

Jennifer Stock: Alright, and we're back. This is Jennifer Stock with Ocean Currents and I have Melissa Miller-Henson from the state of California on the phone, Irina Kogan from Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary on the phone, Fred Smith from the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin here in the studio, and Tom Beaty, a local fisherman, also another regional stakeholder here in the studio and so, I want to continue the conversation about this marine life protection act and the work you've all been doing on the regional stakeholder group about the current draft proposals that are on the table right now. I had a chance to look at some of the maps, which are all online and it seems that there are some consensus amongst the proposals in the plan about where these reserves and conservation areas and marine parks should go.

Can anyone help to maybe take a stab at describing the proposals as they relate to the West Marin-Sonoma coast and the Farallon Islands and maybe talk about some of the proposals that are on the table?

Fred Smith: Well, I think, you know, you alluded to it earlier, but it's interesting when all the groups went through our first round of negotiations it was interesting that all of the groups actually sort of agreed on what the hot spot areas were and that's not surprising. Often the areas that, you know, provide a really great habitat for lots of fish are also the best places to go fishing and the best place to enjoy those resources and so, its trying to create that balance between the two, but I think, you know...go ahead.

Tom Beaty: Oh, I was just going to say for the listeners out there, the areas that Fred is referring to for West Marin interests would be a zone off Bodega Head, a zone off the Point Reyes Headlands, part or all of Drakes Estero, perhaps off Dock's Berry, perhaps, I think one or two proposals has Bolinas Lagoon, all of them have some configuration or another around the Farallones and I guess there are a couple of the little...there's a small reserve down at the very south end of Tomales Bay. A couple of the proposals have reserve status given to the two esteros between the mouth of Tomales Bay and Bodega. So, that would be Estero San Antonio and Estero Americano and...

Jennifer Stock: Lots of important areas to consider. How about...how...the next steps as far as...there's four proposals currently on the table...five...there's five proposals currently on the table. How do the groups now get to finalizing what those next recommendations

will be? So, taking everybody's proposals, everybody's fighting here for how to answer this.

Fred Smith: Melissa needs to answer this one.

Jennifer Stock: Oh, Melissa!

Tom Baty: She's the gatekeeper.

Jennifer Stock: So, what are the next steps? How do we combine all of these proposals into the next step, the next recommendation?

Fred Smith: It's everybody listening to this answer. This is the \$64,000 question.

Melissa Miller-Henson: The Pressure is on.

Fred Smith: You can do it, Melissa.

Melissa Miller-Henson: Yeah. Well, quite honestly, there are a number of options about how we might get to a final resolution and final set of proposals or proposal, but essentially, the bottom line is that we have a public workshop, we have a science advisory team analysis, staff analysis, and fish & game feasibility analysis. All that information comes back to our regional stakeholder group members. Staff will make an effort to synthesize that information as much as possible to assist our stakeholders in digesting it, so to speak, and we'll do that in a couple of ways.

We'll probably have another work session. We're at least going to offer that up to our stakeholders because they have a lot of work to do in order to come up with the final recommendation or recommendations to the blue ribbon task force, which they're tasked with doing on the 18th and 19th of March. So, reality is they only have those two days. This may take a little bit longer and so, we'll probably set up another work session just, you know, maybe a couple weeks prior to that to give them, sort of, a jump-start on some of those discussions that need to take place among the different groups about how we might move forward and whether or not there's an opportunity to take those five different proposals and craft a single proposal or craft a couple of different proposals that can then be forwarded to the task force.

Fred Smith: Yeah, just to give a little background, you know, a number of months ago I think we were at ten proposals and then we managed to winnow down to, I guess, five proposals, which is what we have

right now. Two of those proposals went straight through their individual subgroups. Two of the proposals were a combination of internal and external proposals and then the fifth one is a proposal that was made from an external group. So, we have five proposals now that are now going through this next round of evaluations.

Jennifer Stock: And there were some external proposals as well submitted, correct?

Tom Beaty: There were four external proposals. One dropped out. One is a stand-alone and then, as Fred mentioned, two of those external proposals have hybridized in with some of the internal working groups. So, they're now, I just treated this as one and then, I don't know whether we were just...what we were drinking back then, but when we began this process we all consensed, during I believe our first full meeting, consensed that our goal as a stakeholder group was going to be to come forward with a single, preferred alternative and...which was something that didn't happen in the south-central coast, in the last region before ours, but we all, sort of, took a pledge of some sort to play well together and it'll be very interesting to see whether our herders can get us through that final...

Jennifer Stock: I can't imagine how hard it must be, Mellissa, specifically for you, to manage these diverse interests and these changes because they could be very changing to peoples' economies and how they're going to survive.

Melissa Miller-Henson: It's less about managing these folks. We don't attempt to manage these folks in any way, shape, or form. It's really just managing the process and trying to help provide as much information as possible to help inform the recommendations that come forward. I mean, obviously, we are trying to assist the stakeholders in developing proposals that are going to help us achieve the goals of the act of...that's required and yet, at the same time, minimize the potential impact on peoples' livelihoods and, you know, personal enjoyment of our ocean and coastal resources and so, you know, there's a number of ways in which we've done that and information that we've gathered to help us achieve those goals, but, you know, the other thing is...to keep in mind is that, you know, while the act doesn't say that we have to minimize socioeconomic impacts, clearly, our regional stakeholder group members are attempting to do that and they're doing that in a number of ways.

Jennifer Stock: From the stakeholders that are here, part of this show today, I'm wondering if you guys can just share what your thoughts are so far

for the proposed recommendations. Are they within the range of what you were hoping for and...?

Fred Smith: Let's let Irina go first on that one.

Jennifer Stock: Okay, Irina, come on in.

Irina Kogan: Yeah, that's right and there's no reverb this time. So, all is well. So, the sanctuary going in didn't necessarily, kind of, have a, you know...hoped for a network or anything like that. You know, for us we were concerned that the, you know, we were concerned about the process and we were concerned that the biological hotspots were being considered and the biological hotspots are very much being considered and the stakeholders are very representatives of the different interests of the area. It is a very open process. The science team has been very helpful and, you know, have been very good about just the amount of information that they've provided to us.

So, as far as the sanctuary is concerned, you know, we're pleased and it seems like things are going well.

Fred Smith: I would say from my perspective, EAC's goal has always been, at least since the initial meetings has been to do our best to actually, you know, successfully achieve the scientific advisory team's guidelines and direction, but at the same time provide as much flexibility as possible and it's been a really, really interesting experience being involved with these meetings, talking with all the different stakeholders, and other interested citizens to really try to incorporate those key factors in there like, you know, for example, allowing commercial salmon trawling lines, you know, to go through certain areas and making sure that, you know, most key accessible ports and other areas are open and yet, still trying to find a level of protection that works.

Jennifer Stock: Tom?

Tom Beaty: I guess I'm a skeptic by nature and although I guess I'm enough of an optimist to be involved in this process, it seems to me that from the fishermen's point of view, from the local fisherman's point of view, that we could probably live with almost any of the proposals that are out there in front of us. Some would be better than others. I think probably all of them have areas that I would like to see cleaned up, tidied up, and my perspective on those comes from less of a user, because there's...you always have somewhere else in the

ocean you can fish. So, it's less of a user-interest on my part, but more from a practical or pragmatic standpoint.

I think that some of the areas that have been proposed or are being proposed will represent, and this is just an example, but will represent a challenge for enforcement that will be virtually impossible to overcome and so, if we're designing MPAs within an area that's essentially unenforceable because of its distance from a roadway or distance from an overview or something, then what we're doing is we're reallocating the resource, taking it away from those of us that try to play by the rules and giving it to those people that don't know, don't care, or that actively look for a reserve because they think that they're going to get more, bigger, that sort of thing and so, I'm still anxious within our process that we haven't passed it through the filter of practicality as well as we should have and I hope we can find the time to do...I know it's...we're getting down to crunch time in terms of handing off our part of the program to the next stage, but I'm hoping that we can take a serious look and maybe come up with something that's got a bit more practical...

Fred Smith:

And I agree with you on that point. I think we're still, sort of, in that middle stage and we still have another round to go and I agree with you that there's definitely some areas that need to be improved upon that we definitely need to simplify things as well as clean them up and really...because right now there are some interesting combinations of MPAs that are out there. It's confusing to enforcement and to the public.

Tom Beaty:

If you look, for example, at the internal group that I was working in, which was turquoise group, and we had our original array out at the Farallon Islands. I think maybe it was you, Melissa, that described it as a piece of modern art. It was...the geometric shapes, the delineations were so remarkable, and knowing, as a fisherman, how hard it is to work with the current...within the current regulations...it's very hard to go out and spend the day fishing and not break a law. I mean, it's...right now and when you start adding extra layers of where you can and what can and cannot take in those areas and this is, I'm a person that spend almost 100 days of the year out on the water. So, I've got a very profound knowledge of what's going on out there and it's still hard to do.

Jennifer Stock:

It is very difficult to keep up.

Tom Beaty:

Yeah.

Jennifer Stock: Definitely. I wanted to ask one more question before we start wrapping it up and this is maybe directed toward Melissa or Irina, but you're all welcome to chime in. Even though this process is focused on state waters, is there a potential amongst federal agencies to expand the state network into federal waters or are there unique critical habitats in federal waters too that might be considered in the future for additional protections?

Irina Kogan: So, I guess I'll take a stab on that. That's a really good question, Jenny. It's a question we get a lot and...because there are other sanctuaries that...so, although the sanctuary started at mean-high water in most parts of the Gulf of the Farallones sanctuary we start at mean-high water and extend seaward. We extend past the shelf-slope break. So, past the islands and so, a portion of the sanctuary overlaps state waters, but a portion is just...is solely in federal waters and different sanctuaries have different plans for how to address resource protection issues in federal waters. All of the sanctuaries are guided by our management plans and these plans are developed with stakeholder input.

In fact, often they're developed by groups of stakeholders and in the Gulf of the Farallones we have a plan and basically the way our plan, our guiding document, is written is that if there are issues or problems identified in sanctuary waters, wherever they are, but in particular in federal waters in this case, we bring that information back to our stakeholder advisory group, the sanctuary advisory council and we share that problem with them and then we set up a working group, we get the appropriate stakeholders and we work out solutions to the particular problems and there are many different solutions that, you know, we could propose depending on the type of problem and so, marine protected areas are a potential tool that could be used, but there are lots of other tools that could be used and we would consider them kind of on a case by case basis.

So, there isn't anything planned for federal MPAs in the Gulf of the Farallones sanctuary, but it just depends as we go into the future what kinds of issues come up and what is the best way to address them.

Jennifer Stock: Thank you. Just to be thinking about wrapping up this conversation, I have some announcements for everybody after this, but how can...Melissa, maybe this is for you: How can the public view proposals and learn about what's happened and participate in the future meeting coming up?

Melissa Miller-Henson: Well, the first step would be, if they have internet access, to visit our website the dfg.ca.gov/mlpa and all of the draft proposals are on the website as well as information about the various groups and when and where they meet and background information that's been prepared for each of those meetings or if they don't have internet access they're welcome to call the MLPA offices at [916-654-1885](tel:916-654-1885) and we have those draft proposals on CD or we can send them to them in print copy, either way

Jennifer Stock: I see. How about you, Fred? Is there a way people can get in touch with you about..?

Fred Smith: Definitely. My first phone number is [415-663-9312](tel:415-663-9312), email is EAC@svn.net, and also at our website eacmarin.org and Melissa, do you have the schedule of meetings in front of you?

Melissa Miller-Henson: I do.

Fred Smith: I think it'd be great to read those out and what times and locations and everything.

Melissa Miller-Henson: Okay, well there's quite a few, why don't I just do the next couple ones? We have a science advisory team on the 23rd of January in Pacifica. We have public workshops the 4th, 5th, and 6th of February, the 4th in Pataluma. Those are in the evening, 6 to 9pm. The 5th is in Walala and the 6th in Pacifica and then we have a blue ribbon task force meeting on the 13th and 14th of February also in Pacifica, the first day of that, the 13th is actually a joint meeting with the California Fish & Game Commission.