

September 28, 2005

From: Michael DeLapa, Central Coast Project Manager, MLPA Initiative
To: Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG)
Re: MLPA Initiative Staff recommendations regarding TBD Bin items

At the most recent CCRSG meeting, one issue arose for which staff has prepared an analysis. The question that was posed was whether replication of habitats should be achieved at the level of the biogeographic region or the study region?

This memo describes the issue, analyzes its relevance to implementation of the MLPA and the master plan framework, and provides an initial staff recommendation to the CCRSG regarding the issue.

Description of Issue

In CCRSG deliberations, the question arose whether "habitat replication" as defined in the MLPA should be applied and achieved within the Central Coast study region or at the level of a biogeographical region, across several study regions.

Relation to the MLPA and MPF and Other Relevant Law

The MLPA addresses habitat replication in the Section 2857 (3) Similar types of marine habitats and communities shall be replicated, to the extent possible, in more than one marine life reserve in each biogeographical region.

The Act provides no explicit rationale for replication. The *Science Advisory Team Advice on MPA Network Design* in the Master Plan framework, however, provides two scientific reasons for habitat replication:

To provide analytical power for management comparisons and to buffer against catastrophic loss of an MPA, at least 3-5 replicate MPAs should be designed for each habitat type within biogeographic regions.

The MLPA (1) requires habitat replication "to the extent possible;" (2) only requires replication of habitats in marine life reserves, and (3) only requires replication within a biogeographical region. The Act allows the Science Advisory Team to modify habitats (and depth ranges) and biogeographical regions as defined in the Act. Because the biogeographic region including the Central Coast study region extends from Pt. Conception to the Oregon border, the requirement for replication of habitats will be met by choices within the Central Coast study region and study regions to the north. As they are developed by the CCRSG, alternative packages of MPAs should consider and seek to meet the habitat replicate requirement where possible.

Recommendation

The MLPA Initiative staff recommends that habitat replication as defined in the MLPA be applied on a biogeographical region rather than within a study region, consistent with the requirements of the MLPA and guidance of the MPF. If the packages of MPAs developed in the Central Coast do not meet the requirements for replicate habitats, this requirement would be shifted to future study regions to the north that are in the same bioregion. However, the CCRSG should consider the requirement for habitat replication as it develops alternative packages of MPAs and seek to meet the requirement where possible.