

## MEETING NOTES

### East Alameda County Conservation Strategy Users Advisory Group Meeting August 14, 2008, 2:00 – 4:00 pm Dublin City Center, Regional Meeting Room

#### 1) Review of Scope and Purpose

- a) Overall Goal: provide guidelines for mitigation practices and ratios for locally permitted projects in east Alameda County
  - i) Voluntary program
  - ii) Would not result in permits but would support the permitting process for local projects
  - iii) Will not create new mandates on private land in Alameda County
- b) EACCS will:
  - i) Document important biological resources in east Alameda County
  - ii) Set priorities for mitigation and conservation
  - iii) Include clear standards
  - iv) Set mitigation ratios
- c) Q: Who allows mitigation to go outside of the county?
  - i) Finding mitigation lands are part of the planning process. It is up to the project proponents to find the mitigation land(s) and the resources agencies (e.g. USFWS, DFG, Regional Board and/or Army Corps) to approve the land.
  - ii) Resource agencies have different categories of mitigation. Avoidance is first and foremost preference. If not possible, they prefer onsite in-kind mitigation.
  - iii) There are several factors that project proponents may consider when looking at mitigation lands and including cost of the conservation easement and ease in securing the conservation easement. Sometimes it is easier for project proponents to secure mitigation lands outside the County because they are ready to go.
  - iv) EACCS will reinforce the goal that mitigation stay within the County by prioritizing areas for conservation, setting parameters and providing clear guidance.
    - (1) A proposal for consideration is to increase the mitigation ratios the further away the mitigation lands are from the impact site.

#### 2) Questions and Answer about Land Use or Open Space maps

- a) Question regarding the open space category typing for EBRPD land as Type 2 and Del Valle & SFPUC land as Type 3
  - i) It's the difference between landownership v. lease
    - (1) Looked at what the probability for lands to be developed as well as the primary purpose of the land (i.e. ecological protection)
  - ii) Refer to Figure 2-4 – Open Space Decision Tree, which was distributed at the July meeting and is also posted on the EACCS website.
- b) Note: Altamont Wind Resources Area has been added on to Figure 1.
- c) Request for additional maps that show:
  - i) Williamson Act lands – Alameda County has this map already developed
  - ii) Linear infrastructure corridors (e.g. Zone 7 pipelines, CalTrans lands, etc.)
  - iii) Stream map to emphasize creek corridors
    - (1) Regional trail corridors should be cross-referenced w/EBRPD's Master Plan
  - iv) Regional map to include surrounding areas like Contra Costa County, Santa Clara County, etc. in order to show connectivity (e.g. Mt. Diablo – Del Valle – Henry Coe)
    - (1) This will be a part of the gap analysis task.

### 3) Introduction of Draft Land Cover Map

- a) Level of Certainty (see Table 4 for Mapping Confidence)
  - i) Confidence rating reflects the ability to recognize what is on the aerial photo and that the classification is really what is out on the ground.
- b) Table 5 provides a summary of the vegetation types, # of polygons, acres, and percent each vegetation type are in the study area.
- c) Ground Verification
  - i) Targeted ground verification will be done for specific areas which had a low mapping confidence rating.
    - (1) For example, targeted ground verification will be done in an area where Sergeant cypress is located.
    - ii) Ground verification is scheduled to start at the end of the month.
- d) How this map will fit in the process?
  - i) This map shows where unique vegetation are located
  - ii) This will be used in the habitat modeling effort to help determine what areas are suitable habitats for the focal species. In addition, the distance to aquatic habitat will also be considered.
- e) Comments
  - i) The color for Oak woodland meshes with the color for water.
  - ii) Put in unincorporated roads.
  - iii) Look at calling out Black Oak as it can easily be called out in the Sunol and Pleasanton Ridge area.
  - iv) Review Serpentine Bunchgrass Grassland
  - v) Desert olive scrub is currently not mapped
    - (1) There are 40 acres in Carnegie and in Mt. Diablo. This is easy to spot on an aerial photo and is well distributed.
  - vi) There is a discrepancy between Ca. Annual Grassland & Developed Ag in N. Livermore.
    - (1) Dry farming typically gets lumped in w/Ca. annual grassland. Dry farming is sometimes difficult to map as things can change depending upon the market.
      - (a) A narrative will be provided in the strategy that will define the difference between Ca. annual grassland and developed agriculture.
      - (2) Consider impact if water becomes available for agriculture in N. Livermore, which will lead to conversion of dry farmed land into irrigated crops.
  - vii) Will specific polygons be available for landowners to view?
    - (1) The local agencies will have all the maps on GIS by the end of the process and will be public record.
  - viii) Are there any Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands? Most likely not.

### 4) Questions and Answer about Landowner Meeting Notes

- a) Agriculture-oriented landowner concern: do not want the EACCS to be a barrier if a landowner wants to convert from dry farming to irrigated agriculture.
- b) There is a balance between the best use of the land and conservation opportunities.
  - i) Want to show landowners that having conservation easements is an economically viable option for landowners.
  - ii) Although the EACCS is biologically based, there are collateral benefits to a landowner. This needs to be highlighted.
  - iii) Having an easier time to maintain ponds through permitting is enough incentive for some landowners to buy in to this process
- c) Landowner representation on the UAG
  - i) There are about 2 – 4 spots open on the UAG for more landowner representation.

- ii) Mary will coordinate with the Conservation Partnership to solicit landowners to be representatives on the UAG.

**5) Outreach – Ongoing and Future**

- a) The Steering Committee's Outreach Group will be expanding upon the landowner FAQs sheet to answer some of the landowner questions.
  - i) This will be a living document that will be revised and added to as new questions arise.
  - ii) In addition, this outreach group will develop informational materials for the UAG members to disseminate to their respective constituencies.
- b) Speakers Bureau (one group or consortium of groups)
  - i) Will likely start in about 3 months when draft guidelines and ratios are developed
  - ii) Allison Batteate volunteered to do an EACCS presentation for the Cattlewoman's Association
  - iii) Alameda County Agriculture Advisory Committee presentation to reach out to the Ag. Community
- c) Proposed future presentations
  - i) Present range of mitigation strategies (i.e. ratios, distances, acreage, costs, etc.) for EACCS
  - ii) Application of strategy to temporal impacts associated with roads & infrastructure projects
- d) Others:
  - i) EACCS Newsletter – 1 to 2 page narrative about EACCS in layman's terms
  - ii) Working glossary

**6) Field trip**

- a) A UAG member suggested having a field trip or two to visit some existing and potential conservation areas. These may include:
  - i) Brushy Peak
  - ii) Cedar Mountain area
  - iii) Frick Lake
  - iv) Ohlone Preserve Conservation Bank
  - v) Tim Koopmann's property in Sunol
  - vi) Something in the N. Livermore area
- b) Date: TBD for sometime in September

**7) Next Meeting Date: October 16, 2008 @ 2 p.m. tentatively at the Dublin Regional Meeting Room**

- a) Note: Future UAG meetings may be changed from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month.