



Marine Resources

For years, the oceans were seen as vast places of endless bounty. Not anymore. Today, the ocean habitat and its sea life are increasingly seen as a limited resource threatened by over-fishing, pollution and, increasingly, the effects of climate change. Stakeholders clash over potential remedies - from more restrictive fisheries regulations, to protected marine sanctuaries, to aggressive coastal management strategies. These tensions all too often play out as “either/or” choices: either we protect the marine environment or we protect fishermen and coastal communities’ way of life. This stark, no-win portrayal inevitably pits groups against one another in a seemingly all-or-nothing struggle.

CONCUR’s work on a rapidly growing body of collaborative marine resource projects suggests there is another way. In locations throughout the U.S., CONCUR has successfully helped diverse groups - from conservation advocates, commercial fishermen and recreational users, to scientists and government regulators at all levels - forge consensus approaches to managing increasingly stressed marine resources. CONCUR has facilitated agreements that balance the needs of commercial fishermen and marine mammal endangered species on the East Coast, defined marine life protected areas along the West Coast, fostered international dialogues to protect sea turtles and sea birds without jeopardizing the viability of the longline fishing industry. CONCUR’s experience includes applying our working knowledge of ocean and coastal policy to design and facilitate a state wide ocean workshop on Collaborative Fisheries Research in California for the California Ocean Protection Council. Our work on dozens of projects over the past two decades has required expertise in the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Magnuson-Stevenson Act, federal coastal laws and other key regulatory guidelines. We believe the success of this approach is grounded in CONCUR’s stepwise approach to building agreements: finding ways to integrate parties’ different interests; devising long-term policies that can adapt as better information is developed to address critical unknowns; and fostering dialogues that help parties use the best available information to forge wise and lasting agreements.

Selected Projects

Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative: The aim of the MLPA Initiative is to build a statewide network of marine protected areas to foster biological diversity, rebuild depleted fish stocks, and create educational and research opportunities. CONCUR served as lead facilitator for dialogues focused on the Central Coast and North Central Coast regions. A key aspect of this work centered on a series of facilitated stakeholder discussions and scientific review steps - culminating in a decision by the California Fish and Game Commission - that encouraged a diverse set of participants to move from stakeholder-centric proposals to integrated hybrid packages. Participants in the process include commercial and recreational fishers, harbor masters, recreational divers, conservation groups, scientists, researchers, educators, and representatives of federal, state and local agencies. In April 2007, the Fish and Game Commission unanimously adopted the Preferred Alternative including a set of 29 protected Marine Protected Areas in Central California. In June 2008, the Commission formally accepted the Integrated Preferred Alternative for the North Central Coast Region.

Finding the Balance: Fishing Interests and At-Risk Marine Mammals: CONCUR is facilitating four East Coast stakeholder groups tasked with devising effective strategies to reduce incidental bycatch of endangered marine mammal species while maintaining the viability of commercial fishing efforts up and down the coast. CONCUR’s work, funded by the National Marine Fisheries Service, centers on

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the Harbor Porpoise, the Atlantic Large Whale and protected Pilot Whales species, bringing together fishermen, conservationists, academics, researchers and various government agencies in a collaborative dialogue. CONCUR has relied on a mix of stakeholder interviews and ongoing discussions to identify new approaches capable of being broadly supported by the diverse interests involved in the deliberations (known as Take Reduction Teams). CONCUR's work has yielded consensus agreements on a number of specific regulatory and non-regulatory take-reduction measures that NMFS has or is expected to take to formal rulemaking. CONCUR staff also handles much of the travel logistics associated with participants' involvement in these discussions. Facilitation of the Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team led to the publication of the proposed rule on Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Plan in the Federal Register on June 24, 2008.

Collaborative Fisheries Research Workshop: In May 2008 CONCUR helped design and facilitate a two-day statewide workshop on Collaborative Fisheries Research (CFR) for the Ocean Protection Council. Fisheries managers, fishermen, scientists, community groups and policy makers throughout California and the nation attended the workshop. Our team conducted pre-workshop interviews to help create the agenda and used our working knowledge of ocean and coastal policy, including the status of California ocean fisheries, to refine approaches to be used during the workshop. The workshop focused on summarizing lessons learned from existing CFR projects and solicit feedback on establishing a new statewide CFR program that may then be extended to include other West Coast states. CONCUR facilitated panel discussions and breakout sessions, and provided a comprehensive summary memo including a framework and major institutional elements of a statewide CFR program.

For a complete list of projects please visit our website at www.concurinc.com

About CONCUR, Inc.

CONCUR, Inc. provides services in agreement-focused mediation and facilitation, joint fact-finding, conflict assessment, environmental policy analysis, strategic planning, and environmental mediation training. Our staff has a unique dual expertise in both the process and substance of environmental decision-making. We are rigorously trained in the art and science of negotiation and dispute resolution, as well as in environmental planning and policy analysis. This dual expertise is the foundation of CONCUR's philosophy: to integrate different disciplines that strengthen our problem-solving capability so that we can provide clients the highest quality professional services.

For further information about our services please visit our web site at www.concurinc.com or contact us at:

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