

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium

Tidelines, Winter Edition

Audience: Membership publication, targeting 40-75 age group, family-based, South Bay/San Pedro community, circulation approximately 2,500

The California Marine Life Protection Act: Paving New Ground

By Ken Wiseman, Executive Director, Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

For the next year and a half all eyes will be on Southern California's coast as the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) moves into the south coast study region, representing another step towards the completion of a historical network of marine protected areas (MPAs). Everyone has a stake in the future of our ocean resources – from fishermen to surfers, divers to boaters, beach-goers to sushi-lovers – and the MLPA Initiative invites you to get involved in the process.

The MLPA was passed in 1999 and requires California to redesign its system of marine protected areas to achieve numerous biological and socio-economic goals (see box). To accomplish these goals, a public-private partnership between the California Resources Agency, California Department of Fish and Game, and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation was formed, creating the MLPA Initiative. The MLPA Initiative is designed to achieve the MLPA goals through a regional approach, relying heavily upon public involvement throughout the process.

The MLPAI is well underway. The central coast process was completed in late 2007 and the north central coast is under final review by the California Fish and Game Commission, the ultimate decision-making body under the MLPA. Currently the MLPAI is in the initial planning stages in the MLPA South Coast Study Region (Point Conception in Santa Barbara County to the border with Mexico, including all offshore islands). Each regional process is overseen by a blue ribbon task force (BRTF), guided by the advice of a regional stakeholder group (RSG) and science advisory team (SAT). The RSG in each region is made up of individuals representing the diverse users and interests in the study region and plays a key role in determining the eventual outcome.

As supporters of Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, you are invested in the future of our global ocean. The MLPA Initiative invites you to share your views and include your voice in the decision-making process.

The goals of the MLPA are:

1. To protect the natural diversity and abundance of marine life, and the structure, function, and integrity of marine ecosystems.
2. To help sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations, including those of economic value, and rebuild those that are depleted.
3. To improve recreational, educational, and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems that are subject to minimal human disturbance, and to manage these uses in a manner consistent with protecting biodiversity.
4. To protect marine natural heritage, including protection of representative and unique marine life habitats in California waters for their intrinsic value.
5. To ensure that California's MPAs have clearly defined objectives, effective management measures, and adequate enforcement, and are based on sound scientific guidelines.
6. To ensure that the state's MPAs are designed and managed, to the extent possible, as a network.

The MLPA can be found in Chapter 10.5 of the California Fish and Game Code, Sections 2850 to 2863.

There are numerous opportunities to provide input that include:

- Contact a member of the South Coast RSG to express your interests and views;
- Provide written or verbal comment at BRTF, SAT, RSG and California Fish and Game Commission meetings;
- Submit feedback on documents for comment available on the MLPA website;
- View live webcasts of meetings as they take place or archived versions of the meetings on the MLPA website;
- Submit general comments, ideas and suggestions via email or regular mail; and
- Sign up for the MLPAI mailing list on the MLPA website to receive updates on key meetings, opportunities for comment and documents to review.

TEXT BOX: All BRTF, SAT and RSG meetings are open to the public and are announced via the mailing list; meeting agendas and materials are posted to the MLPA website as they become available. Visit the website and learn more about how these different groups interact and contribute to the overall planning process.

the MLPA Initiative values public involvement and was created as an open and transparent process to ensure all stakeholders have an equal opportunity to have their voice heard. Your participation in the MLPA Initiative process will help shape the future of our ocean for generations to come.

For more information about the MLPA Initiative:

- Please visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa or
- Contact us at
 - MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov
 - 916.654.1885
 - Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814