

Minutes

South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan Steering Committee - December 1, 2006

9:30-12:00 - 700 H Street, 7th Floor Large Conference Room

<http://www.saccounty.net/planning/habitat-conservation/overview.html>

Attendee	Affiliation
Alta Tura	Sacramento Audubon
Charlotte Mitchell	Farm Bureau
Cynthia Garcia	SOS Cranes
Dan Gifford	California Department of Fish and Game
Eva Butler	California Native Plant Society
Hal Holland	Westervelt Ecological Services
Jae Chung	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jessie Wild	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
John Hopkins	Institute for Ecological Health
Joyce Hunting	Rancho Cordova
Kathy Dadey	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mark Hanson	SBM Real Estate
Rich Radmacher	Sacramento County Planning
Rick Balazs	Sacramento County Economic Development
Stan Van Vleck	Cattlemen
Steve Norris	SRCS D
Taro Echiburu	City of Elk Grove
Tom Franzoia	Laguna Ridge South Owners Group
Vincent King	Sacramento County Planning

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by John Hopkins and introductions were made.

2. Review Chapters

Introduction Chapter - Rich Radmacher initiated a page-by-page review of the Introduction chapter. Charlotte Mitchell asked how de-listed species might be handled under the plan (Sec 1.1). Eva Butler and John Hopkins clarified that delisting a species does not necessarily change the level of protection provided under an HCP as the measures undertaken to protect the species through the HCP are necessary to prevent future re-listing. It was also offered that the Plan is largely based on take of habitat and while one species might be de-listed there are several others that will require the same type and amount of habitat. Therefore a de-listing does not translate into less preservation. They also mentioned that many of the species covered in the SSHCP are not listed but are addressed in the CEQA process and if a species is de-listed it still may garner review through CEQA. Stan Van Vleck mentioned that a table describing how a species was addressed and then covered by the HCP would be helpful. Charlotte added that species assessments for management flexibility would be important to agricultural operations due to the cyclical nature of agricultural operations. Rich R. noted that the Monitoring and Adaptive Management chapter would address these principles.

Kathy Dadey asked how the SSHCP would, “reduce the negative consequences of increased property values from non-agricultural land speculation (Sec 1.1.1).” John Hopkins replied that it would not be a direct

action of the HCP, but by placing agricultural land under conservation easement it would ensure land would be available for future generations to farm despite the increasing land values.

Under section 1.1.2 it was reiterated by multiple parties that the plan would need to be a willing seller/willing buyer plan.

Dan Gifford asked if agricultural practices would be covered through the HCP and if general plan amendments were covered (Sec 1.2.3). Rich R. noted that specific activities would be given and listed in the Covered Activities chapter of the SSHCP. He also clarified that general plan amendments within the Urban Services Boundary (USB) would be covered and those outside the USB would not be covered. Stan Van Vleck mentioned that the perception of the HCP from the agricultural community may have evolved where it is no longer seen as additional regulations, but rather a means to work through regulations. As a result, there may be interest from the agricultural community to be covered under the plan for typical agricultural operations. Rich replied that this would be a new fold to the process and would need to be discussed in greater detail and that a meeting on the subject was needed.

Jesse Wild noted that all future committees should be listed in Section 1.4.

In Section 1.5 the use of the term wetlands verses waters of the United States was clarified. It was agreed that waters of the United States was the appropriate term. In the same section, under CEQA and NEPA compliance, Dan Gifford wished to clarify that the biology put forth in the HCP would be used for the CEQA process. Joyce Hunting pointed out that it would be up to the lead agency to determine CEQA and that consideration in the HCP would not necessarily cover all biological aspects of the CEQA process. Dan G. pointed out that CEQA streamlining, from a biological standpoint, is a critical aspect of the approved HCP. Rich R. noted at this point there are still needed revisions and that cities could help propose language to ensure CEQA streamlining within their jurisdictions.

Stan Van Vleck asked how the State of California Right to Farm Legislation may be implemented differently under the HCP. Rich R. asked to defer this conversation to another date where more specifics may be addressed.

Jae Chung asked if the SSHCP would be trying for a Master Streambed Alteration Agreement. Rich R. responded that the SSHCP would pursue an Agreement and that the language was paraphrased. He requested assistance if the language needed to be revised. John Hopkins thought that this may be a time to consider a SAMP sub-group.

Jesse Wild noted that there was significant discussion on the regulatory framework for the HCP and that it perhaps warranted its own chapter.

Dan Gifford mentioned that the biological resources section would benefit from a description of how the SSHCP Study Area fit into the region and state as a whole. He noted that the Study Area has two plant species that do not occur anywhere else and that a general framework would help set the stage for the plan.

While reviewing the species list, Charlotte Mitchell asked where the science behind these species was presented. Rich R. clarified that each species is studied in an individual species account to be provided in an appendix, but the information is available now on-line. Jae Chung asked if fish would be considered for coverage. Rich R. replied that fish species were not covered as there are no fisheries in the Permit Area. At

this point, Eva Butler mentioned that the science behind this plan is better than many HCPs and that many believe it should be considered the template for structuring HCPs.

Land Use Chapter - Rich Radmacher initiated a page-by-page review of the Land Use chapter. Kathy Dadey asked how the HCP will address expansion in city jurisdictions. Rich R. clarified that expansions will be addressed in an amendment to the plan.

Rich R. mentioned that acreage figures will need to be recalculated and should be considered as approximate place holders in the tables (Sec 3.2.1). Similarly, Kathy Dadey mentioned that the Mather Field Specific Plan has been amended and Rich R. said this chapter and the entire document in general would be amended to represent current conditions prior to adoption. There was discussion as to whether the land use chapter should include a discussion on projects like “The Connector.” This was considered difficult as the final alignment of the Connector is unknown at this time. It was agreed not to include specific projects like “The Connector” in the Land Use chapter.

At this point Tom Franzonia pointed out that his group was working with SACOG and would like to partner with environmental groups to push the connector alternative south closer to the Cosumnes River floodplain such that the roadway would function similar to the Yolo Bypass.

3. Present Covered Activities and Take Analysis Chapters

Rich R. gave a broad presentation of the Covered Activities Chapter and referred to a map displaying the urban development area (UDA) and agricultural residential areas that would receive permit coverage under the SSHCP. Dan Gifford asked if projects such as pipelines that cross outside of the UDA would receive permit coverage. Rich R. responded to say that he did not know at this point. SMUD expansions and future projects were also mentioned. Rich R. said that details of the anticipated projects would be important for making those determinations. He also mentioned that it would be important to include a section describing activities which would not receive coverage. Stan Van Vleck pointed out that agricultural land is not expanding and that something needs to occur to allow necessary infrastructure such as retail facilities, processing plants or other improvements that may promote agricultural tourism.

Rich R. gave a broad presentation of the Impact Analysis Chapter. He described how GIS layers were used to clip out land by cover-type that may be impacted by future development. Eva Butler asked if the permitted take could go beyond that shown in the take table for each species. Rich R. said that take of a particular habitat will vary by species as there are regions in the UDA that may not be utilized by each species. However, the aggregate of take per species will represent the total permitted for take. Stan Van Vleck inquired how the land acquisition will function. Rich R. replied that there are several possibilities including purchasing land before impacts occur, entering into MOUs, and land delivery systems.

4. Document Review Strategy & Scheduling

Rich R. reviewed the draft document review strategy and noted that the next meeting would be held on January 11th. Stan Van Vleck and Charlotte Mitchell noted that they would appreciate more time to distribute the documents amongst their constituents as it takes time to circulate and fully represent their opinions.

5. Recap Assigned Tasks

The next SSHCP Steering Committee meeting will be held the morning of January 11th.