

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
Charter of the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group
February 1, 2010

Official Name: This group officially will be designated as the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG) to the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (2010).

Background: The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) was tasked by the 1999 Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) to prepare, or cause to be prepared, a master plan, with recommended alternative networks of marine protected areas within the state's coastal waters, for proposed adoption by the California Fish and Game Commission. The MLPA requires DFG to engage other interested parties to contribute to the master plan, including scientists, geographic information system experts, commercial and recreational fishermen, divers, and other individuals knowledgeable about the state's underwater ecosystems, the history of fishing effort or marine protected area management, or other relevant subjects. DFG is also required to take into account relevant information from local communities and solicit comments and advice from interested parties.

Developing a statewide master plan for marine protected areas (MPAs), while engaging the various, interested parties, requires considerable work and analysis. Through a 2004 memorandum of understanding (MOU), the California Natural Resources Agency, DFG, and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation created a public-private partnership, known as the MLPA Initiative, to help the state implement the MLPA. One element of the initiative was a pilot project along the central coast (Pigeon Point in San Mateo County to Point Conception in Santa Barbara County) where a combination of the efforts of prior working groups, available scientific resources and potential partnerships provided a sound foundation for beginning implementation of the MLPA. A second MOU was signed in December 2006 for the purpose of continuing the public-private partnership in the north central coast (Alder Creek near Point Arena in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point in San Mateo County, including offshore islands). The second MOU has been amended to continue the partnership through 2011 in the remaining three study regions: south coast (Point Conception to the California/Mexico border in San Diego County, including offshore islands), north coast (California/Oregon border to Alder Creek) and San Francisco Bay (Golden Gate Bridge to Carquinez Bridge).

Consistent with the MLPA and MOU amendment continuing the MLPA Initiative, the NCRSG will be convened to enhance the state's ability to carry out the mandates of the Marine Life Protection Act, and to ensure that regional knowledge and interests are reflected in alternative proposals for MPAs along the north coast.

Membership: The NCRSG is composed of individuals who are able and willing to provide information that will assist in developing alternative proposals for MPAs along the north coast. The chair of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) and the director of DFG shall have sole discretion to select members of the group. In selecting members, the chair and director may consider professional expertise or experience, diversity of perspectives, geographic location, willingness to express fundamental interests as opposed to fixed positions, access to and effective use of a communication network, willingness to convey the interests of one or more constituencies, capacity to work with diverse viewpoints, ability to work collaboratively and seek to integrate the interests of a broad range of constituencies, ability to balance a

regional perspective with localized knowledge, and commitment to completing all aspects of the charge of the group by October 2010.

Term: Each member of the NCRSG shall serve through October 2010, or until relieved of duties. Each member shall serve at the pleasure of the chair of the BRTF and director of DFG.

Charge: In cooperation with a facilitation team, a science advisory team, and staff from the MLPA Initiative, the NCRSG will provide assistance in the following key tasks:

- Provide local expertise and knowledge of the north coast study region for informing the MLPA planning process,
- Evaluate existing marine protected areas within the north coast study region with relation to the goals of the MLPA,
- Develop alternative proposals for marine protected areas within the north coast study region that meet the requirements of the MLPA,
- Conduct outreach to constituent groups for involvement in the MLPA North Coast Project,
- Identify potential speakers to present NCRSG recommendations and commentary at MLPA public meetings, and
- Strive for a high degree of cross-interest involvement and support in crafting marine protected area proposals.

The primary focus of deliberations will be public sessions of the group. The NCRSG will not finalize alternative MPA proposals outside public sessions of the group.

Note that the charge of the NCRSG is not to debate:

- the virtues of the Marine Life Protection Act or whether MPAs should be redesigned,
- the validity of MPAs as a fisheries management tool (fisheries management is not the main goal of the MLPA), or
- detailed guidance in the draft *California Marine Life Protection Act Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas* (it is guidance adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission).

Attendance: Members of the NCRSG are expected to attend all publicly-noticed meetings of the group, which shall generally be scheduled as needed from February 2010 through October 2010. Meetings will move throughout the study region. The NCRSG will also have work sessions, where sub-groups meet separately for one- or two-day sessions; NCRSG members are expected to participate in work sessions.

Remuneration: Members of the NCRSG, upon request, will be reimbursed for actual travel expenditures related to the MLPA Initiative. A daily stipend may be made available for attendance at publicly-noticed NCRSG meetings for those members who are not participating as part of their job activities or are giving personal time without any compensation.