

1. Steering Committee Meeting #4 Notes

Multiple Species Conservation Program – North County Plan

Attendees:

PDS: Mary Kopaskie, Peter Eichar, Crystal Benham, Chelsea Oakes, Eira Whitty, Melanie Causey, Tom Oberbauer

DPR: Deb Mosley, Jennifer Price

USFWS: Doreen Stadlander, Susan Wynn

CDFW: Dave Mayer, Carol Williams

SC: Ann Van Leer, Jim Whalen, Frank Landis, Rikki Schroeder, Brad Bartlett, Doug Goad, Dan Silver (teleconference)

Steering Committee Member:	Question/Comment/Topic:	Response/Way Forward:	Date Action Item Anticipated for Completion:
Jim	Will the Steering Committee be provided copies of the question matrix?	We will print copies now so that you have them during the meeting.	Completed
Jim	One of our concerns is second bites to projects by additional CEQA review and documentation. Our understanding is that the BMO will mitigate for any additional species found onsite that were not included in the Conservation Analysis (ex. species: California adolphia, Cleveland goldenstar, etc.)	The EIR/EIS prepared for the NC Plan will include an analysis of the BMO, and the impacts and mitigation for impacts to all species identified in the Plan area. It will include an analysis of covered species, watch list species, and those species that may occur in the plan area but are neither covered nor watch list species. As part of that analysis, a conclusion will be reached regarding the impacts to each of the species, and the effect that the Plan will have on those impacts. (note to staff: let's discuss the following statements) Species not included in the Conservation Analysis will be included in this analysis. The Wildlife Agencies will make a concerted effort to consider all important species within the North County, unlike the South County which left several gaps. Following plan adoption and implementation, projects that are processed in the NC Plan area will be encouraged to tier off this environmental review.	Completed
Ann	How often will we revisit the Covered Species and Watch List? There are some species we are concerned with that were removed from the covered species list, including:	These lists will continue to be revisited as we discuss the conservation analysis and goals/objectives. Regarding the species mentioned:	No action

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange-throated whiptail • Two-striped gartersnake • San Diego goldenstar • Orcutt’s brodiaea • Summer holly • Sticky dudleya 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange-throated whiptail was removed from the Covered/Watch List as it is not likely to be listed during the permit term. It does not have Federal or State status. • Two-striped gartersnake was removed from the Covered/Watch List as it is not likely to be listed during the permit term. It does not have Federal status. • San Diego goldenstar was removed from the Covered/Watch List as it is not likely to be listed during the permit term. It does not have Federal or State status. • Orcutt’s brodiaea was removed from the Covered/Watch List as it is not likely to be listed during the permit term. It does not have Federal or State status. • Summer holly was removed from the Covered/Watch List as it is not likely to be listed during the permit term. It does not have Federal or State status. • Sticky dudleya was removed from the Covered/Watch List as it is not likely to be listed during the permit term. It does not have Federal or State status. 	

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Frank	I think we need to consider how we discuss protecting species in order to protect habitat. There are several ways this may be twisted by developers in terms of mitigation and protection of species but not habitats. Adaptive management needs to be in the forefront of the plan.	The implementing agreement and plan include a “Changed Circumstances” section to provide contingencies and funding for foreseeable issues that may affect the plan area during the permit term. We also have an “Unforeseen Circumstances” section which provides contingencies for unforeseeable changes to the plan area. The MSCP is meant to be a more flexible document that can be changed as needed. Adaptive management will be used to assure the conservation of habitat and the species using it.	May 15 th
Rikki	Climate Change will not be seen immediately, we need to create a plan that is able to adapt to the foreseen changes as we can.	Foreseen changes to the plan area are discussed in the “Changed Circumstances” portion of the plan, which will be discussed at a later meeting date.	May 15 th
Doug	Are we focused on plants or animals or both? Are these being managed concurrently? Do we know which will be affected by climate change more quickly?	The Covered Species includes both plants and animals that drive the plan. They are managed concurrently to protect both the species and their vegetation communities. Plant and animal species will most likely be affected by climate change concurrently; however animal species are mobile and will be able to relocate if needed.	No action
Doug	How does this plan monitor species changes that would trigger adaptive management? How statistically significant are the models used to analyze the data gathered? How quickly would we be able to discover a change in the environment and then adapt to it so that we maintain the existing habitat?	Through the Plan’s monitoring and management requirements the various species will be evaluated over time, which will help us identify any changes that need to be made for the success of those species. Parks will be conducting the monitoring of County-owned preserves, while private developers will have their own RMPs that stipulate monitoring requirements. Unfortunately, the data gathered for species change is not typically linear and cannot be analyzed as such. Monitoring and Management will be discussed in further detail at a later Steering Committee Meeting.	June 7 th

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Ann	My impression is that, generally, we're not doing a very good job in the developed environment with invasive plants. How does this fit into the Preserve? Ornamental landscape may eventually wind up in the Preserve.	In the County Landscape Ordinance there are restrictions to invasive vegetation planting if it is near open space easements, near stormwater drainages or fire prone vegetation. However, there are currently no restrictions on nurseries selling invasive/ornamental vegetation. Previously there was an attempt to impose restrictions which was met with strong pushback from the nurseries. There are upcoming updates to the County Landscape Ordinance, more updates to come. Should consider if we want to add something to monitoring and management for North County Preserve.	Completed
Frank	We should discuss what plants are safe in terms of fire safety and landscaping.	Fire defensible space requires clearing of combustible vegetation in a 100-foot radius from any structure and lists acceptable plants for defensible spaces and undesirable plants. More details can be found on form PDS 199. If an open space easement is located on your property you may legally clear the 100 feet from your structure, even if it takes you into that easement, upon written authorization of your fire protection district. No irrigated or non-native landscaping is allowed within an open space easement.	Completed
Jim	Will the Plan include the same type of detailed list documenting general plan mobility element projects that was included in the South County Plan? I highly recommend we include this as it has worked well in the South County (not just roads, but widening projects, sewer improvements, etc.).	We are working closely with both Parks and DPW to finalize their detailed lists of covered infrastructure projects. The San Marcos Landfill and Palomar Airport are the two large-scale hardline County projects specifically included in the Plan. We have tried to keep the Covered Activities section more general as we want the MSCP to last the full 50 year permit term and the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) specifies County	No action

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		improvements in five year increments. The best way to accommodate the CIP is to have a category of known specific improvements and a more general category for future non-specific improvements. Regardless, all improvement projects will be required to make CEQA findings in compliance with the Plan.	
Frank	Does the 'trails' section of the Covered Activities include development, maintenance, and monitoring?	Yes, all actions involving trails are included in Covered Activities. When trails are opened to the public, we use a contact sensitive design so that we are able to share these areas with the public yet still maintain the integrity of the preserve. Trail guidelines and design are detailed in the FRMP which will be discussed at a later meeting.	May 15 th
Rikki	Have you reached out or considered contacting Flood Control, Stormwater or the Regional Water Quality Control Board to offer them coverage under the Plan or are they on their own?	Flood Control and Stormwater are within the County DPW, who has been included in all discussions pertaining to the plan. We are still working to finalize their covered activities.	No action
Doug	In regards to trail alignments, is there any thought given to closing down trails that have degraded and opening new ones elsewhere?	Trail assessment and restoration is frequently conducted by Parks. For example, in Sycamore Ranch Parks is reassessing the existing trails to determine if they are still sustainable and to determine if new alignments are needed. Additionally, in the Tijuana River Estuary Parks has closed several miles of trails that are currently being restored (naturally or proactively).	No action
Frank	There should be community outreach included in the monitoring and management of County Preserves to ensure trails are being used properly.	Parks currently conducts outreach with several recreational groups throughout the County in order to educate recreational users on where activities are allowed and how they may help maintain the County's trail system.	No action

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Jim	Larger projects will be conditioned by the County to do offsite improvements. These improvements need to be included as Covered Activities.	Private development projects and activities are included in the Plan as a covered activity. All aspects of these projects, including offsite improvements required as conditions of approval, will be reviewed for conformance to the BMO and North County Plan.	No action
Frank	Is the San Diego River Park considered a County Project?	90% of the time the River Park is considered a private project run by JPA. In order for a project to qualify as a Covered Activity, the County has to have discretion (land use authority).	No action
Rikki	How are Sand and Gravel operations classified?	Sand and Gravel operations are considered an industrial use. These types of projects have a qualified exemption; however they still have to be in compliance with the BMO and CEQA.	No action
Dan	Regarding the exemptions to the BMO, there appears to also be a public facilities exemption. Can we discuss all of the exemptions to the BMO? We also need to make a distinction of what is considered clearing vs. fire clearing. Clearing acreages in PAMA (2 or 5) seem excessive, what is the reason for these acreages?	Single-family residential clearing is exempt because it is typically in association with a ministerial action. We will discuss these concerns during our meeting on the BMO.	May 15 th
Dan	A list of proposed hardline projects was previously provided to the Steering Committee however I'm not convinced the County has reached concurrence with the Wildlife Agencies. I am also concerned with including projects that have not been approved by the Board as hardlines. This is even more worrisome as it is inappropriate for us to give a benefit of inclusion to a project that has not yet received approval.	The County will be meeting with and working with the Wildlife Agencies to finalize the hardline project list in the next month or so. When conducting the Conservation Analysis, we reviewed potential impacts to our Preserve and used these to analyze the worst case scenario of development in the North County. Newland Sierra's footprint was taken into consideration and included in the conservation analysis to analyze the worst case scenario to our Preserve.	County will follow up with the Steering Committee after additional discussions with the Wildlife Agencies have occurred

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Ann	In discussing the Residential Clearing Exemption, I don't understand how much acreage is actually affected by this allowance.	We will be discussing this in depth during our next meeting on the Conservation Analysis; however it is important to recognize that the County will be mitigating for this acreage.	April 25 th
Frank	Have you discussed with the insurance agencies how much clearing or defensible space is required for fire safety?	Staff has not discussed the Plan with any private insurance agencies; however staff will review the CalFire guidelines and discuss our proposed exemption with County Fire Marshals.	May 15 th
Rikki	How is agriculture addressed in terms of Covered Activities?	Agricultural operations will also have a qualified exemption which will be discussed in further detail during our BMO discussion.	May 15 th
Dan	I think the agricultural exemption also needs to be reexamined. Where were we in previous discussions with the farm bureau? It is also important to understand what the baseline condition is if someone was to clear today their property today.	We will table this discussion until our BMO discussion and for when the Farm Bureau is present. It is important to note that unlike the South County Plan, the County is accounting for and mitigating for the land lost to agriculture.	May 15 th
Ann	Can the County provide a comparison of how Agriculture is treated in the North County Plan vs. the South County Plan?	Staff will provide this comparison during our BMO discussion.	May 15 th
Frank	Can you provide an example of an "other project and activity associated with implementation of the conservation strategy" that would result in take?	Fairy shrimp monitoring or trapping for Stephens' kangaroo rat may result in take and fall into this "other" category.	No action
Doug	Is invasive plant removal considered part of habitat restoration category? (regarding projects and activities to implement the conservation strategy)	These categories are fluid, so removal of invasive species may fall under Preserve management and maintenance or habitat restoration.	No action

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Jim	Is the Conservation Analysis a gap analysis? Will you be using a model to predict the location of the covered species?	It is a gap analysis. We used the conservation analysis to predict both the location of vegetation communities and the potential for species to be in these locations. Observations of species were grouped into occurrences, which we then created conservation goals for. We also reviewed the model output species by species to determine if the known locations were captured and if the model could accurately predict their locations.	No action
Doug	Are you saying you don't have actual occurrences in your model?	We do; there are different types of models used to predict the location of species. These models were overlaid with known points of species occurrence to ensure the model used was not over or under predicting occurrence probability.	No action
Rikki	You mentioned mitigation ratios, are these ratios the same as South County?	Yes, the proposed mitigation ratios are the same as used in South County.	No action
Ann	At the last meeting, staff mentioned the Steering Committee would receive a large-scale copy of the predicted species hotspot map, is that still coming?	Staff is still working on preparing those maps. They will be available at the next meeting.	Completed
Brad	Is any of the San Diego River Park located within the PAMA?	San Diego River Park is located in the City of San Diego. San Dieguito River Park is not located within the North County PAMA.	Completed