

## Staff Summary for June 11-12, 2025

**7. Commission Policy on Naming Installations****Today's Item**Information ☐Action ☒

Discuss and potentially approve amendments to the Commission's policy on *Naming Installations*, including changing the policy's title to *Naming Protected Areas*.

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions**

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|---|---|
| • Initial proposed revisions to <i>Naming Installations Policy</i>  | December 13-14, 2023                    |
| • Discussed proposed revisions to <i>Naming Installations Policy</i> , and directed staff to conduct more tribal outreach         | April 17-18, 2024, and June 19-20, 2025 |
| • Tribal Committee (TC) discussed proposed changes to <i>Naming Installations Policy</i>  | August 13, 2024; TC                     |
| • Discussed proposed changes to policy  | October 9-10, 2024                      |
| • TC discussed proposed changes to policy   | December 10, 2024; TC                   |
| • Discussed proposed changes to policy and directed staff to refine language.   | December 11-12, 2024                    |
| • Discussed revised draft amended policy  | April 16-17, 2025                       |
| • TC discussed revised draft amended policy   | May 7, 2025; TC                         |
| • <b>Today, receive, discuss and potentially approve the revised draft amended policy as <i>Naming Protected Areas Policy</i></b> | <b>June 11-12, 2025</b>                 |

**Background**

Since June 2023, staff has been advancing a plan to review and present potential updates to Commission policies, with a justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and tribal lens applied when reviewing and recommending changes to policies. Due to significant capacity issues in late 2023 and early 2024, progress was limited to a small number of policies. However, staff remains committed to advancing this project in small, consistent stages.

Potential changes to the Commission's [Naming Installations Policy](#), with a proposed title change to *Naming Protected Areas Policy*, were initially presented at the Commission's December 2023 meeting (see Exhibit 1 for background), and subsequently reviewed at Commission and committee meetings throughout 2024. At its December 2024 meeting, the Commission directed staff to revise the draft amended policy language. The goal of the request for further revisions was to refine content associated with honoring traditional tribal names and language around naming protected areas, for further discussion at a future meeting.

In April 2025, staff reported to the Commission that it had prepared revised policy language drafted to reflect the Commission's intent. However, recognizing a need for additional review by the Department and input from the Commission president and vice president as requested in December, as well as the Commission's interest in further TC review prior to approval, staff recommended to present the revised proposed language at the next TC meeting (held May 7, 2025) for review) prior to potential Commission approval.

## Staff Summary for June 11-12, 2025

**Update**

The TC reviewed the revised proposed policy language at its May 2025 meeting and received public feedback. Following the TC meeting, staff also conferred with the Commission president and vice president, as well as Department staff, regarding the revised draft amended language. Based on the collective feedback, staff has introduced further refinements to the policy to better reflect intent. This collaborative effort has culminated in the next iteration of the revised draft amended policy for Commission consideration today (Exhibit 2).

The revised draft amended policy in Exhibit 2 reflects the following:

- *Change in Policy Title.* The policy title has been changed to reflect a modified scope that represents the types of protected areas within the Commission's responsibility for naming.
- *Affirmation of Geographical Naming.* The policy affirms the continuing practice of naming based on geographical location, while clarifying that the intent of such naming is to assist the general public in understanding the location and to facilitate public engagement when naming or renaming.
- *Removal of In Memoria Naming Exception.* The current policy exception for naming a marine protected area in honor of an individual who had made contributions to California's natural environment has been removed. The new policy language clarifies that the policy applies to future opportunities to name or rename, rather than retroactively removing honorary names from existing marine protected areas.
- *Emphasis on Tribally-Identified Names.* The policy places emphasis on honoring tribally-identified names by actively inviting tribes from ancestral territories to identify ancestral or contemporary tribal names for the protected area.
- *Option for Dual Naming.* The policy indicates that the Commission may select a dual name that includes a tribally-identified name and current geographic name.

**Significant Public Comment (N/A)****Recommendation**

**Commission staff:** Approve the revised draft amended *Naming Installations Policy*, and retitle the policy as the *Naming Protected Areas Policy*, as reflected in Exhibit 1.

**Exhibits**

1. ["Potential Modifications to Commission Naming Installations Policy," dated December 10, 2023 \(for background purposes only\)](#)
2. ["Revised Draft Amended Naming Protected Areas Policy," dated June 6, 2025](#)

**Motion**

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that the Commission approves the revised draft amended *Naming Installations Policy*, as discussed today, and to retitle the policy as the *Naming Protected Areas Policy*.

# **California Fish and Game Commission**

## **Potential Modifications to the Commission Naming Installations Policy**

**December 10, 2023**  
**For Background Purposes Only**

The Commission Naming Installations Policy is numbered 4.13 for tracking during the 2023-24 Commission policies review process. This document proposes changes to the policy for discussion and feedback at the December 2023 Commission meeting.

The Commission has expressed concerns regarding its existing Naming Installations Policy providing an exception for naming a marine protected area (MPA) after an individual; the over 70-year-old policy was amended in 2012 to allow the exception. Currently, there are three MPAs named after individuals: Lovers Point-Julia Platt State Marine Reserve, Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area, and Robert W. Crown State Marine Conservation Area.

Additionally, the Commission has stated the importance of its policies taking into consideration tribal and justice, equity, diversity and inclusion values. The Naming Installations Policy currently does not recognize that, when Europeans arrived, specific geographies already had names established by Native Americans in what is now known as California and off its shores.

For naming purposes, the Commission is directly involved in naming protected areas when it designates such areas: state wildlife areas, ecological reserves, and marine protected areas. The Commission does not have a direct role in establishing, purchasing or naming refuges (established by the California State Legislature), fish hatcheries, vessels, and other installations owned or managed by the Department.

Potential revisions to the policy could include: (1) removing the MPA naming exception; (2) adding a provision to consider, in collaboration with local tribes, tribal placenames when naming or renaming installations, including MPAs; and (3) revising the policy title to reflect proposed policy language focused on protected areas.

If the Commission moves forward with removing the option to name MPAs after individuals, the Commission may wish to specify how to address the three MPAs currently named after an individual. For example, they could be renamed immediately, allowed to remain named as they are, or, if the MPA is renamed, a nearby structure or facility could be named in honor of the individual.

If the Commission moves forward with using tribal placenames, the Commission may wish to consider whether or not a western geographic name might also be referenced to maximize public understanding of where the MPA is located. If a western name is included, the Commission may wish to provide direction regarding a standardized format (e.g., tribal name MPA at western geographic location) and whether to apply the same standard to Kashtayit State Marine Conservation Area and Matlahuayl State Marine Reserve.

Potential revisions are being presented at this meeting for discussion purposes; proposed policy revisions based on Commission and public input are expected to be presented at the February 2024 Commission meeting for potential adoption.

### **Naming Installations Policy with Draft Potential Revisions**

#### ***Naming Protected Areas ~~Installations~~ Policy***

It is the policy of the Fish and Game Commission that:

- I. ~~No fish hatchery, game refuge, wildlife area, ecological reserve, or marine protected area (MPA) or any installation, other than Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), shall be named for any person, living or dead. Installations-Protected areas shall be named in a manner which will indicate their geographical location, avoiding as far as possible the names of local political units. Vessels shall be named for fish.~~
- II. Traditional tribal placenames for a geographic location shall be considered in collaboration and collaboration with local tribes when naming or renaming any protected area, including MPAs.
- I. ~~The Commission may commemorate an individual by including that individual's name after the geographic name of an MPA if all of the following criteria are met:~~
  1. ~~The individual has been deceased for a minimum of 5 years;~~
  2. ~~It has been determined the individual has made an extraordinary, unique, and long-lasting contribution to the conservation, use, and/or enjoyment of California's living marine resources;~~
  3. ~~It has been determined with reasonable care and consideration that the individual's merit and/or contribution can stand the test of time;~~
  4. ~~The individual and/or their efforts have a direct connection with the geographic location of the MPA or immediate vicinity.~~
- III. The Commission shall be represented at and may participate in all ceremonies dedicating the launching or inauguration of any wildlife area, ecological reserve, or MPA ~~or any installation of the facilities mentioned above.~~ The Department and the Commission staff shall coordinate their work and efforts in ~~setting up or arranging~~ such dedication ceremonies ~~programs.~~

(Amended 4/7/1994, and 5/23/2012, 2/xx/2024)

**California Fish and Game Commission**  
**Revised Draft Amended Commission Naming Installations Policy**

*June 6, 2025*

***Naming Protected Areas Policy***

It is the policy of the Fish and Game Commission that:

- I. Protected areas, for the purposes of this policy, consist of wildlife areas, ecological reserves, and marine protected areas, and will be named with input from the public. To help ensure protected areas are understandable and locatable by the public, these areas shall be named in a manner which indicates their geographical location, while avoiding the names of local political units. No new or renamed protected areas shall be named for any person, living or dead.
- II. When identifying the name for, or an opportunity to rename, a protected area, the Commission and Department will invite tribes with ancestral ties to that area to engage in meaningful information-sharing about the cultural significance of the area, and to identify traditional or contemporary tribal names for the area. In selecting a name, the Commission will give significant weight to tribally-identified names, with particular emphasis on restoring tribal place names. In its selection, the Commission may consider combining the tribal place name with a currently-used name that is understandable and locatable, as appropriate, to ensure accessibility and identification by the broader public while restoring tribal heritage recognition.
- III. The Commission shall be represented at and may participate in all ceremonies dedicating or inaugurating any protected area. The Department and Commission staff shall coordinate their work and efforts in arranging such dedication or inauguration ceremonies.

(Amended 4/7/1994,-5/23/2012, 06/11/2025)