

October 2008

Executive Director's Message

On behalf of the MLPA Initiative, I am proud to introduce the first issue of the MLPA Initiative South Coast News. We will be distributing this newsletter on a regular basis to help keep you informed and actively involved in the south coast planning process. The newsletter includes a summary of recent MLPA Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF), Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT), and South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (SCRSG) meetings. We will highlight answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs), documents available for public comment as well as upcoming meetings and events. As with all components of the MLPA Initiative, we welcome your feedback and comments to help make this a more effective tool for remaining engaged in the process.

As you will read in the updates, we are off and running in the MLPA Initiative South Coast Study Region! Your active involvement is what helps make the MLPA Initiative successful and we look forward to your comments and participation.

~Ken Wiseman, Executive Director

Meeting Highlights

Blue Ribbon Task Force

In August 2008, Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman announced the seven-member MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force for the MLPA South Coast Study Region and selected former League of California Cities Executive Director Don Benninghoven as chair. The charge of the task force is to oversee the development of marine protected area (MPA) proposals for presentation to the California Fish & Game Commission, provide recommendations for coordinated MPA management with federal agencies, and provide direction for expenditure of MLPA Initiative funds.

On September 8, 2008, the task force held its first public meeting in San Diego. Key outcomes included:

- A review of the draft lessons learned report for the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region and recommendations for the south coast
- An introduction to the MLPA South Coast Study Region, including existing MPAs and a draft regional profile
- A review of methods for stakeholder involvement at both the statewide and regional levels
- Adoption of the 2008-2009 budget
- Adoption of the task force operating procedures and policies

The next task force meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 4 in Los Angeles.

Science Advisory Team

In September 2008, Donald Koch, director of the California Department of Fish and Game, appointed the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT). The SAT provides the scientific knowledge to assist the California Department of Fish and Game with meeting the objectives of the MLPA, provides scientific input to the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force, and advises and assists in preparing a master plan for marine protected areas (MPAs).

On September 15, 2008, a joint meeting was held between the north central coast and south coast SATs. Key outcomes of this meeting include:

- Adopted the north central coast list of species likely to benefit from MPAs and the document describing the methods used to evaluate MPA proposals
- Introduced the south coast SAT to the MLPA process, including SAT operating principles and MPA evaluation criteria and methods
- Received background information about the south coast study region; north central coast SAT
 members presented information for consideration in the south coast process, including evaluation
 models and water quality information
- Formed work groups for the south coast SAT and chose SAT co-chairs

The next SAT meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 12 in Los Angeles.

Regional Stakeholder Group

In October 2008, the chair of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force and director of the California Department of Fish and Game appointed the South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (SCRSG). Approximately 60 individuals will provide local expertise and stakeholder legitimacy as they develop marine protected area (MPA) proposals for the south coast study region.

On October 6 & 7, the SCRSG had its kickoff meeting, providing members with a fuller description of their charge and work plan, background materials as well as the draft regional profile for the south coast study region. SCRSG members also participated in two breakout sessions focusing on their areas of interest and expertise and identifying hopes and challenges for the south coast process.

Key outcomes included:

- Modified the proposed ground rules and unanimously adopted the revised ground rules
- Received introduction to the draft regional profile, which is expected to be the basis for joint factfinding between the SCRSG, MLPA staff and the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team

The next SCRSG meeting will be held on November 18 & 19 in Ventura and will focus on developing regional goals and discuss the guidelines for evaluting existing MPAs.

Documents for Public Comment

South Coast Regional Profile

Comments on the Draft Regional Profile for the South Coast Study Region are due on **October 31, 2008**. We invite you to share your knowledge about the south 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 Natural 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 south coast study region. Contact Kathie for a list of libraries.

Upcoming Public Meetings & Events

Public Meetings

All meetings are open to the public and are also simultaneously webcast on the day of the meeting at the MLPA Initiative website.

Tuesday, November 4, 2008

Blue Ribbon Task Force Sheraton Gateway Los Angeles Hotel 6101 West Century Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90045

Wednesday, November 12, 2008

Science Advisory Team Sheraton Gateway Los Angeles Hotel 6101 West Century Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90045

Tuesday, November 18, 2008 and Wednesday, November 19, 2008

South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group Crowne Plaza 450 East Harbor Boulevard Ventura, CA 93001

All meeting agendas are posted to the MLPA website at least a week in advance of the meeting and 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 to the website within two days of each meeting.

Events & Activities

MLPA Initiative materials will be available at the following public events:

Santa Barbara Ocean Film Festival - Oct 22-24, Santa Barbara H2O Conference - October 28-30, Long Beach Autumn Festival - November 1 & 2, Aquarium of the Pacific NOAA and Our Planet Day - November 15, Aquarium of the Pacific

Suggestions for other community events to inform the public on the south 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 (310) 928-1537.

Frequently Asked Questions

How will smaller groups have a say in the process and not be overshadowed by larger, more connected interest groups? Will regular citizens be able to provide meaningful input during the entire process?

The MLPA Initiative is designed as an open and transparent process to ensure all stakeholders, including members of the general public, have an equal opportunity to have their voices heard. There are a number of opportunities built into the process to help individuals and/or groups public become involved. The south coast regional stakeholder group (SCRSG) represents a diversity of interests and perspectives including, but not limited, recreational and commercial fishing, conservation, education and local and tribal governments. We encourage you to contact a member of the SCRSG to be sure your concerns are voiced in the process.

There are also public workshops held before and midway through regional planning processes. All meetings of the SCRSG, science advisory team (SAT), and task force (BRTF) are open to the public and include a specific agenda item devoted to public comments. Comments can be made on all planning documents which are available on the MLPA Initiative website, www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/, and general comments can be submitted at any time throughout the process via email or print copy mail.

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 web-casts of meetings

Provide feedback

- Submit feedback on documents open for public comment
- Provide comment at meetings
- Submit formal letters or written comment
- Participate in workshops and public information presentations
- Contact a member of the regional stakeholder group

• Submit comments, ideas and suggestions to AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov

Spread the word

- Circulate South 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 (310) 928-1537 to learn more.

Marine Life Protection Act Initiative c/o California Natural Resources Agency, 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311 Sacramento, CA 95814 916.654.2506 office 916.653.8102 fax AskMPA @wildlife.ca.gov http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/