

Appendix K. Principles of Public Involvement

Public involvement provides an opportunity for all potentially affected and interested parties to become informed about and involved in the process of developing and implementing Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) and research plans. Public involvement also ensures that decision-makers are better informed when making management decisions. It provides a process for obtaining a wide range of perspectives and information that helps ensure that FMPs and research plans are thorough, well-rounded and effective. Public involvement early in the process can provide decision-makers with advance notice of the public's concerns and potentially reduce delays in the approval process. To help ensure effective involvement and achieve these benefits, adherence to the following principles is important:

1. Timeliness and Efficiency

- a. Purposes and goals of public involvement should be clearly defined and communicated in a timely manner.
- b. Public involvement should begin at the initial planning stages so that opportunities for input can be clearly identified and appropriately scheduled in the planning process.
- c. Public involvement should be planned in such a way that the circumstances and facts are presented and conveyed in a manner that allows the public to determine how best to participate.
- d. Formats for public involvement should be tailored to meet the needs of each situation.
- e. The public should be informed of what decisions the participation process can affect and how that particular process can affect them.

2. Equity and Inclusiveness for all of the public

- a. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) should seek to communicate effectively with the full range of the public and use methods that involve diverse groups.
- b. The DFG should recognize the public's potential economic limitations in participating and provide opportunities that equalize participation and support needs and economic requirements of different individuals and groups.
- c. The DFG should apply active, innovative methods in order to offer comparable opportunities for informing, educating and consulting with varied members of the public to achieve broad and equitable participation.
- d. When appropriate, the DFG should use several types of meetings to provide a more equitable opportunity for public involvement. Notice of such meetings will provide information on how the public can participate and any restrictions that may apply.

3. Accessibility

- a. The DFG should conduct its business in an open way.
- b. The DFG should make all relevant documents available for public review.
- c. Documents to be discussed at meetings should be made available to all interested persons with enough time to allow them to review the documents.
- d. Records of meetings with the public should be kept. The summary report of a meeting should include recommendations made, may be available on the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) web page, and may be provided upon request.

4. Accountability and Evaluation

- a. The DFG should have clear objectives for public participation established in advance of meetings.
- b. The DFG will provide the public with information on possible next steps and decisions that need to be taken by the DFG regarding specific subject areas that the public will be discussing.
- c. The DFG will inform the public how and when their comments will be considered in the ongoing activities of the DFG.
- d. The DFG will evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement processes to allow for continuous improvement of those processes by obtaining both internal and external comments and suggestions.