

**California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative:
Proposed Blue Ribbon Task Force Operating Procedures**

For any collaborative process to move forward smoothly, it is helpful for those involved to agree at the onset on the purpose for the process and on the procedures by which the group will govern its discussions, deliberations, and decision-making.

I. Charter of the Blue Ribbon Task Force

The Secretary for Resources determined it beneficial to convene a task force to make public policy recommendations and to enhance the state's ability to carry out its mandate under the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). The charge to the Blue Ribbon Task Force (Task Force) is to meet the objectives of the MLPA Initiative, including: to oversee the development of a draft Master Plan Framework for the Department of Fish and Game (Department) to present to the Fish and Game Commission by May 2005, to oversee a regional project to develop a proposal for alternative networks of marine protected areas in an area along the central coast to present to the Commission by March 2006, to prepare a comprehensive strategy for long-term funding of MLPA implementation by December 2005, and to develop recommendations for improved coordination with federal agencies involved in marine protected areas management by November 2006.

II. Role of the Blue Ribbon Task Force

The Task Force will oversee the development of four products (see charge of the Task Force) and will work to resolve policy disputes and provide direction in the face of uncertainty, while meeting the objectives of the MLPA. The Task Force process will be directly supported by four staff members and indirectly, through the Initiative Steering Committee, three Department staff. Additional support will be provided by other Department staff and independent contractors, as needed and requested. One member of the Task Force will serve as liaison to the Central Coast MLPA Project.

Committees of the Task Force may be formed to conduct work outside the regular meetings. The Task Force will designate committee members as needed for the anticipated tasks and outcomes. At the direction of the Task Force, committee members may develop draft products and make recommendations to the Task Force. Committees will not make decisions on behalf of the Task Force.

Department of Fish and Game. The Department is the lead agency for the MLPA process and is seeking the advice and recommendations of the Task Force. This advice will be used in developing the draft Master Plan Framework and proposed alternative networks of marine protected areas in an area along the central coast that are eventually submitted to the Fish and Game Commission, the decision-making body for the MLPA

III. Participation

Interests Represented. Task Force members do not represent specific parties, organizations, agencies or others that have an interest, role, responsibility and/or would be substantially affected by the development and implementation of the MLPA Initiative.

Attendance at Meetings. Each Task Force member is expected to attend each full meeting. It is the responsibility of the member to stay fully briefed on all Task Force meeting discussions and deliberations. The Central Coast liaison will also attend meetings of the Central Coast MLPA Stakeholder Group.

IV. Meetings

Open Meetings. Task Force meetings will be open to the public. Members of the public will be given opportunities at identified times at each meeting to make comments, raise questions or submit materials, as time permits and the Task Force directs.

Video or Audio Recordings. Every effort will be made to make audio or video recordings of each regular meeting available to the public.

Agendas. Proposed meeting agendas will be drafted by the Executive Director and other staff in consultation with the Task Force chair and under the advice of Task Force members. Proposed agendas will be circulated in advance of meetings and approved or revised at the beginning of each meeting.

Meeting Summaries. Meeting summaries and action item lists will be prepared by the Executive Director in consultation with the Task Force chair to assist the Task Force in documenting its progress and activities. Draft meeting summaries will be provided to the Task Force for correction and comment prior to distribution to the public. Meeting summaries will be distributed to the public via the Initiative web page.

V. Decision-Making and Commitments

Decision Making. Decisions will be made by a quorum of the Task Force at regular meetings. Those absent from any meeting will be asked to provide written comments within one week of a decision, and if they do not, their agreement will be assumed.

Quorum. If less than a majority of the Task Force members are present, decision-making will be postponed until a quorum is reached.

Consensus. When concurrence among members is possible, the Task Force will strive to make decisions by consensus. Consensus is defined as all Task Force members can agree to the recommendation or decision.

VI. Safeguards

Good Faith. All Task Force members agree to act in good faith in all aspects of this collaborative effort. Members are encouraged to offer a free and open exchange of ideas, views and information prior to making recommendations or reaching consensus. Personal attacks are not acceptable.

Information. Task Force members agree to share all relevant information to the maximum extent possible. Members will provide information as much as possible in advance of the meeting at which such information is used. Task Force staff will make a good faith effort to distribute documents to Task Force members and the public at least two weeks in advance of requested action.

VII. Process Reminders

- € Seek to learn and understand each other's and the public's perspective
- € Encourage respectful, candid and constructive discussions
- € Provide balance of speaking time
- € If you disagree, offer an alternative solution
- € Seek to resolve differences and reach consensus
- € Discuss topics together rather than in isolation
- € Make every effort to avoid surprises
- € No sidebar conversations
- € Cell phones shall be turned off or in the silent mode during formal meeting sessions