

Meeting Summary

Butte Regional HCP/NCCP Stakeholder Committee Meeting

May 7, 2008, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

BCAG Conference Room

Stakeholder Committee Attendees

Scott McNall (CSU Chico/Citizens Advisor) Phil Johnson (Altacal Audubon)
Mary Daniels (Butte County Ag. Commission) Colleen Aguilar (BC Farm Bureau)

Resource Agencies Attendees

Jenny Marr (DGF) Nina Bicknese (USFWS)

Steering Committee and Staff Attendees

Jane Dolan (BCAG/ Supervisor) Paul Cylinder (SAIC)
Jon Clark (BCAG) Letty Brown (SAIC)
Chris Devine (BCAG) Holly Wilson-Weatherly (SAIC)

Interested Public Attendees

Josephine Guardino (CNPS)

Associated Documents/Handouts:

1. Agenda packet including Conservation Strategies Memo, Phil Johnson's Science Panel Report Comments (with Paul Cylinder's Responses), new Species of Local Concern, and Meeting Notes from April 2, 2008
2. Handout: Draft Conservation Acquisition Zones (CAZs) maps and acreage tables
3. Handout: Draft Table 1-Conservation Preserve Design Spatial Criteria for Covered Wildlife Species; Draft Table 2- Conservation Preserve Design Criteria for Planning Species; Draft Acreage tables for Representative CAZs with Land Cover Summaries.

Action Items and Key Recommendations:

- The Committee reviewed species accounts for eight species that have been added to the Species of Local Concern list. The Committee accepted the recommendation that four-angled spikerush be removed from the list in light of new data indicating that it is an introduced species to California.
- The General Plan update and the HCP/NCCP processes are running in tandem and relevant information is being shared. Biological resource data generated in the

HCP/NCCP process has been provided to the planning departments. At present, evaluation of impacts and development of the conservation strategy under the HCP/NCCP are on hold until Butte County's draft land use alternatives under the General Plan update process are released.

- SAIC is developing Butte County meadowfoam conservation scenarios for the city of Chico to assist them in assessing potential development options within the city of Chico area. Losses that have occurred since the Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Species was published will be factored into the analysis.
- The next Stakeholder meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 7, 2008, 11:00 am-3:00 pm, at BCAG.

Meeting Agenda:

- Overview of Recommended Approach to Conservation Strategy
- Phil Johnson's Science Panel Report Comments
- Local Species of Concern Accounts
- New Term to Replace "Provisionally Covered Species"
- Update on General Plan Processes
- Meeting Notes from April 2, 2008
- Action Items and Next Meeting

Overview of Recommended Approach to Conservation Strategy:

- Paul Cylinder gave a presentation entitled "Recommended Approach to Developing a Conservation Strategy for the Butte Regional HCP/NCCP" in which he overviewed alternative and recommended approaches to the conservation strategy. Dr. Cylinder talked the group through some of the key factors needed to initiate the process of designing a preserve system.
- The Committee viewed a draft map of the Conservation Acquisition Zones (CAZs); these are bookkeeping units that will be used to identify acquisition zones in the planning area (see handouts). Goals will be set within particular zones.
- Dr. Cylinder overviewed the process of identifying biological goals and objectives for species, communities, and landscapes. Biological goals and objectives will be used to write conservation measures which will drive preserve design. Landscape level measures, for instance, will address how to preserve landscape level processes and gradients, while species-specific measures would address how to ensure the conservation of each covered species. Biological goals and objectives will be quantifiable either in terms of population (e.g. number of individuals, % of existing population) or habitat (e.g. acreage saved) metrics.
- Types of Conservation Measures include protection of species occurrences, habitat acquisition, impact avoidance and minimization, and habitat restoration and enhancements.
- Dr. Cylinder overviewed Table 2: Conservation Preserve Design Criteria for Planning Species (see handouts). This table displays how minimum patch size for specific natural communities will be determined and will be used for preserve design. Minimum patch size for given natural communities will be based on specific planning species (e.g. black-tailed deer for oak woodlands, white-fronted

geese for rice, irrigated pasture, and cropland, and badger for grassland). This does not mean that smaller habitat patches will be ignored. There will be places where conservation of smaller habitat areas will be a priority within the plan because they are important to species conservation.

- Dr. Cylinder discussed the difference between map-based and process-based plans. Some HCPs (e.g. in San Diego MSCP) are heavily map-based while other HCPs are more process-based (e.g. San Joaquin Co HCP). One of the advantages of process-based plans is the flexibility it affords in terms of working with willing sellers, but map-based plans provide more certainty as to the final preserve system. SAIC recommends that the Butte Regional HCP/NCCP take a hybrid approach with some map-based and some process-based elements.
- The Existing Protected Lands database was discussed. Given the range of protections afforded to “protected lands” based on who manages them and what they are managed for, several categories of protection are under development. SAIC will bring these to the next Stakeholder meeting.
- The recommendation was made that the presentation be sent to the Stakeholder Committee members via email. SAIC will do this.

Phil Johnson’s Science Panel Report Comments:

- The Committee reviewed Paul Cylinder’s responses to Phil Johnson’s Comments and posed questions.

New Term to Replace “Provisionally Covered Species”:

- The new term for “Provisionally Covered Species” is “**Special Consideration Species.**” This term applies only to California red-legged frog at this time. The California red-legged frog is federally listed as threatened. Conservation of habitat for this species will be addressed in the HCP/NCCP, but no request will be made to USFWS for take authorization as the species is not known to occur in the Planning Area.

Local Species of Concern Accounts:

- The Committee reviewed the nine Species of Local Concern accounts. These are heartscale, subtle orache, brittlescale, adobe lily, four-angled spikerush merlin, hardhead, hitch, and tule perch, respectively. It was decided that four-angled spikerush would be removed from the Local Concern list, given recent scientific evidence that it is not native to California and widespread in other States. The eight additional Species of Local Concern accounts will be added to the Ecological Baseline Chapter of the HCP/NCCP.
- Anyone with any comments or additional information about these species, please contact Chris Devine or Holly Wilson-Weatherly.

Update On General Plan Processes:

- Chris Devine presented an update on the various General Plan update processes and how it is interacting with the HCP/NCCP. The city of Oroville’s update is in final draft form and will go before the council in June. The city of Gridley’s

process is just beginning, and the city of Biggs has not yet started their update process.

- Jane Dolan walked the group through the County's proposed land use alternatives. These will go before the Board of Supervisors in late July.

Meeting Notes from April 2, 2008:

- Meeting notes from April 2, 2008 were accepted.

Upcoming Workshops/Meetings:

- The next Stakeholder meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 4, 2008, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm, at BCAG. Agenda items will include Existing Protected Lands categories, and