California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
Strategy for Stakeholder and Interested Public Participation in the
MLPA South Coast Study Region
Revised ~~September 4~~October 28, 2008

To communicate the opportunities that exist for stakeholder and interested public participation, this *Strategy for Stakeholder and Interested Public Participation* will be published on the California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative (~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative) website and circulated widely. In addition, a timeline with the major milestones of the ~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative will be created, showing how and at what points in time these methods for involvement might occur, and illustrating the different organizations and individuals involved in the ~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative and their relationship to one another.

The success of the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative depends to a significant degree on incorporating meaningful public and stakeholder input into the work of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force ~~(BRTF)~~, Master Plan Science Advisory Team ~~(SAT)~~, and South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group ~~(RSG)~~ to help the State of California implement the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA).

This strategy identifies the various methods to be used to help ensure quality public and stakeholder participation in developing recommendations the ~~BRTF~~task force delivers to the California Fish and Game Commission for the MLPA South Coast Study Region ~~(SCSR)~~. There are two general categories of methods described in this document which differentiate between "the interested public" and "stakeholders":

- The interested public strategies are those that any person, on their own initiative, can avail themselves of, to follow and provide input into the work of different groups (i.e., ~~BRTF~~task force, ~~SAT~~science advisory team) and individuals. Methods for interested public participation include:
  - Open meetings
  - Public comment at meetings and workshops
  - Written public comment
  - Public outreach meetings and presentations
  - Internet-based technologies
  - Media coverage
  - Print materials
  - Key communicators

- Stakeholder strategies are those that will solicit the views of and involve those with a direct interest in the marine environment. Specific methods of stakeholder participation to be utilized through the ~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative process are:
  - Regional stakeholder group
  - Stakeholder panel presentations at ~~BRTF~~task force meetings
  - Statewide interests group
  - ~~Regional stakeholder group~~
  - Roundtable discussions

- o Study tours and field trips
- o Invited speakers
- o Stakeholder-hosted meetings
- o <u>Workshops</u>
- o Joint fact- finding
- o Local community profiles
- o Interviews

Background

Creating a collaborative, mutually beneficial relationship with stakeholders and the public is essential to the success of any project, including the ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative. Collaborative relationships with stakeholders can increase stability in a complex environment and expand the capacity for successful implementation under changing circumstances. Collaboration with stakeholders offers the opportunity to deepen mutual understanding about the issues at hand, explore and integrate ideas together, generate new options and solutions that may not have been considered individually, identify and resolve areas of conflict, and ensure the long-term availability of resources to achieve mutual goals.

In recognition of these benefits, the focus of this strategy is on building a robust network of positive, mutually reinforcing stakeholder relationships and interested public involvement. This network of relationships will help ensure the success of the ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative, and also creates an evolving structure within which the long-term goal of creating a cohesive network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in California can be achieved. This strategy also builds upon the lessons learned through the first two ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative study regions in 2004-2008 and recommendations made during public workshops in June/July 2008.

A network of relationships is supported by the MLPA, which emphasizes involving affected parties, including commercial fishing interests, recreational users, conservationists, scientists and others, in developing and evaluating management proposals for marine resources. As intended by this legislation, the structure of the ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative provides for local communities and stakeholders to share relevant knowledge, information and suggestions on statewide and regional proposals, including firsthand observations, socioeconomic information, and suggestions for monitoring, evaluation and stewardship of MPAs. The <u>MLPA B</u>lue <u>R</u>ibbon <u>T</u>ask <u>F</u>orce, appointed by the California secretary for resources, is fulfilling this legislative intent through a variety of methods designed to provide opportunities for the interested public and stakeholders to positively contribute to the proposals developed under the guidance of the ~~BRTF~~task force.

Stakeholders Defined

Stakeholders can be defined as "individuals or organizations who stand to gain or lose from the success or failure of a system" (Nuseibeh and Easterbrook, 2000). For a network of MPAs,

this can include designers of the network, resource managers, coastal tourism businesses, the conservation community, and users of marine resources, such as fishers, divers, kayakers, researchers, underwater photographers, and boaters.

Since stakeholders are those who are impacted by, or have an impact on a network of MPAs, their perspectives need to be taken into account in order for the network to ultimately be successful. Stakeholders can have positive or negative views regarding a given product or action, and often don't agree with one another, sometimes making it a challenge to reconcile their varied viewpoints. The ~~BRTF~~ task force has been appointed for the third study region of the ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative to address this possibility by providing guidance and direction to the regional stakeholder group and working to resolve policy disputes.

In a user-centered process, special emphasis is placed on *one* type of stakeholder—the users of the system—arguing that user experience needs to be carefully crafted to satisfy user needs. Understanding user needs and goals is certainly *necessary*, but it will not be *sufficient* for producing a successful design of MPAs. In addition to an understanding of user needs and perspective, a well designed network of MPAs needs to incorporate sound science and effective management principles, as well as the needs and desires of the general public.

Interested Public Participation

Public participation is vital to the successful implementation of the MLPA. As outlined in a memorandum of understanding among the ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative partners – the California Resources Agency, California Department of Fish and Game and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation – all publicly noticed meetings of the ~~BRTF~~task force, ~~SAT~~science advisory team and ~~RSG~~regional stakeholder group will be ~~meeting proceedings will be transparent and~~ open to the public and decision-making in the initiative process will be transparent.

Key opportunities for public participation include the following:

Open meetings
All scheduled meetings of the ~~BRTF~~task force, ~~SAT~~science advisory team and ~~RSG~~regional stakeholder group will be noticed in advance and open to the public; whenever possible, these meetings will also be simultaneously webcast. Meeting agendas and supporting materials will be available for public review, using standard message dissemination techniques such as the Internet, email, list servers, print mailings and other methods on special request. Written meeting summaries and, depending on the technology used, video and/or audio recordings will be available.

Public comment at meetings
The agenda of each ~~BRTF~~ task force and ~~SAT~~science advisory team meeting will include the opportunity for public comments on actions to be taken, as well as a general public comment period for any subject related to that body. Each ~~RSG~~regional stakeholder group meeting will

include a general public comment period for subjects related to the work of the RSGregional stakeholder group.

Written public comment
The public may submit formal written comments to the MLPAIMLPA Initiative, either from the MLPA website or at any MLPA meeting. These comments will be distributed to the appropriate body for review as well as posted on the MLPA website. The public is also welcome to provide general or specific comments on key issues or documents being considered for adoption. The BRTFtask force, SATscience advisory team and RSGregional stakeholder group will consider public comments and questions while developing final versions of key documents. Efforts will be made to communicate how public and stakeholder comments are or are not reflected in decision-making.

Public outreach meetings and presentations
Public outreach meetings were held prior to the start of the regional MPA planning process and will be held again midway through the MPA planning process. The purpose of these meetings is to provide the public with another opportunity to provide feedback at all stages of the process, including feedback on MPA proposals being considered, as well as specific feedback on geographic areas.

Presentations to targeted groups or at large public events are a useful way to disseminate information and educate stakeholders and the public. Presentations will be given throughout the process to help ensure that stakeholders and members of the public are informed of the process and how they can become involved.

Internet-based technologies
The MLPA website, www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa, includes functions such as a list server and a simultaneous webcast of meetings. These and other types of functions will continue to be implemented to the extent that the manageability and cost of these technologies is not prohibitive.

Several new web technologies will be implemented to enhance the effectiveness of outreach and education activities:

1. *New user webpage* - There are often two very distinct types of visitors to the website: 1) regular users who are familiar with the MLPAIMLPA Initiative and use the website to download documents and stay informed of current events; and 2) new users who are just being introduced to the MLPAIMLPA Initiative. To accommodate the needs of these disparate groups, a "new user" page will be developed that will serve as an introductory portal for new visitors to the website.

2. *E-newsletter* – A periodic e-newsletter specific to the MLPA South Coast Study Region will be developed for distribution to the MLPA listserv. The newsletter will summarize all

> ~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative public meetings and events during a specified time period and list all upcoming ~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative meetings and events in a succinct document.

> 3. *New media* - Online communication tools offer an additional opportunity to share ~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative news and information. By using social networking technologies such as Facebook, YouTube, MySpace and Flickr, the ~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative will engage a wider segment of ocean users in southern California through a multimedia approach.

Media coverage
A comprehensive media relations approach, which includes both "new" and traditional media, will be used to inform the public throughout the MLPA Initiative process and offer an outside view of the progress being made in the study region.

Print materials
Printed materials are an invaluable tool to help educate and stimulate the public to become involved in the process. A series of handouts have been created and a tri-fold brochure will be developed to explain and introduce the MLPA, ~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative, and study region process to community members. A core set of volunteers will be used to help disseminate these materials; the materials will also be posted to the MLPA website so that they may be used by any organization or individual at any time.

Key communicators
A network of "key communicators" ~~has being developed~~will be used to help disseminate outreach and educational materials in the study region. Key communicators consist of members of the general public, educational institutions, agencies, non-governmental organizations, and user groups. The key communicators have agreed to disseminate ~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative information through their pre-existing communication channels, greatly enhancing the reach of ~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative outreach materials.

Stakeholder Participation

The principal focus of improving stakeholder involvement in marine management and conservation draws upon years of planning and meetings with stakeholders. These methods go beyond traditional interested public observation and comment to foster direct and useful communication among those with a direct stake in the management of coastal and marine resources and decision-makers in the ~~MLPA~~MLPA Initiative process.

Key opportunities for stakeholder participation include the following:

Regional stakeholder group
This group will include approximately 30 individuals from the study region who provide perspectives and skills that will be valuable in developing alternative proposals for MPAs in the study region. The director of the California Department of Fish and Game and the chair of the

~~BRTF~~task force will solicit nominations, and jointly select from the nominees a group whose members represent the broadest possible stakeholder interests and are capable of working together to successfully complete the project. The group will meet regularly, most often in person, for approximately one year to develop alternative MPA proposals for the study region. The types of representatives selected may include educators, resource managers, extractive users, non-extractive users, scientists, conservation interests, members of the general public and enforcement personnel, among others.

Stakeholder panels *at blue ribbon task force meetings*
At select ~~BRTF~~task force meetings, panels of approximately four to six stakeholders will be asked to provide their perspectives on a question or issue posed in advance of the meeting. The purpose is to encourage a cross-section of stakeholders to engage in dialogue with one another and with the ~~BRTF~~task force and to offer recommendations or other points of consideration on an issue to be discussed by the ~~BRTF~~task force at that meeting. Speakers will be selected based on expertise by the ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative executive director and chair of the ~~BRTF~~task force, in consultation with the MLPA Statewide Interests Group (SIG) (see below) and/or the ~~RSG~~regional stakeholder group.

Statewide ~~i~~Interests ~~g~~Group
This group will include representatives of key constituent groups throughout the state, to serve as an additional mechanism for two-way communication between the ~~BRTF~~task force and stakeholders about the approach and activities of the ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative and about policy issues of statewide concern relevant to the ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative. This group will meet via facilitated conference call and will be convened by the chair of the ~~BRTF~~task force or the executive director of the ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative as necessary or desired, but generally about ten days after each ~~BRTF~~task force meeting. The group will provide feedback on the previous ~~BRTF~~task force meeting, respond to specific questions posed by the chair or executive director, and recommend panel speakers and subject matter for upcoming ~~BRTF~~task force meetings.

~~Periodic stakeholder r~~Roundtable discussions
The ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative will periodically host facilitated discussions with stakeholders. The discussions will be timed to offer an opportunity for stakeholders to provide meaningful input into key work products or deliverables that are being drafted or considered by the ~~BRTF~~task force, ~~SAT~~science advisory team or ~~RSG~~regional stakeholder group. The objective of the discussions will be to elicit possible solutions to identified challenges.

The stakeholder panels, MLPA Statewide Interests Group, regional stakeholder group and roundtable discussions involve facilitated discussions of some type. While facilitated meetings will play a prominent role in the ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative, there are additional tools that can foster effective stakeholder involvement and integration of useful information.

Study tours and field trips

In a study tour/field trip, a group of ~~BRTF~~task force members and MLPA stakeholders gather at relevant sites to learn more about issues related to a ~~system~~ network of MPAs or to visit a place where MPAs already exist. Study tours/field trips are designed to strengthen lines of communication between the ~~BRTF~~task force and stakeholders and/or to introduce ~~BRTF~~task force members to others who have already worked their way through similar questions in a different geographic location. To the extent possible, study tours/field trips will be held in conjunction with ~~BRTF~~task force meetings and at additional times when at least two ~~BRTF~~task force members are able to participate.

Invited speakers
A group of ~~BRTF~~ task force members and MLPA stakeholders may invite participants from a place where MPAs already exist to introduce those who are in the middle of deciding complex matters to others who have already worked their way through similar questions in a different geographic location. To the extent possible, speakers will be invited to ~~BRTF~~ task force meetings and at additional times when at least two ~~BRTF~~task force members are able to participate.

Stakeholder-hosted meetings
Opportunities will be created for groups of ~~BRTF~~task force, ~~SAT~~science advisory team and ~~RSG~~regional stakeholder group members to visit with stakeholders in their communities. Through these visits, ~~BRTF~~task force, ~~SAT~~science advisory team and ~~RSG~~regional stakeholder group members will have an opportunity to learn about the unique needs of the community and how various approaches to designing and managing MPAs could best protect both the natural resources and key social and economic dynamics and resources of the area. Stakeholders are encouraged to forward ideas for constituency-hosted meetings, where ~~BRTF~~task force, ~~SAT~~science advisory team and ~~RSG~~regional stakeholder group members will participate to the extent feasible.

Workshops
Workshops can increase the capacity to gather information relevant to the ~~MLPAI~~MLPA Initiative process, on topics such as marine protected area management and stewardship, regional objectives, enforcement, monitoring and management of fisheries, or social science research. Workshops can also be an effective method for local stakeholders to provide information and suggestions to the ~~BRTF~~task force and ~~RSG~~regional stakeholder group. Workshops will be held periodically as subject matter dictates or the need arises.

~~Presentations~~
~~Presentations to targeted groups or at large public events are a useful way to disseminate information and educate stakeholders and the public. Presentations will be given throughout the process to help ensure that stakeholders and members of the public are informed of the process and how they can become involved.~~

Joint fact-finding

Unlike the traditional coastal management process, joint fact-finding begins with collaboratively developing a common set of issues and questions. While the research itself most often is conducted by experts, defining the research objectives, agreeing on an approach (and on who conducts the research), and analyzing the resulting information can create mutual confidence in the information base for decisions. Joint fact-finding will likely be best applied in the regional project regarding issues such as marine resource user group activities or impacts and benefits of alternative MPA proposals to fisheries.

Local community profiles
Developing local community profiles in collaboration with members of those communities can help assess and provide information to address concerns about the potential impacts of MPAs on the local communities. This approach links social scientists and community members, and combines data and other information available from government, business, and civic institutions in the ~~central coast~~ study region, to help ensure a robust discussion and evaluation of potential impacts of a ~~system~~network of MPAs to local communities.

Interviews
Selective interviews conducted with members of a stakeholder's community can solicit information from those reluctant to participate in a public setting. An interview might concern itself mostly with distilling the views of a constituent or tapping into that person's special knowledge of a fishery, an area, or other important substantive matter. The interview will be conducted by a researcher or other contractor, and the interviews synthesized for consideration by the ~~BRTF~~task force, ~~SAT~~science advisory team or ~~RSG~~regional stakeholder group.

Citations

Nuseibeh, B. and S. Easterbrook. *Requirements Engineering: A Roadmap.* Proceedings of the International Conference on Software Engineering (ICSE-2000), 4-11 June 2000, Limerick, Ireland.

~~Acronyms~~

~~The acronyms listed below are used within this document and are all in relation to the California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative.~~

~~BRTF MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force~~
~~MLPA Marine Life Protection Act~~
~~MPA marine protected area~~
~~RSG regional stakeholder group~~
~~SAT MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team~~
~~SCRSG MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group~~
~~SCSR MLPA South Coast Study Region~~
~~SIG MLPA Statewide Interests Group~~