

California MLPA South Coast Project
Staff Assessment of South Coast Marine Protected Area Sub-Options
October 9, 2010

On March 26, 2010, the California Department of Fish and Game released an initial statement of reasons for regulatory action (ISOR) for the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) South Coast Study Region. The proposed project described in the ISOR contains sub-options for both boundaries and regulations for marine protected areas (MPAs) in several geographies in the south coast. MLPA Initiative staff has reviewed the south coast MPAs ISOR and is providing in Section I of this document an assessment of which sub-options best meet the intent of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) as it was developing an integrated preferred alternative for the south coast study region. For a full description of these sub-options, as well as a description of other proposed MPAs included in the ISOR, please visit <http://www.fgc.ca.gov/regulations/new/2010/632isor.pdf>.

A number of additional issues have been identified since the ISOR was released. Clarification regarding the BRTF's intent with regard to these additional issues is provided in Section II.

I. Assessment of Sub-Options in the ISOR

Arrow Point to Lion's Head Point State Marine Conservation Area

Category: Boundaries

Most Consistent Option: Option 2 (see figure)

Rationale: Straight boundaries allow for improved feasibility, while maintaining protection for nearshore habitats and avoiding socioeconomic impacts at Eagle Reef.



Casino Point State Marine Conservation Area

Category: Regulations

Most Consistent Option: Option 2 (allow fish feeding)

Rationale: Increased tourism is a key objective of this MPA and allowing this activity is consistent with that objective.

Lovers Cove State Marine Conservation Area

Category: Regulations

Most Consistent Option: Option 2 (allow fish feeding)

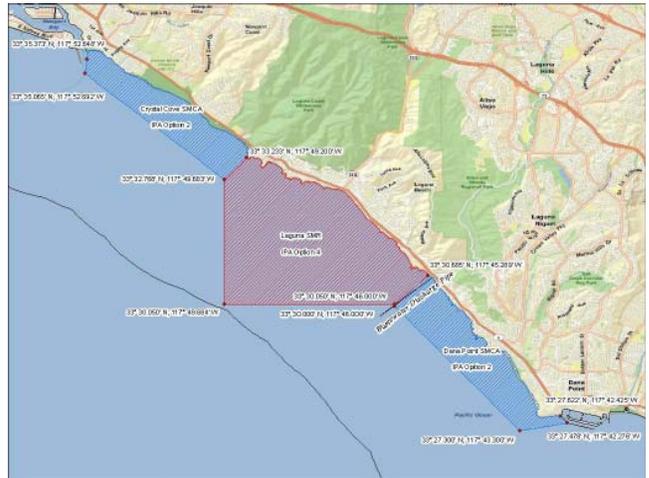
Rationale: Increased tourism is a key objective of this MPA and allowing this activity is consistent with that objective.

Laguna State Marine Reserve

Category: Boundaries and Designation

Most Consistent Option: Option 4 (see figure)

Rationale: Lines perpendicular to shore allow for increased enforceability and avoidance of a wastewater outfall, while maintaining protection of nearshore habitats. This design also allows for retention of the state marine reserve designation, as originally intended.



Crystal Cove State Marine Conservation Area

Category: Boundaries

Most Consistent Option: Option 4 (see figure)

Rationale: This design matches the recommended option for the Laguna State Marine Reserve. It also allows for inclusion of the MPA name Robert E. Badham State Marine Conservation Area, as it was not the intent to alter a name defined by legislative action.

Category: Regulations

Most Consistent Option: Option A (allow commercial lobster)

Rationale: The South Coast Integrated Preferred Alternative MPA Proposal, as well as all three of the stakeholder-generated proposals, proposed allowing this activity. Existing MPA regulations prohibit commercial take of lobster in this area; however, stakeholders expressed a desire throughout the MLPA planning process to allow for this activity. California State Parks staff conveyed to stakeholders and the BRTF that allowing commercial take of lobster conflicts



with the management objectives of a California State Parks underwater lease and findings of California State Parks planning documents for this area.

Dana Point State Marine Conservation Area

Category: Boundaries

Most Consistent Option: Option 2 (see figure)

Rationale: This design matches the recommended option for the Laguna State Marine Reserve.

Category: Regulations

Most Consistent Option: Option B (retain regulations)

Rationale: It was not the intent to disrupt existing management practices, thus it is recommended that existing restrictions on entry and scientific collecting oversight, are retained in the described area.

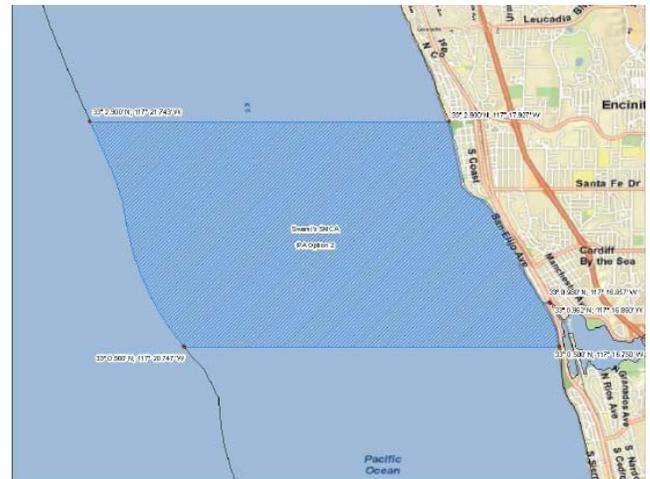


Swami's State Marine Conservation Area

Category: Boundaries

Most Consistent Option: Option 2 (see figure)

Rationale: Moving only the northern boundary is most consistent with the original intent of the MPA. A relatively small shift is required in the north to make the northern boundary more enforceable, while minimizing additional socioeconomic impacts. An additional shift in the south, as presented in other options, is larger and would have more socioeconomic consequences. Further, given the regulations proposed in Option A, not extending the southern boundary ensures that the beach adjacent to a parking lot within California State Parks jurisdiction is not within the MPA. Also, this configuration avoids including a wastewater outfall immediately south of the MPA design.



Category: Regulations

Most Consistent Option: Option A (do not allow shorefishing)

Rationale: The South Coast IPA MPA Proposal does not propose shorefishing due to the level of protection assigned to this activity and associated ecological impacts. This is the only MPA in the southern part of the study region (south of Laguna Beach) that meets the science guidelines for both size and allowed uses. Thus, allowing this activity would create an 80 mile

gap in protection at the minimum science guidelines. California State Parks staff conveyed to stakeholders and the BRTF that prohibiting this activity conflicts with the objectives of general plans for frequently visited state parks and state beaches in this area.

San Diego Scripps Coastal State Marine Conservation Area and Matlahuayl State Marine Conservation Area

Category: Boundaries

Most Consistent Option: Option 2 (see figure)

Rationale: A shift in the boundary between these two MPAs to the south, so that it intersects the base of the Scripps Pier, allows for increased enforceability as well as retention of the state marine reserve designation, as originally intended.



South La Jolla State Marine Reserve and South La Jolla State Marine Conservation Area

Category: Boundary

Most Consistent Option: Option 4 (see figure)

Rationale: Moving both the northern and southern boundaries allows for improved enforceability with relatively small adjustments. This also increases the size of the MPA, bringing it closer to meeting the minimum size guidelines.



Refugio State Marine Conservation Area

Category: Additional MPA

Most Consistent Option: Option 2 (add MPA)

Rationale: While this MPA was not included in the South Coast IPA MPA Proposal, it was the intended desire to work with California State Parks to maintain recreational opportunities for the public along with education and outreach. Since this is an existing MPA with onshore California State Parks resources, additional impacts and enforcement burden are minimal. Regulations for this MPA should be simplified per California Department of Fish and Game guidance.



Doheny Beach State Marine Conservation Area

Category: Additional MPA

Most Consistent Option: Option 2 (add MPA)

Rationale: While this MPA was not included in the South Coast IPA MPA Proposal, it was the intended desire of the BRTF to work with California State Parks to maintain recreational opportunities for the public along with education and outreach. Since this is an existing MPA with onshore California State Parks resources, additional impacts and enforcement burden are minimal. Regulations for this MPA should be simplified per California Department of Fish and Game guidance.



II. Assessment of Additional Issues Not Noticed in the ISOR

Upper Newport Bay State Marine Conservation Area

Category: Other Regulations

Additional Note: In proposing this MPA, the BRTF did not intend to extend existing restrictions or regulations regarding swimming, boat speed, and access beyond those areas where these activities are currently regulated.

Laguna State Marine Reserve

Category: Other Regulations

Additional Note: The BRTF intended that regulations within existing MPAs be superseded by this proposed state marine reserve; this included removing language from the existing Heisler Park State Marine Reserve: “Boats may be launched and retrieved only in designated areas and may be anchored within the conservation area only within daylight hours.”

Catalina Marine Science Center State Marine Reserve

Category: Other Regulations

Additional Note: The BRTF intended that regulations regarding anchoring within the existing Catalina Marine Science Center State Marine Reserve not be extended to apply outside of the existing reserve to the boundaries of the proposed reserve.