



**COLLABORATIVE
NETWORK**



2025 IMPACT REPORT

California's 124+ Marine Protected Area Network



WHO WE ARE

The mission of the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Collaborative Network is to empower diverse communities to engage in marine protected area stewardship for a healthy ocean. The vision of the MPA Collaborative Network is to ensure the health and sustainability of our natural and social environments through civic engagement in local marine management and stewardship.

WHAT WE DO

The purpose of the MPA Collaborative Network is to ensure and support a cooperative and just structure that encourages participation in decision-making processes, grounded in the values of respect for differences and the interconnection between humans and nature.

local voices

Strengthening local voices and agencies through a bottom-up approach.

healthy ocean

Empowering experts in MPA stewardship for a healthy ocean.

inclusion

Empowering agency, tribal sovereignty, self-determination, and removing barriers.



IN THE FIELD

33

MPA COLLABORATIVE CO-CHAIRS

2

NEW CO-CHAIRS
ONBOARDED

14

MPA
COLLABORATIVES

31

COLLABORATIVE
MEETINGS

5

MPACN
EMPLOYEES



Solstice Sea Star Search + King Tides + DarkSky Santa Cruz gathering at Natural Bridges SMR with Santa Cruz MPA Collaborative

CLIMATE & marine protected areas

1

CLIMATE +
MPA
INTERN

5

CLIMATE +
MPA
MICROGRANTS

\$36,070

AWARDED TO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS TO ADDRESS LOCAL CLIMATE CONCERNS TO DATE

Our third climate intern will be working throughout 2026 to **pilot greenhouse gas inventories** for some of California's MPAs—a need that has been expressed by our CN membership and partner agencies, and is an identified **data gap globally**.

Round 2 Climate +
MPA Microgrant
Awardees



2025 AWARDEES

EcoLogik Institute & Cabrillo National Monument

Seymour Marine Discovery Center (Santa Cruz)

DETAILS

A group of 4 youth science communications apprentices will create a comic book on climate science and the MPA

Develop a responsive, interactive, bilingual, student-led climate solutions exhibit

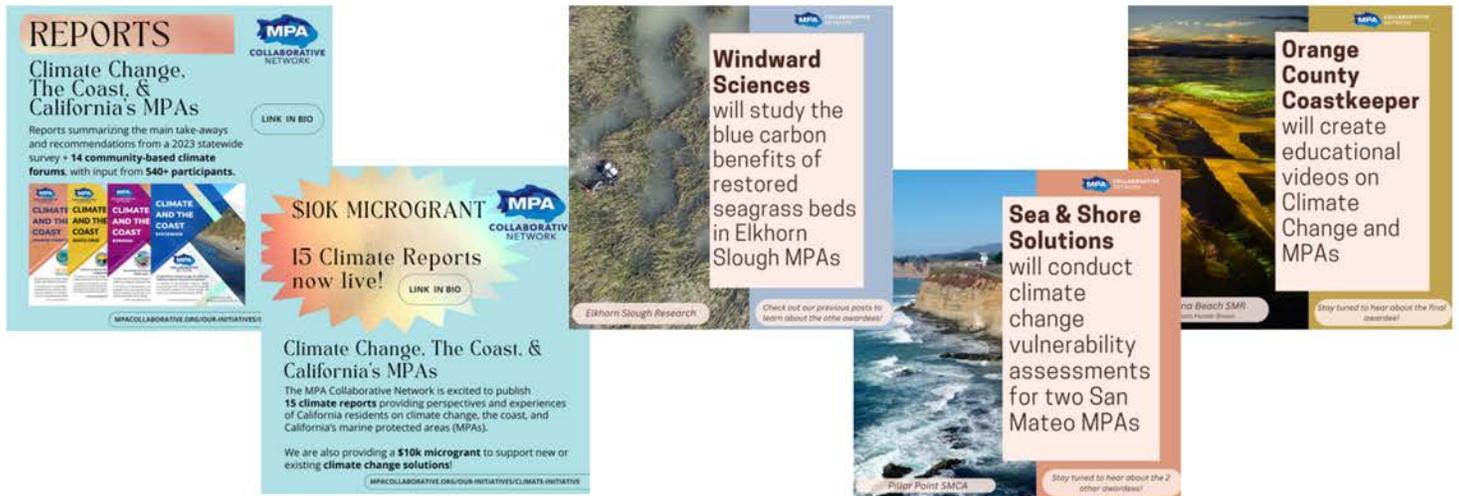
OUTCOME

An English and Spanish comic book sharing how the science informs park management & protection.

Support public understanding of the connections between climate change, blue carbon, ecosystem resilience, and how they relate to MPAs.

ABOUT THE CLIMATE + MPA MICROGRANT:

In 2023, we completed 14 community-based climate forums in each MPA Collaborative county, and published 1 Statewide Climate Report and 14 Climate Reports representing data collected at each community-based climate forum, from over 600+ participants. Each report outlines recommendations for decision-makers for their respective communities in regards to climate change, the coast, and MPAs. Our Climate + MPA Microgrant program funds proposals that address some of the main concerns and recommendations from the Statewide Climate Report and 2023 forums.



SUMMARIES OF ROUND 1 MICROGRANT AWARDEES (COMPLETED OCT. 2025)

MPAS	PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
Pillar Point SMCA & Montara SMR	"Rapid Vulnerability Assessments of San Mateo MPAs." Awardee: Sea & Shore Solutions	Identified potential climate impacts to priority species and habitats, as well as identification of solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed understanding of climate threats to 3 key species/habitats Developed 7 community-led solutions
Statewide	"Climate and MPAs Video." Awardee: Orange County Coastkeeper	Created 12-minute educational video on the intersections of climate change and MPAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 400 individuals reached 10+ expert interviews
Elkhorn Slough SMCA	"Carbon Sequestration of Restored Seagrass Beds." Awardee: Windward Sciences.	Measured the rate of carbon uptake and storage of restored seagrass beds within Elkhorn Slough MPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 data sampling trips 3 interviews with news stations short documentary on project

PATHWAYS

justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, access (JEDIA)

01

PATHWAYS
COORDINATOR
HANDBOOK

10

PATHWAYS
SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED

14

MPA PATHWAYS
PROJECTS
COMPLETED

20

PATHWAYS
COMMUNITY
GROUP
MEETINGS

70+

PATHWAYS
COMMUNITY
GROUP
PARTICIPANTS

82

CULTURALLY
RELEVANT MPA
ARTWORK
BY/FOR/OF
PATHWAYS
MEMBERS &
PARTNERS

The Pathways Community Groups include Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI), Black, and Latine focuses. In 2025, the Pathways Community Groups were extended for an additional three cohorts thanks to funding from the **Ocean Protection Council!** The second cohorts for all three community groups (Asian American Pacific Islander, Black, and Latine) began with **new and returning members**, and will be facilitating cross-group meetings each to foster community outside of their respective groups.

Pathways is an initiative to support diverse **voices** and **perspectives** from historically marginalized communities that are connected to marine ecosystems and California's coastline. The MPACN seeks to drive significant and positive changes that **address social injustice and challenges** in the field of marine protected area stewardship.



Meet the AAPI Pathways Scholarship Awardees

The Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Pathways Affinity Group has awarded 3 scholarships to youth aimed to advance their careers in ocean stewardship!

This week, we will introduce you to them. Stay tuned to learn more.



Meet Our Marine Scholarship Awardees

For Black individuals and Black led organizations pursuing passion, skills, and connection to the water.



Left to right: Latine Pathways member at Dana Point SMCA; AAPI Pathways Scholarship Awardees announcement; Black Pathways Scholarship Awardees announcement.

EDUCATION & outreach



99

Education & Outreach Programs Mapped

125

MPA Interpreter Books Distributed

16,100

Ancestral Waters Activity & Coloring Books distributed



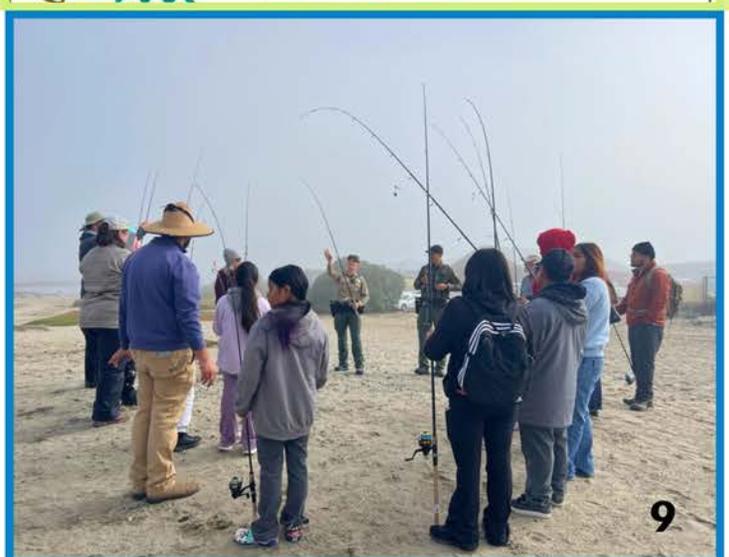
Left to right: Latine Pathways member at Dana Point SMCA during the Latine Community Pathways "Sea Level Rise & Environmental Justice" gathering; Black Community Pathways & Compton Girls Club on an environmental justice & coastal & MPA access trip at Bruce's Beach; CN Program Manager facilitating educational outreach.

LAND & SEA connections

In 2025, the Monterey MPA Collaborative, MPA CN team, and the Elkhorn Slough Foundation (ESF) collaborated to write and submit a proposal to provide **2 subsistence fishing clinics** to community members outside of the Elkhorn Slough SMR. The program served **families** from the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe, and local families who represented English, Spanish, and Mixteco speaking households. Each event included a **stewardship day** on ESF property where participants planted and stewarded **oak tree seedlings**; this provided CRCT a special opportunity to camp and conduct ceremony with their catch on their ancestral homelands.

ESF was able to provide **free fishing gear and over 70 fishing licenses** to participants to increase access and continue supporting subsistence fishing clinics in the future to families.

Special thank you to CDFW and CA State Parks who supported Day 1 of the fishing clinics with officers who provided fishing instruction and support to participants, English/Spanish translation, MPA education and support with navigating MPA regulations.



PERMITTING & policy

In 2025, we increased our **civic engagement** efforts by creating and promoting informational materials to increase public participation and access to the **MPA adaptive management process**, including hosting a paid **internship** in partnership with the CSU COAST program. Civic engagement to support a healthier ocean is the expertise of our team, hence policy and permitting is an important focal area and MPA management pillar

Your voice matters!

A go-to guide on how to make a public comment

Why should I make a public comment?

- Speak up for environmental concerns.
 - Our environment can't advocate for itself, but you can!
 - You don't need to be an expert... just be you!
 - Your perspective is valuable and brings something unique to the table.
- Help shape the future.
 - You can help shape regulations that will impact generations to come.

How do I make a public comment...

Online?

Join the queue once they announce the agenda item you'd like to speak on. If you are making a comment on something that is not an agenda item, do so during the "General Comment" period.

- If calling in, press "9"
- If on zoom, raise your hand

Click on "Meet" of the item you'd like to comment on. Click "Raise hand"

In-Person?

Speaker cards should be filled out at the beginning of the meeting. If you are making a comment on something that is not an agenda item, indicate that on your card.

Fill out your speaker card with your name and the agenda item you would like to speak on.

Here's a tip!
Make sure you are unmuted when you are speaking! Check the bottom left corner of your screen.

Remember...
Decision makers and agency staff are people too! Don't be intimidated, but remember to always be respectful. They want to hear from you!

2026 Upcoming Agency Events

Fish and Game Commission (Cont.)

- December 15 (Tribal Committee)
- December 16-17

(all meetings besides MPA Petition Reviews will be held in Sacramento and virtually)

<https://fgc.ca.gov/Meetings/2025>

Ocean Protection Council (OPC)

- March 23
- June 16
- September 30
- December 9

<https://www.opc.ca.gov/meetings/>

California Coastal Conservancy

- February 19 (Oakland)
- April 23 (South Coast)
- June 18 (Sacramento)
- September 17 (North Coast)
- December 3 (Oakland)

<https://scc.ca.gov/public-meetings/>

MPACN Civic Engagement Resources

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- Collaborate with **MPA decision-making bodies**: CA Fish and Game Commission, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the Ocean Protection Council (OPC).
- Track** pertinent policies and regulatory updates (e.g., fishing) & **share** with CN members.
- Partnering with MPA Statewide Leadership Team (**MSLT**) members.
- Inform** CN members on decision-making processes such as the current **MPA petitions** and **regulatory** process for the MPA Decadal Management Review.
- Increase awareness** of the Scientific Collecting Permits (**SCPs**) process that permits allowable take in MPAs including *some* research, monitoring, and restoration.



Left: LA MPA Collaborative meeting; Right: CSU Coast Intern at Pt Buchon SMCA for Snapshot Cal Coast.



ENFORCEMENT & compliance



Every three years, the MPA Collaborative Network provides **MPA training to enforcement officers** and **management partners** across the state. This year, we delivered 6 MPA Enforcement Trainings to allied agencies in partnership with local MPA Collaboratives, CDFW, Tribal groups, local district attorneys, National Park Service, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, CA State Parks, the Marine Mammal Center, and, including but not limited to, county and local agencies.

6 MPA TRAININGS PROVIDED TO ENFORCEMENT PARTNERS IN 2025

Key Indicator

105 MPA enforcement training attendees

3 MPA Enforcement Ride-Alongs

Participation by 12 Tribal partners

Activity / Project

Uniformed personnel and partners trained in the science of MPAs, local MPA regulations, and more.

Regional Specialists gain field experience with officers to develop insight & build relationships

We prioritize the inclusion of cultural connections in enforcement trainings with Tribes

RESEARCH & monitoring



The Marine Protected Area Collaborative Network staff has continued to **connect with students and partners** interested in similar research to **increase access and opportunities** to dive into California's MPAs statewide through various efforts:

6 MINI-ROV TRAININGS

Trident mini-ROV (remote operated vehicle) trainings occurred throughout the state and lead to new projects, research, and general observations.

4 STATEWIDE TIDEPOOL & ESTUARY WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

MPACN hosts statewide working groups for Tidepools and Estuaries. The Tidepool Working Group also created a statewide English/Spanish tidepool pocket guide for educational programming & interpretation.

35 TEX EXPLORE BEYOND THE SHORE MEETINGS

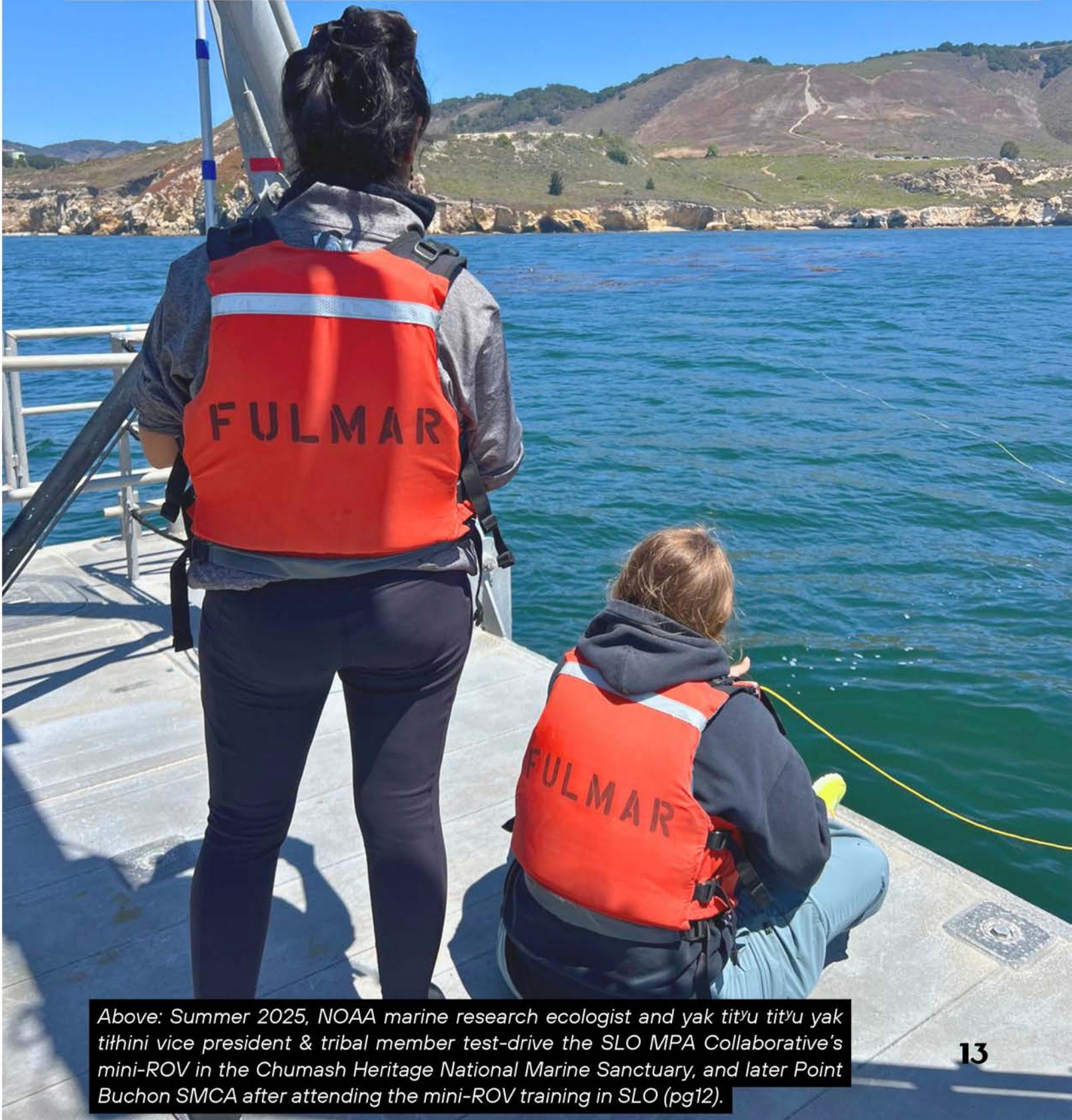
The *Thriving Earth Exchange (TEX) Explore Beyond the Shore* community science project has held a multitude of meetings to discuss data transfer procedures and associated code.



Top to bottom: MPACN Program Manager leading a mini-ROV training for the San Luis Obispo MPA Collaborative; MPACN South Coast Specialist monitoring mini-ROV tether at Orange County MPA Collaborative training; High school students exploring a touch tank at a MPACN hosted event.

OUR *FREE* UNDERWATER MINI REMOTE OPERATED VEHICLE (ROV) PROGRAM

With 28 underwater mini-ROVs across the state, each MPA Collaborative can provide free training and lend equipment to agencies, Tribal partners, and CN members to advance tech skills for MPA research and community science.



Above: Summer 2025, NOAA marine research ecologist and yak titʻu titʻu yak tithini vice president & tribal member test-drive the SLO MPA Collaborative's mini-ROV in the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, and later Point Buchon SMCA after attending the mini-ROV training in SLO (pg12).



HELP SUPPORT OUR MISSION

We are grateful for your ongoing support and collaboration!

Please **donate today** to help connect more people with California's marine protected areas (MPAs) and strengthen our impact.

Your donation will foster connections at our MPA Collaborative Meetings and support our initiatives such as climate, Pathways affinity groups, scholarships, and underwater exploration.

What your donation helps support:



Scan the QR Code with a mobile camera to donate.

Clockwise: Santa Cruz MPA Collaborative at Natural Bridges SMCA for the Solstice Sea Star Search; Youth participating in the subsistence fishing outside on Moss Landing jetty outside of Elkhorn Slough SMCA; Founder & Executive Director conducting MPA education & outreach in South Coast.


Thank
you!
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We couldn't have done it without your generous **SUPPORT.**

Thank you

to all our
donors,
partners, and
volunteers.

Join your local MPA Collaborative to get involved with local meetings, mini-ROV trainings, community science, and civic engagement opportunities for your MPAs!

 mpacollaborativenetwork@gmail.com

 www.MPAcollaborative.org

 The California Coast & 124+ MPAs



Tidepool Luncheon with the San Mateo MPA Collaborative