California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

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To: **MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group**

From: **MLPA Initiative Staff**

Cc: **MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force**

Subject: **Summary of MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force Guidance for Round 2 Marine Protected Area Planning and Application to Round 2 Process Design**

Date: **May 11, 2010**

During the May 3-4, 2010, MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) meeting in Crescent City, BRTF members reaffirmed previous guidance to the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG) for designing marine protected area (MPA) proposals in Round 2; the BRTF also provided additional Round 2 design guidance. This memo summarizes key points made during the May 3-4 BRTF meeting (for a verbatim account of this meeting and the guidance provided, please refer to the archived video or audio files).

Consistent with the BRTF guidance, staff has provided additional details for how this information will be integrated into the process design for the NCRSG's May 19 work session and May 20 public meeting. This process design is intended to help the NCRSG meet the core element of its charge, which is to "…develop alternative proposals for MPAs within the north coast study region by September 2010 that meet the goals of the MLPA, for consideration by the…BRTF" (*Charge and Ground Rules: MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group,* adopted February 9, 2010). A core element of the BRTF's charge, in turn, is to recommend a preferred alternative MPA proposal to the California Fish and Game Commission in December 2010.

Note that additional potential guidance regarding California tribes and tribal communities was introduced and briefly discussed by the BRTF; this potential guidance will be further discussed during a BRTF meeting to be held by conference call and webinar on May 17, 2010. Potential additional guidance from the BRTF is anticipated to complement the existing approach, which includes avoidance of tribal use areas and, where these areas cannot be avoided, specifying allowed activities that would incorporate traditional tribal gathering. NCRSG members should continue to design Round 2 MPAs with this approach in mind.

Summary of Guidance Reaffirmed at the BRTF's May 3-4, 2010 Meeting

BRTF members reconfirmed the following guidance at the May 3-4, 2010 BRTF meeting:

- Meeting the science guidelines provided in the MLPA, in the *California Marine Life Protection Act Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas,* and by the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) should be central to MPA proposals developed by the NCRSG.
- MPA proposals should have a backbone of MPAs that have a very high or high level of protection (as assigned by the SAT), including some state marine reserves.
- Stakeholders should strive for cross-interest support in their MPA designs.

- As in previous study regions, the NCRSG should consider unique aspects of the study region, including weather conditions, safety concerns, existing fisheries management measures, and aspects of local economies, while still meeting the science guidelines.
- Stakeholder input and local knowledge is important, and should be used to supplement the best readily available scientific information.
- In the past three study regions, instances where MPA proposals failed to meet the science guidelines were the exception and not the rule. Exceptions were made for habitats that were not available or rare. In those cases where the habitats were available, exceptions were considered only after a strong effort was made to meet the guidelines and a very compelling reason was given as to why they would not be met.
- BRTF members prefer to select a preferred alternative to recommend to the California Fish and Game Commission from NCRSG MPA proposals that meet the range of science and other guidelines, rather than having to propose their own solutions to address gaps in the science guidelines within NCRSG proposals. The BRTF needs evaluations from a range of options in Round 2 to determine an appropriate preferred alternative to recommend following Round 3.
- The BRTF directs MLPA staff to use its professional judgment and expertise to design a process for Round 2 to implement BRTF guidance.

Additional Guidance from the BRTF's May 3-4, 2010 Meeting

- The NCRSG should generate a range of MPA proposals in Round 2, with the purpose of maximizing the usefulness of feedback that will be generated from Round 2 evaluations of those proposals. BRTF members noted that it is helpful for their decision making to receive proposals that meet the preferred size and spacing guidelines wherever possible, proposals that minimize potential negative socioeconomic impacts while still meeting minimum size and spacing guidelines, and proposals that fall somewhere between these two approaches that also meet minimum size and spacing guidelines wherever possible.

Application to the Round 2 Process Design

- BRTF members have expressed an interest in receiving a range of MPA proposals from the NCRSG in Round 2. Some NCRSG members have expressed an interest in working on a proposal that primarily focuses on minimizing potential negative socioeconomic impacts. Other NCRSG members have expressed an interest in working on a proposal that strives to meet preferred size and spacing science guidelines. *To address these interests, MLPA Initiative staff has refined the Round 2 process design: each gem work group will produce two Round 2 draft MPA proposals that collectively address both the BRTF guidance and these stakeholder interests.* Recall that meeting the science guidelines wherever possible is a core element of the NCRSG's charge for any MPA proposal.
- In completing their homework group assignments, NCRSG members should plan to come to the May 19, 2010 work session with a range of MPA ideas that meet the science

and other guidelines. Ideas can be derived from Round 1 external MPA proposals, as well as new MPA ideas that may address some of the gaps identified in Round 1 evaluations.