

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

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MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force Chair and California Department of Fish and Game Director Announce North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group *The diverse cross-interest group of marine stakeholders will meet Feb. 8-9 in Eureka*

SACRAMENTO – The MLPA Initiative and California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) today announced the appointment of the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group. The 31-member, cross-interest group (list attached) will provide local expertise and knowledge to improve the design and management of the north coast portion of a statewide network of marine protected areas (MPAs).

“These outstanding individuals each bring first-hand knowledge of the marine resources along the north coast,” said DFG Director John McCamman. “I am confident that as a group they will successfully integrate the diverse interests of their constituents into a science-based proposal that improves our management of California’s ocean environment.”

Collectively, the stakeholder group members represent broad interests and perspectives from the state’s north coast region, from the border with Oregon to the Point Arena area in Mendocino County. The stakeholder group includes, among others, representatives of recreational angling and diving groups, tribes, commercial fishing and other ocean-dependent business interests, ports and harbors, conservation groups, educational and research interests, and government agencies.

Under the guidance of a blue ribbon task force, the stakeholder group is responsible for working with a science advisory team and MLPA staff to evaluate existing marine protected areas within the north coast study region in relation to the goals of the MLPA and to develop alternative MPA proposals that meet the act’s requirements. Individual stakeholders will also conduct outreach to constituent groups to encourage public involvement in the project.

“I look forward to working with this unique and diverse group of ocean enthusiasts,” said Cindy Gustafson, chair of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force. “Their interest in and dedication to this process will make certain that we successfully maximize ocean protections for future generations while minimizing short-term socioeconomic impacts to the north coast community.”

The first meeting of the stakeholder group will be held **Monday, Feb. 8** and **Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2010** at the Red Lion Inn, 1929 Fourth Street in Eureka.

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From Feb. to Nov. 2010 the NCRSG will meet approximately seven times in two-day meetings, including a combination of formal plenary meetings and informal work sessions, in various locations throughout the study region. Plenary meetings are open to the public and videotaped for simultaneous webcasting and later viewing on the Internet. Members of the public are encouraged to participate in a number of ways; they also will have opportunities to provide comments on evolving MPA proposals and other elements of the process.

“The appointment of the regional stakeholder group marks the next phase of the north coast MPA planning process,” said Ken Wiseman, MLPA Initiative executive director. “It brings together the initial MPA ideas already generated by community groups as well as other interested members of the public to further refine and improve upon them.”

The MLPA Initiative’s MPA planning process began in 2009 with initial outreach and then the development of draft external MPA arrays from community groups. The first-round draft MPA arrays developed by community groups, and subsequent science evaluations, will be used to help inform the stakeholder group as it begins its work in the next two phases of developing alternative MPA proposals in this science-based, stakeholder-driven process.

In Oct. 2009, the California Department of Fish and Game appointed the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT), which is comprised of 21 scientists with a variety of expertise in marine life protection, the use of MPAs as a management tool, underwater ecosystems found in California waters, water quality and other related subjects, most with specific expertise to the north coast region.

The SAT is charged with providing scientific advice to the regional stakeholder group regarding issues such as MPA placement, size and habitat considerations. The SAT will further support the process reviewing draft documents and addressing scientific questions raised through the planning process.

The California Natural Resources Agency and DFG have partnered with the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation and others in an initiative to help achieve the MLPA goals. The MLPA directs the state to reevaluate and redesign California’s system of MPAs to increase coherence and effectiveness in protecting the state’s marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems and marine natural heritage, as well as to improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems subject to minimal human disturbance. The MLPA also requires that the best readily-available science be used in the redesign process, as well as the advice and assistance of scientists, resource managers, experts, stakeholders and members of the public.

California is taking a regional approach to redesigning MPAs along its 1,100 mile coastline, and has divided the state into five study regions; the MLPA North Coast Study Region, extending from the California border with Oregon to Alder Creek near Point Arena in Mendocino County, is the fourth of the five study regions to undergo the MPA planning process.

The MLPA Initiative’s north coast MPA planning process is expected to be completed in December 2010, when the MLPA Blue Ribbon task Force will present its recommendations to the California Fish and Game Commission, the decision-making body under the MLPA.

For more information about the MLPA Initiative, please visit <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa>.

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Members of the North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group
Revised January 27, 2010

Steve Chaney, Superintendent, Redwood National Park

Russ Crabtree, Tribal Administrator, Smith River Rancheria

Greg Dale, Southwest Operations Manager, Coast Seafood Company

John Dixon, Ecologist, California Coastal Commission

Henry "Ben" Doane, board member, Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers and Klamath Management Zone Fisheries Coalition

Brandi Easter, member, Humboldt Skin Divers

Don Gillespie, retired teacher and board member, Friends of Del Norte and Smith River Alliance

Benjamin Henthorne, Environmental Coordinator, Hopland Band of Pomo Indians

Jacque Hostler, Chief Executive Officer and Transportation & Land-Use Director, Trinidad Rancheria

Robert Jamgochian, educator, Mendocino High School of Natural Resources

Dave Jensen, President, Mendocino Coast Audubon Society

Tim Klassen, Owner, Reel Steel Sportfishing

Larry Knowles, Owner, Rising Tide Sea Vegetables

Zack Larson, Consultant, Zack Larson and Associates and Chair, Del Norte County Fish and Game Advisory Commission

William Lemos, retired teacher and consultant, Natural Resources Defense Council

Kevin McGrath, member, Shelter Cove Fisherman's Alliance

Kevin McKernan, California Program Director, National Conservation System Foundation

Aaron Newman, President, Humboldt Fisherman's Marketing Association

Pete Nichols, Executive Director, Humboldt Baykeeper

Charlie Notthoff, Owner, Nothoff Underwater Service

Megan Rocha, Assistant Self Governance Officer, Yurok Tribe

Jennifer Savage, North Coast Program Coordinator, The Ocean Conservancy

Valerie Stanley, member, Noyo River Indian Community

Atta Stevenson, Acting President, Inter-Tribal Council of California and member, Laytonville Rancheria

Thomas Trumper, Owner/diver, Pacific Rim Seafood

Adam Wagschal, Conservation Director, Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District

Rob Wakefield, member, Del Norte Fisherman's Marketing Association

Reweti Wiki, Tribal Administrator, Elk Valley Rancheria

Harold Wollenberg, professional geologist

David Wright, member, NorCal Kayak Anglers and Vice Chair, Surfrider Foundation's Mendocino Chapter

Richard Young, Chief Executive Officer and Harbormaster, Crescent City Harbor District

