



California Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team 2025 Call for Applications for Tribal Representatives

Background

The [Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team](#)¹ (MSLT) is an advisory body that promotes active and engaged communication among entities with significant authority, mandates, or interest related to California's Marine Protected Area (MPA) network. The MSLT also informs regulatory bodies such as the California Fish and Game Commission. The members of the MSLT recognize the inherent importance of California Native American tribes' traditional and current participation in ocean stewardship, and welcome tribal engagement in MPA management. The MSLT includes one Primary and one Alternate tribal representative serving three-year terms for each of the following regions, which were designated by tribes:

- North Coast – California/Oregon border to Mattole River
- North Central Coast – Mattole River to Golden Gate Bridge
- Central Coast – Golden Gate Bridge to Point Conception
- South Coast – Point Conception to US/Mexico

Tribal representatives were initially appointed to the MSLT in 2018, followed by a second call for nominations in 2019 to fill remaining seats.

In partnership with California's tribes and tribal governments, the MSLT is now seeking to fill the Primary and Alternate Representative seats for all four regions. To fill the eight seats, the MSLT is opening another 90-day call to recruit new tribal representatives **from October 13, 2025 through January 13, 2026** to ensure tribal governments continue to have representation on this important body.

¹ <http://www.opc.ca.gov/programs-summary/marine-protected-areas/partnerships/>

Eligibility

Representatives from California Native American tribes are eligible to apply, regardless of federal recognition status. It is preferable that the Primary and Alternate Representatives for each region are from different tribes, to broaden perspectives and representation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Tribal Representatives on the MSLT work to ensure that tribes in their geographic region are represented in MPA management. This representation is critical to ensuring that California's MPAs are governed fairly and effectively. In July 2025, the MSLT has released a new, partnership-based [Work Plan](#)² (2025 – 2030) that identified key actions to advance the four pillars of the MPA management program: 1. Outreach and education; 2. Enforcement and compliance; 3. Research and monitoring; and 4. Policy and permitting. Tribal Representatives play a key leadership role in implementing the Work Plan across all four focal areas.

Tribal Representatives agree to:

- Be fair and provide equal representation for all tribes in their respective regions, and not serve solely for the purpose and interests of their own tribe.
- Promote and advocate for the well-being of all tribes.
- Uphold tribal sovereignty
- Commit to consistent attendance at meetings.
- Be open, honest, and transparent in all issues.

Time commitment

The time commitment includes MSLT Working Group meetings 3-4 times per year (mostly virtual gatherings), plus preparation time, attending all meetings of the Leadership Team Executive Committee (once per year), and any additional meetings or phone/email correspondence as required. Tribal Representatives will be reimbursed for their time participating in MSLT activities and travel expenses.

Term

Tribal Representatives serve three-year terms. At the end of a term, a Tribal Representative can elect to apply for another term by submitting a written request to the Leadership Team and the

² <https://opc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/MSLT-Workplan-2025-508.pdf>

Secretary. There is no limit on the number of terms that may be served by a Tribal Representative.

Nomination process

Step 1: Fill out the [Nomination Form](#)³ for yourself or to nominate someone.

This form will require you to provide the following information:

- Applicant's name, email address, phone number, and tribe;
- Position sought (e.g. South Coast Primary, North Central Coast Alternate, etc.);
- Applicant's experience with MPAs (outreach/education, monitoring, stewardship, enforcement, traditional/cultural use, etc.); and
- Applicant's approach to providing fair and equal representation for all tribes in their region and conveying information between the tribes and the MSLT.

Step 2: Send a formal letter or resolution from tribal official supporting nomination (including name, title, phone, and email of official) to Mike Esgro, OPC's Tribal Liaison, at Michael.Esgro@resources.ca.gov and Staci Lewis, OPC's lead for the MSLT, at Staci.Lewis@resources.ca.gov.

Step 3: The MSLT will review applications and submit consensus recommendations to the California Secretary for Natural Resources. Appointments to the MSLT will be made by the Secretary.

Applications are due by Tuesday, January 13, 2026.

³ <https://bit.ly/MSLTnomination>