

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Summary of Participant Roles in the 2007-2008 Process

The California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative is a public-private partnership with a wide variety of participants, from staff and scientists to stakeholders and the general public. The initiative process began in August 2004 with the signing of a memorandum of understanding among the California Resources Agency, California Department of Fish and Game, and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation. The MOU created the MLPA Initiative to help the state implement the MLPA, beginning along the central coast (Pigeon Point to Point Conception); the final step of that process was completed in April 2007 when the California Fish and Game Commission adopted regulations for MPAs along the central coast of California. A second MOU became effective on January 1, 2007 to being the next study region along the north central coast (Alder Creek/Point Arena to Pigeon Point).

The MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force is chaired by former San Diego Mayor Susan Golding and includes four other knowledgeable public leaders selected by California Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman. The task force will oversee the development of alternative proposals for marine protected areas (MPAs) along the north central coast and will submit its recommendations to the California Fish and Game Commission.

The MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team includes a group of leading scientists knowledgeable in marine ecology, fisheries science, MPAs, economics and the social sciences, as well as staff from the California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and State Water Resources Control Board. The science team assists the task force, staff and regional stakeholders by reviewing draft and supporting documents, and addressing scientific issues. A sub-team serves to provide more directed advice to the MLPA North Central Coast Project, where alternative proposals for MPAs are developed.

The MLPA Statewide Interests Group is composed of stakeholders who collectively advise the task force and staff on the overall MLPA Initiative process, alerting the task force and staff to issues and opportunities that may improve public involvement in the process.

The MLPA North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group includes almost 40 primary and alternate members who are able and willing to provide information that assists in developing a regional profile and alternative proposals for MPAs along the north central coast. The group will meet as a formal body over 12 to 14 months.

The California Fish and Game Commission is the ultimate decision-making authority for implementing the MLPA. The principal mission of the other participants is to support the commission in making sound policy decisions required by the MLPA. Although the commission is not involved in the day-to-day work of the initiative, there are regular informational meetings and consultation with the commission and its staff.

The California Department of Fish and Game serves as the lead agency for the design and implementation of the master plan required in the Marine Life Protection Act, including a redesigned system of MPAs. The department is a key member of the staff and contractors team that will work closely with the regional stakeholder group throughout the process of developing alternative MPA proposals for consideration by the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force.

The MLPA Initiative staff includes, among others, an executive director, operations and communications manager, north central coast project manager, senior planner, and other contracted staff. Working with initiative staff from the California Department of Fish and Game are a policy advisor, MPA project supervisor, statewide technical advisor, GIS research analysts, enforcement personnel, and others.

The general public has been, and will continue to be, actively involved in the MLPA Initiative by attending and participating in public meetings and workshops, commenting on draft documents, submitting data and information, and helping educate other members of the public about the initiative.