

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force

MEMORANDUM

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John J. Kirlin, *Executive Director*

To: MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
From: John Kirlin, Executive Director
Subject: Request to authorize expenditure of funds
Date: September 6, 2006

This memo reports on an authorization to spend funds to plan for future decision support tools (as approved at your May 25, 2006 meeting – see Item A) and makes requests to expend funds in that and four additional areas. Of the four new items, one is to support preparation of a monitoring plan for California Fish and Game Commission action on the central coast MPAs (Item B), one contributes to both the completion of the MLPA Central Coast Project and future study regions (Item C) and the final two are in preparation for future study regions (items D and E). Each request is identified separately; the total request is \$450,000.

A. Report on May 25 authorization to plan for future decision tools (including those used by the SAT) and request for funds to implement plan.

On May 25 you authorized spending up to \$50,000 to develop a plan for future decision support tools. Will McClintock (UCSB) John Ugoretz (DFG) and Paulo Serpa (DFG) took the lead in sorting out these issues, with contributions from others, including Mary Gleason, and staff of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS). That review resulted in the following plan:

1. Continue to use the decision support tool developed by IMSG under contract supported by the MLPA Initiative and the MBNMS, but not to invest in further enhancement of this tool. The MBNMS is currently using the tool in its stakeholder process but its relevance to the MLPA Central Coast Project is now minimal.
2. Anticipate using newly released and anticipated ARC GIS-related tools from ESRI as the basis for future tools used in regional stakeholder processes and for automation of SAT calculations.
3. Begin training staff in newer ARC GIS tools.
4. Hire one data base manager within DFG with funds appropriated in the 2006-07 state budget.

5. Ensure robust hardware and software to maintain critical data bases at both DFG and UCSB to minimize risk of data loss and downtime to recover from any problems.

Approximately \$30,000 in expenditures were made, leaving another \$20,000 available:

- Travel expenditures among principals to develop plan, at approximately \$2,000.
- ESRI training on the "GIS Portal Tool" for Paulo Serpa, Will McClintock and Sophie Debeukelaer, at approximately \$ 5,000
- Data back up hardware and software at UCSB, at approximately \$23,000

Request: Authorize spending up to an additional \$70,000 to further implement the plan developed, making a total of \$90,000 available. Expenditure of approximately \$70,000 of these funds is planned for hardware and software at DFG and UCSB, in items 2 and 5 of the plan above.

B. Assistance in the design of effective monitoring and adaptive management programs

An MLPA Initiative-supported panel of scientists is currently developing a priority list of baseline data collection that will support long-term monitoring and adaptive management on the central coast. The work of that group, anticipated to be complete by November 2006, provides the basis for a more informed discussion of the design of a monitoring and adaptive management plan for the central coast MPAs. Such a plan will be part of the ultimate decision in designating a package of central coast MPAs and implementing a program for those MPAs.

Consideration of ways to most effectively advance this work has focused on a workshop to bring together members of the existing panel and other experts. One format for such a workshop would include: (a) identifying several relevant experts from California and elsewhere, (b) commissioning each of these individuals to prepare a short thought piece on critical issues and alternative approaches to address these issues, (c) circulating these thought pieces among the authors and other participants in the MLPA process, (d) holding a one- or two-day facilitated working session where the thought pieces are discussed, analyzed, refined and honed into a draft product that frames choices and identifies advantages and disadvantages of each approach, and (e) developing a public product usable by decision makers.

Request: Up to \$40,000 total for this workshop and preparation is requested. The decision to proceed with the workshops or any alternative would be reached by MLPA Initiative and Department of Fish and Game staff. As the BRTF does not meet again until November, authorization is requested now so the work may proceed in a timely fashion.

C. Assistance in determining appropriate incorporation of socioeconomic considerations into MPA designation and management

The issue of appropriate incorporation of socioeconomic considerations was addressed by the MLPA Initiative but continues to be debated. This request is for a modest effort to further clarify

the range of options available, seeking both to understand expectations more precisely and to specify whether and how data and analysis can address those expectations.

There is not yet agreement on how to proceed here. One possibility is for a consultant to seek to clarify expectations of California Fish and Game Commission members and staff, and Department of Fish and Game staff, and then use a workshop of social scientist to address whether and how those expectations could be addressed. This approach would not involve stakeholders directly, though their previous statements regarding socioeconomic considerations provide some information about their expectations.

The goal would be a public product that would identify the range of expectations and analyze whether and how socioeconomic data and analyses could address those expectations. To the extent possible, the analysis should determine rough cost parameters in developing and making useful the possible socioeconomic data and analyses.

Request: Up to \$40,000 total for the work above is requested. The decision to proceed with this work would be reached by Initiative and Department staff. As the BRTF does not meet again until November, authorization is requested now so the work may proceed in a timely fashion.

D. Additional socioeconomic data acquisition and organization for future study regions

A team including Mary Gleason, Paulo Serpa, Evan Fox and Amy Boone is just beginning organization of data sets similar to those used in the MLPA Central Coast Project with the goal of having those data and a draft regional profile available in early 2007 for the next study region. As in the central coast, we anticipate gaps in socioeconomic data. For that reason, the emphasis here is especially on identifying, assessing the usefulness of, and bringing existing socioeconomic data sets into the data files available for use. In addition to those data sets from national and state government sources used in the MLPA Central Coast Project, this effort should also determine what is available in analyses of ocean oriented activities by local governments, chambers of commerce, students at local universities and colleges and local non-profits. This examination of existing data sets will also better inform decisions regarding any new socioeconomic data collection.

Request: Up to \$150,000 to retain two or more consultants to search for, collect, organize and assess ocean oriented data and analyses as described above.

E. Alternative models for study region processes

The MLPA Initiative's Central Coast Project was designed around developing alternative proposed packages of MPAs originating in a facilitated, regional stakeholder process. The MLPA Central Coast Project was successful in developing plausible alternatives, which were considered and modified by the BRTF, and recommended to the Department of Fish and Game, which made additional changes to develop its preferred alternative. The California Fish and Game Commission selected a preferred alternative for CEQA analysis.

The MLPA Initiative and the regional stakeholder group process have been examined by external consultants and their reports presented to the BRTF at this meeting. While the MLPA Central Coast Project design is broadly judged successful and the design for the next study region could sensibly build upon that basic design, it also is appropriate to consider fundamentally different approaches. Here are three examples:

- A future BRTF-type body (supported by contract professional and DFG staff) could be empowered to take a more direct role in package development, still with active stakeholder processes, but with stakeholders focused more on identifying areas of high value and providing information for refining packages than in actual package creation. In this model, a BRTF could function much as does a planning commission in city land use decisions.
- Alternatively, the design could be developed from the strategic decision making approach used in large businesses. That approach emphasizes defining what constitutes a quality decision in the particular situation and has developed principles to be followed in achieving quality decisions. The approach would need to be refined for MPA network design, where the decision is complicated politically and scientifically.
- Yet another approach is seen in the federal Military Base Closing Panel, where independent policy makers recommend decisions which can only be accepted or rejected as a whole package. The MBCP is based on a statutory foundation not available for MPA design, but the option could possibly be modified.
- Finally, a conceptual model should be developed that anticipates use of solely state resources.

In this area, individual consultants would be identified who possess knowledge of the alternative strategy being considered and tasked with developing a conceptual application of that strategy to the MLPA. The resulting work products would be available to decision makers as they consider designs for future study regions.

Request: Up to \$150,000 is requested to retain consultants to develop and apply to the MLPA alternative models for study region processes.