

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

Public Comments Relative to the Round 3 MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group Marine Protected Area Proposal

Comments submitted through October 20, 2010

Notes on this Document

This document contains public comments relative to the Round 3 Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) North Coast Regional Stakeholder group (NCRSG) Marine Protected Area (MPA) Proposal, as submitted through an online form.

Each submitted comment is presented in this document in chronological order and with headers reflecting the field into which each portion of the comment was placed. If a field was left blank in the online form, the field name is not included in this document.

Comment Received: 9/29/2010 13:14:49

First and Last Name: Tom Peters City: Eureka

Comments Specific to an MPA

MPA Name: Northern California

MPA Comments:

As I have said many times, rarely have I seen so much wasted human effort, wasted paper, and wasted resources that should have been used for actual management and enforcement to achieve such minimal and questionable ends.

Having made my opinion clear on the entire MLPA process, I will offer my support for the Northern California Stakeholders Unified Plan as presented to the BRTF, the one that they all compromised to agree on. It has no more value than any other but has the virtue of being minimally damaging to tribes, fishermen, and other coastal users.

Samoa SMCA neglects to allow gathering of sandcrabs and sandworms which people commonly use as bait for Redtail Surfperch (an allowed fishery).

Amounts actually gathered of either species represent a tiny fraction of the population and represent NO threat whatsoever.

Comments Related to Overall MPA Proposal

What you have is one side that has been unable to demonstrate any benefit whatsoever from MPAs and another side that is trying to minimize the actual damage they will do to the Northcoast economy. The fact that they found a compromise is amazing and you should seize on it as the least contentious and likely the only workable plan you're liable to see.

I still maintain that Fish & Game is responsible for managing our resources and has done an admirable job without

General Comments

I have a HUGE problem with special allowances and openings for Native Americans that are not available to other citizens. This is not in any way opposed to Native Americans use of the MPA areas. It is an objection to singling out a special class of citizens and bestowing rights upon them that the rest of us cannot enjoy. I was recently told that our city water department CANNOT offer a special rate to Seniors under State law, thereby creating a special class. This looks like the same thing. I believe the answer is to let F&G do its job, go with the closures we have now, at least until a real need can be demonstrated for more, and quit wasting so much time and money when we have little of either to spare.

Comment Received: 9/29/2010 19:58:01

First and Last Name: lonnie dollarhide City: eureka

Comments Specific to an MPA

MPA Name: north coast region

MPA Comments:

We are getting close to the end game here. This whole ordeal has been nothing but a big mess. To this day I'm still asking myself why we really need MPA here on the north coast. I cant come up with no real answers here. I have said all along that the PFMC & Mother nature , takes good care of what we do here. We have MPA areas here without declaring these areas MPA. The reason is, their to far to travel in a boat. And we don't need to go that far to catch a fish. Trust me, their is no decline in the fish population here on the north coast. Throughout the years here on the north coast the fish population has grown, not declined. We love our coast here, and don't want it to be taken away from us for no real reason. For a lot of us here, fishing is our life , that's all we have, DONT TAKE IT FROM US.....Thanks.

Comment Received: 10/1/2010 16:57:49

First and Last Name: matt mattison City: Monte rio

Comments Specific to an MPA

MPA Comments:

Ms. Cindy Gustafson, Chair
MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Gustafson,

I strongly urge the Blue Ribbon Task Force to accept the NCRSG unified proposal without changes. Any alterations to the proposal could undermine community support and the significant efforts made to reach consensus and compromise by the NCRSG.

Thank you,

Matt Mattison
Monte rio ca.

Comments Related to Overall MPA Proposal

They did one hell of a good job the RSG Brandi Easter and company ! now just need the BRTF to go with it !!!!!

General Comments

The process is corrupted with private agenda's and being pushed through by a corrupted governor with his own vision and legacy he wants to leave behind. Thank god for a few hard working individuals that are standing up against the BRTF and the DFG and the state for us the little guy the sportmen or sportswomen.

Comment Received: 10/1/2010 17:24:23

First and Last Name: Randall Ray Nelums City: San Lorenzo

Comments Related to Overall MPA Proposal

Please approve the NCRSG unified proposal. This the best option developed by people that really know the area. Too second guess their opinion would seem foolish.

Comment Received: 10/4/2010 13:43:53

First and Last Name: Michael Grummell City: Santa Rosa

Comments Specific to an MPA

MPA Comments:

Ms. Cindy Gustafson, Chair
MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Gustafson,

I strongly urge the Blue Ribbon Task Force to accept the NCRSG unified proposal without changes. Any alterations to the proposal could undermine community support and the significant efforts made to reach consensus and compromise by the NCRSG.

Thank you,

Michael V. Grummell
Santa Rosa CA "

Comment Received: 10/5/2010 17:50:33

First and Last Name: David Gaon City: Ukiah

Comments Specific to an MPA

MPA Comments:

Ms. Cindy Gustafson, Chair
MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Gustafson,

I strongly urge the Blue Ribbon Task Force to accept the NCRSG unified proposal without changes. Any alterations to the proposal could undermine community support and the significant efforts made to reach consensus and compromise by the NCRSG.

The north coast area is an economically depressed area. The coastal communities are dependent on tourism for their survival. Much of this tourist money that is brought into the coastal communities comes from diving and fishing. Money is so tight for these people that even losing a few dollars affects them greatly.

With any major drops in income from the abalone divers or fisherman due to a MLPA can mean that people are not going to be able to pay their mortgage or afford to keep a roof over their kid's heads.

Between the Narravo River and MacKerricher State Park there are some people who are almost 100% dependent on the income from the abalone divers and fisherman. Albion and Casper are such towns.

There are some small businesses that make their living harvesting kelp; these people also have no other way to make a living.

To close down any of the ocean between the Narravo River and MacKerricher State Park would lead great financial hardships

for the people living on the coast. These people have no other way to make a living.

Both the Albion estuary and the Big River estuary at Mendocino have an invasive species established in them. This invasive species is the European Green Crab. This crab eats the

young Dungeness crabs as well as all mollusks and small fish. This crab is only controlled by people who dive and fish for Dungeness crabs in these estuaries. When they get one in their nest or traps they kill them. The divers who dive for Dungeness crabs kill the Green crabs by the hundreds.

If these estuaries are shut down to crabbing the European Green Crab will populate the estuaries and bays unchecked destroy a very valuable ecosystem and nursery for Dungeness crabs and several fish species.

The Mendocino coast line has many area that can be made into a pristine ocean parks that will set asides large tracks of ocean without destroying anyone's livelihood.

It's very difficult for people to make a living in the coastal communities. Please do not force many of these people into bankruptcy.

Thank you,

David Gaon

Comment Received: 10/6/2010 9:50:41

First and Last Name: Claudia Hillary City: Point Arena

Comments Specific to an MPA

MPA Comments:

RESOLUTION NO. 2010-13 Resolution of Support for the 3rd Round Unified MPA Array
October 1, 2010

WHEREAS, the City of Point Arena recognizes the need for responsible Marine Resource Management; and

WHEREAS, the MPAs already approved during the North Central Coast MLPA process include an area of over 20 square miles within a ten mile radius of Arena Cove; and

WHEREAS, the City's main income for maintaining and operating the Arena Cove Harbor facilities comes from fishing activities; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the City of Point Arena, the Port of Arena Cove, local citizens, local fishermen and sea food gatherers, local tribal members, and all mariners in general: that no new MPAs should be added to the coast, estuaries or bays within a distance of 31 miles northward from the Point Arena SMR, and not closer than ten miles to any of the historic neighboring Ports of Albion River and Noyo River; and

WHEREAS, the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) calls for the reexamination and redesign of California's Marine Protected Area (MPA) system to increase its coherence and effectiveness at protecting the state's marine life, habitat, and ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, it is consistent with the MLPA and good public policy to redesign California's MPA system in a manner that gives meaningful consideration to the sustainability of ecological, economic, cultural, and social systems; and

WHEREAS, North Coast fisheries are currently sustainable or rebuilding under existing regulations ; and

WHEREAS, recent scientific research has demonstrated that the California Current Ecosystem is one of the most conservatively managed ecosystems in the world ; and

WHEREAS, Mendocino County, Humboldt County and Del Norte County are classified as vulnerable to changes in fisheries management measures due to factors such as high economic dependence on fishing, high community isolation, limited industry diversification, high unemployment, and high poverty rates; and

WHEREAS, the MLPA Initiative Regional Stakeholder Group unified during Round Three of the MLPA Initiative process to develop a consensus based MPA array (Unified MPA Array) that meets the goals of the MLPA while minimizing impacts to social, cultural, and economic systems; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that, due to significantly distinct ecological, social, cultural and economic conditions in the North Coast, the Unified MPA Array does not precisely meet all the guidelines established by the MLPA Initiative Science Advisory Team, yet represents an MPA network consistent with the spirit of those guidelines and the goals and elements identified in the MLPA legislation; and

WHEREAS, the long term success of MPAs will require acceptance by local communities; and although many community members do not believe any new MPAs are warranted, the Unified MPA Array represents a compromise acceptable to North Coast residents, including recreational fishermen, commercial fishermen and conservation advocates; and

WHEREAS, California Indian Tribes and Tribal Communities are traditional and active stewards of marine ecosystems, and their continued gathering and use of marine resources is an ongoing and essential part of their culture and survival.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City of Point Arena that we strongly urge the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force and the California Fish and Game Commission to support and adopt the Unified MPA Array developed by the Regional Stakeholder Group during Round 3 of the North Coast MLPA Initiative process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT if the Blue Ribbon Task Force makes the decision to redesign the Unified MPA Array contrary to the recommendation of the City of Point Arena, then the redesign must be conducted in collaboration with North Coast Regional Stakeholders. Regional Stakeholders have worked for months to design a single cohesive array that incorporates the unique ecological, social, cultural and economic conditions of the North Coast within the framework of the statewide MLPA Initiative Guidelines and MLPA legislation. Because the alteration of any single element of the Unified MPA Array has the potential to undermine its cohesiveness, collaboration with Regional Stakeholders and local communities regarding any change to the Unified MPA Array is essential to retaining both its integrity and the support of local communities, factors that are vital to the long term success of the MPA system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT any approved MPA array design should allow traditional, non-commercial, gathering, subsistence, harvesting, ceremonial and stewardship activities by California Tribes and Tribal Communities. Passed and adopted this 1st day of October, 2010, by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Councilmembers Ingham, Oropeza, Riboli, Sinnott

NOES:

ABSENT: Councilmember Riehl

Lauren Sinnott, MAYOR

ATTEST: Claudia B. Hillary, CITY CLERK/ADMINISTRATOR

Comments Related to Overall MPA Proposal

[The resolution submitted above as pertaining to a specific MPA was also submitted in its entirety as pertaining to the overall MPA proposal.]

General Comments

[The resolution submitted above as pertaining to a specific MPA was also submitted in its entirety as a general comment.]

Comment Received: 10/7/2010 13:55:38 and 10/15/2010 22:22:11

First and Last Name: Steven Krupp City: Eureka

Comments Specific to an MPA

MPA Name: NCRSG PROPOSAL / North Coast Unified Proposal

MPA Comments:

Comments Related to Overall MPA Proposal

Ms. Cindy Gustafson, Chair
MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Gustafson,

I strongly urge the Blue Ribbon Task Force to accept the NCRSG unified proposal without changes. Any alterations to the proposal could undermine community support and the significant efforts made to reach consensus and compromise by the NCRSG.

Thank you,

Steven P. Krupp
Eureka CA 95503

Comment Received: 10/7/2010 21:37:57

First and Last Name: bob bachmann City: santa clara

Comments Related to Overall MPA Proposal

Dear Chair Gustafson,

I strongly urge the Blue Ribbon Task Force to accept the NCRSG unified proposal without changes. Any alterations to the proposal could undermine community support and the significant efforts made to reach consensus and compromise by the NCRSG.

Thank you,
bob Bachmann
santa clara, CA 95051

Comment Received: 10/11/2010 12:42:56

First and Last Name: CAROL ROSE City: South San Francisco

Comments Specific to an MPA

MPA Name: North Coast

MPA Comments:

UNDERWATER SOCIETY OF AMERICA
PO Box 628, Daly City CA 94015
650 583 8492/fax 650 583 6184
underwater-society.org

11 October 2010

Ms. Cindy Gustafson, Chair
MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force, Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 9th Street #1311
Sacramento CA 95814

To: Ms. Gustafson
From: Carol Rose, President USOA
Re: NCRSG Unified Proposal

Ms. Gustafson,

We in the skin/scuba diving community have closely followed the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative from the very beginning. The Underwater Society is the national organization for recreational skin/scuba divers. It has been in existence since 1959, and approximately one third of our members live and dive in California. USOA is a non profit tax exempt corporation devoted to marine ecology and underwater sports. I am a native Californian living in San Mateo County - a certified diver since 1973, past president of the CenCal Dive Council and chair of the Conference of California Councils - the three diving councils in California.

We have had at least one member on each and every Regional Stakeholder Group. We watched the first group meetings with dismay; I attended one fairly reasonable meeting in Half Moon Bay. Then came the hiatus – it was very welcome.

The now finishing second process has made great strides and improvements with each section. It is a shame we cannot now go back and start over with what was learned especially with the absolutely wonderful and miraculous efforts of the north group. A single agreed upon proposal! No one would ever have believed it.

The time, efforts, community support, stakeholder commitments to achieve consensus and compromise are phenomenal. They worked for months and spent literally hundreds of hours in many many meetings. It is a remarkable and in some way unbelievable achievement.

Now it is time for the Blue Ribbon Task Force to step up with the same mindset, attitude and way of thinking. The proposal is not exactly perfect, but it is a consensus, a unified proposal. Please do not nit pick any scientific discrepancies and approve the MPA vision for the North Coast as proposed.

Sincerely,

Carol Rose, President

croseusoa@aol.com

General Comments

It took 3 sessions to get it right - too bad we can't go back and start over.

Comment Received: 10/14/2010 16:48:24

First and Last Name: Anna Weinstein City: Albany

Comments Related to Overall MPA Proposal

October 13, 2010

To: MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force

Dear Task Force Members,

On behalf of Audubon California's 150,000 members and supporters, we congratulate the North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group on its Unified Proposal and appreciate this opportunity to express support for the Proposal and linked set of Special Closures.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPAs)

The Unified Proposal comprises 13.1% of the study region, with less than 6% of this subset receiving moderate to high protection. This is a weak result compared with results the central, north central, and pending south coast network, in terms of overall protection, habitat representation, and size and spacing considerations as described in the state's Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas, and gives us serious reservations about the potential for the Unified Proposal to fulfill the goals of the Marine Life Protection Act for the North Coast Study Area.

We are, however, in qualified support of the MPA network in the Unified Proposal, because it represents "compromises that have been reached within communities and within the NCRSG...this cohesiveness, and recognition of the compromises that have been made, is essential to retaining the Unified MPA Proposal's integrity and support by local communities ... the benefits of adopting the Unified MPA Proposal cannot be overstated." We agree with this conclusion, and urge the BRTF to endorse the will of the Stakeholder Group by approving the Unified Proposal without modification.

General Comments

TRIBAL ACCESS

The question of the consistency and reconciliation between non-commercial Tribal use of areas protected through the MLPA, and the California Code of Regulations has vexed the North Coast process from the beginning. We agree with the Stakeholder Group and the BRTF that Tribal use should not be impeded by MLPA implementation. These uses have co-existed with North Coast ecosystems for thousands of years and remain entirely consistent with resource protection by almost any scientific definition. We also share the frustration of many on the Stakeholder Group – from all camps – that the State has failed to propose a creative solution to this issue which has served to undermine the process. We trust that in the near future the State will develop a legal or legislative solution that retains all features of the Unified Proposal and allows Tribal access to MPAs and Special Closures for ceremonial and other non-commercial uses.

AUDUBON CONTRIBUTIONS TO MLPA IMPLEMENTATION

Audubon chapter members will provide in-kind support for the implementation of the Network and Special Closures through research, restoration activities and public education, just as they do in other parts of the state.

For example, this past year Redwood Region Audubon, along with three other chapters around the state, completed the project "Share the Shore with Snowy Plovers" which engaged local students in an on-the-ground project that has yielded measurable benefits for this endangered marine bird. Also, Mendocino Coast Audubon's Save our Shorebirds program has been monitoring shorebird distribution and abundance at key sites for four consecutive years. The program could be expanded or modified to monitor new estuarine or beach MPAs. Mendocino Coast Audubon also helped BLM staff prepare a brochure highlighting points of interest, resource protection initiatives, and historical facts for visitors who drive the Mendocino Coast.

Thank you for your continued dedication and service to the Marine Life Protection Act. We look forward to your endorsement of the Unified Proposal and Special Closures, and to collectively supporting their implementation well into the future.

Sincerely,

Anna Weinstein

Seabird Conservation Coordinator

Comment Received: 10/15/2010 13:45:33

First and Last Name: Jon Sears City: Emeryville

Comments Related to Overall MPA Proposal

I am writing to comment on the overall process of creating MPAs on the North Coast.

I am an urchin diver who is affected by this process and will comment that I have seen this process take off and travel with a mind of its own (apparently) and with little regard to the input many of my fellow fishermen and watermen.

The need for and usefulness of these areas should be questioned and I feel resisted because they strike at people who are politically useful (and reasonably powerless) to achieve aims that are unproven (and un-American), namely closing our access to our Ocean.

I am all about improving our Oceans for all life forms and am sure our efforts are better spent identifying and controlling forms of pollution which have serious effects on all life in and on the Sea."

Comment Received: 10/18/2010 10:01:14

First and Last Name: Allen Sansano City: San Jose

Comments Related to Overall MPA Proposal

On behalf of NorCalKayakAnglers.com, a community with 2199 members, we support the unified array as put forward by the RSG. We believe the balanced approach of the unified array is in the best interest of both the resource and the community. We do not support any modification to the unified array unless the RSG as a whole approves of said modifications.

Sincerely,

Allen Sansano
Director of Fisheries Affairs, NorCalKayakAnglers.com

Comment Received: 10/18/2010 10:26:08

First and Last Name: Mark Taylor City: Fort Bragg

Comments Related to Overall MPA Proposal

An ongoing theme throughout the North Coast MPA process has been one of fear and mistrust. Many were brought to the table only by the threat that either we draw the lines or someone else does. Discussions with members involved in other regions were rife with tales of perceived double crosses and last minute changes. Questionable F & G Board shuffling and the composition of the Blue Ribbon Task Force has only increased the suspicion. It looked to be a long and contentious and unsatisfying negotiation.

But we're a different region up here, than those that have done this before. Unified by a mutual regard for both the ocean and the community, the Regional Stakeholders came together and hammered out a plan, a single plan, that they feel satisfies the science guidelines and true intent of the MLPA. It's a strong array and I strongly urge the BLTF to adopt this proposal as is.

Everyone who participated in this process is invested now in its outcome. The cooperation of the local community and respect for the boundaries drawn is vital for any success the MLPA wishes to have. Any last minute changes will foul the waters and whatever trust you may have hoped to gain will be lost forever. This is a rare opportunity in community process to do some good and prove the doubters wrong. Approve the Round Three Proposal. The Whole North Coast is watching you."

Comment Received: 10/18/2010 18:26:10

First and Last Name: Joel Greenberg City: Valley Village

Comments Related to Overall MPA Proposal

I strongly urge the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force to support and recommend the Unified MPA Array developed by the Regional Stakeholder Group during Round 3 of the North Coast MLPA Initiative process as their Preferred Alternative without modification.

CEQA requires at least one additional alternative besides the No Action Alternative and the Preferred Alternative. I strongly urge the BRTF to leave the task of developing any additional alternative(s) to the Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Game Commission.

These two recommendations are sufficient to fulfill the BRTF's charge as an advisory body under the MOU, while fully respecting the work of the Regional Stakeholder Group and the regulatory authority and responsibilities of the Department and Commission."

General Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments via this form.

-Joel

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

Public Comments Relative to the Round 3 MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group Special Closures Recommendation

Comments submitted through October 20, 2010

Note on this Assembled Comments Document

This document contains public comments relative to the Round 3 Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) North Coast Regional Stakeholder group (NCRSG) Special Closures Recommendation, as submitted through an online form.

Only one comment was submitted through the online form specifically about special closures, which is presented in this document. The same commenter also submitted comments about the Round 3 NCRSG Marine Protected Area Proposal, which are presented in a separate compilation of public comments.

Comment Received: 10/14/2010 16:48:24

First and Last Name: Anna Weinstein City: Albany

Comments Related to Special Closures

Name of Special Closure(s):

SPECIAL CLOSURES

Special closures are crucial to the viability of seabird and marine mammal populations in the north coast. Breeding seabirds and marine mammals are prone to disturbance and are known to abandon their nests after as little as one disturbance event from boats, foot traffic or aircraft. This susceptibility to disturbance is the rationale for a 300-foot closure around the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge; the six special closures recently put into place for the North Central Coast MLPA study region; and, for the initiation of the Seabird Protection Network of the Gulf of the Farallones National Wildlife Refuge.

Few areas in California are in more need of these safeguards than the North Coast. Its abundant rocks and islets supports 40% of California's breeding seabirds, over 500,000 individuals. Among the 13 species breeding here are California Species of Special Concern Fork-tailed Storm-petrel, Cassin's Auklet and Tufted Puffin. Seabirds are an integral part of the marine ecosystem, bolster the quality of life for residents, and contribute tourist revenue to the region. The North Coast's rocks and islets comprise most of the California Coastal National Monument, managed by the Bureau of Land Management, which ranks seabird conservation as one of its top priorities for the Monument."

In May the Special Closures Work Group, comprised of a healthy cross-section of interests, including Tribes and fishing, agreed to forward 10 sites for introduction to the larger Stakeholder Group. These sites were selected for their high importance to breeding seabirds and/or marine mammals as well as their negligible impacts on recreational or commercial fishing access or revenues. Each site had been identified as a seabird or marine mammal hotspot by the North Coast Science Advisory Team. Of the 10 sites, Castle Rock, False Klamath Complex, and Trinidad Complex are considered globally significant colonies in that they support 10,000-250,000 breeding seabirds.

At its final work session, the Stakeholder Group agreed to forward seven of the 10 sites to the BRTF. These seven comprise less than one-third of the important seabird colonies in the North Coast study area, as defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and would go far to safeguard the North Coast's magnificent marine bird life into the future. We strongly urge the BRTF to approve this set of closures without further modification.