

# Memorandum

Date: October 19, 2010

To: Cindy Gustafson, Chair

Marine Life Protection Act Blue Ribbon Task Force

From: Becky Ota Becky Ota

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Department of Fish and Game

Subject: Update on marine protected area implementation and monitoring

This memo is in response to a Blue Ribbon Task Force request at its July 21-22, 2010 meeting in Fort Bragg of the Department of Fish and Game (Department) for an update on marine protected areas (MPA) implementation and monitoring.

#### Statewide

In the spring of 2010, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed by 11 government and non-government agencies to memorialize their commitments to successful implementation of a statewide network of MPAs established by the State of California pursuant to the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). The signatories held their first meeting in April 2010 in order to highlight current monitoring and research activities, and to receive an enforcement update on compliance with MPA protections. Since then, in collaboration with the Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), and the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation, the Department is drafting an MOU to enhance education and outreach programs associated with the implementation of the MLPA. Additionally, the Department is also developing a comprehensive statewide outreach plan which will include fostering new partnerships and the development of new informational materials, such as investigating innovative technologies like smartphone applications.

## Central Coast Study Region

#### Implementation

- Outreach Public information signs were developed by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation with input from the Department. These new signs are located in the Monterey, Moss Landing, and Santa Cruz harbors and at Lovers Point. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is developing a Monterey Bay pilot's chart which will include MPAs. In addition, the Department developed and distributed a public informational guide to the central coast MPAs, which is also available in electronic format: <a href="https://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/ccmpas\_guide.pdf">www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/ccmpas\_guide.pdf</a>.
- Management The Department continues to coordinate with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the Sea Doc Society's Lost Fishing

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Gear Removal projects. Over the last couple of years a large amount of derelict fishing gear, including gill nets, fishing line, traps, and trawl gear has been removed from MPAs and surrounding areas.

#### <u>Monitoring</u>

- Baseline Characterization In 2007, the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) dedicated approximately \$2.2 million to support five baseline data collection projects that were administered through Sea Grant. Four of those projects were provided an additional amount of nearly \$2 million to conduct a second year of data collection. The baseline projects and research organizations are as follows:
  - 1. Socioeconomic, resource use mapping, and rapid social appraisal Impact Assessment Inc.
  - 2. Kelp and shallow rocky habitat surveys using scuba Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans (PISCO)
  - 3. Rocky Intertidal surveys Multi-agency Rocky Intertidal Network (MARINe)
  - 4. Deep-water habitats (includes canyons) *Delta* submersible, Moss Landing Marine Labs and National Marine Fisheries Service
  - 5. Collaborative fishing California Collaborative Fisheries Research
  - Mid-depth rocky habitats using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) Department (not supported with Sea Grant/OPC funds)

# North Central Coast Study Region

#### Implementation

- Outreach The Department is partnering with State Parks to develop a signage plan. A guide to the north central coast MPAs has also been developed by the Department and is available in electronic format:
   <a href="http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/nccsr12">http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/nccsr12</a> 22 09.pdf. In addition, the Department worked with former regional stakeholder group members to develop an informational flyer for the north central region.
- Management The Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopted emergency regulation changes to Stewarts Point State Marine Reserve which created the Stewarts Point State Marine Conservation Area. The Commission is also considering making the southeast Farallon Island Special Closure seasonal rather than year-round.

#### <u>Monitoring</u>

- Monitoring plan The MPA Monitoring Enterprise, working with the
  Department, developed the North Central Coast MPA Monitoring Plan
  which was approved by the Commission on April 7, 2010. The monitoring
  plan and additional information can be viewed in electronic format:
  <a href="http://www.calost.org/North">http://www.calost.org/North</a> Central.html.
- Baseline characterization OPC has dedicated \$4 million to baseline characterization. Similar to the central coast region, these funds are administered by Sea Grant and projects were selected through a competitive request for proposal process. Eleven baseline projects were

awarded funding and sampling began in the summer of 2010. The baseline projects and research organizations are as follows:

- 1. Scuba surveys of kelp and shallow rock ecosystems PISCO
- Analysis of citizen-science data from rocky shores and sandy beaches, collected by Long-term Monitoring Program and Experiential Training for Students (LiMPETS) - Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association
- 3. Citizen-science scuba surveys of rocky reefs Reef Check
- ROV surveys of deep-water habitats California State University, Monterey Bay and Marine Applied Research and Exploration (MARE)
- Analysis of citizen-science data collected through Beach Watch -Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association
- 6. Surveys of seabird distributions and ecology U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Point Reyes Bird Observatory Conservation Science
- 7. Surveys of sandy beaches and surf-zone ecosystems -Sonoma State University, University of California, Davis, and University of California, Santa Barbara
- 8. Surveys of rocky intertidal ecosystems MARINe
- 9. Socioeconomics and demographics of coastal use Ecotrust and National Marine Sanctuaries/Natural Equity
- 10. Aerial kelp surveys and intertidal habitat mapping Ocean Imaging Corporation
- 11. Integrated ecosystem assessment Farallon Institute for Advanced Ecosystem Research

# South Coast Study Region – currently under consideration by Fish and Game Commission

#### **Implementation**

- Draft Environmental Impact Report On September 29, 2010, the Commission voted to extend the 45-day public review and comment period an additional 15 days. The public comment period will now close October 19, 2010.
- Management The military closures that are part of the Blue Ribbon Task Force Integrated Preferred Alternative for the MLPA south coast study region MPA planning process are now in effect. Additionally, the Department continues to coordinate with the Sea Doc Society to remove derelict fishing gear and debris from existing and proposed MPAs and surrounding areas.

#### **Monitoring**

 Monitoring plan – In conjunction with the Department, the MPA Monitoring Enterprise is developing the South Coast MPA Monitoring Plan. The anticipated release is early 2011. Public workshops to gather input from interested individuals and organizations were held in the south coast region in July. A second round of public workshops to present the framework will be held November 8, 10, and 15. Ongoing conversations Cindy Gustafson Page 4 of 4 October 19, 2010

with agency and academic scientists to identify and discus metrics are occurring, as well as both the utility and incorporation of existing programs and Channel Islands monitoring programs are being considered carefully.

• Baseline Characterization - OPC has dedicated \$4 million to baseline characterization. A request for research proposals for baseline studies is anticipated to coincide with the adoption of a final MPA proposal.

# Other Research

 The Department has received applications for scientific collection permits to study urchins and urchin ecosystem dynamics, and approved several applications since then.