



California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

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To: MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
From: MLPA Initiative Staff
Date: January 13, 2006

**Subject: SOCIOECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE
NETWORK COMPONENTS FOR A NETWORK OF MARINE PROTECTED
AREAS ALONG THE CENTRAL COAST**

Summary

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) gives precedence to ecosystem integrity and habitat protection goals in designing a network of MPAs. Consideration of socioeconomic factors in the act includes the goal of attention to species of economic value, participation by interested parties and local communities, and development of a siting plan for protected areas that considers economic information to the extent possible while achieving goals of the act. Best readily available science and the knowledge of participants is required for decision making; there is no expectation of new data collection or analyses. While the MLPA is not excluded from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), additional review under CEQA is not necessary when the Fish and Game Commission adopts a master plan or a program based on that plan.

To date, the Initiative process has complied with requirements of the MLPA to consider socioeconomic factors and gone beyond those requirements to collect and analyze additional socioeconomic information. The California Department of Fish and Game has stated it will undertake an analysis of the maximum anticipated economic impact of the preferred alternative it proposes to the California Fish and Game Commission. Unlike the National Environmental Policy Act, CEQA does not require analysis of economic impacts unless they have a significant indirect environmental impact. However, the promulgation of implementing regulations by the commission would require an economic analysis.

Socio economic considerations in the MLPA

The MLPA includes few references to socioeconomic or economic factors, shown in bold below:

2853. (b) To improve the design and management of that system, the commission, pursuant to Section 2859, shall adopt a Marine Life Protection Program, which shall have all of the following goals:
- (2) To help sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations, **including those of economic value**, and rebuild those that are depleted.

2855. (b) (1) ... the department shall convene a master plan team to advise and assist in the preparation of the master plan...

(3) The team shall be composed of the following individuals:

(B) Five to seven members who shall be scientists, one of whom **may have expertise in the economics and culture** of California coastal communities.

(c) The department and team, in carrying out this chapter, **shall take into account relevant information from local communities**, and **shall solicit comments** and advice for the master plan from interested parties on issues including, but not necessarily limited to, each of the following:

(2) **Socioeconomic** and environmental **impacts** of various alternatives.

2857. (a) ... The department and team shall develop a preferred siting alternative that incorporates information and views provided by people who live in the area and other interested parties, **including economic information, to the extent possible** while maintaining consistency with the goals of Section 2853 and guidelines in subdivision (c) of this section.

(d) The department and team, in developing the preferred siting alternative, shall take into account the **existence and location of commercial kelp beds**.

As stated above, the Fish and Game Commission's designation of MPAs does not require an additional CEQA analysis once a master plan and program based on that plan are adopted:

Section 2859 (b). ..The commission's adoption of the plan and a program based on the plan **shall not trigger additional review under the California Environmental Quality Act** (Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code).

Information requirements for decision-making in the MLPA

Importantly, the MLPA anticipates decision-making based on readily available, up-to-date science and provides no suggestions of deferring action for additional data collection or analyses. The relevant phrases are again in bold:

2855. (a) The commission shall adopt a master plan that guides the adoption and implementation of the Marine Life Protection Program adopted pursuant to Section 2853 and decisions regarding the siting of new MPAs and major modifications of existing MPAs. The plan shall be based on the **best readily available science**.

2856. (C) Recommendations to augment or modify the guidelines in subdivision (c) of Section 2857, if necessary to ensure that the guidelines reflect **the most up-to-date science**, including, for example, recommendations regarding the minimum size of individual marine life reserves needed to accomplish the various goals set forth in Section 2853.

Incorporation of socio economic factors in the MLPA Initiative

Consistent with the MLPA, socioeconomic information has been brought into the development of proposed MPA packages through:

- a. Knowledge of members of the MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG),
- b. Compilation of existing information into the MLPA Central Coast Regional Profile, and
- c. Opportunities for public participation, including posting documents on the web for comment and public comment periods at MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force, CCRSG and Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) meetings.

Additional socioeconomic information regarding areas of high value uses was collected from interviews with:

- a. A purposive sample of commercial fishermen from 17 fisheries providing GIS data layers and maps available to CCRSG members and the SAT,
- b. Selected non consumptive users (e.g., divers, kayakers) reported in the Central Coast Regional Profile and also related GIS layers, and
- c. Central coast recreational fishing effort data for commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFV) and private skiffs, based on surveys by the Department of Fish and Game and the California Recreational Fisheries Survey, were assembled and made available to the SAT.

These data are only spatial, that is they define areas of high value, but do not assign a monetary measure to the value of uses in locations. While estimating monetary values of use is possible for some activities, especially commercial fishing, it is not possible to develop equivalent monetary measures for other valued uses, especially at the fine spatial resolutions needed for decisions regarding marine protected areas. To provide whatever information could be extracted from existing literature on the value of non consumptive uses, three reviews of existing literature were commissioned. They addressed understanding the potential economic value of (a) marine wildlife and whale watching, (b) SUBA diving and snorkeling, and (c) marine recreational fishing (Pendleton and Rooke, 2005-2006).

Additionally, public documents (e.g., general plans) from coastal cities and counties in the study area were analyzed and selected officials of those jurisdictions interviewed to identify local public policies related to marine resources. This analysis and supporting official documents was available to the CCRSG in hard copy (Sturm 2005)

The SAT evaluations of proposed packages being provided to the BRTF in 2006 will include:

- a. Analyses of the proximity of proposed MPAs to population centers to proposed MPAs, and
- b. Estimation of the maximum possible impacts on commercial and recreational fisheries from more restrictive regulations associated with proposed MPAs.

A final contribution of socioeconomic data and analysis is anticipated after the BRTF completes its role in forwarding alternative package of MPAs to the Department of Fish and Game. The department plans to contract for analysis of maximum anticipated economic impact of a preferred alternative for use in deliberations of the California Fish and Game Commission.