

Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report
Thursday, October 20, 2016
Regional Water Board Office
Santa Rosa, California

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: Marine Protected Areas and the Collaborative Network (*Paul Hobi, MPA Collaborative Network*)

BOARD ACTION: This is an informational item only. No action will be taken by the Regional Water Board.

BACKGROUND: The following is excerpted from the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Collaborative Network website; see link below.

The goal of the MPA Collaborative Network is to engage experts in local MPA stewardship and management. We provide the information, structure, support, and inter-agency communication necessary to facilitate the creation of collaborative groups that are uniquely suited to local needs. Collaboratives provide a forum for nonprofits, fishermen, tribal representatives, government staff, municipalities, academic institutions, scientists, teachers, and aquaria to work together to enhance understanding and compliance of MPAs. Collaborative Network staff work to make it easier for local experts to partner with the state, strengthening connections and facilitating the flow of information between these local MPA professionals and managing agencies, and working closely with California's Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Parks, Ocean Protection Council and Ocean Science Trust. Collaboratives are a key part of the Ocean Protection Council's guiding principles for governing California's MPA network, allowing the state to engage in meaningful partnerships at the local level, leverage resources, and ensure transparency. California implemented a world class system of 124 marine protected areas in 2012, created through a comprehensive stakeholder-led public process.

Collaborative Network Director Calla Allison saw a challenge moving forward: to ensure locals had a voice in the management of their MPAs. Allison had served as a stakeholder creating South Coast MPAs, representing the Orange County Marine Protected Area Council - the first group organized to bring together area experts to collaboratively manage local MPAs. Seeing first-hand the success of this model, Allison proposed replicating it on a county by county basis. She began approaching local stakeholders to organize collaboratives in San Mateo, San Diego, and Santa Barbara in 2012, supported by the Natural Resources Agency and Department of Fish and Wildlife, and funded by Resources Legacy Fund. Based on the success of these groups, in 2013 Allison led the development of Collaboratives covering each of California's coastal counties. Fourteen collaboratives are

now active along the coast, carrying out projects that answer local needs regarding MPAs. What sets this model apart is the bottom-up, localized, and participatory approach to resource management. Rather than the state providing a structure for engagement, collaborative members develop it themselves. This leads to more buy-in and resource sharing from local organizations and allows state agencies to respond for requests for structure and input, rather than feeding it from the top-down.

DISCUSSION: As the state agency overseeing the protection and preservation of all surface waters that drain to the Pacific Ocean in the North Coast, the Regional Water Quality Control Board has an inherent interest in the mission of the MPA Collaborative Network. Today's information item is aimed at identifying potential partnership opportunities between the Regional Water Board and the Collaborative Network in our joint interest in protecting ocean water quality and associated habitat.

RECOMMENDATION: This is an information item. No action will be taken.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: <http://www.mpacollaborative.org/>