



*February 2010*

## **Executive Director's Message**

I am pleased to announce the north coast marine protected area (MPA) planning process has recently achieved two significant milestones: the submission of eight external proposed MPA arrays by community groups (available online or via MarineMap) and the appointment of the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG). The tireless efforts of those community groups that developed external arrays have established a solid foundation for the NCRSG to build upon in the next two rounds of MPA planning. The ideas put forth in the external arrays truly represent the personal relationships and collaborative spirit that have developed between different user groups in the north coast.

To be successful, it will be important for the NCRSG to incorporate feedback from the science advisory team, blue ribbon task force, California Department of Fish and Game, California State Parks, MLPA Initiative staff, and members of the public to build off and refine the external MPA arrays. It will also be important for the NCRSG to continue to cultivate the working relationships with different user groups, both internally amongst the stakeholders and externally with the community at large.

Even with the tremendous progress to date, we still have a long road ahead. I am confident, however, that the framework provided by the external arrays, coupled with the expertise of the NCRSG and continued involvement of the community, will help ensure we successfully fulfill the goals of the MLPA.

I wish to thank the community groups for their valuable efforts, and extend a warm welcome to the NCRSG members as they take the helm of the MPA planning process.

~Ken Wiseman, Executive Director

## **Meeting Highlights**

### **Blue Ribbon Task Force**

On January 13, the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) participated in a field trip that began in Orick and traveled through Del Norte County. This tour was followed by the BRTF's second meeting in Crescent City on January 14.

The task force received a number of presentations including an overview on the evolving nature of living marine resource management and the role of marine protected areas, as well as the science of marine protected areas. In an effort to further consider and incorporate Native American interests in the MLPA Initiative, a panel presentation by more than 10 of northern California's tribes and tribal communities was provided to the BRTF.

The BRTF reviewed policy direction provided in previous study regions and discussed its applicability to the MLPA North Coast Study Region. The BRTF is expected to approve this guidance at its March 1-2, 2010 meeting.

The BRTF will meet again on March 1 in Fort Bragg and then participate in a field trip in the Mendocino County area on March 2.

### **Science Advisory Team**

The third meeting of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) took place in Eureka on January 20 and 21, 2010. SAT members were presented with an update on the 18 external array groups that indicated their intent to submit an array. The SAT was also presented with the following:

- An overview of birds and mammals that occur in the north coast study region, along with the proposed MPA evaluation methods for this region and a description of how birds and mammals might benefit from MPAs. Evaluation methods are similar to those used in the south coast study region, although proposals will be evaluated in their entirety rather than by bioregion.
- A description of north coast water quality and the evaluation methods that will be used. Evaluation methods for this secondary evaluation are largely similar to those in the south coast study region, except:
  - Bays/estuaries will be evaluated using an area measurement.
  - Evaluation will not focus on power plant entrainment.
  - Evaluation will consider harbors to be non-point pollution sources.
- Key and unique habitats, including how evaluations will consider limited eel grass data outside Humboldt Bay. Unique habitats discussed included drowned river canyons, sea stacks, and dynamic river mouths.
- Habitat replication thresholds, including minimum size replicate for the combined soft bottom categories. Background on the development of MPA size and spacing guidelines and new visual representations of the consequences of different size and spacing combinations of MPAs.
- Modeling evaluation methods, including the new genetic connectivity analysis.
- The levels of protection decision tree for coastal pelagic finfish by dipnet or hand nets (high), salmon by non-troll hook and line in waters less than 50 meters (moderate), and sea urchin by hand (moderate-low).

The SAT also received updates from the modeling, tribal, and species likely to benefit work groups, and also reviewed draft responses to science questions. In light of the severe weather that made travel difficult for both SAT members and members of the public, all proposed actions were postponed to the February 11, 2010 SAT teleconference/webinar meeting.

On February 11, 2010, the fourth meeting of the SAT was held via teleconference and webinar. Members approved all SAT evaluation methods presented during the meeting, including those for habitat representation, habitat replication, bioeconomic modeling, benefits to marine birds and mammals, MPA size, MPA spacing, potential commercial and recreational fishery impacts, and water and sediment quality. SAT members also approved:

- Inclusion of information about three specific habitat types (offshore rocks and sea stacks, dynamic river mouths, and drowned river canyons) under existing key habitats
- A recommendation to include at least one replicate of each habitat type in each bioregion
- Continued development of the supplemental genetic connectivity metric by the modeling work group

- Methods used for assigning levels of protection and six newly proposed levels of protection
- The next SAT meeting will be in Eureka on March 16-17.

### **Regional Stakeholder Group**

On February 8-9, 2010, the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG) held its first meeting in Eureka. During this meeting, the NCRSG:

- Received an overview of the goals of the MLPA and MLPA Initiative, including the roles and responsibilities of the NCRSG
- Discussed, revised and adopted ground rules to guide the NCRSG process
- Received presentations on:
  - Key findings from the stakeholder assessment memorandum
  - BRTF guidance for the north coast project
  - Available tools and best readily available information for north coast process
  - Process and timeline for developing MPA proposals
  - How the NCRSG will coordinate with the SAT

NCRSG members also shared their key interests, affiliations, and areas of expertise and had the opportunity to participate in an evening MarineMap training.

During the meeting, NCRSG members requested more comprehensive and accurate information about California tribes and tribal communities be added to the regional profile. MLPA Initiative staff committed to provide California tribes and tribal communities with extra time (until April 1, 2010) to include additional, unedited information in an appendix to the regional profile. Additionally, a follow-up NCRSG teleconference/webinar took place on February 25 to discuss and potentially vote on an NCRSG recommendation regarding how tribal uses should be addressed in the marine protected area planning process. The outcomes of the meeting will be presented to the BRTF at its March 1, 2010 meeting.

The second NCRSG meeting will be held in Crescent City on March 24-25.

## **Documents for Public Comment**

### **Update on the Draft Regional Profile of the North Coast Study Region**

The MLPA Regional Profile of the North Coast Study Region, which provides background information for MPA planning, was released in December for public review as part of a joint-fact finding effort. More than 600 specific comments from 34 individuals and groups were received by the January 15 deadline. A revised version of the regional profile will be available by early March and includes additional substrate data, new data layers, expanded information on California tribes, and additional fisheries statistics. In addition, a special appendix on California tribes and tribal communities, as well as some outstanding habitat data will be added in the next few months. The public will be notified as this new information becomes available.

## **Upcoming Public Meetings & Events**

### **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.

**March 1-2, 2010**

Blue Ribbon Task Force  
C.V. Starr Community Center  
300 S. Lincoln Boulevard  
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

**March 16-17, 2010**

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

**March 24-25, 2010**

Regional Stakeholder Group  
Crescent City  
Location TBD

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 Cal-Span website within two days of each meeting.

**Events & Activities****Public Informational Presentation**

Monday, March 22  
6:30 p.m.  
Mattole River Community Center  
29230 Mattole Rd.  
Petrolia, CA 95558

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 appointment process for regional stakeholders?**

A request for nominations to the NCRSG was made this fall and distributed to more than 3,000 groups and individuals asking for nominations to be made by November 30, 2009. Nominees were evaluated against the selection criteria established in the request for nominations. Staff recommendations to California Department of Fish and Game Director John McCamman and MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force Chair Cindy Gustafson were informed by facilitator interviews, nomination letters, letters of support, DFG background checks (including fish and game citations), as well feedback from other staff who have knowledge of and experience working with the nominees.

The director and chair appointed stakeholders who represent a broad diversity of interests, perspectives, and geographic locations within the MLPA North Coast Study Region. In instances where staff was

unable to find strong candidates that could represent a certain interest or perspective, staff was directed by the director and chair to seek nominees beyond the initial set of nominees (i.e., nominees who submitted their nomination letters by November 30) to recruit possible additional nominees. In each of these cases, the nominee submitted the requested information and was interviewed by the neutral facilitators. A similar directive has been used in other study regions.

### **Is there a deadline for commenting on draft MPA arrays and proposals?**

While there are no specific deadlines for submitting public comments on draft MPA arrays and proposals, comments are most effective when timed to inform the deliberations of the NCRSG. Key dates to be mindful of include:

#### **Feedback on Round 1 external proposed MPA arrays**

- The public is invited to submit feedback on the Round 1 external MPA arrays and evaluation results. The Round 1 external MPA arrays may be found on the MLPA Initiative website as well on MarineMap; the external arrays will inform future MPA proposal development by the NCRSG
- Public feedback on Round 1 arrays is most helpful to inform NCRSG development of Round 2 draft MPA proposals if submitted as verbal comment during the March NCRSG 24-25 meeting or in written form by Monday, May 10. This will help inform the NCRSG work sessions on April 20-21 and May 19. The public will also have the opportunity to provide verbal comment at the NCRSG meeting on May 20, just prior to completion of Round 2 MPA proposals.

#### **Feedback on Round 2 NCRSG draft MPA proposals**

- On July 6-8, a series of public open houses will be held throughout the study region to provide the public the opportunity to review and comment on the NCRSG's Round 2 draft proposals
- Public feedback on Round 2 MPA proposals is most helpful if submitted in written form at the July 6-8 public open houses, as verbal comment during the July 21-22 BRTF meeting or July 29 NCRSG meeting, or in written form by Monday, August 23. This will help inform NCRSG work sessions on July 30 and August 30. The public will also have the opportunity to provide verbal comment at the NCRSG meeting on August 31, just prior to completion of Round 3 MPA proposals.

#### **Feedback on Round 3 NCRSG final MPA proposals**

- The MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force will review Round 3 proposals during its October 26-28 meeting. Public input on Round 3 proposals is most helpful if submitted in written form by Wednesday, October 13 or as verbal comment during the October 26-28 BRTF meeting.

Providing feedback is one of the most important ways to get involved in the MLPA Initiative's MPA planning process. While the time available for verbal comments at meetings is usually limited, there is no limit on the length of comments submitted in writing. Also, while the public is invited to observe the NCRSG work sessions, there are no verbal public comment opportunities during work sessions, so it is important to provide written feedback at least one week before each work session is scheduled.

All written comments should be submitted via email, mail or fax. All written comments are compiled on a weekly basis and distributed to the I-Team and MLPA Initiative groups (BRTF, NCRSG and SAT as appropriate).

## **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
- Contacting a member of the regional stakeholder group
- Submitting comments, ideas and suggestions to [AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto: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.

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