

Minutes

South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan Steering Committee - January 11, 2007

9:00-12:00 - 700 H Street, 6th Floor Training Room 6750

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

Attendee	Affiliation
Alta Tura	Sacramento Audubon
Bill Cody	Tim Lewis
Bill Louie	Morton & Pitalo, Inc
Charlotte Mitchell	Farm Bureau
Dan Gifford	California Department of Fish and Game
Elisha Back	Dunmore Homes
Hal Holland	Westervelt Ecological Services
Heather Ferden	SunCal
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
Mara Bresnick	Centex Homes
Mark Hanson	SBM Real Estate
Matthew Keasling	Taylor & Wiley
Mike Savino	Sierra Club
Rich Radmacher	Sacramento County Planning
Rick Balazs	Sacramento County Economic Development
Sam Miller	Lewis-Waegel
Sean Wirth	SOS Cranes
Stan Van Vleck	Cattlemen
Steve Norris	SRCS
Steve Pavich	ENTRIX
Taro Echiburu	City of Elk Grove
Vincent King	Sacramento County Planning

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Rich Radmacher and introductions were made.

2. Review Chapters

Covered Activities Chapter - Rich Radmacher initiated a page-by-page review of the Covered Activities chapter. Kathy Dadey had a question regarding the streamlining of the Section 7 consultation for the SAMP. Jesse Wild responded that the biological opinion could be done at the same time for the HCP as the SAMP. There was consideration for where development would be covered and it was explained that early in the HCP process general lines and areas were developed that are now shown as the urban development area (UDA).

John Hopkins brought up the indirect impacts of roadways and requested language to analyze additional indirect impacts. Kathy Dadey questioned why the plan wished to cover projects not identified in the respective County and City General Plans. Rich Radmacher explained that the form of development did

not matter for the SSHCP and that land within the UDA, not within a future or existing preserve, was assumed impacted despite the form of development.

Dan Gifford mentioned the issue of flooding and that the SSHCP did not cover fish species. He questioned how the SSHCP might address an intake facility. Rich clarified that the HCP could cover the physical building site of a facility, but that additional impacts to fish species would go beyond the scope of the SSHCP.

Kathy Dadey mentioned mining projects. Sam Miller engaged her in the discussion regarding mining. It was clarified that the purpose of the SSHCP would be to help facilitate mining mitigation as well as other impacts on a regional scale. It was also clarified that the plan will not outright permit the removal of creeks and Rich Radmacher said that assessing variable impacts could propose difficulties in implementing the SSHCP, but could be mentioned and considered. Stan Van Vleck clarified that there are multiple types of mining and that in some cases mining will actually result in restored land and restored habitat opportunities.

Sean Wirth brought up issues of species translocation and John Hopkins noted that translocation was not widely proposed in this plan and that the species documents would specify which species might be considered.

It was recommended that draft dates be put on the chapters and it was agreed that this was a good idea.

Steve Pavich questioned if impacts outside of the UDA were represented in the take number. Rich R. mentioned that the numbers were not included yet and that we were not sure of those impacts. It was asked how it was determined that specific projects outside of the UDA would be included. Rich R. responded that projects included in the respective general plans were included and in coordination with various master plans.

Stan Van Vleck asked if there will be a requirement to mitigate for the loss of agricultural grasslands/rangelands. Through discussion it was determined that agricultural rangeland was not discussed under agricultural impacts due to the difficulty of mapping rangelands and that they were in fact shown in the mapping as valley grasslands. Rich R. noted that specific language addressing the importance of rangelands could be included in the agricultural section.

Dan Gifford addressed the issue of covered activities within preserves. Rich R. noted that we would need to separate the maintenance of existing roadways with the creation of new ones. The new roads would need to be identified and not be included within preserves. The intent of the section was to ensure that existing infrastructure could be maintained once the preserves are established. It was clarified that future infrastructure was a separate issue and needed to be called out separately. Dan G. asked who would hold the take authority beyond preserve maintenance. It was mentioned that activities for other easements (e.g. power line easements) would already hold permits for their on going maintenance.

It was asked if the Army Corps of Engineers maintained any levees within the SSHPC study area and Kathy Dadey responded that she would check on it, but did not believe that there were any project levees in the SSHCP study area.

Covering agricultural residential development was mentioned and Rich R. noted that we will most likely remove agricultural residential development from coverage. Sean Wirth noted that if it were included, then the language would need to be revised as it is confusing.

Concern was brought up that emergency response to things such as wildfires. It was noted that emergency response should be done in an environmentally sensitive way. It was also clarified again that only mining projects within the UDA would receive coverage under the plan.

Take Analysis Chapter - Rich Radmacher initiated a page-by-page review of the Take Analysis chapter. It was asked how changes in SOI's and the County's USB would be included in the plan. The response was that future SOI and USB expansions would not be included in the plan and that they would require an amendment to the plan if they were to be included

It was requested that a graphical representation of the take estimates be include in the chapter.

Stan Van Vleck brought an issue of habitat being used by multiple species and if mitigation would vary if a parcel of land was used by multiple species. Rich R. responded that the SSHCP bases take and mitigation on a habitat level and that increased mitigation would not be necessary for areas used by multiple species. John Hopkins helped to clarify that for the purposes of applying to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for a permit, the SSHCP has to go through an analysis of impacts for each species. This is done to ensure that the USFWS can verify that the SSHCP is meeting its goals of protecting the covered species as conservation occurs.

Sean Wirth mentioned that the more species that are covered the more it cost to monitor those species. He asked if there are species that might overlap. Jesse Wild clarified that species were included in the document due to potential future listing and CEQA coverage.

Kathy Dadey mentioned the placeholder for Jurisdictional wetlands and questioned if there was a framework of information there. Rich R. replied that the permit holders would have to meet with USACE to discuss that section.

Dan G. asked why agricultural impacts were mentioned in the cumulative impacts section if they were not going to be covered under the SSHCP. Rich mentioned that the reference would be removed.

John Hopkins noted that greater mention of the indirect impacts of roads and road widening should be included and suggested reviewing the East Contra Costa plan.

The omission of rangelands under the agricultural cover-types was mentioned again. It was agreed that a bullet describing rangelands would be included. The bullet would also describe how rangelands were included in the habitat cover-types mapping.

Concern was brought up as to the consistency of numbers given in the document. Rich R. explained that the numbers required revision throughout this and many other SSHPC documents and that we would update them.

Hal Holland asked why swales were not included within the vernal pool characterization. John Hopkins explained that while swales are part of the vernal pool complex, they can be distinguished from vernal pools

and that the bio-sub group had chosen to address vernal pools separate from swales for the vernal pool account.

It was noted that the impact estimates for covered species did not address indirect impacts. Jesse Wild mentioned that the primary impact to these species was habitat loss and this section is intended to quantify that loss. There was also discussion to remove the “to be preserved” column of each species table, as this is the take analysis chapter and preservation is discussed in the conservation chapter. In general, the numbers in this table require revision and should be checked for consistency. It was also requested that a discussion of critical habitat be included in this section.

3. Document Review Strategy & Scheduling

Rich R. presented the draft document review strategy and noted that more meeting times were added. He also extended the comment period for the first five chapters until the end of January.

4. Present Assurances Chapters

Rich R. gave a broad presentation of the Assurances Chapter and asked Jesse Wild for some assistance on what would be required in the chapter. He noted that the assurance section of HCPs was currently being litigated and asked for an update on where the lawsuit stood. Jesse W. replied that we presently have an assurances chapter and what was in court had been resolved. It was explained that this chapter looked at rare potential natural and perhaps unnatural events such as a 500-yr flood and determined if the events were anticipated to occur. Should they occur, the chapter would also describe the required actions to prevent an impact to covered species. John Hopkins noted that reasonably foreseen circumstances depend on a time frame. He also noted that there has been a tendency in other HCPs to exclude events that would be expensive to deal with, which is not appropriate. He noted that in general the environmental community would like to include as much as possible in the foreseen circumstances. Rich continued the discussion and Jesse Wild explained that the chapter will establish and lay out thresholds for events that are anticipated. The chapter will also include assurances to private land owners and people neighboring a preserve.

5. Recap Assigned Tasks

John Hopkins requested that a SAMP sub-committee begin. Rich R. replied that we would send an e-mail asking for involvement and establish some dates when people may be able to meet. The next SSHCP Steering Committee meeting will be held the morning of February 8th from 9 to 10:30.