

# California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

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## **MLPA Initiative, Department of Fish and Game Announce Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group**

*Members chosen to represent diverse interests from Point Conception to Pigeon Point, including Morro Bay and Monterey Bay*

**Sacramento, CA** - The California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative and the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) today announced the appointment of 29 members and 10 alternates to the MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group. Under the guidance of a blue ribbon task force, this group is responsible for working with a science team, professional staff and DFG to help the state improve the design and management of the central coast portion of a statewide network of marine protected areas (MPAs).

"We are very pleased with the makeup of this group and the ability of its members to constructively engage in a collaborative planning process," said Ryan Broddrick, director of the California Department of Fish and Game. "We recognize the significant time commitment these individuals are making over the next 10 to 12 months and appreciate their willingness to participate. We'd also like to thank those who nominated prospective members of the group."

Initially the group will help develop regional goals and objectives, and evaluate existing MPAs within the central coast region (Point Conception to Pigeon Point). The stakeholder group will also help develop recommendations for alternative MPAs proposals. At points in the process the regional dialogue will focus on two subgroups for the north and south central coast areas where group members can bring their in-depth of knowledge about local resources and uses.

"This group will serve as a focus for discussions on designing alternative MPA proposals," said MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force Chair Phil Isenberg. "The regional stakeholder group members were chosen for their knowledge of marine issues and the MLPA process, which will be invaluable in developing a recommendation for the central coast," he added.

Marine constituencies represented in the group include recreational angling and diving, commercial fishing, ports and harbors, conservation, business, and other government agencies with marine protected area responsibilities. Pending confirmation of their availability, several members and alternates will be added to the group.

Executive Director John Kirlin stated that a large number of talented people were nominated for the regional stakeholder group. "We selected a manageable-sized working group based upon the breadth and depth of representation for key interests as well as demonstrated experience in working with multi-stakeholder groups."

The first MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group meeting will be held in June in the Monterey Bay area, when members will be introduced to one another and the process. Subsequent meetings of the full group will alternate between the Morro Bay and Monterey areas, while the sub-groups will meet separately in the Monterey and Morro Bay areas.

"I look forward to working with such a diverse group, where the individuals have the ability to discuss and balance varied interests and communicate those interests to a broad constituency", said MLPA Central Coast Project Manager Michael DeLapa.

Discussions at group meetings will be carried out primarily by the stakeholder representatives with the assistance of professional facilitators. Meetings will be open to the general public and will be videotaped for later viewing on the Internet. Members of the public are encouraged to participate in the regional meetings as observers; they also will have opportunities to provide comments on evolving marine protected areas proposals and other elements of the process.

Early next year the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force is expected to present to the Department of Fish and Game a recommendation for alternative MPA proposals in the central coast region. In turn, DFG will present its recommendation to the California Fish and Game Commission by March 2006. The commission is the final decision-making body.

The California Natural Resources Agency and California Department of Fish and Game have partnered with the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation and others in an initiative to achieve the MLPA goals. This public-private partnership is guided by the advice of scientists, resource managers, experts, stakeholders and members of the public. The MLPA directs the state to design and manage a network of marine protected areas in order to, among other things, protect marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems.

The MLPA requires the DFG 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.

For more information about the MLPA Initiative, please visit the initiative website at [www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/).

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