

MPA Messaging Simplified

This messaging guide is designed to provide docents with marine protected area sample messaging for the different types of audiences that visit our California State Parks. Research tells us that effective messaging addresses people’s values. In creating specific messages for our audiences, it is important to consider what they care about, and how to match MPA messages to those values. In the table below we have tailored the MPA messaging based on our audiences and their values. This is meant as a guide to provide docents with simple MPA messaging content that can be modified and integrated into their personal presentation materials.

What they are, how they work and why they are needed:

MPA are special places set aside in the ocean where wildlife and habitat is protected. They serve to limit the removal of fish, invertebrate and algae from designated areas thereby allowing the protected marine ecosystem a chance to rebound and thrive with healthy habitats and natural diversity.

Overarching message around the MLPA process:

Over 150 years ago our country set aside some of our most spectacular places on land. Now, California is doing the same thing for our ocean, creating a system of underwater parks, or marine protected areas. Marine protected areas support a healthy ocean while allowing visitors to experience nature at its best.

Some value definitions: Natural heritage, value ability for generations to enjoy natural environments and places; Conservation, support the preservation of species, habitats and natural environments; Public access, value the access to natural areas for recreation, observation, etc.; Legacy, value leaving a healthy ocean for their ancestors.

Legacy:

Audience	Values (what they care about)	Sample Message
Locals and coastal residents	Natural heritage, conservation, public access, legacy	Here on the central coast the ocean is an integral part of our way of life (both economically and recreationally). We have a responsibility to preserve and protect the ocean for future generations. Marine protected areas are tools for managing our precious marine resources (like fish, invertebrates, algae). Designed with input from scientists and monitored over time by researchers, these protected areas leave the vast majority (80% of coastal waters) of the ocean open for fishing and recreational activities. Tell others in your community about our MPAs because observing the local MPA guidelines will help ensure wildlife and habitats recover and thrive for generations.
Tourists	Recreation and access, natural heritage, science, resources	We have an incredible array of sea life and habitats here at XXX, including XXX. The ocean offers us many recreational and educational opportunities so we have a responsibility to contribute to its protection. With fish the off California's coast depleted to less than ten percent of historic levels and so many degraded marine ecosystems, marine protected areas have been implemented here to help restore our fragile marine ecosystems so fish, wildlife and habitats in this area continue to be healthy and thriving for

		generations to come.
Families w/ children	Natural heritage, conservation, education, legacy	Child message: We have some incredible creatures that live here in the sea. These creatures like XXX need homes (or habitats) to live in just like you need a bed to sleep in. Lately we have noticed our ocean isn't as healthy as it once was so we are creating marine protected areas to help the wildlife and the homes they live in recover so they are healthy for a very long time.
Outdoor Enthusiasts	Recreation and access	The central coast supports a variety of recreational activities especially fishing, boating, diving and surfing. In order to preserve these recreational opportunities we must also preserve the resources that make them so special for future generations of fishermen, surfers, etc. Fish off California's coast are depleted to less than ten percent of historic levels and fishermen are spending more effort to catch smaller fish. We now have a network of marine protected areas to help protect our most fragile ecosystems and fish species while leaving the vast majority of the ocean open for fishing and recreational activities. Tell others in your community about our MPAs because observing the local MPA guidelines will help ensure wildlife and habitats recover and thrive for future divers and fishermen.
Students and teachers	Education, research, conservation	We are lucky to visit and learn about unique places like XXX, because its home to some of California's most incredible sea life and habitats like XXX. The ocean provides us with many educational and research opportunities in return we have a responsibility to protect it for the future. Over time our marine ecosystems have declined. To restore and protect these fragile marine ecosystems, California has designated a network of marine protected areas to help wildlife recover and thrive. Studies have shown that MPAs really work to restore fisheries and marine ecosystems. Lets make sure we protect our precious ocean resource well into the future so everyone can enjoy the ocean.
Retirees	Natural heritage, conservation	Involve retiree visitor groups with an open question: "What changes have you noticed in the ocean over the years? Then follow up using examples of MPA messaging and powerful facts when communicating and reacting to their comments.