

Final Ground Rules

Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

(Adopted by the CCRSG on June 9, 2005)

The following ground rules have been informed by confidential interviews conducted with the primary Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG) members as well as CONCUR's professional experience. These ground rules are intended to foster and reinforce constructive interaction and deliberation among CCRSG members. They emphasize clear communication, respect for divergent views, creative thinking, collaborative problem solving, trust building, and the pursuit of mutual gains. The CCRSG may decide to reconsider and revise these ground rules if they appear not to be serving the CCRSG process.

Representation

- **RSG recruitment and selection.** CCRSG members have been selected by the director of the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the chair of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force. CCRSG members were selected based on professional expertise or experience, diversity of perspectives, geographic location, communication network, capability to work with diverse viewpoints, and commitment to successfully completing the central coast process by March 2006.
- **Checking back with constituencies.** CCRSG members have been recruited based upon their ability to ably represent the views of an important constituency. CCRSG members commit to keeping their constituencies informed of the CCRSG's efforts and to reporting relevant feedback to the CCRSG. In reporting back, CCRSG members will strive to integrate the views of their constituency rather than resorting to a "lowest common denominator" portrayal.
- **Seating of primary participants.** During CCRSG meetings, the following primary participants will be seated at the table: primary CCRSG members, BRTF members, Central Coast Science Sub-Team members, lead MLPA Initiative and DFG staff, and project facilitators. CCRSG alternates, other support staff, and members of the public will be seated nearby.

Participation and Collaboration

- **Primary and alternate CCRSG members.**
 - Primary CCRSG members will make every effort to attend all of the CCRSG meetings. Alternate members are also strongly encouraged to attend all meetings.
 - Primary CCRSG members will work with their alternates to ensure that they are up to speed on CCRSG deliberations. This will enable alternates to step in effectively as needed and keep the project from "backsliding." Primary and alternate members are encouraged to confer in advance of the meetings or during meeting breaks.
 - Discussion at CCRSG meetings will principally involve primary CCRSG members, SAT members, and staff. Primary members may call upon their alternates to address issues outside of their areas of expertise. At their discretion, meeting facilitators may call upon alternate members.

- **Active, focused participation.** Every participant is responsible for communicating his/her perspectives and interests on the issues under consideration. Voicing these perspectives is essential to enable meaningful dialogue. Everyone will participate; no one will dominate. Only one person will speak at a time. Everyone will help stay on track.
- **Respectful interaction.** Participants will respect each other's personal integrity, values and legitimacy of interests. This includes avoiding personal attacks and stereotyping.
- **Integration and creative thinking.** In developing, reviewing and revising work products, participants will strive to be open-minded and to integrate each other's ideas, perspectives and interests. Disagreements will be regarded as problems to be solved rather than battles to be won. Participants will attempt to reframe contentious issues and offer creative solutions to enable constructive dialogue.
- **Mutual gains approach.** Participants will work to satisfy not only their own interests but also those of other CCRSG members. Participants are encouraged to be clear about their own interests and to recognize the important distinction between underlying interests and fixed positions.
- **Commitment to ground rules.** As a set of mutual obligations, CCRSG members will commit to adhere to these ground rules once they are ratified. CCRSG members are encouraged to help uphold and enforce these ground rules. If a CCRSG member consistently deviates from these ground rules, that member may be replaced by another person upon confirmation by the director of the California Department of Fish and Game and the Blue Ribbon Task Force chair.

Commitment to process

- Participants will make a good faith effort to achieving the goals of the project on the schedule proposed.
- Participants will review meeting materials in advance of the meetings and come prepared to address the meeting objectives.
- Meetings will start on time. Participants who know that they will be absent, late, or have to leave early will inform project staff in advance and coordinate with their alternates as needed.

Identifying and Valuing Alternatives

- CCRSG members will strive to identify and value alternative MPA proposals. They will be open to proposals from others in the CCRSG or from outside the CCRSG. The valuation process will assess, using best readily available science and information, how each alternative satisfies the goals and objectives established for the MLPA Central Coast Project. The result of this process will allow the Blue Ribbon Task Force, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Fish and Game Commission to understand how the alternatives identified will satisfy the Marine Life Protection Act.
- The CCRSG facilitation team will seek to foster an approach to meeting management and to the identification and valuing of alternative MPA proposals that maximizes joint gains and mutual benefit, and also optimizes efficiency.

CCRSG Decision Rules

- CCRSG members recognize the need to make simple process agreements to move the effort forward. CCRSG facilitators will use “straw votes” to track progress and help the group arrive at short-term decisions to propel the process forward in an efficient fashion.
- In their advice-giving role, CCRSG members will strive to achieve a high level of consensus in developing and advancing alternative proposals for MPAs. However, it is not the intent here to accord CCRSG members a “de facto” veto on substantive issues, but rather to strive for an expression of proposals that earn broad support across CCRSG members’ interests. The objection of a few CCRSG members will not be grounds to impede movement.

Cooperation with Central Coast Science Advisory Sub-Team (Science Sub-Team)

- CCRSG members will work cooperatively with the Science Sub-Team in the development of options and work products. The Science Sub-Team will assist by reviewing supporting and draft documents, addressing scientific issues and information provided by the CCRSG, and framing and referring policy challenges to the task force.

Multi-interest Work Teams

- DFG and MLPA Initiative staffs expect that cross-interest group work teams will be an essential way to develop constructive, integrative work products during and between CCRSG meetings. The aim of such work teams is to encourage multi-interest options and work products rather than work products put forward by a single bloc or interest group. It is anticipated that work teams will meet primarily by teleconference.
- Work teams will be composed to include appropriate expertise and balance of interests. To the extent possible, work teams will be composed of primary representatives. When a primary representative is unavailable or lacks suitable expertise, an alternate representative may be selected to serve.

Media Contact

- CCRSG meetings are public and will be simultaneously webcast. Audio and video archives of the meetings will be available on the MLPA website a few days after each meeting
- In general, media contact regarding the project will be handled by MLPA staff.
- CCRSG members recognize the need to maintain a balance between providing timely information to constituents and making statements to the media that could undermine the success of the MLPA process. Appropriate topics for CCRSG members to address in speaking to the media include their own group’s interests or where the CCRSG is in the MLPA process. CCRSG members agree to avoid: a) making statements to constituents or the media that may prejudice the project’s outcome, b) speaking on behalf of another group’s point of view or characterizing their motives, or c) stating positions on preliminary proposals while they are still in development or refinement by the CCRSG.
- CCRSG members are encouraged to refer requests for additional contacts to MLPA staff or the CCRSG contact list. If needed, the CCRSG may convene a multi-interest media subcommittee to work with MLPA staff to develop briefings for the media.

- In briefing constituents, CCRSG members are encouraged to rely primarily on the Key Outcomes Memoranda produced for the meetings.

Information Sharing and Joint Fact Finding

- CCRSG members recognize that the MLPA Central Coast Project depends on using the best readily available information.
- Participants are encouraged to be as specific as possible in identifying types of information they believe will support the development of work products, including alternative proposals for marine protected areas. CCRSG members commit to share, and not withhold, relevant information. Tentative information will be treated as such.
- In the event two or more data sets or interpretations appear to conflict, participants will work collaboratively with members of the Science Sub-Team to narrow or clarify the basis of disagreement.

Role of Facilitation Team

- The CCRSG facilitation team is non-partisan and will not act as an advocate for particular outcomes. The facilitators will strive to ensure that all CCRSG members clearly articulate their respective interests and to assist members to complete their work in a well-informed and efficient fashion.
- The CCRSG facilitation team will prepare Key Outcomes Memoranda to summarize the main results of the CCRSG meetings. These Key Outcomes Memoranda will not strive to serve as a transcript of the meetings; rather, they will endeavor to summarize key decisions made, issues discussed, and the next steps identified for moving the project forward. The facilitators will prepare draft and final Key Outcomes Memoranda within 7-10 days of the meetings.