



North County Plan



March 2020

North County Multiple Species Conservation Plan Status Review & Options Assessment Frequently Asked Questions

What is the North County Plan?

The North County Multiple Species Conservation Plan (North County Plan) is a long-term, regional habitat conservation program focused on balancing protection of biological diversity and demand for affordable housing, non-residential development, and associated infrastructure. Under a regional habitat conservation plan like the North County Plan, large blocks of interconnected habitat are conserved through acquisition of land by private and public entities and used as mitigation for development. In return, the County receives long-term permits from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) under the Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) Act. These permits include regulatory assurances from the Wildlife Agencies that the terms of the conservation plan would not change in the foreseeable future. The County is then able to extend its permit coverage to public or private projects under its jurisdiction. The County adopted a similar regional habitat conservation plan in southern San Diego County (South County Plan) in 1998. The County has been implementing the South County Plan for over 20 years.

Why is the County considering options to the North County Plan?

Development of a North County Plan was initiated in 1998 with the goal to bring the same environmental and economic benefits to North County that have been achieved by the South County Plan. Public outreach meetings for the North County Plan were held in spring of 2017 and County staff received input from a variety of stakeholders. The County selected ICF, a consultant with substantial experience in regional conservation planning throughout the state, to review the draft North County Plan in relation to current practices and regulatory requirements and to develop planning options for public discussion and input. ICF's assessment and recommendations are presented in a report to the County that is available on-line: <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/mscp/nc.html>

What are the plan options being considered?

Five options have been identified for County consideration. Each option includes a different approach to regional conservation and achieving compliance with the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and California Endangered Species Act (CESA). These options include: Project-by-Project ESA/CESA Compliance, a Conservation Strategy, a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)/2081 Permit for County Covered Activities, an HCP/2081 permit for Public and Private Covered Activities, and a Revised North County Plan. Further information about these options can be found on our website: <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/mscp/nc.html>

What input is the County requesting at this point in time?

The County requests members of the community consider the options identified and provide their questions, suggestions, and comments. A survey form is available on our website for you to provide your preference for each option and as well as any general input. County staff will summarize the input received to present to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration.

When will this topic go before the Board of Supervisors? What decision will the Board be making?

The report and input received from stakeholders will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for direction in the fall of 2020. At that time, the Board will provide direction to County staff on whether and how to move forward with the North County Plan.