

6. USFWS/DFG/NMFS Items for Discussion
7. Action Items and Next Meeting Agenda

Introductions and Agenda Review

Going forward a meeting will take place prior to the Stakeholder meetings to allow interested persons to obtain background information on the HCP/NCCP process (including prior meetings) that have occurred thus far. These meetings will begin next month.

General Plans - Status

A status of the county and city General Plans was provided. Through the HCP/NCCP process, biological data has been provided to the cities and the county and there has been close coordination with Chico on Butte County Meadowfoam as well. The Butte County General Plan EIR is anticipated to go public at the end of March and Chico is close in timing as well.

Administrative Draft Avoidance and Minimization Measures (Handout #1)

Handout #1 was introduced. A request was made to make chapter numbers more evident and to have an outline of the document as a whole in order to see the full picture of the final document and how the pieces fit together, i.e., an annotated outline. This will be provided to the group and to folks attending the pre-meeting described above (see the discussion under Introduction and Agenda Review).

The initial list of Draft avoidance and minimization measures (AMMs) was discussed and it was noted that this will be an iterative process. The organization of the section was described; the first section discusses surveys that may be needed, etc. the findings of which may trigger specific actions to avoid and minimize impacts.

The various sections of the text were discussed including Activity Exclusion Zones (page 3), Construction and Project Design Measures (page 4), etc. A question was raised regarding some of the Urban-Habitat Interface Design Measures and the practicability of them and if they can in fact be required/enforced (e.g., AMM 17). It was noted that these are generally consistent with the East Contra Costa HCP/NCCP. It was emphasized that it needs to be clear what is optional vs. what must be done and be sure that the measure can be implemented and monitored. A discussion of the use of “shall” vs. “will” or “where necessary” in the measures was discussed and it was suggested to include “shall” and “will” in the document glossary. The need to minimize ambiguity in the AMMs was discussed and to possibly have these read “shall”.

It was also requested to link the AMMs to certain groups of covered activities (e.g., activities in UPAs, etc.) and when they would apply.

There was a discussion of who would be responsible for the cost of surveys, etc. and other AMMs.

There was a discussion about the Species-Specific AMMs described on page 8. These describe more species specific measures that are not otherwise incorporated elsewhere. Some are DFG or

FWS guidance measures related to GGS, etc. The measures involving relocation of species were discussed. The importance of adding more information to the AMMs regarding who would be responsible for doing the AMMs was discussed. The issues associated with the potential relocation/translocation of species was discussed (animals are territorial, predator issues, survival rates, suitability of new location, disease transmission, etc. The agencies will provide more information on this issue and provide to the group. The importance of identifying where the species would be relocated to and the suitability of the site was also discussed. It was indicated that the AMM should be clear that an *approved* biologist vs. a *qualified* biologist is required when a species must be handled.

Table 1 was discussed and it was agreed to review the footprint areas shown. Table 2 was also discussed including the need for a qualifier for the buffer areas shown and the need to minimize uncertainty. It was also discussed that regarding Tables 1 and 2, we may need to elaborate on certain distances that may change due to specific local conditions such as terrain, etc.

It was also discussed that in Table 1, there is no literature citation for peregrine falcon. “Potential Survey Protocols” is used in order to capture all possible means. It was agreed to add more clarification as a footnote to the table.

There was discussion of no take species and fully protected species and the need to address these in the AMMs.

The need to clarify the habitat type in Table 2 for California black rail was identified, i.e., emergent marsh/springs supporting habitat.

It was noted that where suitable erosion materials are indicated, we need to specify that they must be sterile.

There was a discussion of water quality best management practices, local ordinances, etc. and the relationship with the AMMs. Additional information on local ordinances will be obtained.

Administrative Draft Species Conservation Measures (Handouts #2a and #2b)

These handouts were discussed and include a set of draft conservation measures for a number of the covered species. This section will be part of Chapter 5. The conservation measures are the specific measures to achieve the objectives. If protection and preservation across the landscape is not sufficient, species specific measures may be needed. For a number of species there may not be species specific measures if habitat restoration, preservation and AMMs are sufficient. These measures are not complete for the natural communities but the approach is being presented.

The landscape level goals, etc. were discussed including the creation of corridors and the issues (advantages and disadvantages) that may be associated with this, e.g., transmission element for invasive species, etc. A good reference book was identified (Corridor Ecology) – more information on this will be provided. The idea of preserving an existing corridor vs. creating a new one was discussed and the desire to have some areas of connectivity in the long term on the valley floor.

The importance of how to ensure that adequate water supply and availability is maintained was discussed and the Plan should consider a landscape goal, etc. to address this. DFG to provide more input and direction on this issue.

The issue of preacquisition planning was discussed and suggestions are to be submitted on this issue.

The need to have the objectives be clear and measurable was also discussed and to have a clear relationship between the goals and objectives and the conservation measures. A crosswalk table regarding the latter will be provided.

It was requested to provide an annotated outline of the HCP/NCCP document in order to see the planned architecture of the document. This will be provided.

The levels of the draft conservation measures and their relationship were discussed, i.e., three ecological scales including landscape-, natural community-, and species-levels, and the need to provide more clarity on this for the reader. It was also requested to place more emphasis on the goals and objectives.

It was requested to state rice or other suitable habitat vs. agricultural foraging habitat with respect to the white-tailed kite (page 26).

Questions about schedule and the expected completion date of Chapter 5 were raised. It was indicated that the entire Chapter 5 would not be completed by the end of April but that larger pieces of the chapter would be completed including draft conservation measures, goals, and objective for all species. It was indicated that perhaps it would be helpful to prepare the whole chapter first in order to better understand the goals and objectives. It was indicated that if the group would prefer to receive whole, complete chapters first this can be done going forward but this has not been done thus far in order to avoid bringing too much information to the group at once. It was indicated that the relationship, links and crosswalks to the various pieces does need to be understood and cross-checked and the annotated outline which is to be provided to the group will assist as well as the goals and objectives crosswalk table. It was indicated that it would still be helpful to provide as much information as possible on the objectives.

Handout 2b was discussed. Handout 2b demonstrates how the acreage objectives were derived. The economic analysis, etc. will influence these numbers as well. At the next meeting this table will be discussed in more detail and answer any questions the group may have.

Issues with the approach of indicating everything is incorporated into the landscape level conservation measures were raised. The approach was further explained and it was indicated that additional descriptive text will be provided to give more information regarding the information in the table. It was also discussed that additional columns to the table to provide more information on acreages would be added.

Meeting Notes from December 2009 (Handout #3)

Meeting notes from December 2009 were approved.

USFWS/DFG/NMFS Items for Discussion

No additional items.

Action Items and Next Meeting Agenda

- The next Stakeholder meeting will be held on March 3, 2010 from 11:00 to 3:00 pm, at BCAG.
- For the next meeting, an annotated outline of the document will be provided and Handout #2b will be revisited. In addition, a crosswalk table of the goals, objectives and conservation measures will be provided.