



Envisioning a National System of Marine Protected Areas: A West Coast Region Public Dialogue in San Francisco, California

Breakout Group Responses

This document provides a synthesis transcription of comments received from participants during breakout groups at the December 12, 2005, West Coast Region Public Dialogue held in San Francisco, California.

Background

Marine protected areas (MPAs) in the United States are widely used as a tool for helping conserve the nation's wealth of natural and cultural resources for all Americans and the world. These precious resources, including coral reefs, kelp forests, whales, shipwrecks, and a wide variety of marine life in the oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes, are vital to the economic sustainability of the nation for this and future generations. MPAs provide recreation and economic opportunities for millions of Americans; help sustain critical habitats and marine resources; and act as an "insurance policy" by helping protect marine resources from human impacts.

Over the past two decades, the use of place-based marine conservation and management tools, including the use of MPAs, has risen dramatically. Currently, there are hundreds of federal, state, territory, and tribal authorities and thousands of sites in U.S. waters. Each site may have varying definitions of types and purposes. These sites range from multiple-use to no-take reserves, although less than one percent (1%) of MPAs in the U.S. are no-take reserves. The complexity of MPAs and their recognition as vital tools for marine conservation and management are the foundation of Presidential Executive Order 13158 on MPAs, which was signed on May 26, 2000. The Executive Order directs the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Department of the Interior to work with other federal agencies and consult with states, territories, tribes, and the public to develop a scientifically based, comprehensive national system of MPAs. The MPA Center was established to execute this role.

As part of this effort, the MPA Center has outlined a multi-year process to engage the nation in developing the national system of MPAs. This process includes collecting and

considering continuous stakeholder and partner input for the development of the national system, enhancing relationships with stakeholder organizations engaged in these issues, developing and applying sound science about marine resources and their use, and communicating clear, consistent information about the process. The process includes a series of workshops and Regional Public Dialogue meetings to enable the MPA Center to receive input from a wide variety of stakeholders and partners to inform the development of the draft Framework for the national system of MPAs.

West Coast Region Public Dialogue

The fourth in the series of regional public dialogue meetings and the first of two on the west coast was held December 12, 2005 in San Francisco, California at the Presidio of California, Log Cabin. After initial remarks and presentations from the MPA Center and Dr. Mark Hixon, MPA Federal Advisory Committee member, participants were broken out into small groups to facilitate their input in response to the following five questions:

- 1) What are the west coast's important marine economic, recreational, and other types of uses and values that you want to be considered in developing a national system of MPAs?
- 2) What are the west coast's important natural and cultural resources that you think a national system of MPAs should conserve and sustain for future generations?
- 3) How could your interests in the west coast's natural and cultural resource issues benefit from some kind of national system of MPAs?
- 4) How should NOAA and Department of the Interior continue to work with stakeholders like you on the west coast to develop the vision for the national system?
- 5) Other comments?

The notes below were recorded on paper flip charts during the meeting and subsequently transcribed verbatim. The comments from each individual and group have been aggregated under each of the five respective questions.

All input received during this and other dialogues is on the public record and will be considered in developing the draft framework for a national system of MPAs. At this preliminary stage in the effort, the MPA Center does not intend to respond to any comments received via these dialogues. Once a draft framework for the national system is developed, NOAA will publish it in the *Federal Register* for formal public comment and will subsequently provide a formal response to any comments received.

This and other reports from workshops, as well as regularly updated information about the MPA Center's work to develop of the national system of MPAs can be found at <http://mpa.gov/>. For more information, contact Jonathan Kelsey, NOAA National MPA Center, via phone at: 301-713-3155 ext. 130, or by e-mail at: mpa.comments@noaa.gov.

Summary of Breakout Group Responses

Question 1:

What are the West Coast's important marine economic, recreational, and other types of uses and values that you want to be considered in developing a national system of MPAs?

- Access – both consumptive and non-consumptive
- Commercial fishing (cultural heritage, economic)
- Healthy ocean wilderness
 - Fish no afraid
 - Access, no-take areas
- Diving, surfing, kayaking, commercial/recreational fishing, scientific exploration and study
- Bird watching
- Marine mammal watching
- Photography (above and below)
- Beach-going
- Sailing
- Wind surfing
- Educational uses (field trips)
- Archaeological sites (historic, native American)
 - Heritage
- Shipwrecks
- Open areas for sport fishing
- Recreational use with educational support
- Water quality (good WQ)
- Ships to reefs for recreation purposes (angling, diving, creating habitat)
- Commercial fishing
- Monitoring of commercial fishing
- Need for understanding the effectiveness of existing areas
- Clean water; biodiversity value
- Research and science in general
- Need to look at conflicting uses and separate them out (e.g. zoning)
- Maintaining access both to MPAs and within them
- Maintaining healthy coastal communities
- Heritage (historical) values (traditional use grandfathering)
- Value of free transit
- Fisheries – areas of reproductive importance
- Fishing communities/ cultures
- Recreational diving
- Whale/ otter watchers (i.e. ocean wildlife watchers)
- Educational opportunity
- Local/ regional control driven rather than Washington, DC
- Coastal access
- Community participation
- Surfing/ kayaking
- Access to fishing opportunities (commercial/ recreational)
- View without oil platform
- Aquaculture

- Kelp harvesting
- Research
- Identify common threads/ values to breakdown barriers, eliminate turf issues, and allow people to enjoy values

Question 2:

What are the West Coast's important natural and cultural resources that you think a national system of MPAs should conserve and sustain for future generations?

- Migratory routes (whales, birds, butterflies)
- Rookery sites
- Artesian fisheries
- Tidepools
- Kelp forest ecosystem
- Traditional haul-out sites
- Rockfish
- Estuaries
- Monterey Breakwater, casino point., Catalina wreck, stillwater coves, Salt point (other dive sites)
- Photo shoot (Monterey)
- Reference Sites (control sites) – understand natural range of variability
- Eel grass beds
- Kelp forests
- Sea lion rookeries
- Migratory highways for pelagics/ birds
- Deep coral reefs
- Significant areas
- Representations of coast
- Indigenous cultural sites/ areas
- Sea bird nesting colonies
- Cultural activity of having grandchildren be able to catch fish
- Important spawning grounds
- Areas with high productivity (e.g. sea mounts)
- Critical life history areas
- Species of special concern (listed species)
- Significant maritime archaeology (sites and shipwrecks)
- Preserve stewardship and the ocean ethic
- Important biological communities/ habitats
- Turn question around – what would you NOT protect?
- What are our priorities?
- Preserve and conserve / sustain
- Need some areas to preserve and areas with access
- Native American/ tribal sites – living culture sites
- Endangered Species Act – depleted species
- Kelps, corals, and other living seafloor habitats
- Rookeries – seabird colonies
- Wetlands
- Coastal communities dependent on ocean resources (caveat look towards land too)
- Pelagic hot spots

- Native species restoration/ conservation

Question 3:

How could your interests in the West Coast's natural and cultural resource issues benefit from some kind of national system of MPAs?

- Facilitate info sharing between user groups
- Data sharing
- Reference sites
- Gap analysis – refinement and clarity of purpose (with goal of simplicity)
- Consideration of existing protection (tweak existing vs. new)
- Preserve things to photograph
- Protect representative ecosystems
- Protect cultural resources
- Knowing what is out there (inventory, best practices, info sharing)
- Good example to other nations re: how to protect resources
- Know that we are doing right thing (for future generations)
- Organizing information
 - Create standard terminology
 - Consistency
- Improve national understanding
- Funding for national system would be better spent on water quality improvements
- Inter-agency coordination
- Clearinghouse role is needed
 - Coordination
- Simplifying processes
- Providing ecological linkages (e.g. forage areas for sea birds when they leave National Wildlife Refuges) also boat impacts
- Need to drive communication (managers are busy)
- End state: healthy, functioning ecosystem in balance
- Need funding
- Fear that without funding the initiative would disappear
- Mental health improvement
- Have a standard for measuring effectiveness
- Improve communication among stakeholders
- Identify common threads/ values to breakdown barriers, eliminate turf issues, and allow people to enjoy values
- Win/ win
- Mechanisms for coordination
 - Allow for planning to participate
- Reduce redundancy
- Cost effective
- Pooling resources – coordinated funding
- No benefits – government programs regulate and restrict. But better coordination could ensure access and guard against restriction and identify solutions.

Question 4:

How should NOAA and Department of the Interior continue to work with stakeholders like you on the West Coast to develop the vision for the national system?

- Need list of stakeholders and communicate with them
- California Fisheries Coalition (CFC)
- Carol Rose
- California Department of Fish and Game's list of stakeholders
- Make inventory/ gap analysis available
- MPA Center participate in local decision making processes (be info resource)
- National Marine Sanctuaries – currents symposium
- Sanctuary listservs
- Consumer Dive shows (6)
 - Orlando DEMA
 - Next fall – seminars and booths
 - Stakeholder forums around their conferences (Maria B)
- Schools
- Dana – Carol Rose Web Link
- Meetings good – December not good
- MPA Center message needs to be communicated – not trying to create new MPAs
- Continue meetings
- Bring agencies together (form group)
- Maintain website
- Demonstrate a success via a project collaboration in a pilot area (e.g. grey whale, albatross)
- Work across entities
- Summary of research done on MPAs – what do results show
 - Bibliography
- Summary of case studies on benefits/ costs to educate public
 - Also need access beyond internet
- Need to take info to stakeholder meetings
- Establish networks of contacts
 - Regional representatives
- Look at CALFED studies (lhc@ca.gov)
- Increase communication by...
 - Emails
 - Contacting key educators/ information ____ who then disseminate info to members.
- Improve communication strategies
- Targeted effort
- Go beyond fish
- Teach the teachers
- Present at key meetings/ public events about national system efforts
- Not everyone is comfortable with internet
- Engage key responsible journalists
- Continue with public input opportunities
- Consider timing of input
- Reach out to key groups on their turf (build relationships)
- Reach public at aquaria, etc.

Question 5:

Other comments?

- Warmer place
- Better access to public comment place
- Provide directions to venue
- Send email to participants:
 - Confirm a listserv
 - When notes are posted on Web
 - When framework is posted
 - Encourage to pass on info to community