



Initial Assessment of Q14 & Q16 of the 2025 MPA Petition Evaluation Framework

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INTRODUCTION

California's iconic 1,100-mile coastline provides immeasurable ecological, cultural, social, and economic value to residents and visitors. It provides a place for recreation, connection to nature, spiritual and traditional practices, and drives a thriving \$51 billion coastal economy that supports local jobs and businesses.

Acknowledging Historic Exclusion from the Coast

Tribes

All the lands, waters, and natural resources within the boundaries of what is now known as California, have been – and still are – stewarded by California Native American tribes and tribal people since time immemorial. Tribal expertise, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, tribal science, ceremonies, customs, and practices are tied to these places and are critical components of best available science used to steward the lands and waters.

The early decades of California's statehood were marked by widespread violence, exploitation, dispossession, and the attempted destruction of tribal communities. Today, many of the persistent inequitable conditions that tribal communities continue to experience are a direct result of the historical wrongs committed against California Native American tribes by the State of California.

Disadvantaged Communities

Although California has many policies and programs designed to increase access to the coast, history shows that access has not always been equitable. Throughout the twentieth century, discriminatory laws, policies, and practices also restricted coastal access for many minority communities. Both tribal communities and communities of color faced exclusionary zoning, racially restrictive covenants, intimidation, and violence that barred them from beaches, coastal resorts, and waterfront neighborhoods. Some beaches were designated explicitly as “whites only,” while others used targeted law enforcement to discourage minority families from gathering. These injustices were not isolated incidents but part of broader systems of segregation that shaped who could participate in coastal life and who was pushed away from it.

Historic inequalities, as well as California's growing population, changing demographics, socio-economic forces, judicial decisions, and policy choices have and continue to shape development patterns and population shifts that widen the disparity gap. The passage of the California Coastal Act and decades of advocacy have expanded coastal access but many low-income and minority communities continue to face significant barriers. This includes lack of transportation, lack of affordable accommodations, and illegal barriers to access such as fake no parking signs.

Understanding the history of exclusion along the coast is important as proposed changes to the marine protected areas (MPA) network are being considered.

History of MPA Planning Process

The creation of the MPA network we see today was initially not appropriately inclusive of California Native American tribes, despite their long history of use, protection, and stewardship of marine resources and interest in caring for coastal ecosystems. The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative was silent on tribes and the implementation process did not include a formal mechanism for tribal consultation and participation; it instead invited tribes to participate as stakeholders rather than as representatives of tribes. ([Berkey & Williams, 2019](#)) While the history of exclusion is not fully discussed in this analysis, it is important to acknowledge this history and attempt to include California Native American tribes throughout the current and future MPA process.

The MLPA Initiative planning process was not appropriately inclusive or welcoming of people of color. Although participation was open to all, the structure of the process did not include intentional outreach to marginalized coastal users, relied on stakeholder nominations without dedicated representation for underrepresented communities or communities of color in the process, and lacked outreach and engagement staffing, which made engagement inconsistent across the State. ([Sayce et. al., 2013](#)) As a result, early engagement with communities of color and other underrepresented communities was inconsistent across the State.

Addressing these historic imbalances in representation — and incorporation of equity considerations into management and decision-making — helps ensure the benefits of conservation are shared fairly for all Californians. Incorporating diverse perspectives strengthens public support, improves stewardship, and contributes to more resilient ecosystems. There are meaningful opportunities to

repair past harms, ensure appropriate avenues for formal tribal engagement, and build a process that is inclusive of and welcoming for communities of color. This document is meant to inform the Commission's decision making and does not make any conclusions on the petitions themselves.

BACKGROUND

Released in December 2022, the first [Decadal Management Review](#) (DMR) assessed the progress of the MPA network in meeting the goals of the MLPA and included [28 recommendations](#) to guide the next ten years of MPA management. In July 2023, in response to public interest, the California Fish and Game Commission (CFGF) agreed to accept public proposals submitted through its established regulatory change petition process, for potential adaptive management modifications to the MPA network. Twenty petitions were received in December 2023, including over 80 individual proposed actions. Ultimately, these petitions were sorted into Bin 1 and Bin 2 petitions. There were a total of five Bin 1 petitions that could be evaluated in the near term and met certain criteria. Decisions on the five Bin 1 petitions were made by CFGF in [December 2024](#). The 15 petitions not meeting those criteria were placed into Bin 2 to be evaluated in the longer term. Additionally, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) sorted the Bin 2 petitions into two groups: "Tribally-Led or Co-led Petitions," which were submitted by a California Native American tribe, representative designated by a tribe or tribal organization, or have a tribal co-sponsor, and "Other Petitions."

In August 2025, the CFGF approved an "[evaluation framework](#)" for the remaining 15 [Bin 2 Petitions](#), including the Tribally-led or co-led petitions. The evaluation framework included 18 questions, two of which relate to equity or an existing CFGF equity policy. These questions were added to reflect the commitments of CDFW and CFGF to improving access to marine resources for all Californians, increasing access for traditionally underserved and marginalized communities, and implementing and advancing the CFGF Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Policy.

- Question 14: Does the proposed change provide more equitable access opportunities (e.g., fishing, educational, and/or other recreational opportunities) for traditionally underserved or marginalized communities?
- Question 16: Is the proposed change consistent with the CFGF Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy?

CDFW completed and publicly released its evaluation and recommendation for the ten non-tribally led or co-led Bin 2 petitions. The evaluations were based on petition materials submitted in December 2023 and amendments received through March 14, 2025. Subsequent changes, improvements, or stakeholder engagement undertaken by petitioners after March 14, 2025 did not inform CDFW's evaluation. As outlined in the [Companion Document](#) for CDFW's Bin 2 evaluations and recommendations, CDFW originally determined that providing the level of evaluation Questions 14 and 16 and the relevant communities deserve would not be possible within the scope and timeline of the petition evaluations. However, per the request of the CFGC at a regional MPA petitions meeting in May 2026, this document is an initial assessment of Questions 14 and 16 to help inform Commission decisions on the Bin 2 petitions. CDFW staff, California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) staff, and California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) staff (hereby referred to collectively as, "staff") collaborated to conduct this assessment.

Evaluating the proposed actions in the petitions in context of whether they address equitable access (Question 14) and are consistent with the CFGC's JEDI Policy (Question 16) is only a first step to incorporating equity considerations into the adaptive management of the MPA networks. The State of California is committed to supporting the ongoing and future investments and initiatives to ensure equity is at the forefront of engagement, management, and decision-making processes.

Equity Analysis Considerations for Tribes

The state's current approach to defining environmental justice communities conflates California Native American tribes with disadvantaged communities. In these definitions, tribes are often considered disadvantaged communities, but some tribal representatives have expressed that this term "erodes the self-governing nature of [tribes]" ([Haaland & Ortiz, 2022](#)). Additionally, many existing mapping tools "do not provide data from tribal lands and various other local reporting metrics which are not included in census data. Tribes may not fully participate in census and environmental quality data gathering because of historical mistrust of governmental reporting methods, leading to the inability to provide clear metrics for third-party review" ([Haaland & Ortiz, 2022](#)). Evaluating tribes under the context of racial equity does not provide the level of engagement tribes deserve nor acknowledges their status as the original

stewards of the land and ocean. For these reasons, tribal lands and ancestral territories are not explicitly included in the analyses presented here. However, consultation with tribes will continue to provide an important venue for assessing how petitions may impact tribal access to the coast and ocean.

Pursuant to the [CNRA's Tribal Consultation Policy](#), California state agencies are directed to engage in early, often, and meaningful tribal consultations with tribes throughout the MPA process. [CDFW's Tribal Communication and Consultation Policy](#) reaffirms this process by working collaboratively, communicating effectively, and consulting with California Native American tribes. CDFW plans to update the Tribal Communication and Consultation Policy to align with CNRA's Tribal Consultation Policy in 2027.

Tribal Outreach and Consultation

From May 2024 to June 2026, CDFW provided regular updates on the status of the 2023 MPA petitions and petition evaluation process, offering opportunities to request consultations through email communications and mailed tribal notification letters, to the CDFW statewide tribal contact list. The CDFW tribal contact list includes over 400 individuals across the state who represent and/or work for a California Native American tribe that has been identified by the California Native American Heritage Commission for the purposes of cultural resource protection. Many inland tribes have cultural and historical ties to the coast, so inland tribes are also included in the outreach. A summary of outreach and engagement with tribes is included in the [Companion Document](#). To date, no tribes have requested formal consultation.

At its October 2026 meeting, the CFGC is scheduled to consider action on which petitions to grant and move forward for potential regulatory change. After the vote, there will be additional tribal outreach and consultation opportunities as part of the regulatory change process for any actions/petitions granted by the Commission.

APPROACH TO QUESTION 14 EQUITABLE ACCESS

Does the proposed change provide more equitable access opportunities (e.g., fishing, educational, and/or other recreational opportunities) for traditionally underserved or marginalized communities?

Equitable access to the coast and MPAs means something different for every community. For some, meaningful access is rooted in recreational opportunities, such as surfing, swimming, gathering with community, or simply experiencing the outdoor space. For others, the coast can provide for subsistence fishing or traditional food practices.

Defining Terms

Equitable Access

Under the [California Natural Resources Agency's Outdoors for All Strategy](#), "equitable access" is defined as "All people can experience and enjoy California's outdoors regardless of who they are or where they live. It also means that everyone can experience the outdoors in a way that is safe, welcoming, convenient, affordable, and culturally relevant." Equity can be defined in the context of social and racial equity, and means achieving fair outcomes for all groups, while fully acknowledging and addressing unequal starting points. When equity is achieved, no one factor, like race or zip code, can predict individual or community access to quality outdoor spaces ([Government Alliance on Race and Equity](#)).

Traditionally Underserved or Marginalized Communities

For purposes of this assessment, "traditionally underserved or marginalized communities" are defined as "disadvantaged or highly impacted communities" (DACs) as identified using [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#) and [Senate Bill 535](#) (SB535). CalEnviroScreen 4.0 and the SB 535 platform use a variety of environmental justice indicators to identify populations across the state that experience disproportionate environmental and socioeconomic burdens.

CalEnviroScreen 4.0 is a screening methodology that can be used to help identify California communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. [CalEnviroScreen 5.0](#) was released on July 1, 2026 and was not used in this assessment due to the release occurring after the assessment had commenced.

[SB 535](#) established initial requirements for minimum funding levels to "Disadvantaged Communities." The California Environmental Protection Agency formally designated four categories of geographic areas as disadvantaged:

1. Census tracts receiving the highest 25 percent of overall scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (1,984 tracts).

2. Census tracts lacking overall scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 due to data gaps, but receiving the highest 5 percent of CalEnviroScreen 4.0 cumulative pollution burden scores (19 tracts).
3. Census tracts identified in the 2017 DAC designation as disadvantaged, regardless of their scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (307 tracts).
4. Lands under the control of federally recognized Tribes. For purposes of this designation, a tribe may establish that a particular area of land is under its control even if not represented as such on CalEPA's DAC map and therefore should be considered a DAC by requesting a consultation with the CalEPA Deputy Secretary for Intergovernmental Relations at TribalAffairs@calepa.ca.gov.

Methods and Metrics Used

To assess how each petition may affect equitable access, staff compiled an inventory of relevant [demographic information, geographical socioeconomic indicators](#), and [coastal access data](#). Petitioners were encouraged, but not required, to engage with local communities prior to submitting their petitions, so localized needs for access are not captured in this assessment. Staff used existing statewide datasets to develop a snapshot of the current demographic, socioeconomic, and access landscape. The Future Opportunities section includes more discussion about data gaps and approaches for improving future analyses.

Petitions were reviewed using the following components:

1. **Identification of nearby disadvantaged communities**

The first step in determining which petitions would be included in the equitable access inventory was identifying whether proposed MPA changes were located within 10 miles of a disadvantaged or highly impacted community. “Disadvantaged or highly impacted communities” are defined above.

The proximity band chosen was a 10-mile radius around the proposed MPA change and only communities within census tracts identified with [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#) (>75 percentile or higher) or designated as disadvantaged under [SB 535](#) are included.

While Californians travel across the state to access coastal resources, proximity remains one of the strongest predictors of the frequency and regularity of coastal use. A 10-mile radius serves as a practical benchmark for identifying communities most likely to regularly access particular coastal areas for recreation, subsistence activities, exercise, cultural practices, or stewardship activities. In contrast, individuals living farther away may still visit coastal areas, but their use is generally less frequent and more destination-oriented. Therefore, while statewide access is an important consideration, we assessed populations within 10-miles of the coast since those communities are more likely to rely on and regularly engage with a particular coastal area.

After applying the 10-mile DAC filter, seven petitions qualified for further assessment. Appendix A provides the inventory for these seven petitions and presents the demographic and socioeconomic profile of the nearby DACs alongside indicators describing coastal access conditions for the beaches adjacent to the proposed MPA changes.

2. Demographic and socioeconomic profile of affected communities

After census tracts were identified through CalEnviroScreen 4.0, staff pulled demographics data from the census tracts within the 10-mile radius. CalEnviroScreen 4.0 demographic and socioeconomic census tract data originate from the U.S. Census Bureau. The demographic context helps clarify whether the petition may influence access opportunities for traditionally underserved groups.

Socioeconomic data, including educational attainment, linguistic isolation, and poverty, are also included in the profile of affected communities. These factors can influence a community's ability to understand regulatory processes, participate in MPA planning, and access the coast.

[Educational attainment](#) measures the highest level of education a person has completed. California has a high percentage of people without high school degrees compared to the rest of the United States, which makes education important to consider. Lower educational attainment can limit awareness of regulations governing activities like fishing.

[Linguistic isolation](#) is a term used by the U.S. Census Bureau for limited English-speaking households. More than 40% of Californians speak a language other than English at home. Linguistic isolation can make it difficult for residents to understand signage or opportunities for community input on MPA management.

[Poverty](#) is determined by the U.S. Census Bureau each year. It is based on the size of the household and the age of family members. If a person or family's total income before taxes is less than the poverty level, the person or family are considered in poverty. Poverty adds an additional barrier to accessing the coast or MPAs and can signify a potential need for subsistence fishing.

3. Coastal access points and amenities

Existing public coastal access points and associated amenities located within half a mile of the proposed MPA changes were identified, using the [California Coastal Access, Facilities, Amenities, and Parking Dashboard](#). This dashboard compiles statewide geospatial information on public coastal access locations and associated amenities and infrastructure, including parking facilities, restrooms, showers, recreational amenities, and other features that facilitate public access and use of coastal resources. The dataset offers a standardized approach for evaluating and comparing access opportunities across different regions of California. The underlying data include more than 1,500 public beach access locations spanning all 15 coastal counties, making it one of the most comprehensive statewide inventories available. This dataset is particularly valuable because it captures both access points and the amenities that influence the quality and practicality of coastal access. Public access is not determined solely by the presence of a beach or shoreline; it is also shaped by supporting infrastructure such as parking, restrooms, accessible pathways, and recreational facilities. By incorporating these attributes, the dataset provides a more complete representation of the opportunities and constraints that coastal users may experience. See Appendix B for coastal access point maps for the eight MPA petitions.

This dataset is intended to provide CFGC commissioners with an improved understanding of how petitions may impact equitable access to the coast and

ocean by identifying disadvantaged communities located within 10 miles of proposed actions, the demographic and socioeconomic composition of those communities, and nearby coastal access points and amenities.

APPROACH TO QUESTION 16 JEDI POLICY

Is the proposed change consistent with the CFGC Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy?

The [JEDI Policy](#) adopted by CFGC reflects CFGC's deep commitment to supporting safe and equitable access to California's native wildlife and natural habitats. It emphasizes inclusive decision-making that reflects the needs and values of the state's diverse communities. The policy acknowledges the significant past injustices experienced by underserved communities and seeks to correct the burdens these communities have faced in accessing nature, participating in regulatory decision-making, and the privilege often associated with outdoor access. The JEDI Policy also considers and seeks to correct the disproportionate burdens on California Native American tribes and affirms their interwoven stewardship relationships with the environment.

Identifying Applicable JEDI Policy Actions

The JEDI Policy identifies 13 individual commitments referred to as "actions" that guide how CFGC advances JEDI within both internal and outward-facing practices and procedures. In assessing whether the petitions are consistent with the policy, six actions were deemed to be most applicable for evaluation of petitions, whereas the other seven actions focus on CFGC's internal operations, partnerships, and governance processes. This does not downplay the importance of those seven actions in guiding the CFGC toward its JEDI vision, but rather acknowledges that individual petitions do not influence the CFGC's internal operations, partnerships, and governance. To assess whether each petition is consistent with the JEDI Policy, staff evaluated petitions for the following six remaining actions in the JEDI Policy:

- Promote equity through more inclusive decision-making that considers and corrects for disproportionate burdens on historically marginalized communities, including California Native American tribes
- Expand understanding of and improve response to the needs of marginalized fish and wildlife users
- Amplify tribal voices and issues

- Consider the implications of CFGC decisions on subsistence activities
- Improve and champion safe and equitable access to nature and abundant and healthy fish and wildlife populations
- Promote cultural, community, and economic opportunities related to fish and wildlife

Data Sources

The following sources were used when evaluating the petitions for each JEDI Policy action:

- **Information in the petitions and CDFW evaluations and recommendations**

Staff considered the action proposed by the petition, information provided in the petitions as well as CDFW evaluations and recommendations for the petitions, if available. As noted under Question 14, petitioners were encouraged, but not required, to engage with local communities prior to submitting their petitions, so localized needs were not captured. Therefore, most of the petitions did not include sufficient information to thoroughly assess benefits and/or impacts to disadvantaged communities. The Future Opportunities section includes more discussion about data gaps and approaches to resolve them.

- **Equitable access considerations from Question 14**

While equitable access is the main focus of Question 14, Question 16 touches on it as well, with several of these actions in the JEDI Policy relating to equitable access. Therefore, the considerations for equitable access described under Question 14 are relevant to Question 16 as well, including the framing for what equity and equitable access mean and the definition and identification of disadvantaged communities.

Considerations

In addition to overlap between Question 14 and Question 16, there is overlap between the actions themselves on the topics of take, equitable access, and disadvantaged communities.

The following are the primary considerations that were factored into the evaluation of petitions for the six JEDI Policy actions:

- **California Native American tribes**

Since many tribal communities often face similar challenges as communities entitled to environmental justice (e.g. low-income communities or disadvantaged communities) and since the JEDI Policy seeks to correct the disproportionate burdens on California Native American tribes, it was relevant to consider whether petitions were proposed or co-sponsored by California Native American tribes and whether the proposed change would impact tribal cultural practices.

- **Disadvantaged communities**

Since the JEDI Policy seeks to correct the burdens that disadvantaged communities have faced in accessing nature, participating in regulatory decision-making, and the privilege often associated with outdoor access, it was relevant to consider whether the petition change would impact disadvantaged communities. For the purposes of this evaluation, “marginalized fish and wildlife users” and “historically marginalized communities” are defined as “disadvantaged communities or highly impacted communities” as identified using [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#) and [SB 535](#).”

Staff started evaluating the petition for each JEDI Policy action considering the action proposed by the petition and whether the petition action is being proposed or co-sponsored by a California Native American tribe or a disadvantaged community. None of the petition actions were proposed by disadvantaged communities, so the 10-mile radius proximity band described in Question 14 served as a proxy for evaluating whether a disadvantaged community potentially might be affected by the petition action. Only 19 petitions were proposed or co-sponsored by a California Native American tribe or had a disadvantaged community within a 10-mile radius, so this subset of petitions was evaluated further for considerations related to access, take, and subsistence activities.

Relevant information from the petitions and CDFW evaluations and recommendations, if available, factored into considerations related to access, take, and subsistence activities. For JEDI Policy actions that relate to access or take, staff also considered whether the petition action potentially would expand or restrict access to the area in question and whether the petition action potentially would expand or restrict take. For JEDI Policy actions related to subsistence activities, staff included the added consideration of the U.S. Census

Bureau data on poverty in disadvantaged communities that was included in Q14. Poverty adds an additional barrier to accessing the coast or MPAs and can signify a need for subsistence fishing. If a petition action potentially could affect subsistence activities, staff considered whether there was a disadvantaged community within a 10-mile radius with a poverty level of 75% or higher to evaluate the petition action for JEDI Policy actions related to subsistence activities.

Appendix C is a flowchart that visually walks through the considerations that went into evaluating the petitions for each JEDI Policy action.

Appendix D presents the evaluation of 18 petitions for the six JEDI Policy actions and includes the Question 14 data on the CES 4.0 Indicators for disadvantaged communities. Appendix D only includes petitions that were:

- Proposed or co-sponsored by a California Native American tribe or had a disadvantaged community within a 10-mile radius
- And may advance at least one of the six JEDI Policy actions.

Although there is a disadvantaged community within a 10-mile radius of petition action 2023-18MPA_4, the evaluation concluded that this petition action may not advance any of the six JEDI Policy actions since it would only change the color of the Campus Point SMCA on maps, and therefore this petition action is not included in Appendix D.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Addressing Meaningful Access

This analysis was done with the best available information. There are still gaps to understanding what meaningful and equitable access to the California coast and MPAs means to communities across California. Some communities may prioritize MPAs, while others rely on the ocean for subsistence fishing, and others for their livelihoods. Similarly, barriers to accessing the coast, ocean, and MPAs will vary among communities as will the solutions to those barriers. Understanding community needs is an important step towards incorporating equity into managing the MPA network and addressing broader equity issues related to coastal and ocean access.

The [DMR](#) includes a [suite of recommendations](#) to prioritize for the next decade of the adaptive management cycle. These recommendations are the culmination of priority needs to advance and improve MPA governance and partnership coordination. Recommendations to improve tribal coordination include, but are not limited to, improving tribal engagement and relationship building efforts (DMR Recommendation 1), create a clear pathway to tribal MPA management (DMR Recommendation 2), build tribal capacity to participate in MPA management activities (DMR Recommendation 3), and developing a process to incorporate state marine cultural preservation areas into existing MPAs and new locations across the network (DMR Recommendation 24). Recommendations under the justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion pillar include recommendations such as including and funding more diverse researchers and stakeholders in research and monitoring projects that directly contribute to the MPA Monitoring Program (DMR Recommendation 6), expanding targeted outreach and education materials and events to under-represented user groups (DMR Recommendation 7), and evaluating the accessibility of MPAs to various community groups (DMR Recommendation 8).

CDFW, OPC, and CFGC are committed to working collaboratively with tribes, community-based organizations, and non-governmental organizations to conduct community outreach and engagement, including roundtables. This provides a better understanding of community needs, as it is crucial to including tribes and underserved communities as part of the MPA governance process.

Research Opportunities and Investments

The State of California is actively investing in research and monitoring to have a more comprehensive understanding of the social, cultural, and social-ecological dimensions of the MPA network. One ongoing project focuses on who benefits from the MPA network, who faces barriers to access, and how those patterns vary across communities. Through community-engaged surveys, interviews, focus groups, tribal engagement, and geospatial analyses, it will document how different communities access and use coastal and marine resources, the cultural, recreational, and subsistence values they derive from the ocean, and how environmental change and management actions influence those benefits. Anticipated to be complete by Fall 2027, this project will generate critical social baseline information on ocean-dependent activities, values, and experiences that has been identified as a major information gap in

assessing the effectiveness and equity outcomes of California's MPA network. More information on this project and its results can be found [here](#).

In addition, this specific project will evaluate patterns of proximity and accessibility to MPAs, identify disparities affecting disadvantaged, vulnerable, underserved, and tribal communities, and develop standardized profiles that characterize access opportunities and barriers across the MPA network. A key component of this work will be the evaluation and comparison of multiple environmental justice screening tools and indicators, including CalEnviroScreen, [EPA EJScreen](#), the [Vulnerable Communities Platform](#), and the [California Climate Investments Priority Populations Mapping Tool](#), to better understand how different frameworks identify disadvantaged, vulnerable, and underserved communities. By examining the strengths, limitations, geographic patterns, and areas of agreement among these tools, the project will elucidate strategies to select and interpret environmental justice metrics for use in MPA planning and evaluation. The research will provide actionable information that can help advance DMR recommendations and recommendations on ways to enhance equitable access and participation in MPA management and decision-making processes, and to advance environmental justice, climate resilience, and inclusive stewardship of California's coastal and marine resources.

Defining Subsistence

The CFGC's Tribal Committee is pursuing defining 'subsistence' to clarify how the word should be applied to management in relation to tribes. The outcome can help inform development of a potential definition for broader use with public subsistence fishing/harvesting.

Adopting Environmental Justice Policies

The California Natural Resources Agency recently published ["Helping Californians Thrive - Environmental Justice and Equity Policy."](#) The Policy calls for broad public input to inform government decisions amongst other actionable items to achieve equitable outcomes for all Californians. CDFW and CFGC will formally consider adopting the Policy at an upcoming meeting and incorporate a public process to ensure both entities capture and incorporate the specific needs of the communities we serve. The Policy can address gaps, like definitions and metrics we need to incorporate environmental justice principles into all we do. Similarly, [OPC's 2022 Equity Plan](#) commits to embedding equity across ocean and coastal policies by strengthening environmental justice policies,

expanding meaningful community engagement, providing targeted funding and technical assistance, and integrating community science and tribal expertise into decision-making. Together, these statewide policies provide a strong framework for ensuring that California's marine resource management is inclusive, transparent, and responsive to the needs of historically underserved communities.

CONCLUSION

Integrating equity considerations into the adaptive management of California's MPA network is essential to ensuring that the benefits of conservation are shared fairly across all communities. The history of exclusion from the coast experienced by California Native American tribes and disadvantaged communities underscores the need for representation in decision-making processes and meaningful participation in the stewardship of coastal and marine resources. This initial assessment of Questions 14 and 16 of the 2025 MPA Petition Evaluation Framework provides an initial foundation for how proposed petition actions may influence equitable access and alignment with the CFGC's JEDI Policy, while also highlighting data gaps and the opportunities available to address them.

Moving forward, expanding tribal and community engagement, investing in social, cultural, and access-related research will be critical to deepening the understanding of how different communities experience MPAs and the coast. By centering tribal stewardship and equity, California can continue building more inclusive and resilient ecosystems and ensure all Californians are able to access them in the future.

Appendix A

2023 Bin 2 MPA Petitions Proposed Actions

				CES 4.0 DACs (10 mi)					Access Points				Amenities								Parking + Fees					
CFGC Tracking No.	Action ID	Affected MPA	Proposed Action	DAC within 10 miles	Demographics	Educational Attainment	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Access Points (trails, paths, stairs, etc.)	Beach	Visual (including overlooks)	Pier	Restroom (showers, portable)	Picnic Area (Benches, Tables, BBQ)	Lifeguard Tower	Trash Cans	Stores (Gift shop, Cafe/Restaurants)	Visitor Center	Other Recreational Amenities (playground, ball park, etc.)	Paid Parking (Lots,Street, etc)	Free Parking (Lots,Street, etc)	Parking Lots	Street Parking	Neighborhood Parking	Unmarked Parking Lot	
2023-14MPA	2023-14MPA_1-9	Sea Lion Cove, Stewart's Point, Salt Point, Double Cone Rock, Naples, Anacapa Island, Point Dume, Point Vicente, and Swami's SMCAs	Modify take in 9 SMCAs to allow commercial urchin take at Sea Lion Cove, Stewarts Point, Salt Point, Double Cone Rock, Naples, Anacapa Island, Point Dume, Point Vicente, and Swami's SMCAs.	Point Vicente - CES median 91% SB535 median 68% Overall median 85%	• African American (15,576) • Asian American (40,479) • Hispanic (129,192) • Native American (308) • Other (5,306) • White (21,995)	77%	76%	71%	3	2			1									2				
				Naples - CES 76.8%	• African American (373) • Asian American (658) • Hispanic (2,916) • Native American (0) • Other (103) • White (1,716)	60%	64%	67%																		
2023-18MPA	2023-18MPA_1	Vandenberg SMR	Redesignate a portion of Vandenberg State Marine Reserve (SMR) to create a narrow State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) alongshore for the entire length of Vandenberg SMR that allows recreational shore fishing for finfish by hook-and-line.	Campus Point - CES 76.8%	• African American (373) • Asian American (658) • Hispanic (2,916) • Native American (0) • Other (103) • White (1,716)	60%	64%	67%	11	7				2				1		22	4	4		22		

				CES 4.0 DACs (10 mi)					Access Points				Amenities								Parking + Fees					
CFGC Tracking No.	Action ID	Affected MPA	Proposed Action	DAC within 10 miles	Demographics	Educational Attainment	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Access Points (trails, paths, stairs, etc.)	Beach	Visual (including overlooks)	Pier	Restroom (showers, portable)	Picnic Area (Benches, Tables, BBQ)	Lifeguard Tower	Trash Cans	Stores (Gift shop, Cafe/Restaurants)	Visitor Center	Other Recreational Amenities (playground, ball park, etc.)	Paid Parking (Lots,Street, etc)	Free Parking (Lots,Street, etc)	Parking Lots	Street Parking	Neighborhood Parking	Unmarked Parking Lot	
2022-004	2022-004	Vandenberg SMR	Redesignate a portion of Vandenberg SMR to create a small SMCA that allows shore fishing on the one half mile stretch of beach known as Surf Beach	Vandenberg - CES 80.81%	• African American (41) • Asian American (231) • Hispanic (6,845) • Native American (0) • Other (18) • White (438)	92%	84%	78%	3	2	1		2	1					1		2	2				
2023-18MPA	2023-18MPA_4	Campus Point SMCA	Change color of No-take Campus Point SMCA from purple to red on maps.	Campus Point - CES 76.8%	• African American (373) • Asian American (658) • Hispanic (2,916) • Native American (0) • Other (103) • White (1,716)	92%	84%	78%	11	7				2				1		22	4	4		22		
2023-23MPA_AM1	2023-23MPA_1_AM1, 2023-23MPA_6_AM1, 2023-23MPA_11_AM1	Edward F. Ricketts, Pacific Grove Marine Gardens, and Carmel Bay SMCAs	For diver safety, prohibit recreational and commercial take of finfish when a petitioner-proposed "kelp restoration management permit" is active within: Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area [SMCA, (2023-23MPA_1_AM1)], Pacific Grove Marine Gardens SMCA (2023-23MPA_6_AM1) and Carmel Bay	Edward Ricketts - SB535 68%	• African American (391) • Asian American (505) • Hispanic (1,108) • Native American (0) • Other (271) • White (1,044)	50%	No data	72%	14	5			2	12		17	6			10	1	6	5			

				CES 4.0 DACs (10 mi)					Access Points				Amenities								Parking + Fees					
CFGC Tracking No.	Action ID	Affected MPA	Proposed Action	DAC within 10 miles	Demographics	Educational Attainment	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Access Points (trails, paths, stairs, etc.)	Beach	Visual (including overlooks)	Pier	Restroom (showers, portable)	Picnic Area (Benches, Tables, BBQ)	Lifeguard Tower	Trash Cans	Stores (Gift shop, Cafe/Restaurants)	Visitor Center	Other Recreational Amenities (playground, ball park, etc.)	Paid Parking (Lots,Street, etc)	Free Parking (Lots,Street, etc)	Parking Lots	Street Parking	Neighborhood Parking	Unmarked Parking Lot	
			SMCA (2023-23MPA_11_AM1).																							
2023-24MPA_AM1	2023-24MPA_1_AM1	Laguna Beach No-Take SMCA	Extend the Laguna Beach No-take SMCA southern boundary to the southern border of the City of Laguna Beach, which will require modification of the northern boundary of Dana Point SMCA (modified boundaries as amended).	Laguna Beach - CES median 81% SB535 31.58% Overall median 80%	• African American (2,036) • Asian American (3,596) • Hispanic (5,639) • Native American (0) • Other (578) • White (5,084)	25%	64%	44%	19	25			2	2	1				1	39	24	10	21	32		
2023-33MPA_AM1	2023-33MPA_1_AM1	Cabrillo SMR	Expand Cabrillo SMR westward (to 3-mile state line) and northward (to New Hope Rock) by ~9.99 sq mi.	Cabrillo - CES median 84% SB535 median 70% Overall median 83%	• African American (13,970) • Asian American (17,119) • Hispanic (114,397) • Native American (309) • Other (3,453) • White (29,430)	80%	82%	83%	1	1			1							1	1	2				

[illegible]

[illegible]

Appendix B

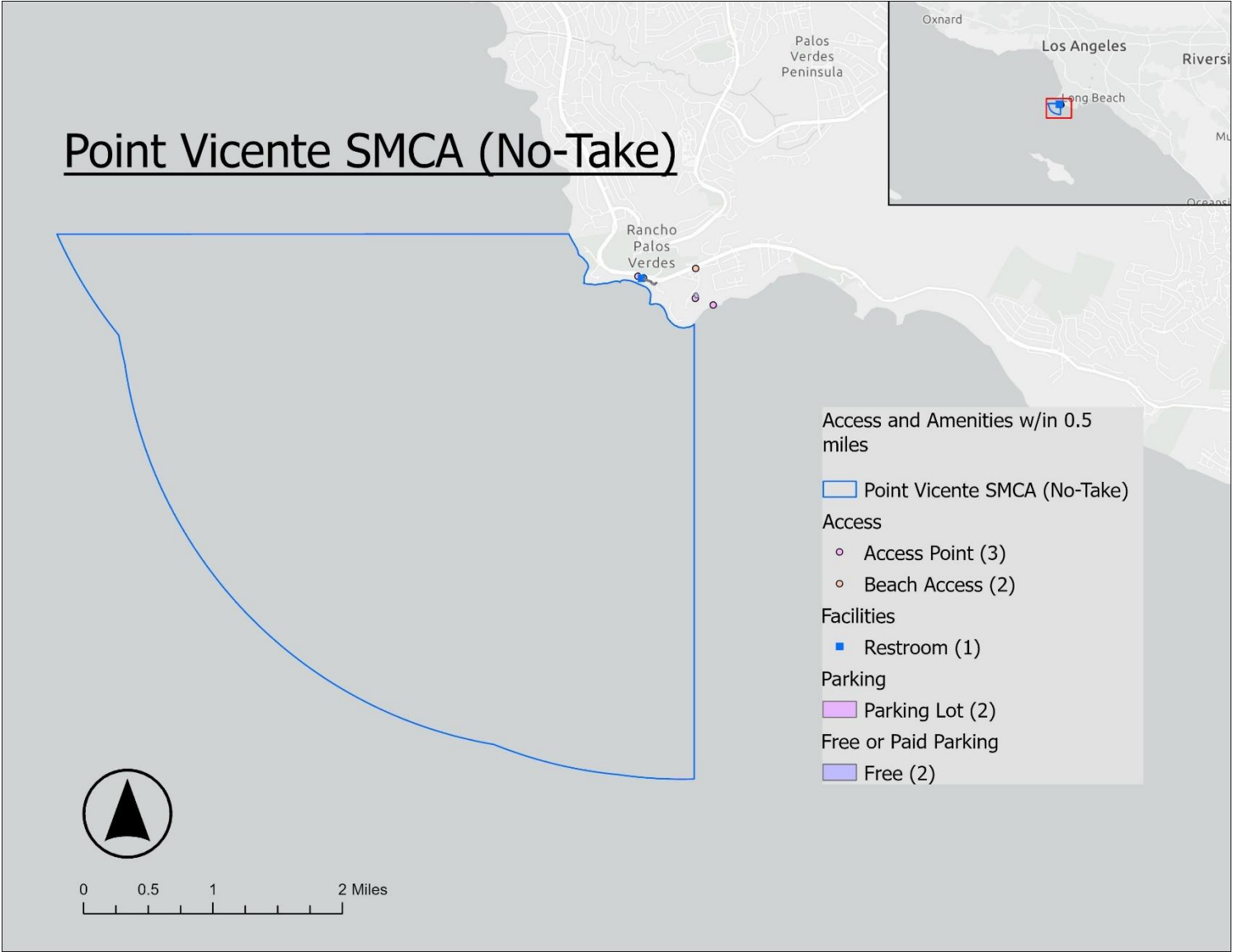


Figure 1 Point Vicente Coastal Access Map

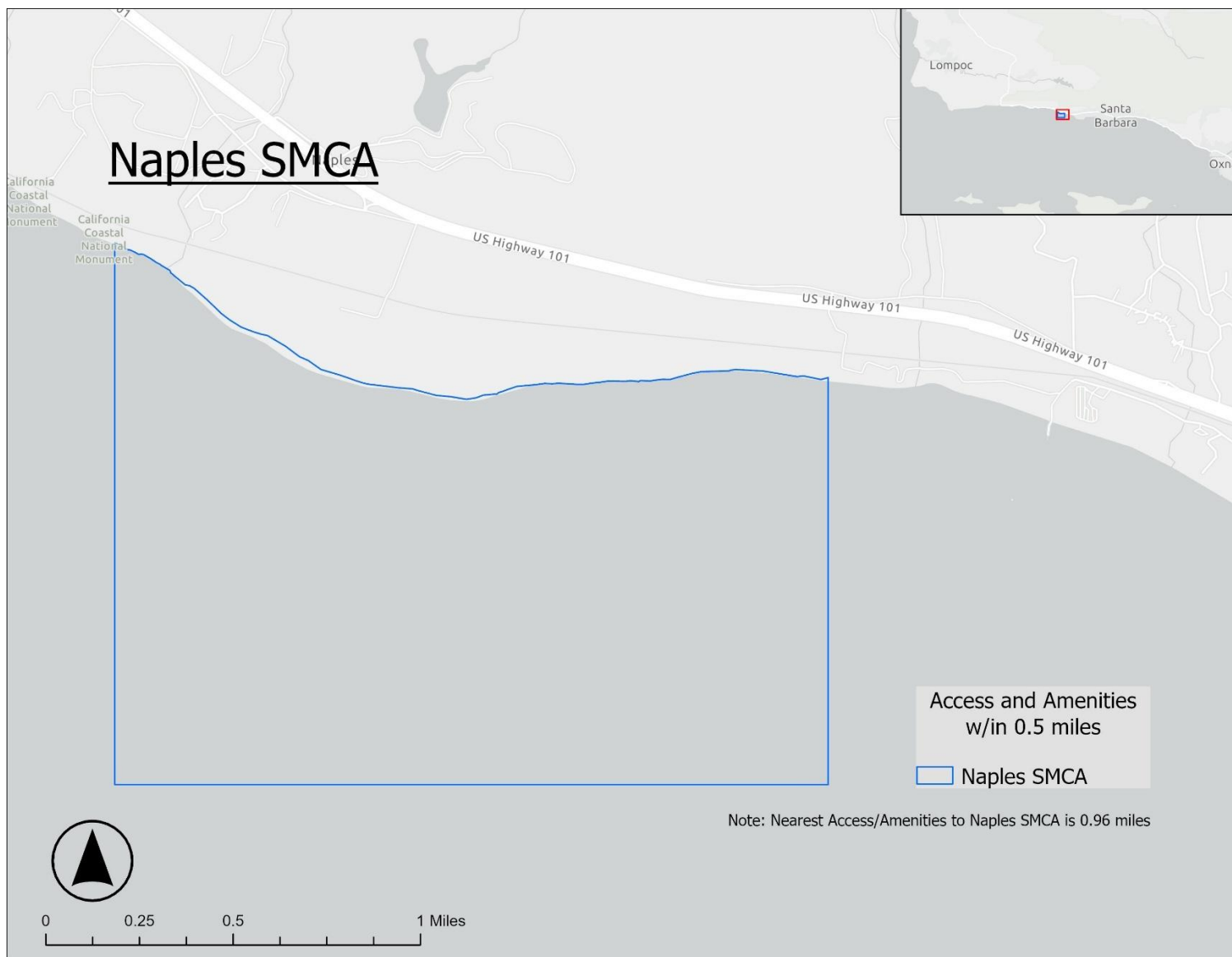


Figure 2 Naples SMCA Coastal Access Map

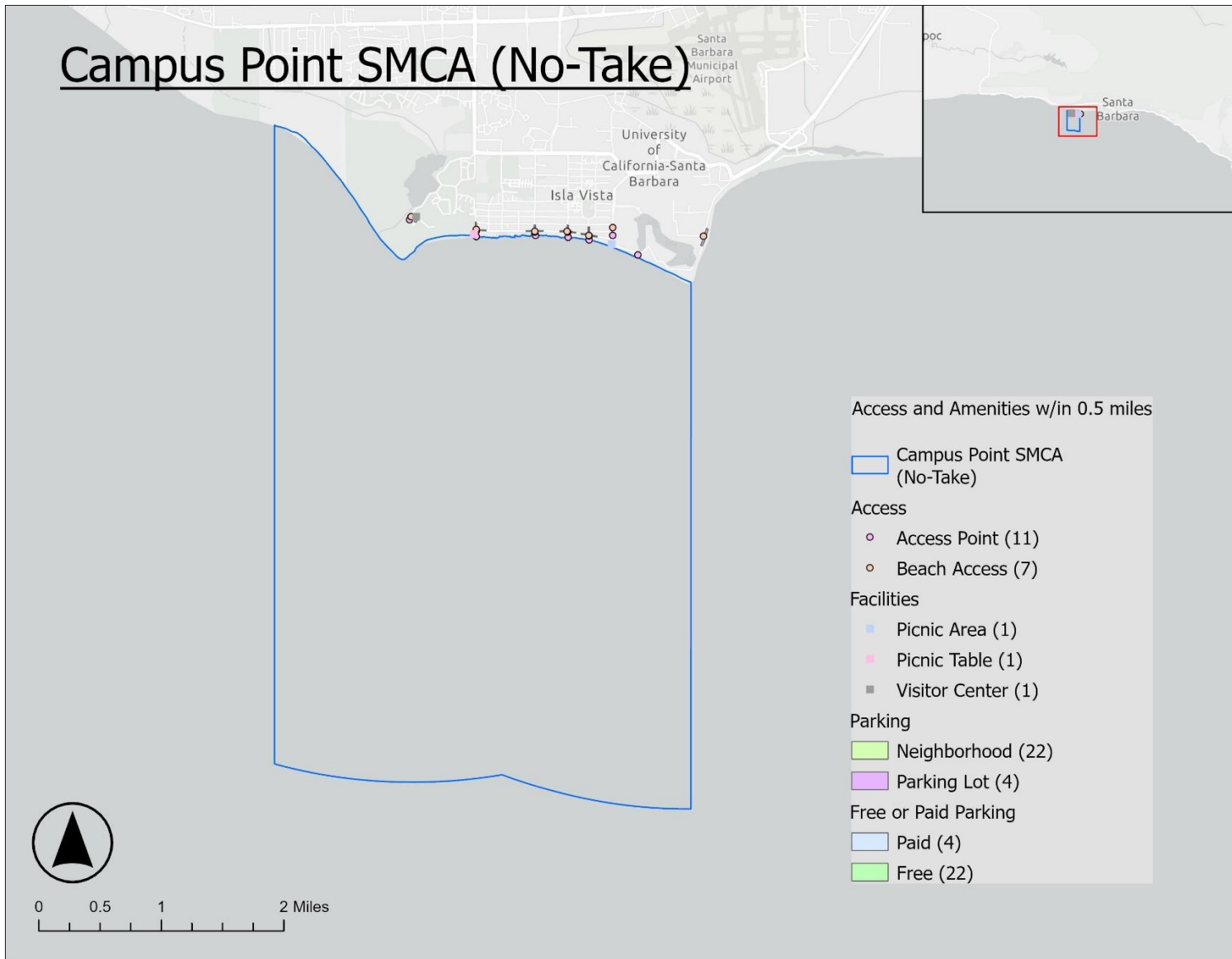


Figure 3 Campus Point SMCA (No-Take) Coastal Access Map

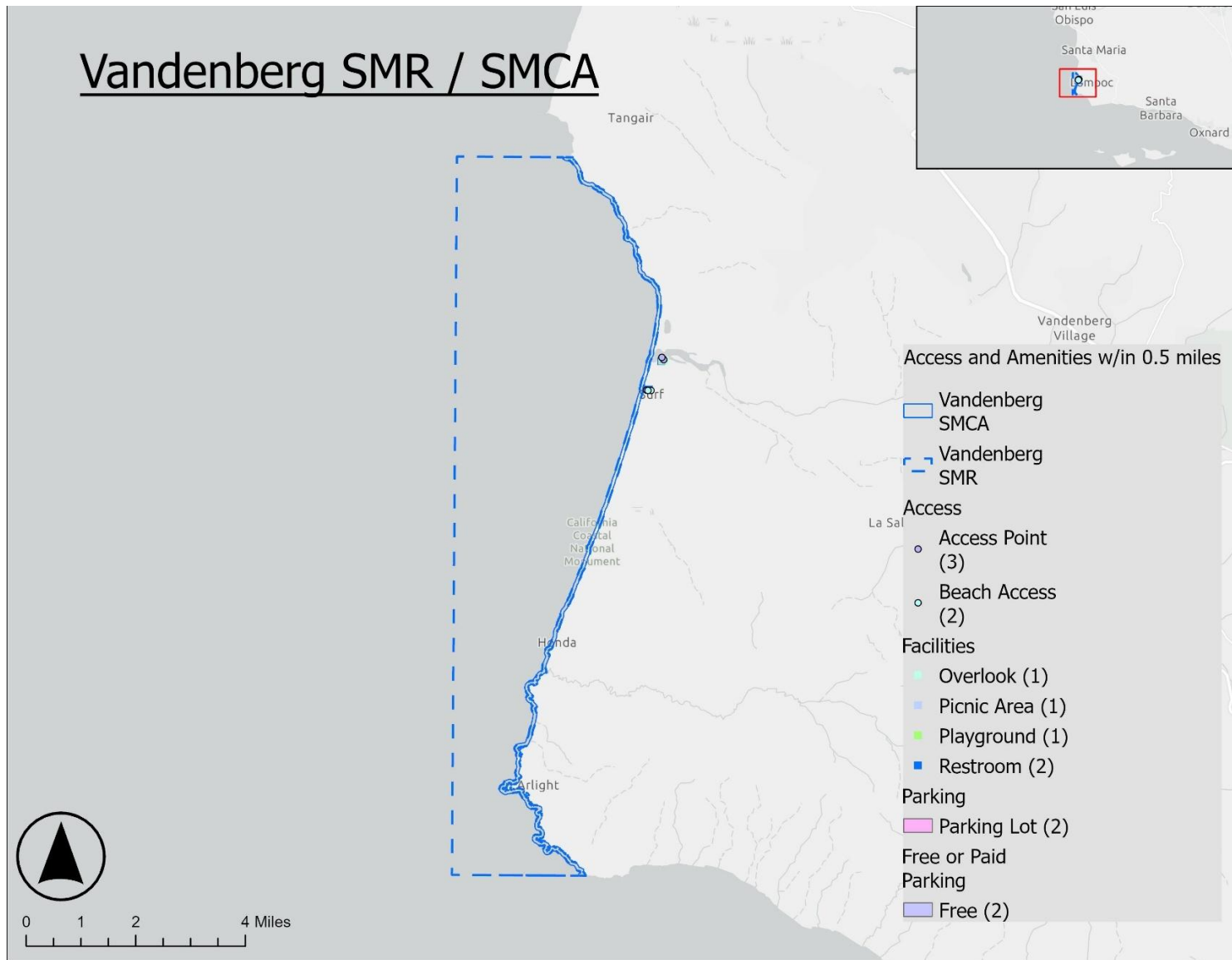


Figure 4 Vandenberg SMR/SMCA Coastal Access Map

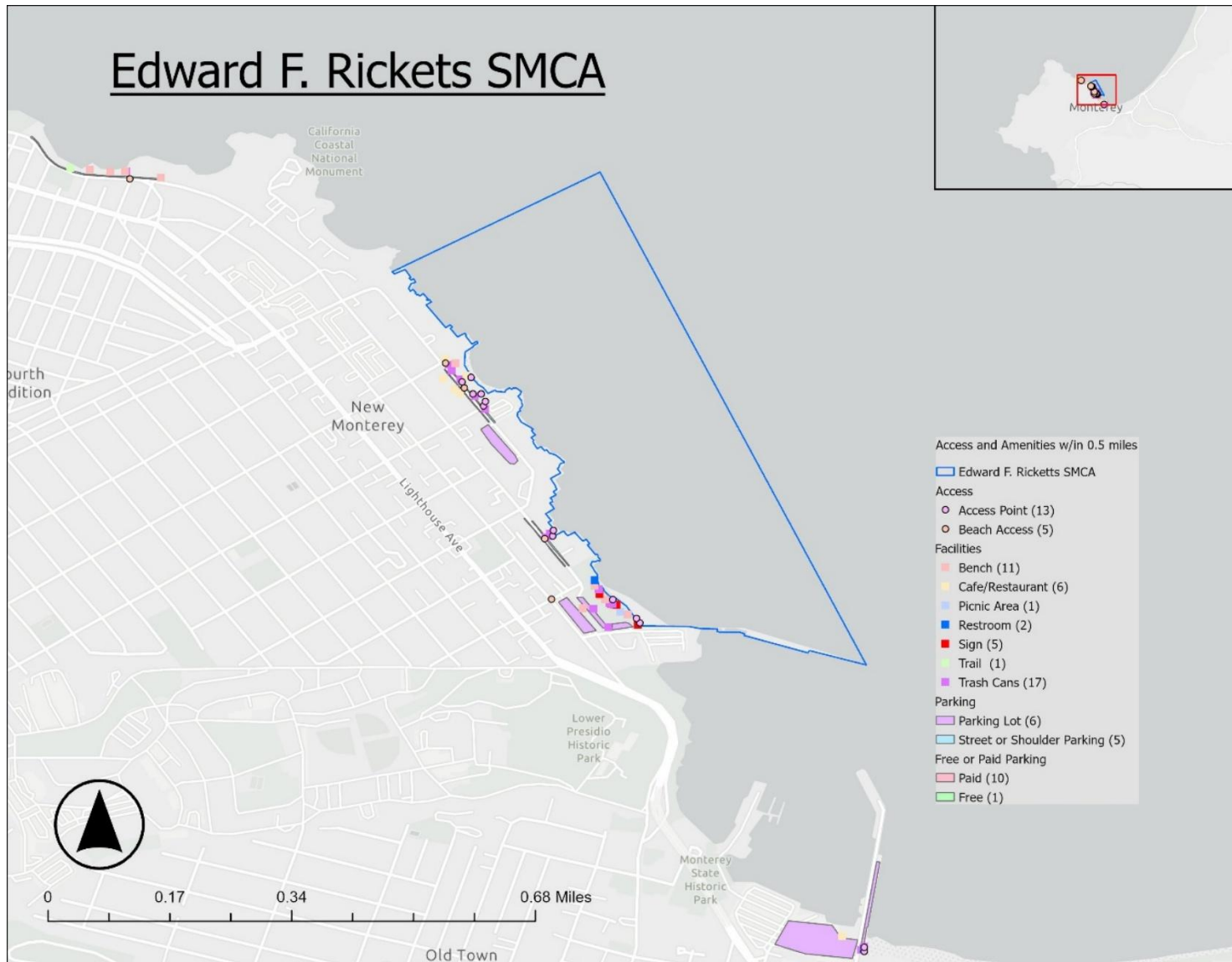


Figure 5 Edward F. Ricketts SMCA Coastal Access Map

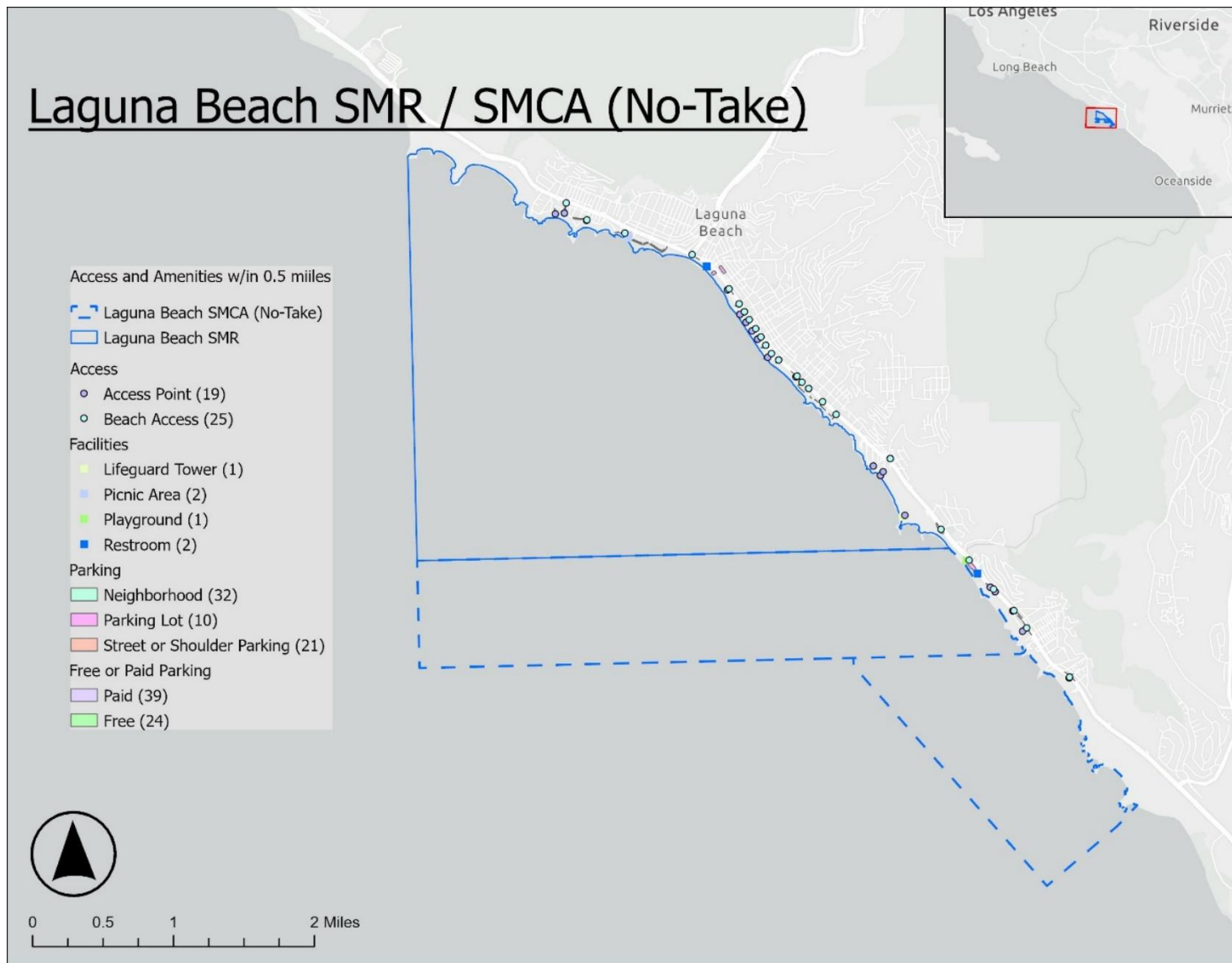


Figure 6 Laguna Beach SMR/SMCA (No-Take) Coastal Access Map



Figure 7 Cabrillo SMR Coastal Access Map

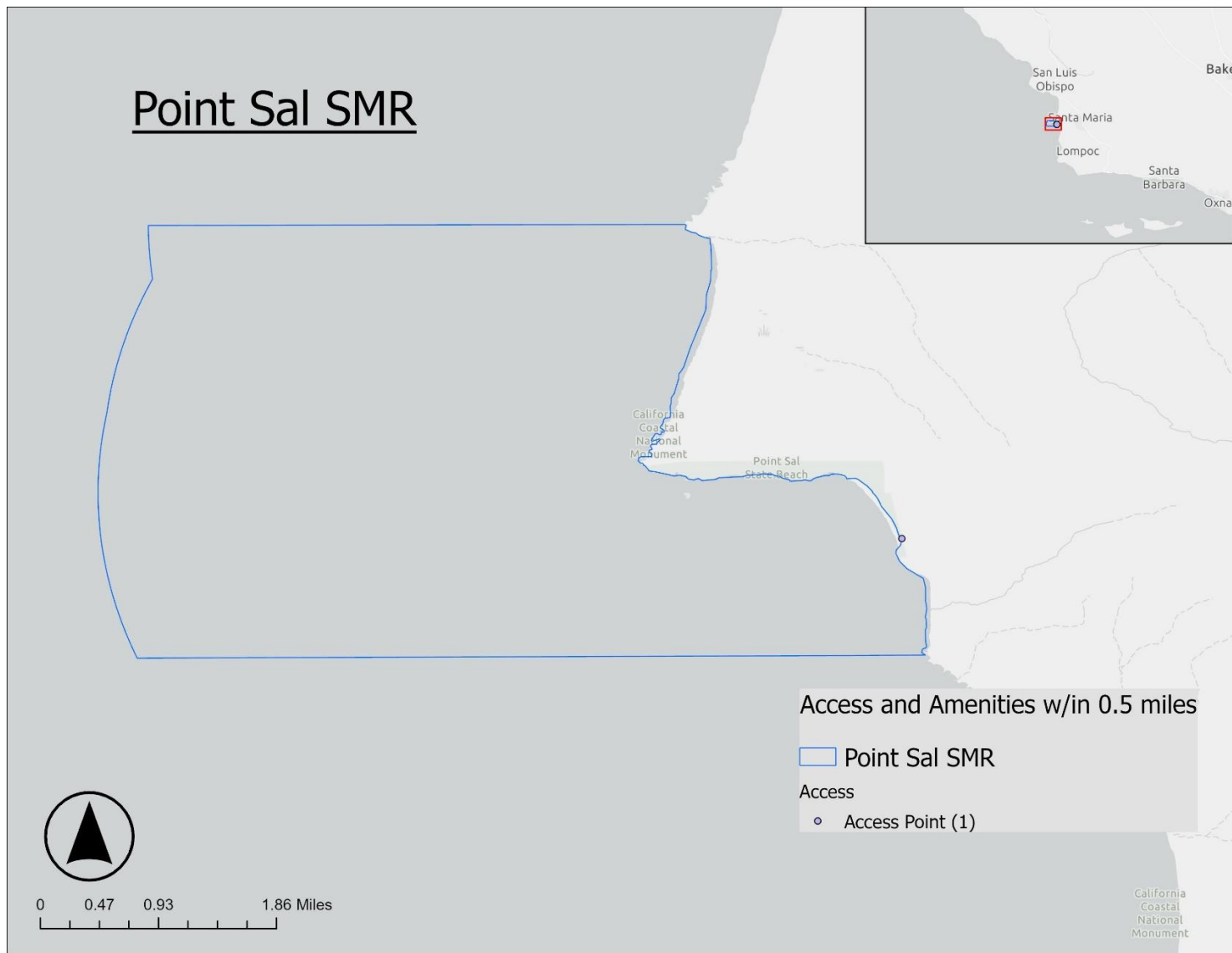


Figure 8 Point Sal SMR Coastal Access Map

Appendix C

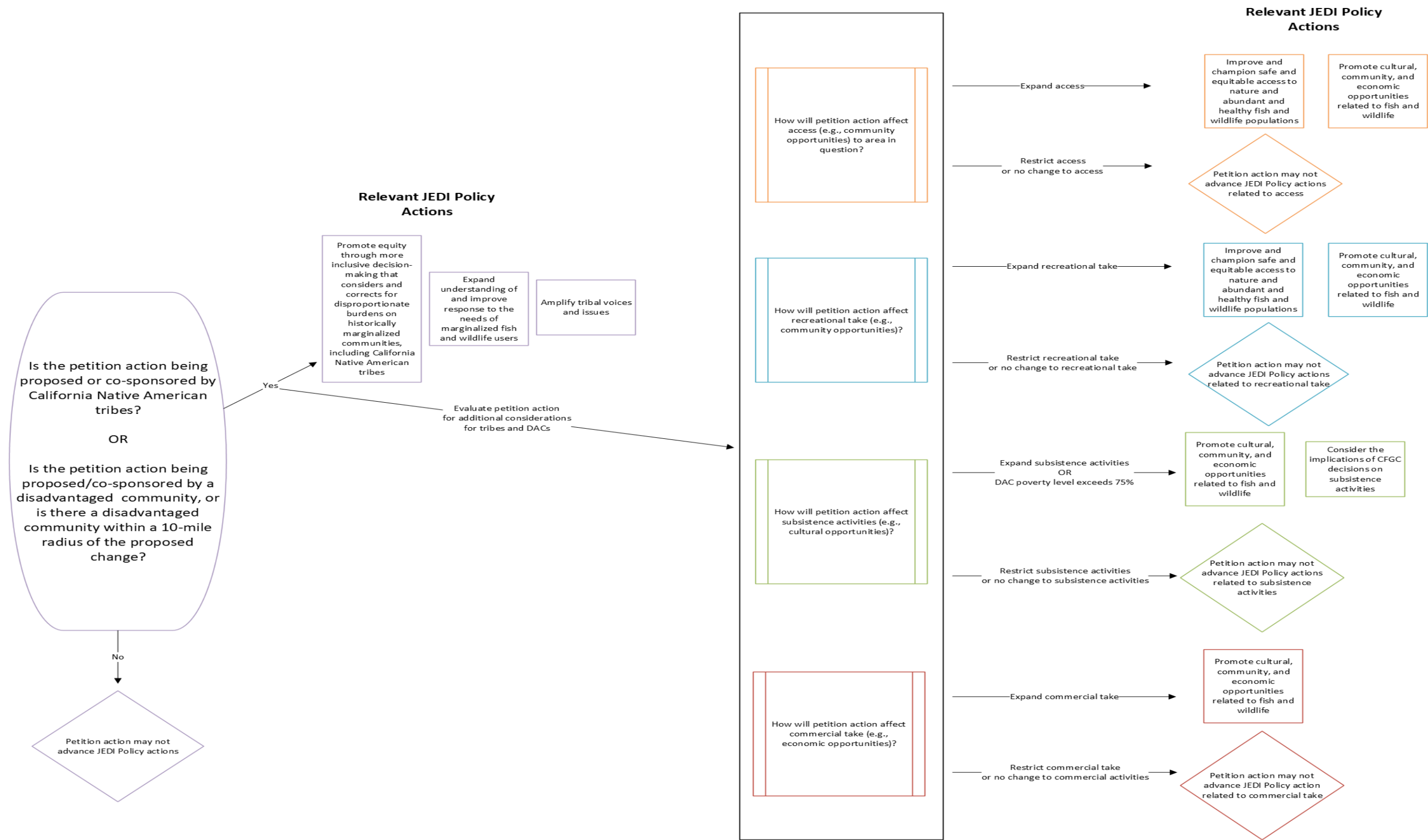


Figure 9 Considerations Flow Chart for JEDI Policy Actions

Appendix D

						CES 4.0 Indicators									
CFGC Tracking No.	Action ID	Affected MPA	MLPA Action Category	Action Type	Proposed Action	DAC within 10 miles	Educational Attainment	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Promote equity through more inclusive decision-making that considers and corrects for disproportionate burdens on historically marginalized communities, including California Native American tribes	Expand understanding of and improve response to the needs of marginalized fish and wildlife users	Consider implications of our decisions on subsistence activities	Improve and champion equitable access to nature and abundant and healthy fish and wildlife populations	Promote cultural, community, and economic opportunities related to fish and wildlife	Amplify tribal voices and issues
2023-14MPA	2023-14MPA_5	Naples SMCA	Modify	Take	Modify take in 9 SMCAs to allow commercial urchin take at Sea Lion Cove, Stewarts Point, Salt Point, Double Cone Rock, Naples, Anacapa Island, Point Dume, Point Vicente, and Swami's SMCAs.	Naples - CES 76.8%	60%	64%	67%	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
2023-14MPA	2023-14MPA_8	Point Vicente SMCA	Modify	Take	Modify take in 9 SMCAs to allow commercial urchin take at Sea Lion Cove, Stewarts Point, Salt Point, Double Cone Rock, Naples, Anacapa Island, Point Dume, Point Vicente, and Swami's SMCAs.	Point Vicente - CES median 91% SB535 median 68% Overall median 85%	77%	76%	71%	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
2023-18MPA	2023-18MPA_1	Vandenberg SMR	Modify	Classification, Take	Redesignate a portion of Vandenberg State Marine Reserve (SMR) to create a narrow State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) alongshore for the entire length of Vandenberg SMR that allows recreational shore fishing for finfish by hook-and-line.	Campus Point - CES 76.8%	60%	64%	67%	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

						CES 4.0 Indicators									
CFGC Tracking No.	Action ID	Affected MPA	MLPA Action Category	Action Type	Proposed Action	DAC within 10 miles	Educational Attainment	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Promote equity through more inclusive decision-making that considers and corrects for disproportionate burdens on historically marginalized communities, including California Native American tribes	Expand understanding of and improve response to the needs of marginalized fish and wildlife users	Consider implications of our decisions on subsistence activities	Improve and champion equitable access to nature and abundant and healthy fish and wildlife populations	Promote cultural, community, and economic opportunities related to fish and wildlife	Amplify tribal voices and issues
2022-004	2022-004	Vandenberg SMR	Modify	Classification, Take	Redesignate a portion of Vandenberg SMR to create a small SMCA that allows shore fishing on the one half mile stretch of beach known as Surf Beach	Vandenberg - CES 80.81%	92%	84%	78%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
2023-23MPA_AM1	2023-23MPA_1_AM1	Edward F. Ricketts, SMCA	Modify	Classification, Take	For diver safety, prohibit recreational and commercial take of finfish when a petitioner-proposed "kelp restoration management permit" is active within: Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area [SMCA, (2023-23MPA_1_AM1)], Pacific Grove Marine Gardens SMCA (2023-23MPA_6_AM1) and Carmel Bay SMCA (2023-23MPA_11_AM1).	Edward Ricketts - SB535 68%	50%	No data	72%	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
2023-23MPA_AM1	2023-23MPA_2	Edward F. Ricketts SMCA	Modify	Take	Allow unlimited recreational urchin removal in Edward F. Ricketts SMCA (2023-23MPA_2), Pacific Grove Marine Gardens SMCA (2023-23MPA_7), Carmel Bay SMCA (2023-23MPA_12), and Point Lobos State Marine Reserve [SMR, (2023-23MPA_16)].	Edward Ricketts - SB535 68%	50%	No data	72%	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

						CES 4.0 Indicators									
CFGC Tracking No.	Action ID	Affected MPA	MLPA Action Category	Action Type	Proposed Action	DAC within 10 miles	Educational Attainment	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Promote equity through more inclusive decision-making that considers and corrects for disproportionate burdens on historically marginalized communities, including California Native American tribes	Expand understanding of and improve response to the needs of marginalized fish and wildlife users	Consider implications of our decisions on subsistence activities	Improve and champion equitable access to nature and abundant and healthy fish and wildlife populations	Promote cultural, community, and economic opportunities related to fish and wildlife	Amplify tribal voices and issues
2023-23MPA_AM1	2023-23MPA_3, 4, 5	Edward F. Ricketts SMCAs	Modify	Reg change	In Edward F. Ricketts SMCA, Pacific Grove Marine Gardens SMCA, Carmel Bay SMCA, and Point Lobos SMR, allow the following activities to occur without an SCP: • Out-planting kelp on the reef, • Spore dispersal by sporophyte bags, and • Pruning kelp canopy to promote growth and resilience to storms.	Edward Ricketts - SB535 68%	50%	No data	72%	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
2023-24MPA_AM1	2023-24MPA_1_AM1	Laguna Beach No-Take SMCA	Modify	Boundaries	Extend the Laguna Beach No-take SMCA southern boundary to the southern border of the City of Laguna Beach, which will require modification of the northern boundary of Dana Point SMCA (modified boundaries as amended).	Laguna Beach - CES median 81% SB535 31.58% Overall median 80%	25%	64%	44%	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

						CES 4.0 Indicators									
CFGC Tracking No.	Action ID	Affected MPA	MLPA Action Category	Action Type	Proposed Action	DAC within 10 miles	Educational Attainment	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Promote equity through more inclusive decision-making that considers and corrects for disproportionate burdens on historically marginalized communities, including California Native American tribes	Expand understanding of and improve response to the needs of marginalized fish and wildlife users	Consider implications of our decisions on subsistence activities	Improve and champion equitable access to nature and abundant and healthy fish and wildlife populations	Promote cultural, community, and economic opportunities related to fish and wildlife	Amplify tribal voices and issues
2023-33MPA_AM1	2023-33MPA_1_AM1	Cabrillo SMR	Modify	Boundaries	Expand Cabrillo SMR westward (to 3-mile state line) and northward (to New Hope Rock) by ~9.99 sq mi.	Cabrillo - CES median 84% SB535 median 70% Overall median 83%	80%	82%	83%	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Tribally-led Petitions															
2023-19MPA-AM1	2023-19MPA_1_AM1	N/A (New - Chitqawi SMCA)	Establish	Establish new MPA	Designate new SMCA in Morro Bay with a tribal take exemption for SYBCI					Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
2023-20MPA_AM1	2023-20MPA_1	Point Buchon SMCA (maybe SMR too)	N/A	Non-regulatory - tribal	Establish co-management with Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians at Point Buchon SMCA.					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2023-20MPA_AM1	2023-20MPA_2	Point Buchon SMR	Modify	Boundaries	Adjust the northern boundary of Point Buchon SMR to align with Point Buchon.					Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
2023-20MPA_AM1	2023-20MPA_3	Point Buchon SMCA	Modify	Name	Rename the SMCA					Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
2023-20MPA_AM1	2023-20MPA_4_AM1	Point Buchon SMCA	Modify	Take	Add tribal take exemption for Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

						CES 4.0 Indicators									
CFGC Tracking No.	Action ID	Affected MPA	MLPA Action Category	Action Type	Proposed Action	DAC within 10 miles	Educational Attainment	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Promote equity through more inclusive decision-making that considers and corrects for disproportionate burdens on historically marginalized communities, including California Native American tribes	Expand understanding of and improve response to the needs of marginalized fish and wildlife users	Consider implications of our decisions on subsistence activities	Improve and champion equitable access to nature and abundant and healthy fish and wildlife populations	Promote cultural, community, and economic opportunities related to fish and wildlife	Amplify tribal voices and issues
2023-21MPA_AM1	2023-21MPA_1	Pyramid Point SMCA	Modify	Take	Remove recreational take allowance for surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net in Pyramid Point SMCA so the MPA would become a No-take SMCA and retain the existing tribal exemption for Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2023-21MPA_AM1	2023-21MPA_2	Pyramid Point SMCA	Modify	Boundaries	Change northern boundary from the official California/Oregon state line (42°N) to align with the landside surveyed border (41°59'55"N)					Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes

						CES 4.0 Indicators									
CFGC Tracking No.	Action ID	Affected MPA	MLPA Action Category	Action Type	Proposed Action	DAC within 10 miles	Educational Attainment	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Promote equity through more inclusive decision-making that considers and corrects for disproportionate burdens on historically marginalized communities, including California Native American tribes	Expand understanding of and improve response to the needs of marginalized fish and wildlife users	Consider implications of our decisions on subsistence activities	Improve and champion equitable access to nature and abundant and healthy fish and wildlife populations	Promote cultural, community, and economic opportunities related to fish and wildlife	Amplify tribal voices and issues
2023-28MPA_AM2	2023-28MPA_1_AM2	N/A (New - Point Sal SMCA)	Establish	Establish new MPA	Designate a new SMCA that is just over 9 sq mi around Point Sal in central California with allowance for recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore; consult with tribes to identify a traditional tribal name for the new MPA; include language to allow for take incidental to mission-critical operations at Vandenberg Space Force Base, discretionally restrict public entry, and require the CDFW to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Commander of Vandenberg Space Force Base for the mutually beneficial management and administration of the Point Sal SMCA and then work to formalize an official collaborative co-stewardship agreement among CDFW, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council and other interested tribes.	Point Sal - CES Score 81%	92%	84%	77%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

						CES 4.0 Indicators									
CFGC Tracking No.	Action ID	Affected MPA	MLPA Action Category	Action Type	Proposed Action	DAC within 10 miles	Educational Attainment	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Promote equity through more inclusive decision-making that considers and corrects for disproportionate burdens on historically marginalized communities, including California Native American tribes	Expand understanding of and improve response to the needs of marginalized fish and wildlife users	Consider implications of our decisions on subsistence activities	Improve and champion equitable access to nature and abundant and healthy fish and wildlife populations	Promote cultural, community, and economic opportunities related to fish and wildlife	Amplify tribal voices and issues
2023-29MPA_AM2	2023-29MPA_1_AM2	N/A (New - Mishopshno SMCA)	Establish	Establish new MPA	Designate a new tribal co-management SMCA (9.05 sq mi) near Carpinteria named Mishopshno that allows for the recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore and a tribal take exemption for Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. Develop a co-management agreement between the State of California and the SYBCI through continued access to the shoreline and marine resources for traditional, ceremonial, cultural, and subsistence purposes for all Chumash people.					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes