

**Guidance on Regional Goals and Objectives
Central Coast Goals and Objectives
June 20, 2005**

Regional Goals

At the first Central Coast Regional Stakeholder meeting, we discussed the relationship between the goals in the California Marine Life Protection Act and the regional goals that we will be developing for the central coast. We asked the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Office of the General Counsel for their interpretation. According to DFG,

- The MLPA does not require that all of its goals apply to all locations uniformly. Indeed, the Act contemplates that different goals will be emphasized as the particular location-specific characteristics require.
- The goals are linked to the guidelines. The guidelines require that "each" MPA must have "identified goals and objectives," and that individual MPAs "may serve varied primary purposes while collectively achieving the overall goals and guidelines of this chapter."
- Some goals may be deemed more important than others for a particular area in order to achieve the overall goals of the MLPA Act.

Consequently, the MLPA-I staff recommends that the CCRSG carefully review the statewide MLPA goals and consider how to 1) refine those goals to make them specific to the region and 2) consider which goals are most important to this region. The MLPA indicates that some goals may be more important than others in a given location for achieving the overall aim of the MLPA program depending on the location-specific characteristics, but that all goals apply to every region.

The statewide MLPA goals are:

1. To protect the natural diversity and abundance of marine life, and the structure, function and integrity of marine ecosystems.
2. To help sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations, including those of economic value, and rebuild those that are depleted.
3. To improve recreational, educational, and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems that are subject to minimal disturbance, and to manage those uses in a manner consistent with protecting biodiversity.
4. To protect marine natural heritage, including protection of representative and unique marine life habitats in CA waters for their intrinsic value.
5. To ensure that CA's MPAs have clearly defined objectives, effective management measures, and adequate enforcement, and are based on sound scientific guidelines.
6. To ensure the State's MPAs are designed and managed, to the extent possible, as a network.

Logical Link Among Goals, Objectives, and Indicators

MPAs (whether new or existing) are the tool or **action** we are empowered to use to achieve our regional goals and objectives. How will we know whether our management measures (i.e. MPAs) are effective? We need to logically link goals and objectives in a way that allows us to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our MPAs over time. By matching **indicators** (i.e. a unit of information measured over time) to our goals and objectives, we are establishing a process for measuring whether MPAs are achieving what they were designed to achieve.

The **regional goals** (=statewide MLPA goals) sets the broad vision of what we are trying to achieve through the establishment of a set of MPAs.

The **regional objectives** will help us to know that we have attained our goals. They should be “SMART” (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely).

An **indicator** is how we will actually measure the objective over time to document changes in specific attributes of the MPAs. The indicators provide a way to gauge whether the goals and objectives of the MPAs are being achieved. Appropriate indicators are selected after the goals and objectives are identified and are used as part of the monitoring program to evaluate effectiveness and guide adaptive management.

Some examples:

Goal	Objective	Potential Indicator (s)
(MLPA #2): To help sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations, including those of economic value, and rebuild those that are depleted.	Increase abundance of depleted near-shore rockfish species inside MPAs by [X%] over areas outside MPAs in [X] years.	Abundance of rockfish species X, Y, and Z
(MLPA #4) To protect marine natural heritage, including protection of representative and unique marine life habitats in CA waters for their intrinsic value.	Replicated examples of the regional habitat types (kelp forest, submarine canyons, rocky reefs, ETC) in each type of state MPA.	Acres of representative habitat in each type of MPA Biennial monitoring of status and condition of each habitat

Other examples of how goals, objectives and indicators are linked can be found in the book, *How is my MPA doing?* (ordered for the CCRSG and available now in pdf format at: <http://www.effectivempa.noaa.gov/guidebook/guidebook.html>).

Identifying Regional Objectives:

The CCRSG work group should identify some preliminary regional objectives for each of the regional goals for consideration by the broader CCRSG on July 7, 2005. These regional objectives will be preliminary and may not initially be as specific as we need eventually need them to be. They will continue to be refined over time as we develop the regional profile and gain a better understanding of the regional context. The MLPA identified some statewide objectives that can be used as a guide:

“The preferred alternative may include MPAs that will achieve either or both of the following objectives:

- (1) Protection of habitat by prohibiting potentially damaging fishing practices or other activities that upset the natural ecological functions of the area.
- (2) Enhancement of a particular species or group of species, by prohibiting or restricting fishing for that species or group within the MPA boundary.”

Please also review the:

- Results of the brainstorming activity at the June CCRSG meeting and try to incorporate the ideas of the broader CCRSG members
- Goals and objectives from other regional MPA efforts

Relationship Between the Regional Profile and Goals/Objectives for the Region:

The regional profile and the goals and objectives for the region will be developed roughly at the same time. Development of the goals and objectives and refinement of the regional profile will necessarily be iterative (back and forth) activities. That is, once the Regional Profile is complete, it will be clearer what special marine resources and opportunities in the region need to be considered under the MLPA. We anticipate refining the goals and objectives during July and finalizing them in August.