East County MSCP Steering Committee Meeting
County Administration Center (CAC) Room 302/303
1600 Pacific Coast Highway, San Diego, CA
May 28, 2008 1:30pm – 3:30pm

1:30 p.m. **Introductions (Bryan Woods, Steering Committee Facilitator)**

1:35 p.m. **Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**

- Steering Committee Minutes (Meeting # 3 held on March 19, 2008)
- Steering Committee Minutes (Meeting # 2 held on Feb. 6, 2008)

1:40 p.m. **Overview/Discussion of Key Issues with Steering Committee (Bryan Woods)**

1. **Farming/Working Landscapes (Kim Zuppiger)**

2. **ECMSP Preserve Design Tools / Strategies (Tom Oberbauer)**

3. **Follow Up Items (Tom Oberbauer)**

3:00 p.m. **Opportunity for Public Input (Bryan Woods)**

3:20 p.m. **Upcoming Meetings (Bryan Woods)**

Steering Committee Meeting # 5 Topic: TBD	**June 25, 2008 (Wed.)** **1:00 pm – 3:00 pm** County Admin. Center, 1600 Pacific Coast Hwy., Tower 7 (7th Floor)
Steering Committee Meeting # 6 Topic: TBD	**August 27, 2008 (Wed.)** **1:00 pm – 3:00 pm** County Admin. Center, 1600 Pacific Coast Hwy., Room 302/303 (3rd Floor)

3:25 p.m. **Closing Comments (Bryan Woods)**

Attachments:

1. Power Point Presentation (Meeting # 4 held on May 28, 2008)
2. Steering Committee Minutes (Meeting # 3 held on March 19, 2008)
3. Steering Committee Minutes (Meeting # 2 held on Feb. 6, 2008)
4. ESA Basics http://www.fws.gov/endangered/factsheets/ESA_basics.pdf
5. Planning Approach for ECMSCP Preserve Design
6. Hardline Criteria Policy and Steering Committee Comments
7. Wildfire Issue Paper

EAST COUNTY MSCP STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 4

May 28, 2008

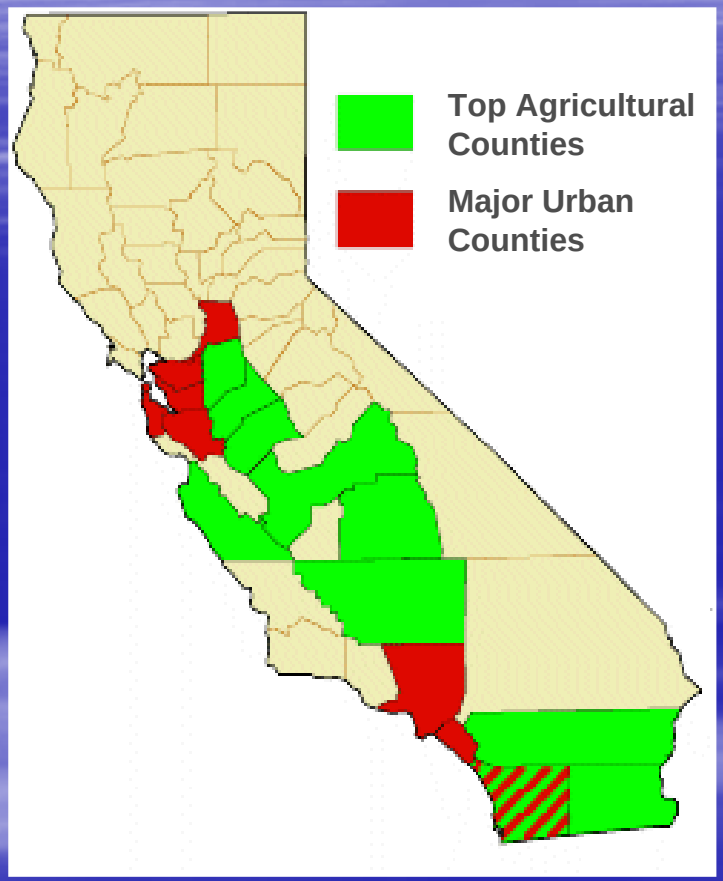
1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Room 302/303

1600 Pacific Coast Hwy

SAN DIEGO COUNTY
FARMING / WORKING LANDSCAPES

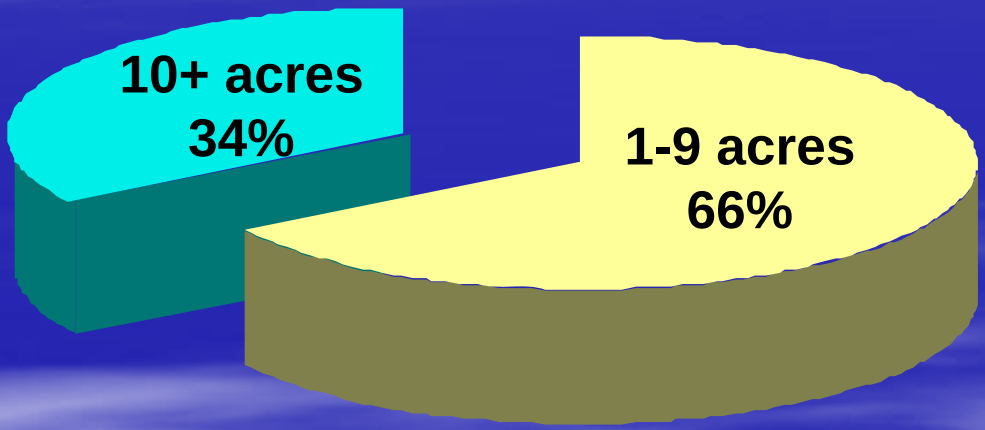
FARMING IN AN URBAN COUNTY



San Diego County is both a top agricultural and major urban county.

Source: California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit

FARM SIZE IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY



- 5,225 farms are located in the County- 2nd highest in the nation.

Source: 2002 USDA Census of Agriculture

SIGNIFICANT FARMING ECONOMY

- Value of agriculture is approximately $1.46 billion/year
- Overall economic impact of nearly $5.12 billion/year
- 5th largest component of the County's economy
- 8th largest farm economy of 58 counties in California
- 12th largest agricultural economy of the 3,075 counties in the US

Source: 2002 USDA Census of Agriculture

FARMING REVENUES

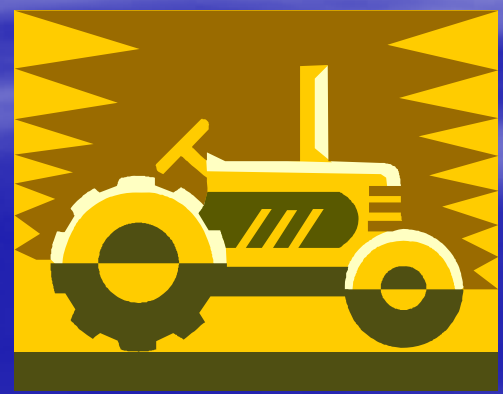
47 crops in the County have had at least $1 million in value:

- Nursery/flower crops: $990 million
- Fruit and nuts: $326 million
- Vegetable crops: $138 million
- Livestock/poultry products (primarily eggs/milk): $48 million
- Livestock and poultry: $19 million
- Field crops: $6 million
- Apiary production: $3 million

Source: 2005 Crop Statistics and Annual Report issued by AWM

MSCP GOALS FOR FARMING

- Protection from ESA for existing operations
- Maintain agricultural production
- Reduce regulatory burdens and complexity for agriculture
- Maintain crop flexibility
- Encourage conservation of farming
- Recognize habitat values of working landscapes



EXISTING REGULATIONS

- Regulation of run-off and pesticide use.
- Existing agriculture may be subject to federal and state ESA.
- Expansion of cropland farming onto natural lands may require environmental review, grading permit(s), clearing permit(s), administrative permit(s), and mitigation for impacts to habitat.
- Grazing is not subject to these regulations.

EXISTING FARMING

South County & North County (Draft)

Inside or Outside PAMA

- Automatic Take Authorization for all covered species for on-going current operations, If following Best Management Practices (BMPs)

EXPANSION OF CROPLAND FARMS

South County & North County (Draft)

Outside PAMA

- BMO allows for an exemption from requirement for agriculturally-related clearing under BMO, if land is not located in a floodplain.
- Acreage limitation on overall clearing exemption.

Inside PAMA

- Mitigate according to existing grading and clearing regulations.

CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURE TO NON-AGRICULTURAL USES

South County & North County (Draft)

Outside PAMA

- Unlikely mitigation required under MSCP
- Agricultural loss will be analyzed under CEQA (existing regulations)

Inside PAMA

- Must follow preserve design criteria
- Agricultural loss will be analyzed under CEQA (existing regulations)
- Mitigation may be required depending on biological value of lands converted.

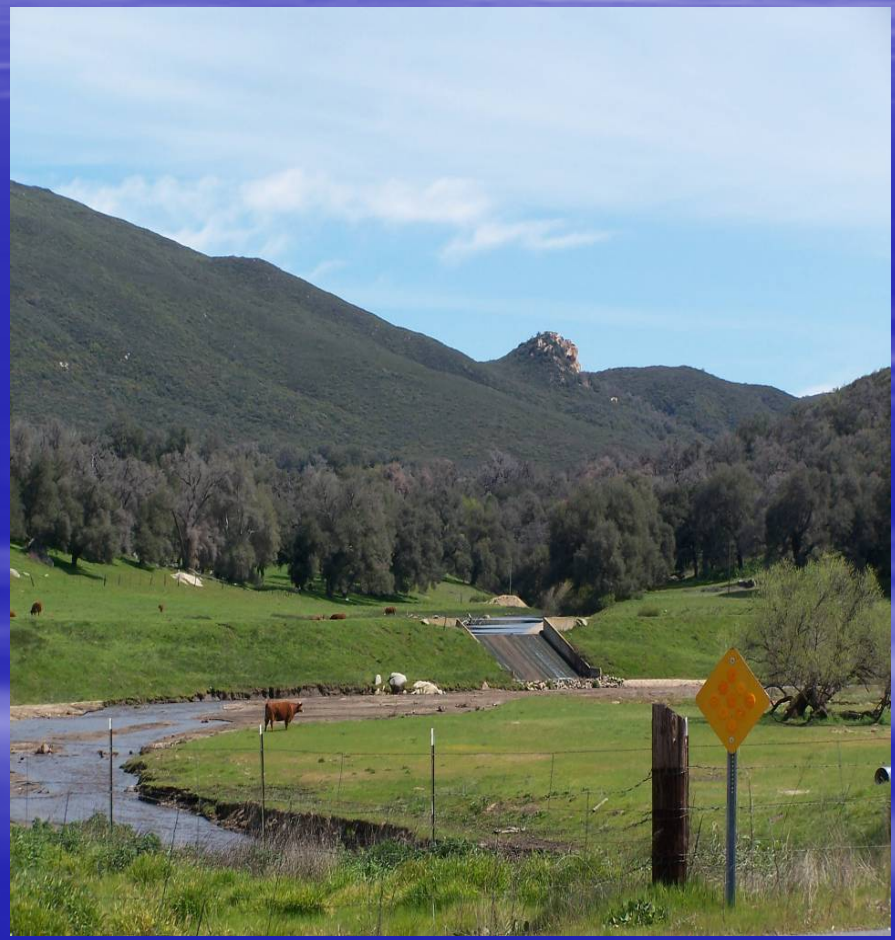
PROTECTION FROM ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

- The MSCP Plan supports incidental take of Endangered Species for on-going farming activities that follow Best Management Practices (BMPs).
- Landowners will not be penalized with additional regulatory requirements as a result of their good stewardship.
- Intended to create incentives for landowners to engage in land use and management practices that benefit sensitive plant and animal species.

FARMING WITHIN ECMSCP

The East County MSCP Area is characterized by:

- Grazing
- Citrus in the desert region
- Orchards & Vineyards
- Scattered farms producing livestock, and
- Nursery crops



OVERVIEW OF EAST COUNTY MSCP PLANNING APPROACH

OVERALL GOALS

- **Conservation**: Conserve sensitive populations and allow for wildlife connectivity.
- **Agriculture**: Provide assurances for ESA compliance associated with agricultural activities or expansion of agricultural activities.
- **Development**: Provide assurances for ESA compliance associated with development, fire clearing, etc.

EXAMPLES OF CONSERVATION TOOLS

Various tools may be utilized to achieve conservation, development, and agricultural goals within the ECMSCP Planning Area.

- **Pre-approved Mitigation Area (PAMA)**
- **Hardlines**
- **Project design criteria**
- **Species-specific policies**
- **Incentives for best management practices (BMPs)**

DEFINITIONS

- The “Study Area” means all lands in the project boundary of the East County MSCP Study Areas (i.e., private land and public lands) with the exception of Tribal lands.

- The “Planning Area” means the unincorporated lands in the project boundary of East County MSCP Areas over which the County of San Diego has land use jurisdiction (i.e., private parcels and County-owned land).

STEP 1: RESERVE SELECTION MODELING

- **Hardcoded in:** Resource Management (RMS) Categories I and II will be hardcoded in.
- **Hardcoded out**: Tribal lands will be hardcoded out.
- **Seeding:** Planning units adjacent to preserve areas in adjoining conservation plans (NCMSCP, SCMSCP, Riverside MSHCP, Coachella Valley, CBI's US/Mexico border linkages) will be given a "seeding" factor to promote their inclusion.
- **Goals:** ECMSCP Planning Area goals will include the following:
  Focal Species, Sensitive Soils, Watersheds, Linkages

STEP 2: STUDY AREA MAP

The County will develop a draft regional, landscape-level map that identifies conservation areas within the East County MSCP Study Area using factors, such as the following:

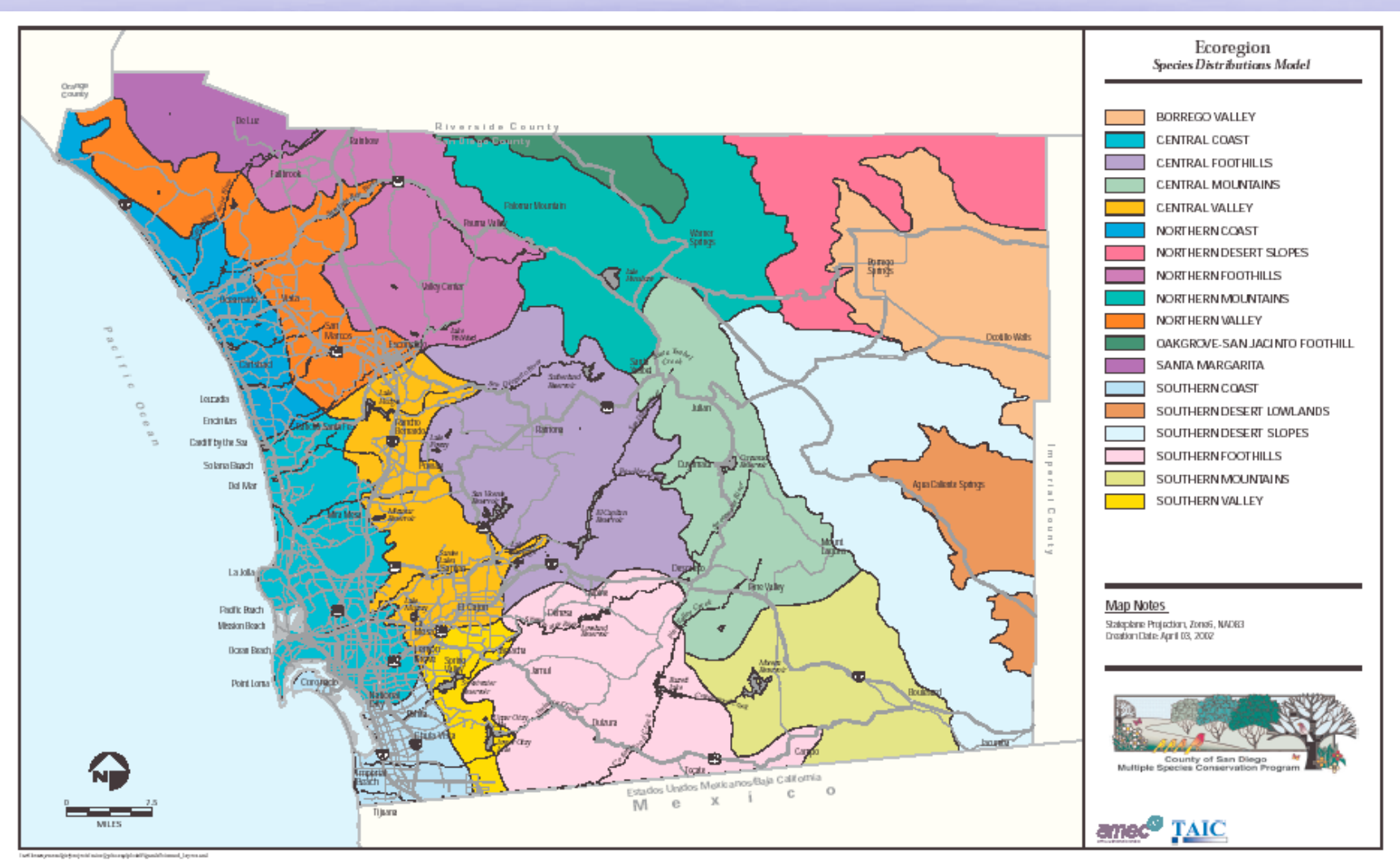
- Baseline Preserves
- Wetland/Riparian Areas
- Other Public Lands/Preserves
- Core habitat, corridor, and linkage areas
- Known species locations

STEP 3: PLANNING AREA MAP

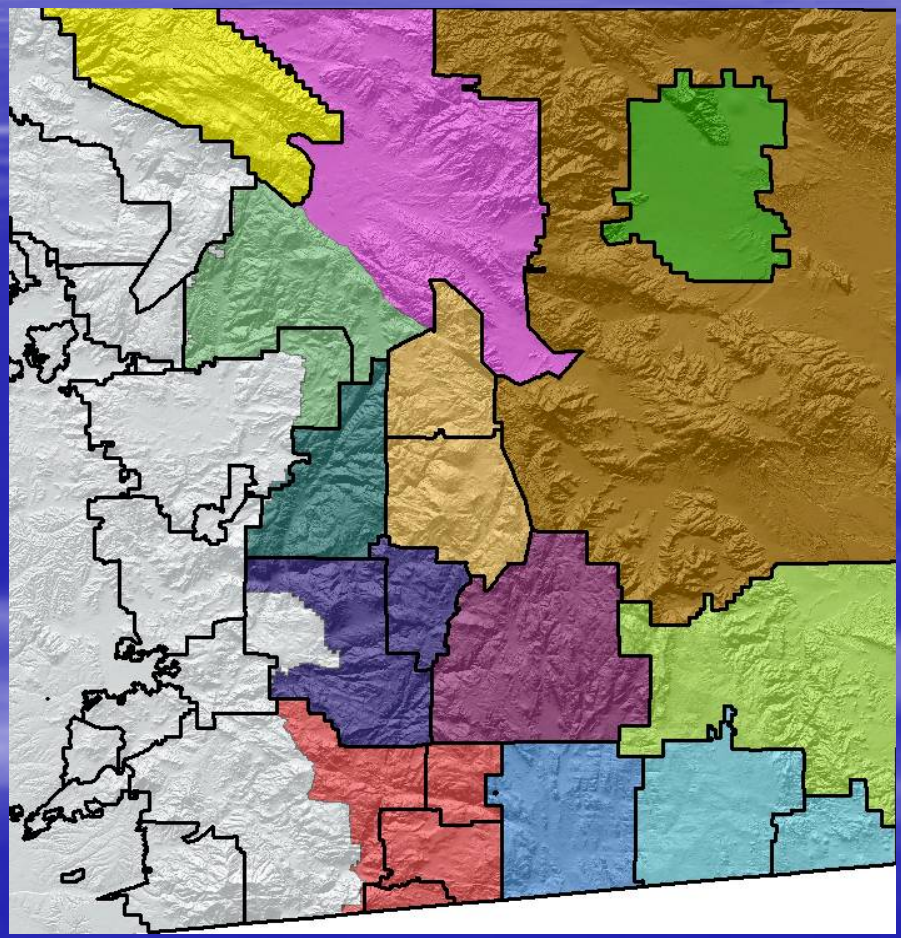
The County will develop a draft map for the Planning Area that identifies key conservation areas using factors, such as the following:

- General Plan and zoning designations
- Community plan areas
- Existing parcelization
- Topography
- Watershed boundaries
- Core habitat, corridor, and linkage areas
- Known species locations

ECO-REGIONS


Ecoregion
Species Distributions Model
BORREGO VALLEY
CENTRAL COAST
CENTRAL FOOTHILLS
CENTRAL MOUNTAINS
CENTRAL VALLEY
NORTHERN COAST
NORTHERN DESERT SLOPES
NORTHERN FOOTHILLS
NORTHERN MOUNTAINS
NORTHERN VALLEY
OAKGROVE-SAN JACINTO FOOTHILL
SANTA MARGARITA
SOUTHERN COAST
SOUTHERN DESERT LOWLANDS
SOUTHERN DESERT SLOPES
SOUTHERN FOOTHILLS
SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS
SOUTHERN VALLEY
Map Notes
Stateplane Projection, Zone6, NAD83
Creation Date: April 03, 2002
County of San Diego
Multiple Species Conservation Program
Riverside County
Imperial County
Pacific Ocean
Estados Unidos Mexicanos/Baja California
M e x i c o
Tijuana
MILES

PLANNING SEGMENTS



STEP 4: DRAFT ECSMCP MAP

- This draft map will identify areas that may be designated as PAMA and/or areas where other conservation policies or tools such as criteria or policies may be applied.

- As the planning process continues, the draft map may be modified to reflect new information regarding the ECMSP Planning Area, or new goals and policies.

NEXT MEETING

Steering Committee Meeting # 5

June 25, 2008

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Tower 7 (7th Floor)

County Administration Center

1600 Pacific Coast Hwy

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

ESA Basics

More Than 30 Years of Conserving Endangered Species

When Congress passed the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973, it recognized that our rich natural heritage is of "esthetic, ecological, educational, recreational, and scientific value to our Nation and its people." It further expressed concern that many of our nation's native plants and animals were in danger of becoming extinct.

The purpose of the ESA is to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. It is administered by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The FWS has primary responsibility for terrestrial and freshwater organisms, while the responsibilities of NMFS are mainly marine wildlife such as whales and anadromons fish such as salmon.

Under the ESA, species may be listed as either endangered or threatened. "Endangered" means a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. "Threatened" means a species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future. All species of plants and animals, except pest insects, are eligible for listing as endangered or threatened. For the purposes of the ESA, Congress defined species to include subspecies, varieties, and, for vertebrates, distinct population segments.

As of March 2008, the FWS has listed 1,925 species worldwide as endangered or threatened, of which 1,351 occur in the U.S.

How are Species Listed?

Section 4 of the ESA requires species to be listed as endangered or threatened solely on the basis of their biological status and threats to their existence. When evaluating a species for listing, the FWS considers five factors: 1) damage to, or destruction of, a species' habitat; 2) overutilization of the species for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; 3) disease or predation; 4) inadequacy of existing protection; and 5) other natural or manmade factors that affect the continued existence of the species. When one or more of these factors imperils the survival of a species, the FWS takes action to protect it. To ensure the accuracy of the data, the FWS decides all listings using sound science and peer review.

Tom MacKenzie/USFWS

Puerto Rican parrot

Candidates for Listing

The FWS also maintains a list of "candidate" species. These are species for which the FWS has enough information to warrant proposing them for listing but is precluded from doing so by higher listing priorities. While listing actions of higher priority go forward, the FWS works with States, Tribes, private landowners, private partners, and other Federal agencies to carry out conservation actions for these species to prevent further decline and possibly eliminate the need for listing.

Protection

The ESA protects endangered and threatened species and their habitats by prohibiting the "take" of listed animals and the interstate or international trade in listed plants and animals, including their parts and products, except under Federal permit. Such permits generally are available for conservation and scientific purposes.

What is "Take"?

The ESA makes it unlawful for a person to take a listed animal without a permit. Take is defined as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or attempt to engage in any such conduct." Through regulations, the term "harm" is defined as "an act which actually kills or injures wildlife. Such an act may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering." Listed plants are not protected from take, although it is illegal to collect or maliciously harm them on Federal land. Protection from commercial trade and the effects of Federal actions do apply for plants. In addtion, States may have their own laws restricting activity involving listed species.

Recovery

The law's ultimate goal is to "recover" species so they no longer need protection under the ESA. Recovery plans describe the steps needed to restore a species to ecological health. FWS biologists write and implement these plans with the assistance of species experts; other Federal, State, and local agencies; Tribes; nongovernmental organizations; academia; and other stakeholders.

Federal Activities

Section 7 of the ESA requires Federal agencies to use their legal authorities to promote the conservation purposes of the ESA and to consult with the FWS and NMFS, as appropriate, to ensure that effects of actions they authorize, fund, or carry out will not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species. During consultation the "action" agency receives a "biological opinion" or concurrence letter addressing the proposed action.

ATTACHMENT 4

In the relatively few cases in which the FWS or NMFS makes a jeopardy determination, the agency offers "reasonable and prudent alternatives" about how the proposed action could be modified to avoid jeopardy. In almost all cases solutions can be found; it is extremely rare that a project ends up being withdrawn or terminated because of jeopardy to a listed species.

The ESA also requires the designation of "critical habitat" for listed species when "prudent and determinable." Critical habitat includes geographic areas that contain the physical or biological features that are is essential to the conservation of the species and may need special management or protection. Critical habitat designations affect only Federal agency actions or federally funded or permitted activities. Federal agencies are required to avoid "destruction" or "adverse modification" of designated critical habitat.

Critical habitat may include areas that are not occupied by the species at the time of listing but are essential to its conservation. An area can be excluded from critical habitat designation if an economic analysis determines that the benefits of excluding it outweigh the benefits of including it, unless failure to designate the area as critical habitat may lead to extinction of the listed species.

The ESA provides a process for exempting development projects from the restrictions of the law if a Cabinet-level "Endangered Species Committee" decides the benefits of the project clearly outweigh the benefits of conserving a species. Since its creation in 1978, the Committee has only been convened three times to make this decision.

Working with States

Partnerships with States are critical to our efforts to conserve listed species. Section 6 of the ESA encourages States to develop and maintain conservation programs for threatened and endangered species. Federal funding is available to promote State participation. Some State laws and regulations are even more restrictive than the ESA in granting exceptions or permits.

Working with Landowners

Two-thirds of federally listed species have at least some habitat on private land. The FWS has developed an array of tools and incentives to protect the interests of private landowners while encouraging management activities that benefit listed and other at-risk species.

Habitat Conservation Plans

Section 10 of the ESA provides relief to landowners including private citizens, corporations, Tribes, States, and counties who want to develop property inhabited by listed species. Landowners can receive a permit to take such species incidental to otherwise legal activities, provided they have developed an approved habitat conservation plan (HCP). HCPs include an assessment of the likely impacts on the species from the proposed action, the steps that the permit holder will take to minimize and mitigate the impacts, and the funding available to carry out the steps.

HCPs may benefit not only landowners but also species by securing and managing important habitat.

Safe Harbor Agreements

Safe Harbor Agreements (SHAs) provide regulatory assurance for non-Federal landowners who voluntarily aid in the recovery of listed species by improving or maintaining wildlife habitat. Under SHAs, landowners manage the enrolled property and may return it to originally agreed-upon "baseline" conditions for the species and its habitat at the end of the agreement, even if this means incidentally taking the species.

Candidate Conservation Agreements

It is easier to conserve species before they need to be listed as endangered or threatened than to try to recover them when they are in danger of extinction or likely to become so. Candidate Conservation agreements (CCAs) are voluntary agreements between landowners—including Federal land management Agencies— and one or more other parties to reduce or remove threats to candidate or other at-risk species. Parties to the CCA work with the FWS to design conservation measures and monitor the effectiveness of plan implementation.

Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances

Under Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA), non-Federal landowners volunteer to work with the FWS on plans to conserve candidate and other at-risk species so that protection of the ESA is not needed. In return, landowners receive regulatory assurances that, if a species covered by the CCAA is listed, they will not be required to do anything beyond what is specified in the agreement, and they will receive an enhancement of survival permit, allowing incidental take in reference to the management activities identified in the agreement.

Conservation Banks

Conservation banks are lands that are permanently protected and managed as mitigation for the loss elsewhere of listed and other at-risk species and their habitat. Conservation banking is a free-market enterprise based on supply and demand of mitigation credits. Credits are supplied by landowners who enter into a Conservation Bank Agreement (CBA) with the FWS agreeing to protect and manage their lands for one or more species. Other landowners who need to mitigate for adverse impacts to those same species may purchase conservation bank credits to meet their mitigation requirements. Conservation banking benefits species by reducing the piecemeal approach to mitigation that often results in many small, isolated and unsustainable preserves that lose their habitat functions and values over time.

Endangered Species Grants

The ESA also implements U.S. participation in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), a 172-nation agreement designed to prevent species from becoming endangered or extinct due to international trade. Except as allowed by permit, CITES prohibits importing or exporting species listed on its three appendices. A species may require a permit under the ESA, CITES, or both.

International Species

The ESA also implements U.S. participation in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), a 169-nation agreement designed to prevent species from becoming endangered or extinct due to international trade. The law prohibits trade in ESA-listed species except under CITES permits.

For More Information

For more information, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the address below, or visit *http://www.fws.gov/endangered/*.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Endangered Species Program
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420
Arlington, VA 22203
703-358-2171
http://www.fws.gov/endangered/
April 2008

PLANNING APPROACH FOR EAST COUNTY MSCP PRESERVE DESIGN

The East County MSCP Planning Area (Planning Area) is defined as the areas where the East County MSCP policies will be applied and "Incidental Take" will be authorized. This area includes the privately owned, and county owned lands to the east of the North County and South County MSCP Plans that are interspersed with state and federally owned lands. The Planning Area is biologically diverse, and includes numerous desert and forest communities. Additionally, the current and proposed land uses throughout the Planning Area are diverse.

Several aspects of the East County MSCP planning context warrant additional analysis of the specific conservation tools to be utilized for this plan. The following elements differentiate this effort from the North and South County MSCP plans:

1) The dominance of public lands with conservation value;
2) Significantly lower development potential within the Planning Area; and
3) The presence of large parcels of undeveloped land and working landscapes unlikely to change their use within the planning horizon.

Based on these distinguishing features, the East County MSCP presents an opportunity for the development of an alternative approach to conservation that may combine elements of criteria and policy-based conservation tools in conjunction with, or as an alternative to, the PAMA approach.

The MSCP team is currently examining a range of alternative approaches to achieving conservation for sensitive species and section 10(a) Take Authorization in the East County MSCP Planning Area. Input from the East County MSCP Steering Committee is being solicited to assist in this effort. The exploration of creative, yet practical tools for conservation will be guided by information regarding species needs and ability to achieve development and agricultural goals.

STEP 1 – RESERVE SELECTION MODELING

The initial step in this process is to identify species needs within the Planning Area. The primary tool that will be utilized to identify areas that are the most important for meeting species and conservation needs in the Planning Area is the Reserve Selection Algorithm (RSA) modeling program. Though the output will not necessarily be used to create a PAMA as in the North County MSCP, the information derived from this model will assist in the identification of key conservation areas for the East County MSCP.

The RSA is a computerized modeling program used to identify the most efficient preserve design that will meet pre-defined conservation goals. The RSA was utilized as an initial tool to develop the soft-line preserve system known as the Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA) for the North County MSCP. The following provides an overview of the planning approach and the steps involved in the preserve design process.

A "rough-cut" model of the key conservation areas was prepared for the second East County MSCP Workshop that was held with the Independent Science Advisors Workshop, key components that were recommended and will be implemented as part of the MARXAN Reserve Selection Algorithm (RSA) modeling process are as follows:

1.1 Hardcoded In: Lands identified during the Gap Analysis as Resource Management Status (RMS) Class I and II will be hardcoded in.

1.2 **Hardcoded Out**: Tribal lands will be hardcoded out.

1.3 **Seeding:** Planning units adjacent to preserve areas in adjoining conservation plans (North County MSCP, South County MSCP, Riverside MSHCP, Coachella Valley, CBI US Border linkages) will be given a "seeding" factor to promote their inclusion.

1.4 **Goals:** Goals will be defined within the East County MSCP "Planning Area" for the following:

- Focal Species
- Sensitive Soils
- Watersheds
- Linkages - linkages from South Coast Wildlands Linkage Design

STEP 2: GIS PROCESS TO CREATE DRAFT STUDY AREA MAP(S)

The East County MSCP Plan Study Area covers 1,551,600 acres and is bounded on the west by Ramona and the State Park areas of Descanso and Palomar Mountain, on the north by Riverside County, and on the east predominantly by Imperial County, and the south by Mexico.

The "Study Area" means all lands in the East County MSCP project boundary (i.e., private land and public lands) with the exception of Tribal lands. Although tribal lands are located within the East County Plan Study Area, tribal lands are not included in the conservation analysis and are not included as potential preserves, however, Tribes may participate on a voluntary basis. The County's plan for the unincorporated area will be a stand-alone plan and the tribal lands will not be relied upon for conserving and gaining coverage from the Wildlife Agencies for rare and endangered species.

The diverse habitats in the Study Area represent a broad suite of species that must be considered during the conservation planning process. The County will prepare a draft map that identifies conservation areas for the entire East County MSCP Study Area using the following factors:

2.1 **Baseline Preserves** – The lands mapped as Resource Management Class I and II status will be considered conserved.

2.2 **Wetland/Riparian Areas** – All wetland/riparian areas will be included as inputs to the model.

2.3 **Other Public Lands Preserve** – Approximately 73% of the East County Study Area consists of land owned by other Public Agencies with separate and use plans. Although, the County does not have jurisdiction authority over public lands within the East County Study area, basic assumptions regarding levels of conservation can be made for public land is managed as open space and allows multiple species to complete a portion of their life cycle (e.g. reproduction, growth, feeding, movement/ migration). In situations where the key conservation areas intersect with other public lands, the policy of the County will coordinate planning efforts with these public agencies to determine where and how conservation strategies will be able to complement one another to maintain open space connectivity and linkages across these lands.

2.4 **Pre-Approved Mitigation Areas (PAMA)** – The County has jurisdictional authority of the Planning Area and will focus efforts of preserve assembly through open space acquisitions and incentives for open space mitigation to be directed to within the PAMA areas. If this tool is utilized, the conservation level for PAMA in the East County MSCP will need to be determined as the planning approach is further refined.

2.5 **Hardline/Take Authorized Areas** – The County has developed a Hardline Criteria Policy for the East County MSCP Plan and any hardline/take authorized areas in the East County MSCP Planning area will be based on negotiations with property owners and the wildlife agencies.

STEP 3 – GIS PROCESS TO CREATE DRAFT PLANNING AREA MAP(S)

The "Planning Area" means the unincorporated lands in the project boundary of the East County MSCP Areas over which the County of San Diego has land use jurisdiction (i.e., private parcels and County-owned land). The Planning Area is approximately 27% (418,930 acres) of the entire Study Area.

The County will prepare a draft map(s) that identifies key conservation areas for the East County MSCP Planning Area. Since it is not obvious exactly where the boundaries of key conservation areas should be located, these boundaries will be adjusted as appropriate. The factors that will be considered are as follows:

3.1 **General Plan** –General Plan designations, zoning/land uses, community plan areas, and existing parcelization will be considered.

3.2 **Topography/Watershed Boundaries** – Watersheds will be considered, because individual watersheds may have unique goals. The conservation areas boundaries will be compared with topography and watershed boundaries to identify opportunities to (1) protect intact watersheds, (2) better maintain ridgelines and drainages, and (3) ensure hydrologic processes are protected through enhanced riparian/wetland buffers.

3.3 **Habitat Linkages and Connections** – The distribution of different habitats will be considered, as different habitats may have unique goals and policies. The modeling results will both address and include linkages at a regional scale.

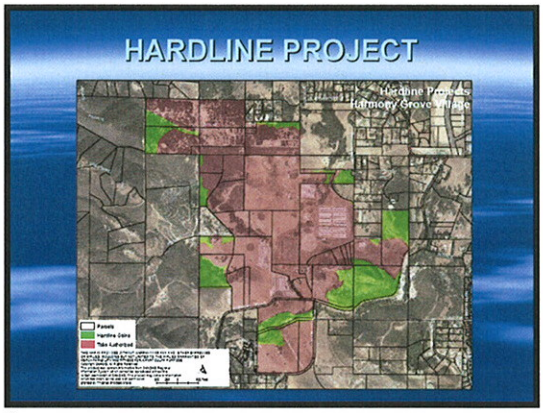
3.4 **Known species locations** – The biological function of different areas will be considered (e.g., migration corridors, core biological areas), because conservation goals may be unique within these areas.

STEP 4 – CONSERVATION TOOLS FOR EAST COUNTY MSCP PRESERVE DESIGN MAP

This draft map will identify areas to be designated as PAMA and/or areas where other conservation policies or tools such as criteria or policies may be applied. As the planning process continues, the map boundaries may be modified to reflect new information regarding the Planning Area, or new goals and policies. There are numerous tools available. Within each segment, the appropriate tools will be utilized to achieve conservation, development, and agricultural goals.

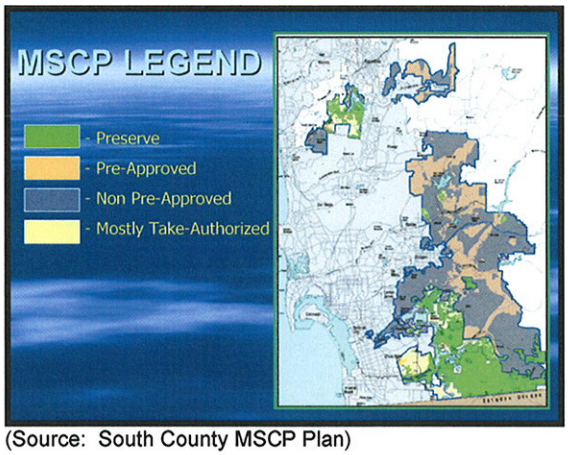
- Pre-approved Mitigation Area (PAMA)
- Hardlines
- Project design criteria
- Species-specific policies

A Hardline project is defined as follows: A project included in the MSCP Plan, or amended thereunto, for which specific development (Take-Authorized) and preserve boundaries, as well as conditions for Take Authorization, to potentially be included and analyzed under this Plan. Conservation and impact areas will need to be determined as part of East County MSCP Planning process.



(Source: Draft North County MSCP Plan - Harmony Grove Village)

Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA) is defined as follows: Lands within the boundaries of the Pre-approved Mitigation Area for the East County MSCP Plan. Conservation efforts will be focused within the PAMA during the implementation of this Plan.



(Source: South County MSCP Plan)

Overall, the planning approach being used for East County is similar to that used for development of the Draft North County MSCP Plan. This strategy involves computer-aided conservation modeling of species distribution, habitat, and preserve design as well as extensive collaboration with specialists and stakeholders.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO • DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND USE

DATE: October 16, 2007

TO: MSCP Staff
MSCP Stakeholders

FROM: Eric Gibson, Interim Director

RE: CRITERIA FOR HARD-LINE CONSIDERATION FOR THE EAST COUNTY MSCP

As we initiate the habitat preserve mapping and modeling phase of the East County MSCP, criteria must be established to determine when a development proposal will be considered a "Hard-Lined Development Project." By definition, a Hard-lined Development Project is a project for which the boundaries of the proposed Biological Open Space and the proposed Development Area have been identified and incorporated into a Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Plan. Under the MSCP plan, the Biological Open Space is shown as Gains and the Development Area is shown as Take Authorized Area. Upon approval of the MSCP plan, Take of Covered Species Subject to Incidental Take will be authorized within the Take Authorized Area and Adaptive Management will be required within the Biological Open Space.

A Hard-Lined Development Project does not confer any development rights or project approvals; it is only used to assess the functionality of the proposed East County MSCP preserve area assuming certain conceptual development impact areas that are proposed within that preserve area. In order to be considered a hard-line in the East County MSCP, a development project must comply with the following criteria.

I. An active discretionary permit application is on file with DPLU; and,

II. A biological technical report has been prepared by the applicant and accepted as complete by the County by no later than December 19, 2008; and,

III. The proposed habitat preserve hard-line has been accepted in concept by DPLU and the Wildlife Agencies as being consistent with draft conservation policies or providing conservation of resources that might otherwise not be conserved by no later than February 27, 2009; and,

IV. The environmental analysis (CEQA) has gone out for public review, the project is scheduled for public hearing, or the project has received tentative approval from the decision-making authority by no later than July 22, 2009.

If a proposed project meets the criterion listed above, the property owner must be informed of the following via a letter from the County.

- The East County MSCP map and plan text will be submitted to the Wildlife Agencies as a draft proposal by the County. If the Wildlife Agencies raise legitimate concerns regarding the effect of the Hard-Lined Development Project on the East County MSCP, the project will be removed from the MSCP plan and revert to the designation of Pre-Approved Mitigation Area.

ATTACHMENT 6

- The project hardlines are specific to the proposed discretionary permit application. If the development project is denied or expires for any reason, the agreed upon hardlines will revert to the designation of Pre-Approved Mitigation Area.

- It is important to note that DPLU's acceptance of this project as a Hard-Lined Development Project only pertains to take authorizations that are anticipated under the East County MSCP and should not be construed as a preliminary approval of the proposed project.

- The decision to include the project as a Hard-Lined Development Project does not endorse or guarantee future approvals of the proposed project through the regulatory process, nor does it pre-suppose or assure land uses within these areas will be approved.

- The proposed development project must comply with all applicable County ordinances and analyze a full range of alternatives under CEQA. Any significant modifications to the project design that occur after the East County plan is adopted will likely require that you process an amendment to the MSCP plan.

If you should have any questions, please contact Jeff Murphy, Interim Deputy Director at (858) 694-3765 or Tom Oberbauer, Chief MSCP, at (858) 694-3701.

Alliance for Habitat Conservation Comments
Strike-out/Underline
Criteria for Hard-line Consideration for the East County MSCP

"As we initiate the habitat preserve mapping and the modeling phase of the East County MSCP, criteria must be established to determine when a development proposal will be considered a "Hard-Lined Development Project." By definition, a Hard-Lined Development Project is a project for which the boundaries of the proposed Biological Open Space and the proposed Development Area have been identified and incorporated into a Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Plan. Under the MSCP plan, the Biological Open Space is shown as Gains and the Development Area is shown as Take Authorized Area. Upon approval of the MSCP plan, Take of Covered Species Subject to Incidental Take will be authorized within the Take Authorized Area and Adaptive Management will be required within the Biological Open Space.

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If a proposed project meets the ~~criterion~~ criteria above, the property owner must be informed of the following via a letter from the County.

- The East County MSCP map and plan text will be submitted to the Wildlife Agencies as a draft proposal by the County. ~~If the Wildlife Agencies raise legitimate concerns regarding the effect of the Hard-Lines Development Project on the East County MSCP, the project will be removed from the MSCP plan and revert to the designation of Pre-Approved Mitigation Area.~~

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- ~~The~~ Any proposed development project base on these hardlines must comply with all applicable County ordinances and analyze a full range of alternatives under CEQA. Any significant modifications, consistent with the terms of the MSCP and the resulting implementing agreement, to the project design that occur after the East County plan is adopted ~~will likely~~ may require that you process an amendment to the MSCP plan."

EAST COUNTY MSCP PLAN
WILDFIRE ISSUE PAPER

Fire is an essential component of San Diego County's Mediterranean ecosystems. Unmanaged fires in wildlands pose a threat to human life and property. Catastrophic wind driven fires may also threaten animal and plant species, habitats, water supplies, public works, and recreational amenities. This report provides background information on wildfire issues applicable to the development of the East County MSCP (ECMSCP) Plan. The key issues include, but are not limited to, restoring fire to its natural place in the ecosystem as one of the tools in managing wildfire risk.

Wildland Fire Overview

Fires have been an integral part of shaping the local environment in the San Diego County for over 12,000 years. Prior to human occupation, lightning was responsible for starting fires. These fires burned primarily during the summer monsoon season and were limited when they encountered fire resistant young vegetation.

In the past, Native Americans used fire for many reasons including improving wildflower crop yields, improving acorn production, driving game, controlling insects and other pests, fireproofing campsites, and creating areas of resprouting young vegetation to attract game. Journals of early European explorers are filled with descriptions of open forests and fields of wildflowers. However, the annual Native American burning of fields to improve the next year's crops was interpreted by the Spanish as wanton destruction of feed for horses and cattle. In 1793, the governor of Alta and Baja California issued a proclamation prohibiting the burning of lands and directing the public to suppress all fires.

With the inclusion of California into the United States, the policy of fire exclusion for the protection of life and property was continued and reinforced. Over the last century, there has been a greater emphasis on wildfire prevention, suppression, and improvement of firefighting methods. Although these programs attempt to control wildfires for protection of human life and property, wildfires continue to shape the landscape. The fire regime has shifted from one of frequent small (1,000-5,000 acres) summertime fires to infrequent large fires occurring in the fall under Santa Ana wind conditions. The fires of 2003 and 2007 are recent examples, but similar large fires also occurred in 1928, 1944, 1956, 1967, and 1970.

Simultaneously, the effects of fire suppression to the ecosystem become more apparent. Cuyamaca Rancho State Park is in serious jeopardy of becoming a chaparral and oak woodland since the Cedar fire destroyed over 90% of the pines, cedars, and firs in this area. Without seed trees, conifers will need to be planted and chaparral controlled. Old growth sugar pines on Middle Peak, some over 800 years old, where killed in the recent wildfires and no seedlings have yet been observed.

In East County forest ecosystems, periodic fire clears weaker trees, forest litter, and brush from the forest floor with low intensity flames, preventing more destructive, larger future fires. Under optimum conditions, low intensity fire generally remains on the

ground, burning grasses and vegetation and causing little damage to trees. Fire also kills diseases and insects that harm trees. Some species are fire-dependent, requiring fire for regeneration. Occasional small crown fires can be beneficial, as they create openings on forest floors, allowing seedlings to prosper.

Under moderate weather and fuel conditions, fire promotes vegetation and wildlife diversity, releases nutrients to soil, creates structural diversity, provides new wildlife habitats, and eliminates heavy dead fuels that may lead to larger-scale fire events. Small mosaic burns provide ecotones or transition areas with high levels of biodiversity. Fire in grasslands maintains openness by limiting brush and tree encroachment and recycles nutrients back to the land. In addition, springtime fires can encourage wildflowers and limit non-native European annual grasses. In general, it is expected that some vegetation will burn each year, although the fire return interval for chaparral averages roughly 50 years.

Wildfire as a Threat

Fire season typically lasts from May to mid-December in San Diego County, but can persist into the winter months during dry years. Under the natural fire regime, most fires burned during the summer months with moderate weather conditions. Daily wildfire risk is correlated to weather conditions, such as high temperature, low humidity, and high wind velocity. Santa Ana winds are the major weather-related factor that increases the threat of wildfire, although high pressure generated heat waves in the summer have been a significant factor in many major fires. Topography also greatly influences fire spread and intensity. Wildfire spreads faster uphill as convective heat rises, preheating and drying vegetation ahead. The direction a slope faces determines vegetation type and moisture content, with south-facing slopes drier and supporting lighter vegetation than north-facing slopes. Canyons and saddles also funnel winds, increasing wind speed and fire spread.

The age of vegetation determines how susceptible it is to fire. Young chamise chaparral stands have actively growing leaves and space between plants. As they mature, their canopies merge and some branches die. Over time, more dead material is added to the stand, increasing its flammability. Fires in chaparral less than 20 years of age are rare. Fires in older chaparral are very resistant to control. For fires over 10,000 acres in San Diego County, the average vegetation age at the area of origin is 60 years. Conversely, fires have started under extreme weather conditions in four year old chaparral with only limited spread.

Maintaining a patchwork of different aged vegetation areas by integrating mechanical clearing, biological clearing, and prescribed burning can limit wildfire size and intensity, while improving biodiversity.

East County MSCP Study Area

In the ECMSCP region factors such as existing communities in the wildland urban interface (WUI), diversified responsibility for vegetation management and fire protection, and presence of dead, dying, and diseased trees create a challenging environment in

which to manage wildfire risk. In addition, approximately 73% of the 1.6 million acre Study Area is publicly owned and managed, with private land adjacent to or imbedded within this matrix. Large portions of land are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Forest Service (USFS), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), California State Parks(State Parks), City of San Diego, County of San Diego , and Indian tribes. Land management, including fuel modification, may be conducted by local, state, and federal agencies, tribes, and private landowners. Wildland fire suppression in the Study Area is the responsibility of the USFS on forest lands (e.g., Cleveland National Forest), USFWS on federal preserve lands, and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) on private, BLM, and tribal lands.

Role of Fire in Preserve Management

The overall approach to conservation for the ECMSCP may vary depending on wildfire management factors in various areas. The overall vigor of the ecosystem is dependent on a balance between climate and disturbance. Clearly, the amount and distribution of rainfall impacts the health and growth of vegetation. Similarly, the type and rate of disturbance profoundly influences the ecosystem. Fire that is too frequent can maintain vegetation in an early serial stage, while too much time between fires can change the make up of plant communities, impacting some species. Mechanical disturbances can mimic fire to some extent, but lack the heat and smoke necessary to germinate dormant seeds. Fire and other related disturbances must be allowed to play their natural roles in the ecosystem if vegetation communities are to remain viable.

Partnerships to Address Fire Management

Partnerships with key stakeholders can be effective in helping to manage fire in preserves, while simultaneously mitigating risk to adjacent properties. Property lines tend to be arbitrary, without regard to natural fire boundaries. Coordination between agencies managing public lands and private property owners can result in burns, which can benefit habitat at reduced cost. Through the ECMSCP, there is an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in returning fire in ecosystem management. Public and private landowners must work cooperatively and individually to maintain lands in a fire safe condition and provide the required defensible space around structures.

Pre-fire agreements regarding suppression response and tactics should be in place between preserve managers and fire management agencies. Limitations on bulldozer use, fire retardant placement, and avoidance of damage to sensitive species and habitats should be agreed upon by all parties.

Community Outreach, Public Awareness, and Education

Residents living in high wildfire risk areas should be fully informed about wildfire and actions that may minimize damage. Public education allows homeowners to appreciate the risk involved in living in the WUI, along with their role in creating fire safe communities, beginning with defensible space around homes. The County of San Diego provides a range of online information and materials to assist property owners in reducing fire risk, as along with extensive written information for those applying for

permits to develop property within the WUI. County staff will assist in educating the public about fire's role in the ecosystem and the need for more frequent, but less intense fires, on public lands.

Other Issues Following Wildfire

Natural vegetation has evolved with fire. However, large fires may result in post-fire issues, such as erosion. Limiting the size and intensity of fires through planned burning during moderate weather conditions will reduce such adverse effects following fire. In addition, burned areas may provide opportunities for non-native, invasive plant species to become established. A monitoring program will provide early warning regarding the presence of invasive species, so that prompt remedial action can be taken. Furthermore, acting in a timely manner to control such invasive species can eliminate the need for costly removal programs at a later date.

Conclusion

In the County of San Diego and surrounding regions, fire is a natural and essential part of the ecosystem. Learning to manage fire is essential in maintaining safe communities and a healthy ecosystem. Fire shed boundaries (like watershed boundaries) have no respect for artificial human property lines. Cooperation and collaboration with other public and private land managers can benefit the safety of the general public and health of the habitat.

APPENDIX

Fire Protection Responsibilities

In California, responsibility for wildfire prevention and suppression in unincorporated areas is vested in state (CAL FIRE) and federal agencies. In addition to prevention and suppression, federal agencies (USFS, BLM, USFWS, and Department of Defense) manage their lands. Federally owned and managed lands are designated as Federal Responsibility Areas (FRA).

The State of California has determined that non-federal lands outside of incorporated cities with watershed value are of statewide interest and has classified those lands as State Responsibility Areas (SRA). All non-watershed lands (primarily deserts) are classified as Local Responsibility Areas (LRA). Cities are responsible for all fire protection within their corporate boundaries. Local fire protection agencies, such as special districts and volunteer agencies, provide structural fire protection and assist wildland agencies with vegetation fires. Tribal governments also fund fire departments for structural fire protection on tribal lands. All fire agencies provide mutual aid to each other for large fires, as well.

Counties have no legal obligation to provide fire protection services. However, counties may provide assistance to local, state and federal fire agencies and include wildfire risk and mitigation in land use policies for land under their authority.

Wildland Urban Interface

Areas where wildlands abut, surround, or infiltrate developed areas are referred to as the wildland urban interface (WUI). [1] Potential loss of life, damage to private property, impacts to species and habitats, and wildfire suppression costs are high in the WUI. In 2000, an estimated 28,340 dwelling units were located in high, very high, or extreme fire threat areas. By 2020, it is estimated that a significant amount of the unincorporated County's population will be in rural regions, with over 60,000 units in high, very high, or extreme fire threat areas.[2] Increased development in the WUI creates conflicts between protecting property, human lives, biodiversity, and natural resources. In developing the ECMSCP, land use planning and wildfire management must be considered, to preserve biodiversity and reduce hazards to property and human life from wildfire.

Increased development in suburban and rural areas adjacent to or surrounded by fire-dependant forests, brush, and grassland vegetation has created significant risks to safety, property, and natural resources. Most communities in the East County backcountry (Cuyamaca, Descanso, Pine Valley, Julian, Boulevard, Jacumba, Campo, Lake Morena, Potrero, Palomar, Dulzura, and Jamul) and isolated houses in rural areas that meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland vegetation are within the WUI. . An environment where fire may move readily between structures and vegetation fuels is

[1] USDA and USDI. Federal Register 66:75 1-777.
[2] Fire Hazards and Emergency Services Background Report, Draft, page 7, October 2006.

created within the WUI. Population growth, increased fuels, lack of natural fire, lack of vegetation management, and increased costs associated with fire suppression complicate management in the WUI. As a result, local government may mitigate wildfire risk through site design, fire resistive building codes, and code enforcement. Defensible space, which provides firefighters an area to safely operate during normal fire conditions around structures and serves as a barrier between structures and wildfires, becomes increasingly important.

Vegetation Management

Vegetation management is a cost-effective tool to manage wildfire, protect species and habitats, preserve biodiversity, and mitigate for fire impacts. Fuel management includes selective thinning, prescribed burning, fuel breaks, and mechanical and biological treatment. Vegetation management, as it relates to wildfire, refers to total or partial removal of high fire hazard grasses, shrubs, or trees and thinning to reduce the amount of vegetation fuel to disrupt fire progress. In addition to reducing fire hazards, vegetation management may create access for recreational purposes, increase water yields, improve wildlife habitat, and reduce invasive species.

Defensible Space

In January 2005, California law extended defensible space requirements from 30 to 100 feet around homes, improving wildfire resistance and firefighter safety[3]. To create defensible space, combustible vegetation is managed within this 100-foot radius. Within this fuel modification zone, vegetation should be suitable and eliminate highly flammable and non-native, invasive species. Vegetation management should not be limited to only native vegetation but should also include combustible landscaping. To prevent erosion, vegetation should not be cleared to the bare ground and root systems should remain intact. Dead and dying vegetation should be removed, trees should be trimmed to avoid overhanging structures, and lower tree branches should be cut to reduce ladder fuel. Under certain circumstances, it may be advisable for brush clearance to be increased with agency approval (e.g., homes located at the top of a ridgeline, slope, or canyon; limited fire department access; limited or private water supply; or wood shake roofs). Public education, outreach, and assistance in clearing may be encouraged to improve understanding of fuel modification requirements and consistent enforcement facilitates compliance. As part of this public education effort, ignition resistant improvements need to be applied to existing and future structures.

Although severe wind-driven firestorms cannot be stopped, fuel management around homes and communities can substantially prevent or minimize damage and provide a defense against future wildfires. The recent 2007 wildfires illustrate the success of several programs, such as increased requirements for vegetation management, DDDT removal, and maintenance by homeowners associations of open space buffers in new major subdivisions, which have reduced fire damage. Although over 17,000 homes were located within the 2007 wildfire perimeter (up to ¼ mile from the fire), only 1,700 burned. As less than 10% of homes in the wildfire threat area burned, measures taken by the County in coordination with other agencies, communities, and residents are

[3] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection website September 2006.

evident, along with strong protection by firefighters.[4] Fuel management needs to be applied not only to native vegetation, but also landscape vegetation and structures themselves.

Fuel Management Areas

Fuel management areas are comprised of strips of land where vegetation is reduced, although not necessarily removed completely. The fuel break system was envisioned as a grid to stop and control wildfires once they reached the fuel management area to reduce intensity, provide firefighters an opportunity to halt progress of wildfire, and to provide for more controlled prescribed burns. The international fuel management area along the United States and Mexico border near Otay Mountain completed in 2002 is an example of such a system. Although they may provide some benefits, fuel breaks require landowner permission to maintain, are labor intensive, are costly, can cause erosion, and can raise environmental concerns. Furthermore, they are not always successful in stopping wildfires, since embers may travel long distances and start spot fires. In the 2003 Cedar Fire, for example, flames crossed eight lanes of Interstate 15 (which serves as a fuel break) in three locations.

Dead, Dying, and Diseased Trees

Drought, insects, disease, and unnaturally high tree density have left thousands of trees (mainly conifers) dead and dying in areas such as Palomar Mountain, increasing wildfire risk and potential for complete burns (e.g., Cuyamaca in 2003). Various types of bark beetles kill trees already stressed by drought. In 2004, the County established a program in partnership with CAL FIRE, USFS, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Forest Area Safety Task Force (FAST), BLM, CALTRANS, San Diego Gas & Electric, and other stakeholders to remove such trees. The county received nearly $40 million in grants from NRCS and the USFS. Priority areas for tree removal were determined based on amount of dead trees, unburned fuel, forest conditions, evacuation corridors, community risk, and protection of structures. At the program's start, there were an estimated 250,000 to 300,000 dead, dying, and diseased trees. By 2007, over 500,000 trees were removed by partners in forested areas. Firefighters credit the tree removal program with providing the defensible space necessary for them to protect countless structures on Palomar Mountain during the 2007 Poomacha Fire. The County is seeking additional funding to continue the program due to its success in reducing fuel load and risks to human life, property, and resources.

Prescribed Burning

Prescribed or controlled burning is the intentional introduction of fire, under favorable weather conditions, to remove vegetation based on an approved plan to mimic the natural regeneration process. Prescribed fires are a cost-effective method to alter the age of large vegetation stands, but require biological, environmental, and archeological studies prior to the burn. In addition, prescribed burns must consider impacts from smoke and include public education. Forests may need more frequent fires than chaparral to maintain fewer but larger trees, reflecting a healthy ecosystem. In the East County region, the USFS and CAL FIRE undertake prescribed burns to remove

[4] 2007 San Diego County Firestorms After Action Report, February 2007.

vegetation, maintain fuel breaks, and improve forest health. Some studies have found that more frequent, smaller, and less intense fires benefit species, by increasing ecotones and habitat diversity.

Biological Treatment

Since 1769, cattle have been grazing on grasslands in San Diego County. They may have played a significant role in limiting the size of fires by removing flammable grasses, thereby limiting the spread of fire. As cattle are being removed from historic rangelands, fire may be necessary to maintain grassland health. Most grasslands consist of non-native grasses that are adapted to grazing. Grazing animals, such as cattle and sheep, may be an economical and effective method of reducing annual grasses, although they do not eat chaparral. Browsing animals, such as goats, tend to eat all available vegetation, but leave root systems intact.

Chemical Treatments

Specific application of herbicides may be used to reduce highly flammable, invasive species or prevent regrowth of sprouting shrubs on fuelbreaks. Chemical use has proven to be the only feasible way to remove some non-native, invasive species, such as Arundo donax, pampas grass, and tamarisk.

Mechanical Treatment

Currently, mechanical methods of vegetation management in involve thinning and chipping of shrubs in place through the use of a “masticator” machine. In general, such mechanical treatment is limited to small sites with gentle slopes. They have been used successfully on some slopes below residential areas on Palomar Mountain, Mount Laguna, and Carveacre.

East County Plan Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
County Administration Center (CAC), Tower 7
1600 Pacific Coast Highway, San Diego, CA
May 28, 2008

Introductions (Bryan Woods, Steering Committee Facilitator)

This is the fourth Steering Committee meeting for the East County Plan. Introductions were made for members of the Steering Committee and public present.

Review Minutes of Steering Committee Meetings Two and Three (Bryan Woods)

The Steering Committee had been asked to review the February 6, 2008, and March 19, 2008 meeting minutes provided in the packet, which were also e-mailed to Steering Committee members prior to this meeting. Bryan Woods found that there are 23 members of the Steering Committee; 12 members are needed for a quorum in order to approve the minutes. As only 10 members are present, the minutes are tabled until the next meeting for a vote.

Overview/Discussion of Key Issues with Steering Committee (Bryan Woods)

The topics to be reviewed today include: 1) Farming/Working Landscapes and 2) East County Plan Preserve Design Tools and Strategies.

1. **Farming/Working Landscapes (Kim Zuppiger)**

   PowerPoint presentation given that provides a general overview and background information on farming and working landscapes in San Diego County, including the East County region.

   1.1 What percentage of East County land is in agriculture? (Susan Wynn)
   1.2 That depends on what is included within the definition of agriculture (e.g., ranching, crops, etc.). County staff can provide those numbers at a future meeting for the Steering Committee. (Tom Oberbauer)
   1.3 Yes, this would be interesting to know. (Bryan Woods)
   1.4 The percentage of agriculture in private versus public land would also be useful. (Eric Larson)
   1.5 Categories of farming in the East County would also be useful. What is the threshold that determines whether agricultural land has "biological value?" (Jeff Barfield)
   1.6 The "biological value" is dependent on the resources and location of the property. There may be valuable resources on the property or the location may provide wildlife corridors/linkages, for example. (Tom Oberbauer)
   1.7 It is confusing to compare agriculture in South County and North County, particularly since the North County Plan is still in draft form and has not taken the comments of the Wildlife Agencies into consideration, yet. (Susan Wynn)
   1.8 If there is a conservation easement, the terms may still require mitigation, even if not required by the MSCP. (Eric Larson)
   1.9 There has been less than 50 acres of agricultural conversion in areas covered by the South County Plan so far. How big of an issue is conversion of agriculture for the East County Plan? Different issues are raised in East County, such as the

2.1 County staff is meeting with consultants on Friday to discuss different scenarios for preserve design. This has not been discussed with the Wildlife Agencies yet. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.2 Resource management status (RMS) is determined based on how public land is being managed or used. A different value is given based on value of property and how it is being treated. A value of I or II is the highest value that is assigned for protection of sensitive resources on publicly owned land. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.3 Eco-regions are being considered as part of developing Planning Units or Segments for the Preserve Design, each of which could have separate goals. We are evaluating what would be reasonable planning unit boundaries, perhaps based on community planning or sponsor group boundaries. Some areas may be aggregated and some areas may need to be separated, such as the Eastern Jamul area. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.4 Using these planning segments, Pre-Approved Mitigation Areas (PAMA) may be considered for certain regions, such as the southern area of the East County, Borrego Valley, and a few other areas where there is more intense development pressure. Perhaps the PAMA will be applied only to areas with higher densities under the General Plan Update and areas where a large number of discretionary permits are in process. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.5 The goal is to have the East County Plan adopted by 2010. The General Plan Update may be done before the East County Plan. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.6 What is the percentage of agriculture in each segment and what is the type of agriculture in each segment? Staff can bring this information back to the Steering Committee. Also, what is "seeding" and is it a commonly used term? (Dr. Almeda Starkey)

2.7 "Seeding" is a term used by GIS for weighting purposes. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.8 Will TAIC come in to speak to the Steering Committee regarding this term or the process? (Dr. Almeda Starkey)

2.9 Not under the current contract. The intent is for staff to present this to cut down on costs. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.10 Staff should bring this back to the Steering Committee and list priorities for seeding in planning units for the East County. (Dr. Almeda Starkey)

2.11 This can be done, but it would be a long table. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.12 That is okay. We are here to learn. (Dr. Almeda Starkey)

2.13 What is the modeling method? (Jeff Barfield)

2.14 Marxan RSA was used for the initial modeling that has been done. A Landscape map is generated by this model. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.15 It seems that the East County process is more "map sensitive" than South County or North County. When will the maps be done? (Eric Larson)

2.16 The maps will need to be evaluated in order to draft the plan text and the environmental document. We are trying to get these out by the end of June. It will be soon. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.17 There will be draft iterations of the map available for review this summer. (Kim Zuppiger)

2.18 Good. The sooner, the better. (Eric Larson)

2.19 How does this schedule work for the Wildlife Agencies? Do they need more time and people? (Jim Whalen)

2.20 We are doing what we can with our staff and time. (Susan Wynn)

2.21 We have more staff for NCCPs, but there are budget problems and there are 19 NCCPs that are being reviewed. (Libby Lucas)

2.37 Originally, there were 230 or 250 species proposed, but the list has been narrowed down. The County wants to get as much coverage as possible to prevent situations such as the Quino checkerspot butterfly, which was not covered by the South County Plan. It has taken more than 10 years to amend the permit to include the Quino checkerspot butterfly because it was not a covered species under the South County Plan. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.38 Why not just use public lands to protect covered species? (Dr. Almeda Starkey)

2.39 Many species do not occur on public lands. The goal is to get coverage for as many species as we can. (Tom Oberbauer)

2.40 Would like to see the percentages and numbers of species on public versus private lands. (Dr. Almeda Starkey)

2.41 Perhaps County staff can meet with Dr. Starkey to review these issues. (Bryan Woods)

2.42 An evaluation of each species proposed for coverage was done previously as part of the East County Plan process to narrow down the species list. (Tom Oberbauer)

Opportunity for Public Input (Bryan Woods)

The definition of agriculture includes many things. If a person wants to switch from one agricultural use to another, will this be possible under the East County Plan? One example of this includes switching from irrigated and dry farm cattle grazing to corn for ethanol. (Rodney Starkey)

Dry farm grazing does not require a permit, in general. There may be a need to obtain a clearing permit from the County to convert from grazing to corn, at present. Under the East County Plan, the goal is to allow this if the property is outside of PAMA. If it is inside of PAMA, if it is existing pasture land with irrigation and you wanted to switch to growing corn, there would be no difference. If outside of PAMA, the County also aims to provide coverage for take even for conversion to a more intensive agricultural type. (Tom Oberbauer)

If the property is in irrigated pastures now and want to switch to irrigated corn, would this be possible under the East County Plan as long as it is irrigated? (Rodney Starkey)

Yes. (Tom Oberbauer)

In the figures provided previously for the Study Area, 23% is privately owned and 77% is publicly owned. What percent of private land is owned by conservation NGOs, such as The Nature Conservancy? Doesn't The Nature Conservancy own 13,800 acres in the County and isn't it looking at 140 more properties in the County to purchase? (Rodney Starkey)

Less than 2,000 acres of land in the East County are owned by The Nature Conservancy and when it acquires land, it transfers it out to a public agency, such as the County or BLM. So, there is not a lot of land in East County that is held in private ownership by an NGO or private land conservation entity. Even the land currently owned in East County by The Nature Conservancy is in the process of transfer. (Kathy Viatella)

When the transfer is done, the public percentage of owned land will go even higher and private ownership will be lower. It would be useful to know the actual figures. (Rodney Starkey)

Written Comments Received from Dr. Almeda Starkey
San Diego - Imperial County Cattlemen's Association

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RE: Comments for the May 28, 2008 ECMSCP Steering Committee Meeting for Key Issue: #2 Farming/Working Landscapes

In Fall of 2003, Dr. Reed Noss, Co-Founder of the Wildlands Project and Lead Scientists for the Independent Science Advisors for the ECMSCP stated in a published article that "Fifty percent is an estimate I made years ago of the proportion of an average region that would need to be managed for conservation goals. The question "how much is enough?" should be answered empirically rather than dogmatically. If we consider empirical research on this question, it turns out I was pretty much on the mark with my 50% hypothesis. Studies done by researchers in North America, Australia, Africa, and elsewhere have found that's about what it takes. Most of the estimates fall in the range of 25 to 75%.

In the book "Regional Conservation Planning in California" on page 13 it states that that "overall, the result of the state-wide distribution of land ownerships and biological communities is that desert and mountain natural communities are relatively well protected but valley, foothills and coastal communities are poorly protected." One of the top advisors for this book was Michael Beck of the Endangered Habitat League who is one of the San Diego County Planning Commissioners.

With this being said, The East County MSCP desert and mountain communities are very different than that of South County and the North County.
"The East County MSCP is quite unique in that some 75% of the 1.6 million acre study area is public land. This public land forms a relatively unfragmented matrix" (ISA report: 3-31-06 pg. 1)

"San Diego East County MSCP: Planning area of over 1 million acres in far eastern San Diego is an area with lower development pressure)" (www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/WAP/docs/report/ch9-southcoast pdf pg 41) search done on 2/8/08

Therefore we would make the following recommendation that the Reserve design be placed on Public Lands and private Conservation Lands

We would ask your support in putting the preserve assemblage completely on Public land since the majority of land is owned by public agencies and relatively unfragmented.(See Ownership parcel map) This would include local, state and federal agency land and Private Conservation Land (such as land owned by TNC). No private land, especially parcels used for agriculture would be placed in the reserve design (ie. PAMA). The local jurisdictions would contribute to the management of the Existing Conservation Lands as mitigation for the Habitat loss allowed under the Plan.

This plan would exempt agricultural land from the preserve and therefore would not be subject to the County's attempt to gain 75% of the preserve's land in acquisition in fee title or easements (ISA report pg.9) unless initiated voluntarily by the property owner. This would mean that all land for the purpose's of the East County MSCP (NCCP/HCP) and regional corridors and linkages would happen on existing public conservation lands or Private Conservation Lands. With at least 75% of the land in East County already in public ownership or in Private Conservation Lands the listed species of concern can be covered and monitored on public lands without using Agricultural parcels.