

Proponents' Summary of Changes Made to Package 3
MLPA Central Coast Project
13 February 2006

Changes were made in response to comments at the BRTF meeting in Morro Bay on 31 Jan - 1 Feb 2006, and the meeting with MLPA and CDFG staff and SAT members in Monterey on 6 Feb 2006.

Nearly all the changes address issues about meeting SAT guidelines with respect to spacing among habitat types and reducing socioeconomic impact on fisheries, as well as boundary concerns related to the ease of enforcement. There are also minor adjustments to some of the boundaries to match those of Packages 1 and 2 where the minor existing differences were inadvertent.

Proceeding from north to south, these changes are:

Año Nuevo SMR: Moved the southern boundary of Package 3 slightly south to include more rocky habitat. Reduced area along coast north of Año Nuevo Island to the intertidal zone (between mean high tide level and lowest low tide level) to simplify enforcement and remove impact on recreational fisheries.

Natural Bridges SMR: Adjusted boundaries slightly to match those of Package 2 (and we hope Package 1). Kept boundary between mean high tide level and lowest low tide level.

Moro Cojo SMR: Changed western boundary slightly to match that in Packages 1 and 2.

Soquel Canyon SMCA: Adjusted eastern boundary to line up with that of Portuguese Ledge SMCA for easier location and enforcement.

Ed Ricketts SMCA: Combined with what was the Ed Ricketts SMR so now extends as a single SMCA from the breakwater to the Expanded Hopkins SMR. The reason for this change is to simplify the zoning of the area in response to BRTF concerns.

Moreover, CDFG personnel raised concerns about not allowing fishing on the breakwater. Conflict between divers and fishers on the breakwater, however, is real and should be addressed. Package 1 allows fishing only beyond the bend in the breakwater; that area supports a narrow band of kelp where divers go. Divers are mostly on the surface and away from the breakwater in the area shoreward of the bend. Consequently, Package 3 allows fishing only shoreward of the bend in the breakwater, and recommends an educational effort to further reduce conflicts with divers.

Regarding kelp harvesting within this SMCA, current CDFG regulations prohibit kelp harvesting between the breakwater and Charthouse, covering approximately half of the SMCA and covering the area subject to the heaviest diver use. Those regulations should remain in effect. For the remaining area, from the Charthouse to the Expanded Hopkins SMR, Package 3 proposes that existing kelp harvesting be restricted to the months of November through February.

Pinnacles SMR: Package 3 took the squared off east, south, and west boundaries in Package 1 and extended the northern boundary to the shore to simplify enforcement.

Carmel Bay SMCA: In light of the changes made in the Pinnacles SMR, Package 3 placed the western boundary of the Carmel Bay SMCA so that it matched that of the current Carmel Bay Ecological Reserve.

Point Lobos SMR and SMCA: Package 3 adopted a single, continuous, straight northern boundary for these MPAs, with the northern edge of the SMR reaching the edge of the Carmel Canyon. This change addresses concerns about enforceability problems with the former complex jags in the northern edge, but it is understood the change will not impact spot prawn trapping.

Expanded Big Creek SMR: Both the northern and southern boundaries were shifted slightly inward to decrease the area of the SMR and lessen the impact on spot prawn trapping, as this single site contributed the majority of spot prawn impacts.

Morro Bay South SMRMA: Status changed to State Marine Recreational Management Area on suggestion from CDFG personnel. This designation unambiguously allows hunting if that is desired.

Point Buchon SMR and SMCA: Northern and southern boundaries shifted slightly outward to expand area and increase hard bottom habitat. This small change was made to address SAT concerns regarding a network gap in deep hard bottom habitat.

Point Sal SMR: Northern boundary shifted slightly south to lessen impact on commercial surfperch fishing.

All other MPAs remained unchanged.