



**MEMORANDUM**

Item 5

**TO:** California Ocean Protection Council

**FROM:** Liz Parissenti, Sea Grant Fellow and Cyndi Dawson, OPC Marine Protected Areas Policy Advisor

**DATE:** December 2, 2014

**RE:** Proposed resolution regarding “The California Collaborative Approach: Marine Protected Areas Partnership Plan”

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1). Proposed Resolution of the California Ocean Protection Council regarding “The California Collaborative Approach: Marine Protected Areas Partnership Plan”
- 2). “The California Collaborative Approach: Marine Protected Areas Partnership Plan”

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**REQUESTED ACTION:**

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council adopt the resolution attached in Exhibit 1 on “The California Collaborative Approach: Marine Protected Areas Partnership Plan” pursuant to Sections 35500 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code.

**SUMMARY:**

The attached proposed resolution will:

1. Adopt the “The California Collaborative Approach: Marine Protected Areas Partnership Plan” (Partnership Plan) and commit to a broad partnership approach that includes state agencies, local, tribal and federal governments, non-governmental organizations, commercial and recreational fishermen, academics, non-consumptive recreational users and the private sector and others to enable successful and effective management of California’s marine protected area (MPA) network.
2. Create an internal workplan with core state agencies to explicitly coordinate roles and responsibilities, leverage resources, and ensure that partnerships are underscored by *respect, mutual benefit, trust and transparency and accountability.*

**PURPOSE:**

The Ocean Protection Council (OPC), together with the California Ocean Science Trust (OST), the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), and the California Fish and Game Commission (FGC), have developed a unique collaborative approach to managing California’s Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This approach underscores the state’s commitment to engaging and partnering with a broad constituency to effectively manage the statewide MPA network. This philosophy and a guide to its implementation is articulated in “The California Collaborative Approach: Marine Protected Areas Partnership Plan” (Partnership Plan) and accompanying resolution, which staff recommends for adoption by the OPC.

The Partnership Plan is an overarching guide for our partners with and without jurisdictional authority on how to engage in MPA management. Partners include but are not limited to: state agencies, local, tribal, and federal governments, non-governmental organizations, commercial and recreational fishermen, academics, non-consumptive recreational users, and the private sector. Many of these groups actively participated in the

design, designation and implementation of the statewide MPA network directed by the Marine Life Protection Act. The Partnership Plan builds on the momentum of these efforts and lays out a framework for a partnership based approach for effective MPA network management.

There are four key elements to the Partnership Plan:

1. Formalizes the ongoing MPA Collaborative Implementation Project under OPC direction. This innovative approach to management establishes a network of 14 Collaboratives that span the California coastline and connect state agency staff to local organizations and stakeholders interested and engaged in supporting MPA network management. OPC will organize regional and state forums to connect local Collaboratives to each other and enable communication across local, regional, and state and federal partners.
2. Offers tribes a range of collaboration and communication options including contacts for engaging with the state on MPA network management and more broadly ocean health.
3. Connects local and federal efforts with state management and includes a dispute resolution mechanism to encourage the resolution of issues quickly and efficiently among partners.
4. Continues the emphasis on using science for decision making and improving the integration of tribal traditional ecological knowledge and expertise of fishermen into the process of MPA network management.

#### **NOVEL PARTNERSHIPS: MPA COLLABORATIVES**

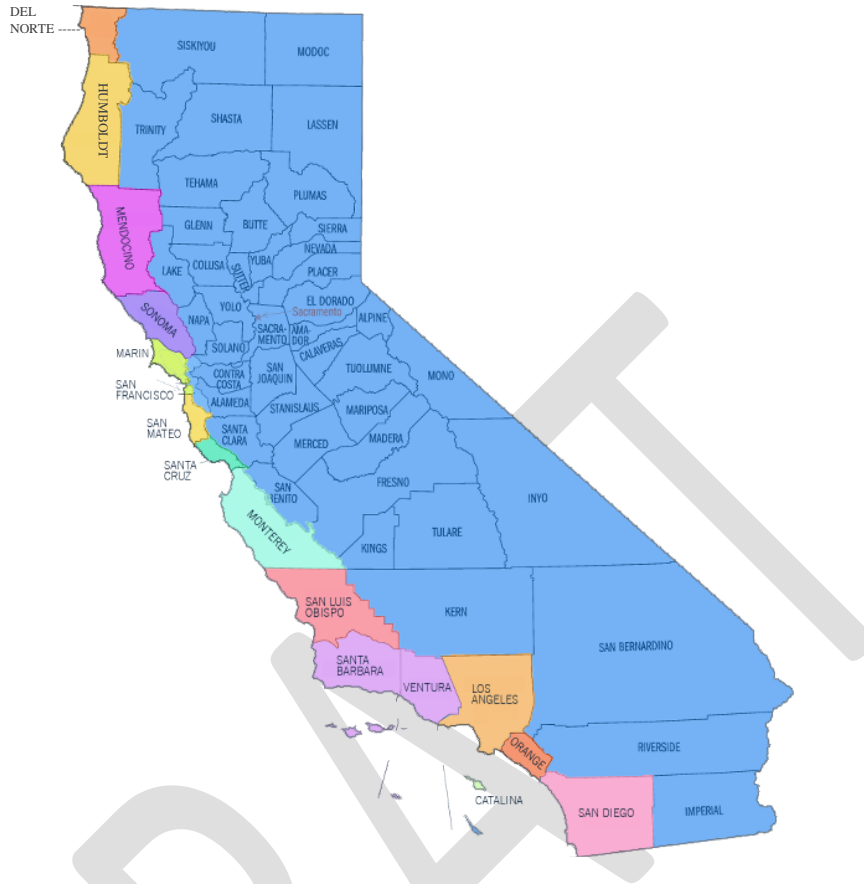
The Partnership Plan introduces a new state initiative called the MPA Collaborative Implementation Project and establishes a framework for coordinating MPA management across local, regional, and state scales. This innovative approach to management has created a network of 14 community or county-based Collaboratives that span the state's coastline and connect centralized state agencies to various local groups and stakeholders interested and engaged in supporting MPA management. Collaboratives include governmental agencies (city, county, state, federal, and tribal), organizations, associations, and institutions that communicate regularly about the MPAs in a particular sub-region (Figure 1). Local stakeholders can use the Collaboratives as:

1. A way to work on site-specific projects more effectively;
2. A forum to communicate with state agencies and key partners about any issues or concerns occurring at the statewide, regional or local scale; and
3. A way to receive information about monitoring efforts, enforcement updates, and outreach and education initiatives from agencies and partners.

Each Collaborative creates partnerships both within local groups and across management jurisdictions. Members of each Collaborative have chosen representatives who, in collaboration with agency input, guide the structure, format, and content of regular meetings and who can provide feedback to higher-level staff on a regional or state scale about local MPAs. The state recognizes the Collaboratives as an important mechanism for engaging stakeholders who have been critical to the MPA network's success and providing opportunities for these and other groups to be involved with MPAs moving forward. As described below, OPC is coordinating meetings at the regional and state-scale to allow Collaboratives to learn from each other and interact with higher-level MPA management decision-makers

Collaboratives work directly with agency partners to support effective management of the state MPA network. As available, agency staff participate in local meetings and serve as key advisors to Collaboratives in developing and implementing projects. The direct collaboration and communication with expert state agency staff provides the Collaboratives with an understanding of agency mandates and priorities and provides an entry point for addressing any issues or concerns. These direct lines of communication are a critical element in allowing the Collaboratives to effectively support the MPA management responsibilities of state agencies.

Figure 1. Statewide Collaborative network shown along coastline. Collaboratives focus on supporting MPA Management within their boundaries but also communicate and collaborate statewide through annual workshops, meetings and forums.



Ultimately, the Partnership Plan is intended to guide interactions across jurisdictions, sectors and scales so the state can leverage the extensive resources already being brought to bear on the conservation and protection of these special areas. Effectively incorporating stakeholders will support sustainable and resilient marine ecosystems, not only benefiting California’s coastal and ocean resources, but the entire West Coast, particularly in the face of climate change. The Partnership Plan is intended to be a “living” document taking into account that aspects of management are constantly being refined. The state is committed to evaluating the effectiveness of this approach for the MPA network management and will continue to seek to improve communication and collaboration among partners.

California is poised to capitalize on the momentum generated by the MLPA designation process by working collaboratively with an extensive network of governmental and non-governmental partners. These partnerships allow leveraging of resources and demonstrate a commitment of all parties to effective MPA network management. Through the Partnership Plan, California establishes a unique and effective framework for active and durable marine management that can be emulated by others implementing MPAs.

**PUBLIC AND TRIBAL COMMENTS ON THE PARTNERSHIP PLAN**

The Partnership Plan underwent a public and a tribal comment period in summer 2014. Outreach was conducted to stakeholders through local Collaborative meetings to inform them of the comment period and OPC staff reached out to fishermen and other groups prior to and during the comment period. Public comments were addressed and incorporated at the end of the comment period as appropriate. OPC staff conducted seven informational sessions with tribes prior to and during the comment period, as well as informal discussions and government-to-government consultation as appropriate, including:

- November 2013 – In-person meeting/webinar for all California tribes (regardless of geographic location), Sacramento, CA.
- December 2013 – In-person meeting with North Coast tribes, Loleta, CA.
- February 2014 – In-person meeting with South Coast Tribal Chairman’s Association, Escondido, CA
- February 2014 – In-person meeting with South Coast tribes, Costa Mesa, CA
- February 2014 – In-person meeting with Central Coast tribes, Santa Barbara, CA
- July 2014 – In-person meeting with the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council, Ukiah, CA
- August 2014 – In-person meeting with the Northern California Tribal Chairman’s Association, Eureka, CA

The tribal comment period was extended in summer 2014 to allow ample time for tribes to provide comments and for the OPC to engage in government-to-government discussions. Revisions to the tribal section were shared with the commenting tribal governments for a final review period prior to the release of this final draft document. These public and tribal engagement processes ensured consistent communication and collaboration and has built relationships that will extend beyond the adoption of the Partnership Plan.

**FIRST STATE-WIDE COLLABORATIVE FORUM**

To date all 14 Collaboratives have elected leaders or chairs for their groups. Collaboratives across the state range in their stages of development, some have been well established and active for years while others are just beginning their initial collaborative projects. This provides a unique opportunity to bring together Collaboratives Chairs from across the state to learn from each other and engage in a dialogue with agency partners. A continued focus of these interactions will be continuing to improve communication and collaboration around MPA management.

The first statewide Collaborative Workshop is scheduled for December 1 – 2 , 2014 in Sacramento just prior to the OPC Meeting. The goals of the workshop are to recognize the work of the Collaboratives, provide a forum to share lessons learned and current projects and for agency staff to learn from the Collaboratives and discuss how to define roles and responsibilities moving forward. This workshop will be followed in the spring of 2015 by the first Regional Collaborative Forum, which will be held in southern California. Annual forums and workshops will be held annually as funding is available to support the work of the Collaboratives and ensure a strong connection with agency priorities and mandates.

**BACKGROUND ON MPA DESIGNATION:**

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) directed DFW to redesign California’s system of MPAs into a robust network to “increase coherence and its effectiveness at protecting the State’s marine life, habitat, and ecosystems.”<sup>i</sup> The MLPA complements the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA), which set forth underlying goals regarding living marine resource management including conserving entire systems, acknowledging non-consumptive values, promoting sustainability and encouraging habitat conservation and restoration. Both these laws called on FGC and DFW to work closely together and required effective partnerships to meet the tenets outlined in the law. The state’s network of MPAs was established through the leadership of DFW and FGC and supported by the hard work and dedication of many Californians from both the public and private sector. Building upon this momentum, the OPC and its partner agencies are seeking to channel this energy into effective and durable management of the individual MPAs and the statewide network.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION ACT:**

As outlined in the California Ocean Protection Act (COPA), the OPC is responsible' for coordinating activities of state agencies that are related to the protection and conservation of coastal waters and ocean ecosystems, and is designated by SB 96 as the lead agency for guiding the policy direction of the network of MPAs. In this leadership capacity, OPC convened the Drafting Committee of the Partnership Plan, consisting of staff from CDFW, FGC, CNRA, and OST, to formalize partnership guidelines among agencies and others. The Partnership Plan now outlines roles and responsibilities of the primary agencies and groups involved in MPA management, and provides avenues for future engagement as the network matures.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE OPC’S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) AND OBJECTIVES:**

Beyond its connection to OPC’s legislative mandate, the proposed resolution regarding the Partnership Plan also fulfills numerous elements of the OPC’s Five-Year Strategic Plan 2012-2017, in which the OPC has committed to:

- “Build on the foundation laid by the MLMA and MLPA, and partner with the regulatory bodies charged with implementing these statutes to help advance sustainable ocean ecosystem management in the state.” (Issue C)
- “Work with partners to effectively advance MPA management, enforcement, monitoring, education, and outreach across a broad range of public and private entities that are engaged in marine resource protection and restoration activities.” (Issue 8).

The Collaboratives, as established in the Partnership Plan, incorporate local stakeholders and provide venues for fulfilling additional elements of the OPC’s Five-Year Strategic Plan 2012-2017 outlined in objective 8.1 which commits to:

- “Support effective implementation of MPAs consistent with the MLPA through strategic partnerships.”
- “Support efforts to increase public awareness of MPAs by participating in a working group with appropriate local, state and federal agencies, tribal governments, private foundations, NGOs, educators, and other relevant entities to facilitate development and implementation of a coordinated public education strategy.”

The agency roles and responsibilities outlined in the Partnership Plan additionally fulfill objective 8.2:

- “Support coordination of MLPA partners to facilitate communication, collaboration, and cost effective implementation of the MLPA”
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