



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** California Ocean Protection Council

**FROM:** Cat Kuhlman (Executive Director, OPC), Calla Allison (Director of Community Partnerships, MPA Collaborative Implementation Project), Marisa Villarreal (California State Sea Grant Fellow, OPC)

**DATE:** February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**RE:** The California Collaborative Approach for Marine Protected Areas

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### Summary

OPC staff, together with the Ocean Science Trust, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the California Fish and Game Commission (F&GC) staff, have developed a unique collaborative approach to managing California's marine protected areas (MPAs) which underscores the state's commitment to partnering with others in this effort. This philosophy, and a guide to its implementation, will be articulated in a draft document with a working title of "The California Collaborative Approach: Marine Protected Area Partnership Plan" (Partnership Plan).

The Partnership Plan will be an overarching guide for our partners (including: other state agencies, federal, regional, local and tribal governments, tribal communities, NGOs, academic groups, and the private sector) on how to engage in MPA management. The Partnership Plan offers options for engagement. There are four key elements to the plan:

1. Formalizes the ongoing MPA Collaborative Implementation Project under OPC management. This project establishes a framework for coordinating MPA management across scales from local, to regional, to state. This innovative approach to management establishes a network of state-wide "Community Collaboratives" which will connect the centralized state agencies to the various local groups and stakeholders interested and engaged in MPA management.
2. Offers, to tribes, a menu of options and contacts for engaging in discussions with the state on MPAs.
3. Connects local and federal efforts with state management and includes a dispute resolution mechanism to encourage the resolution of issues quickly and efficiently.
4. Continues the emphasis on using science for decision making and improving the integration of tribal ecological knowledge and knowledge of fishermen into the process.

The Partnership Plan will undergo a public and a tribal comment period in spring 2014. Following incorporation of comments from the first comment period, an additional public and tribal comment period will follow and a final draft of the Partnership Plan is anticipated to be presented to the Ocean Protection Council by the end of the year. OPC, DFW, and F&GC staff recommends that the Partnership Plan, once finalized, be incorporated into the larger adoption of the State's *Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas*, which has been developed through previous regulatory proceedings.

## **Background**

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) was signed into law in 1999, and directed CDFW to redesign California's system of MPAs into a robust network to "increase coherence and its effectiveness at protecting the State's marine life, habitat, and ecosystems."<sup>i</sup> The MPAs were established through the leadership of CDFW and the F&GC, supported by the hard work and dedication of many Californians from both the public and private sector. Building upon this momentum, the OPC and its partner agencies are seeking to channel this energy into successful and lasting management of the individual MPAs and the statewide network. California is poised to meet this opportunity by working collaboratively with an extensive network of governmental and non-governmental partners and their resources and commitment. Through the Partnership Plan, California will establish a unique and effective example of strong marine management for others implementing MPAs.

## **The MPA Partnership Plan**

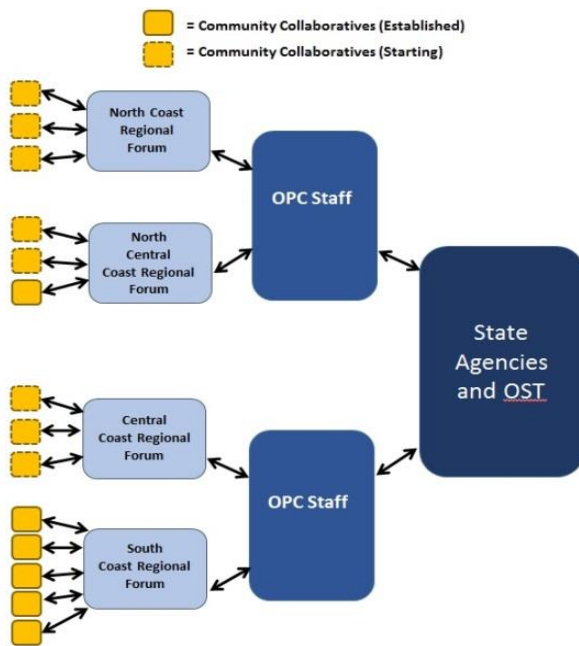
The Partnership Plan is intended to provide guidance for multiple audiences, both with and without jurisdictional authority, for how to engage in and support a partner-based approach to MPA management. These audiences include state, federal, and local governments, tribal governments and communities, NGOs, academic/research institutions, and the private sector. The document is being written by a Drafting Oversight Committee, which includes senior staff from the OPC, CDFW, F&GC, California Ocean Science Trust, and CNRA, with support from Blue Earth Consultants.

The OPC, DFW, and F&GC staff recommends that the Partnership Plan be incorporated into the larger adoption of the State's *Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas*, which has been developed through previous regulatory proceedings. Ultimately, this Partnership Plan is intended to guide interactions across jurisdictions, sectors, and scales so the state can leverage the extensive resources already being brought to bear on the conservation and protection of these special areas. Effectively incorporating stakeholders will support sustainable and resilient marine ecosystems, not only benefitting California's coastal and ocean resources, but the entire West Coast, particularly in the face of climate change. The Partnership Plan is intended to be a "living" document to take into account that aspects of management are constantly being refined. The state is committed to evaluating the effectiveness of this approach for the MPA network to improve governance and management.

## **Community Collaboratives**

The Partnership Plan utilizes a new state initiative called the MPA Collaborative Implementation Project, which establishes a framework for coordinating MPA management across scales (from local, to regional, to state). This innovative approach to management establishes a network of state-wide "Community Collaboratives" which will connect the centralized state agencies to the various

local groups and stakeholders interested and engaged in MPA management. Community Collaboratives include governmental agencies (city, county, state, federal, and tribal), organizations, associations, and institutions that communicate regularly about the MPAs in a particular sub-region (Figure 1). Local communities can use the Collaboratives as: 1). a way to work on site-specific projects more effectively, 2). a forum to communicate with state agencies and key partners about any issues or concerns occurring on-the-ground, and 3). a way to receive information about monitoring efforts, enforcement updates, and outreach & education initiatives from agencies and partners.



**Figure 1.** Community Collaboratives, shown in yellow, will provide local communities access to state agencies involved in MPA implementation. Nine of the fourteen Community Collaboratives have been established and work is ongoing. Regional Community Collaborative Forums, geographically based off MLPA regions, are shown in light blue. OPC staff will participate in the Regional Community Collaborative Forums. These larger meetings will directly connect OPC staff with participants at a regional level. Ultimately, these Regional Community Collaborative Forums serve the purpose of streamlining communication and coordination across issues

### Tribal engagement

Pursuant to Executive Order B-10-11, and the California Natural Resources Agency’s tribal Consultation Policy, this Partnership Plan reaffirms that state agencies are committed to and interested in collaborating with both federally and non-federally recognized tribes on all facets of MPA management. OPC staff has already completed 5 advanced outreach and informational sessions on the Partnership Plan to California tribes, including:

- November 2013 – In-person meeting/webinar for all California tribes (regardless of geographic location), Sacramento, CA.
- December 2013 – In-person meeting with North Coast tribes, Loleta, CA.
- February 2014 – In-person meeting with South Coast Tribal Chairman’s Association, Escondido, CA
- February 2014 – In-person meeting with South Coast tribes, Costa Mesa, CA
- February 2014 – In-person meeting with Central Coast tribes, Santa Barbara, CA

The purpose of these sessions was to engage tribes in a discussion regarding the purpose, goals and development timeline of the document, and to ask tribes to begin to identify the roles that they would like to play in the management of MPAs. These meetings have provided staff with greater insight into the various visions and principles that California tribes have with regards to management and partnership on MPAs. In addition, these forums have functioned as places for

relationship and trust building between OPC and CDFW staff and those tribal members and representatives who participated.

### **Next steps**

The first draft version of the Partnership Plan is expected to be complete by spring 2014. The document will then undergo a public comment period and a tribal comment period. The comments from these processes will be addressed and incorporated into a second draft of the Partnership Plan, where it will then undergo a second round of public and tribal comment periods. Once the comments from this second round have been addressed and incorporated into the document, a final draft will be presented to the Council for approval. OPC staff will continue to work with our partner agencies CDFW and F&GC to ensure that the timeline for the Partnership Plan is coordinated with the adoption of the *Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas*. Moving forward, OPC staff will be continuing to coordinate the distinct, yet connected activities on MPA management, within the state.

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<sup>i</sup> FGC §2850-2863