

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 25, 2009

Contact: Nicole Lampe, Resource Media, 415-397-5000 x302

South Coast Ocean Protection Plans Take Shape

Final Stakeholder Marine Protected Area Maps Now Available for Public Review

Los Angeles, CA—Today the public got its first glimpse of three stakeholder-designed plans for a south coast network of marine protected areas. The plans are designed to restore southern California's ocean to health by setting aside key areas where sea life can recover and thrive. They are available for review at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/scrsg-dprops-r3.asp>.

Stakeholders have been working for over a year to map out protected areas that will preserve important habitat and enhance recreation, study and education opportunities. After two rounds of negotiations, the group was divided into three teams: one focused on conservation, one on fishing, and a third "middle ground" team was charged with creating a compromise plan with cross-interest support.

On September 10, they met in Los Angeles to hear public comment and finalize their plans. The conservation group focused on quality over quantity, designing an efficient network that will deliver quick and substantial benefits with fewer protected areas. Their plan would protect ecological hot spots like Naples Reef, Point Dume, the western half of Rocky Point and the southern half of La Jolla's reef while leaving nearly 90 percent of coastal waters open for fishing.

The middle ground plan tries to balance the needs of different user groups, but still includes some protection for key sites like Point Dume, Naples Reef and La Jolla.

The fishing group's proposal would provide the least conservation benefits, since it was designed to leave the best habitat open for consumptive use. The fishermen's proposal fails to provide any protections at iconic places like La Jolla, the Gaviota Coast and south Laguna.

The three plans each protect similar percentages of the ocean—the real difference is the quality and diversity of habitat. The higher the quality, the bigger the expected gains in ecosystem health and productivity.

(more)

Proposals at a glance:

Proposal	Number of Marine Protected Areas	Total % in Marine Protected Areas	Number of Marine Reserves	Total % in Marine Reserves
Middle Ground (Group 1)	52	17%	32	13%
Fishermen (Group 2)	40	16%	25	12%
Conservationists (Group 3)	43	17%	30	12%

The stakeholder plans will be evaluated for science and socio-economic impacts before the October 20-22 Blue Ribbon Task Force meeting in Long Beach. The community can submit comments by mail, email, or in person at the October meeting. The Task Force will recommend a preferred plan to the Fish and Game Commission in December for adoption in 2010.

For more information about the MLPA, visit www.caloceans.org or www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa.

###