

# Nomination to the MLPAI North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

## Tom Shaver

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### *General Statement*

I believe I would be a valuable member of the NCRSG due to the depth of my experience working with differing interests to come to consensus on a way forward without losing sight of the interests of the constituency I represent. As a volunteer and paid staff, I have played a key role in group efforts to establish new organizations and pass citizen-proposed legislation at the state and city level. I am able to listen respectfully and am very creative at amending proposals to take a wide range of concerns into account.

As a third generation Californian and lifelong surfer, the ocean runs in my veins. Since coming to Mendocino County 3 years ago I have taken up abalone diving and harvesting seaweed commercially. Having studied biology in college, I understand the importance of ecological integrity. I see myself as part of a movement that is forging a more harmonious human relationship with nature, particularly through our choices of what to eat.

My interest in being involved in the MLPAI process is to ensure that MPAs do not compromise unnecessarily the ability of people to obtain food from the ocean by ecologically benign methods. I am especially concerned that seaweed harvesters have a strong voice in the process.

My biology background will serve me well in navigating through the scientific elements of the MLPA process. My experiences in citizen lobbying have given me a fairly high level of comfort interacting with the politically powerful as well as a keen ability for discerning the essential concerns of the most irate citizen. For over 20 years I have developed strong skills at facilitating formal consensus decision making processes involving as many as 300 people.

Because of inconsistent phone service at the rural property where I live, it is sometimes difficult to reach me by phone, but I do have dependable, reasonably fast internet access. I would anticipate being a conduit of information about the MLPA process to the Anderson Valley and coordinating with other seaweed harvesters. While attending plenary meetings and work sessions may be challenging due to distance, parental responsibilities with my 3 year old and a large construction project on our land, I would be a faithful attendee should I be chosen to participate in the stakeholder group.

### *Additional Information*

#### Natural Resource Policy Experience:

The effort most related to natural resource policy that I participated in was while working for Kentuckians For The Commonwealth, a grassroots social justice and environmental group. We successfully lobbied for legislation to increase the protections for landowners regarding oil and gas well drilling operations on their land where the subsurface mineral extraction rights are separate from surface ownership. I researched model legislation from other states, interviewed land owners harmed by drilling operations and prepared educational materials based on the research and personal stories I gathered to give to legislators and the media. I accompanied citizen lobbyists

while they met with elected officials and bureaucrats and participated in strategy sessions with staff and members.

Ability to Make Time Commitment:

I live on a 190 acre parcel of land with 10 adults and 2 kids. The land is owned outright by a non-profit, Emerald Earth Sanctuary. Our mission is to rediscover, invent and practice appropriate ways to live in harmony with the earth and with each other. Much of our food comes from our gardens, orchards and animals as well as whatever we can glean, wildcraft and trade for locally. Our low basic living expenses are paid for by various jobs and enterprises we engage in both on and off the land. We offer workshops in natural building and opportunities to volunteer or intern for various lengths of time.

My wife is a massage therapist and is the major breadwinner in our nuclear family. We have a 3 year old boy. I take on construction work for a couple of months during the year and earn some extra money selling mushrooms I collect in the winter on our land and helping my friend Andrew harvest seaweed in the summer. This description of my life is a perhaps long-winded way of saying that I have a flexible life style that should allow me to commit the time to participate fully in the stakeholder group. However, I will need notice of meetings at least a month or two in advance so that I can adjust my schedule and make sure my responsibilities are covered. It may be difficult for me to attend meetings that are scheduled on short notice.

Also, I drive a VW Jetta TDI that gets over 40 mpg on biodiesel made from waste vegetable oil.

Education:

BA in Biology, UC Santa Cruz, 1984

Masters in Intercultural Administration, School for International Training, Vermont, 1994

Political Organizing:

*Santa Cruz Service Corps* – 1999-2000 - Coordinated public and political support and camping facilities for group of homeless people who did volunteer work in the community while supporting each other in sobriety.

*Santa Cruz Community Housing Land Trust* – 1999-2001 - Coordinated the writing of bylaws and establishment of a group dedicated to providing affordable home ownership opportunities.

*Santa Cruz Action Network* – 1998-2000 - Coordinated electoral campaign support and ongoing assistance to progressive elected officials.

*Montana People's Action* – 1996-1998 - Staffed a branch office that recruited grassroots leaders who worked for legal protections for mobile home owners and a welfare recipient's bill of rights.

*Kentuckians For The Commonwealth* – 1993-1994 - Conducted research, prepared informational materials and recruited grassroots lobbyists for a successful campaign to enhance legal protections for landowners threatened with unwanted oil and gas well drilling on their land.

*Citizens for a Permanent Greenbelt* – 1991 - Developed, with citizen activists and elected officials, a plan to bring open lands surrounding the city of Santa Cruz into public ownership.

*Green Party of California* – 1990-1992 - Organized and represented a 4-county region during the drive for ballot status. As a member of the statewide coordinating committee; maintained communications with other regions, hosted and facilitated state level plenary decision making sessions and coordinated the drafting of the party's bylaws.