California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
Charter of the MLPA Statewide Interests Group, 2010
Revised January 11, 2010

Official Name: This group officially is designated as the MLPA Statewide Interests Group (SIG) to the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF).

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. Designing and implementing marine protected areas is challenging. Therefore, the secretary for natural resources determined it beneficial to convene an MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) to enhance the state's ability to carry out the mandate under the Marine Life Protection Act.

Creation of a BRTF was initially stipulated in a 2004 memorandum of understanding (MOU) to which the California Natural Resources Agency, DFG, and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation were parties. The MOU 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). The MOU expired in December 2006 and a second MOU was signed for the purpose of continuing the public-private partnership, including the blue ribbon task force, in the north central coast (Alder Creek in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point in San Mateo County). The second MOU was amended in July 2008 to continue the public-private partnership in the remaining study regions (south coast, north coast and San Francisco Bay).

To assist the task force in communicating with stakeholders and the public on a statewide basis regarding implementation of the MLPA and recommendations of the BRTF, the MLPA Statewide Interests Group was created under the first phase MOU and has been created again for each study region under the second phase MOU.

Membership: The SIG will consist of approximately 12-15 individuals with the willingness and capacity to communicate with as broad a constituency as possible. The individuals selected will achieve a diversity of perspectives, constituencies and geography. Members are appointed by the MLPA Initiative executive director in consultation with the chair of the BRTF.

Term: Each member of the SIG shall serve through December 2010, or until relieved of duties, at the pleasure of the chair of the BRTF.

Charge: The SIG is intended to provide a forum for enhanced communication between the task force and stakeholders during the MLPA North Coast Project. To that end, the SIG will advise the chair of the task force and MLPA staff regarding:

- how to improve the progress in implementing, and to identify statewide issues that relate to or may affect, the MLPA Initiative,
- ways to increase public and stakeholder participation in the MLPA Initiative,
- strategies for outreach to constituent groups,
- potential panel speakers for task force and other meetings, and
- other issues as identified by the task force.

The SIG's role is not to negotiate or decide issues for the task force, and participants are not expected to make commitments on behalf of their constituencies.

Attendance: The members of the SIG are expected to participate in all regular meetings of the group, which shall generally be scheduled by teleconference before or after BRTF meetings between February and December 2010. The chair of the BRTF, or her/his designee, shall participate in all regular meetings of the SIG.

Remuneration: Members of the SIG will, upon request, be reimbursed for any travel expenditures related to the MLPA Initiative, but not for time. All meetings are expected to be conducted via conference call through a toll-free number, so participation costs to SIG members are not anticipated.