

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

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MLPA Initiative Hosts Workshop on North Coast Marine Protected Area Planning

Workshop to include review of north coast MPA planning process, MarineMap training

Sacramento – A public workshop is scheduled for members of the north coast community to learn more about the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) planning process. The MLPA requires the state to reexamine and redesign California's system of marine protected areas (MPAs) in state waters. The event, which is free and open to all interested members of the public, will be hosted by the MLPA Initiative, a public-private partnership dedicated to implementing the 1999 law. Participants will have the opportunity to:

- review the north coast MPA planning process,
- learn about the necessary components of an MPA proposal,
- be introduced to science and feasibility guidelines, and
- receive basic training in MarineMap, the MLPA Initiative's online mapping tool.

"We invite all interested members of the public to participate in the upcoming educational workshop," said Ken Wiseman, executive director of the MLPA Initiative. "It is our hope to incorporate the tremendous amount of local knowledge in the north coast community into the science-based, public process to redesign California's marine protected areas."

The workshop is scheduled for **Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.** and the public can participate in person, by teleconference and webinar from two staffed locations, or from their home or office if they have a phone line and Internet access. The three public in-person locations are:

- **Eureka, Red Lion Inn**, 1929 Fourth Street
- **Crescent City, Best Western Northwoods Inn**, 655 US Highway 101 S (staffed, teleconference/webinar location)
- **Fort Bragg, CV Starr Community Center**, 300 South Lincoln Street (staffed, teleconference/webinar location)

The workshop presentations will be made in Eureka and simultaneously webcast to the Fort Bragg and Crescent City satellite locations as well as available for viewing on the Internet. Participants at the satellite locations will be able to interact directly with the Eureka workshop. The public can also participate from their home or office through the teleconference or by using

an online webinar tool that allows questions to be submitted via the Internet. Audio and video archives of the workshop will be available online and on CD.

RSVPs are requested for in-person participation to ensure adequate food, beverages and seating. RSVP by calling 916- 654-1885 or by emailing dga_mlp@sbglobal.net.

At the workshop, MLPA Initiative staff will provide an overview of the MPA planning process for the north coast, a description of existing marine protected areas in the study region, how the science of MPAs is applied, and how the public can become involved. Staff will also provide an introduction to MarineMap and the guidelines for MPA proposal development.

In addition, on **Wednesday, Sept. 30 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** at the same three locations, MLPA Initiative staff will be available to answer more specific, detailed questions about the north coast planning process and how MPA proposals will initially be developed through an “external” design process in Fall 2009.

MPA proposals generated through the “external” MPA design process may potentially be used by the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG) as a starting point to develop cross-interest MPA proposals in the MLPA Initiative planning process. Under the guidance of a blue ribbon task force, the NCRSG is responsible for working with a science advisory team and MLPA staff to help California improve the design and management of the north coast portion of a statewide network of marine protected areas. A public announcement for nominations to the NCRSG is expected in November 2009, with members to be appointed by late January 2010.

The MLPA, enacted into law in 1999, directs the state to reexamine and redesign California’s system of MPAs, which are discrete geographic marine or estuarine areas designed to protect or conserve marine life and habitat. The goals of the act are to increase the coherence and effectiveness at protecting the state’s marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as to improve recreational, educational and study opportunities in marine ecosystems that are subject to minimal human disturbance.

The state identifies three types of MPAs – marine conservation areas, marine parks and marine reserves - that range from limiting certain types of commercial and recreational activities to establishing no-take zones. Public access is allowed in all three.

The California Resources Agency and DFG have partnered with the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation to create a planning process to help achieve the MLPA goals; this public-private partnership, the MLPA Initiative, is guided by the advice of scientists, resource managers, experts, stakeholders and members of the public.

A regional approach is being used in the MLPA Initiative, where California’s 1,100- mile coastline has been divided into five study regions. The planning process is just now beginning in the MLPA North Coast Study Region, from the California border with Oregon to Alder Creek near Point Arena in Mendocino County. In September of 2007, regulations for the first of the five study regions were implemented for the central coast (Pigeon Point in San Mateo County to Point Conception in Santa Barbara County). In July of 2009, regulations for the north central coast (Alder Creek near Point Arena in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point in San Mateo County, including the Farallon Islands) were adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission.

The planning process for the MLPA South Coast Study Region (Point Conception in Santa Barbara County to the California border with Mexico, including offshore islands) is expected to result in a set of alternative MPA proposals by late 2009. The fifth and final study region

planning process, San Francisco Bay (from the Golden Gate Bridge northeast to the Carquinez Bridge), is expected to begin following the north coast.

The MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force will make a final recommendation regarding north coast MPA proposals to the California Fish and Game Commission near the end of 2010.

For additional information about the MLPA Initiative, visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa.

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