

California MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team
Summary of the January 20-21, 2010 Meeting
Revised January 28, 2010

Meeting Date, Time and Place

Wednesday, January 20, 2010
1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

and

Thursday, January 21, 2010
8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Red Lion Hotel Eureka
1929 Fourth Street
Eureka, CA 95501

SAT members attending: Eric Bjorkstedt, Mark Carr, Kevin Fleming, Dawn Goley, Dominic Gregorio, David Hankin, Ron LeValley, Phillip Levin, Karina Nielsen, Pete Raimondi, Steven Rumrill, Craig Strong, Steve Wertz, and Will White.

SAT members absent: Larry Allen, Chris Costello, Steve Gaines, John Largier, Steven Morgan, Steve Murray, and Astrid Scholz.

Meeting Objectives

- *Receive updates on the MLPA North Coast Study Region planning process*
- *Receive updates from SAT work groups*
- *Review and discuss marine protected area (MPA) habitat representation methods*
- *Review, discuss and potentially approve MPA habitat replication evaluation methods*
- *Review, discuss and potentially approve MPA size and spacing evaluation methods*
- *Review, discuss and potentially approve levels of protection (LOPs)*
- *Review and discuss water quality evaluations for the north coast study region*
- *Review and discuss marine birds and mammal evaluations for the north study coast region*
- *Review and potentially approve SAT responses to science guidance question*

The meeting agenda and both audio and video recordings of this meeting are available on the MLPA website at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/meetings_n.asp

Executive Summary

The third meeting of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team for the MLPA North Coast Study Region took place at the Red Lion Hotel in Eureka on January 20 and 21, 2010. Due to

inclement weather preventing some in-person participation, action on items was postponed to the February 11, 2010 meeting to allow more time for public comment and SAT discussion.

Meeting Summary

Welcome, Introductions and Review of Agenda

On January 20 and 21, 2010, the third meeting of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) for the MLPA North Coast Study Region (NCSR) was held in Eureka.

Review of Agenda

Due to inclement weather preventing some in-person participation, action on items was postponed to the February 11, 2010 meeting to allow more time for public comment and SAT discussion. Agenda Item E (Modeling work group update) was incorporated into Agenda Item K (Modeling evaluation methods).

I. Updates

A. Briefing on the January 13-14, 2010 meeting of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force

Ken Wiseman gave an update on the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) meeting. The meeting went very well and the BRTF made good progress with its work.

B. Update on the progress of external array groups

Dominique Monie gave an update on the external array groups. Eighteen groups indicated their intent to submit an array, but many of the groups likely will join together and staff predicts up to six arrays will be submitted. The public workshops last week were well attended and staff members were able to answer many questions for the external array group members. Science questions that could not be addressed by staff during the public workshops will be brought to the SAT for its consideration.

II. MPA Design Guidelines and Evaluation Methods for the MLPA North Coast Study Region

C. Discuss marine bird and mammal evaluation methods

Craig Strong and Dawn Goley presented the background information for the marine bird and mammal evaluation methods. Craig gave an overview of birds and mammals that occur in the NCSR. Dawn presented the proposed evaluation methods for the region and described how birds and mammals might benefit from MPAs. The evaluation methods are largely similar to those used in the south coast study region, although proposals will be evaluated in their entirety rather than by bioregion.

D. Water quality considerations for MPAs in the MLPA North Coast Study Region

Dominic Gregorio presented an overview of the water quality of the NCSR and detailed the evaluation methods that will be used. The evaluation methods for water quality are largely similar to the water quality evaluation methods from the south coast study region, except bays/estuaries will be evaluated using an area measurement, there is no need to focus on power plant entrainment, and the evaluation will consider harbors to be non-point pollution sources. Evaluation scores will be based on presence/absence of water quality concerns and opportunities; co-location with areas of water quality concern will cause a score to decrease, while co-location with areas of special biological significance (ASBS) will improve score, and final scores will range from zero to one. SAT members wanted to ensure the external array proponents understand this evaluation is a secondary evaluation.

III. Update from SAT Work Groups

E. Modeling work group

The modeling update was incorporated into the modeling evaluation methods agenda item.

F. Tribal work group

Becky Ota presented an update on the tribal work group. The group is developing a protocol to guide tribal input to the SAT to ensure the SAT receives information in a format that may be used for MPA planning and/or evaluation consistent with other types of information considered in the MLPA Initiative. This information includes species taken, method of take, location of take, magnitude of take, and when take occurs. The SAT acknowledges that the question of whether or not aboriginal take can be considered part of the natural ecosystem is very interesting, but answering that question is beyond the scope of the SAT and conclusions could not be made without an extensive anthropological study.

G. Species likely to benefit from MPAs in the North Coast Study Region

Seth Miller gave an update on the species likely to benefit list. The criteria document is largely unchanged from the version presented at the December SAT meeting, and the draft list has been updated to reflect comments from that meeting. Seth asked the SAT to fill in the blanks in the list and add species that should be considered. The SAT potentially will take action on these documents during its February 11 meeting.

II. MPA Design Guidelines and Evaluation Methods for the MLPA North Coast Study Region (continued from day 1)

H. Discussion on habitat representation: unique habitats and an update on the methods used to quantify available habitats

Emily Saarman presented information about the key and unique habitats in the NCSR. Data collection is complete for the location of major habitats in the region, and staff is working hard to process those data and incorporate the information into MarineMap. Since eelgrass is poorly

mapped outside of Humboldt Bay, the SAT agreed the evaluations should include a count of other estuaries included in MPA array proposals that are known habitats for eelgrass. Emily also presented the information concerning unique habitats in the NCSR. Mendocino sunken rivers and dynamic river mouths in the region have been identified. Sea stacks had been noted as a potential unique habitat at the December SAT meeting, but sea stacks are not particularly unique to or rare within the NCSR. The SAT informally agreed that evaluations for rocky shores should include two measures: the onshore rocky habitat and the offshore rocky habitat (which would include the rocky habitat provided by sea stacks and offshore rocks).

I. Review and discuss habitat replication criteria for the North Coast Study Region

Pete Raimondi presented the background information on how the habitat replication thresholds are determined. SAT members pointed out that the 90% threshold on the species/area curves is not an arbitrary number, but rather the point at which the marginal value of adding area to a reserve decreases dramatically. SAT members also pointed out that the minimum size replicate for the combined soft bottom categories was slightly larger than the minimum size of an MPA recommended in the size guidelines. The SAT will consider this difference and provide any feedback for review during the next SAT meeting.

J. Discussion on MPA size and spacing evaluation methods

Will White presented the MPA size and spacing evaluation methods. The presentation provided a background on the development of the size and spacing guidelines and introduced new visual representations of the consequences of different size and spacing combinations of MPAs. This new figure showing the interaction between size and spacing provides another resource for external array proponents and regional stakeholder group members to use during their development of MPA proposals.

K. Review and discuss modeling evaluation methods

Eric Bjorkstedt presented the background of the model and how the model works. Will White then presented the modeling evaluation methods, including the new genetic connectivity analysis. The results of the modeling evaluation will provide additional information during the evaluation process.

L. Review and discuss supporting text for levels of protection (LOPs) approved at the December 16, 2009 SAT meeting

Karina Nielsen presented the new proposed LOPs. She led the SAT through the revised LOP decision tree for coastal pelagic finfish by dipnet or hand nets (high), salmon by non-troll hook and line in waters less than 50 meters (moderate), and sea urchin by hand (moderate-low). She also presented the draft supporting text for LOPs and asked SAT members to review the text and provide comments for incorporation by the February SAT meeting.

IV. Science guidance questions from the public and external array proponents

M. Review and discuss SAT responses to science questions received at the December 16, 2009 SAT meeting

Steve Wertz presented the draft responses to science questions. SAT members were asked to review the questions and provide comments before the next meeting.

Next Steps

N. Timeline for SAT evaluations of draft external array proposals

Mike Prall presented the timeline for SAT evaluations: receipt of proposals on February 1, proposal cleanup by staff until February 15, and draft SAT evaluations are due by the March 16-17 SAT meeting. SAT presentations of the evaluation results then will be given by SAT members at the following MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group and BRTF meetings.

Public Comment

Members of the public commented on a wide variety of issues. Many comments focused on proposed and approved levels of protection, with representatives from different user groups presenting information on how the SAT should consider the potential impacts of their activities. Other public comments included thoughts on the MLPA process timeline, information about tribal uses of area resources, and comments about the regional profile.

Briefing Documents

- C.1: Marine birds and mammals of the MLPA NCSR PowerPoint
- D.1: Water quality in the MLPA NCSR PowerPoint
- E.1: Methods used to evaluate draft MPA proposals in the NCSR (Draft) Appendix C
- E.2: Methods used to evaluate draft MPA proposals in the NCSR (Draft) Section 12.0 – Commercial and recreational fishery impacts
- G.1: Criteria for the Species Likely to Benefit List in the North Coast Study Region (revised December 14, 2009)
- G.2: Draft List of Species Likely to Benefit from MPAs in the North Coast Study Region (revised January 15, 2010)
- H.1: Key and unique habitats in the MLPA North Coast Study Region PowerPoint
- H.2: Methods used to evaluate draft MPA proposals in the NCSR (Draft) Section 4.0 – Habitat representation
- I.1: Habitat replication guidelines for the North Coast Study Region PowerPoint
- J.1: MPA size and spacing guidelines and evaluations for the MLPA North Coast Study Region PowerPoint
- J.2: Methods Used to Evaluate Draft MPA Proposals in the North Coast Study Region (DRAFT) Section-6.0 and 7.0 Size and Spacing (revised January 18, 2010)

- K.1: Modeling evaluation methods for the North Coast Study Region PowerPoint
- K.2: Methods used to evaluate draft MPA proposals in the North Coast Study Region (Draft) Section 8.0 – Bioeconomic modeling (revised January 19, 2010)
- L.1: Draft proposed levels of protection for the North Coast Study Region PowerPoint
- L.2: Draft supporting text for LOPs approved at the December 16-17, 2009 SAT meeting
- M.1: Draft responses to science questions developed by the SAT and MLPA Initiative staff
- N.1: Summary of the December 16-17, 2009 meeting of the North Coast Science Advisory Team (January 10, 2010)
- O.2: Methods used to evaluate draft MPA proposals in the North Coast Study Region (DRAFT) Appendix C. impact assessment methods - Revised January 13, 2010
- O.3: Methods Used to Evaluate Draft MPA Proposals in the North Coast Study Region (DRAFT) Section 12.0 – Commercial and Recreational Fishery Impacts- Revised January 13, 2010