MENDOCINO COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Executive Office (707)463-4441

TO: MENDOCINO COUNTY NEWS MEDIA

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Ukiah, California… Thursday, March 4, 2010

Mendocino County Receives Grant to Provide Public MLPA Outreach

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) was passed by the State Legislature and signed by Governor Davis in 1999. MLPA goals include rebuilding marine life populations, improving recreational and educational opportunities, biodiversity protection, and protecting marine natural heritage. The legislation requires the state to create a network of marine protected areas where take of marine life is restricted or prohibited. A public-private partnership, the MLPA Initiative (MLPAI), has been established to help the State implement the MLPA.

The County of Mendocino has received a $30,000 grant from the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation to provide outreach and facilitation support for county residents to participate in the MLPAI. As stated by Fourth District County Supervisor Kendall Smith, "This grant has been critical in providing a framework for our constituents to effectively engage the MLPA in a process that will permanently affect our communities and coastline".

Dr. Jeanine Pfeiffer and Jim Martin jointly responded to the County's request for MLPA program outreach services, and have been respectively selected as the County's Program Outreach Facilitator and Coordinator. Dr. Pfeiffer is a research associate at UC Davis and lecturer at San Jose State University, with a PhD in Ecology. Mr. Martin is a county Fish & Game Advisory Commission member who serves on the board of numerous fisheries advocacy and conservation associations.

Over the past four months, Dr. Pfeiffer and Mr. Martin have provided leadership to the newly-formed Mendocino Ocean Community Alliance (MOCA) in the development of proposed marine protected areas for the North Coast region, an area that extends from Pt. Arena to the Oregon border and includes Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties. In coordination with the Humboldt Harbor District and Del Norte County's MLPA working groups, MOCA supports the development of marine protected areas that fulfill the requirements of the law, while protecting both the economic value of the region's diverse and sustainable fisheries and the cultural heritage of Mendocino County residents, including tribes and tribal communities.

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MOCA will be hosting monthly public meetings at the Episcopal Church in Fort Bragg (at Fir and Franklin), along with workshops on marine science, using MLPA decision support tools like MarineMap, and open discussions about how to effectively engage in the public stakeholder process. The next MOCA meetings are Monday, March 15th from 6-8 pm and Tuesday, April 27th from 6-8 pm.

MOCA hosts an online discussion forum at www.mendoca.org and posts relevant announcements to a community list-serve: requests to be placed on the list-serve can be made through the website, or by contacting Dr. Pfeiffer at 707-962-4560. The main source of MLPA-related documents from the Department of Fish and Game and the MLPAI are located at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/northcoast.asp.

MLPA meetings will rotate through Eureka, Crescent City, and Ft. Bragg through October 2010. The next opportunity for public comment to the MLPA Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) will be on March 24-25, in Crescent City; and to the Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) on May 3-4, also in Crescent City. The meetings may be viewed via simultaneous webcast at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/meetings_n.asp (for viewing or listening only).

In response to constituent requests, separate meeting "nodes" for the three counties are being established for North Coast residents without broadband internet access, and to enable North Coast residents to participate in RSG, BRTF, and Science Advisory Team (SAT) meetings without having to drive lengthy distances. Announcements regarding the locations of these nodes will be posted on the MLPA and MOCA websites.

Released by: _____
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