

## **Preliminary Priorities for Suggested Actions from the Working Committee of the Marine Interests Group**

The Working Committee prepared a list of suggested actions on October 24 and 29, 2003. *On November 7, each member identified no more than 3 high priority items in each category. The number of members selecting a particular item is indicated in [].*

### **Information and Awareness**

1. Complete the inventory of public and private agencies and their activities. [currently underway] [9]
2. Compile existing data and identify currently planned research programs. [5]
3. Develop good baseline data on physical processes (tides, geological, weather, etc.) and biology (fish other vertebrates and invertebrates) with an agreed upon protocol to analyze the information in order to resolve key issues. [13]
4. Examine how this area is connected with other areas in order to manage the resources appropriately. For example, is this area a haven for certain species or a seeding population for other areas? [9]
5. Study regime changes further and their interrelationships with human impacts to improve understanding and management strategies. [4]
6. Gather and analyze socio-economic data on the marine resources and uses (fisheries, tourism, recreation, etc.) in order to understand the cost-benefit of resource use. [5]
7. Enhance public education to build understanding of the resources and to support good stewardship. Solicit input from the public on the importance of the resources to gain clearer direction on desirable actions. [5]
8. Establish a process for information exchange among agencies and other interested parties to address the items above. [7]

### **Health of the Ecosystem**

1. Enhance public awareness to take proactive action to prevent adverse impacts. [3]
2. Develop and agree upon a set of indicators for a healthy ecosystem and means of measuring and tracking them. Establish clear protocols for the acquisition and use of data (including data from participant-providers). Display trends of resources over time (e.g. mammals, fish, etc.) and identify linkages with policy actions. [12]
3. Nurture the continued existence of a diverse stakeholder group to identify issues, offer solutions, and, overall, be a good steward of the resources. [12]

4. Encourage or require regular local meetings of regulatory agencies. [7]
5. Explore prospects of regulatory management on a more localized ecosystem basis (e.g. Point Sur to Point Purisima). [6]
6. Examine the unintended consequences of regulation—e.g. concentration of fishing in nearshore area and impact on fish stocks. [3]
7. Reassess marine mammal populations, their effects on land and marine resources, and the laws and policies to manage these species in balance with other species. [6]

### **Preservation of the Fishing Community**

1. Review models of regulation and self-regulation that work elsewhere (e.g. Maine lobster fishery, New Zealand, etc.) for possible application in this area. [8]
2. Clarify definition of good data and ways to obtain and evaluate them. Clarify the relative impacts of natural phenomena and human actions. [4]
3. Apply a precautionary approach to managing the resource while gathering better data. [5]
4. Develop a focused collaborative research program with an overall plan, objectives, and milestones. [13]
5. Assess minimum fishing infrastructure needs and ways to maintain them. [6]
6. Develop more predictable and cost-effective dredge spoils policies. [3]
7. Support fishing community with education and marketing opportunities (e.g. educate public on wild vs. farmed salmon). [8]

### **Management of the Resources**

1. Complete an inventory of stakeholders and their activities. [5]
2. Establish a venue with an agenda for regular meetings to review events, research news, planned management activities, and funding resources for collaboration. Encourage or require agency direct participation or written reports. [14]
3. Continue work with NOAA (through MBNMS) for mapping of resources and other data collection efforts. [6]
4. Support sustainable funding for research. [11]
5. Develop a program for San Luis Obispo County marine research, education, conservation, enhancement, and coordination with funding to implement it. [7]

## **Options Considered for Pursuing Suggested Actions**

**a. Maintain status quo (no action).**

Leave regulatory and stewardship activities in the hands of current agencies and interested parties to pursue through existing vehicles.

**b. Conduct periodic meetings of Marine Interests Group with agencies and interested parties.**

Continue collaborative research and convene agencies and other interested parties in the San Luis Obispo County area on a periodic basis to discuss the resources.

**c. Expand Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) to include marine issues in its non-regulatory model.**

Request that MBNEP develop programs and obtain funding to address marine issues in the areas of research, education, fisheries, conservation, and other areas of broad interest.

**d. Create an independent non-regulatory group (like MBNEP, but separate) to address marine issues.**

Establish a new group to develop programs and obtain funding to address marine issues in the areas of research, education, fisheries, conservation, and other areas of broad interest.

**e. Propose extension of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) to the remainder of San Luis Obispo County.**

Request that NOAA extend the MBNMS to include the remainder of the San Luis Obispo County Coast. Include the Marine Interests Group format as an advisory group for the southern portion of the Sanctuary.

**f. Propose creation of a new National Marine Sanctuary for the San Luis Obispo County area.**

Request that NOAA create a new National Marine Sanctuary for the San Luis Obispo County area.

**g. Advocate a Marine Protected Area (no-take zone) for a portion of the San Luis Obispo County Coast.**

Request that California Dept. of Fish and Game or NMFS establish a no-take zone for some portion of the San Luis Obispo County Coast. This would receive consideration through the established processes for identification and creation of marine protected areas.

**h. Ask SAC and NEP to consider what might be better options for this area. Ask local researchers to be on the Research Advisory Panel and NEP review committees to identify potential shared research.** [This option could function with the other options.]

**i. Combine elements of SAC and NEP to create a regulatory group that would regulate resources other than fisheries.**

### Results of Straw Ballot

[Each of the 17 members present on November 7 identified a “1<sup>st</sup> Choice” that she or he perceived would best fulfill the Shared Hopes for the Future of the Marine Resources and “Other Acceptable Choices” that would support the Shared Hopes. The following table presents the results.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Choice</b>	<b>Other Acceptable Choices</b>								
	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.	g.	h.	i.
a. 1		1							
b. 4	2		1	4					1
c.									
d. 5		2	2		1	3	1	1	4
e. 4		1		2		1	1	2	3
f. 2		1		2					1
g.									
h.									
i. 1				1	1	1			

### Observations

1. All members thought that doing something beyond the Status Quo was the best choice or an acceptable choice. [One member chose Option “a.” as 1<sup>st</sup> Choice.]
2. Option “d.” received the broadest support with 5 “1<sup>st</sup> Choices” and 9 “Acceptable Choices” from members who had other 1<sup>st</sup> Choices.
3. Option “b.” also received support from a majority of those present (4 “1<sup>st</sup> Choices” and 5 “Acceptable Choices.”]
4. Nine members considered Option “i.” to be an “Acceptable Choice,” reflecting interest in regulatory means of protecting the marine resources from threats such as off shore oil and selenium dumping.

### Next Steps

A subgroup will meet prior to the November 19 meeting to develop ideas about ways to accomplish the highest priority activities with either option “d.” or “b.” and report its ideas to the full Working Committee before the November 19 meeting.