

**CALIFORNIA MARINE LIFE PROTECTION ACT INITIATIVE  
STATEWIDE INTERESTS GROUP  
MARCH 4, 2005 MEETING SUMMARY  
(12:00 noon - 2:00 p.m. via conference call)**

**Welcome, Roll Call, and Logistics for Conference Call**

The meeting began with a brief welcome by Phil Isenberg, MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) Chair. The facilitator, Gail Bingham from RESOLVE, called the roll with 23 members present. MLPA Initiative staff also participated in the call, including John Kirlin, MLPA Initiative executive director; Mike Weber, MLPA Initiative senior project manager; and Melissa Miller-Henson, MLPA Initiative operations and communications manager. Also present on the call was John Ugoretz, senior policy advisor to the MLPA Initiative and Rob Williams of RESOLVE.

**Recap of Central Coast Workshops**

John Kirlin thanked the MLPA Statewide Interests Group (SIG) representatives for their support. Although the workshops added significantly to the staff workload, staff felt that it was well worth the effort and helped frame the discussion at the February BRTF meeting. He noted that an additional workshop (three in total) was held in response to suggestions made at the last SIG call. All three meetings were held from 6:00 – 9:00 pm, also as suggested on the last call. The locations, dates, and total number of participants were:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Bodega	February 15, 2005	38
Santa Cruz	February 16, 2005	64
Morro Bay	February 17, 2005	97

SIG representatives were asked for general comments and impressions about the workshops and provided the following:

- Generally the meetings were well run and received.
- A few workshop participants expressed concern to one of the SIG members that they did not recognize the staff present from the BRTF or the California Department of Fish and Game. These participants felt that their input would be more seriously considered if those they recognized as senior members of these organizations had been present. (The representative making this comment said he didn't necessarily share that view and that he received other favorable impressions of the workshop.) The chair and staff also noted that BRTF members and staff who were not present made the effort to watch the video tapes and asked SIG members to convey this to their constituencies.
- The general public's lack of knowledge about the issue of marine protected areas (MPAs), and the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative in particular, was again evident. This is likely to be unavoidable and perhaps could be planned for with a FAQ handout or summary at the beginning of future workshops of this type.
- The specific terminology "study area" was and continues to be problematic. This contributes to public misunderstanding and questions such as, 'do you not have enough areas to study already?' Different terminology that more accurately conveys intended action to the public would be helpful.

- When participants spoke at length from the heart about a topic, the moderator would fail to record anything, leaving the participant to feel that their input and effort was not valued.
- Though the meetings were well run on balance, there needs to be more of an effort to focus participants on the topic at hand.

### **Stakeholder Involvement at the February BRTF Meeting**

As noted previously, the input from the three workshops played a significant role in helping frame the discussion of the MLPA Central Coast Study Region at BRTF meeting held February 22-23 in Monterey. However, due to unexpected illnesses and mudslide conditions across the state, a quorum was not reached; and a formal decision about the designation of the study region was postponed until the April 11-12 meeting.

SIG representatives were asked for feedback on the BRTF meeting including: a) what went well; b) suggestions for change; and comments on the webcasting, website, and potential for video teleconferencing (VTC).

SIG members were disappointed that a formal decision about the study region was not made at the February meeting, given the series of workshops and the amount of preparatory work done. Several people asked whether, in similar unusual circumstances, provisions might be made for an alternative method to reach quorum for key decisions in the future (e.g., participation by phone in case of hardship) so that work could be continued and forward momentum could be sustained. Reservations also were expressed concerning the idea of participation by phone, however.

The chair was complimented on the way the meeting was run and his personal commitment to listening to the public, which he showed by staying and listening to such a large number of comments. Some concerns were expressed about managing the time more effectively, with the suggestion that the use of a timing device would relieve the chair from having to cut people off. Staff indicated that this was already planned for the next meeting. Others suggested that the device give a 1 minute and another 30 second warning that would be visible to the participant and the audience. It was also recommended that the participants be requested to line up behind the microphone to enable the chair to gauge the number of people interested in speaking and more effectively manage the process.

SIG representatives made the following additional comments:

- BRTF members asked great questions.
- There was good variety in composition of the panels, and SIG members appreciated hearing from new people.
- The science discussion was particularly engaging and provided an opportunity to focus on critical issues.

- The PowerPoint presentations were particularly helpful and informative; their continued use should be considered.
- The webcast feedback was well received.
- SIG members would have liked time to ask both panels (expert and stakeholder) questions.

The chair asked for thoughts about whether the BRTF will need to reopen public comment and discussion on the designation of the study region at the April meeting. SIG members commented that interested stakeholder groups and the general public have had extensive opportunities to comment, so reopening the discussion would not be a good use of time. Most members thought that it would be constructive to allocate about an hour to the topic of the study region at the beginning of the BRTF meeting, with a supplemental memo from staff reprising the issues and comments received and a representative stakeholder panel to summarize key points. SIG members agreed to coordinate the selection of panel members (e.g. among the recreational fishing community).

### **April Task Force Meeting**

SIG members were asked to comment on what the focus of the expert and stakeholder panels should be at the upcoming April BRTF meeting. John Ugoretz noted that the principal focus of the meeting would be on the master plan framework. John reported that two issues have come up frequently in comments received, and that providing an opportunity for the BRTF to hear more about these issues from experts and stakeholders might assist them in making decisions. The first issue is the meaning of the concept of a “network” of MPAs and the variety of ways to design and implement such a network. The second issue was to discuss the gradations of restrictions of use and what would be the relationship between the different types of MPAs (no take reserves, recreation only, and limited take conservation areas). This discussion could address when to use which kinds, how they are used, and how they relate spatially.

SIG members commented on the usefulness of both topics and suggested a few others. Two related issues that might best be dealt with in the future (perhaps in the context of the MLPA Central Coast Project) were: 1) indirect impacts (e.g. from land-based pollution); what are they and how the MLPA process will address them, and 2) location of ports and harbors and the interaction with MPAs. Other topics suggested included socio-economic impacts, the benefits of MPAs, and the issue of displaced effort. The chair asked staff to begin working on a conceptual understanding of the varying levels of protection (gradations of use), expanding it to include a suggestion to consider management options in addition to MPAs. This discussion can begin in April but will be worked on iteratively for future meetings. The chair also suggested that this topic of varying levels of protection could usefully be the subject of a workshop after the April meeting.

Based on this discussion, there will be a single focus for the expert and stakeholder panels on the topic of networks.

SIG members were also invited to make suggestions regarding the composition of the expert and stakeholder panel. MLPA staff agreed to email a reminder to all representatives soliciting suggestions for the panels and detailing desirable qualities/expertise for panelists, and requested that suggestions be received by March 9. Additional specific suggestions for the expert panel included:

- representative from NOAA
- pollution expert
- larval transport expert
- social scientist / socio-economist

The stakeholder panel will be constituted as in the past, with about five individuals representing the broad categories of stakeholder interests. SIG members noted the value of varying the particular representative each time.

### **Update on Draft Master Plan Framework Status and Timetable**

Mike Weber reported that over 275 comments were received regarding the MLPA Master Plan Framework (MPF). Major topics that frequently came up, in addition to the issue of the definition of networks, included: land-sea interaction, places that seemed to suggest an anti-fishing bias, and ways to organize the text more clearly including flow charts depicting who is responsible for which decisions.

The current timetable for the MPF is as follows:

March 15	Target for revised draft (showing changes)
March 23	Master Plan Science Advisory Team meeting
March 25	Comments due on revised draft
April 5	Distribute final draft
April 11	BRTF meeting and a decision

### **Open Discussion**

The following comments were made during the open discussion:

- It would be useful to have a discussion of what the specific process is for moving from various proposals to a final MPA designation.
- The broadcast technology is helpful and appreciated.
- The Aquarium of the Pacific and the Monterey Bay Aquarium are discussing approaches to general public education related to MPAs.
- A consideration and discussion of field trips would be useful.

**Information on Future Meeting Dates**

*Blue Ribbon Task Force Meetings*

April 11-12            Los Angeles area

May 23                Sacramento

*Master Plan Science Advisory Team Meetings*

March 23             Oakland

*Proposed SIG meetings (by teleconference)*

April 21              1:30-3:30

June 3                1:30-3:30

**Wrap Up**

The conference call adjourned at 3:45 PM.