

1. Steering Committee Meeting #6 Notes

May 15, 2017

Multiple Species Conservation Program – North County Plan

Attendees:

PDS: Mark Wardlaw, Rami Talleh, Mary Kopaskie Brown, Peter Eichar, Crystal Benham, Chelsea Oakes, Eira Whitty, Melanie Casey, Tom Oberbauer, Claudia Anzures, Stephanie Smith

DPR: Deb Mosley, Jennifer Price

CDFW: Dave Mayer, Carol Williams

SC: Rikki Schroeder, Eric Larson, Doug Goad, Ann Van Leer, Jim Whalen, Brad Bartlett, Matt Adams

Steering Committee Member:	Question/Comment/Topic:	Response/Way Forward:	Date Action Item Anticipated for Completion:
Doug	We are approaching the MSCP from a biological standpoint, but I'm not sure we have enough information to say we have fully integrated the recreational community's perspective and needs. Don't want the North County MSCP to end up like South County MSCP, where recreational needs were not a focus during the plan development.	Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has been a co-leader on this effort and has worked to ensure the Plan does not conflict with the County's recreational efforts. The Steering Committee will receive more details on how the recreational community's needs have been addressed when we discuss the implementation documents at our next meeting and management/monitoring at our June 29th meeting. Trails are a covered activity in our Plan, however any impacts will be mitigated for to ensure the Preserve is both accessible to the public and a resource for the recreational community. As we begin discussing the implementing documents (including the Framework Resource Management Plan or FRMP), we will address your concerns.	June 7th/June 29th
Jim	Trail location is quite controversial with conservationists who are interested in making sure birds of prey continue to function, particularly the Golden Eagle.	Staff continues to work with the Wildlife Agencies on issues pertaining to the Golden Eagle, as well as trail siting criteria outlined in the draft FRMP.	No action
Rikki	It is important to keep in mind the differences between this plan and the South County MSCP. The North County doesn't have the same large parcelization we had in the South County, making it more difficult to balance conservation, recreation, and development.	Staff has worked to balance the views of conservation, recreation, and the development communities in drafting the Plan. In doing so, we have taken into account the differences in development patterns and geography between the North and South County.	No action

Steering Committee Member:	Question/Comment/Topic:	Response/Way Forward:	Date Action Item Anticipated for Completion:
Jim	Who is physically going to run the conservation analysis?	The Conservation Analysis will be run in house by County staff.	No action
Jim/Matt	The slide indicates that the overall preservation goal is 75% of the Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA). The development community is not comfortable with this percentage. We understand that this number is on the slide to demonstrate how the goal relates to the overall amount of land available, but this percentage is extremely problematic. Has been a significant issue in the South County Plan. Request that all mention of the 75% is removed from the presentations, MSCP materials, and the Plan to avoid confusion.	It is not the County's intent to create confusion by stating 75% is a targeted goal, we meant to show this as an illustration. Staff understand the sensitivity, and will remove this dot point from the slide.	Completed
Ann	How did you determine active vs. inactive agricultural lands?	To quantify active agricultural lands, staff reviewed aerial photography and County pesticide permits. Additional agriculture could exist on the ground that we can't see (including fallow lands); however we mapped as many active areas as possible.	No action
Jim	Within the 116,000 acres, we have 20,000 acres of existing agriculture. Are you precluding additional lands from becoming agriculture?	Of the 116,000 acres of PAMA, we have approximately 20,000 acres that are either existing agriculture or developed lands – the other lands in PAMA are undeveloped. We are not precluding additional lands from becoming agriculture – impacts are allowed within PAMA from any covered activity (including agriculture).	No action
Ann	If we don't achieve the future target for conservation (about 72,000 acres), do we not have a viable preserve?	Based on our current modeling, we need to conserve 102,000 acres to have a viable preserve. There are currently 30,000 acres in baseline, so we need to secure about 72,000 more acres to meet the overall preserve goal.	No action

Steering Committee Member:	Question/Comment/Topic:	Response/Way Forward:	Date Action Item Anticipated for Completion:
Jim	What are the differences between the conservation analysis from the June 2016 Draft and the current draft? We would like to see a comparison between the two. Are there weak areas of the conservation analysis?	The June 2016 Draft the Wildlife Agencies reviewed did not include a conservation analysis. The draft we are currently working on has a conservation analysis, which will be rerun with updated data this summer. Staff can provide the current analysis and the analysis that we will run later this summer for comparison when we reconvene at the end of the summer.	August/September 2017
Rikki	What happens if the covered species do not occur where they were predicted? If the Preserve is based on having and conserving a population of Species A in one location but it isn't there, how will the Preserve goals be affected?	Project mitigation is determined by completion of on-the-ground biological analyses. An applicant would not be required to mitigate for species that were predicted on-site but don't actually occur there. Staff is currently working with the Wildlife Agencies on individual species goals and objectives, which will need to be re-vetted once the conservation analysis has been rerun this summer.	August/September 2017
Jim	Because there is already a preserve in South County, and that existing preserve is connected to the future North County preserve. Can we ascertain that if a species is adequately protected in the South County, it is protected in the County as a whole?	To clarify, covered species preserved in the South County MSCP are not automatically covered and included in the North County MSCP. The Wildlife Agencies need to make their findings for each separate planning area – they will consider connectivity between existing preserves, but cannot grant take in North County simply because take authority has already been granted in another area.	August/September 2017
Doug	You mentioned that for projects, mitigation requirements are determined based upon on the ground biological analyses that are completed by applicants. How do we know these reports are accurate and unbiased?	The County provides a template for Biological Analysis documents and provides applicants with a list of vetted third-party qualified specialists for all technical areas for which we may require preparation of a technical study. County staff review submitted reports to ensure quality and content meet our standards.	No action
Ann	If you have applied certain planning tools to the South County MSCP, can you show us how they have worked cumulatively?	That information is included in the 2016 South County MSCP Annual Report, which we can provide to you.	June 7th

Steering Committee Member:	Question/Comment/Topic:	Response/Way Forward:	Date Action Item Anticipated for Completion:
Eric	I want to make sure we don't repeat the "4,500 acres" for agricultural exemption so many times that it becomes the final number without further discussion.	We will be sure to clarify in the documents that 4,500 acres was used as the agricultural exemption in the most recent conservation analysis, but that this number could potentially change.	August/September 2017
Jim	For the avoidance percentages listed on Slide 18, do these include buffer habitat? For example, riparian areas will often have farm lands planted directly up to their edge.	Additional habitat types were not included in these avoidance percentages.	No action
Rikki	How do these avoidance percentages compare to those in the South County MSCP?	The avoidance percentages are based on the existing regulations placed on these habitat types. The regulations vary somewhat from those analyzed for South County, because regulations have changed since the time that Plan was developed. Also, the South County Plan conservation analysis did not factor in avoidance percentages in the same way we have done for North County.	No action
Doug	Why aren't we avoiding 100% of the habitat? It seems like we would be eating away at the mapped Preserve Area.	Essentially, we'd be sacrificing the edges of the PAMA in order to preserve the center, connected habitat. We aren't avoiding 100% of the habitat because that would preclude development on any properties located within the PAMA, which would be a taking of property.	No action
Brad	Are the Vegetation Tier Levels and mitigation ratios defined somewhere?	The Vegetation Tier Levels and their corresponding mitigation requirements were designated based on habitat sensitivity. These were originally defined in the South County MSCP. Staff can provide copies of the Vegetation Tiers and Mitigation ratios at our next meeting.	June 7th
Matt	How often has development clustering been used since implementation of the General Plan Update?	Development clustering is often implemented by smaller projects; staff will do some research to determine how many projects have used the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance and clustered development.	June 7th

Steering Committee Member:	Question/Comment/Topic:	Response/Way Forward:	Date Action Item Anticipated for Completion:
Eric	You may also want to consider development of a PACE companion program. Farmers who receive PACE funding may have property that is un-farmable, which they may be willing to place additional easements upon.	Staff will take this into consideration as we continue to develop additional MSCP Tools to build the Preserve.	August/September 2017
Jim	We may want to explore allowing mitigation lands to be purchased in/by other jurisdictions if part of a partnership, allowing private conservation on public lands, or the creation of an in-lieu fund to allow other parties to revegetate lands.	Staff will take this into consideration as we continue to develop additional MSCP Tools to build the Preserve.	August/September 2017
Jim	For the South County MSCP, a model was used to create the Preserve but it wasn't the SITES Model?	Correct, we did not use the SITES model to create the South County MSCP Preserve. The data input used by the SITES model in the North County MSCP is, however, the same type of data input that was used to create the South County MSCP Preserve.	No action
Dave	It should be noted that Major and Minor Amendment Areas were a land classification in the South County MSCP. Though the amendment process may still be used in the North County MSCP, we are not designating specific parcels with this classification.	(Comment)	No Action.
Jim	We have not discussed funding the Preserve assembly or preserve management. For the Wildlife Agencies to make their findings, they will have to be comfortable that we can fund the creation of the Preserve.	Management, Monitoring, and Funding will be discussed on June 29th meeting. The FRMP will be discussed at our June 7th meeting when we discuss the Implementing Documents.	June 7th/June 29th
Rikki	What questions have been asked during the Small Group Meetings?	The County has received questions regarding BMO application, 75/25% conservation ratios used in South County, development of the Preserve, the number of covered species, proposed linkages, climate change and how it will be addressed in the plan, trail siting, and other various topics. We will discuss in further detail in our wrap-up meeting.	August/September 2017