

Meeting #45 Summary

Butte Regional Conservation Plan (BRCP)

Stakeholder Committee Meeting

December 4, 2013, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

BCAG Conference Room

Stakeholder Committee Attendees

Colleen Cecil (Butte Co. Farm Bureau)	Richard Price (Butte Co. Ag. Comm.) - Chair
Virginia Getz (Ducks Unlimited)	Suellen Rowilson (CNPS)
Woody Elliott (CNPS)	Eugene Massa (Biggs West-Gridley Water D)

Resource Agencies Attendees

Mike Thomas (USFWS)	Jenny Marr (CDFW)
Cassidee Shinn (CDFW)	Krystal Bell (USACE, on phone)
Guy Chetelat (CVRWQCB, on phone)	

Steering Committee and Staff Attendees

Jon Clark (BCAG)	Paul Cylinder (Leidos, formerly SAIC)
Chris Devine (BCAG)	
Bill Connelly (Butte County Supervisor)	

Interested Public Attendees

John Byrne (Sycamore Creek Mitigation Bank)	Riley Swift (Restoration Resources)
Barbara Vlamis (Aqua Alliance)	John Merz (Citizen)
Keith Landrum (Eco-Analysts)	Tracy Bettencourt (Gallaway Enterprises)
Jim Stevens (Northstar Environmental)	Christy Dawson (Northstar Environmental)
Jody Gallaway (Gallaway Enterprises)	Lucas Ross Merz (Sac River Trust)

Associated Documents/Handouts

Agenda packet including:

1. Meeting Notes from February 6, 2013 Stakeholder Committee Meeting (Handout #1)
2. Schedule for Release of the Formal Public Draft BRCP & EIS/EIR (Handout #2)

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions and Agenda Review
2. Meeting Notes From February 6, 2013 Stakeholder Committee Meeting (Handout #1)
3. Overview of Revisions to Preliminary Public Draft BRCP

- a. Stakeholder Committee Input
- b. USFWS and CDFW Input
4. Schedule for Release of the Formal Public Draft BRCP & EIS/EIR (Handout #2)
5. Action Items and Next Meeting Date/Agenda

Introductions and Agenda Review

The agenda was distributed and the names of attendees were announced.

Meeting Notes from February 6, 2013 Stakeholder Committee Meeting (Handout #1)

The BRCP Stakeholder Committee Meeting Summary from February 6, 2013 was reviewed and approved.

Overview of Revisions to Preliminary Public Draft BRCP

Delay in making revisions to the Preliminary Public Draft BRCP resulted from long delay in receiving comments from USFWS. Challenges for USFWS resulted from short staffing, federal government budget “sequestration,” and federal government shutdown.

The Administrative Draft EIR/EIS was completed during this downtime and USFWS is completing their review of the last few chapters. The Administrative Draft Implementation Agreement was also completed during this downtime and a Public Draft Implementation Agreement will be released with the Public Draft BRCP.

Paul Cylinder (Leidos) provided an overview of the key substantive revisions made to the Preliminary Draft BRCP based on comments received from the Stakeholder Committee, Steering Committee, USFWS, and CDFW between January and November 2013 (see Powerpoint presentation on BRCP website under “Past Stakeholder Committee Meetings”). Many changes were simply editorial and provided clarification to information and concepts presented in various chapters of the BRCP. Substantive changes requested by Stakeholder and Steering Committee members focused on the avoidance and minimization measures (AMMs). Greater flexibility was added to AMMs for buffers around covered species occurrences and streams/riparian habitat and for the design elements of wildland-urban interface areas. Changes to the Conservation Strategy requested by USFWS and CDFW to reduce natural community and covered species habitat acreage targets for protection and restoration were driven by three key factors: 1) implementation cost concerns; 2) for some species, conservation targets were more than sufficient for covered species recovery in the Plan Area; 3) minimize footprint on agriculture.

Concerns expressed with changes to allowable activities on conservation lands requested by USFWS and CDFW with regard to allowable levels of hunting. Concern that limitation of hunting to past levels of use may drive landowners away from entering into conservation easements. Concern regarding potential adverse effects on covered species and natural communities from hunting activities. Hunting is typically not permitted on mitigation lands, but examples provided in which hunting has been allowed at approved mitigation banks. The following text change to Section 6.8, *Allowable Activities on BRCP Conservation Lands*, was agreed to by the committee: “Hunting of game species may be allowed if it does not adversely affect covered species occurrences or the function of covered species habitat, ~~if it is not in excess~~”

of prior hunting use, and is developed and approved within Conservation Lands Management Plans and BRCP approved conservation easements.”

There was discussion regarding the changing of riparian buffers in the Avoidance and Minimization Measures. It was explained that this was limited to the Chico UPA, where the City of Chico has existing measures in place for buffers. The BRCP will be consistent with Chico’s existing riparian buffers.

There was concern regarding removing the reference to Recovery Plans in Chapter 6 of the BRCP. USFWS explained that this was their request and was necessary to avoid needing to update the BRCP every time a recovery plan was changed for consistency. It was noted that the Recovery Plan is referenced elsewhere in the document where the BRCP relies on them for conservation guidance.

Schedule for Release of the Formal Public Draft BRCP & EIS/EIR (Handout #2)

The schedule for the Public Draft of the BRCP EIS/EIR was reviewed and discussed. The Public Draft BRCP will be completed by the end of January 2014. The Public Draft EIR/EIS should be completed by the end of February 2014 with release of the formal Public Draft BRCP and EIR/EIS in March 2014. The 90-day public comment period will begin at that time. The public comment period is an extended time as per Endangered Species Act and Natural Community Conservation Planning Act policy. Combined BRCP and EIS/EIR workshops will be held during the public comment period likely, as last time, in Chico, Oroville, and Gridley.

Action Items and Next Meeting Agenda

The date of the next Stakeholder Committee meeting is Wednesday, February 5, 2014 at 11:00am-2:00pm.