



**JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW
DRAFT ACTION PLAN:
Ecosystem Protection – Marine Protected Areas
Revised: 2/24/03**

***Please Note:** The MBNMS and the Sanctuary Advisory Council have tasked the management plan working groups with development of draft action plans that characterize the issue or problem and identify strategies and activities that address the issue. The working groups will develop these strategies and activities as they meet over the next several months. With this goal in mind, the progress of the group, the decisions, areas of agreement will be outlined in a progressively developed action plan identifying draft goals, issue characterizations, and strategies and activities. Members of the group as well as other interested parties should look to this draft action plan as it develops as way of tracking the group's progress and decisions.*

OVERVIEW:

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are a management tool that may fully restrict harvesting of marine life within a designated geographic area or may allow take of selected species or take by selected user groups. Scientific research has indicated that carefully crafted MPAs can be effective tools for conservation of biodiversity and habitats. MPAs may be used as a means to restore degraded areas and as a precautionary tool to conserve a range of representative habitats and biodiversity. Well-designed MPAs generally contain higher species diversity, more abundant species, and larger fish within their boundaries relative to similar areas outside the reserve. MPAs are one of many useful tools needed to prevent, slow, or reverse negative habitat and ecosystem changes within the Sanctuary.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program received approximately 7,000 comments during the scoping period of the Joint Management Plan Review (JMPR) requesting increased protection of the ecosystem by taking the lead in implementing a network of MPAs in State and Federal waters. The Program also received 1400 signatures on a petition circulated by the fishing community asking that regulatory authority on fishing and MPAs remain with existing State and Federal agencies, and that any consideration by the Sanctuary of MPAs should be based on consensus with the fishing industry. The Sanctuary Program believes that any consideration of MPAs should and will be a joint effort with the participation of many diverse stakeholders, including strong participation of the fishing community to tap into their extensive knowledge and to consider socioeconomic impacts of alternative MPA designs, as well as participation from other agencies, environmental organizations and the public.

Where MPA processes led by other agencies are underway, such as the Marine Life Protection Act process led by the California Department of Fish and Game, MBNMS staff will be active participants in that process. Although the Sanctuary program would bring its



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extensive expertise in ecosystem protection and multi-stakeholder approaches to the issue of MPAs, our initial preference in central California is that the actual designation of any MPAs in state waters be done under the regulatory authority of the California Department of Fish and Game, provided those MPAs are developed within a reasonable period of time and can adequately address the ecosystem and habitat conservation goals of the Sanctuary program. In Federal waters, where there is no current process underway to evaluate the potential for MPAs, the Sanctuary would work with NMFS, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, the fishing community, environmental organizations, and others to conduct such an evaluation. The MBNMS has also been actively working with the industry-led Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries in their evaluation of MPAs, and will continue sharing information and seeking common ground with that group.

WORKGROUP PLANNING:

To address the issue of properly protecting the Sanctuary's marine ecosystem via MPAs, the MBNMS has developed this Workgroup of the Sanctuary Advisory Council to provide guidance on several aspects of MPAs. First, the Workgroup will be asked to outline the framework for providing input to CDFG on the design and implementation of reserves under the MLPA, evaluating the success of that effort and potential need for further action. The Workgroup will also help develop a framework to address the need for, and if necessary, general criteria for and types of MPAs in the federal waters of the Sanctuary. The MBNMS will work closely with fisherman, and other interested parties, and state and federal fishery managers to implement the MPAs.

These frameworks will describe the process, goals and criteria for an effective MPA network and would become the basis of an action plan in the revised Sanctuary management plan. Although the revised management plan itself is not likely to specify exact locations for MPAs, it could specify the types of habitats, general locations and other criteria required for an effective MPA network across state and federal waters.

The Workgroup refined a draft list of categories of topics to be addressed in the MPA plan during its first meeting in January 2003. This list, shown below, will be further reviewed during the course of Workgroup meetings over the next three months, and the Workgroup will be asked to jointly develop specific, more detailed recommendations for those topics which emerge as priorities. These recommendations will provide the basis for a longer-term work program for implementation, with continued involvement by the Workgroup.

GOAL OF A MARINE PROTECTED AREAS PLAN: The Sanctuary's goal for MPAs is best stated by language directly from the National Marine Sanctuary Act that states one of the overarching goals of the Sanctuary program. That goal is to "Maintain the natural biological communities in the national marine sanctuaries, and to protect, and where appropriate, restore and enhance natural habitats, populations and ecological



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processes.” In addition, an important goal for MPAs is to design them in such a way that they allow for the long-term continuation of sustainable fisheries in the Sanctuary, as fisheries are a key cultural and economic component of the region.

CATEGORIES OF THE PLAN:

A list of potential categories of topics to be addressed in the framework plan is included below, including modifications made by the Workgroup at the first meeting in January.

Habitats and ecosystems to be protected—

- Identify range of representative habitat types and resources—e.g. hard bottom, soft bottom, kelp forest, deep canyon, pelagic (hydrographic) habitats, rocky intertidal, estuarine, etc.
- Preserve key ecological interactions, including predator-prey relationships, migratory patterns, life history stages (including nursery grounds), and the role of habitat engineers
- Identify potential or existing threats to these habitats, resources or interactions
- Include mix of degrees of habitat health ranging from areas which are minimally disturbed set aside for protection, to degraded, currently underused habitats set aside to allow recovery

General geographic considerations—

- Geographic coverage across state and federal waters
- Distances between MPAs and between types of MPAs
- Distances from port
- Safety considerations
- Evaluate distribution of human activities on the water
- Evaluate how locations and distances may impact different user groups
- Potential impacts of displacement of fishing effort to other areas
- Access by other target users, such as divers, kayakers, shore fishermen
- Location of existing small reserves and other types of MPAs
- Proximity to ecological “hotspots” or areas of special biological significance
- Identification of comparable habitats as “control” areas for evaluation purposes



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- Locations of other types of human threats—e.g. water quality, landslides, vessel traffic, MPWC

Size, scale and scope—

- Appropriate sizes of individual MPAs
- Scale of a network of MPAs

Type of use—

- Consider mix of options which may restrict various types of activities at selected sites in an MPA network, including addressing-
 - full no-take zones and allowable harvest of selected species
 - commercial and recreational catch
 - gear types which impact habitat
 - access by non-extractive and research uses, etc.
- MPAs that may be established to augment or benefit non-extractive activities, such as diving and research

Integration with other management tools-

- Identify other existing or planned ecosystem, fishery, or land-based management tools
- Evaluate means to effectively integrate with these tools to leverage and strengthen efforts and avoid duplication
- Use MPAs as a means to leverage agency resources to address multiple threats to key sites, including land-based activities

Socioeconomics—

- Key socioeconomic analyses which should be considered to assist in the design of a biologically effective network which will allow continuation of sustainable fisheries
- Prioritization of studies needed, including consideration of those required by NEPA
- User groups and ports affected, short and long-term effects, and potential for buffering or reducing negative effects



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- Economic uses that may be improved by designation of reserves
- Evaluation of how community as a whole is impacted—address sustainability of coastal communities, including cultural and economic consideration of both consumptive and nonconsumptive factors and values
- Consider social values of a wide variety of different people in viewing MPAs
- Promote mitigation for economic and cultural impacts, including approaches to NOAA and Department of Commerce
- Develop system to promote continued involvement of communities in process

Enforcement—

- Components of effective enforcement program
- Locations, shapes, etc. which enhance enforceability

Education—

- Components of an effective education program on reserves for fishing community and the general public
- Identification of target audiences
- Education potential of individual reserve locations
- Links to general education strategies on fisheries (a separate working group) and to MBNMS regional education and outreach plans

Research and Monitoring—

- Evaluation of biological changes within MPAs
- Link effectiveness evaluation to specific goals of MPA
- Distinguish between natural and anthropogenic changes, including climate variability and regime shifts
- Evaluation of larval distributions and potential spillover effect to local populations
- Socioeconomic monitoring of changes in user groups
- Choosing readily measured indicators



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- Value of MPA location as research site
- Involvement of fishermen and divers in monitoring
- Include comparisons to adequate control sites

Timing—

- Potential for phasing of implementation
- Criteria for establishing a reasonable first phase
- Timing of effectiveness evaluation
- How to achieve permanent protection, but allow flexibility for adaptive management based on improved knowledge

Most of the above categories apply to consideration of MPAs in both state and federal waters. In addition, some specific categories to be addressed for federal or state processes are listed below.

Federal Waters—

- Define conditions when it is beneficial to extend state MPAs to federal waters
- Evaluate type of extension that may be appropriate—orientation, etc.
- Evaluate potential for separate offshore MPAs focused on biological hotspots correlated with persistent physical and oceanographic features
- Outline roles and steps for involvement of NMFS, PFMC, and Sanctuary in MPA designation process

State Waters—

- Describe MBNMS involvement in MLPA process and development of recommendations
- Describe evaluation of success of MLPA process--range of acceptable outcomes and timelines for process
- Outline alternative process to be used if necessary

Timeline for drafting MBNMS framework action plan: January 2003 – April 2003

Timeline for ongoing work to develop full plan: 2003-2005.



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