

Meeting Summary

Butte Regional HCP/NCCP Stakeholder Committee Meeting

March 5, 2008, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

BCAG Conference Room

Stakeholder Committee Attendees

Mary Daniels (Butte County Ag. Commission)	Laura Grossman (Sierra Club)
Scott McNall (Chico State)	Scott Huber (Altacal Audubon)
Pia Sevelius (Butte County RCD)	Colleen Aguilar (BC Farm Bureau)
Suellen Rowilson (CNPS)	

Resource Agencies Attendees

Rick Kuyper (USFWS)	Nina Bicknese (USFWS)
Jenny Marr (DFG)	Eric Haney (DFG)
Katie Perry (DFG)	Bruce Webb (DFG)
Eric Tattersall (USFWS)	

Steering Committee and Staff Attendees

Jane Dolan (BCAG/ Supervisor)	Paul Cylinder (SAIC)
Jamie Johansson (Oroville City Council)	Letty Brown (SAIC)
Chris Devine (BCAG)	

Interested Public Attendees

Patrick Kelly (Sierra Club)	Breanna Owens (Gallaway Consulting)
Alexis Vertolli (Butte County RCD)	David Arsenault (Gallaway Consulting)
Jennifer Carvalho (Preservation Partners)	

Associated Documents/Handouts:

1. Agenda including Meeting Notes from December 12, 2007
2. Handout: Recommendations and Rationale for Adding and Not Adding Covered Species and Species of Local Concern
3. Handout: Approach to Addressing Red-Legged Frog and California Tiger Salamander
4. Handout: Preliminary Draft Biological Constraints memo

Action Items and Key Recommendations:

- The General Plan update process and the HCP/NCCP process are running in tandem and relevant information is being shared. Biological resource data generated in the HCP/NCCP process is being provided to the cities and County planning departments. At present, development of portions of the HCP/NCCP are on hold until Butte County's preferred land use alternatives under the General Plan update process are released.
- SAIC/BCAG worked with the resource agencies and it was decided that four additional species would be recommended as Covered Species to the Butte HCP/NCCP. These species are California beak rush, Red Bluff dwarf rush, Ahart's paronychia, and slender Orcutt grass. SAIC will develop species accounts and habitat models (if applicable) for these four species and bring them to the next Stakeholder Committee meeting.
- Additional species are being considered for inclusion as Species of Local Concern. SAIC will bring more information on each of these species and recommendations regarding whether they should be included or not to the next Stakeholder Committee meeting.
- Red-legged Frog will be addressed in the HCP/NCCP under a different approach than the formally Covered Species. FWS and DFG will discuss this approach with their home offices to assess how it might work and bring concepts back to the Steering and Stakeholder Committees.
- The next Stakeholder meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, 11:00 am-3:00 pm, at BCAG.

Meeting Purpose:

- January/February 2008 Updates
- Update on General Plan Processes
- Overview of Biological Constraints Analysis
- Butte County Meadowfoam Evaluation
- Potential Additional Species of Local Concern and Covered Species
- Approach to Addressing Red Legged Frog and California Tiger Salamander
- Meeting Notes from December 12, 2007
- Action Items and Next Meeting

January/February 2008 Updates:

- BCAG hosted a booth at the Snow Goose Festival in late January to inform the public about the HCP/NCCP. Chris Devine and Phil Johnson (Altacal Audubon) put up posters, distributed handouts, and answered questions about the plan.
- BCAG staff and Paul Cylinder attended the city of Chico's Citizen Advisory Committee meeting in January. Jon Clark and Chris Devine provided an overview presentation on HCP/NCCP's in general, and provided details on the Butte Regional Conservation Plan and coordination efforts with the ongoing General Plan updates. Paul Cylinder presented detailed information on the

Biological Constraints Analysis that was developed for the local jurisdictions' use in updating their General Plans.

- Last week, Chris Devine, Jon Clark, and Paul Cylinder attended a meeting with the Chico Building Industry Association (BIA) to inform the group about the HCP/NCCP process.

Update on General Plan Processes:

- Chris Devine presented an update on the General Plan Update process and how it is interacting with the HCP/NCCP. The two processes are running in tandem and are sharing relevant information. Biological resource data generated in the HCP/NCCP process is being provided to the planning departments including the land cover mapping and the species habitat models. At present, development of portions of the HCP/NCCP are on hold until Butte County's preferred land use alternatives under the General Plan update process are released. These data will be used to move forward with the Covered Activities and Impact Analysis portions of the HCP/NCCP.

Overview of Biological Constraints Analysis:

- Paul Cylinder overviewed the Preliminary Draft Biological Constraints Analysis process to the group. The map and accompanying memo were provided to the General Plan Update planners and their consultants. The Stakeholder Committee discussed how the Constraints Analysis works and its utility in the process.

Butte County Meadowfoam Evaluation:

- SAIC is developing Butte County meadowfoam conservation scenarios for the city of Chico looking at potential development areas within the city and vicinity. The conservation scenarios represent different levels of conservation of meadowfoam habitat. SAIC is undergoing this analysis using many different types of data including mapped locations of occurrences from various surveys, survey boundaries for presence/absence, habitat suitability model results, and recovery units and critical habitat areas. Scenarios will be evaluated using conservation biology principles and current knowledge of meadowfoam ecology and genetics.

Potential Additional Species of Local Concern and Covered Species:

- Additional species are being considered for inclusion on the Covered Species list and the Species of Local Concern list, based on recommendations from the Independent Science Advisory Panel.
- SAIC/BCAG worked with the DFG and FWS and it was decided that four additional species would be recommended for addition to the Butte HCP/NCCP Covered Species list. These species are California beak rush, Red Bluff dwarf rush, Ahart's paronychia, and slender Orcutt grass. The Steering Committee concurred with the recommendation to include these species on the permit application. SAIC will develop species accounts and habitat models (if applicable) for these four species and bring them to the next Stakeholder Committee meeting.

- SAIC/BCAG also worked with DFG and FWS on several species to consider for inclusion on the Species of Local Concern list. A recommended list of these species was brought to the Stakeholder Committee for consideration of whether to include them in the HCP/NCCP and Local Concern Species. The Stakeholder Committee asked that more information be brought to the next meeting to assist the Committee in evaluating the potential additional Species of Local Concern. SAIC will do this.

Approach to Addressing Red-Legged Frog and California Tiger Salamander:

- Paul Cylinder presented a potential approach to the coverage of red-legged frog and California tiger salamander under the Butte Regional HCP/NCCP (see handout). These two species are currently identified as Covered Species under the plan, and the planning area is considered within their historic range, but neither species has been found within the planning area for a long time. As such, the planning area is considered outside the current known range for each species. Under the plan, a substantial amount of land that could be suitable habitat for both species would be identified in the planning area. FWS requires under the ESA Section 7 process that project proponents in Butte County survey for red-legged frog where suitable habitat is present; however no red-legged frog has been found to date and therefore no mitigation requirements have been imposed. In the case of California tiger salamander, FWS does not require project proponents in Butte County to survey for the species under the ESA Section 7 process and considers the Butte County to be outside of the species range.
- Given these factors, FWS and DFG recommend that California Tiger Salamander not be included as a covered species in the Butte HCP/NCCP and that California Red-Legged Frog be addressed in the HCP/NCCP under a special form of “coverage.” Cylinder suggested the term “Provisionally Covered Species” wherein mitigation would not be required for removal of potentially suitable habitat but that the plan would include conservation measures that address species habitat and could contribute to species recovery. FWS and DFG will discuss this approach with their respective offices. They asked that a new term be developed to describe this coverage for Red-legged Frog.
- The Stakeholder Committee discussed this recommendation and accepted the approach. A challenge was presented to come up with a better name than “Provisionally Covered Species” for this new category of species.

Meeting Notes from December 12, 2007:

- Meeting notes from December 12, 2007 were accepted.

Upcoming Workshops/Meetings:

- The next Stakeholder meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, 11:00 am- 3:00 pm, at BCAG. Agenda items will include review of new Covered Species accounts and habitat models, and discussion of whether to add new Species of Local Concern to the list.