

Meeting Summaries CCRSG – Interim Work Sessions November 4, 2005

Introduction and purpose

Over the past several weeks, CCRSG members, with support from MLPA Initiative staff, participated in a series of work sessions. Four took place in the Morro Bay area (October 20, 27, November 1, 2), while two took place in Monterey (October 20, November 2). The overarching objective of the work sessions was to continue CCRSG deliberations on candidate MPA concepts for the purpose of preparing for upcoming CCRSG discussions on candidate MPA “packages.”

This document summarizes some of the key results from the work sessions. The document has two primary purposes:

- To inform CCRSG members of what transpired in and resulted from the work sessions.
- To serve as a reference to assist stakeholders in recalling particular issues discussed or ideas proposed. [Note: other reference materials from the work sessions include detailed notes and the updated matrix of candidate MPA concepts.]

We have tried to capture these outcomes as accurately as possible. Given the document’s role as but one of several reference materials, we are not seeking stakeholder review. The main intent behind preparing the meeting summaries is to help ensure that the ideas discussed during the work sessions are not lost. It is important that the CCRSG build upon the work sessions as effectively as possible as it shifts its attention toward the development and evaluation of candidate MPA packages at the November CCRSG meeting.

The meeting summaries below are organized by south and north work sessions. The summaries include descriptions of work session objectives and participation, key issues discussed and decisions made, and next steps identified.

CCRSG - South Work Sessions

**October 20, 27 and November 1, 2, 2005
Morro Bay area, CA**

South Work Session #1 (October 20, 2005)

Objectives and participation

On October 20 in San Luis Obispo, 15 CCRSG members, plus MLPA Initiative staff and a few members of the public, met to discuss refinement of initial MPA concepts which were proposed at the October 5-6 CCRSG meeting in Monterey.

Key issues discussed and decisions made

Paul Reilly gave a brief presentation on some of the practical design guidelines to consider when proposing concept MPAs. Quite a few questions were asked and addressed by staff, with assistance from DFG enforcement officers Mark Crossland and George Gross.

The RSG members were given a hard copy of a spreadsheet which summarized all MPA concepts received from CCRSG members since the October 5-6 meetings. Unfortunately, the list was arranged alphabetically by presenter initials rather than geographically and included initial concepts which were revised at the October 5-6 meeting. This resulted in the need for additional time to digest the list. However, RSG members were able to locate their own concepts and verify and/or correct their accuracy rather quickly. A few concepts were eliminated because they could not be traced back to an RSG member.

There were 96 MPA concepts in the southern region on the original list. These covered most of the southern half of the study region, with the notable exception of the area from Lopez Point south to Salmon Creek, a distance of about 15 miles, where no MPAs were proposed.

Then, with the assistance of GIS technician Paulo Serpa, the group systematically went through what we call five "hot spot" subregions to look at possible duplication of concepts. The hot spots, subregions in which numerous overlapping concepts were generated, are the Big Sur, Pfeiffer to Big Creek, Cambria to Piedras Blancas, Morro Bay to Port San Luis, and Vandenberg regions.

No changes were made to any concepts proposed by an RSG member not in attendance.

By the end of the meeting, 22 of the 96 concepts were withdrawn by their proposers due to overlap, duplication, or reconsideration.

Next steps identified

The group decided that additional work was needed to refine the remaining concepts in the hot spots, and three evening meetings were scheduled to each deal with either one or two of them.

South Work Session #2 (October 27, 2005)

Objectives and participation

On October 27 in San Luis Obispo, eight CCRSG members plus MLPA Initiative staff and one member of the public met in person and by phone. The purpose of the work session was to continue to discuss refinement of initial MPA concepts for the southern region which were proposed at the October 5-6 CCRSG meeting in Monterey and subsequently reviewed at a follow up work session on October 20. The October 27 work session focused on two subregions: Vandenberg to Pt. Conception and Morro Bay to Port San Luis.

Key issues discussed and decisions made

Earlier that day CCRSG members received an email message from Executive Director John Kirlin recommending that the CCRSG not consider at this time candidate concepts for new or modified MPAs in state waters offshore of Vandenberg Air Force Base. The work session participants chose to discuss the region anyway.

Four concepts involving Safety Zone 4 were consolidated into one SMR/SMCA concept. It was noted that fishing for Dungeness crab is an allowable use in Safety Zone 4 because at no time do the fishing vessels actually stop. It was also noted that there is more hard bottom habitat within Safety Zone 4 than the coarse-scale mapping data show.

Considerable discussion occurred about safety zones 5, 6, and 7, which extend from Pt. Arguello to Pt. Conception, but no modifications were made to any concepts. The participants urged the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force and DFG to actively pursue further discussions with Vandenberg Air Force Base to consider new or modified MPAs in that area.

Several concepts were discussed about the Morro Bay estuary. It is possible that three of these concepts could be consolidated into one, but more discussion was needed among those who had suggested the concepts.

Two options were discussed about consolidating some of the concepts around the Diablo Canyon national security zone:

- a. An SMR with squared off boundaries, but exclude the area around the power plant intake.

- b. An SMCA with squared off boundaries and only allow take due to entrainment in the power plant intake.

Discussion occurred about the overall extent of a proposed MPA in this region but no conclusion was reached. It was also noted that two SMR concepts for Islay Creek to Diablo appeared to be very similar, if not identical. Two concepts also exist for Port San Luis Harbor.

Next steps identified

Kirk Sturm will contact the relevant individuals about the possibility of consolidating the Morro Bay estuary concepts. Staff agreed to look into the issue of duck hunting within the estuary as related to MPA designation. Kirk Sturm subsequently contacted the creators of the Port San Luis Harbor concepts to ask if they would be willing to consolidate these into single concepts, and they said that they would work on doing so.

South Work Session #3 (November 1, 2005)

Objectives and participation

On November 1 in Morro Bay, six CCRSG members, plus MLPA Initiative staff, DFG enforcement staff, the Big Creek Reserve Manager, and one member of the public, met in person and by phone to continue to discuss refinement of initial MPA concepts which were proposed at the October 5-6 CCRSG meeting in Monterey. The November 1 meeting focused on the subregion from Pt. Sur to Big Creek.

Three CCRSG members who had previously suggested MPA concepts in this subregion were not present; thus the group could not withdraw any of their concepts but could use them to suggest consolidated concepts using the new naming convention if a concept is supported by more than one individual (i.e. name starts with geographical area and not initials of creator).

Key issues discussed and decisions made

One concept in the Big Creek area was withdrawn and replaced by a concept to the north; two other concepts may be duplicative but one of the creators was not present so no action was taken.

Four new consolidated MPA concepts were developed for the Partington to Big Creek area with support of multiple stakeholders. These consist of two groups of paired MPAs; each pair is a SMR nearshore with an adjacent SMCA offshore; the two pairs are separated by an area open to all allowable fishing. These are not obligate pairs, i.e. one of the concepts in a pair could be carried forward without the other.

There was considerable discussion about the Pt. Sur to Fuller's Canyon area (Fuller's is south of Cooper Point). Conservation constituents supported establishing an SMR

within the area. Fishing interests opposed this and believe that the area presently is adequately protected. Suggestions were made about an integrative concept but no decision was reached on this. The two fishing representatives (recreational and commercial) then proposed a new group (n = 2) concept for one large SMCA from the Little Sur River to Cooper Pt and out to 3 miles which would allow salmon, rockfish, squid, and spot prawn fishing; these are the only fisheries currently operating in the area. Conservation interests did not feel that this would provide adequate protection.

Next steps identified

Concerns were voiced about the upcoming Nov 9-10 meeting. RSG members felt that the group needs to focus on areas of common ground or mutual agreement and not take steps backward. Participants expressed concern about spending time reviewing the 100+ initial concepts.

South Work Session #4 (November 4, 2005)

Objectives and Participation

On November 2 in Morro Bay, ten CCRSG members, plus MLPA Initiative staff, DFG enforcement staff, and three members of the public, met in person and by phone to continue to discuss refinement of initial MPA concepts that were proposed at the October 5-6 CCRSG meeting in Monterey. The November 2 meeting focused on the subregion from Piedras Blancas to Cambria.

Two CCRSG members who had previously suggested MPA concepts in this subregion were not present; thus the group could not withdraw any of their concepts. However, participants could use the concepts to suggest consolidated concepts using the new naming convention if the new concept was supported by more than one individual (i.e. name starts with geographical area rather than initials of creator).

Key Issues Discussed and Decisions Made

The members present discussed their hopes and goals as related to developing a component of an MPA network in this subregion. There was much discussion and cross-interest education, although there were no consolidations or new integrated proposals. The group partitioned the discussions into three areas; Piedras Blancas Point, San Simeon Point, and Cambria. Considerable discussion focused on the recent acquisition of 18 miles of shoreline by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), the possibility of future expanded use in this area, and the potential need for intertidal invertebrate protection. The possibility of creating intertidal SMCAs prohibiting invertebrate take only was discussed, as opposed to intertidal SMRs. Present regulations allow harvest of only certain types of invertebrates in the marine environment from mean high tide to 1000 feet from shore unless otherwise specified.

Questions were asked about kelp bed leases relative to establishing new MPAs. Staff will research these questions.

Concerns were expressed about the extensive coverage of concept MPAs in this subregion, which in total virtually covered the entire area. However, it was noted that MPA packages will likely have substantial open areas between proposed MPAs when all is said and done.

Next Steps Identified

Kirk Sturm will contact individuals by email to facilitate the development of new group concepts that consolidate some of the original concepts in preparation for the Nov 9-10 CCRSG meeting in Cambria. Kirk will also look into access and protection plans for the 18 miles of coastline recently acquired by DPR. All agreed that seeing full packages of proposals at the Nov 9-10 meeting, presented by various interests, will facilitate further discussion. There will be different packages, and although not all members may support any one package, there is the possibility that more members will support a compromise package.

CCRSB - North Work Sessions

**October 20 and November 2, 2005
Monterey, CA**

North Work Session #1 (October 20, 2005)

Objectives and participation

The first of two northern work sessions took place in Monterey on October 20, 2005 at the offices of the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). The primary objectives of the meeting were to confirm the accuracy of candidate MPA concepts and to discuss opportunities for modifying and consolidating these concepts. Fifteen primary and alternate CCRSB members attended the work session.

Key issues addressed and decisions made

- Work session participants discussed boundary design considerations and received feedback from DFG Enforcement. DFG Enforcement indicated that a key to effective enforcement is designing MPAs that are readily understandable by users (i.e., simple). DFG Enforcement emphasized the importance of straight MPA boundary lines and noted that while horizontal and vertical lat/long lines are preferred, other straight lines (i.e., diagonal) may work in particular cases.
- Participants asked a number of policy/legal questions and asked staff to follow up on these. Key issues included:
 - What are the differences in enforcement and administration between a State Marine Park (SMP), a State Marine Reserve (SMR), and a State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA)? Does the SMP designation impose a difference, possibly duplicative layer of enforcement in marine areas?
 - How would spear fishing be enforced in a SMCA abutting a SMR?
 - Can a SMR be established a certain distance (e.g., 50 yards) offshore to allow for shore fishing?
 - How does the MLPA or other DFG regulations address the issue of including a leased kelp bed in a SMR?
 - Does the MLPA require some deep-water habitat, including submarine canyons, within the central coast study region to be included in a SMR?
- Participants requested that the candidate MPA concepts from the external proposals be captured in the MPA decision support tool for future reference.
- The group discussed and refined candidate MPA concepts for 4 sub-regions: Pigeon Point to Needle Rock Point, Davenport to Capitola, Monterey to Santa Cruz, and Point Pinos to Point Sur. The group did not address the Monterey to Point Pinos sub-region during the work session but agreed to do so at a follow up work session. Participants offered to remove 8-10 of the previous candidate MPA concepts. For the most part, these were removed because they were viewed as having been

superceded by other candidate concepts or more recent thinking. Participants representing cross-interest groups offered 6 or so new candidate MPA concepts and took comments from the other participants. These discussions helped to clarify emerging areas of agreement and disagreement. Key comments included the following:

- Ano Nuevo. There was emerging support around a combination SMR and SMCA around Ano Nuevo.
- Santa Cruz. Participants discussed a number of existing MPA concepts in the Santa Cruz area and one new concept (Opal Cliffs SMCA). There was no single MPA concept that received significantly more support than any other.
- Elkhorn Slough. Participants showed strong agreement around a single Elkhorn Slough MPA concept.
- Participants expressed the view that it might be premature to remove many of the candidate MPA concepts from the list before the CCRSG begins discussing networks more explicitly.

Next steps identified

Participants scheduled a follow-up work session to take place Nov. 2 from 10 am - 3 pm in the Monterey area. The focus of the follow-up work session will be on the Monterey to Point Pinos sub-region. The work session will also focus on newly revised MPA concepts that work session members expect to produce for the Point Pinos to Point Sur sub-region.

North Work Session #2 (November 2, 2005)

Objectives and participation

The second northern work session took place on November 2, 2005 at the Beach Resort Monterey. The primary objective of this meeting was to continue the deliberation and refinement of candidate MPA concepts. The focus of this work session was on two sub-regions in particular: Monterey to Point Pinos, and Point Pinos to Point Sur. Sixteen primary and alternate CCRSG members attended the work session. Emphasis was placed on discussing new candidate MPA concepts having cross-interest group support.

Key issues addressed and decisions made

- During the work session, participants offered to withdraw over a dozen candidate MPA concepts. These were generally replaced by a smaller number of revised or consolidated concepts seen as improvements over the earlier versions. The new concepts were often described as representing “compromises” among user groups.

- Participants acknowledged that Monterey and Carmel Bays are heavily used, making the task of creating candidate MPA concepts for the area difficult and complex.
- Participants presented and discussed new candidate MPA concepts for the following areas:
 - Monterey shale beds. One new candidate MPA concept (SMCA) was discussed that focused on the Monterey shale beds. It was offered by a single interest group but drew heavily on consultations conducted with other CCRSG members. Several participants expressed concern regarding the enforceability and effectiveness of bag limits for a small area which are less than the existing DFG bag limits.
 - Monterey peninsula (Breakwater to Asilomar). Two new suites of candidate MPA concepts were proposed.
 - 1) The first was proposed by an individual CCRSG member based on consultations with other CCRSG members. It consisted of 4 individual MPAs (an expanded Hopkins SMR, an offshore Hopkins SMCA, a northern Pacific Grove SMCA, and a Pacific Grove Intertidal SMR). Key comments included the following:
 - There was strong support for a Pacific Grove area rocky intertidal SMR.
 - Several participant recognized that there has been strong historical interest to create a SMR along Cannery Row, but they also acknowledged that this area is characterized by multiple uses that might benefit more from an SMCA.
 - Some participants expressed the concern that the offshore Hopkins and northern Pacific Grove SMCAs impinged on important fishing grounds.
 - 2) The second suite of candidate MPA concepts was proposed by a group of CCRSG members representing multiple stakeholder interests (primarily consumptive users—15 commercial and recreational fishermen). It was also based on consultations with non-consumptive users. It consisted of 3 individual MPAs (an Ed Ricketts SMCA, a Pacific Grove Intertidal SMR, and an expanded Pacific Grove SMCA). Key comments included the following:
 - There was strong support for a Pacific Grove area rocky intertidal SMR from Hopkins to Asilomar.
 - Participants discussed different possibilities for restricting fishing off of the breakwater.
 - Participants were interested in discussing further the possibility of moving the Ed Ricketts SMCA boundary from the elbow out to the tip of the breakwater.
 - There was some support to make the Cannery Row area around kelp bed #220, a small portion of which already prohibits kelp harvesting, a SMR. Several fishing representatives indicated they would consider this.

- There was a lot of discussion about the pros and cons of extending Hopkins SMR west to Lovers Point. Participants also discussed expanding Hopkins SMR north to capture Hopkins Deep Reef.
 - Several participants expressed the concern that the expanded Pacific Grove SMCA was large but did not protect a lot of important habitat.
- Carmel Bay area. Three new suites of candidate MPA concepts were proposed.
- 1) The first suite was supported by a group representing multiple stakeholder interests (primarily consumptive users—15 commercial and recreational fishermen). It was also based on consultations with other CCRSG members. It consisted of 4 individual MPAs (a Carmel Bay Pinnacles SMR, a revised Carmel Bay SMCA, an expanded Point Lobos SMR, and an offshore Point Lobos SMCA). These new concepts were modifications of earlier concepts discussed at the October 20 work session. Key comments included the following:
 - There was strong agreement over expanding the Point Lobos SMR.
 - There was strong agreement around creating an offshore SMCA that captured the area west of an expanded Point Lobos SMR out to 3 miles.
 - There was some interest in finding ways to expand the Carmel Bay Pinnacles SMR that would bring in more of the valuable habitat but not overly constrict spear fishing and fishing interests. Participants expressed a willingness to discuss this further. Particular interest was placed on addressing Stillwater cove, an area of importance to spear fishermen.
 - There was some interest in finding a way to protect some of the hard bottom habitat off of Yankee Point while not overly impinging on the shallow water rockfish fishery as well as other fisheries. Participants expressed a willingness to discuss this further.
 - 2) The second suite of new candidate MPA concepts was proposed by a single interest group based on consultations with other CCRSG members. It consisted of 4 individual MPAs (an expanded Carmel Bay Pinnacles SMR, an expanded Point Lobos SMR, an offshore Point Lobos SMCA, and a Point Lobos-Garrapata SMCA). Key comments included the following:
 - Again, there was strong support for an expanded Point Lobos SMR and an offshore Point Lobos SMCA.
 - Participants again expressed interest in exploring new boundaries to the Carmel Bay Pinnacles SMR to address spear fishing and recreational fishing interests.
 - Several participants expressed concern that the Point Lobos-Garrapata SMCA impinges on an important rockfish fishery area.
 - 3) The third was proposed by an individual based on consultations with other CCRSG members. It consisted of 5 individual MPAs (an expanded Carmel Bay Pinnacles SMR, a SMCA north of Carmel Bay, a SMCA in north Carmel

Bay, a slightly expanded Point Lobos SMR, and a SMCA in south Carmel Bay. Key comments included the following:

- Participants recognized that this suite of MPAs constituted a compromise that focused MPA protection north of Point Lobos and left the region south of Point Lobos open for consumptive use.
 - Participants did not have a lot of time to discuss this suite of concepts.
- Participants posed several questions for MLPA Initiative staff, including:
 - Participants discussed kelp bed leases and expressed the concern that open beds were more at risk of being clear cut. Staff will look into this.
 - Participants asked if it would be permissible for the Monterey Bay Aquarium (or other commercial institutions) to take water directly from a SMR due to the potential for plankton entrainment? Paul Reilly agreed to look into this.

Next steps identified

Participants discussed preparations for presenting initial candidate MPA *packages* at the November 9-10, 2005 CCRSG meeting. Staff requested that the presenters of two full initial candidate MPA packages provide staff with key information (including boundaries for individual MPAs). Staff also requested similar information from stakeholders seeking to present partial packages. Mike DeLapa emphasized that the focus of the November CCRSG meeting will be on full packages produced by cross-interest groups. He also stressed that stakeholders proposing partial packages should work across interest groups to develop complete candidate packages.