

Draft Ground Rules

North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

(For review and adoption by MLPA NCCRSG)

The following ground rules have been informed by confidential interviews conducted with a cross section of the nominees for the MLPA North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCCRSG), including nearly all of the appointed north central coast (NCC) primary members, as well as CONCUR's professional experience. These ground rules are intended to foster and reinforce constructive interaction and deliberation among NCCRSG members; they emphasize clear communication, trust building, respect for divergent views, creative thinking, collaborative problem solving, and the pursuit of mutual gains. The NCCRSG may decide to reconsider and revise these ground rules if they appear not to be serving the NCCRSG process.

Representation

- **NCCRSG recruitment and selection.** NCCRSG members have been appointed by the director of the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the chair of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force. Taken together, appointments were made to achieve a diversity of stakeholder perspectives, expertise, and geography. NCCRSG members were appointed based on their match with the following selection criteria:
 - Able to bring first hand knowledge and perspective to bear on the marine resources of the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region
 - Able to balance a north central coast regional perspective with localized knowledge
 - Willing to express fundamental interests (as opposed to fixed positions) and to clearly convey the interests of one or more important stakeholder groups
 - Capable of working collaboratively, seeking to integrate the interests of a broad range of constituencies
 - Able to access and use an effective communication network to reach stakeholders not attending the public meetings
 - Committed to completing all aspects of the charge of the NCCRSG
- **Checking back with constituencies.** NCCRSG members have been recruited based upon their ability to ably represent the views of one or more important constituencies. NCCRSG members commit to: making themselves available to communicate with interested stakeholder constituents, keeping their constituencies informed of the NCCRSG's efforts, and reporting relevant feedback to the NCCRSG. In reporting back, NCCRSG members will strive to integrate the views of their constituency rather than resorting to a "lowest common denominator" portrayal. In checking back with their constituencies, NCCRSG members will seek to avoid prejudging preliminary proposals still in development by the NCCRSG.
- **Seating of primary participants.** During NCCRSG meetings, the following participants will be seated at the main table: primary NCCRSG members, the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) liaison, NCC Science Sub-Team members in attendance, lead MLPA Initiative and DFG staff, and project facilitators. NCCRSG alternates, other staff, and members of the public will be seated nearby.

Participation and Collaboration

- **Primary and alternate NCCRS members.**
 - Primary NCCRS members will make every effort to attend all of the NCCRS meetings. Alternate members are also strongly encouraged to attend all meetings.
 - Primary NCCRS members will work with their alternates to ensure that they are informed regarding NCCRS deliberations. This will enable alternates to step in effectively as needed and keep the project from “backsliding.” Primary and alternate members are encouraged to confer in advance of the meetings or during meeting breaks. They are also encouraged to confer with their broader constituencies at these times.
 - Discussion at NCCRS meetings will principally involve primary NCCRS members, members of the NCC Science Sub-Team, and MLPA Initiative and DFG staff. Primary members may call upon their alternates to address issues outside of their areas of expertise. At their discretion, meeting facilitators may call upon alternate members. Alternate members are encouraged to actively participate in breakout sessions.
- **Active, focused participation.** Every participant is responsible for communicating his/her perspectives and interests on the issues under consideration. Voicing these perspectives is essential to enable meaningful dialogue. Everyone will participate; no one will dominate. Only one person will speak at a time. Everyone will help keep the meetings on track.
- **Respectful interaction.** Participants will respect each other’s personal integrity, values and legitimacy of interests. Participants will avoid personal attacks and stereotyping.
- **Integration and creative thinking.** In developing, reviewing and revising work products, participants will strive to be open-minded and to integrate each other’s ideas, perspectives and interests. Disagreements will be regarded as problems to be solved rather than battles to be won. Participants will attempt to reframe contentious issues and offer creative solutions to enable constructive dialogue.
- **Mutual gains approach.** Participants will work to satisfy not only their own interests but also those of other NCCRS members. Participants are encouraged to be clear about their own interests and to recognize the important distinction between underlying interests and fixed positions.
- **Commitment to ground rules.** As a set of mutual obligations, NCCRS members will commit to adhere to these ground rules once they are ratified. NCCRS members are encouraged to help uphold and enforce these ground rules. If an NCCRS member consistently deviates from these ground rules, that member may be replaced by another person upon confirmation by the director of DFG and the chair of the BRTF.

Commitment to process

- Participants will make a good faith effort to achieving the goals of the project on the schedule proposed.

- Participants will review meeting materials in advance of the meetings and come prepared to address the meeting objectives.
- Meetings will start on time. Participants who know that they will be absent, late, or have to leave early will inform project staff in advance and coordinate with their alternates as needed.
- Cell phones, pagers and other electronic devices will be turned off or set to “silent” mode.

Identifying and Considering Alternative MPA Packages

- The North Central Coast Project has been structured to allow time for developing and deliberating multiple alternative packages of MPAs. This process will be an iterative one, with time allocated for SAT, BRTF and public review.
- NCCRS members will be open to proposals from other NCCRS members or from others outside the NCCRS.
- As part of their work, NCCRS members will strive to identify and consider alternative MPA packages. NCCRS members will consider, using best readily available science and information, how each alternative package satisfies the goals and objectives established for the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region. The result of this deliberation is intended to allow the BRTF, DFG, and the California Fish and Game Commission to understand how the alternative packages identified will satisfy the Marine Life Protection Act.
- The NCCRS facilitation team will seek to foster approaches to meeting management, and to the identification and consideration of alternative MPA packages, that maximize joint gains and mutual benefit, and also optimize efficiency.

NCCRS Decision Rules

- NCCRS members recognize the need to make simple process agreements to move the effort forward. NCCRS facilitators may use “straw votes” to track progress and help the group arrive at short-term decisions to propel the process forward in an efficient fashion.
- NCCRS members will strive to achieve a high level of consensus in developing and advancing alternative proposals for MPAs. The intent here is to strive for packages that earn broad support across NCCRS members’ interests, not to accord NCCRS members a “de facto” veto on substantive issues. The objection of a few NCCRS members will not be grounds to impede movement.

Cooperation with North Central Coast Science Sub-Team (Science Sub-Team)

- NCCRS members will work cooperatively with the Science Sub-Team in developing options and work products. The Science Sub-Team will assist the NCCRS by reviewing draft documents, addressing scientific issues and information provided by the NCCRS, and helping to frame and refer policy challenges to the BRTF. At their discretion, MLPA Initiative and DFG staff may plan for joint meetings or work sessions of the SAT or Science Sub-Team and the NCCRS.

Briefings to the BRTF

- NCCRS members will have an opportunity to present focused briefings on the progress of package development to the BRTF. The BRTF is expected to provide feedback on draft packages for consideration by the NCCRS.

Multi-interest Work Teams

- DFG and MLPA Initiative staff expect that cross-interest group work teams will be an essential way to develop constructive, integrative work products during and between NCCRS meetings. The aim of such work teams is to encourage multi-interest options and work products rather than work products put forward by a single bloc or interest group. It is anticipated that work teams will meet primarily by teleconference, although in-person meetings are encouraged.
- Work teams will be composed to include appropriate expertise and balance of interests. To the extent possible, work teams will be composed of primary representatives. When a primary representative is unavailable or lacks suitable expertise, an alternate representative may be selected to serve.

Media Contact

- NCCRS meetings are public and will be simultaneously webcast. Audio and video archives of the meetings will be available on the MLPA website a few days after each meeting.
- Media contacts regarding the project from a “big picture” perspective will be handled by MLPA Initiative and DFG staff. First contacts should go to Steve Martarano, DFG information officer at (916) 654-5866, (916) 804-1714, cell; or Melissa Miller-Henson, MLPA Initiative operations and communications manager at (916) 654-2506, cell (530) 400-2545.
- On occasion, reporters may call individual NCCRS members for comment about a particular issue. Members who are contacted by the media will speak only on behalf of their group or constituency, or concerning the NCCRS’s progress in the MLPA process. After commenting, please contact an MLPA communications person listed above to give them a “heads up” that a media entity is working on a story.
- NCCRS members recognize the need to maintain a balance between providing timely information to constituents and making statements to the media that could undermine the success of the MLPA process. NCCRS members agree to avoid: a) making statements to the media that may prejudice the project’s outcome, b) representing another group’s point of view or characterizing their motives, or c) stating positions on preliminary proposals while they are still in development or refinement by work teams or by the NCCRS.
- NCCRS members will refer requests for additional contacts to MLPA and DFG staff listed above or the NCCRS contact list. If needed, the NCCRS may convene a multi-interest media subcommittee to work with MLPA Initiative and DFG staff to develop briefings for the media.
- In briefing constituents, NCCRS members are encouraged to rely primarily on key outcomes memoranda to be produced for the meetings.

Public Comment

- Designated times at NCCRSG meetings will be agendized for public comment. Efforts will be made to hold public comment at consistent time slots and keyed to important NCCRSG work product discussions. At all other times of the meeting, comments and discussion will be only among NCCRSG members and alternates, Science Sub-Team members, and MLPA Initiative and DFG staff.
- To the extent possible, public comments will be directed toward the work effort, products, or process of the NCCRSG. Comments on subjects external to the MLPA should be directed to other forums.
- Members of the public are encouraged to convey their comments to relevant colleagues who serve as NCCRSG members or alternates. Members of the public are also encouraged to submit comments in writing (via email to MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov). Written comments will be distributed to NCCRSG members.
- Public comments may be limited to up to 3 minutes per individual speaker. The NCCRSG facilitation team will exercise flexibility in allocation of speaking time depending on the number of comments.

Information Sharing and Joint Fact Finding

- NCCRSG members recognize that the MLPA North Central Coast Project relies on using the best readily available information.
- MLPA Initiative and DFG staff intend to create multiple opportunities for data sharing and joint fact finding within the NCCRSG.
- NCCRSG members are encouraged to be as specific as possible in identifying types of information they believe will support the development of work products, including alternative packages of marine protected areas. NCCRSG members commit to share, and not withhold, relevant information to inform the revision of the *Regional Profile of the North Central Coast Study Region (Alder Creek/Point Arena to Pigeon Point, California)* and the identification of candidate MPAs.
- NCCRSG work teams may develop preliminary MPA packages, which should be regarded as tentative and not subject to broad distribution until they have been presented to the NCCRSG. Tentative information will be treated as such.
- In the event that two or more data sets or interpretations appear to conflict, participants will work collaboratively with members of the Science Sub-Team to narrow or clarify the basis of disagreement.

Role of Facilitation Team

- The NCCRSG facilitation team is non-partisan; they have no stake in any particular set of alternative packages. They will not act as an advocate for particular outcomes. The facilitators will strive to ensure that all NCCRSG members clearly articulate their respective interests and to assist members to complete their work in a well-informed and efficient fashion.

- The facilitation team will use its discretion in guiding meetings and may propose agenda adjustments. The facilitation team may also use straw voting to track a range of preferences on emerging issues.
- The NCCRSG facilitation team will prepare key outcomes memoranda to summarize the main results of the NCCRSG meetings. These key outcomes memoranda will not strive to serve as a transcript of the meetings; rather, they will endeavor to summarize key decisions made, issues discussed, and the next steps identified for moving the project forward. The facilitators will prepare key outcomes memoranda within 7-10 days of the meetings.