



August 2010

Executive Director's Message

What a busy summer it has been! I am delighted to report more than 275 people attended five open houses held throughout the MLPA North Coast Study Region on July 6, 7, and 8. These open houses provided the public an opportunity to review and comment on the four Round 2 NCRSG draft MPA proposals, resulting in more than 120 comments, suggestions and ideas. This valuable input was provided to the blue ribbon task force and the north coast regional stakeholder group to help inform the third and final round of MPA proposal development. Like all comments submitted throughout the planning process, comments made on the Round 2 draft MPA proposals are accessible online (a summary of public comments is available as well as a compilation of all the public comments submitted through July 19). I encourage members of the public to review the feedback provided by your fellow north coast residents.

Also in July, the science advisory team completed its scientific evaluations of the Round 2 draft MPA proposals and presented its findings to the blue ribbon task force. The task force provided guidance for the development of Round 3 proposals, and the members of the regional stakeholder group began to put this guidance into practice as they started to develop their final MPA proposal(s) at their late July meeting.

In addition to all of our meetings, the MLPA Initiative has made some great strides in improving online access to materials and information. Launched in May, the new "Key Resources" page provides a one-stop place to find key documents and resources such as responses to science questions, policy documents, and MLPA 101 materials. Also, check out our new online search engine, which offers an easy way to access meeting documents quickly.

While these past few months have certainly had their fair share of challenges, I am routinely impressed by the tight bonds the north coast communities share and the mutual respect, compassion and understanding for all perspectives and voices. I thank members of the public in advance of our upcoming meetings in August and beyond, for continuing the theme of respect and consideration as we move into the final stages of the planning process.

~Ken Wiseman, Executive Director

Meeting Highlights

Blue Ribbon Task Force

The MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) held its seventh meeting on July 21-22 in Fort Bragg. During this meeting, the task force received all four MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG) Round 2 draft marine protected area (MPA) proposals, as well as draft recommendations for special closures. The task force also received evaluations of NCRSG draft MPA proposals and special closures from the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT), California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), California Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks) and MLPA Initiative staff.

During this meeting, the task force discussed and approved additional guidance to the NCRSG regarding developing Round 3 MPA proposals. Key elements of the Round 3 process guidance includes:

- The NCRSG will work primarily in a full group setting toward developing a cross-interest proposal that meets the minimum science guidelines to the extent possible, with a specific focus on addressing gaps in the Round 2 draft MPA proposals, such as habitat replication and MPA spacing.
- If the NCRSG cannot come to agreement on a single proposal, it should work to identify key geographies where the group cannot come to agreement on a single MPA design and create multiple proposals to address those differences. All NCRSG members should be able to live with at least one Round 3 MPA proposal.
- To increase information available to the BRTF, MPAs with proposed uses intended to accommodate tribal uses will be evaluated and reported for habitat replication, MPA size and MPA spacing as follows:
 1. Proposed allowed uses and methods of take will be assigned a level of protection (LOP) consistent with the SAT's protocol.
 2. MPAs that are intended to be part of the backbone of an MPA proposal, but with an LOP below moderate-high only to accommodate tribal uses, will first be reported according to SAT evaluation methods (not included if LOP is less than moderate-high) and then in a supplementary evaluation be reported with all MPAs at or above moderate-high LOP.

The BRTF's next meeting will be held on October 25-27 in Fortuna where it will receive the final NCRSG MPA proposal(s) and evaluations and will develop recommendations to deliver to the California Fish and Game Commission.

Science Advisory Team

The seventh meeting of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) took place in Eureka on June 29-30. During the meeting, SAT members discussed and approved all evaluation results of the Round 2 draft MPA proposals, pending minor edits to the bioeconomic modeling evaluation results. Additionally, SAT members approved responses to science questions, which were forwarded to the BRTF and NCRSG.

On July 28, 2010, the eighth meeting of the SAT for the MLPA North Coast Study Region (NCSR) was held via teleconference and webinar. During the meeting, SAT members approved three documents:

- Revisions to the Draft Methods Used to Evaluate Marine Protected Area Proposals in the MLPA North Coast Study Region (July 27, 2010 draft)
- Summary of SAT Evaluation of North Coast Round 2 Draft MPA Proposals: Habitat Representation, Habitat Replication, and MPA Size and MPA Spacing Analyses (Revised July 14, 2010)
- Draft Responses to Science Questions Posed during the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team Meeting on June 29-30, 2010 (July 27, 2010)

The next SAT meeting will be October 13-14, 2010 in Eureka when the science evaluations of the Round 3 draft MPA proposal(s) will be reviewed.

North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

The fifth meeting of the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG) was held on July 29-30 in Fort Bragg. During this meeting, the NCRSG received a number of presentations, including:

- Guidance for Round 3 process design from the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force and MLPA Initiative staff;
- Overview presentations of Round 2 draft marine protected area (MPA) proposals and draft proposed special closures; and
- Evaluation results of Round 2 draft MPA proposals from the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT), California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) and MLPA Initiative staff.

The NCRSG began developing its Round 3 MPA proposal(s) as a full group and specifically identified potential MPA options for homework groups to build from during their efforts between the NCRSG's July and August meetings. The NCRSG selected its Round 3 co-leads: Brandi Easter, Zack Larson, Bill Lemos, Jennifer Savage, Tom Trumper, and Adam Wagschal. Four homework groups (southern bioregion, northern bioregion, estuaries, and special closures) were created and participants were identified to continue developing ideas to be incorporated into the Round 3 MPA proposal(s).

The next NCRSG meeting will take place August 30-31, 2010 in Fortuna to develop the Round 3 NCRSG MPA proposal(s) to be forwarded to the BRTF for consideration.

Upcoming Public Meetings & Events

Public Meetings

All meetings are open to the public and simultaneously webcast on the day of the meeting (field trips not included). Meeting details are available on the MLPA website. Open houses, workshops and work sessions are generally not videotaped or webcast. [Click here](#) to learn more about NCRSG work sessions.

To the extent possible, public participation locations are also set up in at least one other city within the study region (Crescent City, Eureka and/or Fort Bragg) to provide members of the public with a stable Internet connection for the webcast and the opportunity to provide comments during the public comment period(s).

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 webcast of meetings, the video and audio archives are posted online within two days of each meeting.

Monday, August 30 – Tuesday, August 31, 2010

Monday, August 30 at 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, August 31 at 8:00 a.m.
Regional Stakeholder Group
River Lodge Conference Center
1800 Riverwalk Drive
Fortuna, CA 95540

A single public comment period will be held, beginning on Monday, August 30 at approximately 4:30 p.m. The comment period will recess and resume at approximately 11:00 a.m. the following morning for approximately one hour. Members of the public will have the opportunity to speak at one of the identified time periods; to be most effective for stakeholder group discussions, it is suggested that comments be made on Monday, August 30.

Thursday, September 1, 2010

Regional Stakeholder Group Work Session*
River Lodge Conference Center
1800 Riverwalk Drive
Fortuna, CA 95540

Wednesday, October 13 – Thursday, October 14, 2010

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

Monday, October 25 – Wednesday, October 27, 2010

Blue Ribbon Task Force (with the North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group)
River Lodge Conference Center
1800 Riverwalk Drive
Fortuna, CA 95540

* **Work Sessions:** Work sessions provide NCRSG members with focused, face-to-face opportunities to pursue their charge of developing alternative MPA proposals. NCRSG work sessions are not formal public meetings and are not videotaped or webcast. All work sessions are open to members of the public, who may attend as observers; while there is no formal public comment period, there are informal opportunities for members of the public to share their perspectives with NCRSG members and MLPA Initiative staff. Accredited media interested in covering an NCRSG work session are asked to contact the MLPA Initiative media relations team prior to the session.

Community Events

Information Session

Sunday, August 29, 2010

Shelter Cove Fire Station Meeting Hall
9126 Shelter Cove Road
3:00 - 4:30 PM

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative invites the Shelter Cove community and others to attend an informational presentation designed to orient interested members of the public to the MLPA North Coast Study Region marine protected area planning process. MLPA Initiative staff will invite questions and solicit input on the draft MPA proposals. For more information contact Kelly Sayce by email or by phone at (707) 832-4088.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does the MLPA differ from fisheries management regulations current in place in the north coast study region?

MPAs established under the MLPA are intended to complement existing fishing regulations and are not intended to replace existing or future regulations. MPAs are focused on ecosystems, rather than individual species, and are designed to allow both fished and unfished species to exist in a more natural setting.

The Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) is California's primary fishery management tool. The MLMA acknowledges that other conservation and management programs, such as those being developed under the MLPA, help facilitate long-term protection of fishery resources. An important difference, however, is that habitat protection under the MLMA is intended to advance the "primary fishery management goal" of sustainability, while protected areas established under the MLPA are intended to address broader, ecosystem-based objectives that are not limited to managing fisheries. Some goals of the MLPA simply cannot be achieved with traditional fisheries management.

What is the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) rationale for the inclusion of Stone Lagoon in the MLPA North Coast Study Region (NCSR)?

Based on criteria determined by DFG, Stone Lagoon is included in the NCSR. The determination to include Stone Lagoon was based on the consideration of a series of data sources, including detailed accounts of natural breaching events, documented saltwater fish species, and reported water quality measurements. Key considerations included:

- Stone Lagoon, fed primarily by one perennial stream (McDonald Creek), breaches naturally and is therefore tidally influenced, at least periodically. Breaching occurs every several years from either the seaward or the lagoon side and, upon breaching, the water level in the lagoon typically reaches near sea level within a day or so. The breach site can quickly close or remain open for months, depending on the level of water exchange.
- Common saltwater fish species have been reported from Stone Lagoon, such as Pacific herring, Pacific staghorn sculpin, tidewater goby, bay pipefish, tubesnout, night smelt, topsmelt, cabezon, surfperches, starry flounder, and sandsole.

A detailed explanation for the method used to determine the NCSR boundary can be found in section 3.1.3 of the Regional Profile of the North Coast Study Region (Alder Creek to the California-Oregon Border); this method is consistent with how boundaries were determined for previous MLPA study regions.

How does the California Fish and Game Commission's recent decision to revise Stewarts Point State marine Reserve in the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region potentially affect proposed placement of north coast MPAs?

On June 24, 2010, the California Fish and Game Commission (F&GC) reviewed a proposal to change a portion of Stewarts Point State Marine Reserve (in the north central coast study region) to allow for certain recreational activities, thereby allowing traditional tribal gathering to continue. The F&GC unanimously approved reclassifying a portion of Stewarts Point State Marine Reserve as a state marine conservation area that would extend 1000 feet offshore from the northern boundary of the reserve to just below Rocky Point, approximately four miles south. This change amended the new MPA regulations that went into effect in the region on May 1, 2010 as well as the replication of beach habitat in the north central coast.

The sixth goal of the MLPA states California's MPAs should be designed as a statewide network. Habitats protected in MPAs in other study regions can help to guide regional stakeholders in the placement of and rationale for MPAs in the north coast study region. As a result of the F&GC's change to Stewarts Point State Marine Reserve in the north central coast, the reserve no longer includes sufficient beach length to constitute a replicate of beach habitat (see the north central coast evaluation methods document for a description of replication and how it helps to achieve the goals of the MLPA). The next replicate of beach habitat to the south is located at Bodega Head State Marine Reserve in the north central coast, approximately 58 miles south of Alder Creek, the border between the north coast and north central coast study regions. This change in the configuration of replicated habitats in the north central coast study region challenges the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG) to consider placing an MPA closer to the border between the study regions to create a replicate for beaches.

Information about the F&GC's action and the resulting change in beach habitat replication was presented by the SAT to the NCRSG in July for consideration. MLPA Initiative staff advised the NCRSG to consider the information and follow BRTF guidance to strive to meet the SAT guidelines. However, recognizing that this change took place at the beginning of the final round of MPA proposal development and that the NCRSG may choose not to create a replicate for beaches, NCRSG members were asked to explain their rationale for not designing MPAs to include a replicate for beaches in the southern bioregion of the north coast study region.

How do the MPA size and spacing guidelines described in the California Marine Life Protection Act Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas apply to estuaries?

Estuarine habitats, including estuarine waters, eelgrass, coastal marsh, and tidal flats, are among the key habitats identified in the master plan and thus are subject to the spacing guidelines applied to all key habitats. In past study regions, estuarine habitats were unevenly distributed or poorly mapped, which reduced the utility of estuarine spacing evaluations; however, spacing was assessed for estuarine habitats in the north central coast.

In the north coast study region estuarine habitats, with the exception of tidal flats, are generally well mapped and are relatively evenly distributed across the study region. Although gaps between adjacent estuaries in the north coast do not exceed the spacing guideline of 62 miles, eelgrass and coastal marsh habitats are less evenly distributed throughout the study region with natural gaps that exceed the spacing guidelines. During Round 1 of MPA proposal development, SAT evaluations were completed for estuarine habitat representation, replication and size. Noting the number of estuaries in the north coast study region, SAT members agreed during their March 16-17, 2010 meeting that an evaluation for spacing also should be conducted for rounds 2 and 3. Round 2 evaluations were conducted for estuarine habitat representation and replication, as well as MPA size and spacing, consistent with the evaluation methods; this evaluation contributed new information to inform the north coast MPA planning process.

The NCRSG has been provided the estuarine evaluation information to help inform Round 3 discussions. The SAT will continue evaluations of estuarine habitats, including MPA spacing, to provide information for planning. MLPA Initiative staff advised the NCRSG to consider the information and follow BRTF guidance to strive to meet the SAT guidelines. However, recognizing that this information was presented to the NCRSG at the beginning of the final round of MPA proposal development and that the NCRSG may not meet the SAT guidelines for estuarine habitats,, NCRSG members were asked to explain their rationale for why spacing guidelines were not met for estuarine habitats.

How do I use the MLPA Initiative website's document search engine?

Did you know you can search for any MLPA Initiative meeting document through our new document search engine? Here are some steps to help you find the information you're searching for in a quick and easy way:

- Visit: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/meetings_n.asp
- At the top right of the page you will see "Meeting Materials to Search for North Coast Study Region Meeting Agendas and Materials in the DFG Document Library"

Meetings and Events (North Coast Study Region)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- [Blue Ribbon Task Force](#)
- [Master Plan Science Advisory Team](#)
- [North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group](#)
Note: There are two types of NCRSG meetings. A description of the two types is provided in the [NCRSG meeting section](#).
- [Statewide Interests Group](#)
- [Public Meetings, Public Workshops and Open Houses](#)

Internet Webcasting and Video Archives

These links connect to the CAL-SPAN website.

- [View or listen](#) to MLPA Initiative meetings in real time via Internet webcasting. (Note: This feature is available only on the day of a scheduled meeting, and does not include Fish and Game Commission meetings)
- [View or listen](#) to California Fish and Game Commission meetings in real time via Internet webcasting. (Note: This feature is available only on the day of a scheduled meeting)
- [Video Archive of MLPA Meetings](#)

Meeting Materials

- [Search for North Coast Study Region Meeting Agendas and Materials in the DFG Document Library](#)
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When you click on this link you are taken to this page:

Document Library > Browse by Category > Category Document Viewer

Marine Life Protection Act North Coast Study Region Documents

Advanced Criteria: category is "MLPA-NorthCoast"

File	Title	Subject	Author	Published
(2.60 MB)	Updated Maps for Areas of Water Quality C...	Meeting Briefing Document	MLPA Initiative Staff	8/24/2010
(469 KB)	Updated Evaluation Methods: Chapter 10. V	Meeting Briefing Document	MLPA Initiative Staff	8/24/2010
(2.01 MB)	Draft Methods Used to Evaluate Marine Pro...	Meeting Briefing Document	MLPA Initiative Staff	8/24/2010
(25.8 KB)	Draft Meeting Agenda, North Coast Region	Meeting Agenda	MLPA Initiative Staff	8/20/2010
(32.7 KB)	Draft Meeting Agenda, North Coast Region	Meeting Agenda	MLPA Initiative Staff	8/9/2010
(5.00 MB)	Public comments through 8/18/2010	Public Comment	MLPA Initiative Staff	8/19/2010
(5.67 MB)	Public comments regarding the Draft Regio...	Public Comment	MLPA Initiative Staff	8/17/2010
(5.00 MB)	Public comments regarding the Draft Regio...	Public Comment	MLPA Initiative Staff	8/17/2010

- You can then enter in keywords, such as "public comment", and hit "search". You can also choose a "subcategory" so the search only targets a specific MLPA Initiative meeting type.
- Once the search has populated the list of potential documents, you can sort by "author", "subject" or "published" to be sure you get the document you're looking for!

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:

Have you contacted your regional stakeholder group members?

Share your questions and concerns with the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG) members. Composed of your local representatives, the NCRSG is charged with drafting marine protected area (MPA) recommendations for the north coast segment of California's statewide MPA network. Contact an NCRSG member today and ensure your voice is included in the MPA planning process.

Stay informed

- Attend meetings or view live webcasts or archived videos of meetings
- The 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. Public comment provided at meetings should be concise and focused on specific ideas or suggestions (click here for suggested guidelines for providing public comment). 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 can be submitted via email, mail or fax:

Email: AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov

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

Fax: 916.653.8102

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). Please do not send comments to SAT or BRTF members directly.

Specific opportunities to provide input include:

- View current MPA proposals anytime by clicking http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/mpaproposals_nc.asp or visiting MarineMap
- Submitting feedback on documents open for public comment
- Participating in workshops, open houses and public information presentations
- Contacting a member of the north coast regional stakeholder group
- Submitting comments, ideas and suggestions to AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov

Spread the word

- Circulate North Coast News 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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