

North County Plan Program EIR Virtual Scoping Meeting			
#	Question	Answer(s) Live	Answer(s) in Q&A
1	California has new fire risk maps. Do high risk zone have additional protection?	The State released new fire risk maps, and the County's fire authority will decide if they warrant changes to the fire code. Updates to the fire code or clearing policies will be communicated as necessary.	Regardless of identified fire risk zone, the MSCP does not currently preclude clearing for fire prevention and suppression as permitted by the County of San Diego Consolidated Fire Code or other related policies, including the County's Grading, Clearing, and Watercourses Ordinance (Section 87.502(b)) and Biological Mitigation Ordinance (Section 86.503 (a)(12)).
2	Research shows that larger contiguous protected zones increase biodiversity. Will land area size be considered and included?	The Priority Conservation Area is designed to connect existing open spaces and conserve larger vacant lands. Its guiding principles prioritize conservation adjacent to existing protected areas, integrating this approach into both current mitigation efforts and future conservation strategies.	
3	What will the plan do to reduce take as close to zero as possible?	The conservation strategy includes standards and avoidance and minimization measures to minimize impacts on resources in the North County Plan Area. Workshops held last year briefly covered these, and a working draft of the conservation strategy is available on the website and engagement portal.	
4	Where can the GIS from the PCA, linkages, and corridors be found. I would need this to comment.	The GIS layer and maps of linkages are currently in draft form and not publicly available. They will be released as part of the Public Draft EIR once consensus is reached among the internal team and Wildlife Agencies. At that time, the public will have the opportunity to review and comment on them.	
5	Is the current 5-acre allowance for properties that have been farmed or can anyone grade 5 acres on any type of zoned-land?	The Grading, Clearing, and Watercourses Ordinance provides a by-right clearing allowance for properties zoned for single-family homes, which applies to all such properties, not only agricultural ones.	

6	How many acres can be cleared in the PCA by right?	Without the North County Plan, there is a 5-acre by-right clearing allowance. Under the proposed North County Plan, this allowance would be reduced to 2 acres within the Priority Conservation Area, aligning with adopted South County Subarea Plan policies.	
7	Can you please go over the timeline when the Area plan acreage increased to include more of East county?	In October 2020, the County presented an assessment of the North County Plan to the Board of Supervisors and discussed whether to include Rancho Guejito, a major landowner in San Pasqual Valley. Conservation in the plan relies on willing sellers, and Rancho Guejito was not willing to conserve their land as anticipated. As a result, the Board directed the removal of Rancho Guejito from the Plan Area and sought alternatives to replace the lost habitat. In 2021, the Plan Area was expanded to the mountain-desert divide, incorporating communities previously in the East County Plan. Workshops were held in 2021, and related materials are available on the website and engagement portal.	
8	As a follow up, can you address why the covered species list remains short when the increased area now includes species that are not found in the list of 40 species now?	During the Plan Area expansion of the North County Plan, the Covered Species list was revised in collaboration with our Wildlife Agency partners and stakeholders. The focus shifted to species currently listed as threatened or endangered, or those at risk of future listing. Feedback led to the addition of 7 indicator species to reflect habitat function and ecological processes. Meanwhile, a few butterfly species were removed, as a separate habitat conservation plan (Butterflies HCP) is addressing them, aiming for coverage from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 4 butterfly species in the county.	
9	Recreation has a big impact on wildlife conservation. Will sensitive properties have more protection than others---some having no access, some with restricted?	When the County acquires land, baseline surveys are conducted to identify the resources present. Some properties remain closed to public recreation to protect sensitive species and resources. The Framework Resource Management Plan will include detailed guidelines, such as species-specific considerations and buffer areas, to determine site access and permissible activities.	

10	Are there any conflicts between your preserve and linkage areas and areas noted in the County Trails Plan?	The Community Trails Master Plan outlines conceptual trails for each community. It is not a commitment to build specific trails, as each proposed trail must undergo environmental review to assess potential impacts before implementation.	
11	Bicycles and e-bikes have a big impact on unpaved trails and quality of wildlife habitat. Will there be designated trails for "mechanized" recreation as opposed to low impact (hiking/equestrian) especially in sensitive areas?	The current e-bike policy prohibits throttle-based e-bikes with higher top speeds on County properties. Usage evaluations, guided by the Framework Resource Management Plan, consider site-specific species and resources to determine allowed activities.	
12	Are agricultural zoned areas included in the MSCP and if so will it include green house areas? Green houses cover large agricultural areas in some regions and yet they do not provide a benefit for wildlife.	Existing agricultural lands are included as "other land cover" in the North County Plan, with no requirements for current operations. Some agricultural lands are included within the Priority Conservation Area due to their potential role as wildlife corridors, but they are not subject to additional requirements. Policies within the Plan apply only to new or expanded agricultural operations, which are exempt from the Biological Mitigation Ordinance to support agriculture and align with existing South County Subarea Plan benefits. Intensive uses like greenhouses are not considered wildlife corridors and have no related policies.	
13	Where will the funds come from for land acquisition?	The preserve will be assembled using various methods, similar to the South County Subarea Plan approach. This includes County acquisitions, funded primarily by the County General Fund, supplemented by state and federal grants, and contributions from nonprofit partners. Lands purchased for conservation by nonprofits and land set aside during development will also be integrated into the preserve. Funding will come from multiple sources, with County acquisitions relying heavily on the General Fund.	

14	<p>With a climate target surpassing 1.5 C by the end of the century and near the end of the permit term for the NCMSCP, CNPS anticipates many more species being listed within the next 50 years. What is the component/mechanism of the plan for adding these species (if not covered by the Plan at the start) as they become listed under CEQA or NEPA? What about newly described species or newly found range extensions to rare species? Thank you!</p>	<p>The plan implementation chapter includes a process to amend the plan for newly listed species or speciation changes if needed. While "no surprises" rules in federal and state acts limit regulatory adjustments, the County prioritizes habitat and species protection and can evaluate changes through amendments as warranted.</p>	
15	<p>Will the NEPA process also include an NOP and Initial Study?</p>	<p>The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the lead agency for the NEPA document, while the County and consultant ESA are preparing it in coordination with them. NEPA requires a Notice of Intent (NOI), similar to CEQA's Notice of Preparation (NOP), which is expected to be released in the coming months, pending the decision of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Updates will be shared once the release date is determined.</p>	
16	<p>Where would I be able to see the list of indicator species and 40 mentioned species?</p>		<p>We have an infographic that includes all 40 Covered Species on our engagement portal:  <a href="https://engage.sandiegocounty.gov/20358/widgets/72864/documents/49530">https://engage.sandiegocounty.gov/20358/widgets/72864/documents/49530</a></p>