

Marine Life Protection Act Initiative



MLPA Planning and Recommendations for the North Coast Study Region

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Why the MLPA Initiative?

- Different model than traditional decision-making
- Robust, transparent, adaptive process with multiple opportunities for participation
- Deliberative iterations where choices framed and interests expressed; stakeholders develop ideas, public is able to directly contribute, ideas refined
- Use of best, readily-available science to inform deliberations
- Significant data and information about proposals through various evaluations, analyses, and stakeholder-developed materials
- Strong foundation for recommendations



Why a Blue Ribbon Task Force?

- MLPA offers six goals without any priority
- Stakeholders differ in emphasis they give goals, how they interpret goals, where to place MPAs to achieve goals, and how they assess possible future impacts
- MLPA goals do not give priority to socioeconomics, yet cannot be ignored
- Science evaluations provide informative and important metrics; lack application of values
- Differing impacts in the short- and long-term
- Different guidelines sometimes conflict
- In general, policy judgment required



Marine Life Protection Act

- **California law with mandate to:**
 - Improve design and management of marine protected areas (MPAs) in state waters
 - Focus on marine ecosystems and habitats rather than single species
- **Requires, in part:**
 - Use of “best readily available science”
 - Involvement of stakeholders and other interested parties
 - Master plan for MPAs, program with six goals, and adaptive management





Why the MLPA?

- California's MPAs created over decades without a coherent plan, scientific guidelines or overall goals; confusing system
- California's extraordinary marine biological diversity a vital asset
- Various human activities threaten the health of marine habitat and biological diversity
- Marine protected areas offer multiple benefits for sustaining ocean ecosystems



Why Marine Protected Areas?

Marine protected areas (MPAs):

- Protect habitat and ecosystems
- Conserve biological diversity
- Maintain culturally significant resources
- Enhance recreational and educational opportunities
- Provide research opportunities
- Complement fisheries management



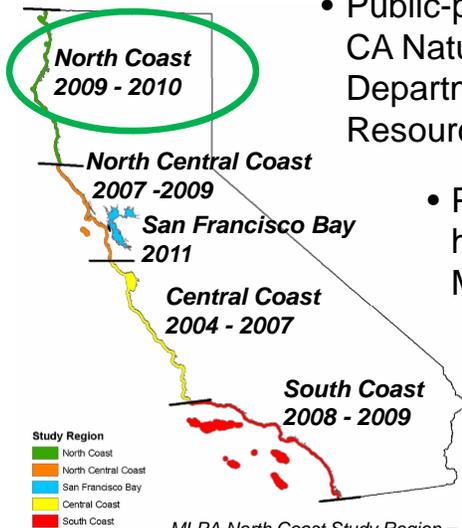


Types of Marine Protected Areas

- **State marine conservation area (SMCA)**
 - Allows some recreational and/or commercial extractive activities
- **State marine park (SMP)**
 - Allows some recreational activities and prohibits all commercial extractive activities
- **State marine reserve (SMR)**
 - Prohibits all extractive activities



California MLPA Initiative



- Public-private partnership among the CA Natural Resources Agency, CA Department of Fish and Game, and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation
- Planning process designed to help California implement the MLPA
- Citizen-based, adaptive, transparent process with public participation at every stage



MLPA Initiative Participants

- Institutional partners
 - California Department of Fish and Game
 - California Natural Resources Agency
 - RLFF
- MLPA Initiative groups
 - Blue ribbon task force
 - Science advisory team
 - Regional stakeholder group
 - Statewide Interests Group
 - Staff and contractors
- General public and interested parties



Role of Science Advisory Team

- Apply science guidance from the master plan
- Assemble and review relevant data for MPA planning and evaluation
- Determine levels of protection achieved by allowing take of particular species with specific gear types in proposed MPAs
- Answer science related questions from BRTF, stakeholders and general public, including external array proponents
- Evaluate potential ecological and economic impacts of MPA proposals





Role of Regional Stakeholder Group

- Contribute local expertise and knowledge for refining a regional profile and informing the MPA planning process
- Work collaboratively to develop MPA proposals that meet the requirements of the act
- Conduct outreach to constituent groups for broader involvement in the project
- Identify potential speakers to present recommendations and commentary at MLPA public meetings
- Strive for a high degree of cross-interest involvement and support in crafting MPA proposals



North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

- Ports and harbors
- Commercial fishing
- Sea vegetable harvesting
- Diving
- Bird watching
- Surfing
- Seafood processing
- Conservation
- Water quality
- Research
- Kayaking
- Recreational fishing
- Education and outreach
- Coastal consulting
- Tribes/tribal communities
- California Coastal Commission
- National Park Service
- Public-at-large



Photo: Gretchen Hofmann

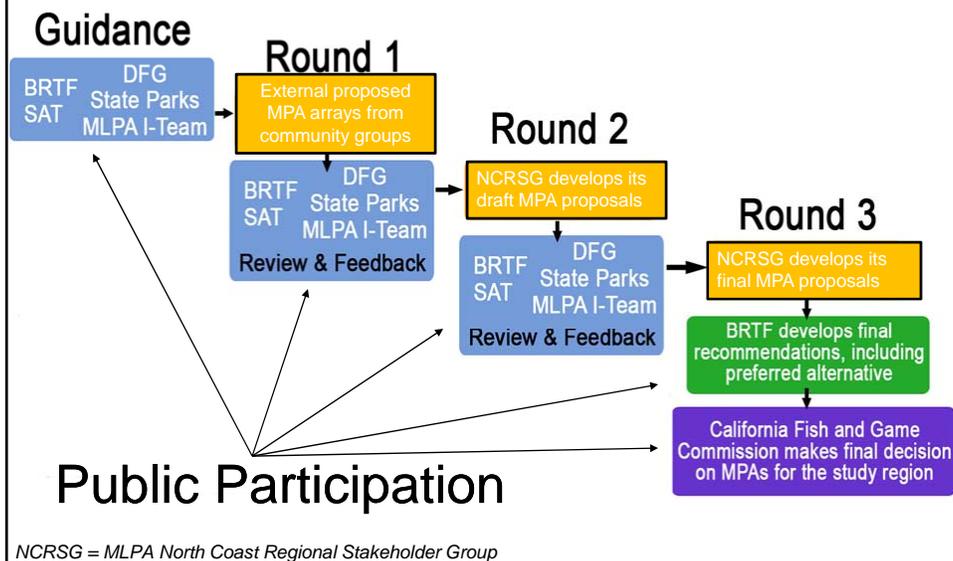


Iterative MPA Planning Process

- Three rounds of MPA planning
- Designed to gather information, test ideas, learn from evaluations and other feedback
- Feedback and input from:
 - MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT)
 - MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF)
 - California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
 - California Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks)
 - MLPA Initiative staff (I-Team)
 - Interested public



North Coast Planning Process





Public Outreach and Participation

- Outreach efforts: Website, list server, print mailing list, live webcasts, archived video/audio, open houses, workshops, electronic newsletter, Twitter, Facebook, individual and small group discussions
- Targeted outreach to tribes and tribal communities
- Opportunities for public participation: Develop MPA array in Round 1, communicate directly with an NCRSG member, submit ideas or suggestions in writing or during public comment at meetings, provide feedback on documents and MPA proposals, help educate other members of the community, field trips, “remote” public participation locations for meetings



NCRSG Accomplishments

NCRSG accomplished all elements of its charge, and more:

- Considered extent to which existing marine protected areas (MPAs) contributed to goals of MLPA
- Contributed local knowledge
- Reached out to and involved broader communities
- Closely considered guidance from SAT, BRTF, DFG and California State Parks
- Developed a single “unified” Round 3 MPA proposal
- Recommended special closures for north coast
- Adopted motion supporting a tribal uses category within MPAs to allow traditional tribal uses



BRTF North Coast Recommendations

In October the BRTF adopted seven motions, two related to forwarding MPA proposals and special closures recommendation to the commission:

- Revised Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal, with NCRSG recommendation to re-name the Ten Mile MPAs and staff recommended updates to the recreational take intended to accommodate tribal uses
- North Coast Enhanced Compliance Alternative MPA Proposal, that builds off the Revised Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal with modifications to improve compliance with science guidelines and DFG feasibility criteria
- North Coast Special Closures Recommendation, as developed by the NCRSG



BRTF Recommendations (continued)

Incorporate Tribal Uses in Marine Protected Areas of the MLPA North Coast Study Region:

- When the legal authority to do so is clarified and settled by the State of California and California tribes and tribal communities, create a separate “tribal use” category of proposed uses.
- Create “nearshore ribbons” where the tribal use category can be applied to SMCAs to allow traditional tribal gathering.
- DFG should consult and work with tribes and tribal communities to resolve any outstanding issues related to traditional tribal gathering.



BRTF Recommendations (continued)

Co-management of MPAs with Sister Agencies, Including Tribes and Tribal Communities

- The California Fish and Game Commission should work with tribes and tribal communities and encourage sister agencies to work with the commission and tribes and tribal communities to develop co-management of MPAs where appropriate.
- “Sister” agencies are broadly construed to include agencies at different levels of jurisdiction, including local agencies, tribes and tribal communities.



BRTF Recommendations (continued)

Add Recreational Take of Pacific Lamprey and Eulachon to Appropriate Estuarine MPAs

- Add eulachon and Pacific lamprey to estuaries with proposed uses intended to accommodate tribes and tribal communities (South Humboldt Bay SMRMA, Big River Estuary SMP, and Navarro River Estuary SMRMA).
- Currently federally listed species that are illegal to take, but tribes and tribal communities would like them listed in MPA regulations for such a time in the future that the species might be de-listed and become available (not an effort to provide an allowance under state regulations that is currently illegal under federal regulations).



BRTF Recommendations (continued)

Retain Three Existing North Coast Marine Protected Areas with Modifications

- MacKerricher SMCA, Russian Gulch SMCA and Van Damme SMCA be retained with existing take regulations (both commercial and recreational), with the addition of proposed allowed uses intended to accommodate tribes and tribal communities.
- California State Parks and Recreation and California Department of Fish and Game worked together to address feasibility concerns with the boundaries of each site.



BRTF Recommendations (continued)

Change Classification of Two State Marine Recreational Management Areas (SMRMAs)

- If designated, change the classification of Ten Mile Estuary State Marine Recreational Management Area to a state marine reserve and the Navarro River Estuary State Marine Recreational Management Area to a state marine conservation area, as intended by the NCRSG.