

UPDATE ON MARINE RESERVES ISSUES

Situation:

Marine Protected Area (MPA) Demonstration Project. The Council received funding to coordinate with the National MPA Center and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on matters associated with MPAs on the West Coast. Exhibit E.1, Attachment 1 is a fact sheet on the West Coast MPA Demonstration Project, including a NMFS-sponsored workshop proposed to integrate MPAs with fishery science and management. The bulk of the funding for Council use is scheduled for 2004.

Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Marine Reserves Subcommittee White Paper. On August 18-20, 2003 the SSC Marine Reserves Subcommittee met to develop a white paper evaluating the implications of marine reserves for contemporary fishery management on the West Coast, taking into consideration reserve objectives and uncertainties associated with both reserves and traditional fishery management. The preliminary recommendations of the subcommittee will be reviewed by the SSC at this Council meeting, and it is expected that the white paper will be presented to the Council at the November meeting. A representative of the SSC is expected to brief the Council on the meeting during this agenda item.

Joint Management Plan Review. The three central California National Marine Sanctuaries – Monterey Bay, Cordell Bank, and Gulf of the Farallones – are undergoing a joint management plan review process. This June and July, the Sanctuaries' working groups submitted recommendations to their respective Sanctuary Advisory Councils (SACs). The Monterey Bay SAC met in August, and the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank SACs will meet in September to review the working group recommendations. The Council received two pieces of public comment and one letter from Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary related to the development of the Action Plans and draft management plan for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary (Exhibit E.1, Attachments 2, 3, and 4). A draft management plan based on these Action Plans is expected to be completed in Fall 2003.

Terminology. There has been some confusion about the types of management measures that fall under the "marine reserves" agenda item. Some of this confusion is due to terminology. The Council uses the term "marine reserve" to mean an area where some or all fishing is prohibited. This is similar to the definition of a "fishery reserve" created by the Ocean Studies Board of the National Research Council:

"Zoning that precludes fishing activity on some or all species to protect critical habitat, rebuild stocks (long term, but not necessarily permanent closure), provide insurance against overfishing, or enhance fishery yield." (Ocean Studies Board, 2001)

A "marine protected area" is a "geographic area with discrete boundaries [like the boundaries of a piece of real estate or a park] that has been designated to enhance the conservation of marine resources" (Ocean Studies Board). As such, marine reserves are types of "marine protected areas;"

however, marine protected areas include more than just marine reserves. For example, a marine protected area might prohibit activities like oil and gas drilling, while allowing fishing.

Issues that the Council deals with, such as modifying National Marine Sanctuary management plans, include MPA provisions that go beyond marine reserves. Therefore, Council staff feels it more appropriate to change the name of this agenda category from “marine reserves” to “marine protected areas” in future Council agendas.

Council Task:

1. Council discussion (no action required).

Reference Materials:

1. West Coast Demonstration Project Fact Sheet (Exhibit E.1, Attachment 1).
2. Letter from the Ocean Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, and Save Our Shores to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (Exhibit E.1, Attachment 2).
3. Testimony of Ms. Kathy Fosmark before the Sanctuary Advisory Council (Exhibit E.1, Attachment 3).
4. Letter from Mr. William Douros to Mr. Tom Canale regarding the Special Marine Protected Areas Workgroup of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (Exhibit E.1, Attachment 4).

Agenda Order:

1. Update on Marine Reserves Issues
 - a. Agendum Overview
 - b. Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Report
 - c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
 - d. Public Comment
 - e. Council Discussion

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