

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
Abbreviated Report 3 on the MLPA Initiative as Required in the
August 2004 Memorandum of Understanding
May 17, 2006

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the State of California Resources Agency (Agency), California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation (RLFF) structures the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative (Initiative). The MOU was signed in August 2004. This is the third semi-annual report required in the MOU.

A. Work of the Initiative is accomplished through four groups of volunteers, supported by staff from the Initiative and the DFG.

1. ***The Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF)***. This eight person group, appointed in September 2004, provides policy recommendations to DFG and Agency with regards to the requirements in the act.

Ten meetings held, over a total of 19 days.

Accomplishments:

- Selection of a central coast project region (Pigeon Point to Point Conception), adoption of a recommended MLPA Master Plan Framework
- Approval of a set of regional goals, objectives and implementation and design considerations
- Recommendation of three alternative proposed packages of central coast MPAs to DFG
- Provided recommendations regarding long-term funding of MPAs to the secretary, Resources Agency

2. ***The Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT)***. This panel, appointed in January 2005, provides scientific advice to the BRTF, DFG, and Central Coast Regional Stakeholders Group (CCRSG) on scientific issues and questions about marine protected area results and design.

Thirteen 1-day meetings held.

Accomplishments:

- Recommendations for marine protected area design included in the MLPA Master Plan Framework
- Developed a list of species likely to benefit from MPAs
- Responses to a significant number of CCRSG questions
- A series of presentations to the BRTF and CCRSG on general marine protected area information
- Iterative evaluations of proposed packages of MPAs and meetings with package proponents

3. **The Statewide Interests Group (SIG)** continues to meet by telephone conference approximately one week after each BRTF meeting. This group has provided input on BRTF agendas and selection of speaker panels as well as made suggestions for the process as a whole.
4. **The Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG)** was appointed by DFG and the BRTF in May 2005. This group consisted of 32 members and 24 alternates representing a wide array of interests.

Held seven 2-day meetings in 2005.

Accomplishments:

- Significant input into the MLPA Master Plan Framework
 - Adoption of a collection of regional goals, objectives and implementation and design considerations
 - Developing three alternative packages of proposed MPAs
5. **Staff.** The full-time Initiative staff is small and DFG also provides a few individuals whose major responsibilities include the Initiative. Additional individuals and firms provided serve under contract.

B. The MOU sets five deliverables and progress continues in each area, along with successful implementation of the first three.

1. **Submit the Department's draft Master Plan Framework to the Fish and Game Commission by May 2005 for proposed adoption by the Commission in August 2005.** The MLPA Master Plan Framework was adopted unanimously by the Fish and Game Commission in August, 2005.
2. **Prepare a comprehensive strategy for long-term funding of planning, management and enforcement of marine protected areas by December 2005.** The BRTF forwarded their consultants' report in late 2005 and added additional recommendations at their January 31-February 1, 2006, meeting.
3. **Design and submit the Department's draft proposal for alternative networks of marine protected areas in an area along the central coast to the Fish and Game Commission by March 2006 for proposed adoption by the Commission by November 2006.** The CCRSG developed three alternative packages of proposed MPAs. Two packages were submitted by outside groups following a procedure established by the BRTF. At its March 2006 meeting, the BRTF recommended three packages be forwarded to DFG for consideration (packages 1, 2R and 3R) and

recommended Package 3R as the preferred alternative. DFG is now developing its proposal to the Fish and Game Commission (F&GC), including a recommended preferred alternative. That will begin the regulatory process.

- 4. *Develop recommendations for coordinating the management of marine protected areas with the federal government by November 2006.*** A joint DFG, National Marine Sanctuary, and NOAA MPA Science Center working group has been formed to address data needs. This group has created a large database of geographic information system (GIS) layers, an online GIS viewing site and participated in the formation of a GIS mapping tool. A report analyzing opportunities for improved coordination is being developed.
- 5. *Secure agreement and commitment among state agencies with marine protected area responsibilities by November 2006 to complete statewide implementation of the Master Plan by 2011.*** Discussions with the California Coastal Commission and California Department of Parks and Recreation have continued. Staff is actively seeking input from other agencies on both MPA design and timelines for meeting with the various entities involved with regulating resource use and access.

C. Efforts have continued with regard to wide public participation and transparency of the process.

- BRTF and CCRSG meetings are all live-broadcast via the worldwide web and all meetings (including science team meetings) are recorded for later web viewing.
- Public comment periods have been included at all BRTF, SAT, and CCRSG meetings.
- Public comments have been invited and received through the MLPA website.
- The MLPA website has been revised through contract and will be re-launched in a more user friendly format in the near future.
- BRTF members were present at several of the CCRSG meetings to listen to both stakeholder input and public comment.
- F&GC members were present at three BRTF meetings and the BRTF and F&GC held one joint meeting. Another joint BRTF-F&GC meeting is scheduled for May 25, 2006.

D. Additional Activities Undertaken: Three sets of activities not explicitly described in the MOU are being undertaken to support the goal of effective and timely implementation of the MLPA.

- 1. *Support the DFG and F&GC in areas regarding the Central Coast Project.*** In this area, the Initiative is supporting four specific activities:

- A project to develop a priority listing of baseline data collection needs which will provide the foundation for effective monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management
- Staff assistance available to DFG to prepare materials for presentation to the F&GC
- Fund video recording and webcasting of special meetings of the F&GC focused on designating central coast MPAs
- Analyzed the experiences of marine protection programs to develop cost estimates for full implementation of the MLPA

2. Prepare for the next study region. In this area, two activities are underway.

- Further development of tools to support identification and assessment of possible networks of protected areas is being supported at a consortium of university and other researchers
- Data layers are being organized for possible study regions, building on the experiences of the MLPA Central Coast Project

3. Develop lessons learned. The MLPA is an innovative public-private partnership and the MLPA Central Coast Project was intended to be a pilot project. To effectively develop lessons, the Initiative staff is undertaking the following:

- Developing “procedures” manuals for activities which will be repeated
- Developing foundational descriptive materials, such as a chronology, budget analyses and organization charts
- Developing recommendations for future study regions and public-private partnerships
- Three external consultants have also been retained and charged with developing independent reports which will (a) accurately describe operations of the Initiative and (b) offer recommendations for future similar public-private partnerships and study regions.