

From: Peter Grenell [mailto:pgrenell@smharbor.com]
Sent: Monday, April 04, 2005 3:01 PM
To: Leah Akins
Cc: page@igc.org
Subject: Comments on draft final summary report: Info, Res, Out Needs

Hello,

I'm Peter Grenell, General Manager of San Mateo County Harbor District. We operate Pillar Point Harbor on Half Moon Bay. Following are a few comments I have on your draft report:

1. I understand the basic purpose of the gathering and representation at the workshop. But, I recall attending a symposium in Orange County about a dozen years ago where the same theme - how scientists and decision-makers can better communicate, including how scientists can provide information of use to decision-makers, and how decision-makers can better understand what scientists are trying to tell them. Seems we have not progressed very far. My question is: What is being proposed, considered, or simply thought about this time around that is new and might make some real progress? I don't see any signs of this in the draft report.
2. Second, to make this really work, I think more emphasis earlier in the process needs to be given to input from decision-makers, "users", if you will. Surely, as stated on page 3 bullet 1, a needs exists for improved communication between state agency staff and marine scientists. But, what about local governments, harbor managers, and others who make important decisions all the time, who must apply for permits and comply with a multitude of regulations, who must seek funds, who must serve the public and various user groups including other agencies. The turbulent ongoing discussions regarding marine protected areas and fisheries management show clearly that research cannot proceed in a vacuum.
3. Re: Ecosystem Health: Given the needs stated in the report and as summarized on p. 3, seems that an appropriate recommendation would be to temporarily suspend the MLPA process regarding marine reserves until some more of this sort of information is available. Now, an argument is made that some sort of provision must be made precisely to obtain such information, if only for comparative purposes. If so, then it is imperative that those most affected by such a move, e. g., fishermen, must be involved directly in the design, monitoring, and where possible, other relevant research. Much more attention should be given explicitly to this issue, beyond "socio-economic analysis".
4. Re: Fisheries Management: Ditto #3 above, especially as linked to increased monitoring of Existing MPAs, such as the Rockfish Conservation Area. This is basic stuff: a lot more support and constructive action can be achieved if attention is paid to this issue.
5. Re: Pollution: What about potentially unwarranted "bad PR"? Lurid headlines about "the most polluted" beaches, e. g., are not necessarily helpful in really address a given problem. We have one situation where the causes of certain bacterial counts appear to be both storm drain outfall - human caused - and seabird fecal matter - not human caused. Recent headlines make no mention of this situation. My point is that education of certain environmentally concerned groups as to the complexities of given situations may result in more constructive action - and support - than a National Inquirer-type approach.
6. Re: participant views: What about assessing decision-makers' views about "bridging the gap" between them and scientists? Wouldn't it be helpful to know more about what they see as useful contributions from scientists?
7. Re: participant views: The fascinating "disconnect" between how participants view cooperation: They are cooperative but others are not, raises a basic question: If scientists have this problem of both fact and perception, how do they expect to improve their communication with decision-makers? Seems to me that this Must be addressed first, before all this other stuff begins.

Hope this helps your process.

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