

Fisheries Information Committee
Major Meeting Outcomes
March 21, 2009
Sheraton Four Points Hotel
Los Angeles, California

1. Fisheries Information Committee (FIC) and South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) members who had not attended a FIC meeting in the past introduced themselves.
2. FIC members approved the February 8, 2009 meeting minutes, with one minor change.
3. RSG member Merit McCrea led the group's review of the FIC external proposal, labeled "External Proposal A" by the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative Team (I-Team). FIC/RSG members discussed and agreed to potential modifications and alternatives to individually proposed MPAs in the External Proposal. Major comments, concerns and issues are summarized:
 - Members considered commercial and recreational resource tradeoffs of the original, modified and alternative MPAs.
 - A general observation was that many areas of existing kelp and shallow hard bottom areas were either underestimated or not accounted for in the Marine Map tool developed to calculate amounts of representative habitats. Merit pointed out that the mapped kelp coverages represented a "proxy" for shallow hard bottom in the Marine Map data layers.
 - The overlap between the kelp/hard bottom coverages did not address all concerns regarding underrepresentation of kelp beds and 0-30 meter hard bottom in the Marine Map layers. The group noted that kelp beds occurring in water depths shallower than 20 meters were not accounted for in the data layer calculations, perhaps due to the differing depth ranges of the two major species of kelp: bull kelp (*nereocystis luetkeana*) prevalent in northern CA and giant kelp (*macrocystis pyrifera*) abundant in S.CA.
 - The group is waiting for the pending legal opinion regarding the treatment of areas closed for military use. The treatment of military "exclusion zones" in state waters will determine future recommendations for MPAs proposed offshore the southern Channel Islands. Currently, it is not known if the areas closed to fishing will be considered as protected habitat areas for purposes of MLPA related assessments/analyses.
4. Charles Steinback handed out the 3/20/09 draft Ecotrust evaluation of the RSG and External MPA round one proposals, and reviewed the document with members. FIC/RSG member comments generally focused on requests for additional analyses:
 - Aggregate species and port fisheries analyses to determine impacts on broader groupings of or entire fisheries. Include northern Channel Islands MPAs in the aggregated analyses.
 - Analyze impacts on the live bait fishery.
 - Make a note of limitations of area calculations.
 - Aggregate the species analyses for CPFV fisheries impacts to report the total impact on captains and businesses. Assess impacts on ½ day boat trips.
 - Develop an aggregate impact analysis for coastal pelagic species (CPS) fisheries, i.e. species, including squid, targeted by the wetfish industry, as the wetfish fleet harvests both CPS finfish and squid.
5. Vern Goering provided members with materials to assist with outreach to stakeholders and elected officials. Members provided guidance for and generally supported the grassroots communications strategies either being planned or implemented by the commercial and recreational industries. The following efforts were discussed at the meeting:

- The recreational sector is circulating a letter promoting adoption of External Proposal A to stakeholders for their signatures and presentation to Resources Secretary Chrisman, Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) Chair Benninghoven, the Fishing and Game Commission (F&GC) and possibly others.
- Paul Romanowski previewed his MLPA 101 power point presentation, intended to inform dive clubs and possibly other groups about the south coast MLPA process.
- How to respond to media articles that provide erroneous information about the MLPA process and/or the commercial and recreational industries.
- How to put a human face on the impacts of the MLPA process and designation of MPAs. It was suggested to focus on surf shops and other coastal/fishing dependant businesses. Wendy Tochiyara is documenting "Make a Wish" recipient life stories and organizing presentations by the recipients at upcoming BRTF and F&GC meetings.
- Vern previewed a letter documenting that onshore sources of water pollution and related impacts on offshore water quality are being overlooked by the responsible agencies and I-Team contractors.

6. Next Steps:

- Members agreed that the FIC should inform the Science Advisory Team (SAT) on behalf of the FIN and fishing interest RSG members to address the members' concerns regarding 1) the underrepresentation of kelp and 0-30 meter hard bottom in the Marine Map data layers and 2) the SAT analysis of connectivity between the mainland and northern Channel Islands. The FIC recommended including Anacapa Island in calculations of larval dispersal and habitat protection between the northern mainland subregion and Anacapa Island. *[Post-meeting note: Preparation of a letter, with regard to MarineMap habitat data, is being reconsidered due to information from the GIS staff/SAT members, as discussed below.]*
 - Members agreed that field trips for RSG members, SAT scientists and possibly others on the I-Team may be necessary to demonstrate the underreporting of the nearshore habitats. Trips would likely be scheduled in the general areas of the proposed Malibu, Laguna and Del Mar SMRs and Portuguese Bend SMCA, if they are to occur.
 - Follow-up, as necessary, with the Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation to address any conflicts between the identified DDT zone and proposed Portuguese Bend SMCA.
 - After receiving the legal opinion on how military exclusion zones will be treated in state waters, members may approach the Navy representatives on the RSG.
 - Merit volunteered to contact the MLPA GIS staff regarding the Marine Map Catalina Island kelp resource calculations that are in error. He expects to circulate the response to his inquiry to members. *[After the meeting, Diane circulated GIS staff and SAT member responses to inquiries from Joe Exline and Dave Rudie.]*
 - Provide written comments on the Ecotrust MPA proposals evaluations ASAP to Charles. A revised evaluation is scheduled to be completed by March 27, 2009.
 - Volunteers were requested to help staff FIN booths at the Del Mar Fred Hall Show and Day at the Docks in San Diego, as well as to distribute and gather signatures for the recreational sector letter and responses, as needed, to media articles.
 - Suggestions for recipient organizations were provided to those who chose to participate in fund-raising.
7. The next FIC meeting will be scheduled via email communications and may occur prior to the April 28, 2009 RSG meeting.