

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

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To: MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group
From: MLPA Initiative Staff
Subject: Modified Guidance for Round 2 of the North Coast Marine Protected Area Planning Process
Date: April 2, 2010

This memorandum presents Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative staff's modified process guidance for Round 2 marine protected area (MPA) proposal development, based on feedback received from MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG) members at your March 24-25, 2010 meeting in Crescent City. Providing this process guidance is consistent with MLPA Initiative staff's role of providing neutral process support to assist the NCRSG achieve its charge, as articulated in the adopted NCRSG ground rules.

Background

At the March 24-25 NCRSG meeting, MLPA Initiative staff presented process guidance for developing Round 2 MPA proposals for the MLPA North Coast Study Region (Briefing Document V.2). This process guidance was focused on the use of two cross-interest "gem" work groups. During the discussion that ensued, NCRSG members shared different interests and preferences regarding the Round 2 process approach. Of special concern to some NCRSG members was whether the Round 2 deliberations should more appropriately take place in work groups or as a single group. At the end of this discussion, NCRSG members participated in a "straw poll"¹ to help better understand the preference of the group on this subject (see results below).

MLPA Initiative staff committed to consider the feedback provided by NCRSG members regarding the Round 2 process approach. At staff meetings held after the NCRSG March 24-25 meeting, MLPA Initiative staff considered the NCRSG's feedback and discussed possible ways to address concerns and interests shared. This memorandum describes staff's modified process guidance for Round 2.

Feedback Received and Interests Shared Regarding Round 2 Process Design

During the discussion on Round 2 process design, NCRSG members and MLPA Initiative staff expressed a number of different interests and preferences for the Round 2 process design.

Key Interests Expressed by Individual NCRSG Members

1. Hear all NCRSG perspectives in MPA development discussions
2. Build on relationships from external array process

¹ As articulated in the adopted NCRSG ground rules, a straw poll is a "method used for surveying a group on a particular issue and typically involves asking each group member to indicate a preference on a particular issue."

3. Work together toward a single MPA proposal by the end of the process
4. Make decisions as a whole group
5. Ensure that NCRSG members can focus on the geographies they know best
6. Ensure efficient deliberations
7. Ensure full participation by all NCRSG members in Round 2 proposal development

Key Interests Expressed by MLPA Initiative Staff

1. Ensure efficient deliberations
2. Ensure full participation by all NCRSG members in Round 2 proposal development
3. Ensure cross-interest dialogue
4. Emphasize Round 2 as still being an important opportunity to learn and gather information in the MPA development process
5. Aim for convergence across interests
6. Ensure the NCRSG generates Round 2 MPA proposals that follow MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force guidance and address outstanding issues that external arrays were not able to address in Round 1

The NCRSG participated in a straw poll to gauge the level of support for the options of using work groups or a single group in Round 2. The results of the straw poll are²:

Option 1: Either one full group or two work groups (could live with either option) – 14 votes

Option 2: One full group operating in plenary – 12 votes

Option 3: Two work groups – 6 votes

Option 4: Three work groups – 1 vote

Modified Round 2 Process Guidance

MLPA Initiative staff has considered the feedback received from the NCRSG and has subsequently modified its process guidance. The revised approach is a hybrid of the original staff guidance (two gem work groups) and a single group approach. Our modified approach seeks to accommodate the interests expressed by both NCRSG members and MLPA Initiative staff during our discussion at the March 24-25 meeting.

² These results of the straw poll include votes from two of the three NCRSG members who were not present when the poll was conducted on March 25, 2010. The MLPA Initiative facilitation team followed up with these three individuals, invited them to view the video of the NCRSG discussion, and requested their participation in the straw poll. Votes were received by email or phone.

Key Elements of the Modified Round 2 Process Approach

- Round 2 will involve a mix of combined work group (i.e., single group) and gem work group discussions
- Significant time will be provided in the combined work group setting to discuss Round 1 evaluation results and to inform draft Round 2 MPA proposals as they are being developed
- The combined work group will discuss final Round 2 proposals prior to forwarding them for evaluation
- The Round 2 MPA proposal development process will proceed in three general steps:
 1. *Combined work group discussion of the Round 1 evaluation results.* Time will be provided on Day 1 of the April 20-21 work session for NCRSG members in the combined work group setting to review the Round 1 evaluation results, share interests, and discuss possible MPA design options/modifications to address outstanding issues identified in the Round 1 evaluations.
 2. *Gem work group development of Round 2 draft MPA proposals, with iterative feedback from the combined work group.* This step will begin near the end of April 20 and extend to the May 19 work session. As described in the previous process guidance, each gem work group will aim to develop 1-2 draft MPA proposals based on the external MPA arrays and results of the Round 1 evaluations. These efforts should also seek to incorporate information shared during the combined work group discussion on April 20. If a work group produces two draft proposals, it should strive to minimize the differences between them. Importantly, this step will involve opportunities for the gem work groups to share their interim work with, and receive feedback from, all NCRSG members.
 3. *Combined work group review and discussion of resulting gem work group draft MPA proposals.* At the NCRSG meeting on May 20, the full NCRSG will discuss the gem work group draft MPA proposals and finalize them for Round 2 evaluation.

Other elements of the process guidance presented in document V.2 from the March 24-25 NCRSG meeting still hold true, including: staff support for the gem work groups, anticipated Round 3 meeting dates, use of gem work group list servers to facilitate work group communications, required elements of complete draft MPA proposals, and gem work group composition.

Rationale for Revised Round 2 Process Approach

As articulated in the ground rules adopted by the NCRSG, it is the role of MLPA Initiative staff to provide neutral process support in developing an MPA proposal design approach that allows all NCRSG members to effectively contribute ideas. The modified Round 2 process approach outlined above has been developed to ensure that the NCRSG is able to accomplish its charge

in a timely manner, with sufficient opportunities for all NCRSG members to provide input, while at the same time addressing key interests expressed by NCRSG members. Important benefits of the revised approach include:

- The hybrid combined work group/gem work group approach is designed to take advantage of the benefits of both the single group and gem work group approaches.
 - It provides significant opportunities for sharing of interests in a full group setting.
 - It allows the NCRSG to further develop and build from relationships developed during the Round 1 external MPA array process.
 - It allows NCRSG members with unique expertise and/or constituencies to share their knowledge in both small groups, as well as with the entire NCRSG.
 - It allows important opportunities for more efficient development of MPA ideas in a smaller work group atmosphere, with increased opportunities for every NCRSG member to provide input.
 - It facilitates the development of creative ideas in small groups, while still ensuring that new designs are heard and reviewed by all before moving forward for evaluation.
- The revised approach encourages NCRSG members to focus on the entire study region, which is critical to addressing the interests of different constituencies.
- The revised approach is still consistent with the process guidance vetted with the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force at its March 1-2, 2010 meeting.

As with every step in the MLPA Initiative MPA planning process, staff will continue to make process adjustments, as needed, to help ensure that the NCRSG is able to successfully accomplish its charge.