



*June 2009*

## **Executive Director's Message**

It has been a full year since we embarked upon the south coast marine protected area (MPA) planning process, where we have made tremendous progress and learned a great amount as we journey forward together. We have seen countless hours put in by members of the regional stakeholder group, science advisory team, task force, staff, and interested public. Together we have produced volumes of guidance, scientific evaluations and suggestions that serve to both document where we've been and provide guidance for the future.

Though we may not always agree, and sometimes we take missteps, every meeting serves as testament to the tremendous levels of preparation, effort and commitment demonstrated by all involved. This dedication allowed us to recently reach an important milestone – the regional stakeholder group and external proponents completed their Round 2 draft and revised MPA proposals, which are now being evaluated. The proposals can be viewed on the MLPA website, as well as in MarineMap, and will be showcased at a series of open houses to be held throughout the study region over the next two weeks.

Reflecting on the commitment of everyone involved in the south coast process, I am reminded of a quote from Phil Jackson, coach of the Los Angeles Lakers, who said, "Once you've done the mental work, there comes a point you have to throw yourself into the action and put your heart on the line. That means not only being brave, but being compassionate towards yourself, your teammates and your opponents." As we move forward with the upcoming open houses and then into Round 3, this quote reminds us all to focus on our shared passion for California's marine resources and to treat each other with compassion and respect.

For those of you in the study region, I encourage each of you to attend an open house to review the proposals and provide your input. We want to know what you think!

~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**

On June 4, the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) held its ninth public meeting in Los Angeles. The task force unanimously adopted:

- Modified staff recommendations regarding the evaluation of Round 2 draft and revised marine protected area proposals, as well as preliminary guidance for Round 3; and
- MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team water quality evaluation method.

The task force also reviewed the status report on recommendations to improve coordination among state and federal agencies with MPA management responsibilities and directed MLPA Initiative staff to assist the state with implementing the first two recommendations outlines in the report.

The BRTF will meet again on July 28 and 29 in the Santa Monica area. It is anticipated that additional guidance will be provided at that time to the regional stakeholder group regarding developing marine protected area proposals in Round 3.

### **Science Advisory Team**

On May 15, the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) held its seventh meeting via teleconference and webinar. During this meeting, the SAT approved the draft evaluation of ecological contributions of pending military closures and proposed MPAs at San Nicolas Island, Begg Rock and San Clemente Island.

On June 18, the SAT held its eighth meeting. During this meeting, SAT:

- Approved all evaluation results for MPA size and spacing, habitat representation and replication, benefits to birds and mammals, potential fishery impacts, bioeconomic modeling and water quality for Round 2 draft proposals. These results will be presented to the MLPA Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force and MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (SCRSG) at their next meetings.
- Approved supporting text for previously approved 'levels of protection' (LOP) and approved a new 'low' LOP for take of ghost shrimp.

The water quality work group presented information on the White's Point Superfund site and the Portuguese Bend landslide and made recommendations as to how the SCRSG should consider integrating this information into Round 3. The spacing guidelines work group will continue to work on that subject over the summer.

The next SAT meeting is currently scheduled for October 6 as a joint meeting with the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team for the north coast study region.

### **South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group**

On May 21, the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (SCRSG) participated in its sixth general meeting in Santa Ana, proceeded by one and a half days of work sessions. SCRSG members received:

- Guidance from the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) on pending military closures and military use areas, and how such areas should be treated in developing Round 2 MPA proposals.

Each of the SCRSG work groups, "Lapis," "Opal" and "Topaz," completed their Round 2 draft MPA proposals and, in doing so, pursued its own proposal development process:

- Opal and Topaz each submitted a single draft MPA proposal to be automatically moved forward for evaluation, and the Lapis workgroup submitted two proposals (Lapis 1 and Lapis 2).
- The gems groups then presented these proposals to the full SCRSG for review and discussion.

Based on the BRTF's guidance to forward no more than six proposals for Round 2 evaluation, a straw vote was conducted to select four proposals from among the five remaining proposals including: the three external proposals (External A, External B and External C) and the two non-converged Lapis proposals (Lapis 1 and Lapis 2). All SCRSG members (including those not present at the meeting) were given the opportunity to vote, and were required to vote for four of the five proposals.

The SCRSG will meet again on August 3 and 4 in the Oceanside/Carlsbad area to receive informational presentations on the review and evaluations of the Round 2 proposals conducted by the the MLPA Master Science Plan Advisory Team, California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Parks and Recreation and MLPA Initiative staff. Comments collected during the public open houses regarding Round 2 proposals will also be presented. The BRTF is expected to provide further guidance on how the draft proposals will create a framework for further negotiations in Round 3 of the MPA design process.

## Upcoming 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. Open houses and work sessions are not videotaped or webcast.

#### **Tuesday, July 28 & Wednesday, July 29, 2009**

Blue Ribbon Task Force

July 28: 9:30 a.m.

July 29: 8:30 a.m.

Santa Monica area

#### **Monday, August 3 (meeting) & Tuesday, August 4 (work session)\*, 2009**

South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

Oceanside/Carlsbad area

\*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. 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

### South Coast Summer Public Open Houses

June 29 and 30, and July 1, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13

5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

The MLPA Initiative South Coast Summer Open Houses provide an opportunity for the public to review and comment on "Round 2" draft MPA proposals developed for the south coast study region. All are welcome\* to visit informational stations and interact with staff and south coast regional stakeholders any time between 5:30 and 8:30 p.m.

**Monday, June 29**

Hilton Garden Inn  
6450 Carlsbad Blvd.  
Carlsbad, CA 92011  
(760) 476-0800

**Tuesday, June 30**

Marina Village Conference Center  
1936 Quivira Way  
San Diego, CA 92109  
(619) 222-1620

**Wednesday, July 1**

Aliso Creek Inn  
31106 South Coast Highway  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651  
(949) 499-2271

**Monday, July 6**

Simons Banquet Center  
Ports O Call Village, Berth 80  
1050 Nagoya Way  
San Pedro, CA 90731  
(310) 514-1050

**Tuesday, July 7**

Marina del Rey Hotel  
13534 Bali Way  
Marina del Rey, CA 90292  
(310) 301-1000

**Wednesday, July 8**

Residence Inn  
2101 W Vineyard Ave.  
Oxnard, CA 93036  
(805) 278-2200

**Thursday, July 9**

Fess Parker's Doubletree  
633 East Cabrillo Blvd.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93103  
(805) 564-4333

**Monday, July 13**

Catalina Island  
Avalon City Hall  
410 Avalon Canyon Rd,  
Avalon, CA 90704  
(310) 510-0220

### **What if I can't attend one of the public open houses?**

If you are not able to attend, you may also provide your feedback via email by sending a message to AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov or by mail to MLPA Initiative, c/o California Natural Resources Agency, 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814. Comments should be received no later than July 19, 2009 so that SCRSG and BRTF members have time for review prior to the start of Round 3.

\*Opportunities for the non-English speaking public to provide input will also be made available

### **Upcoming North Coast Study Region Public Open Houses**

Save the dates! Open houses are scheduled to introduce the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative's North Coast Project. Attendees are welcome to walk through informational stations at their leisure any time between 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. The open house goals are to introduce people to the MLPA Initiative and its North Coast Project (state waters from the California border with Oregon to Alder Creek near Point Arena in Mendocino County), invite questions, and solicit input on the process.

#### **Monday, July 20**

Wharfinger Building  
#1 Marina Way  
Eureka, CA 95501

#### **Tuesday, July 21**

Dana Gray Elementary School  
1197 Chestnut Street  
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

#### **Wednesday, July 22**

Cultural Center  
1001 Front Street  
Crescent City, CA 95531

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What does best readily-available science mean and how is it used in the MLPA planning process?**

Best readily-available science is the best data that is accessible in a format where it can be readily incorporated into the MPA planning process. Marine systems are highly complex and better information is constantly being generated by ongoing research. Recognizing this, and that complete information and knowledge will never exist to fully inform management decisions, under the MLPA the California State Legislature requires the use of best readily available science in decisions regarding the siting of new MPAs and any major modifications of existing MPAs (California Fish and Game Code §2855(a)).

In the south coast, the MLPA Initiative worked to identify readily-available science and information by hosting a data outreach workshop and undertaking joint fact-finding with stakeholders and members of the public, as well as creating with the science advisory team a process for data to be submitted and considered in the process. While there will always be additional information that may further inform MPA planning, a large amount already exists to help California redesign its system of MPAs to achieve the goals of the MLPA. Current information is based on a long history of scientific research and data

gathering, not only in California, but also around the world on species distribution, spawning areas, life history characteristics and habitat relationships, among other topics.

Data are used in a variety of ways in the MLPA Initiative process. Information about the south coast study region is provided to stakeholders in a regional profile as well as an online decision support tool called MarineMap (<http://www.marinemap.org/marinemap/>). The MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) uses data to create guidelines and conduct evaluations of MPA proposals.

Scientific guidelines for MPA planning are provided in the text of the Marine Life Protection Act; further details are outlined in the California Marine Life Protection Act Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas, as adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission after substantial public input and scientific peer review. The methods and application of the guidelines in the master plan have been peer reviewed and found to be scientifically sound. In keeping up with the best, readily-available science, the science guidance is reviewed, refined and improved in each study region as the planning process proceeds.

In the MLPA South Coast Study Region, the SAT tailored the science guidelines and evaluations to the unique conditions of the study region, based upon the best, readily-available science. Results of the science evaluations are provided to the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group and MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force, who incorporate the results into their planning and decisions. After the MLPA planning process is completed, new science will continue to help improve California's network of MPAs by informing an adaptive management process.

## 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. 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). Please do not 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 concise and focused on specific ideas or suggestions. While the time available for verbal comments at meetings is limited, there is no limit on the length of comments submitted in writing.

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, open houses and public information presentations

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

*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](mailto:AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov)  
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/>