

**CALIFORNIA MARINE LIFE PROTECTION ACT INITIATIVE
STATEWIDE INTERESTS GROUP
JULY 20, 2005 MEETING SUMMARY
(2:00-3:45 p.m. via conference call)**

SIG members present: Steve Campi, James Colston, Don Canestro, Kevin Cooper, Dr. Ronald Fritzsche, Karen Garrison, Vern Goehring, Zeke Grader, Joel Greenberg, Nancy Hastings, Jim Martin, Mike Osmond, Tom Raftican, Jesús Ruiz, Linda Sheehan, Erin Simmons, Ben Sleeter, David Whittington

Others present: Jack Peveler (listening for Carol Abella), Phil Isenberg (Chair, MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force), Gail Bingham (Facilitator), Michael DeLapa (MLPA Initiative staff), Maura Leos (notetaker, DFG staff), Melissa Miller-Henson (MLPA Initiative staff), John Ugoretz (DFG staff), Michael Weber (MLPA Initiative staff)

Acronyms used: California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), California Fish and Game Commission (F&GC), geographic information system (GIS), MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF), MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG), MLPA Master Plan Framework (MPF), MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT), marine protected area (MPA)

Welcome

Gail Bingham, facilitator from RESOLVE, welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda and meeting objectives. There were no questions regarding the agenda. Four SIG members asked to raise issues in the open discussion.

Update on the Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG)

Michael DeLapa reported on the progress of the CCRSG. The group has made good progress and put together a mass of information. It is a great team, on schedule and on budget. There are 32 primary members with 9 members of the SAT as a science sub-team. The CCRSG has already met twice with another meeting scheduled in Monterey on August 10-11, 2005. Some work teams have been formed to deal with goals and objectives, mapping, and socio-economic data.

The CCRSG has a detailed work plan and project schedule. The website is being redesigned and built in a form to track questions and issues. The CCRSG adopted some regional goals with the prospect of adopting provisional objectives at its next meeting for the BRTF to review in September. The second draft of the MLPA Central Coast Regional Profile will be brought to the CCRSG at its August meeting. A number of research contracts have been initiated including: two socio-economic studies, one by Dr. Astrid Scholtz and one by Dr. Linwood Pendleton; a data visualization project by IM Systems; and a non-consumptive study by Chris LaFranche. Next steps are to complete the regional profile, set some regional objectives, evaluate existing MPAs and inventory possible new areas. A package of alternatives should be ready for the BRTF by October or November.

Questions

A SIG member had a question regarding the upcoming CCRSG meeting in September in Morro Bay. Will the group break out into the two regional groups or remain as one? MLPA Initiative Staff answered that the first day will be a collective meeting. The second day the group may break into two regional groups or even back into the small working groups. The specific arrangement for the meeting will be decided later.

The same SIG member wondered how the word will get out regarding GIS layers. How will the public and those not able to attend meetings access and use the mapping site? MLPA Initiative staff answered that the idea was to have these tools available to the stakeholders at the meetings. There will be GIS staff at each meeting to assist. The site has been announced at each meeting. This data is important to understand and the GIS staff and website are reference tools. The site can be difficult to navigate. There won't be a lot of outreach to people outside of the stakeholder group. However, stakeholders can learn at meetings and then assist their constituents.

A SIG member wanted to know who the members of the science sub-team were for the CCRSG. MLPA Initiative staff answered that Mark Carr and Dean Wendt are the primary members with Rick Starr and Linwood Pendleton as their alternates. There are also two graduate students assisting the SAT. Also, Steve Palumbi, Doyle Hanan, Steve Gaines, Loo Botsford, and Mary Yoklavich volunteered to assist the CCRSG.

Another SIG member wondered if it was still possible to submit comments on the regional profile, and if people outside the CCRSG were able to submit comments. MLPA Initiative staff answered that they certainly will accept any comments submitted. There is a quick turn around for this project so staff urged comments to be made in a timely manner. The next draft should be to the CCRSG members by the 2nd of August to be discussed at the meeting on the 10th. There will be another round of comments with a deadline of August 17. There is definitely still time to comment.

A SIG member asked whether the GIS tool allows for negotiation further down the road. Will stakeholders be able to compare and pick and choose what aspects they want in an MPA? MLPA Initiative staff answered that the current GIS tool does not allow this kind of comparison. This function is something that can be used in meetings, not online, to show what will happen if an area is closed. Stakeholders will be able to determine some socio-economic impacts from the decision support tool. However, it will only compare total closure to no closure.

At this point, John Ugoretz interjected that people outside the process have been invited to submit proposals. These proposals would have to be consistent with Appendix F of the MPF. These outside proposals would then be evaluated based on the MPF guidelines.

A SIG member wanted to know if the outside proposals could be individual MPA proposals or would they need to be an entire package. He was afraid this could open up a can of worms

with single MPA proposals being submitted. Staff answered that he should review Appendix F, because it will probably address his concerns.

A SIG member asked if there was a way to deal with suggested revisions to the key outcomes memo from the CCRSG meeting. MLPA Initiative staff answered that such revisions need to be submitted directly to the facilitators with a copy to Michael DeLapa.

Future Science Presentations

John Ugoretz reported on the SAT science module presentations. The questions raised during the last conference call were forwarded to the SAT. The SAT organized the presentations and tried to keep a logical order. The three modules presented at the BRTF meeting in Santa Barbara will be presented again at the next CCRSG meeting. This will be the way the modules will be presented. MLPA Initiative staff had hoped to combine some of the BRTF and CCRSG meetings so the SAT would not have to give duplicate presentations, but it did not work out. The SAT is in the process of preparing the next four modules to be presented to the BRTF.

Discussion

One SIG member stated the presenters did an excellent job of expressing the complexity of these issues; however, they also left the BRTF grappling with trying to figure out success and failure. It would be a good idea if the presenters could include how to determine success and failure in the presentations. MLPA Initiative staff answered that success and failure will be covered in the monitoring and evaluation modules. These issues are part of the overall management issue.

A SIG member felt the need to look for a more balanced economist. He indicated that he would have a list of names by the end of the week to propose. John Ugoretz responded that Commissioner Rogers (F&GC) indicated that he would like to have a business economist involved; DFG is looking for such an individual. Staff is bringing in non-SAT scientists to work with the SAT on the presentations. If anyone has suggestions, they can be made to John Ugoretz or John Kirlin.

A SIG member suggested, instead of bringing in an additional economist, give Linwood Pendleton the opportunity to address any concerns.

Stakeholder Sponsored Workshop

Tom Raftican reported on a proposed United Anglers of Southern California-sponsored science workshop. There is a problem with the timeline; United Anglers would like to have the workshop sometime toward the end of September. They are definitely going to go forward with the workshop because of concerns about the definition of network and larval transport, as well as funding. United Anglers would like to invite anyone who is interested to join in shaping the questions and to work out the timing.

A SIG member asked who is the audience for the workshop. The answer was, "first the SIG, then ultimately the BRTF."

Another SIG member expressed that, while this is an important issue, they would like to see it happen within the context of the current schedule of meetings.

MLPA staff and Chair Isenberg indicated an appreciation for both concerns of audience and timing. Discussion of these issues will indeed take place at the upcoming BRTF meetings.

Tom Raftican suggested that anyone who wants to propose scientists to participate in the workshop is encouraged to get the names to United Anglers as soon as possible. Be assured, everyone will see the end product.

A SIG member stated that he felt there needed to be additional scientists with different views at the workshop.

Facilitator Bingham reminded the group of the short time window for any suggested topics or scientists to participate in the presentation. For those who feel there is still a need to plan an additional workshop it will be towards the end of September and will be inclusive of all scientists. Contact Tom Raftican if you are interested in helping to shape questions or work on the timing.

A SIG member took this opportunity to recommend to John Ugoretz a topic on data availability and uncertainty.

Another SIG member asked about bringing in another economist. He was concerned there wouldn't be point-counter-point. The answer was "no," if another economist is brought in, it will be a collaborative effort.

July BRTF Meeting

Melissa Miller-Henson reported that the last BRTF meeting was held in Santa Barbara on July 11-12. A number of SIG members attended. The BRTF returned to an earlier format with a field trip Monday afternoon. As usual, the meeting was videotaped and webcast. Tuesday afternoon, the F&GC held a hearing to take public comment on the MPF. One thing staff learned was that five days of back-to-back meetings was not conducive to sanity.

Open Discussion

Ben Sleeter asked if a GIS scientist could be added to the SAT; he would prefer someone with a Ph.D. He will send some suggested names to John Ugoretz and John Kirilin. MLPA staff indicated that Dr. Will McClintock attended the last CCRSG meeting and is working with staff and the SAT. He is not a member of the SAT, but is an analyst and interpreter.

Zeke Grader asked about using the KRIS program that is used for north coast watersheds, which could serve as an excellent template for MLPA.

Karen Garrison asked how the stakeholders are going to integrate affordability into the process; that issues should be looked at now. MLPA staff answered that the BRTF is indeed looking at the numbers now; the cost won't be known until staff actually start building the framework. At this point it is all rather nebulous. In the end, this thing DOES need to be paid for.

Linda Sheehan asked, about a tangentially related issue, if MLPA staff wanted information regarding agriculture water piped to Point Alero. If desired, MLPA staff should e-mail Ms. Sheehan. This is an issue that keeps coming back.

Joel Greenberg had some latent questions. How is the redesign progressing on the website? Is there a timeframe? MLPA staff answered that staff is reviewing the proposed architecture of the website now, which will then go back to the contractor after staff review. A functioning product should be ready by the end of August.

A SIG member asked if the public can expect to see published public comments on the regional profile. The MLPA staff answered that they haven't been published yet, but will be in the future.

GIS Mapping and Tools for Comparing Network Alternatives

Michael DeLapa reported there are two different tools for GIS mapping available. Staff is able to access raw data layers and best readily available science. Contractors are developing a separate tool that is not web based; this tool will allow polygons to be drawn with quantitative data. The tool will be available at CCRSG meetings, and is similar to the Oceans Map.

Some SIG members felt what is available now is nowhere near ready to be made public. The available technology is not a tool for decision making. The tool is not interactive. All members need training on using these datasets to ensure that the wrong conclusions are not drawn. Being able to see the existing closures and defacto layers is an excellent tool.

Michael DeLapa indicated that these concerns are all part of what will be addressed over the next five months.

One SIG member asked if there had been a panel set up with the SAT to review outside alternatives. There was concern that the SAT will review the alternative package going to the F&GC and that it will not be altered between the time it goes from the CCRSG to the F&GC. MLPA Initiative staff answered that, no, outside alternatives will be presented to the stakeholder group as a whole. The selection of an alternative will be a process happening concurrently not linearly.

A SIG member indicated that he wanted to know who the scientists on the peer review panel will be. The MLPA staff answered that his request will be passed along to John Ugoretz (who had to leave early).

A SIG member asked about a staff template of goals and objectives he heard was available. Michael DeLapa answered that he was not aware of such a template.

Updates

There will be some changes regarding the CCRSG meetings. Originally it was envisioned there would be two sub-groups. Staff is finding that many issues need to be addressed by the group as a whole. As such, the August 10 and 11 meeting will be held in Monterey and the meeting in September will be combined. It will be decided at the August meeting whether the October meeting will also be combined. The BRTF, however, will stick to its original meeting schedule with its next meeting in San Luis Obispo on September 28 and 29.

The next call is scheduled for October 7 from 12:00 to 2:00 pm. SIG members are invited to send suggestions for agenda items.

Closing Thoughts

Chair Isenberg stated that as we come closer to recommendations the difficulty increases. We see some intense battles to come. We will be grappling with the question of at what point does the BRTF say, "Just give us the alternatives." We thank you for your active support and participation.