

Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o the California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attention: Melissa Miller-Henson

Paul Lebowitz
Director, Kayak Fishing Association of California

San Diego, CA 92126

Via email: MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov

Re: MLPA South Coast RSG Nomination

June 26, 2008

Dear MLPA Initiative Staff,

I am submitting myself as a nominee representing the kayak fishing community on the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder's Group.

I am the founding director of the Kayak Fishing Association, a grassroots organization dedicated to preserve and expand kayak fishing opportunities. Some years ago as the sport began its rapid and continued growth we realized a need for our own advocacy. Although we enjoy warm relations with our fellow anglers in groups such as United Anglers of Southern California, those organizations have an incomplete understanding of our use patterns and access needs. Because kayak fishing ocean use relies on a relatively small number of access sites, the sport is highly vulnerable to unfortunately sited MPAs, highlighting the importance of our participation.

The KFACA reaches the entire Southern California kayak fishing community. Our Advisory Board includes prominent business and internet bulletin board / club owners. Our support extends from the corporate level (kayak manufacturers such as Hobie), through shop owners, guides, and down to individual anglers. We acknowledge the need for robust fisheries management to ensure the continued recovery of California's rich recreational fisheries and the continued growth of our low-impact sport.

Our interaction / preparation for the MLPA began in 2004. In the absence of local kayak fishing representation during the early days of the Central Coast project, the KFACA submitted testimony identifying key use areas. As area kayak anglers became increasingly more involved, we deferred to their superior local knowledge. By the beginning of the North-Central Coast project, NorCal Kayak Anglers was mobilized and offered up an exceptional RSG candidate in my friend Sean White, allowing us to focus on our own upcoming study region, although NCKA was able to build on our earlier work.

Together, my personal qualifications and KFACA community resources fulfill every MLPA South Coast RSG Selection Criteria:

- KFACA communication channels include every major kayak fishing club, bulletin board, and business in the study region, plus the organization's own website.
- KFACA's Advisory Board and Area Teams are representational and highly networked from Pt Conception to the US - Mexico border. Building the organization required carefully balancing

competing and sometimes antagonistic interests – fueling a robust and positive collaborative effort.

- As the nation's most widely published communicator on the sport of kayak fishing, I'm personally and intimately familiar with the use patterns of kayak anglers and well practiced at distributing information as well as extensively traveled throughout the study region.

(NOTE – Should I be selected to the RSG, out of respect for the collaborative process I will carefully balance what I write about the MLPA in publications such as Western Outdoor News, where I have a monthly column. Explicitly criticizing a process I am personally and professionally invested in would be counter-productive. I am a staunch believer in the importance of MLPA engagement / public participation)

- Past graduate level study in Geography / Environmental Sciences, prior work in the environmental consulting field (Phase I and II environmental assessment), and a basic familiarity with GIS systems and resource management.

- The responsibilities required of RSG members are significant; I do not lightly raise my hand. My fluid work schedule permits me to fulfill the charge of the RSG.

Southern California is the birthplace of the modern kayak fishing revival. Places such as La Jolla, Malibu, and Dana Point hold a special place in the hearts of kayak anglers – they are steeped in history and tradition. Once a rare sight, kayak anglers now often outnumber private boaters at many of our launch sites. Our use patterns are unique from other recreational fishing communities. Most of us are ardent conservationists, proud of our light impact on the resource. Truly, only a kayak angler can adequately give voice to our collective interests.

I humbly request that charge.

Respectfully,

Paul

Paul Lebowitz
Director, Kayak Fishing Association of California