

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

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April 11, 2005

California MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force Selects Central Coast Study Region for Developing Alternative Network Components of Marine Protected Areas

Chair Phil Isenberg Also Announces Central Coast Project Manager

Pasadena, CA - The California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Blue Ribbon Task Force selected an area stretching from Pigeon Pt. to Pt. Conception as a central coast study region for developing alternative proposals for networks of marine protected areas (MPAs). The task force also announced the selection of Michael D. DeLapa as the central coast project manager for the effort.

"The task force's recommendation for the central coast study region reflects a judgment based on not only what makes sense on a scientific basis, but also from the perspective of stakeholders and resource users," said Phil Isenberg, chair of the task force.

The task force reached its decision after reviewing recommendations and testimony from the MLPA Science Advisory Team, a panel of experts on the science of marine resources, as well as stakeholder input and extensive public testimony over the last several months.

Executive Director John Kirlin stated, "At the direction of the task force, we will now appoint a central coast stakeholder group to work with staff and a science sub-team in developing a recommendation for the central coast network component of MPAs."

The task force will oversee an effort to present recommendations for MPAs in the central coast study region to the California Fish and Game Commission for its consideration in March 2006.

"Mike DeLapa will work with the other professional staff involved in this initiative to guide the central coast process," added Isenberg. "His skills and background will be a tremendous asset to the team."

As the owner of DeLapa Management Consulting, DeLapa has over 20 years' experience in providing marketing, strategic planning, business development and other management services to businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit groups. His past experiences include co-founder and chief operating officer of Arena Solutions; chief operating officer and vice president of Website Publishing, Beyond.com; co-founder and general manager of Sea Studios Foundation; co-founder of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation; and co-founder of LandWatch in Monterey County.

In considering and selecting the central coast study region, the task force applied criteria it adopted at its January meeting. Among other factors, the task force determined that the area chosen should:

- Offer boundaries based on sound marine science,
- Address "bio-physical" characteristics of the region,

- Incorporate stakeholder input on a range of human uses, and
- Offer a large enough area to test the success of conservation areas for potential replication and to effectively measure conservation results.

Developing a recommendation for marine protected areas in the central coast study area is among four major objectives of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force. In addition to the central coast, the task force is charged with overseeing the development of a statewide draft Master Plan Framework for an alternative network of MPAs to present to the Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Game Commission by May 2005.

The task force's charter also directs it to prepare by December 2005 a comprehensive strategy for long-term funding of MLPA implementation and to develop by November 2006 recommendations for improved coordination with federal agencies involved in MPA management.

The eight-member task force was formed by Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman to help the state implement the MLPA. The MLPA requires the Department of Fish and Game to prepare and present to the Fish and Game Commission a master plan that will guide the adoption and implementation of a Marine Life Protection Program within the department. The Fish and Game Commission is then required to adopt a master plan, based on the best readily available science, which includes a statewide network of marine protected areas. After the central coast, the commission will be presented with recommendations for alternative network components along the remaining sections of California coast between 2006 and 2011.

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