CDFW, OPC & Strategic Earth Consulting
Kelp Restoration and Management Plan
KRMP Community Working Group Charter - Updated April 2026

I. Background

In California, bull kelp (*Nereocystis luetkeana*) and giant kelp (*Macrocystis pyrifera*) are foundational and iconic nearshore species forming the physical structure of productive and biodiverse habitats that provide a variety of ecological functions, ecosystem services, including economic benefits, and use and enjoyment by the public. Kelp loss in recent years due to changing oceanographic and ecological conditions has resulted in significant negative impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services, particularly for bull kelp in Mendocino and Sonoma counties, where dramatic declines have occurred outside of the range of normal variability starting in 2014. In response, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), in partnership with the Ocean Protection Council (OPC), has prioritized the development of a statewide, adaptive ecosystem-based Kelp Restoration and Management Plan (KRMP) for bull kelp and giant kelp. The KRMP will provide approaches for managing, protecting, and restoring kelp forests in the face of changing ocean conditions. The KRMP will include a cohesive kelp management strategy that consists of three core components: 1) a kelp harvest management framework and other Fishery Management Plan (FMP) elements required by the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) that the Kelp Enhanced Status Report informs, 2) an innovative framework for ecosystem-based management of kelp forest systems, and 3) a Restoration Toolkit. To successfully develop the KRMP and ensure it reflects the best available science and community perspectives consistent with the 2018 MLMA Master Plan for Fisheries, CDFW and OPC have convened a KRMP Community Working Group (Community Working Group). This document serves as the Community Working Group Charter, outlining its purpose, roles, and operational procedures.

II. Purpose and Charge

The Community Working Group is an informal advisory body composed of members of California Native American Tribes, stakeholders, and interested members of the public established to help inform the design and development of the KRMP.

III. Goals and Objectives

The goals of the Community Working Group are to advise on and inform the development of the core components of the KRMP through the following approaches:

- Improve public understanding of the current status of California's kelp resources and the state's management of kelp forests.
- Identify and explore kelp management elements (e.g., priorities, opportunities, challenges/concerns, innovations, strategies, management approaches) related to kelp management, including restoration, that support thriving, healthy, dynamic kelp ecosystems and are informed by the work conducted by the Science Advisory Team.
- Represent and communicate the perspectives and interests of respective constituencies, be available to constituencies between Community Working Group meetings, and keep constituents informed about the development of the KRMP, including discussions and recommendations, through various means of networking and engagement.
- Help identify communications channels, strategies, target audiences, known barriers, etc., to share information about the development of the KRMP and its progress.
- Develop a shared understanding of the need for and applicability of, specific management approaches.
- Review and provide feedback on interim draft documents.

IV. Composition & Roles

A. Composition: Community Working Group Membership

Participation in the Community Working Group was determined through a nomination process open to stakeholders, Tribal communities, and the public interested in engaging throughout the process. Members were invited to participate based on their working knowledge of the kelp resource, area of expertise, the community(s) they represent, communication skills, history of good working relationships with CDFW and OPC, and interest from prior outreach and engagement by CDFW and OPC. The Community Working Group will leverage the experiences, expertise, diversity of perspectives, and insights of all participants and the constituents they represent, as they are committed to the successful development of a statewide KRMP.

Individuals could nominate themselves or someone else to be part of the Community Working Group. Nomination submissions were received through a nomination form distributed to the public via CDFW's KRMP Webpage. Applicants were selected to serve on the Community Working Group by CDFW and OPC based on their knowledge of California's kelp ecosystems, their network of constituents, which sector they represent, their geographic region, and their ability to commit and work collaboratively with others on a multi-year process.

As needed, smaller subcommittees or breakout groups (e.g., bull kelp, giant kelp, geographic regions) may be convened to help advance discussions and optimize creativity on specific topics either during meetings, as breakout sessions, or between full Community Working Group meetings. Information and outputs from the subcommittee discussions will be brought back to the full Community Working Group for further deliberation. The Community Working Group may identify a liaison to help share information discussed by a subcommittee and ensure information is seamlessly shared with the full Community Working Group. The group will determine small group selection and identification of liaison roles.

Table 1. KRMP Community Working Group Members

Name	Affiliation	Species of Focus
Claire Arre	Marine Protected Area Collaborative Network	Giant Kelp
Capt. David Bacon	WaveWalker Charters, Coastal Conservation Association - California Chapter - Board of Directors	Both
Kathryn Beheshti	University of California, Santa Barbara	Giant Kelp
Doug Bush	The Cultured Abalone Farm LLC	Giant Kelp
Grant Downie	Commercial Sea Urchin Diver	Bull Kelp
Gary Fleener	Hog Island Oyster Company	Bull Kelp
Tom Ford	The Bay Foundation	Giant Kelp
Jan Freiwald	Reef Check	Both
Severino Gomes	Kashia Band of Pomo Indians	Bull Kelp
Peter Guinosso	Blue Harmony	Bull Kelp
Jacob Harris	Amah Mutsun Land Trust	Both

Rietta Hohman	Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (NOAA Affiliate)	Bull Kelp
James Jungwirth	Naturespirit Herbs LLC	Bull Kelp
MariaElena Lopez	Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation	Both
Tristin Anoush McHugh	The Nature Conservancy	Both
Tyler McKinney	Monterey Bay Scuba	Both
Anna Neumann	Noyo Harbor District	Bull Kelp
Andrea Paz-Lacavex	University of California, Santa Cruz	Both
Dave Rudie	California Sea Urchin Commission	Both
Marc Shargel	Living Sea Images	Both
Javier Silva	Sherwood Valley-Noyo Pomo	Both
Jessica Gravelle	Trinidad Rancheria	Bull Kelp
Patrick Webster	Underwater photo videographer and marine science communicator	Both

B. Roles

- **Community Working Group Members**: Members will review materials in advance of scheduled Community Working Group meetings and come prepared to share their personal and community-informed insights and perspectives to make recommendations to inform the KRMP. Members are "key communicators," meaning they are expected to share information with their peers and within their broader community network. They are also expected to represent their communities by sharing their communities' perspectives, interests, and feedback. If members believe their role/responsibilities in the Community Working Group no longer align with the value they experience in the group (e.g., monetary, information gathering, relationship building, etc.), please reach out to noelia@strategicearth.com with your concerns.
    - **Alternates**: An alternate may be identified if a member cannot attend a meeting. CDFW, OPC, and the member will work to identify an alternate. Alternates must be identified no less than 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Should an alternate be identified, they must follow meeting agreements and procedures and share information discussed with the member. Upon approval by CDFW and OPC, alternates can attend meetings and represent members case-by-case. Community Working Group members agree that alternates may not attend more meetings than members. Alternates are permitted to vote in the member's absence.
- **Agencies**: CDFW and OPC will support the planning and administration of the Community Working Group. They will provide information to help inform the development of Community Working Group recommendations. CDFW and OPC will review and consider the recommendations from the Community Working Group for incorporation into the KRMP. CDFW, and the Fish and Game Commission ultimately decide when and how those recommendations may be incorporated into the KRMP.
- **Facilitator**: Strategic Earth will support the Community Working Group and agencies as a third-party, neutral facilitator. Strategic Earth will:
    - Facilitate and coordinate Community Working Group meetings, develop agendas, take notes, and track the follow-up steps from meetings.

- Ensure members have access to available information, identify areas of agreement, and advance discussions promptly.
- Ensure members meet roles, expectations, responsibilities, and task deadlines.
- Facilitate communication between members when disagreements and conflicts arise.
- Conduct direct outreach to Community Working Group participants before and between meetings to help understand member needs and priorities and support constructive meetings.
- Develop high-level meeting summaries following each Community Working Group meeting with guidance from members to share with them and post on CDFW's webpage, as appropriate.
- Develop a recommendations summary with guidance from the Community Working Group identifying recommendations for the KRMP.

C. Procedures

All Community Working Group meetings will be under third-party, neutral facilitation provided by Strategic Earth Consulting. Community Working Group meetings will be informed by an agenda as put forth by the facilitator in consultation with CDFW and OPC. Anticipated action items will be clearly agendized. Meetings are expected to be closed to the public, and recordings may be made available to the public upon request following the meetings for those interested in the KRMP development process. Members are expected to share information with the communities they represent, including meeting summaries and some meeting materials.

A. Process for Input, Recommendations, and Advancing Ideas

- Community Working Group Members are invited to share ideas, suggestions, comments, and questions with the facilitators regarding the KRMP during and between meetings. Facilitators will share this information with agencies as it comes in.
    - Community Working Group feedback will be carefully considered and evaluated by the agencies for incorporation into the development of the KRMP.
- Ideas will be shared with the public, Community Working Group, CDFW, and OPC.
    - All recommendation(s) will be captured in a summary report that the Community Working Group will review within a set timeframe, after which time it will be submitted to CDFW and OPC after completing each Community Working Group meeting.
    - Meeting summaries and/or reports will be made available to the public online, shared via the Community Working Group's email list, and communicated to other key audiences identified by the Community Working Group.
- The decision-making procedures that the Community Working Group will use to advance ideas include consensus methods that may be used to enhance recommendations, which might otherwise be limited to majority rule outcomes. Tools such as Robert's rules, motions, and other formal procedures may be used at the discretion of the Community Working Group.
- **Administrative decisions** about the daily activities of the Community Working Group (including but not limited to logistics, meeting dates and times, agenda revisions, schedules, etc.) will be made on a *simple majority vote* of all members present at a given meeting.
- **Recommendation decisions** about the KRMP (including but not limited to topics requested by OPC and CDFW and other topics that the Community Working Group chooses to address) will require a *2/3*

majority of Community Working Group Members present during the meeting (i.e., two-thirds affirmatives across those present when a vote is taken) to reach consensus where possible. Minority opinion(s) with support from two or more members will also be forwarded with any recommendations. If consensus cannot be achieved, the majority of decision-making procedures will forward a recommendation.

- "Consensus with accountability" procedures will be used. This means that members must try to reach a consensus while always supporting and expressing their and their constituency's interests. If a member cannot support an option or recommendation, they are responsible for proposing an alternative that legitimately attempts to achieve their interest and the goals of the Community Working Group.
- Outcomes from voting procedures will be recorded in the meeting summaries, which are made publicly available. Upon reaching at least two-thirds of the affirmative votes of all members, that recommendation will be forwarded.
- Minimum required attendance for a vote to take place is three-quarters of the Community Working Group to ensure representation across interests. All majority recommendation rules will apply if three-quarters of the Community Working Group or more members are present.

- Voting and Straw Polls
  - Community Working Group may use straw polls to assess the degree of preliminary support for an idea before it is submitted as a formal recommendation for final consideration/voting. Members may indicate only tentative approval for a preliminary recommendation without fully committing to its support. Straw Polls will include subsequent work by the Community Working Group to revise the recommendation and prepare it for a final vote.
  - Prior to a vote commencing, a member must make a motion with another member providing a second to request a vote. The facilitation team will work with the Community Working Group to ensure sufficient discussion has taken place prior to the vote occurring.
  - The Community Working Group will use the following three levels to indicate a Member's degree of approval and support for any recommendation or decision being considered and to determine the degree of consensus.
    - Thumbs Up: I think this recommendation is the best choice of the options available to us.
    - Thumbs Sideways: I can accept the recommendation, although I do not necessarily support it and propose an alternative. This level will only be used for straw polls.
    - Thumbs Down: I disagree with the recommendation. I need to block its adoption and propose an alternative.
    - Abstention: Sometimes, a pending decision may be infeasible for a Member to weigh in. Examples could include but not be limited to a Member not getting a consensus of their constituents and therefore not being able to offer a proposal or opinion and other similar conditions.

- The goal is for all members to be in the 'Thumbs Up' or Thumbs Sideways' levels of agreement. The Community Working Group will be considered to have reached a consensus if all members are at those two levels. The Community Working Group will be considered to have reached a majority if two-thirds (13) members are at those two levels. If any Member is at a 'Thumbs Down' level, that Member must provide a counter proposal that legitimately attempts to achieve their interest and the interests of the other members. Members who abstain from particular recommendations are encouraged to explain why abstention is in their best interest.

- Final votes will be taken via roll call. Each member's vote will be captured and shared in the public-facing summary, including their names.

- In the event of disagreements, the Community Working Group, in consultation with the facilitation team, will decide how best to move forward. For example, an additional discussion may be needed to help understand unresolved concerns before proceeding; the group may benefit from creating additional options, or the question may be set aside and addressed later.

To reach a majority or consensus, all voices will be heard, and creative solutions will be sought to resolve issues and craft options that encompass the diversity of viewpoints. During reaching a consensus, a "minority" view or views may become apparent. The Community Working Group will seek to address and acknowledge minority viewpoints that have been expressed. The facilitation team will try to follow up with Community Working Group participants on consensus-based actions (i.e., phone calls) to uphold inclusivity.

B. Attendance, Time Commitment, and Expectations for Community Working Group Members

The Community Working Group meetings will be scheduled to accommodate members' availability and maximize total attendance to the extent possible. It is anticipated that there will be six 4-hour Zoom meetings, including one orientation/kick-off Zoom meeting, and one 1-2 day in person meeting between 2023-2025, to inform the KRMP. Additional ad-hoc meetings, including subcommittee meetings, may be scheduled as agreed to by the group, CDFW, and OPC.

Call-in information, meeting agenda, and meeting materials will be circulated to Community Working Group Members before meetings with adequate time to review by members. Members are encouraged to attend all meetings, allocate time to read materials, and prepare for discussions before each meeting.

Community Working Group Members are expected to serve to their best ability. If a Community Working Group member misses a meeting, they may be permitted to send an alternate (upon written approval from CDFW, OPC, and the facilitator) to participate in their place. The facilitator will address situations in which a member misses multiple meetings. Regardless of attendance, all members will be expected to arrive at meetings prepared and with a shared understanding of previous Community Working Group conversations. Meeting time will not be spent providing background on previously discussed items. Members and alternates are expected to be fully educated by each other following each meeting attended.

C. Meeting Agreements

Community Working Group Members agree to:

- Participate in each meeting prepared to discuss agenda items constructively. This includes reviewing materials and information distributed in advance of the meeting/conference call, connecting with the facilitators or agencies to talk through questions or concerns, and soliciting input from constituents between meetings;

- Arrive promptly to all meetings, stay for the duration of the entire meeting, and inform the facilitator in advance to leave early or if your Alternate will be attending in your place;
- Approach discussions from a place of diversity and inclusion, considering the voices and perspectives of each Member's respective constituencies and/or organizations;
- Focus the discussion on strategies and solutions that move the conversation forward and avoid revisiting agreements and/or topics that have been addressed by the group (or agencies) previously;
- Listen for understanding, acknowledge and seek clarification of others' perspectives and verify assumptions, and openly discuss issues with others who hold diverse views;
- Be present - minimize actions that could distract discussions (e.g., turn cell phones to silent, remain on mute, etc.). If meeting attendee behavior becomes distracting to members, those members should speak with the facilitator to intervene;
- When necessary, identify any personal/professional conflicts of interest (e.g., financial) related to any subject of discussion and/or recommendation-making;
- Members will not work at cross-interests with the goals and objectives of the Community Working Group; and
- Personal attacks will not be tolerated.

If any members of the Community Working Group are unable to adhere to the standards and rules outlined in this charter, te KRMP Project Team may revoke their membership on the Community Working Group at any time.

D. Communications: Protocols for Information Sharing

Community Working Group Members, Strategic Earth, CDFW, and OPC are committed to transparency and open lines of communication. The Community Working Group, with support from the facilitator, will co-create protocols for communications and information sharing to identify how/when information is shared and will work to share materials externally through unified communications and messaging. Community Working Group Members will also help liaise and share information about the KRMP from the agencies with their peers and through their networks. CDFW and OPC communications will emphasize that while the Community Working Group makes recommendations, CDFW and the Fish and Game Commission ultimately decide when and how those recommendations may be incorporated into management measures. Public summaries of Community Working Group meetings and recommendations will be available online through CDFW's website.

Community Working Group participants may provide their perspectives to peers, media, etc., as individuals but may not speak on behalf of the full Community Working Group; such communication will not be considered a Working Group product. Any correspondence, reports, or other written documents developed on behalf of the full Community Working Group that constitutes a "Community Working Group product" will be shared with the facilitation team for final approval prior to circulating publicly. Public summaries of full Community Working Group deliberations and outcomes will be available on the KRMP website. Community Working Group members are requested not to broadly circulate products in development and wait until the final product is available for public posting.

E. Travel Reimbursements

Limited travel reimbursements are available and intended to provide financial support for participating in the Community Working Group. These funds are prioritized for Community Working Group Members who do not receive travel reimbursements or wages from their place of employment for attending Community Working

Group in-person meetings. Members must submit a request for funding support via email up to seven (7) days following a scheduled meeting to noelia@strategicearth.com. Funding will be distributed via mailed check approximately two weeks after scheduled meetings.

F. Charter Amendments

Community Working Group Members may amend this Charter by following the decision-making guidelines and proposing amendments during a meeting. The proposal will be agendized for discussion and possible action at the next meeting.

Updates & Amendments Made To This Charter

Date	Update
January 22, 2024	Updated the membership table to change Claire Arre's affiliation from Orange County Coastkeeper to the Marine Protected Area Collaborative Network.
February 5, 2024	Updated the membership table to include Jacob Harris (Amah Mutsun Land Trust).
November 14, 2024	Updated the membership table to remove Alyssa Bellamy (Bamboo Reef Dive Centers), and include MariaElena Lopez (Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation) and Tyler McKinney (Monterey Bay Scuba). Updated the *Attendance, Time Commitment, and Expectations for Community Working Group Members* section to reflect changes in the number of virtual meetings from four to six.
February 6, 2025	Updated membership table to remove a CWG Member who did not want to continue to be associated with the KRMP CWG process.
April 8, 2026	Updated membership table to remove Joshua Russo (Waterman's Alliance) and add Pete Guinosso (Blue Harmony)