

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

Charter of the 2009-2011 Master Plan Science Advisory Team

October 1, 2009

Official Name

This team officially is designated as the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) 2009-2011 Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) to the California Department of Fish and Game.

Background

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) was tasked by the 1999 MLPA to prepare, or cause to be prepared, a master plan, with recommended alternative networks of marine protected areas within the state's coastal waters, for proposed adoption by the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission). The MLPA directs the DFG to appoint a master plan team to advise and assist in the preparation of the master plan. The statute identifies the composition of the master plan team, see discussion under 'Membership' below, but also allows for the contribution of other experts to the master plan development process (Fish and Game Code, Section 2855). The SAT is comprised of the combination of the master plan team as defined in statute and additional experts.

Due to the complexities presented by the task of drafting a master plan, the DFG will enhance the scientific expertise required by the MLPA by adding to the master plan team, described in statute, members with biological, fisheries and socioeconomic expertise. The policy considerations of the master plan will be addressed by the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) through recommendations to the Commission. The DFG is charging the master plan team to focus on the scientific considerations involved in drafting the programmatic portion of the master plan and the design of alternative regional proposals for marine protected areas. The master plan team is therefore renamed the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) to reflect this enhanced expertise and scientific focus.

Creation of the SAT was initially stipulated in a 2004 memorandum of understanding (MOU) to which the California Resources Agency, California Department of Fish and Game, and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation were parties. The MOU created a public-private partnership, known as the MLPA Initiative, to help the state implement the MLPA. One element of the initiative was a pilot project along the central coast (Pigeon Point in San Mateo County to Point Conception in Santa Barbara County). A second MOU was signed in December 2006 for the purpose of continuing the public-private partnership in the north central coast (Alder Creek in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point in San Mateo County). The second MOU was amended and extended the agreement to include the south coast (Point Conception in Santa Barbara County to the California/Mexico border in San Diego County, including offshore islands), north coast (California/Oregon border in Del Norte County to Alder Creek in Mendocino County), and the San Francisco Bay region (Golden Gate Bridge to Carquinez Bridge).

Membership

The MLPA requires that the master plan team include staff from the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the State Water Resources Control Board, one member appointed from a list provided by Sea Grant, and five to seven scientists, one of whom may have expertise in the economics and culture of California coastal communities. The SAT will include those members identified in statute and additional scientists knowledgeable in marine ecology, fisheries, marine protected areas, economics and the social sciences. The DFG director will appoint the members of the SAT. In considering members for the SAT, the director may consult with the secretary for natural resources, the chair of the BRTF, and the president of the Commission. The SAT shall designate one to three members to serve as chair(s) of the SAT. The chair(s) will be responsible for assisting the DFG in planning meetings, ensuring meetings meet their stated objectives, and acting as the primary SAT liaison to the BRTF. The chair(s) shall assign four to six members to serve as the SAT sub-team to the MLPA North Coast Project.

Term

Each member shall serve, as appointed by the director of the California Department of Fish and Game, for the duration of the MOU, through June 2011 or until relieved of duties.

Charge

The charge to the SAT is to provide the scientific knowledge and judgment necessary to assist the DFG with: (1) meeting the objectives of the MLPA Initiative, (2) providing input to the BRTF, and (3) completing the north coast portion of the master plan for MPAs. Principally, the SAT is charged with reviewing and commenting on scientific papers relevant to the implementation of the MLPA, reviewing alternative MPA proposals, reviewing draft master plan documents, addressing scientific issues presented by those documents, and addressing scientific questions raised by the BRTF or stakeholders. In the course of assisting the DFG, members shall refrain from making policy judgments; rather, where available science presents options or uncertainty, the SAT shall frame and refer those policy questions to the DFG, or if appropriate, the BRTF.

The SAT will be supported by the California Department of Fish and Game's policy advisor, and other DFG staff, and the science and planning advisor for the MLPA Initiative.

The SAT will convene regular, open meetings that may be attended by interested members of the public. Any meeting of a majority of SAT members will be publicly noticed at least 10 calendar days prior to the meeting and open to the public. The DFG, with the assistance of SAT members and the MLPA science advisor, will report SAT findings and recommendations to the BRTF at the BRTF's regular, open meetings. The SAT chair(s) may convene sub-teams of the members as necessary to address specific scientific issues; sub-teams will report the results of their work to the full SAT at regularly scheduled, open meetings.

Guidance from the SAT on the design of an improved system of marine protected areas, as required in the MLPA, becomes effective through adoption of the *California Marine Life Protection Act Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas* by the Commission. Guidance developed by the SAT was adopted by the Commission in August, 2005 and later amended in January, 2008. The SAT may propose revisions or augmentations to that guidance for consideration by the DFG, which may in turn transmit the proposed revisions with recommendations to the BRTF and Commission. Revisions should be based on either new scientific information brought forward by the SAT or differences specific to the MLPA North Coast Study Region.

Attendance

The members of the SAT are each expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the SAT. The chair(s) of the SAT, or designees, is/are expected to attend all regular meetings of the BRTF, which shall be scheduled as needed from November 2009 through June 2011. Other members of the SAT may attend BRTF meetings. The chair(s) of the SAT may also assign members to sub-teams, and those members are expected to fulfill all assignments of those sub-teams including attending any additional scheduled meetings. Members of the SAT Sub-Team to the MLPA North Coast Project shall also attend regularly scheduled meetings of the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group to provide scientific summaries, answer scientific questions, and advise on relevant scientific merits of various MPA proposals. Members will be responsible for reviewing all relevant materials in advance of each meeting.

Remuneration

Members of the SAT will, upon request, be reimbursed for actual travel expenditures related to the MLPA Initiative, but not for time.