



## CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: California Ocean Protection Council

FROM: Christine Blackburn, Project Manager

DATE: October 25, 2007

RE: OPC-DFG Joint Workplan update

ATTACHMENT: (1) [Project and cost summary table](#)  
(2) [OPC-DFG Joint Workplan](#)

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At the November 2006, Ocean Protection Council (OPC) meeting, the council unanimously approved the OPC-DFG joint workplan. The creation of the joint workplan was a prerequisite of the legislature for expending a \$2 million dollar appropriation to the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and an \$8 million appropriation to the OPC. These funds were included in the FY06-07 budget with the goal of furthering the implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) and Marine Life Management Act (MLMA).

Following the OPC meeting, the plan was reviewed by the State Coastal Conservancy Board and then submitted on January 19, 2007, to the chairpersons of the fiscal committees in each house of the Legislature and to the Chairperson of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.

Since this time, OPC and DFG staffs have been working cooperatively to initiate the projects outlined in the plan. The scope of each project is discussed below. Of the \$10,000,000 joint appropriation, \$9,146,275 has already been spent, encumbered, or a contract is pending (i.e., the agreement has been drafted and is awaiting signature). The total spent from DFG is more than the budgeted \$2,000,000 because other funding sources were used to supplement these projects. The remaining projects are in development and the funds should be encumbered by early 2008. A summary of this information can be found in the attached table.

### JOINT WORKPLAN PROJECTS

#### Data Collection

##### A1 - MLPA Central Coast Baseline Monitoring

Grantee: UC Sea Grant

Amount: \$2,275,000 (OPC)

Status: Under contract

Scope: OPC staff and the science advisor worked closely with UC Sea Grant to select a group of researchers to collect baseline data prior to, and concurrent with, the designation of new MPAs in

the central coast region. Six different research groups were selected, each focusing on a different aspect of the overall project: manned submersible surveys, SCUBA surveys, intertidal surveys, a socioeconomic assessment, and cooperative research with recreational fishermen on nearshore fish assemblages. All of this research was completed this past summer or will be wrapped up this fall. Data are scheduled to be reported to DFG, OPC, and the MPA monitoring enterprise in spring 2008.

#### A2 - Benthic Habitat Mapping - North Central Coast

Grantee: Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation and the CSU Monterey Bay Foundation

Amount: \$1,150,000 (OPC) and \$1,000,000 (DFG)

Status: DGF contract is complete. OPC money is still under contract as products continue to be completed.

Scope: Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation contracted work to Fugro Pelagos, Inc. to collect high-resolution benthic mapping data from February through April 2007. Data was then given to CSUMB Seafloor Mapping Lab to create initial maps that were provided to the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) and regional stakeholder group starting in summer 2007. These maps are currently being used by these groups to devise a package of suggested MPAs for the north central coast region.

#### A3 - SCUBA surveys of marine species/habitats

Grantees: PISCO/UC Santa Barbara and National Park Service

Amount: \$600,000 (OPC)

Status: Under contract

Scope: Research groups at UC Santa Barbara and Channel Islands National Park are coordinating to expand nearshore SCUBA surveys in the Channel Islands for 2007 and 2008. This work builds off of existing surveys for PISCO and CRANE, a DFG monitoring program. These data will be used to inform the five-year review of the Channel Islands MPAs.

#### A4 - ROV surveys of marine species/habitats

Grantee: Marine Applied Research and Education (MARE)

Amount: \$660,000 (OPC)

Status: Under contract

Progress: MARE has created a cooperative partnership with DFG, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS), the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to implement a deepwater monitoring program in the Channel Islands. These funds were used as part of a larger effort to support three years of surveys, comprising the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> straight years for these types of surveys in the region. These data will be used to inform the five-year review of the Channel Islands MPAs.

#### A5 - Fish Trapping Studies

Grantee: UC Santa Barbara

Amount: \$400,000 (OPC)

Status: Contract pending

Progress: Researchers at UC Santa Barbara are using trap surveys throughout the Channel Islands and Santa Barbara Channel to evaluate the effect of marine reserves on California spiny lobster, cabezon, California sheephead, grass rockfish, and other fishes targeted by the live-fish fishery. This work is being conducted in cooperation with fishermen in the region and the data will be combined with previous survey results to inform the five-year review of the Channel Islands MPAs.

#### A6 - Ichthyoplankton Surveys of Marine Species

Grantee: Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego

Amount: \$500,000 (OPC)

Status: Contract pending

Progress: Researchers with the California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigation (CalCOFI) are analyzing ichthyoplankton (i.e., fish larvae) assemblages of nearshore coastal habitats, including newly created central coast MPAs and established Channel Island MPAs. These assessments are based on recent and historical CalCOFI samples and a review and synthesis of past nearshore ichthyoplankton studies. This research will elucidate the contemporary and historical contribution of coastal habitats and MPA sites to the region's ichthyoplankton. Moreover, it will provide urgently needed indices of stock and recruitment for key California state fisheries that can be used to inform stock assessments.

#### A7 - Field data collection

Grantee: Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Amount: \$630,000 (OPC)

Status: Contract pending

Progress: The California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) was begun in 2004 to provide catch and effort estimates for marine recreational finfish fisheries that would inform sustainable management of these resources. This survey is a collaborative effort between DFG and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC). The workplan funds will be used to analyze how to improve catch and effort data collected for private access fishing and also to gather essential fisheries information on the recreational spiny lobster fishery. These studies are being completed in close coordination with DFG staff and results will inform changes to the survey in future years.

#### A8 - MLPA socioeconomic data collection

Grantee: Ecotrust

Amount: \$200,000 (OPC)

Status: Under contract

Progress: Ecotrust was hired during the initial phase of the MLPA process to collect spatial data regarding commercial fisheries in the central coast region and assess the importance of certain areas to specific fishermen. These current funds were used to extend that work through the north central coast region. These new surveys incorporated changes based on lessons learned from the central coast region. These data will be provided to DFG, the regional stakeholder group, the BRTF, and science advisory team in October 2007. The interactive maps with the consolidated data will be used to examine potential impacts of different MPA system alternatives.

### **Data Analysis**

#### B1 - Stock assessments

Project is under development – DFG and OPC staff are currently working to find an appropriate researcher to complete a stock assessment. This project will be pursued in 2008. In a related project (funded by other DFG funds), a contract is presently being developed to receive information on management of data poor stocks in general.

#### B2 - Fishery data collection system evaluation

Project is under development

### B3 - Commercial Fishery logbook data management

Grantee: PC Database Solutions

Amount: \$5,000 (OPC)

Status: Contract pending

Progress: Within two months, the contractor will create a pilot database shell for electronic logbook data. This program will allow DFG to enter daily lobster logbook data, including prior years' data, and easily search, edit, and report this information. If this pilot program suits the needs of DFG, the remaining amount of funds (\$445,000) will be contracted to complete similar database shells for at least 11 other important commercial fisheries in California.

## **DFG Program Support**

### C1 - Department staff development

Grantee: College of the Siskiyous

Amount: \$155,843 (DFG)

Status: Under contract

Progress: With the assistance of the contractor, the DFG's Marine Region held its first all-staff meeting and training since 2000 on October 9-11, 2007. The contractor provided meeting planning and facilitation support to a team of DFG staff. The contractor also provided training to the entire Marine Region at the meeting on various communications, listening, and meeting management skills. The contractor has been provided a list of key supervisory staff who will receive further training on specific skills.

### C2 - Department marine research priority setting

Grantee: Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Amount: \$150,000 (DFG)

Status: Under contract

Progress: The funds for this item are being used to conduct a comprehensive review of research needs and priorities and, through a three phase process, develop long-term research priorities. The first phase of this project requested responses from Marine Region staff on existing research activities and future needs. A list of responses is presently being compiled. These funds were used to hire an expert in research planning and budgets to prioritize the needs for the second phase of the project. Phase three will include developing specific research plans with the expert's assistance and will occur in 2008.

## **General Infrastructure**

### D1 - ROV Upgrade

Grantee: DFG

Amount: \$100,000 (OPC)

Status: Under contract

Progress: The funds for this item will be used to make incremental improvements to the existing DFG remotely operated vehicle (ROV); improvements that can be transferred to a new DFG platform if and when it is acquired. These improvements include a higher resolution video camera, new navigational equipment, and improved data recording equipment.

#### D2 - Research Vessel Operations

Grantee: DFG

Amount: \$200,000 (OPC)

Status: Under contract

Progress: The DFG Marine Region maintains and uses a small fleet of vessels to conduct on-water fisheries research and monitoring activities. These funds will be used for 11 vessel upgrade and maintenance items, including items to improve vessel safety and functionality, important restoration and repair items, purchase ancillary equipment to improve navigation and communication, and modifications to law enforcement vessels to facilitate their use as research vessels. These upgrades will be made over the course of the next couple years.

#### D3 - SCUBA Compressors

Purchased

Amount: \$27,000 (DFG)

Details: Two portable and one semi-portable high-performance air compressors were purchased for use on DFG enforcement and research vessels. The portable units are deployed on an as-needed basis to vessels conducting diver research. The semi-portable unit is mounted on the DFG Research Vessel Garibaldi and supports nearshore and marine protected area monitoring efforts.

#### D4 - Network Printers

Purchased

Amount: \$26,806 (DFG)

Details: Network printers were purchased for several marine region offices.

#### D5 - IT Hardware

Purchased

Amount: \$350,000 (DFG)

Details: The funds were spent on Information Technology (IT) hardware that will benefit both the Marine Life Protection Act and Marine Life Management Act.

#### D6 - SCUBA Equipment

Grantee: DFG

Amount: \$25,000 (OPC)

Status: Under contract

Progress: The DFG Diving Safety Program (DSP) trains approximately 70 scientific and public safety divers who use underwater life-support equipment in support of a variety of programs and projects. The funds from this item will be used to purchase standard-reference training manuals for all divers, emergency situation underwater diver recall phones, and Automated External Defibrillators for dive-related medical emergencies. All of this equipment will be purchased by the end of 2007.

#### D7 – Computers

Purchased

Amount: \$339,861 (DFG)

Details: Computers were purchased or upgraded to comply with current Department standards as well as to equip new staff.