

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force

MEMORANDUM

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To: L. Ryan Brodrick, Director
California Department of Fish and Game

From: Phil Isenberg, Chair
MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force

Subject: MLPA Central Coast Project Recommendations

Date: April 28, 2006



The MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) has completed its deliberation on recommended marine protected areas (MPAs) along the central coast of California and herewith refer to you three (3) alternative packages, labeled respectively 1, 2R and 3R.

Package 3R is recommended to the California Department of Fish and Game by the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force as the preferred alternative.

This memo begins with a summary of recommendations, followed by a description of the processes leading to those recommendations (in reverse chronological order):

- I. Summary of the BRTF recommended packages
- II. Packages under consideration as the BRTF's March 14-15, 2006 meeting began
- III. The process preceding votes at the March BRTF meeting
- IV. Process to develop and approve packages, January 2005 to March 2006
- V. The MLPA Initiative MOU and its charge provide context for BRTF action

Three attachments are also included:

- Attachment A: E-mail messages from BRTF members Doug Wheeler and Jane Pisano, in support of the recommendations regarding the central coast MPA packages
- Attachment B: BRTF member comments on the central coast MPA packages
- Attachment C: Six binders with background materials, including legal and policy memos, process records, and descriptions of MPAs in each package (evaluations of how each package meets habitat representation and size and spacing guidelines, and of potential impacts on commercial and recreational fishing, will be provided when complete).

I. Summary of the BRTF Recommended Packages

Recommended Central Coast MPA Packages (March 15, 2006)

	Number of MPAs	Total Area of MPAs (mi²)	Percentage of Study Region¹
Existing MPAs	13	43.15 mi ²	3.75%
Package 1	29	171.33 mi ²	14.90%
Package 2R	30	221.45 mi ²	19.26%
Package 3R (preferred)	31	198.38 mi ²	17.25%

¹ The MLPA Central Coast Study Region encompasses 1150.1 square miles.

The following recommendations were approved by the BRTF on March 15, 2006:

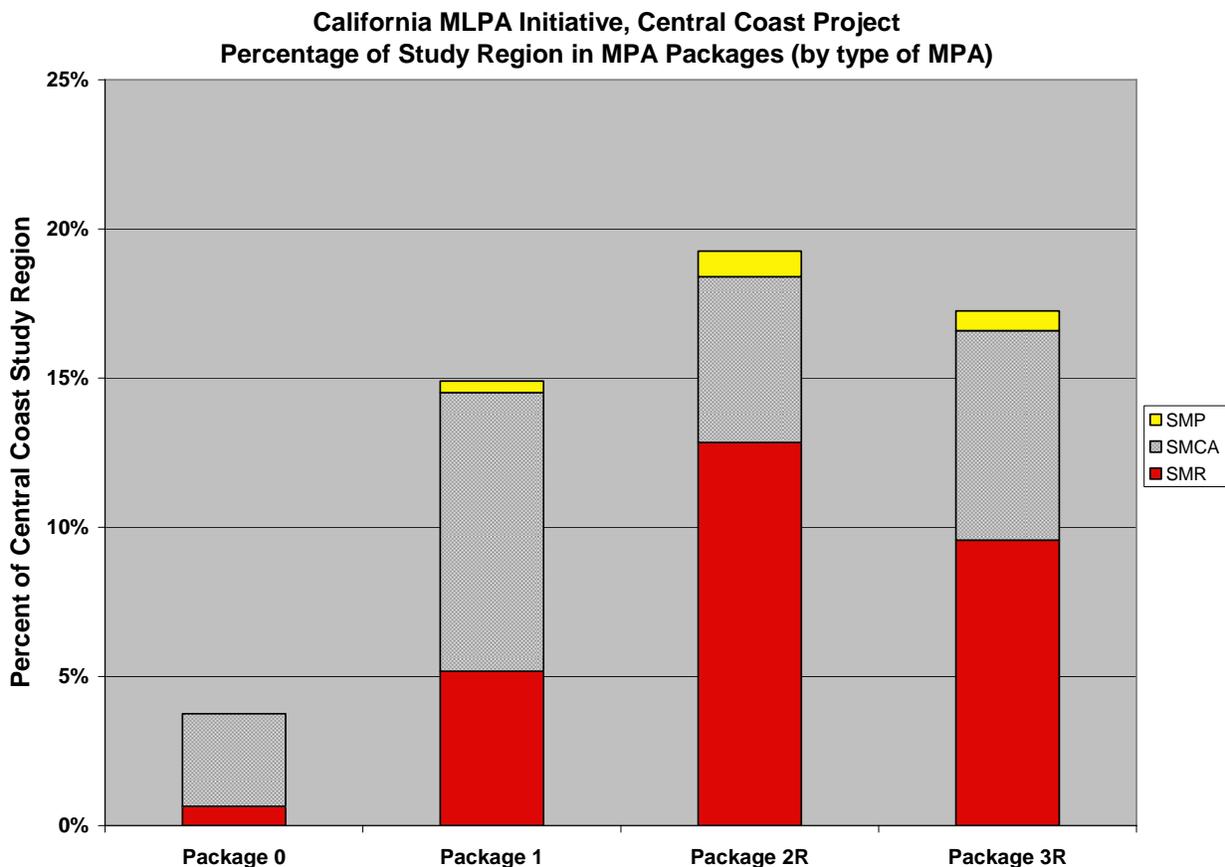
1. To forward as recommended alternative packages of MPAs for the central coast (vote of those present: 5-0):
 - Package 1
 - Package 2R (revised by BRTF vote)
 - Package 3R (twice revised by BRTF vote)

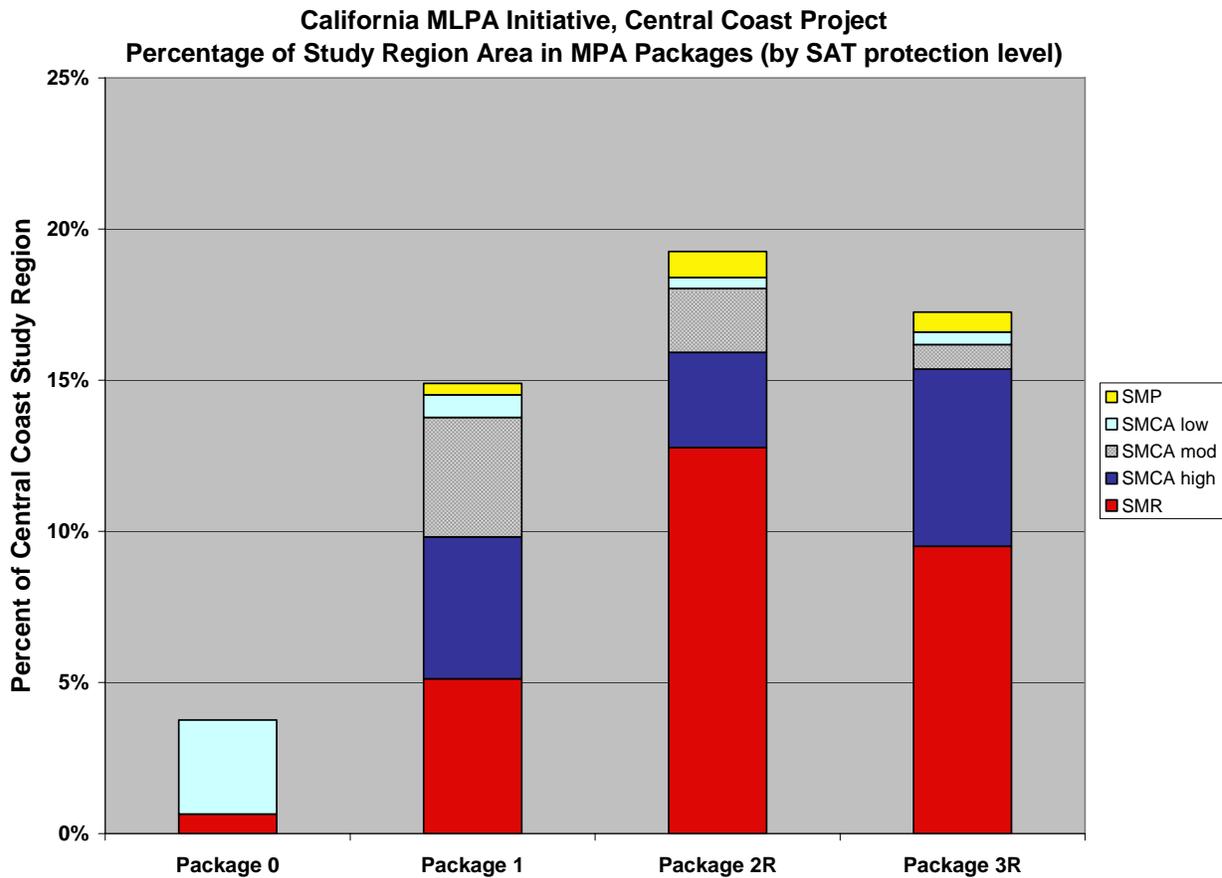
Charts beginning on the next page show the percentage of areas covered, by the type of MPA and level of protection, for each of these packages as well as existing MPAs (Package 0). Details and descriptions of final packages 1, 2R and 3R, including maps, are appended in Binder VI of Attachment C. GIS shape files and proposed regulations for each MPA in each package have been provided separately by staff to the Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

2. To recommend as the preferred alternative (vote of those present: 3-2 and subsequently by e-mail 5-2)¹:
 - Package 3R, in its final, revised form
3. To forward, as information to DFG, a number of comments on packages by individual BRTF members, appended as Attachment B.
4. To identify a number of issues of concern and recommendations to DFG and the Fish and Game Commission:
 - a. Review kelp harvest leases, including seasonal leasing and hand-harvesting, in potential MPAs

¹ Note: Two BRTF members, Ms. Caldwell and Ms. Golding, identified Package 2 as their preferred alternative. One BRTF member, Mr. Wheeler, had to leave at 2 p.m. on March 15. He recorded an affirmative vote on forwarding packages 1, 2 and 3, and his preference for Package 3 as the preferred alternative. However, additional adjustments were made to Package 3 after Mr. Wheeler left the meeting. As a result, he has added his support of these recommendations by e-mail, after review of the materials. BRTF member Jane Pisano was unable to be present but reviewed meeting materials and added her support to the recommendations to forward packages 1, 2R and 3R and for recommending Package 3R as the preferred alternative (copies of their messages are attached as Attachment A)

- b. Engage in dialogue with Vandenberg Air Force Base, continuing discussions initiated by the California Resources Agency with the U.S. Air Force regarding MPAs
- c. The importance of long-term funding for implementation of the MLPA
- d. Review and adjust fishing regulations to be complementary to MPA designations
- e. Consider spear fishing and spear fishing contests (the BRTF notes stakeholder concerns expressed, but will not address)
- f. The naming of MPAs should follow existing practices and specific names submitted with MPA packages carry no BRTF recommendation
- g. Recommend DFG take care in adjusting boundaries for improving public understanding and enforceability, and attempt to limit both environmental and socio-economic impact by those changes
- h. Extend recommended boundaries that are very close to the state waters limit to that boundary
- i. Recognize that activities on land can have negative impacts on marine habitats and life; though the MLPA Initiative did not have time to address this issue in developing packages of proposed MPAs, it urges the commission and other responsible state agencies to address these impacts.





II. Packages under Consideration as the BRTF’s March 14-15, 2006 Meeting Began

Six possible MPA packages for the central coast had been developed and presented by stakeholders, outside groups and the MLPA Initiative staff. Also included was Package 0, a “no project” alternative, which is the existing array of MPAs along the central coast.

- Package 0: Existing MPAs
- Package 1: Originally developed by consumptive interests
- Package 2: Originally developed by non-consumptive interests
- Package 3: Developed by several MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG) members as a hybrid package between packages 1 and 2
- Package S: Developed by MLPA Initiative staff following BRTF direction at our January 31-February 1, 2006 meeting
- Package AC: Developed outside the CCRSG process, by Natural Resources Defense Council and PBRO Conservation Science

One additional package (Package B) was developed outside the CCRSG process by Help Our Peninsula Environment, and was dropped from further consideration at the January 31-February 1, 2006 BRTF meeting. We based this decision upon the advice of the MLPA Master

Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) and MLPA Initiative staff that Package B was not a network of MPAs.

III. The Process Preceding Votes at the March BRTF Meeting

- The BRTF received extensive and descriptive presentations on the packages by MLPA Initiative staff, evaluations by representatives of the SAT, comments by package proponents and public comments. This occurred from 10 a.m. to almost 7 p.m. on March 14.
- The BRTF returned the next morning to discuss and adopt recommendations. The BRTF asked MLPA Initiative staff to work with the proponents of Package 3 and SAT members to improve that package with elements of Package S. Those modifications were completed, reported to the BRTF and approved as Package 3R.
- The BRTF members then discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the other packages (those comments are included in Attachment B).
- A motion was made and passed (5-0) to modify Package 3R as follows:
 - Enlarge the total area of three MPAs (at Point Sur, Point Buchon and Purisima Point) to 18 square miles to meet the SAT “preferred” size range.
 - To adopt the Package 2 boundary lines at Pinnacles/Stillwater Cove, rebalancing user group interests.
 - To revise the configuration of MPAs along the bay side of Monterey Peninsula to create an SMR from the breakwater to Charhouse, then an SMCA to allow limited kelp harvest by hand, then an SMR to Lovers Point, all with a seaward boundary along the 60 foot contour line, rebalancing user group interests.
- A motion was made and passed (4-0) to modify Package 2, which became Package 2R, as follows:
 - To revise the configuration of MPAs along the bay side of Monterey Peninsula to create an SMR from the breakwater to Charhouse, then an SMCA to allow limited kelp harvest by hand, then an SMR to Lovers Point, all with a seaward boundary along the 60 foot contour line, rebalancing user group interests.

IV. Process to Develop and Approve Packages, January 2005 to March 2006

The packages that we recommend to you were developed through an intensive stakeholder process with strong support from the SAT and regular involvement of the BRTF.

- The Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG) that you appointed with Chair Isenberg met for seven, 2-day meetings and many additional work sessions.
- The BRTF was regularly involved in the work of the CCRSG. In addition to approving the goals and objectives for MPAs in the central coast that were developed by the CCRSG, we provided formal decisions on a few questions of importance to progress of the CCRSG. Additionally, in comments to stakeholders making presentations at BRTF meetings and in my memos to stakeholders, we provided encouragement and urged

them to be responsive to SAT evaluations of proposed packages. Task force members attended virtually all of the meetings and I was present at two.

- The SAT designated a sub-team to support the work of the CCRSG. The SAT subsequently designated an evaluation sub-team to evaluate how packages of proposed MPAs satisfied the habitat representation and size and spacing guidelines established in the MLPA Master Plan Framework adopted by the Fish and Game Commission in August 2005. The full SAT spent large portions of three, 1-day meetings discussing the evaluations of proposed packages. They also received and discussed evaluations of the potential maximum impacts on commercial and recreational fisheries.
- MLPA Initiative and DFG staff supported the work of the CCRSG, SAT and BRTF with extensive GIS capacity, facilitation of meetings, and other support as appropriate.
- The BRTF has now held 19 days of meetings; there has been discussion of the central coast process at each. Development of the MLPA Master Plan Framework, the focus of early meetings, provided the road map for proposing packages of MPAs. In February 2005 we identified the Central Coast Study Region as Point Conception to Pigeon Point after three public workshops and public input at our meetings. BRTF meetings in December 2005 and January and March 2006 were almost entirely devoted to information and input on proposed packages of MPAs in the central coast.

V. The MLPA Initiative MOU and its Charge Provide Context for BRTF Action

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) among the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Resources Agency and the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation includes as an objective the development of proposed alternative networks of MPAs for an area of the central coast. The MOU states:

- C. Submit the Department's draft proposal for alternative networks of MPAs for a select area within the Central Coast to the Commission by March 2006

The responsibility for developing the alternative networks of MPAs for the central coast was included in the charge of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force:

“...to oversee a regional project to develop a proposal for alternative networks of marine protected areas in an area along the central coast to present to the Commission by March 2006...”

This charge to the BRTF is now complete with our recommendation of three alternative packages of MPAs and one of those packages as the preferred alternative. As we understand it, DFG is to consider these recommendations, make modifications as it deems appropriate, and then recommend alternative packages along with a preferred alternative to the California Fish and Game Commission.

cc: Secretary Mike Chrisman, California Resources Agency

Attachment A: E-mail messages from BRTF members Doug Wheeler and Jane Pisano

Attachment B: MLPA BRTF member comments on the central coast MPA packages

Attachment C: Six binders with background materials

Binder I: Initiative Authorization and Organization

- a. MOU among the California Resources Agency, California Department of Fish and Game, and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation
- b. Organization / relationships charts
- c. Roles and responsibilities
- d. Charters (BRTF, SAT, SIG, CCRSG)
- e. Rosters of members and staff (BRTF, SAT, SIG, CCRSG, staff)
- f. Strategy for Stakeholder and Interested Public Participation
- g. Marine Life Protection Act
- h. Marine Managed Areas Improvement Act

Binder II: Legal and Policy Context Documents

- a. Adopted MLPA Master Plan Framework
- b. Legal opinions
- c. Chair Isenberg memos to CCRSG and stakeholders
- d. Memos to BRTF (Kirlin and MLPA I staff)
- e. Final Report on Long-Term Funding
- f. Long-term funding strategy memo from Phil Isenberg to Secretary Mike Chrisman

Binder III: Best Readily Available Science

- a. External peer review of MLPA Master Plan Framework
- b. Species likely to benefit from MPAs
- c. Methods for analyzing packages of MPAs in achieving the goals of the MLPA (related to representative or unique habitats; size and spacing; replication; and recreational, educational and study opportunities).
- d. Literature surveys of the economics of non-consumptive activities

Binder IV: Process Records

- a. List of all public meetings, by group and by reverse chronological order
- b. Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group meeting agendas and key outcomes memos
- c. Blue Ribbon Task Force meeting agendas and summaries
- d. Master Plan Science Advisory Team meeting agendas and summaries
- e. Statewide Interest Group meeting agendas and summaries

Binder V: Central Coast Regional Profile

- a. Central Coast Regional Profile

Binder VI: Developing Packages of MPAs for the Central Coast

- a. Central Coast Goals, Objectives, and Design and Implementation Considerations
- b. MPA package percentage of study region area graphs, by MPA types and levels of protection
- c. Existing MPAs (maps, staff summary, habitat representation)
- d. MPA Package 1 (maps, staff summary, MPA matrix, habitat representation)
- e. MPA Package 2R (maps, staff summary, MPA matrix, habitat representation)
- f. MPA Package 3R (maps, staff summary, MPA matrix, habitat representation)
- g. Side-by-side comparison of proposed MPAs (maps) and regulations for packages 1, 2R and 3R (by subregion) with existing MPAs identified.
- h. Comparison of proposed MPA regulations for packages 0, 1, 2R and 3R (all subregions in a single file)