

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

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To: MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

From: MLPA Initiative Staff

Date: November 12, 2008

Subject: MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force Request for Summary of Policy Guidance in the Central Coast and North Central Coast Study Regions

During the first and second phases of the MLPA Initiative in the central coast and north central coast, the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force provided policy guidance to the regional stakeholder groups through several memos (see attached). The guidance that was provided included:

- a strong emphasis on meeting the preferred size and spacing guidelines in the *California Marine Life Protection Act Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas*,
- creating a backbone of marine protected areas that are assigned high and very high levels of protection by the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team,
- the importance of cross-interest support for no more than three marine protected area proposals,
- giving strong consideration to the California Department of Fish and Game's feasibility criteria,
- taking into account socioeconomic considerations,
- meeting the qualitative standards of the MLPA and qualitative guidelines of the master plan for MPAs, and
- selective and sparing use of special closures.

At its November 4, 2008 meeting, the task force confirmed the previous guidance and requested that MLPA staff develop a document summarizing the guidance; the summary document is expected to be reviewed and potentially approved at the December 10, 2008 meeting of the task force.

Attachments: Policy memo from the MLPA Central Coast Project regarding socioeconomic considerations

Policy memo from the MLPA Central Coast Project regarding qualitative standards

Summary of task force guidance for the MLPA North Central Coast Project regarding SAT evaluations, science guidelines, cross-interest support, salmon trolling, the number of MPA proposals, California Department of Fish and Game feasibility guidelines, and special closures



California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
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To: MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
From: MLPA Initiative Staff
Date: January 13, 2006

**Subject: SOCIOECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE
NETWORK COMPONENTS FOR A NETWORK OF MARINE PROTECTED
AREAS ALONG THE CENTRAL COAST**

Summary

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) gives precedence to ecosystem integrity and habitat protection goals in designing a network of MPAs. Consideration of socioeconomic factors in the act includes the goal of attention to species of economic value, participation by interested parties and local communities, and development of a siting plan for protected areas that considers economic information to the extent possible while achieving goals of the act. Best readily available science and the knowledge of participants is required for decision making; there is no expectation of new data collection or analyses. While the MLPA is not excluded from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), additional review under CEQA is not necessary when the Fish and Game Commission adopts a master plan or a program based on that plan.

To date, the Initiative process has complied with requirements of the MLPA to consider socioeconomic factors and gone beyond those requirements to collect and analyze additional socioeconomic information. The California Department of Fish and Game has stated it will undertake an analysis of the maximum anticipated economic impact of the preferred alternative it proposes to the California Fish and Game Commission. Unlike the National Environmental Policy Act, CEQA does not require analysis of economic impacts unless they have a significant indirect environmental impact. However, the promulgation of implementing regulations by the commission would require an economic analysis.

Socio economic considerations in the MLPA

The MLPA includes few references to socioeconomic or economic factors, shown in bold below:

2853. (b) To improve the design and management of that system, the commission, pursuant to Section 2859, shall adopt a Marine Life Protection Program, which shall have all of the following goals:
- (2) To help sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations, **including those of economic value**, and rebuild those that are depleted.

2855. (b) (1) ... the department shall convene a master plan team to advise and assist in the preparation of the master plan...

(3) The team shall be composed of the following individuals:

(B) Five to seven members who shall be scientists, one of whom **may have expertise in the economics and culture** of California coastal communities.

(c) The department and team, in carrying out this chapter, **shall take into account relevant information from local communities**, and **shall solicit comments** and advice for the master plan from interested parties on issues including, but not necessarily limited to, each of the following:

(2) **Socioeconomic** and environmental **impacts** of various alternatives.

2857. (a) ... The department and team shall develop a preferred siting alternative that incorporates information and views provided by people who live in the area and other interested parties, **including economic information, to the extent possible** while maintaining consistency with the goals of Section 2853 and guidelines in subdivision (c) of this section.

(d) The department and team, in developing the preferred siting alternative, shall take into account the **existence and location of commercial kelp beds**.

As stated above, the Fish and Game Commission's designation of MPAs does not require an additional CEQA analysis once a master plan and program based on that plan are adopted:

Section 2859 (b). ..The commission's adoption of the plan and a program based on the plan **shall not trigger additional review under the California Environmental Quality Act** (Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code).

Information requirements for decision-making in the MLPA

Importantly, the MLPA anticipates decision-making based on readily available, up-to-date science and provides no suggestions of deferring action for additional data collection or analyses. The relevant phrases are again in bold:

2855. (a) The commission shall adopt a master plan that guides the adoption and implementation of the Marine Life Protection Program adopted pursuant to Section 2853 and decisions regarding the siting of new MPAs and major modifications of existing MPAs. The plan shall be based on the **best readily available science**.

2856. (C) Recommendations to augment or modify the guidelines in subdivision (c) of Section 2857, if necessary to ensure that the guidelines reflect **the most up-to-date science**, including, for example, recommendations regarding the minimum size of individual marine life reserves needed to accomplish the various goals set forth in Section 2853.

Incorporation of socio economic factors in the MLPA Initiative

Consistent with the MLPA, socioeconomic information has been brought into the development of proposed MPA packages through:

- a. Knowledge of members of the MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG),
- b. Compilation of existing information into the MLPA Central Coast Regional Profile, and
- c. Opportunities for public participation, including posting documents on the web for comment and public comment periods at MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force, CCRSG and Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) meetings.

Additional socioeconomic information regarding areas of high value uses was collected from interviews with:

- a. A purposive sample of commercial fishermen from 17 fisheries providing GIS data layers and maps available to CCRSG members and the SAT,
- b. Selected non consumptive users (e.g., divers, kayakers) reported in the Central Coast Regional Profile and also related GIS layers, and
- c. Central coast recreational fishing effort data for commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFV) and private skiffs, based on surveys by the Department of Fish and Game and the California Recreational Fisheries Survey, were assembled and made available to the SAT.

These data are only spatial, that is they define areas of high value, but do not assign a monetary measure to the value of uses in locations. While estimating monetary values of use is possible for some activities, especially commercial fishing, it is not possible to develop equivalent monetary measures for other valued uses, especially at the fine spatial resolutions needed for decisions regarding marine protected areas. To provide whatever information could be extracted from existing literature on the value of non consumptive uses, three reviews of existing literature were commissioned. They addressed understanding the potential economic value of (a) marine wildlife and whale watching, (b) SUBA diving and snorkeling, and (c) marine recreational fishing (Pendleton and Rooke, 2005-2006).

Additionally, public documents (e.g., general plans) from coastal cities and counties in the study area were analyzed and selected officials of those jurisdictions interviewed to identify local public policies related to marine resources. This analysis and supporting official documents was available to the CCRSG in hard copy (Sturm 2005)

The SAT evaluations of proposed packages being provided to the BRTF in 2006 will include:

- a. Analyses of the proximity of proposed MPAs to population centers to proposed MPAs, and
- b. Estimation of the maximum possible impacts on commercial and recreational fisheries from more restrictive regulations associated with proposed MPAs.

A final contribution of socioeconomic data and analysis is anticipated after the BRTF completes its role in forwarding alternative package of MPAs to the Department of Fish and Game. The department plans to contract for analysis of maximum anticipated economic impact of a preferred alternative for use in deliberations of the California Fish and Game Commission.



**California Marine Life
Protection Act Initiative**

c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
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To: MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
From: Michael DeLapa, Central Coast Project Manager
Date: January 20, 2006

**Subject: QUALITATIVE STANDARDS OF THE MLPA AND QUALITATIVE GUIDELINES
OF THE MLPA MASTER PLAN FRAMEWORK**

Summary

The purpose of this memo is to assist the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) in its review of candidate MPA packages for the central coast by identifying substantive tests and key concepts in the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA; Fish and Game Code, sections 2850-2863) and MLPA Master Plan Framework (as adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission in August 2005). Nothing in this memo shall impute decision-making authority to the BRTF, whose deliberative role is properly confined to broad policy issues. The entities with primary decision-making authority are the California Department of Fish and Game and the California Fish and Game Commission.

Sections 2853 and 2857 of the MLPA provide a variety of standards for judging candidate MPA packages while Section 2853 identifies the six goals of the act. Section 2857 addresses the design of a preferred alternative, including specific requirements for the design of an improved marine life reserve component. Appendix A of this memo provides the full text of these sections.

In addition, the MLPA (Section 2855(a)) requires that the commission adopt

"...a master plan that guides the adoption and implementation of the Marine Life Protection Program adopted pursuant to Section 2853 and decisions regarding the siting of new MPAs and major modifications of existing MPAs. The plan shall be based on the best readily available science."

The commission adopted a master plan framework in August 2006. The framework provides additional design guidance, based on best readily available science. Appendix B provides excerpts of the master plan relevant to the MLPA's requirements for MPA size, number, type of protection, location and other MPA network design features.

Qualitative Standards of the MLPA

1. Pursuant to Section 2853 (redesign of MPA system, goals and elements of program), does the package [emphasis added]:

- Increase the coherence and effectiveness of California's MPA system at protecting the state's marine life, habitat, and ecosystems?
- Meet the six goals of the act?
 - i. To protect the natural diversity and abundance of marine life, and the structure, function, and integrity of marine ecosystems.
 - ii. To help sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations, including those of economic value, and rebuild those that are depleted.
 - iii. To improve recreational, educational, and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems that are subject to minimal human disturbance, and to manage these uses in a manner consistent with protecting biodiversity.
 - iv. To protect marine natural heritage, including protection of representative and unique marine life habitats in California waters for their intrinsic value.
 - v. To ensure that California's MPAs have clearly defined objectives, effective management measures, and adequate enforcement, and are based on sound scientific guidelines.
 - vi. To ensure that the state's MPAs are designed and managed, to the extent possible, as a network.
- Include all of the following elements:
 - i. An improved marine life reserve component consistent with the guidelines in subdivision (c) of Section 2857?
 - ii. Specific identified objectives, and management and enforcement measures, for all MPAs in the system?

[Note: other requirements described in this section will be met later in the MLPA planning process]

2. Pursuant to Section 2857 (workshops and a preferred siting alternative, does the package:

- Include MPA networks with an improved marine life reserve component and is designed according to each of five guidelines?
 - i. Each MPA shall have identified goals and objectives.
 - ii. Marine life reserves in each bioregion shall encompass a representative variety of marine habitat types and communities, across a range of depths and environmental conditions.
 - iii. Similar types of marine habitats and communities shall be replicated, to the extent possible, in more than one marine life reserve in each biogeographical region.

- iv. Marine life reserves shall be designed, to the extent practicable, to ensure that activities that upset the natural ecological functions of the area are avoided.
- v. The MPA network and individual MPAs shall be of adequate size, number, type of protection, and location to ensure that each MPA meets its objectives and that the network as a whole meets the goals and guidelines of this chapter.
 - Take into account the existence and location of commercial kelp beds?

Qualitative Guidelines of the MLPA Master Plan Framework

1. Pursuant to the adopted MLPA Master Plan Framework, does the package:

- Represent every 'key' marine habitat in the MPA network?
- Include MPAs from the intertidal zone to deep waters offshore to protect the diversity of species that live in different habitats and those that move among different habitats over their lifetime?
- Have an alongshore span of 5-10 km (3-6 m or 2.5-5.4 nm) of coastline, and preferably 10-20 km (6-12.5 m or 5.4-11 nm), based on adult neighborhood sizes and movement patterns, to protect adult populations?
- Are placed within 50-100 km (31-62 m or 27-54 nm) of each other to facilitate dispersal of important bottom-dwelling fish and invertebrate groups among MPAs, based on currently known scales of larval dispersal?

Appendix A: Relevant Provisions of the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA)

2853. (a) The Legislature finds and declares that there is a need to reexamine and redesign California's MPA system to increase its coherence and its effectiveness at protecting the state's marine life, habitat, and ecosystems.

(b) To improve the design and management of that system, the commission, pursuant to Section 2859, shall adopt a Marine Life Protection Program, which shall have all of the following goals:

- (1) To protect the natural diversity and abundance of marine life, and the structure, function, and integrity of marine ecosystems.
- (2) To help sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations, including those of economic value, and rebuild those that are depleted.
- (3) To improve recreational, educational, and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems that are subject to minimal human disturbance, and to manage these uses in a manner consistent with protecting biodiversity.
- (4) To protect marine natural heritage, including protection of representative and unique marine life habitats in California waters for their intrinsic value.
- (5) To ensure that California's MPAs have clearly defined objectives, effective management measures, and adequate enforcement, and are based on sound scientific guidelines.
- (6) To ensure that the state's MPAs are designed and managed, to the extent possible, as a network.

(c) The program may include areas with various levels of protection, and shall include all of the following elements:

- (1) An improved marine life reserve component consistent with the guidelines in subdivision (c) of Section 2857.
- (2) Specific identified objectives, and management and enforcement measures, for all MPAs in the system.
- (3) Provisions for monitoring, research, and evaluation at selected sites to facilitate adaptive management of MPAs and ensure that the system meets the goals stated in this chapter.
- (4) Provisions for educating the public about MPAs, and for administering and enforcing MPAs in a manner that encourages public participation.
- (5) A process for the establishment, modification, or abolishment of existing MPAs or new MPAs established pursuant to this program, that involves interested parties, consistent with paragraph (7) of subdivision (b) of Section 7050, and that facilitates the designation of MPAs consistent with the master plan adopted pursuant to Section 2855.

2857. (b) The preferred alternative may include MPAs that will achieve either or both of the following objectives:

(1) Protection of habitat by prohibiting potentially damaging fishing practices or other activities that upset the natural ecological functions of the area.

(2) Enhancement of a particular species or group of species, by prohibiting or restricting fishing for that species or group within the MPA boundary.

(c) The preferred siting alternative shall include MPA networks with an improved marine life reserve component, and shall be designed according to each of the following guidelines:

(1) Each MPA shall have identified goals and objectives. Individual MPAs may serve varied primary purposes while collectively achieving the overall goals and guidelines of this chapter.

(2) Marine life reserves in each bioregion shall encompass a representative variety of marine habitat types and communities, across a range of depths and environmental conditions.

(3) Similar types of marine habitats and communities shall be replicated, to the extent possible, in more than one marine life reserve in each biogeographical region.

(4) Marine life reserves shall be designed, to the extent practicable, to ensure that activities that upset the natural ecological functions of the area are avoided.

(5) The MPA network and individual MPAs shall be of adequate size, number, type of protection, and location to ensure that each MPA meets its objectives and that the network as a whole meets the goals and guidelines of this chapter.

(d) The department and team, in developing the preferred siting alternative, shall take into account the existence and location of commercial kelp beds.

(e) The department and team may provide recommendations for phasing in the new MPAs in the preferred siting alternative.

Appendix B: Relevant Excerpts from the MLPA Master Plan Framework as Adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission in August 2005

Science Advisory Team Guidance on MPA Network Design (page 38)

The MLPA calls for the use of the best readily available science, and establishes a science team as one vehicle for fostering consistency with this standard. The MLPA also requires that the statewide MPA network and individual MPAs be of adequate size, number, type of protection, and location as to ensure that each MPA and the network as a whole meet the objectives of the MLPA. In addition, the MLPA requires that representative habitats in each bioregion be replicated to the extent possible in more than one marine reserve.

The availability of scientific information is expected to change and increase over time. As with the rest of this framework, the following guidelines may be modified if new science becomes available that indicates changes. Additionally, changes may be made based on adaptive management and lessons learned as MPAs are monitored throughout various regions of the state.

The science team provided the following guidance in meeting these standards. This guidance, which is expressed in ranges for some aspects such as size and spacing of MPAs, should be the starting point for regional discussions of alternative MPAs. Although this guidance is not prescriptive, any significant deviation from it should be consistent with both regional goals and objectives and the requirements of the MLPA. The guidelines are linked to specific objectives and not all guidelines will necessarily be achieved by each MPA.

Overall MPA and network guidelines:

- The diversity of species and habitats to be protected, and the diversity of human uses of marine environments, prevents a single optimum network design in all environments.
- For an objective of protecting the diversity of species that live in different habitats and those that move among different habitats over their lifetime, every 'key' marine habitat should be represented in the MPA network.
- For an objective of protecting the diversity of species that live at different depths and to accommodate the movement of individuals to and from shallow nursery or spawning grounds to adult habitats offshore, MPAs should extend from the intertidal zone to deep waters offshore.
- For an objective of protecting adult populations, based on adult neighborhood sizes and movement patterns, MPAs should have an alongshore span of 5-10 km (3-6 m or 2.5-5.4 nm) of coastline, and preferably 10-20 km (6-12.5 m or 5.4-11 nm). Larger MPAs would be required to fully protect marine birds, mammals, and migratory fish.

- For an objective of facilitating dispersal of important bottom-dwelling fish and invertebrate groups among MPAs, based on currently known scales of larval dispersal, MPAs should be placed within 50-100 km (31-62 m or 27-54 nm) of each other.

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
Summary of MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force Guidance to the
North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group
February 14, 2008 BRTF meeting
Prepared February 20, 2008

At its February 14 meeting, the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) provided the following guidance to the MLPA North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCCRSR) and the MLPA Initiative team of staff and contractors (I-Team) as they work to complete the MLPA Initiative process for the North Central Coast Study Region.

1. NCCRSR members should place great weight on the results of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) evaluations of marine protected area (MPA) proposals.
2. In preparing the final round of proposals, NCCRSR members should place strong emphasis on MPAs that meet the SAT guidelines for "preferred" size and spacing. Proposals should include MPAs with "very high" or "high" levels of protection. The BRTF considers marine reserves to be the "backbone" of any proposed network. The BRTF recognizes that proposals may include MPAs with "moderate-high" levels of protection. The BRTF will seriously consider such proposals and will use all SAT-evaluated levels of protection when considering MPA alternative proposals and their socio-economic consequences, as outlined above.
3. The BRTF deliberated on the levels of protection assigned by the SAT to MPAs that allow salmon trolling. Specifically, the BRTF agreed that MPAs that allow salmon trolling at depths less than 50 meters should be characterized as providing a "moderate-high" level of protection for the North Central Coast.

In reaching its decision, the BRTF noted that in the SAT evaluation for the MLPA Central Coast Study Region, MPAs allowing salmon trolling in less than 50 meters water depth were assigned a "moderate" level of protection. The BRTF also recognized that for the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region, the SAT had reached a split vote on the issue of salmon trolling at depths less than 50 meters, and that the SAT acknowledged that resolving this issue would likely require policy direction from the BRTF.

4. The BRTF stressed that cross-interest support for the final MPA proposals is very important and will be given great weight.
5. The BRTF asked that in March the NCCRSR forward no more than three alternative MPA proposals, where there are currently five draft MPA proposals. BRTF members applauded the cross-interest work in developing the draft MPA proposals and asked that the NCCRSR continue to strive for convergence.
6. The BRTF asked that RSG members give strong consideration to the Department of Fish and Game Feasibility guidelines. In the final MPA proposals, the NCCRSR should provide specific rationale for any deviations from the recommendations in the feasibility analysis conducted by the California Department of Fish and Game.

7. The BRTF considered the merits of including recommendations for special closures, for marine bird and marine mammal protection, in the final MPA proposals. The BRTF reaffirmed that the main focus of the NCCRSG in developing final proposals should be on MPAs rather than special closures, as the primary charge of this group is to develop alternative MPA proposals for the north central coast. The BRTF also recognized that in some instances special closures may offer geographically-specific protection from threats such as disturbance that are not necessarily addressed by MPAs.
 - a. The NCCRSG may elect to include recommendations for special closures in their final proposals so long as this does not detract from completing the primary task of developing alternative MPA proposals.
 - b. Special closures should be used sparingly and selectively.
 - c. Refinement of special closures options may require an additional meeting of the NCCRSG Special Closures Work Group.