPAs Used in Planning

## Lessons learned from MLPA Initiative process

- Each MPA should be based on clear goals and objectives
- Different MPA designation categories give stakeholders options and flexibility
- Paired sets of MPAs with different regulations allow for comparative research
- Special closures can supplement MPAs



# Approaches to Building MPA Proposals

- Lessons learned from Channel Islands process
  - Stakeholders developed MPA proposals based on local knowledge and information provided by advisory teams
  - Scientists provided data, guidelines and evaluation of MPA proposals
  - High level of communication is desirable between stakeholders and scientists during planning process
  - Ease of enforcement is an important consideration for MPA design



# Approaches to Building MPA Proposals

- Lessons learned from Channel Islands process
  - Assumption of total loss of all consumptive activities from proposed MPAs not realistic
  - Socioeconomic analysis did not include any means of evaluating potential benefits of MPAs to users
  - Socioeconomic evaluation was not able to take into account variables such as changes in fishery regulations, cost of fuel, shifts in foreign seafood markets, etc.
  - Uncertainties in socioeconomic analysis should be clearly identified



# Approaches to Building MPA Proposals

## Lessons Learned from MLPA Initiative process

- Iterative process of proposing MPAs, gaining SAT review, and BRTF feedback is key to MPA proposal development and creates opportunities for sharing solutions
- Important to keep regional stakeholder group together through iterative process
- Broad cross-interest support is preferred by task force, and supported by CA Fish and Game Commission
- Helpful to focus on internal stakeholder proposals
- Creating opportunities for fully developed external proposals enhances participation



# Stakeholders, Science and Policy

- Lessons learned from Channel Islands process
  - Important for stakeholders to understand legal basis for action, agency mandates, policies, goals and objectives, authority and regulatory process
  - Important for stakeholders and scientists to be clear in their roles in process of designing MPAs
  - Participants want to know how MPAs will affect or be integrated into other types of regulations and management plans





# Stakeholders, Science and Policy

## Lessons Learned from MLPA Initiative process

- Useful to structure regional profile development as a joint fact-finding process
- SAT member briefings need to be complemented by direct dialogue with regional stakeholder group
- Helpful to have a formal mechanism for stakeholder group members to pose science questions to SAT
- Stakeholder group members benefit from direct opportunity to present proposals to task force
- Helpful to include stakeholder group members in final task force deliberations



# Tools and Support for RSG

- Lessons learned from Channel Islands process
  - Essential to provide easy access to data
  - Participants should be made aware of limitations in available data
  - Information about individual users and their activities should be protected through data aggregation and data sharing agreements
  - Important to provide a means of evaluating proposed MPAs



# Tools and Support for RSG

## **Lessons Learned from MLPA Initiative process**

- Increasing user access and familiarity with GIS tools is essential
- Building a solid information base early in regional stakeholder group process is key step
- Establishing clear guidelines for developing and sharing draft proposals is key
- Creating mechanism for gathering and summarizing information on potential economic impacts is key
- Strong planning and GIS staff support is critical



# Final Deliberations of Stakeholders

- Lessons learned from Channel Islands process
  - Reasonable outcome is to evaluate range of MPA proposals that reflect diverse views of stakeholders
  - Not necessarily realistic to strive for consensus on a single mapped proposal
  - Consensus on single proposal is not needed for CEQA or NEPA; range of alternative proposals is needed



# Final Deliberations of RSG

## Lessons Learned from MLPA Initiative process

- Keeping full regional stakeholder group together through development of final proposals is important
- Side-by-side comparison may point out many “common elements” of proposals
- Helpful to create opportunities for stakeholder group to explain logic of proposals at task force meeting, before recommendation is made to CA Fish and Game Commission