

Butte Regional HCP/NCCP Stakeholder Committee Meeting

April 04, 2007, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

BCAG

Meeting Summary

Chris Devine (BCAG)	Scott McNall (CSU, Chico)
Jon Clark (BCAG)	Phil Johnson (Altacal Audubon)
Jamison Watts (Nor Cal Reg Land Trust)	John Merz (Sac River Preservation Trust)
Jane Dolan (BCAG Board)	Jason Bougie (BIA)
Jenny Marr (CDFG)	Jim Estep (SAIC subcontractor)
Jennifer Hogan (CDFG)	Paul Cylinder (SAIC)
Jesse Wild (USFWS)	Letty Brown (SAIC)
Ted Trimble (Western Canal Water District)	Colleen Aguiar (Butte County Farm Bureau)
Scott Huber (Altacal Audubon)	Pia Sevelius (BC-RCD)
Bill Haas (PCCA/MLC of CNPS)	Richard Price (Butte Cnty Ag Commissioner)
Barbara Vlamis (BEC)	Mike Miller (Butte College District)
GeneAnna McMillan (BEC)	Suellen Rowlison (CNPS)

Associated documents/handouts:

1. Agenda including Meeting Notes from Stakeholder Meeting March 14th, 2007.
2. Draft Planning Agreement
3. Preliminary Short list of Science Advisory Panel Candidates.
4. Handout from Bill Haas, PCCA and MLC of CNPS.

Action Items and Key Recommendations

- Committee's comments on the short list of Science Advisory Panel candidates are being solicited as soon as possible (due to Chris Devine).
- Portions of the draft Planning Agreement regarding the role of Committees are being revised by Stakeholder Committee members. Their suggested changes will be reviewed at the next meeting. Additionally, BCAG will provide a red-line version of the draft Planning Agreement, showing template and added language, also for review at the next meeting.
- The need was identified to bring HCP/NCCP planning process information to the Citizen's Advisory Committee on the General Plan update process. Agreement was made that BCAG and possibly Consultant(s) will attend an upcoming Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting and deliver information.
- Committee agreed that a list called "Species of Local Concern" is needed. Jim Estep is working with Stakeholder Committee members on this.
- Agreement that Peregrine Falcon should be added to the Potential Covered Species list. Jim Estep will create the species account and it will be submitted to the Committee for review.

- Outreach efforts by BCAG staff and Stakeholder Committee members to bring more parties (e.g., sportsmen groups, tribal groups, large landowners, watershed groups) to the table will continue.
- Many Committee members offered specific data items (eg. maps, data sets) applicable to the Ecological Baseline Report (including the Potential Covered Species accounts). SAIC will follow up with these individuals.
- Several dates were identified as potential dates for a working session to review maps of the Butte Regional HCP/NCCP Planning Area. Letty Brown will follow-up with a final date shortly.
- SAIC will prepare revised draft of Ecological Baseline Report based on Stakeholder Committee comments for the Science Panel review.
- Next meeting will be held May 02, from 11am- 3pm, at BCAG.

Meeting Purpose:

- Personal Introductions;
- Discussion of Roles and Responsibilities of Committees (revisit of draft handout);
- Science Advisory Panel Status;
- Planning Agreement;
- Interim Projects Tracking;
- Review of comments submitted to 16 Additional Species for Draft Ecological Baseline Conditions report;
- Set-up of Working Session to Review Maps of Butte Regional HCP/NCCP Planning Area
- Assignment of next meeting time.

Discussion of Roles of Committees and the Science Advisory Panel:

- Supervisor Dolan opened discussion of the *Draft Planning and Decision- Making Process* handout. Revisions were not available at the meeting start, so we will revisit this topic in the next meeting and will review comments provided by Bill Haas.
- Committee discussed the role of the Science Advisory Panel, which is in the process of being chosen by an independent science facilitator (Dr. Wayne Spencer of the Conservation Biology Institute). The Science Panel is an independent scientific committee that will peer review the scientific information used to develop the HCP/NCCP. CDFG recommends reading their website article regarding the role of the Science Panel. This is also posted on the buttehcp website under Documents.
- Discussion of how Science Panel candidates are chosen. They will have expertise in covered species, local ecosystems, and/or the principles of conservation biology. One Committee member summarized the Panel as “separate, independent, and absolutely credible.” Committee’s comments on the long list have been submitted and comments are now being solicited on the short list (due within one week to Chris Devine).
- The Science Panel budget was discussed as well as the extent of their involvement in the HCP/NCCP process. Consultant and resource agencies explained that they

will be involved multiple times in the process, including in the current phases of developing the ecological baseline information, and later in the phases of impact assessment, conservation strategies, and creation of the monitoring and adaptive management plans.

- It is anticipated that the Science Panel will be chosen by May, at which point they will be asked to review the draft Ecological Baseline Report and conduct a field tour and workshop.
- Suggestion was made that the Committee should prepare a list of science-related questions that arise during Committee meetings to go to the Science Panel, and that these should be general rather than specific in scope.

Planning Agreement and Interim Projects Tracking:

- The Planning Agreement falls under the NCCP Act. Discussion of the role of the various committees as written in the Planning Agreement. Barbara Vlamis and Bill Haas volunteered to rewrite the section that describes committee roles.
- Question: Can we look at the language of the draft Planning Agreement to better understand what is template language and what is added language? At the next Committee meeting, a red-line version of the draft Planning Agreement showing template and added language will be provided for the Committee's review.
- After the Planning Agreement is finalized with all the signatory entities, a 21-day public comment period will begin.
- Barbara Vlamis discussed the role of illegal activities in Butte County that are leading to adverse impacts on resources. Suggestion made that the Committee take these into consideration in the HCP/NCCP process.
- Discussion of the need for a forum to bring HCP information to the Citizen's Advisory Committee (for the General Plan updating process). Several members are on both the HCP Stakeholder and the Citizen's Advisory Committees. Recommendation made that this happen soon. May 31st is the date of an upcoming meeting and BCAG and potentially Consultant will attend.
- Discussion of "interim projects". These are development projects that are initiated during the HCP/NCCP planning stages but before its implementation. What are the mechanisms for tracking such projects? Consultants are working with the local agency planning offices to ensure that these projects are documented.

Discussion of Potential Covered Species List and 16 Additional Species Accounts:

- Committee discussed the Potential Covered Species list. Question: How are these species chosen? Resource agencies and Consultants explained that these include both listed and non-listed species (the non-listed species covered under the plan should be treated as though they were listed) that will need authorization for incidental take permits. Key criteria used to develop the Potential Covered Species list are as follows: the species occur or have the potential to occur within the planning area, and are likely to be impacted by Covered Activities; the species are state- or federally listed as threatened or endangered, or may become listed during the term of the permit; sufficient information is available about the species

- to assess impacts and to develop conservation measures. Resource agency biologists highlighted that regulatory needs dictate many elements of this list.
- Discussion of what to do about species not on the Potential Covered Species list, such as locally rare species that are not federally- or state listed, and are not expected to become listed. Agreement made that a list called “Species of Local Concern” will be created. These species will be discussed in the Covered Natural Communities sections of the Ecological Baseline Report, and are also evaluated under the NEPA/CEQA process. SAIC will work with Committee members to create this list.
 - Agreement that Peregrine Falcon should be added to the Potential Covered Species list. Jim Estep will create the species account and it will be submitted to the Committee for review.
 - The need to evaluate or reevaluate species for inclusion on the Potential Covered Species list was discussed and the topic will be revisited at the next meeting.
 - Discussion of Potential Covered Species list and agricultural issues, as well as the Neighboring Landowner Assurances and Safe Harbors Act. More discussion of these to come.
 - No written comments on the 16 Additional Species Accounts have been submitted to date. Oral comments were received at the meeting.
 - Opportunities for additional data for insertion into the document were identified. SAIC will follow up with these individuals.
 - Several dates were identified as potential dates for a working session to review maps of the Butte Regional HCP/NCCP Planning Area. Letty Brown will follow-up with a final date shortly.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Next Stakeholder meeting will occur on Wednesday, May 2nd, 11:00 am- 3:00 pm, at BCAG. Agenda items identified are as follows: Roles and Responsibilities of Committees; Science Panel update; Planning Agreement review; Potential Covered Species list.
- A date for a Working Session for Review of Maps of the Butte Regional HCP/NCCP Planning Area will be announced shortly.