

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

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To: MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group
From: MLPA Initiative Staff
Subject: Overview and Application of MarineMap as a Decision-Support Tool
Date: November 10, 2008

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform the South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (SCRSG) about MarineMap, a new decision-support tool that was mentioned at your first meeting. This memorandum provides background information on MarineMap, guidelines for its use within the MLPA Initiative process, and the expected implementation plan.

Background

The MLPA planning process involves the iterative development of marine protected area (MPA) proposals by the SCRSG. Stakeholder group members work in groups to identify potential locations, boundaries, regulations, and rationale for individual MPAs. While drafting individual MPA concepts, SCRSG members consider a variety of information, much of which can be linked to specific geographic locations and displayed using a geographic information system (GIS). In the design process, SCRSG members review spatial data layers, design MPAs, and record detailed information regarding proposed MPA concepts. SCRSG members work together during meetings, as well as between meetings, to generate individual MPA concepts and assemble them into MPA arrays, which are then vetted by the SCRSG to develop a full MPA proposal.

To help facilitate the collaborative design process, SCRSG members and MLPA Initiative staff will be using MarineMap, an internet-based mapping tool, to display information, record details of individual MPA concepts, and create MPA arrays. To facilitate the timely transmission of feedback on MPA arrays, MarineMap will have the capacity to generate reports that provide basic feedback on the design of MPAs.

MarineMap

MarineMap is a decision-support tool developed to enhance stakeholder efforts to draft and share potential MPA concepts, as well as receive basic feedback on how well MPA arrays meet certain MPA design guidelines. MLPA Initiative participants can access MarineMap over the Internet and utilize user names and passwords to access individual accounts. Using MarineMap, stakeholders can view geospatial data layers compiled by the MLPA Initiative and overlay, or superimpose, two or more different maps of the same area to display information of interest.

Stakeholders can use MarineMap to draw individual MPA concepts and specify MPA boundaries, regulations and rationale. Stakeholders can also group individual MPA concepts together to create a full MPA array. By default, individual MPA concepts and MPA arrays can be viewed only by the person who created them. However, stakeholders may share their work by selecting this option within MarineMap. Stakeholders may use MarineMap to compare various

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shared individual MPA concepts and full arrays to assist them in developing their draft MPA proposal.

MarineMap also provides stakeholders with basic feedback on MPA concepts. For individual MPA concepts and full proposals, stakeholders can generate basic calculations on areas and distances, as well as statistics regarding habitat coverage. While some of these numbers are used in analyses conducted by the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT), stakeholders should note that the basic reports generated within MarineMap do not serve as a substitute for a full SAT analysis.

During SCRSG meetings, MLPA staff will use MarineMap to help coalesce the individual MPA concepts developed by SCRSG members into draft MPA proposals. MLPA staff will have the ability to display MPAs that have been shared to the full SCRSG outside of meetings, and may also draw new MPA concepts. Outside of meetings, stakeholders may use MarineMap to further develop individual MPA concepts and MPA arrays.

MarineMap is primarily designed to facilitate MPA proposal development by the SCRSG. Some portions of the tool, including the ability to view data layers and MPA proposals, are available to the general public. For entities outside of the SCRSG that are interested in submitting external proposals, the capability to draw and edit MPAs in an array for consideration as a full MPA proposal may be available. Further information regarding the participation of entities outside the SCRSG can be obtained by contacting MLPA staff.

Implementation Plan

Implementation of MarineMap will occur over the upcoming months, as various features and capabilities become available. At the next SCRSG meeting (November 18-19, 2008), there will be an introductory presentation about MarineMap, as well as an opportunity to test the tool with MLPA staff. Following the SCRSG meeting, there will be a series of online training sessions and each SCRSG member is strongly encouraged to participate in one of those sessions. For those without computers or Internet access, physical office locations will be identified where MLPA staff will be available with computers for SCRSG use.

In the training sessions, stakeholders will learn how to utilize MarineMap, draw marine protected areas, add detailed information, and run reports on MPA size and habitat representation. During December and January, the SCRSG will have the opportunity to become comfortable using the basic functions of MarineMap. By the third SCRSG meeting (January 13-14, 2009), SCRSG members will begin using MarineMap to draft and share MPA arrays.

At the November 18-19 SCRSG meeting, SCRSG members will have the opportunity to sign up for basic MarineMap training; there will be several options for when stakeholders can participate in training and when staff will be available to provide additional support, if needed. At any time, stakeholders may send questions or comments regarding MarineMap to help@lists.marinemap.org. Staff will be regularly monitoring that e-mail address to ensure timely responses to issues or questions.