

MEETING NOTES
East Alameda County Conservation Strategy
Steering Committee Meeting
February 3, 2009

Attendees

Mary Lim - Zone 7
Troy Rahmig & David Zippin (by phone) – ICF Jones & Stokes
Liz McElligott & Dominic Farinha – Alameda County
Mark Lander – City of Dublin
Steve Stewart – City of Livermore
Jim Kelcourse – City of Pleasanton
Chris Barton – EBRPD
Jim Robins – Alameda County Conservation Partnership
Cay Goude – USFWS
Marcia Grefsrud – DFG

- 1) CalFed Grant & Funding Update
 - a) DWR will pay invoices submitted for work completed prior to December 17th. Timing on reimbursement of outstanding invoices is unknown at this time.
 - b) JSA provided a memo that provides suggested areas of cost-savings to address the \$7,000 budget deficit. These include:
 - i) Website maintenance by one of the local agencies;
 - (1) Zone 7 and City of Livermore will look at the possibility of maintaining the website.
 - ii) Reducing the number of in-person meetings and number of UAG meetings;
 - iii) Printing of strategy document will be done by local agencies; and/or
 - (1) As much as possible, the strategy will be provided in electronic format
 - iv) Reducing scope and content of workshops designed to discuss biological goals & objectives (this is a last resort).
 - c) There was question as to whether JSA would be able to reduce its rates by 5 – 10% as opposed to cutting back on any items in the scope of work.
 - i) JSA would consider reduction only under certain dire circumstances. Because there is a small shortfall (i.e. \$7,000 out of a \$230,000 contract), JSA would not be able to consider reducing its rates at this time.
 - ii) The JSA contract is a time and materials contract. The \$230,000 contract amount for Phase 2/3 is a conservative figure.
- 2) January 15, 2009 Users Advisory Group Meeting – Debrief
 - a) EACCS & the project development/implementation process
 - i) At the December UAG meeting, some of the UAG members requested a list of projects and anticipated impact that would require mitigation.
 - ii) Troy reminded the UAG what the conservation strategy will provide and that the strategy is not tied to projects. Rather, the conservation strategy is focused on biological species and their habitat.

- iii) Informed UAG that a schematic showing how EACCS will be used in the project development and implementation is currently being developed.
- b) Pond analysis
 - i) There was a question by the UAG about whether the strategy would look at where ponds could be created.
 - ii) There are a lot of issues (e.g. water rights; how many ponds are allowed on a site based upon size of parcel) tied with pond creation as well as with existing ponds.
 - iii) Want to ensure the conservation strategy does not authorize pond creation without going through the proper regulatory channels.
 - iv) The conservation strategy will address pond as habitat. In addition, the strategy will cite the various limitations with existing ponds and with pond creation.
- 3) Local conservation planning efforts
 - a) North Livermore Resource Conservation Plan
 - i) Tri-Valley Conservancy recently completed a North Livermore Resource Conservation Plan and published a public review draft.
 - ii) The purpose of this plan is to prioritize lands for conservation based on an evaluation of critical conservation resources and corridors for North Livermore.
 - (1) This plan provides a detailed ranking of parcels and maps to identify key properties that should be targeted for conservation.
 - (2) The plan also discusses strategies and potential sources of conservation acquisition.
 - iii) This plan was funded by Tri-Valley Conservancy and did not include a stakeholder process. In addition, the resource agencies were not informed or involved with the development of this plan.
 - (1) The plan notes most of the agencies on the Steering Committee as stakeholders of the plan and potential future partners.
 - (2) The plan also makes references to other conservation planning efforts, including EACCS.
 - iv) Discuss relevance to EACCS
 - (1) The plan is detailed and could complement the EACCS as a potential implementation tool.
 - (2) There is concern that the public may perceive Tri-Valley Conservancy's plan and EACCS as interconnected.
 - (3) Steering Committee will need to distinguish the two planning efforts. For example, EACCS is being developed in a transparent manner (i.e. assistance from stakeholder group) vs. NLRCP had no stakeholder participation.
 - b) Altamont Wind Resources Area NCCP/HCP
 - i) The Altamont Wind Resources Area NCCP/HCP will be complete in 3 years.
 - (1) The study area is completely within the EACCS study area but does not extend into Contra Costa.
 - ii) The current stakeholder group consists of representatives from Alameda County, all four wind turbine operators, and the local and national Audubon Society. DFG & USFWS are on the steering committee.

- iii) EACCS will not address wind turbines but will, at a minimum point out the issues. In addition, EACCS will refer wind turbine projects to the Altamont Wind Resources Area NCCP/HCP.
- iv) Because Alameda County, DFG, and USFWS have representatives on the Altamont Wind Resources Area NCCP/HCP effort, there is no need to have an EACCS rep on that stakeholder group.
 - (1) JSA, Alameda County, DFG, and USFWS will provide updates to the EACCS Steering Committee.

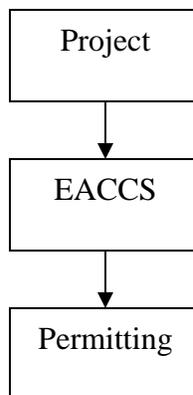
4) Project Update (60 min)

a) Chapter 1

- i) This is the introductory chapter that sets the stage for what EACCS is.
- ii) Will be available in the next week or two for Steering Committee's review & comment.

b) Conservation Strategy schematic

- i) The permitting boxes will be separated to show Federal permits and State permits.
- ii) Include the word "Streamline" in the title of the graphic.
- iii) Schematic will be changed to a hierarchal format similar to this:



- iv) Schematic will include a notation or footnote describing how information on the EACCS can be used to facilitate other permitting processes (e.g. 1600 SAA permits and 401 water quality certification)
- v) With regards to streamline permitting, USFWS noted that it can either write a programmatic biological opinion (BiOp) or local agencies could use EACCS text and structure as to write standard biological assessment and associated BiOp for the named focal species. Both options will streamline the permitting process.
 - (1) Rare plants and non-focal species will require more detail and would not be included in the standard biological assessment/opinion.
 - (2) USFWS will need to determine if one BiOp will be developed for entire region or if it would be better to divide the region into sections and develop BiOps for each section.
- c) Draft gap analysis numbers
 - i) Troy distributed a draft table that shows the total acres of each land cover type and the percentage of each land cover type that is within protected open space. (See attached table).

- ii) A new column will be added to show the breakdown of what land covers occur in existing open space in the study area
 - d) Conceptual Corridor Analysis Approach
 - i) Chapter 2 – Environmental Setting is close to complete.
 - ii) Habitat models have been reviewed by wildlife experts. The expert review process will be documented in the strategy.
 - iii) Wildlife corridors for SJKF and American Badger were easier to model as their movement patterns are easier to predict.
 - iv) Still collected on the ground data for other species. Currently evaluating whether there is enough data to model.
 - v) USFWS recommended that JSA confer with Dave Cook on CTS.
 - vi) With regard to ponds that are close in proximity, will be evaluating whether the ponds would actually support species (i.e. looking at ability to move between ponds with little to no obstruction).
 - e) Review procedures that we discussed with UAG
 - i) Chapters will be presented to the UAG at its regular meetings.
 - ii) UAG will be given the chapters in Word format. Grammatical edits can be done using tracked changes on Word or can be done by hand.
 - iii) An Excel spreadsheet will be provided for UAG to provide any substantive issues. All comments will be compiled into one spreadsheet for everyone to view.
- 5) Upcoming meetings
- a) Tri-Valley Conservancy North Livermore Resource Conservation Plan Presentation: Thursday, February 5th from 7 – 8:30 pm at Robert Livermore Community Center, 4444 East Avenue, Livermore
 - b) Steering Committee Meeting: Tuesday, March 3, 2009 @ 10 am
 - i) USFWS will bring a list of potential projects that could be covered under a programmatic BiOp.
 - c) UAG Meeting: Thursday, March 19, 2009