

Selecting a Central Coast Study Region

Presentation to the MLPA
Blue Ribbon Task Force
February 22, 2005

MLPA Initiative Process

- BRTF makes recommendations to State Fish and Game Commission
- SAT, SIG
- One “deliverable” is a pilot project to implement the MLPA in some part of the central coast (Pt. Arena to Pt. Conception)
 - Due to Fish and Game Commission **March 2006**

Action: Phasing the MLPA

- Action today defines portion of 1,100 mile California coast in which to first apply MLPA – start a pilot/learning
- Does NOT establish any MPAs or restrictions
- Only Fish and Game Commission can establish MPAs
- An important action to comply with statute:
 - Moves MLPA forward
 - Defines which region and which stakeholders

Context for choice of study region

- MLPA – 1999
- Master Plan Team process – then seven regions, ended 2003
- Related processes: Channel Islands, national marine sanctuaries
- MOU to start MLPA Initiative – 2004

Steps preparing for this action

- Science Advisory Team considers and suggests modifications to criteria (Jan '05)
- BRTF approves criteria for selection of central coast study region (Jan '05)
- Possible study regions identified (10 – Jan/Feb '05)
- Science Advisory Team assesses possible study regions (Feb '05)
- Three public workshops (Feb '05)
- Public comments received

Areas of agreement

- Important criteria – ranked highly by both SAT and workshop participants
 - Biophysical
 - Available scientific knowledge
 - Boundaries of human uses
 - Large enough
- Preferred study regions by both SAT and workshops are mid to southern choices

Areas of concern expressed

- Need for more protected areas challenged
- MLPA process dominated by private funders
- Central coast region choice too hurried
- Too many regions = too many replicates
- Ultimate failure to protect valued areas
- Failure to choose a large enough central coast area for success

Specific regions suggested – examples from organizations

- Pt. San Pedro to Cambria – MBNMS
- Bodega Bay to Pt. Conception – Environmental Defense
- Bodega Head to Pt. Sur – Environmental Action Committee of West Marin
- Bodega Head to Cambria – Coalition of Organizations for Ocean Life
- Ano Nuevo to Pt. Sur – Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen's Association and Central Coast Fisheries Conservation Coalition

Specific regions suggested – examples from workshops and individuals in frequency order

- Pt. Año Nuevo to Pt. Concepcion
- Pt. Año Nuevo to Pt. Sur
- Bodega Head to Pt. Concepcion
- Pt. Arena to Pt. Año Nuevo
- Pt. Arena to Pt. Concepcion
- Pigeon Pt. to Lopez Pt.
- Most individuals fit above or desired protection of specific areas (e.g., Pt. Pinos – San Carlos Beach/breakwater in MB)

Science Advisory Team, high-ranked criteria

- Encompass upwelling cells (Pt. Arena, Pt. Reyes, Davenport, Pt. Sur and Pt. Conception)
- Large enough
- Biogeographic regions
- Human activity boundaries

Science Advisory Team on study region

- Four preferred regions – but “fuzzy” ends
 - Pt. Año Nuevo to Pt. Conception
 - Pt. Año Nuevo to Cambria
 - Bodega to Cambria
 - Pt. Año Nuevo to Pt. Arena
- Later individual communications support
 - Pt. Año Nuevo to Pt. Conception
 - Bodega Head to Pt. Año Nuevo/Pt. Sur

Learning from the discussions

- Diversity of habitats, intensity of human use, available science, scientific institutions, and possible partners are highest from Bodega Head to Pt. Sur
- Pt. Año Nuevo boundary divides a reef => use Pigeon Pt. (5 nautical miles north)
- Large areas of agreement among SAT members and workshop participants on criteria
- Substantial agreement among SAT members and workshop participants on study regions

Focus on three most mentioned study regions to frame choice

- Pigeon Pt. to Pt. Sur
- Pigeon Pt. to Pt. Conception
- Bodega Head to Pt. Conception

Pigeon Pt. to Pt. Sur

- Pros
 - High value, high knowledge, high use
 - Many available science institutions and stakeholders
 - Allows comparison to Pt. Lobos, already a reserve
 - One of seven study regions in earlier process
- Cons
 - Small area poses problems
 - May intensify conflict at next stage
 - Finding replicates could be difficult
 - Does not include pristine areas to south
 - Leaves the portion to Pt. Conception for later

Pigeon Pt. to Pt. Conception

- Pros
 - Wide variety of habitats and uses
 - Includes areas of high value, high use and high knowledge
 - Pt. Conception is a major boundary, biogeographically and in MLPA regions
 - A workable scale to complete MLPA by 2011
- Cons
 - Stakeholder participation over longer distance
 - Fishing uses more diverse south of Pt. Sur
 - Could rekindle Channel Islands antagonisms

Bodega Head to Pt. Conception

- Pros
 - Anchored by federal marine protected areas (Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones and Channel Islands) and includes MBNMS
 - Large enough for flexibility and replicates
- Cons
 - Inconsistent with biogeographical and human use boundaries
 - Stakeholder involvement difficult (distance, variety and across SF Bay metropolis)
 - Splits Bodega Bay port activity area

Choosing a study region

- Important phasing decision – 1st step to statewide implementation of MLPA by 2011 and should provide good model
- Large areas of agreement emerged in discussions
- Values do conflict
- Choice of a study region will begin extensive involvement with stakeholders and assembling readily available science to make recommendation of MPAs to Fish and Game Commission