

## MEETING NOTES

### East Alameda County Conservation Strategy Users Advisory Group Meeting March 19, 2009

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#### East Alameda County Conservation Strategy Mission:

The East Alameda County Conservation Strategy (EACCS) will provide a blueprint for conservation of biological species in East Alameda County.

The EACCS will streamline the environmental permitting process for development and infrastructure projects by:

- Documenting important biological resources in east Alameda County
- Setting priorities for mitigation and conservation of biological resources
- Providing clear standards as to where and how to focus mitigation efforts
- Setting mitigation ratios for focal species
- Facilitate ongoing conservation programs through a coordinated approach

[www.eastalco-conservation.org](http://www.eastalco-conservation.org)

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#### 1) Project Update

- a) Chapter 1 – Action: Preferable to have comments to Mary or Troy by April 10<sup>th</sup> in order to have them addressed by next UAG Meeting. April 16<sup>th</sup> is the deadline, although the Steering Committee will accept comments during the course of the Conservation Strategy development.
  - i) Overview of the Planning Process
    - (1) Steering Committee, Users Advisory Group, Technical Working Groups, and Public Outreach
    - ii) Scope of Strategy
      - (1) Study Area Figure 1-1 now includes other planning efforts (e.g. HCP/NCCP's) complete and in progress
      - (2) Figure 1-2 is new and illustrates the regulatory scope.
    - iii) Regulatory Setting
      - (1) Federal, state regulator framework
        - (a) UAG member comments:
          - (i) Include Alameda County Measure D in Chapter 1
          - (ii) Inclusion of a hypothetical project would help understand how Conservation Strategy functions.
          - (iii) Add AB 32 and SB 375 discussions
    - iv) Review Process
      - (1) Chapter 1 includes nearly all of the Steering Committee's comments.
      - (2) Comments via letters, e-mail etc will be included in the tracking spreadsheet
      - (3) Receiving UAG comments by April 10<sup>th</sup> will enable the tracking of comments and incorporation in time for discussion at the April 16<sup>th</sup> UAG meeting.  
All UAG comments will be available to the entire UAG unless an individual wants their comments to remain confidential
- b) Potential Projects Utilizing the Conservation Strategy

- i) List of projects that could be included in a Programmatic Biological Opinion include:
  - (1) Residential and Commercial development (housing, retail, business parks, recreational parks)
  - (2) Infrastructure (utility pipelines, water treatment facilities, roadways, canals, cell towers, transmission lines, wastewater treatment facilities, trails, landfills, solar generation facilities.
  - (3) Preserve management
- ii) Projects would not be included and could not be tiered from a Conservation Strategy Programmatic Biological Opinion:
  - (1) Wind projects
  - (2) Ag conversion
  - (3) New irrigated ag
  - (4) Water importation
  - (5) O&M on PG&E facilities
  - (6) Mining
- iii) There is concern about how the Conservation Strategy would or would not treat “ranchette” development.
- iv) While the Conservation Strategy will be voluntary, the USFWS would encourage project proponents to utilize the Conservation Strategy
- v) Programmatic Biological Opinion is the USFWS implementation tool for the Conservation Strategy. Should discuss CDFG implementation. The Conservation Strategy will provide guidance for all focal species, including non-listed species. However, the Programmatic Biological Opinion would not specifically address non-listed species. Additionally, non-listed species are often subject to and included in CEQA review.
- vi) Steering Committee is currently discussing how the Conservation Strategy will treat wetlands/ponds (e.g. buffers, setbacks etc.). Generally, any information that can front load a Section 7 review should be considered.
- vii) The shelf life of the Strategy could be in perpetuity, with periodic updates as new information emerges and conditions change. The Steering Committee will be discussing how the Conservation strategy will evolve over time. This information will be included in the Implementation Chapter.

## **2) Technical Review Process**

- a) Unlike an HCP, developing the Conservation Strategy does not require a scientific advisory panel or group. The UAG is fulfilling this role. However, technical workshop groups would assist in data review and confirmation.

- i) Technical Workshop Groups include the following groups that will most likely overlap in focus:
  - (1) Grassland, Chaparral, Coastal Scrub and associate species
  - (2) Ponds, wetland and associated species
  - (3) Riparian forest, scrub, oak and conifer woodland and associated species (this group is a catch-all for the natural communities included in the Conservation Strategy.

- ii) Anticipate workshop groups meeting between 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April and 1<sup>st</sup> week of May.

## **3) Other Conservation Efforts**

- a) Tri-Valley Conservancy’s North Livermore Resource Conservation Plan

- i) Next steps after public meeting are not known by the Steering Committee/UAG
  - ii) Hopeful for an update from TVC UAG representative.
- b) SFPUC's Alameda Watershed HCP
  - i) Mainly for maintenance activities
- c) Altamont Wind Resources HCP/NCCP
  - i) Includes terrestrial species not just avian
- d) UAG recommends to add the following planning effort updates:
  - i) Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP Implementation
  - ii) San Joaquin HCP Implementation
  - iii) Santa Rosa Conservation Strategy
- 4) Public Comments**
  - a) CNPS distributed comment letter previously sent to the Steering Committee
    - i) No other public comments
- 5) Next Meeting Date: April 16, 2009 @ 2 p.m. at the Dublin Regional Meeting Room**
  - a) Agenda items:
    - i) Summarize comments received on Chapter 1
    - ii) Chapter 2
    - iii) First Public Meeting