

**Report 2 on the MLPA Initiative as Required in the
August 2004 Memorandum of Understanding
October 2005**

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) among the State of California Resources Agency (Agency), California Department of Fish and Game (Department), and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation (RLFF) structures the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative (Initiative). The MOU was signed in August 2004. This is the second semi-annual report required in the MOU.

The main organizational structure in support of the Initiative includes a variety of groups:

1. The Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF). This eight person group, appointed in September 2004, provides policy recommendations to the Department and Agency with regard to the MLPA. The BRTF has held seven meetings, most occurring over two days:

- September 2005 - San Luis Obispo
- July 2005 - Santa Barbara
- May 2005 – Sacramento
- April 2005 - Pasadena
- February 2005 - Monterey
- January 2005 - Long Beach
- October 2004 - Sacramento

Accomplishments to date include the selection of a central coast project region (Pigeon Pt. to Pt. Conception), adoption of a recommended Master Plan Framework, and approval of a set of regional goals, objectives and implementation and design considerations for the central coast.

2. The Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT). This panel, appointed in January 2005, provides scientific advice to the BRTF, Department, and regional stakeholder group on scientific issues and questions about marine protected area results and design. While it was initially thought that this group would meet every other month, they have met much more frequently to ensure timely response to stakeholder questions and need for input into the BRTF process. The SAT has held nine one-day meetings in 2005:

- October - San Luis Obispo
- September - Santa Cruz
- August - San Luis Obispo
- August - Oakland

- July - San Luis Obispo
- May - Oakland
- March - Oakland
- February - Oakland
- January - Oakland

Accomplishments to date include recommendations for marine protected area design included in the Master Plan Framework, responses to a significant number of regional stakeholder group questions, and a series of presentations to the BRTF and regional stakeholder group on general marine protected area information to support decision-making.

3. The Initiative staff has expanded considerably since the first report in April 2005, at which time an executive director and senior project manager were under contract. The operations and communications manager of the Agency and Department staff worked full time on the Initiative, with RLFF funding. In addition to the original membership, the Initiative staff now includes a central coast project manager, central coast operations and communications manager, principal planner, assistant marine planner, and policy analyst. A strong facilitation team from CONCUR, Inc. supports the Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group process, working with two outreach coordinators.

From the Department, a policy advisor and regional project coordinator continue to be deeply involved in the Initiative. The Department has continued to face staffing shortfalls, but even so has expanded its staffing for the process. Though the statewide technical advisor position was filled, it subsequently became vacant through a voluntary departure and has not been refilled. The Department has, however, hired a GIS analyst and assigned an existing GIS analyst to the process. Additional enforcement expertise has been brought into the process through participation of local area captains at regional stakeholder group meetings along with the oversight of a marine enforcement coordinator. The Department has also provided legal staff to review and comment on questions regarding the MLPA. Administrative assistance has been provided for note-taking and meeting preparation, and a number of other Department staff have participated at various meetings and provided technical support for the process.

4. The Statewide Interests Group (SIG) continues to meet by telephone conference approximately one week after each BRTF meeting. This group has provided input on BRTF agendas and selection of speaker panels as well as made suggestions for the process as a whole.
5. The Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG) was appointed by the Department and Initiative in May 2005. This group presently consists of 55 members and alternates representing a wide array of interests. The membership can be viewed at

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/centralcoast.html#members>. The group has held five two-day meetings:

- October - Monterey
- September - Cambria
- August - Monterey
- July - Morro Bay
- June - Monterey

Accomplishments to date include significant input into the Master Plan Framework, and adoption of a collection of regional goals, objectives and implementation and design considerations. The group is actively working to review potential marine protected area (MPA) concepts and develop proposals for alternative MPA recommendations along the central coast.

The MOU sets five deliverables and progress continues in each area, along with successful implementation of the first:

- **Submit the Department's draft Master Plan Framework to the Fish and Game Commission by May 2005 for proposed adoption by the Commission in August 2005.** The Master Plan Framework was adopted unanimously by the Fish and Game Commission in August 2005.
- **Prepare a comprehensive strategy for long-term funding of planning, management and enforcement of marine protected areas by December 2005.** Background work and contracts for this product have been successfully concluded. A draft strategy will be presented to the BRTF in November 2005.
- **Design and submit the Department's draft proposal for alternative networks of marine protected areas in an area along the central coast to the Fish and Game Commission by March 2006 for proposed adoption by the Commission by November 2006.** As noted above, the CCRSG is actively working toward this goal. The CCRSG is expected to complete development of alternative packages of MPAs in December 2005. The BRTF will first consider these alternative packages of MPAs at its January 2006 meeting and take final action in March 2006. Subsequently, a preliminary proposal will be made to the Fish and Game Commission by the Department and the regulatory process will begin.
- **Develop recommendations for coordinating the management of marine protected areas with the federal government by November 2006.** A joint Department, National Marine Sanctuary Program, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration MPA Science Center working group has been formed to address data needs. This group has

created a large database of geographic information system (GIS) layers, created an online GIS viewing site, and participated in the formation of a GIS mapping tool. The Department, Initiative staff, the sanctuary, and NOAA's MPA Science Center have collaborated to coordinate efforts. These activities and communications lay the foundation for preparing an MPA coordination report next year.

- **Secure agreement and commitment among state agencies with marine protected area responsibilities by November 2006 to complete statewide implementation of the Master Plan by 2011.** Discussions with the State Coastal Commission, State Water Resources Control Board and Department of Parks and Recreation have continued. Staff are actively seeking input from other agencies on both MPA design and timelines for meeting with the various entities involved with regulating resource use and access.

Efforts have continued with regard to wide public participation and transparency of the process:

- BRTF and CCRSG meetings are all live-broadcast via the worldwide web and all public meetings (including science team meetings) are recorded for later web viewing.
- Public comment periods have been included at all BRTF, SAT, and CCRSG meetings.
- Public comments have been invited and received through the Department's MLPA website.
- The Department's MLPA website has been revised through contract and will be re-launched in a more user friendly format next month.
- BRTF members have been present at several of the CCRSG meetings to listen to both stakeholder input and public comment.
- Fish and Game Commission (F&GC) members have been present at two BRTF meetings and the BRTF and F&GC held one joint meeting.