

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
Charter of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force, 2009-2010
October 5, 2009

Official Name: This task force officially is designated as the California Marine Life Protection Act Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) to the California Natural Resources Agency.

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 from a public policy perspective because of numerous scientific, economic and cultural questions, many of which are not definitively answered by the best available science. Therefore, the secretary for natural resources determined it beneficial to convene a task force to make recommendations for implementing the MLPA and 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). A second MOU was signed in December 2006 for the purpose of continuing the public-private partnership, including a task force, in the north central coast (Alder Creek in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point in San Mateo County), and an amendment to the second MOU continues the partnership through the south coast study region (Point Conception to the California-Mexico border in San Diego County, including offshore islands), through the north coast study region (California-Oregon border in Del Norte County to Alder Creek) and to begin planning in the San Francisco Bay study region (Golden Gate Bridge to Carquinez Bridge).

Membership: The BRTF will be composed of five to eight distinguished, knowledgeable and highly credible public leaders selected by the secretary for natural resources. The secretary shall have sole discretion to select members of the task force, and may consider persons for their intellect, vision, public policy experience, and diversity of professional expertise. The secretary shall also select one person to serve as chair of the task force.

Term: Each member of the task force shall serve for the duration of the MLPA North Coast Project, through December 2010, or until relieved of duties. Each member shall serve at the pleasure of the secretary.

Charge: The charge to the task force is to meet the objectives of the MLPA Initiative, implementing the provisions of the MOU effective January 1, 2007, including to:

- oversee a regional project to develop alternative marine protected area proposals in an area along the north coast to present to the California Fish and Game Commission by December 2010,
- prepare information and recommendations for coordinating management of MPAs with federal agencies, and

- provide direction for expenditure of initiative funds.

The task force will also work to resolve policy disputes and provide direction in the face of uncertainty, while meeting the objectives of the MLPA.

The chair of the BRTF will oversee the work of the executive director to the initiative, work with the director of DFG to convene the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group, and serve as the principal link between the BRTF and initiative staff.

Members are also expected to serve as liaisons to the North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group.

Attendance: Members of the BRTF are each expected to attend all regular meetings of the task force, which shall generally be scheduled as one- or two-day meetings as needed between November 2009 and December 2010. One or more members of the BRTF shall attend each meeting of the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group.

Remuneration: Members of the BRTF will, upon request, be reimbursed for actual travel expenditures related to the MLPA Initiative, but not for time.