



January 2010

Executive Director's Message

On behalf of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative, I am pleased to introduce the inaugural issue of the MLPA Initiative's North Coast News. This digital newsletter will be released on a regular basis to help keep you informed and actively involved in the marine protected areas (MPAs) planning process in the north coast. We are also working to have print copies of each issue available in specific locations familiar to your community, such as local California Department of Fish and Game offices and select libraries. The North Coast News will provide recaps of MLPA Initiative meetings, such as recent meetings of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force and MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team that are summarized in this issue. We will also highlight frequently asked questions (FAQs), documents available for public comment, and upcoming meetings and events. As with all components of the MLPA Initiative, we welcome your feedback and constructive comments to help maximize the utility of future issues of the North Coast News.

We are off to a great start in the north coast study region, but there remains much work. Your active involvement is crucial to the success of the MLPA Initiative and we look forward to your ongoing participation in 2010.

~Ken Wiseman, Executive Director

Meeting Highlights

Blue Ribbon Task Force

Members of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) are selected by the secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency for their knowledge, vision, public policy experience and diversity of professional expertise. For more information about the task force, [click here](#).

The first meeting of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force for the MLPA North Coast Study Region was held in Eureka on November 18, followed by a field trip in the Eureka/Arcata area on November 19. Task force Chair Cindy Gustafson led the meeting, which introduced the BRTF to the MLPA North Coast Study Region (NCSR), provided an overview of the north coast regional profile and reviewed policy direction provided in previous study regions and its applicability to the current study region (from the California border with Oregon to Alder Creek near Point Arena).

The BRTF received a briefing from staff on the external array development process and engaged in a dialogue with representatives of community groups that have indicated an intent to submit external MPA arrays for the north coast study region. Updates were provided on the status of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT), MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG) and MLPA Statewide Interests Group (SIG). The BRTF reviewed current opportunities for public involvement at both the statewide and regional levels and requested public feedback on the draft strategy presented by staff. Also, in an effort to further consider and incorporate Native American interests in the MLPA Initiative, the task force requested staff to coordinate directly with local tribes and organize a panel discussion for the January BRTF meeting to assist the task force in preparing policy guidance.

Additionally, the BTRF:

- Reviewed and adopted a revised 2008-2010 budget;
- Reviewed and adopted the BTRF operating procedures, reimbursement guidelines, and policy on transparency; and
- Reviewed a calendar of future meetings for the north coast. The task force provided feedback to MLPA Initiative staff and requested revisions to the calendar for further discussion during its January meeting ([link](#)).

The BRTF will meet again on Wednesday, January 13 for a field trip in the Del Norte County area. The task force will then convene for its second meeting on Thursday, January 14 in Crescent City at the Elk Valley Rancheria Community Center.

Science Advisory Team

The MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) is appointed by the director of Fish and Game and its members are tasked with providing the scientific knowledge and judgment necessary to assist with meeting the objectives of the MLPA Initiative and completing the north coast portion of the master plan for MPAs. Principally, the SAT is charged with reviewing and commenting on scientific papers relevant to the implementation of the MLPA, reviewing alternative MPA proposals, reviewing draft master plan documents, addressing scientific issues presented by those documents, and addressing scientific questions raised by the BRTF or stakeholders. The members of the SAT for the north coast were appointed in October 2009. For more information about the SAT, [click here](#).

The first meeting of the SAT for the north coast study region and the twelfth meeting of the SAT for the south coast study region took place jointly in Eureka on October 30, 2009. The meeting focused on welcoming new SAT members and explaining the role of the SAT in the MLPA planning process.

New SAT members were introduced to the MLPA and MLPA Initiative, including the operating principles of the SAT, the Bagley-Keene Open Meetings Act and the science guidance in the California Marine Life Protection Act Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas. Additionally, the SAT reviewed MPA proposal evaluation methods used in the south coast and discussed potential changes to be made to ensure that the methods reflected the north coast study region. The SAT also began initial discussions regarding bioregions for the north coast, levels of protection for marine harvest activities, spacing guidelines, and bioeconomic modeling.

During this meeting, the SAT also formed a number of work groups to help gather data and provide recommendations to the full SAT during the north coast process. The work groups include:

- Bioregions/habitat/study region boundary: John Largier, Phil Levin, Steven Morgan, Karina Nielsen, Pete Raimondi, Steve Rumrill, Craig Strong, Steve Wertz, ,

- Evaluations: Mark Carr, Steve Gaines, Ron LeValley, Steve Murray, Will White,
- Level of protection: Dave Hankin, Steve Wertz, Karina Nielsen, Larry Allen, Ron LeValley, Mark Carr
- Tribal: Astrid Scholz, Kevin Fleming, Dave Hankin, Steven Morgan, Karina Nielsen
- Bioeconomic modeling: Eric Bjorkstedt, Chris Costello, Steve Gaines, Astrid Scholz, Will White
- Water quality: Dominic Gregorio, John Largier, Steven Morgan, Pete Raimondi
- Species likely to benefit from MPAs: Larry Allen, Dawn Goley, Ron LeValley, Karina Nielsen, Pete Raimondi
- Birds and mammals: Dawn Goley, Ron LeValley, Craig Strong
- Potential commercial/recreational fishing impacts: Dave Hankin, Astrid Scholz

The SAT also selected the SAT Sub-team to the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group: Eric Bjorkstedt, Dominic Gregorio, Karina Nielsen, Craig Strong, and Will White.

This meeting included a public comment period, during which members of the public asked clarifying questions about the MLPA planning process and the role of the SAT. At the conclusion of the meeting, SAT members nominated and approved Mark Carr, Eric Bjorkstedt, and Ron LeValley as co-chairs.

Due to the extensive agenda for this joint meeting, the SAT for the south coast study region held another meeting (via webinar) on Monday, November 9, 2009 to review, discuss and potentially approve final documents prepared for the November 10, 2009 BRTF meeting in Los Angeles. The second SAT meeting for the north coast was scheduled for December 16-17, 2009 in Eureka.

On December 16 and 17, the SAT held its second meeting for the north coast in Eureka. During the meeting, SAT members gave a number of presentations focusing on background information for the north coast study region and the methods used to evaluate marine protected area (MPA) proposals. Presentations were also given on components of SAT evaluations, including: bioregions, habitat representation and replication, levels of protection (LOPs), size and spacing of MPAs, bioeconomic modeling, and potential commercial and recreational fishing impacts. The SAT also received updates from the species likely to benefit from MPAs, study region boundary, modeling, and tribal work groups.

The SAT approved dividing the study region into two bioregions, with a boundary at the mouth of the Mattole River. Community groups developing MPA arrays were encouraged to replicate habitats in each bioregion. The SAT also approved all currently proposed levels of protection except commercial take of urchins; the LOP work group will revisit and provide additional information for this activity at the SAT's next meeting on January 20-21, 2010 in Eureka. A list of LOPs for the north coast is available here (please note this document includes the draft urchin LOP).

Documents for Public Comment

MLPA North Coast Regional Profile

On December 15, 2009 the public was invited to provide comments on the Draft Regional Profile for the North Coast Study Region (comments requested no later than January 15, 2010). We invite you to share your knowledge about the north coast study region to make certain the best readily-available information is provided to stakeholders and decision-makers within the MLPA process.

Comments can be submitted the following ways:

- Email to AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov
- Mail to:

Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

- Fax to 916.653.8102, Attn: MLPA Initiative

The profile is available online or on CD by contacting Kathie Magnuson (916.653.9486). Print forms of the profile are also available at libraries throughout the north coast study region. Contact Kathie for a list of libraries.

Draft Strategy for Public Participation in the MLPA North Coast Study Region

Comments on the Draft Strategy for Public Participation in the MLPA North Coast Study Region are due no later than February 15, 2010.

Comments can be submitted the following ways:

- Email to AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov
- Subject: Draft Strategy for Public Participation
- Mail to:
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Fax to 916.653.8102, Attn: MLPA Initiative

Upcoming Public Meetings and Events

Public Workshops

External MPA Array Support Workshops.

Monday, January 11, 2010

6:30-8:30 p.m.
CV Starr Community Center
300 S. Lincoln Street
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Tuesday, January 12, 2010

6:30-8:30 p.m.
Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center
921 Waterfront Drive
Eureka, CA 95501

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

6:30-8:30 p.m.
Hampton Inn & Suites
100 A Street
Crescent City, CA 95531

Public Meetings

All meetings are open to the public and are also simultaneously webcast on the day of the meeting on the MLPA website. Open houses, workshops and work sessions are generally not videotaped or webcast.

Wednesday, January 13 & Thursday, January 14, 2010

Blue Ribbon Task Force
Elk Valley Rancheria Community Center
2332 Howland Hill Road
Crescent City, CA 95531

Wednesday, January 20 & Thursday, January 21, 2010

Science Advisory Team
Red Lion Hotel Eureka
1929 Fourth Street
Eureka, CA 95501

All meeting agendas are posted to the MLPA website at least one week in advance of the meeting. Meeting materials are posted as soon as they become available. In addition to the simultaneous live webcast of meetings, the video and audio archives are posted to the website within two days of each meeting.

Events & Activities

Suggestions for community events to inform the public on the north coast process are welcome! A special thank you to those Key Communicators who have been distributing MLPA Initiative information to a wider public. To learn how you can become a Key Communicator, contact the MLPA Initiative Public Outreach and Education Team via email or call (707) 832-4088.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the process for developing marine protected area (MPA) proposals within the north coast study region?

In previous study regions, groups and individuals “external” to the appointed regional stakeholder group have submitted MPA arrays and proposals, while the regional stakeholder group developed “internal” arrays and proposals. Complete external MPA proposals were included in the MPA planning process in a variety of ways: by the regional stakeholder group as elements in internal MPA proposals; as separate MPA proposals; and/or as ideas that informed the MPA planning process.

Process Adaptations to Better Suit the North Coast Community

To fully integrate the robust local knowledge available within the MLPA North Coast Study Region, community groups and/or individuals were invited to develop external MPA arrays as the first round of MPA proposal development. This revised approach allows members of the north coast community to build a foundation from which the NCRSG can work to develop MPA proposals.

Similar to past study regions, complete external MPA arrays that include full geographic coverage of the study region and outline details of MPAs, including specific boundaries and proposed regulations, will be evaluated by the SAT, DFG, State Parks and MLPA Initiative staff, as well as reviewed by the BRTF and the public. External proposed MPA arrays, along with their evaluation results, will be presented to the north coast regional stakeholder group for consideration in MPA planning.

North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG)

More than 80 individuals have been nominated for the NCRSG (deadline for nominations was November 30). Approximately 20-30 individuals will be appointed in late January by the director of the California Department of Fish and Game and the chair of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force. The NCRSG is primarily tasked with developing MPA proposals for the north coast study region. During its initial meetings, the NCRSG will be provided with the draft arrays developed by community groups, and the various evaluations and feedback received on those arrays, to be considered in MPA proposal development.

Building on lessons learned from previous study regions and the unique attributes of the north coast study region (in particular, the close relations that already exist among north coast stakeholders), the NCRSG will be composed of primary members only (in previous study regions, the stakeholder groups included both primary members and alternates). This process change will allow for more full-group discussions and increase the effectiveness of NCRSG deliberations.

What is the timeline for MPA planning in the north coast?

The MLPA Initiative is in the initial stages of the MPA planning process in the north coast. MPA proposals developed through the MLPA Initiative are crafted over three iterative rounds. In October, north coast communities were invited to develop draft MPA arrays as part of Round 1 of the MPA planning process. During Rounds 2 and 3, NCRSG members will have the opportunity to integrate ideas from the external arrays as they develop the next stage of MPA proposals. Input from community groups and the general public will continue to be included throughout the MPA proposal development process.

During each round of planning, MPA arrays and proposals are evaluated by the SAT. In addition, feedback is provided by the BRTF, DFG, State Parks and MLPA Initiative staff. The public also has an opportunity to provide input during each round. The various forms of evaluation and input provide opportunities for refinement and improvement in successive rounds.

(NOTE: all dates are subject to change)

Round 1 (draft external MPA arrays developed by community groups): November – February 2010

Round 2 (draft MPA proposals developed by NCRSG): March – May 2010

Round 3 (final NCRSG MPA proposals developed by NCRSG): June – September 2010

Develop BRTF recommendation(s): October 2010

Presentation of BRTF recommendation(s) to the California Fish and Game Commission: December 2010

Get Involved

The success of the MLPA largely depends on the continued involvement of the public. There are a number of ways that members of the public can participate in this process:

Stay informed

- Attend meetings or view live or archived webcasts of meetings
- MLPA Initiative is on Facebook! Join the MLPA Initiative group on Facebook for the latest MLPA news

Provide feedback

Providing feedback is one of the most important ways to get involved in the MLPA Initiative process. Public comment provided at meetings should be concise and focused on specific ideas or suggestions. While the time available for verbal comments at meetings is usually limited, there is no limit on the length of comments submitted in writing. All written comments should be submitted via email, mail or fax.

All comments received (both verbally and in writing) are compiled on a weekly basis and distributed to the I-Team and MLPA Initiative groups (BRTF, NCRSG and SAT as appropriate). Please do not send comments to SAT or BRTF members directly.

Specific opportunities to provide input include:

- Submitting feedback on documents open for public comment
- Participating in workshops, open houses and public information presentations
- Submitting comments, ideas and suggestions to AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov

Spread the word

- Circulate North Coast News far and wide to help ensure others in your community are aware of the MLPA Initiative, upcoming meetings and opportunities for public involvement
- If you are a leader in your community and/or have access to a large number of constituents, become a "Key Communicator." Contact the Public Outreach and Education Team via email or call (707) 832-4088 to learn more.

Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Natural Resources Agency,
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814
916.654.1885 office
916.653.8102 fax
AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/>