

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
Statewide Interests Group
Meeting Summary
(revised September 27, 2010)

Tuesday, August 10, 2010 at 3:00 p.m.

Via conference call

Meeting Objectives

- *Provide an update on the status of the five study regions (central coast, north central coast, south coast, north coast and San Francisco Bay)*
- *Provide status report on recent open houses, and on recent and upcoming MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT), MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF), and MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG,) meetings in the north coast study region*
- *Receive comments and advice from MLPA Statewide Interests Group (SIG) members*

Meeting Participants

SIG Members: Nick Angeloff, Maura Eastman, Zeke Grader, Joel Greenberg, Doug Hammerstrom, Ken Jones, Ken Kurtis, Martha McClure, Linda Sheehan and Stephen Umbertis

BRTF Members: Chair Cindy Gustafson

MLPA Staff: Sean Hastings, Dominique Monie, Melissa Miller-Henson, Kelly Sayce, Steve Wertz and Ken Wiseman

Meeting Summary

A. Welcome, Roll Call and Logistics for Conference Call - Ken Wiseman and Sean Hastings

B. Follow up from SIG Introductory Meeting

SIG meeting highlights from June 25 conference call; see meeting summary for specifics.

Kelly Sayce – provided a general MLPA Initiative “101” overview. North coast is now in Round 3 of the marine protected area (MPA) development process. The process is adapted for each study region.

SIG member contact information is now available on the MLPA website (http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/statewide_nc.asp).

SIG Questions/Comments – SIG members asked a series of questions and expressed concerns on a several issues. For example: the involvement of the general public, stakeholders and lobbying groups; the seemingly heavy weighting and quality of science over

local knowledge and economic impacts in the process; the perceived rapid pace of the planning process; transparency and politicization of the process.

Staff Response to SIG Questions/Comments – Every effort is made to ensure that all members of the public are treated equally. Many advisory groups, like the SIG, encapsulate the qualifications important to this subject and process. Local level of knowledge is formally brought into the MPA planning process via the regional stakeholder group in each study region. There is an avenue for anyone to be involved, via public comment periods, communicating directly with stakeholder group members, etc. Other processes may be dominated by certain user groups, but the MLPA Initiative provides a seat for a wide array of user groups and multiple avenues for public input. Staff suggested an offline discussion to identify whom might be feeling marginalized and how the process can bring in their input. Not unique to any one region.

Budget status – Ken Wiseman. The north coast budget is adequate to complete the planning process. The current plan for the San Francisco Bay study region is to hire a consultant to develop planning options and costs for implementing a planning process.

Discussion of timeline – Ken Wiseman. The south coast adoption hearing now will likely be in December with a discussion hearing in October. The California Fish and Game Commission will receive the north coast recommendations in early 2011. The BRTF will receive the NCRSG recommendation(s) in October.

C. Update on the MLPA Study Regions provided by Steve Wertz, California Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

MPA outreach on the central coast and north central coast continues with signage, booklets and web updates. California State Parks is an important outreach partner. The California Department of General Services did not approve DFG's contract with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to support DFG's ROV project. However, California Sea Grant did let a grant with MARE to conduct ROV work within north central coast MPAs.

The public scoping meeting for the south coast was held on July 23, 2010 in Long Beach. A draft environmental impact report is expected by August 18, 2010 and will be out for a 45 day public comment.

DFG supported the California MPA Monitoring Enterprise's public workshops to inform an MPA monitoring plan for the south coast region.

D. MLPA North Coast Project

Summer 2010 Open Houses – Kelly Sayce summarized attendance and the types of comments received from the public. [Note that she forwarded comments via email to SIG members].

Master Plan Science Advisory Team – completed evaluations of Round 2 NCRSG draft MPA proposals and approved all updates to evaluation results and draft responses to new science questions.

Blue Ribbon Task Force – provided guidance to the NCRSG to: 1) meet science guidelines otherwise BRTF may have to modify proposals to do so; 2) consider cross interest support and local knowledge/expertise; 3) avoid MPA placement in tribal use areas; 4) use SMCA along shoreline (i.e. nearshore coastal MPA ribbons) in areas where tribal use cannot be avoided, but recognize that tribes cannot have exclusive access and the area would be open to all non-commercial users; only new legislation could permit exclusive tribal use; 5) need specific input on tribal uses; 6) incorporate tribal feedback into MPA proposal.

SIG Questions/Comments

How effectively have the tribes been engaged? Is tribal data available and helpful?

Staff Response –The MLPA Initiative Team has made a big investment in meeting with north coast tribes and tribal communities one-on-one to gather/gain specific input on the Round 2 proposals and to detail tribal uses and methods that would potentially be impacted by certain MPAs. Tribal information is less available in the northern portion of the study region; there is better information and a willingness to share information in the southern portion of the study region. The information has been aggregated and will be considered in Round 3 proposal development.

Other fishing interests are being hamstrung by tribal positions in the process.

Staff Response – The plan is to review and evaluate the Round 3 MPA proposals with and without exempting tribal uses so that the BRTF can make an informed decision on how to produce a robust proposal. Staff clarified that a “ribbon” is an inshore vs. offshore MPA, designated as an SMCA or SMP versus an SMR to allow take from the shoreline. The MLPA Initiative has been informed by the California Fish and Game Commission (F&GC) that current legislation does not allow for exclusive access to any one group (e.g. tribes) so an SMCA or SMP would have to be open to all recreational users for the species and gear types identified.

North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group – The NCRSG met in July and developed Round 3 MPA proposals. The NCRSG received BRTF guidance and SAT evaluations, DFG and California State Parks feasibility analyses, goal 3 evaluations, responses to science questions, and an overview of outreach to north coast tribes. Many NCRSG members are striving for one MPA proposal. If the NCRSG develops one proposal, does Proposal 0 count as an alternative?

Staff Response – Proposal 0 is considered part of the existing environment and has to be analyzed. The F&GC determines the preferred alternative for CEQA and regulatory purposes, while the BRTF determines its preferred alternative for F&GC consideration.

The BRTF is supportive of the NCRSG developing one proposal, to the extent possible it meets the guidelines. If certain guidelines are not met, the BRTF may need to recommend a preferred alternative that better meets the guidelines.

E. Feedback from SIG Members

Public involvement in the meeting is going well. Allowing tribes to “vent” with a demonstration at the July BRTF meeting was helpful.

Having a SAT member in attendance at NCRSG meetings would be helpful to provide more real-time feedback.

There were too many staff presentations and overview of materials at meetings, which limits NCRSG interaction and getting to the task at hand.

Public comment at last NCRSG meeting was scheduled at 4 p.m., and many locals showed up but didn’t get heard because others (i.e. tribal demonstrators) used up all the time. By allowing the meeting to be interrupted by the demonstration, it delayed the public comment period so some didn’t get to speak.

Bring a couple of BRTF members and science team members to Crescent City to have a roundtable discussion.

At the California MPA Monitoring Enterprise planning session a SIG member was distressed by “each side” working to undermine the process and a reluctance to move forward.

The NCRSG members should study more before meetings to minimize staff presentations at the meetings.

F. Recap and Next Steps – The next SIG meeting is planned for late September, post NCRSG August meeting and before the October BRTF meeting.