



May 2009

Executive Director's Message

Recently, the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (SCRSG) began developing Round 2 draft marine protected area (MPA) proposals. Equipped with the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team's evaluation of "Round 1" draft arrays/proposals, along with important guidance from the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force and feedback from the California Department of Fish and Game, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, as well as feedback from MLPA Initiative staff, the SCRSG has been charged with integrating multiple interests – including the public's input – during this phase of MPA proposal development. SCRSG members are encouraged to "reach toward the middle" to begin balancing important tradeoffs and achieve broad, cross-interest support.

This cross-interest deliberation began at the SCRSG's last meeting on April 28, 2009 and work session on April 29 (both in Oxnard) and will continue during its next work sessions and meeting May 19-20 in Santa Ana. In response to requests from the SCRSG and the public, an additional half day work session has scheduled that evening beginning at 7:00 p.m. I encourage you to provide the SCRSG with specific feedback – whether in person or via email, mail or fax – on the components of the arrays that you support or do not support, and why. Please also consider how the proposed arrays, and your comments, help meet the goals of the MLPA. This valuable public input will assist the SCRSG during Round 2 to develop strong cross-interest draft proposals.

~Ken Wiseman, Executive Director

Meeting Highlights

A complete list of upcoming meeting dates through December 2009 can be found on the MLPA Initiative website.

Blue Ribbon Task Force

The MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) held its sixth public meeting in Dana Point on April 15 & 16, 2009. During this day and a half meeting the task force reviewed 10 "Round 1" draft MPA arrays/proposals (six draft arrays submitted by the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (SCRSG), three draft external proposals, and proposal 0 with existing MPAs) and received the first round analyses by the SAT, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), State Parks and MLPA Initiative staff. The BRTF provided specific guidance to the SCRSG for developing "Round 2" draft MPA proposals:

- Reduction of the overall number of draft proposals in Round 2 to no more than five to six alternative proposals.
- Building Round 2 draft proposals that have significant cross-interest support.
- Scientific evaluations are important, including evaluations of habitat, size, spacing, and bioeconomic modeling, as well as water quality issues and use of best readily available substrate data.
- Importance of DFG feasibility criteria.
- How to consider military use areas and pending military closures.
- Reiterating and updating guidance provided in previous study regions.

In addition, the task force directed the MLPA staff to provide a written memo to the SCRSG that clarifies BRTF guidance regarding developing draft MPA proposals in Round 2, and it postponed the agenda item regarding recommendations for improved MPA management coordination with federal agencies.

During the afternoon of April 16, the task force participated in a field trip to Treasure Island in Laguna Beach and Crystal Cove State Park. This tour provided task force members an opportunity to interact with public educators, commercial and recreational fishermen, resource managers and fisheries-dependent business operators. The BRTF will meet again on May 18 & 19 via teleconference and webinar.

Science Advisory Team

The sixth meeting of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) took place at the Embassy Suites Hotel North in Los Angeles on April 1, 2009 and via teleconference and webinar on April 6, 2009. During this meeting, SAT members:

- Reviewed and approved evaluation results for habitat representation and replication, MPA size and spacing and the bioeconomic modeling. Additional review of the water quality evaluation methods was required and was scheduled for the next SAT meeting.
- Conditionally approved evaluation results for birds and mammals and potential commercial and recreational fishery impacts, as well a revised response to the BRTF regarding the ecology of military use areas. All documents were scheduled for review at the next SAT meeting.
- Approved all new levels of protection (LOP) designations, the beach manipulation activities document, responses to questions from the last SCRSG meeting and text associated with previously-approved LOP designation.
- Determined additional discussion is required to develop guidance on how to include natural and restored wetlands in MPA proposals. The work group will revisit this issue and discuss how to provide guidance to the SCRSG for discussion at a SAT meeting.

On Tuesday, May 5 the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) held their seventh meeting met via teleconference and webinar. During this meeting a number of documents were approved, including:

- Evaluation methods for marine birds and mammals and water quality, as well as information guidance on wetlands restoration activities and artificial reefs.
- Draft response to the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force's request for a description of how the SAT uses the status of fish stocks information.

Also during this meeting, a new committee was formed to further review, comment and evaluate how best to integrate new data proposed for addressing habitat data gaps.

The next SAT meeting will be held on Friday, May 15 via teleconference and webinar. This meeting will solely focus on the SAT's analysis of military use areas proposed for the south coast study region.

South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

On March 3 & 4, 2009, the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (SCRSG) participated in its fourth meeting and work session in Long Beach. On March 3, general meeting, SCRSG members received an update of evaluation methods as well as guidelines for developing draft MPA arrays including:

- An interim decision from the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) on how to address the pending military closures in the workgroups' draft arrays;
- Answers to some key feasibility questions for developing MPA designs, regulations and boundaries; and
- Description of the methods used in evaluating the draft arrays.

Also on March 3, three external MPA proposals from the Fisherman's Information Network, United Anglers of Southern California, and the Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and Santa Monica Baykeeper were presented to the SCRSG for consideration as it moved forward to finalize draft MPA arrays.

On March 4, each of the three SCRSG work groups completed two draft arrays, including MPA shapes, designations and rationales. These draft arrays were forwarded to the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team, DFG and MLPA Initiative staff for evaluation and to the BRTF and public for review.

On April 28, 2009, the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (SCRSG) participated in its fifth meeting in Oxnard, CA. This meeting marked the start of "Round 2" marine protected areas (MPA) proposal development. SCRSG members received guidance and feedback from the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF), the MLPA Master Science Plan Advisory Team (SAT), California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) and MLPA Initiative staff (I-Team), including:

- Key BRTF guidance to create cross-interest proposals in each of the gems groups, defining cross-interest as "a broad range of consumptive and non-consumptive interests as represented through the SCRSG". SCRSG members were instructed to develop a single cross-interest proposal in each work group.
- SAT evaluations of each of the ten Round 1 MPA arrays/proposals, including size and spacing, habitat representation and replication, bioeconomic modeling, marine birds and mammals, and

results from the Ecotrust analysis of socioeconomic impacts to commercial and recreational fisheries. Areas of convergence and a summary of key evaluation points for each array/proposal were also provided.

- DFG and State Parks' evaluations relative to DFG feasibility guidelines and conformed with State Parks guidance.

On April 29, the SCRSG members met in their respective gem groups for an all-day work session to begin designing their cross-interest draft proposals. On April 30, SCRSG and I-Team members, along with members of the public, participated in a field trip from Oxnard to Malibu.

In response to SCRSG member requests for additional time to accommodate new guidance and gain more input from the general public, a supplemental work session and evening public comments session will take place on May 19. The SCRSG work groups will continue in work sessions on May 20. An SCRSG meeting will be held on May 21, during which SCRSG members will have the opportunity to determine which proposals, including the external proposals, will be forwarded to the SAT, BRTF, DFG, State Parks and I-Team for Round 2 evaluation.

Upcoming Public Meetings and Events

Public Meetings

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

Friday, May 15, 2009

Science Advisory Team

2:30 p.m.

Teleconference/webinar

Monday, May 18 & Tuesday, May 19, 2009

Blue Ribbon Task Force

9:00 a.m. each day

Teleconference/webinar

Tuesday, May 19* & Wednesday, May 20*, 2009

South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

Doubletree Hotel Santa Ana

201 East MacArthur Blvd.

Santa Ana, CA 92707

Tuesday, May 19 - 1:30 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.; Public comment 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, May 20- 8:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 21, 2009

South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

Doubletree Hotel Santa Ana

201 East MacArthur Blvd.

Santa Ana, CA 92707

9:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, June 4, 2009

Blue Ribbon Task Force

Sheraton Gateway Los Angeles Hotel
6101 West Century Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90045

*Work sessions are not videotaped and do not include a formal public comment period; members of the public are welcome to attend as observers.

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

Upcoming Public Workshops

Save the date! Public workshops will be held June 29 & 30 and July 1, 6, 7, 8 & 9, 2009 in various locations (TBD) throughout the south coast study. These workshops are an opportunity for the public to review and comment on Round 2 draft proposals. Please check the website for updates on location information.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is fisheries management not directly addressed in the MLPA planning process?

Marine protected areas (MPAs) and the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) are intended to complement existing fishery regulations and are not intended to replace existing regulations. The MLPA is designed to improve our system of MPAs in order to protect marine life, habitat and ecosystems. MPAs address a broad array of ecosystem needs and, in particular, allow for interactions between both fished and unfished species to occur in a more natural setting. If any changes to fisheries regulations were required in response to MPAs, this would occur through existing systems established in fisheries management plans and other regulatory frameworks.

How does the ecosystem management requirement in the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) differ from the MLPA?

California's primary state fisheries management statute, the MLMA, acknowledges that conservation and management programs (such as that being developed under the MLPA) help ensure conservation and facilitate long-term protection of fishery resources. The purpose of habitat protection in the MLMA is to advance the "primary fishery management goal" of sustainability and so may only provide limited protection of a particular habitat. Conversely, although the MLPA considers fishery habitat, it also encompasses broader, ecosystem-based objectives that are not limited to only managing fisheries. Some goals of the MLPA simply cannot be achieved with traditional fisheries management.

A lessons-learned evaluation of the MLMA is currently underway as a joint venture between the California Ocean Protection Council, California Fish and Game Commission, and DFG. This project is intended to evaluate the performance to date of the MLMA to date and provide recommendations to improve future MLMA efforts. Please visit the "MLMA Lessons Learned Project" website for more information.

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 on meeting and mixers in your area

Provide feedback

Providing feedback is one of the most important ways to get involved in the MLPA Initiative process. All written comments should be submitted via email, mail or fax. All comments received are compiled on a weekly basis and distributed to the I-Team and MLPA Initiative groups (BRTF, SCRSG and SAT). It is not appropriate to send comments to SAT or BRTF members directly.

Public comment at MLPA Initiative meetings is another important opportunity to provide input and feedback. Public comments should be succinct, concise and focused on specific ideas or suggestions. While the time available for public comments at meetings is limited to a couple of minutes per individual, there is an essentially unlimited opportunity for written public comment.

Other opportunities to provide input include:

- 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
- Distribute the MLPA Initiative brochure - post it on your website, circulate it via listservs and/or print it for distribution at community events
- 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) 738-2665 to learn more.

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