

## **“GREEN SHEET”**

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**Meeting/workshop:** December 4-5, Commission Meeting

**Agenda Item #12:** Marine Protected Areas – Briefing

**Prepared by:** Michele Culver, Regional Director

**Presenter:** Brie VanCleve, MPA Coordinator, Intergovernmental Resource Management

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### **Background:**

Senate Bill 6231 passed during the 2008 session. It created a Marine Protected Area (MPA) work group, which was chaired by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and included representatives from the Department of Natural Resources, the State Parks and Recreation Commission, and appropriate Marine Resource Committees. Representatives from the tribes, federal agencies, other state agencies, the Puget Sound Partnership, local governments, and non-governmental organizations that manage MPAs were also invited to participate. SB 6231 directed the work group to:

- Examine and update the current inventory and management of Washington’s MPAs;
- Develop recommendations to improve coordination and consistency among MPAs relative to goals for the MPA, criteria for establishment, management and monitoring practices, and terminology;
- Develop recommendations to improve the integration of science into MPA establishment and management decisions;
- Develop recommendations to further integrate local governments and non-governmental organizations into the establishment and management of MPAs; and
- Provide any other recommendations to improve the effectiveness of MPAs in Washington.

The work group was also directed to complete a written report by December 1, 2009, that includes: 1) an inventory of MPAs in all marine waters of the state; and 2) a summary of the issues and recommendations identified relative the items listed above. For the purposes of the work group’s report, SB 6231 broadly defined an MPA as “a geographic marine or estuarine area designated by a state, federal, tribal, or local government in order to provide long-term protection for part or all of the resources within that area.”

WDFW contacted MPA management entities to compile the inventory and create maps using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, which allowed staff to summarize the amount of area currently set aside for protection. Over the course of the past year, WDFW convened ten meetings of the work group to review and edit the inventory, develop its recommendations and draft the report required by SB 6231.

At the December meeting, Department staff will brief the Commission on the work group’s findings, their recommendations, including a recommended process for coordination among state and federal agencies, tribes, local governments, and stakeholders.

**Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:**

None—this is a briefing only.

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**Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

At the December meeting, Department staff will brief the Commission on the results of the work group meetings.

**Actions requested (identify the specific Commission decisions you are seeking):**

None—this is a briefing only.

**Draft motion language:**

N/A

**Justification for Commission adoption:**

N/A

## FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

**POLICY TITLE:** Marine Protected Areas

**POLICY NUMBER:** POL-C3013

**Cancels:**

**Effective Date:** June 13, 1998

**Termination Date:**

**See Also:**

**Approved by:**

*Lisa Pelly*  
Fish and Wildlife Commission Chair

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are sites given long-term protection to protect and enhance some or all of the resources at the site and/or to facilitate some uses of the area. MPAs can serve a variety of purposes including:

- Research and Education Areas
- Protection of Unique or Sensitive Populations
- Fish Production and Fishery Management
- Protection of Habitats of Special Importance
- Non-Consumptive Use Recreational Areas

A variety of fish and wildlife resources can benefit from establishment of MPAs. Some fish resources require major reductions in harvest pressure and protection from removal as by-catch to establish productive populations of adults. Establishing such areas may be important tools to recover from past over-harvest or prevent future overharvest (e.g., rockfish in Puget Sound). MPAs can also provide areas for non-consumptive use of the resources, allow collection of baseline data on resources at the site, provide reference areas, and protect unique, sensitive, or important habitats and populations. They can facilitate integrated management of all resources within important habitats or areas.

**General Policy:** The Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife will use marine protected areas as one of the agency's working tools for resource protection and management. The Director will be responsible for plan development and implementation to manage consumptive and/or non-consumptive uses.

**The management objectives for the use of marine protected areas are:**

- Preserve, protect, perpetuate and manage the living resources of the state.
- Provide refuges for stocks, substocks, or populations.
- Protect unique or important habitats or species.
- Foster stewardship of unique or important resources or habitats.
- Provide research and education areas.
- Provide baseline areas or reference sites.
- Provide non-consumptive recreational opportunities.

All sites will not meet all objectives but many sites will meet multiple objectives.

**The following management principles will be used:**

- Designed MPAs are needed in Puget Sound to protect a variety of species, to promote the recovery of some over-harvested species and to protect important habitats.
- To the extent possible, MPAs will be established based on scientific principles and available data.
- MPAs will not be delayed until all potential questions are answered since recovery of some depressed or declining resources will rely on the timely establishment of sites. The agency will rely on existing information to determine resources of concern and begin selection of areas.
- Regulations adopted will be as simple as possible at individual sites and throughout the network.
- Within the constraints of the above principles and objectives, uses compatible with the type of site and resource needs will be permitted.
- Opportunities will be made available for public involvement by consumptive and non-consumptive users during development of the network of areas and site selection.
- The agency will use adaptive management, including good neighbor practices, to modify the sites and the network as data is collected.