

**CALIFORNIA MARINE LIFE PROTECTION ACT INITIATIVE  
STATEWIDE INTERESTS GROUP  
DECEMBER 16, 2004 CONFERENCE CALL  
MEETING SUMMARY**

**Welcome, Roll Call and Logistics for Conference Call**

The meeting began with a brief welcome and introduction by Phil Isenberg, MLPA Task Force chair and his personal appreciation to all for their participation. MLPA Initiative staff were introduced, including John Kirlin, MLPA Initiative executive director; Mike Weber, senior project manager; Melissa Miller-Henson, MLPA Initiative operations & communications manager, and John Ugoretz, DFG's MLPA Policy Advisor. The facilitator, Gail Bingham from RESOLVE, called the roll with nearly all members present. By the end of the call, all members and alternates had participated with only one exception.

**Charge to the Statewide Interests Group (SIG)**

Melissa Miller-Henson explained that need for a state-level group such as this had been identified by participants in the MLPA Initiative constituent involvement roundtable discussions held in late August and early September 2004. She noted that the members of this group were nominated directly by stakeholders and selected based on their ability to communicate with a broad range of constituents. She also noted that the group's function is to provide feedback to the Blue Ribbon Task Force and the initiative staff regarding how the process is going and how to make it better. The initiative staff hope both to share information with stakeholders through the SIG and receive useful suggestions to improve the process. This is not a decision-making group, so it will not be required to vote on issues or reach consensus. It also is not a substitute for public hearings or other public processes on the issues themselves. Advice from this group may include help in identifying other stakeholders whose voices need to be heard in the process. The task force chair asked each of the SIG participants to give the task force a list of up to five specific concerns that it should keep its eyes on as the initiative process moves forward.

**Introductions**

Each SIG member and alternate present on the call was invited to introduce themselves and provide a little information about his or her organization and constituency and past involvement with the MLPA.

**Stakeholder Involvement at October 2004 Task Force Meeting**

SIG members were asked to describe what went well and what could be improved based on the October task force meeting and to make suggestions regarding future meetings and the MLPA website. Members expressed appreciation for the webcast of the meeting and the continuing availability of video and audio-only recordings of the meetings on the website. It was suggested that such coverage also be provided for the science team meetings. Initiative staff noted that webcasting is very expensive but that they are looking into it and are also considering the possibility of interactive webcasts. They will also be trying video conferencing for the January

task force meeting (to be held at the foundation offices of the California State University, Long Beach) with videoconference locations expected at:

- Humboldt State University in Arcata
- California State Association of Counties in Sacramento
- Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo
- National Marine Fishery Service in Santa Cruz

Broadcast on public access television also was suggested, although it may require special agreements with each station. Members also expressed appreciation for the opportunities for public comment at the task force meeting and for the openness of the meeting in general. Members expressed interest in receiving materials earlier in advance of the meeting and initiative staff said that was their goal, although it may not be achievable before the January meeting. Information on meeting and video conferencing sites and logistics will be available on the MLPA website.

### **Stakeholder Presentations for January Task Force Meeting**

Initiative staff explained that the objective for the January meeting is to provide the task force with information about the larger context in which the MLPA will be implemented, including the various other activities, laws, and regulations that will affect the assessment of need for protected areas. In particular, the military has requested an opportunity to present information on their activities, safety zones, and other issues. Initiative staff asked SIG members for additional suggestions of this type. Suggestions included information on:

- the effect of the California Ocean Protection Act on the MLPA
- National Marine Fisheries Service stock assessments
- restricted areas around nuclear or other power plants
- other federal law overlays or maps of existing protected areas or other use restrictions
- any other closed areas or marine protected areas (MPAs)
- previous studies by the Department of Parks and Recreation regarding biodiversity
- the existing framework regarding water quality

Members were requested to e-mail Melissa Miller-Henson with additional suggestions. Initiative staff informed participants that an initial overlay of all existing protected areas is being prepared but noted that it would not be complete by the January task force meeting. Staff also noted that the task force had been provided with Deborah McArdle's brochure on MPAs and with general information on existing MPAs and their status. Briefing material for the meetings will be posted on the web site, usually 10 days to 2 weeks prior to the meetings.

### **Process for Stakeholder Input in Developing the Draft Master Plan Framework**

Initiative staff provided a brief update on the status of the draft Master Plan Framework and asked for suggestions on how best to obtain stakeholder input. Staff is working from the table of contents presented at the October task force meeting and are developing an annotated version (with key questions and information sources noted) along with drafts of the simpler sections (e.g., background on MLPA and the initiative). Staff have drawn on comments received so far,

and will provide stakeholder comments to the task force along with the annotated draft in their January meeting briefing packets. They will begin developing other elements after the January task force meeting and will circulate drafts for comment and input from stakeholders and the science team (making clear that these are only drafts and not final decisions). The goal is to have the first draft prepared by mid-February.

Comments may be provided in writing, by e-mail, or even by telephone – all avenues are open. It was suggested that for some key issues (e.g., interpretation of goals and objectives, siting guidelines), it would be useful to convene workshops (with staff and stakeholders) for more in-depth discussion. Staff asked members to provide additional feedback on how best to organize such workshops and on which elements of the draft Master Plan Framework table of contents would benefit from such workshops. There was also discussion about how comments would be handled by the staff, and there were no objections to the suggestion that all member comments be posted to the MLPA website for other members and the public to read.

In response to a question, staff clarified that the prior MLPA regional working groups were disbanded. Any participants in those processes are welcome to join the MLPA Initiative listserv and can apply to participate when regional stakeholder groups are convened under the initiative process in the future. The central coast regional stakeholder group will be assembled shortly after the precise boundaries of the area are set by the task force, probably at the February meeting.

### **Balancing Multiple-Stakeholder and Single-Stakeholder Consultations**

John Kirlin, MLPA Initiative executive director, stated that he appreciated the suggestions regarding the use of workshops to address certain elements of the draft Master Plan Framework and regarding offers of technological ideas and assistance for the process. He noted that the initiative needs the SIG members to be a two-way conduit of information to and from their constituents and expressed appreciation for the direction the group is headed with support for transparency and openness in the process.

### **Future Statewide Interests Group Meetings and Next Steps**

Calls are planned to occur monthly, and the next call will be scheduled for shortly after the January task force meeting. Members were asked to e-mail Melissa Miller-Henson regarding:

- their availability for a call the week immediately after the January task force meeting
- specific contact information that they would like to be provided to the rest of the group

Members were advised that if they did not already have an alternate, they were free to send their nomination to Melissa Miller-Henson and that it would be reviewed and considered. Participants felt that a short (approximately two page) summary of SIG meetings/calls would be useful in sharing information about the calls, in lieu of detailed minutes. Members expressed satisfaction with the conference call format, and Chair Isenberg thanked the members for their participation.