

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1	Overview.....	1
1.1.1	Benefits of the SSHCP.....	2
1.1.2	Guiding Principles	2
1.1.3	Goals	3
1.2	Plan Setting	3
1.2.1	Permit Area	3
1.2.2	Permit Holder/Permit Duration.....	4
1.2.3	Covered Activities	4
1.3	Plan Development Process	4
1.4	Plan Participants and Public Review.....	5
1.4.1	Steering Committee	5
1.4.2	Biological Subcommittee.....	5
1.4.3	Economic Subcommittee	6
1.4.4	Technical Advisory Committee.....	6
1.4.5	Science Advisors.....	6
1.4.6	Public Outreach	6
1.4.7	Local Agency Working Group	6
1.5	Regulatory Framework	7
1.5.1	Endangered Species Acts.....	7
1.5.2	Waters of the United States.....	7
1.5.3	CEQA and NEPA Compliance	7
1.5.4	Other Permits or Agreements	7
1.5.5	Federal Law and Policy.....	8
1.5.6	State Law and Policy.....	11
1.5.7	Local Law and Policy.....	16
1.6	Biological Resources.....	19
1.6.1	Habitats	19
1.6.2	Species	20
1.7	Document Organization	22

1.1 Overview

The South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP) is a regional approach to addressing issues related to urban development, habitat conservation, open space protection and agricultural protection. The SSHCP will consolidate environmental efforts to protect and enhance aquatic and upland habitats to provide ecologically viable conservation areas. It will also minimize regulatory hurdles and streamline the permitting process for projects that engage in covered activities (See Chapter 4 for definition of covered activities). Currently, individual project proponents must address regulatory agencies on an individual basis when seeking compliance with wetland and species regulations. The resulting process can be disjointed, confusing, and

potentially ineffective. Years of negotiation can result in not only costly expenses and lost time, but also a patchwork of less than desirable habitat preserves.

The SSHCP will cover 40 species of plants and wildlife including 10 that are state or federally listed as threatened or endangered. The SSHCP will be an agreement between state/federal resource agencies and Plan Participants including the County of Sacramento, City of Elk Grove, City of Galt, City of Rancho Cordova, Sacramento County Water Agency, Sacramento Regional Sanitation District and the Capital SouthEast Connector Joint Powers Authority. The agreement will allow the Plan Participants to engage in the "incidental take" of listed species and allow the County and cities the ability to extend incidental take coverage to third parties in return for conservation commitments. These commitments will be fulfilled through take avoidance and minimization measures and by using funds from a per-acre fee paid by Plan Participants and third parties to mitigate habitat impacts from covered activities or from land and easement dedications. Fees will be directed to both public and private mitigation sites that provide large-scale habitat preservation and habitat restoration opportunities. Supplementary monies will be sought from grants or other funding sources to acquire preserve lands that are required to protect covered species but are in addition to mitigation requirements.

1.1.1 Benefits of the SSHCP

The SSHCP offers a number of benefits for all interests involved from the State, Federal, and Local agencies, to landowners and the environmental, agricultural, and development communities. For the development community, there is an expedited and predictable permitting process for the federal and state Endangered Species Acts (ESA), federal Clean Water Act (CWA), and state Porter-Cologne Act, expedited CEQA compliance process, predictable mitigation costs, permit issuance and control by local jurisdictions. For the environmental community, the SSHCP will protect a broad diversity of species and habitats in a manner that provides long-term viability, conserves and enhances ecosystem functions and consolidates mitigation into a meaningful system of preserves that are located in areas of the highest quality habitat. For the agricultural community, the SSHCP provides the opportunity to voluntarily sell conservation easements. The regulatory community benefits from reduced project oversight and the likelihood that additional federal listing will be unnecessary.

In the absence of an HCP, landowners have to negotiate individually with the federal and state regulators to mitigate for habitat loss. This method has proven to be expensive, time consuming, and less than beneficial for species protection or recovery. The current process typically requires lengthy negotiations between the landowner and the resource agencies costing both parties considerable staff time and the landowner additional costs associated with carrying the property. This process has also resulted in the protection of small fragmented habitats that are difficult to manage efficiently and typically not designed to provide long-term species protection.

1.1.2 Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles

The SSHCP guiding principles are to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan through a process that:

- Involves all stakeholders in the Study Area including developers, environmentalists, agriculturists, and government agencies.
- Educates stakeholders regarding the importance of the plan, its components, and its significance to them.
- Progresses in an efficient and expeditious manner through consensus building.

1.1.3 Goals

Through the utilization of the guiding principles, the SSHCP aims to achieve the following goals:

- Ensure long-term viability to aid and enhance recovery of sensitive species in the Study Area by protecting an adequate quality and quantity of habitat in an integrated manner.
- Accommodate development in appropriate sites with fair and reasonable mitigation cost structure.
- Protect agricultural lands and operations from constraints associated with the plan's implementation.
- Gain the trust of all stakeholders in the permitting process by providing certainty that their interests will be considered in a fair and predictable process.
- Rely on voluntary participation through incentives and willing landowners that make the HCP process preferable to the existing process.
- Provide a streamlined permitting process that reduces permitting cost to developers and taxpayers.
- Provide a comprehensive framework for use in linking plant and animal conservation with local land use programs, consistent with Sacramento County General Plan goals and policies.

1.2 Plan Setting

The geographic scope of the SSHCP Study Area includes 341,335 acres within South Sacramento County and includes the Cities of Elk Grove, Galt and Rancho Cordova. The geographic boundaries of the Plan Area are defined as being bound by Highway 50 to the north, the County line with Amador and El Dorado Counties to the east, San Joaquin County to the south, and Interstate 5 to the west. The Plan Area excludes the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta portion of Sacramento County, the City of Folsom's Sphere of Influence and the community of Rancho Murrieta.

1.2.1 Permit Area

The permit area is that locale in which the SSHCP is requesting authorization from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game for incidental take of species that result from implementation of covered activities. The Permit Area has been designated as that location within the SSHCP Study Area that is also within the Sacramento County Urban Services Boundary, within the incorporated cities of Rancho Cordova, Elk Grove, Galt and Galt's Sphere of Influence. A limited amount of species take is also requested for some

infrastructure projects located outside of the permit area. These infrastructure projects are associated with road improvements, storm water conveyance and recycled water delivery.

1.2.2 Permit Holder/Permit Duration

The SSHCP implementing entity and the Plan Participants will hold an incidental take permit that is valid for a term of 50 years. The permit duration is based on the projected timeframe for build out to occur within the County's Urban Services Boundary and the current participating city's boundaries. While it is difficult if not impossible to predict trends in development beyond a 15 to 20 year timeframe, a 50 year permit is believed to be reasonable and necessary to provide sufficient time to complete the establishment of the preserve system.

It is anticipated that the following Plan Participants will hold incidental take permits: the City of Elk Grove, City of Galt, City of Rancho Cordova, County of Sacramento, Sacramento County Water Agency and Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District. Each Plan Participant will be able to permit its own activities but only the County and Cities will be able to extend incidental take coverage to third parties. The SSHCP Implementing entity will also hold an incidental take permit for restoration projects and ongoing management of preserves and can extend take coverage to Participating Special Entities (See Appendix X for definition of terms).

1.2.3 Covered Activities

Covered activities under this plan will allow for the reasonable expansion of urban areas within the USB and city limits or approved SOIs of participating jurisdictions. Activities covered within the USB in the unincorporated County or the cities of Elk Grove, Galt and Rancho Cordova include projects related to urban development and associated infrastructure that are consistent with County and City General Plans, as well as projects related to transportation, water and waste water development. A limited number of infrastructure projects related to roadway improvements, storm water conveyance and recycled water delivery located outside of the permit area will also be covered activities under this Plan. In addition, guidelines have been established to allow for activities within the SSHCP preserve system related to the management and monitoring of preserve systems and the restoration of habitat which will ultimately ensure the overall integrity of the preserve system.

1.3 Plan Development Process

The SSHCP process initially began in 1992 as a watershed study funded with monies granted from the USEPA. In 1993, the regulatory agencies proposed shifting from a watershed study to a more comprehensive approach such as a habitat conservation plan. A guidance committee was formed comprised of County staff and stakeholders that worked with a consultant to determine whether an HCP would be politically, economically and biologically feasible. Despite concerns regarding the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's direction for vernal pool protection areas and higher than originally anticipated per acre costs for purchasing and managing HCP lands, the HCP was deemed feasible and further work was conducted for possible strategies and economic analysis.

In 1995, a County Board-approved Steering Committee was created with members recruited from the guidance committee and others from outside the planning process. This committee consisted of an equal number of members representing the regulatory, agricultural, development and environmental communities, as well as County staff and Federal and State agency representatives.

The process of crafting the SSHCP began in September 1996, when the Steering Committee drafted project goals and principles to guide the development of the Plan. The Steering Committee also formed two subcommittees, biological and economic, and identified members for a Technical Advisory Committee. In February 1997, the Steering Committee recommended, and the County hired, consulting firms to assist in developing the HCP. The consultants, with direction from the four committees and the County Planning Department, were responsible for most of the research and text writing necessary for developing the HCP.

Funding during the late 1990s proved insufficient to make substantial progress. In 2001, the County reassessed the viability of the SSHCP and made major alterations to the process. It was concluded that the County would handle all aspects of project management and document preparation. Individual experts were hired to assist in the preparation of specialized documents, but it was County staff that generated the majority of the SSHCP.

In 2008 a coalition of Plan Participants was formed that included the County of Sacramento, City of Elk Grove, City of Galt, City of Rancho Cordova, Sacramento County Water Agency and Sacramento Regional Sanitation District. This coalition formed a working group to craft and review Plan documents and to assist in negotiations with resource agencies in order to expedite completion of the Plan.

1.4 Plan Participants and Public Review

1.4.1 Steering Committee

The crafting of the Plan was assisted by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the development, environmental, agricultural, landowner, and regulatory communities. While the Steering Committee was formed at the request of the Board of Supervisors, Committee members were not appointed nor did they have the authority to act on behalf of elected officials. The Committee's primary responsibility was to review work products and provide advice to consultants and government agencies who were crafting the Plan document. The Committee was scheduled to meet monthly, but was convened only when work products needed review or when discussion was needed to resolve key issues. All meetings were open to the public and were often attended by interested parties.

1.4.2 Biological Subcommittee

The Biological Subcommittee was formed to focus on review of scientifically rigorous documents that the Steering Committee felt were too technical in nature for their review. The Committee was made up of members of the Steering Committee, but frequently included experts in various

fields of the biological sciences. These meetings, as with all HCP meetings, were open to the public.

1.4.3 Economic Subcommittee

Much like the Biological Subcommittee, the Economic Subcommittee was formed to address complex economic issues and report back to the Steering Committee with their findings.

1.4.4 Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee was formed early on in the process to evaluate and establish species lists, habitat cover-types, and biological goals and objectives. The members included professional scientists from relevant disciplines and Agency representatives.

1.4.5 Science Advisors

Early on the SSHCP recognized the need for an independent scientific review of Plan documents. However, the County made the decision to utilize the scientific community in a manner that differs from “normal” Scientific Advisory Panels. Instead of hiring a group of scientists to craft a generic preserve design strategy at the onset of Plan development and provide fairly obvious, and in some cases seemingly ineffectual guidelines, the County chose to utilize local experts on a case by case basis as they were needed. This method proved to be far more useful as it enabled consultants and planners to seek answers to specific questions.

1.4.6 Public Outreach

The Plan Participants strived to ensure that the public and participating agencies were afforded every opportunity to be part of the planning process and provide comments and feedback as the Plan was developed. To ensure public participation, every meeting of the Steering Committee, Biological Subcommittee and Economic Subcommittee was open to the public and agency staff. The County maintained an e-mail list of interested individuals and posted draft materials on a SSHCP Web site. The County also held a number of outreach meetings for the public and made presentations to organizations, upon request. Additional public outreach workshops and presentations to interested organizations were conducted during the preparation of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) as required under CEQA and NEPA.

1.4.7 Local Agency Working Group

Development of the Plan was overseen by a Local Agency Working Group that included staff from the County of Sacramento, City of Elk Grove, City of Galt, City of Rancho Cordova, Sacramento County Water Agency, Sacramento Regional Sanitation District and the Capital SouthEast Connector Joint Powers Authority. The focus of this group was to guide work products and provide direction to consultants who were assisting with the preparation of the Plan. The group met monthly or as often as needed to complete work products.

1.5 Regulatory Framework

1.5.1 Endangered Species Acts

Habitat Conservation Plans are essentially Federal and State Endangered Species Act permitting documents. The SSHCP results in an incidental take permit (ITP) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for plants and animals listed under the federal act (FESA) and from the Department of Fish and Game for species listed under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). The County of Sacramento, City of Elk Grove, City of Galt, City of Rancho Cordova, Sacramento County Water Agency, Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District and Capital SouthEast Connector Joint Powers Authority will be the permittees and will in turn authorize take under discretionary projects that comply with the SSHCP requirements.

1.5.2 Waters of the United States

The Plan Partners will seek a Section 404 programmatic Permit under the Clean Water Act from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to allow filling of vernal pools and other wetlands, as well as minor impacts to stream corridors for projects permitted under the SSHCP. Generally, USACE wetland permits require individual projects to avoid impacts to the maximum extent practicable. Wetland permitting has been deemed an essential component of the SSHCP by stakeholders in the development community. General Permits, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), Letters of Permission or other instruments will be sought whereby the Corps agrees to carry out rapid permitting for projects when they abide by the conservation and mitigation strategy of the SSHCP and the Wetland and /Riparian Protection Ordinance.

1.5.3 CEQA and NEPA Compliance

Part of the permitting process is to analyze and disclose for public review the environmental impacts of the proposed actions under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Once the programmatic-level Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) has been approved, subsequent projects may rely on the biological mitigation measures provided in the programmatic document. The EIR/EIS document will analyze the environmental impacts of the USACE's issuance of the Section 404 permit, as well as the federal and state endangered species act permits.

A project that utilizes the SSHCP is still subject to and must comply with CEQA regulations. It is anticipated however, that projects utilizing the SSHCP will also be able to satisfy CEQA mitigation standards as the conservation measures identified in the Plan will be adequate to meet CEQA mitigation requirements. This virtually eliminates the need to complete significant biological sections of an EIR/EIS as SSHCP conservation measures are incorporated into the environmental document by reference. This has the potential to provide a significant cost savings to project proponents.

1.5.4 Other Permits or Agreements

The Plan Partners will also pursue programmatic permitting or agreements with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding water quality and waste discharge under Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act and the State's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. It may also seek a programmatic Stream Bed Alteration Agreement with the California Department of Fish and Game under Section 1600 of the Fish and Game Code.

1.5.5 Federal Law and Policy

1.5.5.1 The Endangered Species Act

Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) of 1973 states that any action authorized, funded or carried out by a federal agency must, in consultation of the USFWS ensure that its actions are not "likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat of such species".

If necessary, the USFWS will issue a Biological Opinion (BO), which determines whether the permit action will jeopardize the continued existence of the listed species or adversely modify its critical habitat. The BO must include reasonable and prudent alternatives that would avoid such a result.

Section 4 of the FESA directs the USFWS to designate critical habitat for each listed species as well as recovery plans. Although recovery plans provide essential information regarding the conservation needs of listed species, there is no legal requirement that plans be implemented. Section 7(a)(1) of the FESA also mandates every federal agency to "carry out programs for the conservation of listed species". The term "conservation" is defined as the "recovery of a species so that it no longer warrants federal listing".

Section 9 of the FESA prohibits any "take" of federally listed species unless approved specifically for scientific research and/or conservation actions. The FESA definition of "Take" is defined as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in such conduct". In 1982, amendments were made to FESA to authorize exceptions to the Section 9 prohibition. Section 10 allows the USFWS to issue incidental take permits (ITP) to non-federal entities such as states, counties, local governments and private landowners after the submission of an acceptable habitat conservation plan (HCP). The HCP must clearly specify "the impacts which will likely result from such taking and what steps the applicant will take to minimize and mitigate such impacts". The HCP process allows private and public economic development to proceed while promoting listed species conservation. Section 10 (a)(1)(B) describes the requirements the conservation plan must meet in order for the USFWS to issue an ITP. An ITP can be issued if an HCP meets the following conditions:

- The taking will be incidental to otherwise lawful activities.
- The applicant will, to the maximum extent practicable, minimize and mitigate the impacts of the taking.

- The applicant will ensure that adequate funding for the plan will be provided.
- The taking will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival and recovery of the species in the wild.

Mitigation measures for impacts to listed species and their associated habitat must be detailed within Habitat Conservation Plans and FESA requires that an ITP not be issued unless the USFWS determines that the authorized taking will not jeopardize the species' continued existence.

Lands in Sacramento County are subject to the same rules and regulations pertaining to endangered species as on other private lands. Specifically, actions that could result in "take" of a federally listed endangered species are subject to regulation under the Endangered Species Act. For example, changes in land use (e.g., conversion of vernal pool wetlands to urban development) that could result in the loss of habitat considered important to a federally listed endangered species may be subject to regulation under the FESA.

Through the Consultation Program, the USFWS works with private landowners and other non-Federal entities to develop Habitat Conservation Plans under Section 10 of the ESA that authorize the incidental take of listed species. The HCP process allows private economic development to proceed while promoting listed species conservation.

In Sacramento County, federally listed species include the Sacramento Orcutt Grass (*Orcuttia viscida*), Slender Orcutt Grass (*Orcuttia tenuis*), Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp (*Lepidurus packardi*), Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*), California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) and Giant Garter Snake (*Thamnophis gigas*).

The protection of federal listed species on federal lands is a priority, yet many federal listed species occur partially, extensively, or exclusively on private lands. Policies and incentives have been developed to protect private landowner's interests on private lands, while encouraging the landowners to manage their lands in a way that benefits federally listed species. The following is a list of landowner assistance policies:

- **Habitat Conservation Planning (Section 10 of the FESA)** allows non federal entities and individuals to develop land supporting listed species provided that they undertake certain conservation measures developed in conjunction with the USFWS and/or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
- **The No Surprises Policy** assures participating landowners that they will incur no additional mitigation requirements beyond those they agreed to in the Habitat Conservation Plan, except under very limited circumstances.

1.5.5.2 The Clean Water Act

The 1972 Clean Water Act (CWA) was passed by Congress to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity” of the Nation’s waters. The CWA regulates what is referred to as “navigable waters” which is defined by the CWA as “waters of the United States”. Section 404(a) of the CWA gives the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) authority to issue permits for the discharge of dredged or fill material into navigable waters at specified disposal sites. Section 404(b) requires the permits issued by USACE to be in compliance with the guidelines developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Section 404(c) authorizes the EPA to veto a permit issued by the USACE if the discharge of material “will have a unacceptable adverse effect on municipal water supplies, shellfish beds and fishery areas (including spawning and breeding areas), wildlife, or recreational areas” (33 USC 1344).

Although not specifically used within the CWA, the term “wetland” is identified for the purpose of federal regulation under section 404 of the CWA to mean “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions” (33 CFR 328.3(b); 40 CFR 230.3(e)). The Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual (Environmental Laboratory, 1987) “describes technical guidelines and methods using a multi-parameter approach to identify and delineate wetlands for the purposes of Section 404 of the CWA.”

Permits to fill wetlands (including vernal pools/wetlands) require the applicant to delineate the wetlands using the criteria of the USACE. All delineations must be verified by USACE and may or may not require a 404 permit based on the USACE determination. The presence of federally listed species in vernal pools/wetlands requires the USACE to initiate consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

1.5.5.3 Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934 (16 U.S.C. 661-667e), authorizes the Secretaries of Agriculture and Commerce to cooperate with State and Federal agencies to “protect, rear, stock, and increase the supply of game and fur-bearing animals, as well as to study the effects of domestic sewage, trade wastes, and other polluting substances on wildlife”. The Act also authorizes the preparation of plans to protect wildlife resources, the completion of wildlife surveys on public lands, and the acceptance by Federal agencies of funds or lands for related purposes provided that land donations received the consent of the state in which they are located.

Amendments enacted in 1946 require the USFWS to consult with State Fish and Wildlife agencies in cases where the “waters of any stream or other body of water are proposed or authorized, permitted or licensed to be impounded, diverted... or otherwise controlled or modified” by any agency under a Federal permit or license in order of “preventing loss of and damage to wildlife resources”.

These comments and recommendations are usually conveyed to the USACE through the USFWS responses to 404 permit applications. The USACOE is not required to implement USFWS suggestions.

1.5.5.4 Executive Order 11990

Executive Order No. 11990 was issued by President Jimmy Carter in 1977 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) in order “to avoid to the extent possible the long and short term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands and to avoid direct or indirect support of new construction in wetlands wherever there is a practicable alternative” on Federally owned properties (including those that are proposed for lease or sale to non federal parties) and on Federally funded (or sponsored) projects.

Compliance with Executive Order 11990 is provided within 404 permits and within NEPA and CEQA documents.

1.5.5.5 Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) implements various conventions and treaties between the United States, Canada, Mexico, Japan and the former Soviet Union. These treaties are designed to protect bird species that live, reproduce, or migrate within or across international borders at some point during their annual life cycle. This Act prohibits the taking, killing, or possession of migratory birds including the taking of any parts, nest, or eggs of such birds (16 USC 703). The Migratory Bird Executive Order issued by President Clinton directed all federal agencies to work in concert with the USFWS to avoid or minimize impacts on migratory birds, restore and enhance habitat, prevent or abate pollution affecting birds, and incorporate conservation of migratory birds into the planning process.

CDFG Code 3513 makes it unlawful to “take or possess any migratory non-game bird as designated in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or any part of such migratory non-game bird”.

1.5.5.6 Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

Under the Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle Protection Act, it is a violation to “take, possess, sell, purchase, barter, offer to sell, transport, export or import, at any time or in any manner, any Bald Eagle commonly known as the American Eagle, or Golden Eagle, alive or dead, or any part, nest, or egg, thereof...”. A “take” in this context is defined to include pursue, “shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest, and disturb”. Both the Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle are found within the SSHCP Study Area.

1.5.6 State Law and Policy

1.5.6.1 Williamson Act

The Williamson Act (also known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965), was passed by the California State Legislature to preserve agricultural and other open space lands. The intent of the Williamson Act is to slow the loss of prime agricultural land. Lands protected under the Williamson Act may be considered for acquisition in fee title or easement as mitigation land for federally-listed species habitat under the SSHCP.

Under the Act, cities and counties can enter into contracts with private landowners of 10 years or more for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space uses. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value. Local governments receive an annual subvention of forgone property tax revenues from the state via the Open Space Subvention Act of 1971. A more recent “Super Williamson Act” provides for longer term contracts.

Lands enrolled in the program are referred to as Agricultural Preserves. An Agricultural Preserve is an area devoted to plant and animal production for commercial purposes, and for other compatible uses. In Sacramento County, Agricultural Preserves are typically at least 100 acres in size. They can be comprised of several owners who agree to combine their land with neighboring lands to meet the 100-acre minimum, provided that all the properties are contiguous.

Proposals for establishing Agricultural Preserves are reviewed for consistency with the Sacramento County General Plan by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. To enroll in the program, a landowner or owners submit an application for consideration and a public hearing is held by the Board of Supervisors on the application. If approved, the Board of Supervisors offers the landowner(s) a Land Conservation Contract. In Sacramento County, Land Conservation Contracts are in effect for a term of twenty (20) years. (Note: The initial term is for ten years with an automatic, annual renewal at the end of the first ten (10) years. At the end of the first ten years, either party has the right to non-renew in order to prevent additional years being automatically added. Once a non-renewal notice has been filed with the Board of Supervisors, the contract will expire 10 years after the date of the last renewal. This effectively makes the contract a minimum of 20 years.)

1.5.6.2 State of California Right to Farm Legislation

The State of California passed a state statute in 1981 that declares that a farm in operation for more than three years is not to be considered a nuisance due to changed conditions (urbanization) in the area (Section 3482.5 of the California Civil Code). This legislation gives farmers the basic "Right to Farm" without the fear of lawsuits being brought by offended neighbors. The Right to Farm laws protect farmers from the nuisance laws that apply to ordinary neighbors. Specific annoyances that are not considered a legal nuisance to neighbors under the legislation include odor, noise, dust and the use of pesticides. However, the Right to Farm legislation does not give farmers complete freedom to operate. To be eligible for protection under the Act, a landowner must conduct agricultural practices in a legal and reasonable manner. In the 1980s, the Farm Bureau prepared a model Right to Farm ordinance that most counties, including Sacramento County, have adopted into their own County Right to Farm ordinances (Sacramento County Right to Farm Ordinance is described below under “Local Law and Policies”).

1.5.6.3 State of California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (State Fish & Game Code §§ 2050, et seq.) generally parallels the main provisions of the Federal Endangered Species Act and is administered by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

CESA prohibits the "taking" of state listed species except as otherwise provided in State law. Unlike its Federal counterpart, CESA applies the take prohibitions to species petitioned for listing (state candidates). Fully Protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time and no licenses or permits may be issued for their take except for collecting these species for necessary scientific research and relocation of the bird species for the protection of livestock. California "Species of Special Concern" are animals that may be eventually listed by the State.

Section 2081 of CESA states that a take of an endangered, threatened and candidate species may be authorized if it is "minimized and fully mitigated" (b)(2) and does not "jeopardize the continued existence of species" (c). Furthermore, this statute states that the "Department shall make this determination based on the best scientific and other information that is reasonably available, and shall include consideration of the species capability to survive and reproduce, and any adverse impacts in the taking on those abilities in light of (1) known population trends; (2) known threats to the species; and reasonably foreseeable impacts on the species from other related projects and activities".

Plant species found within the SSHCP that are listed by the State of California as Endangered include the Sacramento Orcutt Grass (*Orcuttia viscida*), and species listed as Threatened include the Slender Orcutt Grass (*Orcuttia tenuis*) and Boggs Lake Hedge-Hyssop (*Gratiola heterosepala*).

Bird species protected under CESA include the State Endangered American Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) and Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and State Threatened species such as Greater Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis tabida*) and Swainson's Hawk (*Butes swainsoni*).

1.5.6.4 State of California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Water Code Section 13020) mandates that "all the waters of the state shall be protected, that all activities and factors affecting the quality of water shall be regulated to attain the highest water quality within reason, and the state must be prepared to exercise its full power and jurisdiction to protect the quality of water in the state from degradation". The Porter-Cologne Act directs the State Water Resources Control Board to formulate and adopt state policies for controlling water quality and designates the State Board as the state water pollution control agency for all purposes stated in the CWA. Water Code section 13260 requires "any person discharging waste, or proposing to discharge waste, within any region that could affect the waters of the state to file a report of discharge (an application for waste discharge requirements)." (Water Code Section 13260(a)(1)). The Regional Water Quality Control Board issues a water quality permit, or a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit allowing the waste discharge, or a waiver of the waste discharge requirements.

The term “waters of the state” is defined as “any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state.” (Water Code Section 13050(e)). “Beneficial uses of the waters of the state that may be protected against quality degradation include, but are not limited to, domestic, municipal, agricultural, and industrial supply; power generation; recreation; aesthetic enjoyment; navigation; and preservation and enhancement of fish, wildlife, and other aquatic resources or preserves”(f).

Waters of the State may provide habitat for federal and/or state listed species covered under the SSHCP. The impairment of water from a discharge may be permitted under a NPDES permit or water quality certification, which may be facilitated through the HCP process.

1.5.6.5 California Fish and Game Code Sections 3511, 4700, 5050 & 5515 (Fully Protected Species)

Prior to CESA, the California Legislature identified certain species within the Fish and Game Codes that would be “fully protected” and could not be taken or possessed at any time except for purposes of scientific research or for protection of livestock. Birds covered under the SSHCP that are listed under CFGC 3511 include, American Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle, Greater Sandhill Crane, White-Shouldered Kite, and Golden Eagle. The Ringtail is the only mammal listed as fully protected (CFGC 4700) included in the SSHCP. The SSHCP does not cover any reptile, amphibian (CFGC 5050) or fish (CFGC 5515) species that are listed as fully protected.

1.5.6.6 California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503 & 3503.5 (Birds & Birds of Prey)

Birds are protected by Section 3503 of CDFG Code, which makes it unlawful to “take, possess or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird” and by Section 3503.5, which makes it unlawful to “take, possess, or destroy any birds in the order Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds of prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird”.

1.5.6.7 California Fish and Game Code Sections 1601-1607 (Streambed Alteration)

Section 1600-1607 of the California Department of Fish and Game Code regulates activities which will “divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow or the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake designated by the department in which there is at any time an existing fish or wildlife resource or from which these resources derive benefit” (CDFG Code 1601).

Streambed or Lakebed Alteration Agreements between CDFG and project proponents are required for projects which involve activities such as the re-channeling and diversion of streams, flood control projects, bank stabilization, dam construction, gravel mining and bridge and culvert crossings.

Riparian areas associated with rivers, streams and lakes are also regulated by CDFG under Sections 1600-1607. These areas often do not meet all three parameters used by the USACE to delineate wetlands, thus may not be regulated through Section 404 of the CWA.

1.5.6.8 Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA)

Plants that are not formally listed by State or Federal agencies but are listed as 1B or List 2 in the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (2001) must be addressed through CEQA as directed by the 1977 Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA). This Act gives the CDFG authority to designate native plants as rare or endangered and the authority to "preserve, protect and enhance endangered or rare plants of this State" (CDFG Code Section 1901, Chapter 10).

Plants listed as 1B are considered to be rare, threatened or endangered in California and elsewhere. List 1B plants, which inhabit vernal wetlands in the SSHCP Study Area, include Ahart's Dwarf Rush (*Juncus leiospermus* var. *ahartii*), Bogg's Lake Hedge-Hyssop (*Gratiola heterosepala*), Legenere (*Legenere limosa*) and Pincushion Navarretia (*Navarretia myersii*, ssp. *myersii*).

CNPS List 2 plants are rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but are more common elsewhere. Dwarf Downingia (*Downingia pusilla*) is the only known List 2 species which inhabits vernal pools/wetlands in the SSHCP Study Area.

1.5.6.9 AB 242 and Oak Woodland Conservation

The Oak Woodlands Conservation Act of 2001 (Assembly Bill 242) was passed by the California Legislature in 2001. This Act recognizes the importance of oak woodlands and the threats to oak woodland habitats from development, firewood harvesting, and agricultural conversions. The Act also recognizes the aesthetic values of oak woodlands to the State, the critical role of oaks on private lands, and the importance of private land stewardship. The Act further acknowledges that oak woodlands increase the monetary and ecological value of real property (McCready 2004b).

The Oak Woodlands Conservation Act establishes the Oak Woodland Conservation Program. This Program, administered by the Wildlife Conservation board (WCB), provides up to \$10 million in funding to help local jurisdictions protect and enhance their oak woodland resources. It offers landowners, conservation organizations, and cities and counties an opportunity to obtain funding for projects designed to conserve and restore California's oak woodlands. It authorizes the WCB to purchase oak woodland conservation easements and provide grants for land improvements and oak restoration efforts. While the Program is statewide in nature, it is designed to address oak woodland issues on a regional priority basis. The Legislature created the Oak Woodlands Conservation Program with the expressed intent to accomplish the following:

- Support and encourage voluntary, long-term private stewardship and conservation of California oak woodlands by offering landowners financial incentives to protect and promote biologically functional oak woodlands;

- Provide incentives to protect and encourage farming and ranching operations that are operated in a manner that protects and promotes healthy oak woodlands;
- Provide incentives for the protection of oak trees providing superior wildlife values on private land, and;
- Encourage planning that is consistent with oak woodland preservation.

The WCB is authorized to award cost-share incentive payments to private landowners who enter into long-term agreements. Such agreements will be structured to include management practices that benefit oak woodlands and promote the economic sustainability of the farming and ranching operations. The Act requires that at least 80 percent of the money be used for grants for the purchase of easements, for restoration activities, or for enhancement projects. In addition, the funds may be used for grants that provide cost-share incentive payments and long-term agreements.

The remaining 20 percent of the funds may be used for public education and outreach efforts by local governments, park and open space districts, resource conservation districts, and non-profit organizations. Within this 20 percent category, funds may also be used for grants designed to provide technical assistance and to develop and implement oak conservation elements in local general plans.

1.5.6.10 SB 1334 and Oak Woodland Conservation (oak woodland habitat)

SB 1334 requires that an environmental analysis be done to determine if a project will result in a significant impact to oak woodlands under CEQA. SB 1334 also requires County jurisdictions to adopt oak woodlands management plans and ordinances that require a discretionary permit for oak woodland conversions and set a minimum mitigation standard. This bill only applies to County jurisdictions.

1.5.7 Local Law and Policy

1.5.7.1 Sacramento County General Plan

The Sacramento County General Plan addresses the need to provide a framework for conservation of open spaces while identifying areas that will likely be developed as the Sacramento urban area expands. The open space definition used by the County is taken from the Government Code 65560, which describes open spaces for the preservation of natural resources. These include “areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species; areas required for ecological and other scientific study purposes; banks of rivers and streams, and watershed lands”.

Under the Vegetation and Wildlife section of the Conservation Element of the General Plan (1993), the goal to “preserve and enhance high-quality, self-sustaining vernal habitats” is to be accomplished through the achievement of several objectives. The main objective is to preserve vernal pools on the 4 major landforms they commonly occur on. These include old (high) terrace, young (new) terrace, mudflow pools, and drainage ways. Preserve design criteria are outlined in County Policies CO-78 through CO-82. Other objectives to preserve vernal pools in Sacramento County include: directing development around concentrated vernal pool areas, create a vernal

pool management program, coordinate with wetland regulators, and to foster community awareness.

The Sacramento County General Plan is currently under revision and will incorporate the vernal pool/wetland conservation goals and strategies set forth in this Plan.

1.5.7.2 Sacramento County Right to Farm Ordinance

Sacramento County passed its Right to Farm ordinance on July 10, 1990. This ordinance is based largely on the state Right-to-Farm template. The Right to Farm Ordinance is included in chapter 2.35 of Title 2, an addition of Title 14, Chapter 14.05 of the Sacramento Code relating to Agricultural Activities. The intent of the Sacramento County Right to Farm Ordinance, like the state Right to Farm Ordinance, is to:

“...insure that established agricultural operations that are operated in a manner that is consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards be allowed to continue.”

Land uses protected under the Right to Farm ordinance would protect the agricultural land in operation, which may be considered mitigation land for federally-listed species habitat or waters/wetlands under the SSHCP.

1.5.7.3 City of Elk Grove General Plan

The City of Elk Grove General Plan, adopted in 2003, recognizes that lands in and around Elk Grove provide habitat to many native plant and animal species as well as open space and agricultural uses. The City's Conservation and Air Quality Element provides policies and programs intended to reduce impacts to plants and animals which will result from the loss of habitat to development. While development of many areas currently used as habitat by native plants and animals is viewed as an unavoidable result of urbanization, numerous policies have been incorporated to ensure that impacts to native species are reduced or mitigated.

General Plan Policy CAQ-9 recognizes the value of vernal pools and wetlands and establishes a net loss policy for these resources. Policy CAQ-11 aims at the preservation of habitat for special-status plant and animal species and CAQ-10 specifically addresses the adoption of a habitat conservation plan for rare, threatened, or endangered species. General Plan policies CAQ17 through CAQ-24 are aimed at protecting natural drainage and stream corridors and their associated vegetation and wildlife through preservation, buffers, and design standards. Other policies aimed at protecting habitat and open space include PTO 18 which aims at the retention of natural drainage courses and SA-15 which prohibits development in the 100-year floodplain.

1.5.7.4 City of Rancho Cordova General Plan

The City of Rancho Cordova General Plan, adopted June 26, 2006, establishes the City's policy framework for the preservation of natural resources, including the biological resources that will be protected through the implementation of the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP). While policies and programs within various elements will guide the community form

and generally conserve natural resources, the General Plan provisions most relevant to the SSHCP are presented within the Natural Resources Element, with the stated purpose to “foster the preservation of Rancho Cordova’s many valuable natural resources, including wildlife, habitat, water resources, soils and mineral resources.”

The Natural Resources Element recognizes and complies with the complex and interrelated regulatory framework established to preserve resources which includes federal (NEPA, Federal ESA, Vernal Pool Recovery Act, Clean Water Act) and state (CEQA, California ESA, California Fish and Game Code) regulations.

General Plan Natural Resource Element goals that relate directly to the SSHCP include:

- Goal NR1: Protect and preserve diverse wildlife and plant habitats, including habitat for special status species.
- Goal NR.2: Preserve the City’s rich and diverse natural resources.
- Goal NR.3: Preserve and maintain creek corridors and wetland preserves with useable buffer zones throughout the new development area as feasible.

Organized within these three broad goal statements, the General Plan presents 20 individual policy statements and 18 specific actions that, in total, establish the City’s adopted strategy that will ensure the preservation of biological resources within Rancho Cordova. This regulatory framework was prepared with the goal and intent of being consistent with anticipated provisions of the SSHCP.

1.5.7.5 City of Galt General Plan

Galt’s 2030 General Plan recognizes that environmental resources contribute to the city’s economy and are important elements in the quality of life of Galt’s residents. Therefore, the General Plan seeks to balance the need for growth with the conservation and enhancement of the area’s natural resources. The City’s Conservation and Open Space Element, Land Use Element, and Public Facilities and Services Element contain many policies to protect, restore, and enhance habitats, and to preserve open space and natural resources of the Galt area. The City also recognizes the importance of the regional habitat conservation planning effort that is taking place and has included two policies (COS-2.7 and LU-1.10) committing to continue coordination efforts to develop the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan.

Galt General Plan policies COS-1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.13, 1.14 and LU-1.4 are designed to specifically protect and enhance the ecological features associated with the area’s rivers, creeks, sloughs, wetlands and floodplains. The City has also adopted a number of policies to protect important fish and wildlife habitats and plant species and to address the effects of urban development on these resources (COS-2.1 through 2.9, COS-3.1 and 3.2).

It is the City’s goal to protect natural floodways and land forms from development and to maintain open space, park, and natural areas that are interconnected and of sufficient size to protect biodiversity, accommodate wildlife movement, and provide more sustainable ecosystems as

evidenced in policies COS-4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.8, 4.9, LU-9.3, PFS-8.2, PFS-8.11, and PFS-8.12. Finally, Land Use policy LU-9.1 cites the city's specific intent to pursue creation of a permanent agriculture, open space, and wildlife habitat greenbelt between Galt and Elk Grove.

1.6 Biological Resources

1.6.1 Habitats

This section includes general descriptions of the six broad habitat groups and 18 habitat cover-types that provide habitat for SSHCP Covered Species. There are eight (8) additional mapping cover types not covered in this section, including existing roads, development, recreation/landscaped areas, existing mitigation, and other land uses. Detailed descriptions for all twenty-six cover types, are found in the Land Cover-Type Report (appendix K)

1.6.1.1 Stream and Riparian

The Stream and Riparian group includes Mine Tailing Riparian Woodlands, Mixed Riparian Scrub, Mixed Riparian Woodland, Streams and Creeks and Valley Oak Woodlands. Most streams and Creeks in the SSHCP Plan Area are Valley floor streams characterized by slow-moving water except after rain events, and often carrying substantial sediment loads as a result of land disturbances. Some reaches of tributaries in the eastern portion of the Plan Area flow over gently sloping terrain and have more of a pool and riffle structure. Mixed Riparian Woodlands, Mixed Riparian Scrub and Valley Oak Riparian Woodland are typically characterized as transitional areas adjacent to stream or creeks and an open canopy of woodlands or a layer of shrubs or both intermingled. Mine Tailing Riparian Woodland is characterized by an open canopy formed primarily by Oak and Cottonwood trees. This cover-types is distinguished by the fact that it only occurs within the slickens formed by mine tailing deposits. One species of plant and 26 animals are covered under the SSHCP, all of which require or otherwise benefit from high quality functioning riparian habitat.

1.6.1.2 Valley Grasslands

The Valley Grassland Habitat group includes Valley Grassland as the only habitat cover type. Valley grassland is characterized as an annual herbaceous plant community whose plant composition varies with climatic, geographic, and land use factors such as rainfall, temperature, elevation, slope, aspect, grazing and other herbivory (e.g. livestock, wildlife, rodent, songbird, insect use), and fire frequency and duration. The term Valley Grassland refers to a majority of the highly altered grasslands throughout the undeveloped lowlands and rolling hills of the SSHCP Plan Area. Valley Grassland also occurs as an understory within a variety of other habitat types including Valley Oak Riparian Woodland, Blue Oak Woodland and Blue Oak Savannah.

1.6.1.3 Vernal Pool

The Vernal Pool Wetland Habitat group includes Vernal Pool as the sole habitat cover type. Vernal Pools are a type of seasonal wetland habitat that is characterized by a specific set of physical parameters and a unique assemblage of highly specialized endemic plants and animals. This cover-

type is characterized by frequent inundation during the winter season followed by dry down and eventual desiccation of the soil in the summer months. Vernal Pool habitat cover-types can be distinguished from the Other Wetlands and Open Water habitat cover-types by its unique vegetation assemblages. Thirteen species of plants and animals covered in the SSHCP require vernal pool habitat.

1.6.1.4 Other Wetland and Open Water

The Other Wetland and Open Water Habitat group includes Freshwater Marsh, Open Water, Seasonal Impoundment, Seasonal Wetland, and Swale cover types. . All of these cover-types with the exception of open water share similar characteristics including being frequently inundated or have soils that remain saturated long enough to support vegetation adapted to hydric soil conditions and exclude organisms that cannot tolerate such conditions. Open Water is the exception in that this habit cover-type remains inundated year round.

1.6.1.5 Blue Oak Woodland and Blue Oak Savanna

Blue Oak Woodland and Blue Oak Savanna are the only two cover-types that are included in this group. Blue Oak Woodland is characterized by an open canopy formed primarily by blue oak with other foothill tree species mixed in. Blue Oak Woodland generally has a sparse shrub layer and well-developed Valley Grassland layer. Blue Oak Savanna is characterized by a sparse tree canopy structure that ranges from scattered solitary blue oak trees and small clusters of blue oaks, to small areas of blue oak stands. It generally has little to no shrub layer, but has a well-developed Valley Grassland layer. Blue Oak Savanna habitat is typically transitional between Valley Grassland, with or without Vernal Pools, and Blue Oak Woodland habitat.

1.6.1.6 Agricultural

The Agricultural Habitat Group includes Cropland, Irrigated Pasture-Grassland, Orchard and Vineyard cover-types. Cropland is characterized as currently being used for production of annual row and field crops (e.g., small grains, corn, tomatoes, melons, peppers); short-term perennial crops (e.g., asparagus, alfalfa), and other crops (e.g., safflower, sunflower, corn). Irrigated Pasture-Grassland is typically seeded, cut/grazed, and reseeded and is used as pasture for livestock or for hay production. Orchards are typically comprised of a single tree species densely planted in straight row configurations of same-age trees. Vineyards are lands planted with a single crop: grapes.

1.6.2 Species

The SSHCP covers the following 41 species of animals and plants:

1.6.2.1 Mammals

American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)
Pallid Bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)
Ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*)
Western Red Bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*)
Yuma Myotis Bat (*Myotis yumanensis*)

1.6.2.2 Birds

American Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*)
Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)
Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*)
Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)
Greater Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis tabida*)
Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)
Long-Eared Owl (*Asio otus*)
Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)
Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)
Sharp-Shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)
Short-Eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)
Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
Tricolored Blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*)
Western Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*)
White-Faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*)
White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*)
Yellow Breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*)

1.6.2.3 Reptiles

Giant Garter Snake (*Thamnophis gigas*)
Western Pond Turtle (northwestern and southwestern sub-species)
(*Clemmys marmorata*)

1.6.2.4 Amphibians

California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*)
Western Spadefoot Toad (*Spea hammondi*)

1.6.2.5 Invertebrates

Mid-Valley Fairy Shrimp (*Branchinecta mesovallensis*)
Ricksecker's Water Scavenger Beetle (*Hydrochara rickseckeri*)
Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (*Desmoncerus californicus dimorphus*)
Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*)
Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*)

1.6.2.6 Plants

Ahart's Dwarf Rush (*Juncu leiospermus ahartii*)
Boggs Lake Hedge-Hyssop (*Gratiola heteropepala*)
Dwarf Downingia (*Downingia pusilla*)
Legenere (*Legenere limosa*)
Pincushion Navarretia (*Navarretia myersii*)
Sacramento Orcutt Grass (*Orcuttia tenuis*)
Sanford's Arrowhead (*Sagittaria sanfordii*)
Slender Orcutt Grass (*Orcuttia tenuis*)

1.7 Document Organization

This plan and supporting information are provided in the chapters and appendices below.

Chapter 1: Introduction, provides an overview of the SSHCP, the principals and goals used to guide Plan development scope and process associated with preparing the document.

Chapter 2: Physical Resources, describes the geologic history and composition of the SSHCP Study Area, the natural resources, and associated environmental concerns.

Chapter 3: Land Use, provides an overview of existing land use conditions and examines future trends in development that could occur over the next 50 years throughout the SSHCP Study Area.

Chapter 4: Covered Activities, describes the activities for which authorization for the incidental take of SSHCP covered species is being sought through the issuance of a Federal Endangered Species Act section 10 (a)(1)(B) incidental take permit and state Endangered Species Act section 2081 (b) permit.

Chapter 5: Impacts of Take Analysis and Take Levels, assesses the impact estimates of biotic communities and covered species, and the minimization of those impacts.

Chapter 6: Conditions, describes the process for issuing Incidental Take Permits for Covered Activities under the SSHCP. It details project information and survey requirements and explains how projects are evaluated.

Chapter 7: Conservation Strategy, describes the nature of the recommended strategy, the goals and objectives, and the associated preserve acquisition, restoration and enhancement.

Chapter 8: Monitoring and Adaptive Management, describes the activities associated with compliance and effectiveness monitoring, the related reporting schedule, and adaptive management strategies.

Chapter 9: Economic Analysis, reviews the costs associated with plan implementation and the various mechanisms for funding those costs.

Chapter 10: Plan Implementation, outlines the structure, strategy and process for implementing the SSHCP.

Appendix A: Species Analysis and Conservation Strategies Documents

Appendix B: Habitat Analysis and Conservation Strategies Documents

Appendix C: Permit Applications

Appendix D: Implementation Agreement

Appendix E: Implementation Ordinance

Appendix F: Sample Conservation Easement

Appendix G: Preserve Documentation Report

Appendix H: Species and Habitat Monitoring Protocols

Appendix I: Management Plan Checklist

Appendix J: Restoration-Creation Guidelines

Appendix K: Land Cover-Type Report

Appendix L: Glossary