

North County Multiple Species Conservation Plan (North County Plan)

Steering Committee Meeting

Presented March 6, 2020

by the County of San Diego Land Use and Environment Group

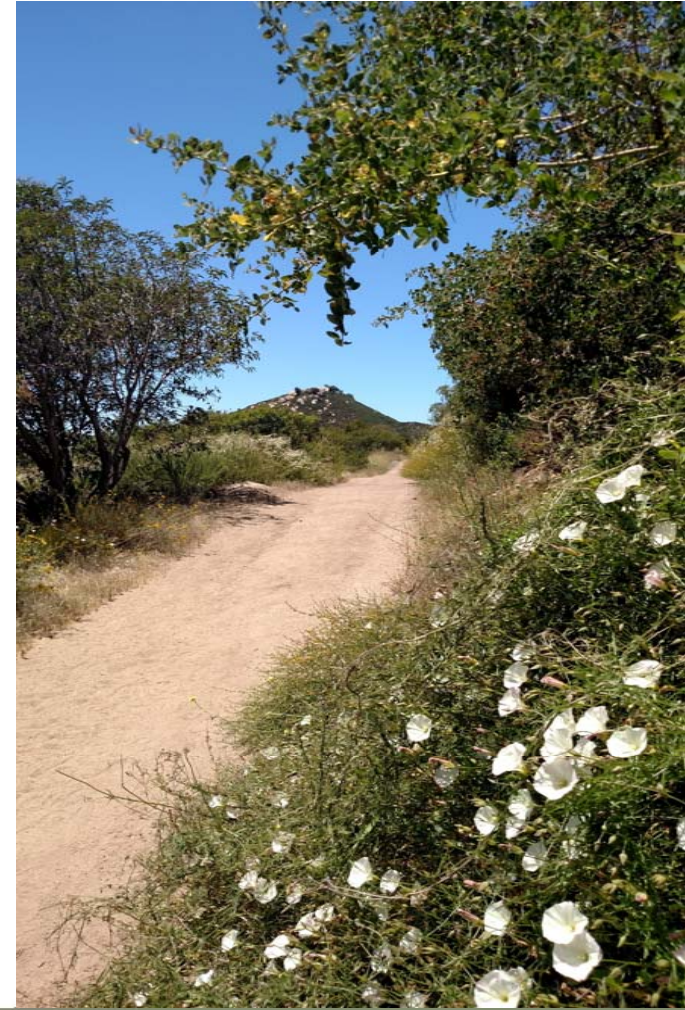


North County Plan



Agenda

- **Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP)**
 - Background and History
 - Successes Over Time
 - Partner Participation
- **ICF Status Review and Options Assessment**
 - Anticipated Benefits of North County Plan
 - Five Options for Moving Forward
- **Next Steps**

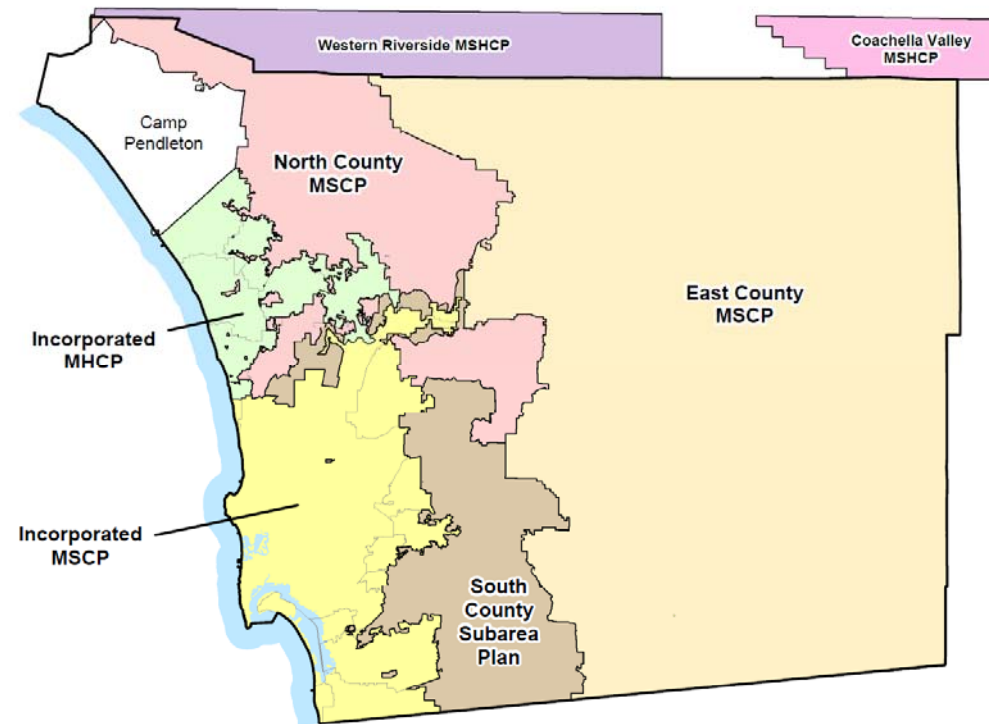


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MSCP: Background

- Long-term, regional habitat conservation program
- Balance protection of biological resources with development and infrastructure
- Streamlines agency collaboration, assurances and permits



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MSCP: South County Plan



- Implemented for last 23 years
- 80% of preserve assembled
- ~3,800 permits issued
- 85 covered plant and animal species protected
- 27 Resource Management Plans for Parks/Preserves



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North County Plan History and Challenges

1998
Launch

2011
Included in
General Plan

2017
Draft
Presented

2019
Additional
Options
Assessed

TODAY

- Increased Regulatory Requirements
- Fewer Partners, Less Collaboration
- Disagreements on Requirements
- Challenged Authorities



North County Plan



Contracted Support through ICF

Review
benefits of a
regional
conservation
plan

Evaluate the
2017 draft of
the North
County Plan

**Identify,
Assess and
Present
Options**

**Recommend
strategies to
proceed**

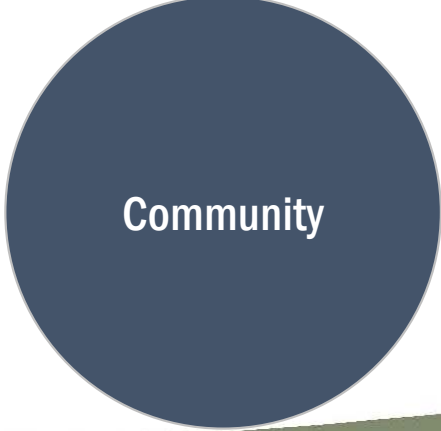


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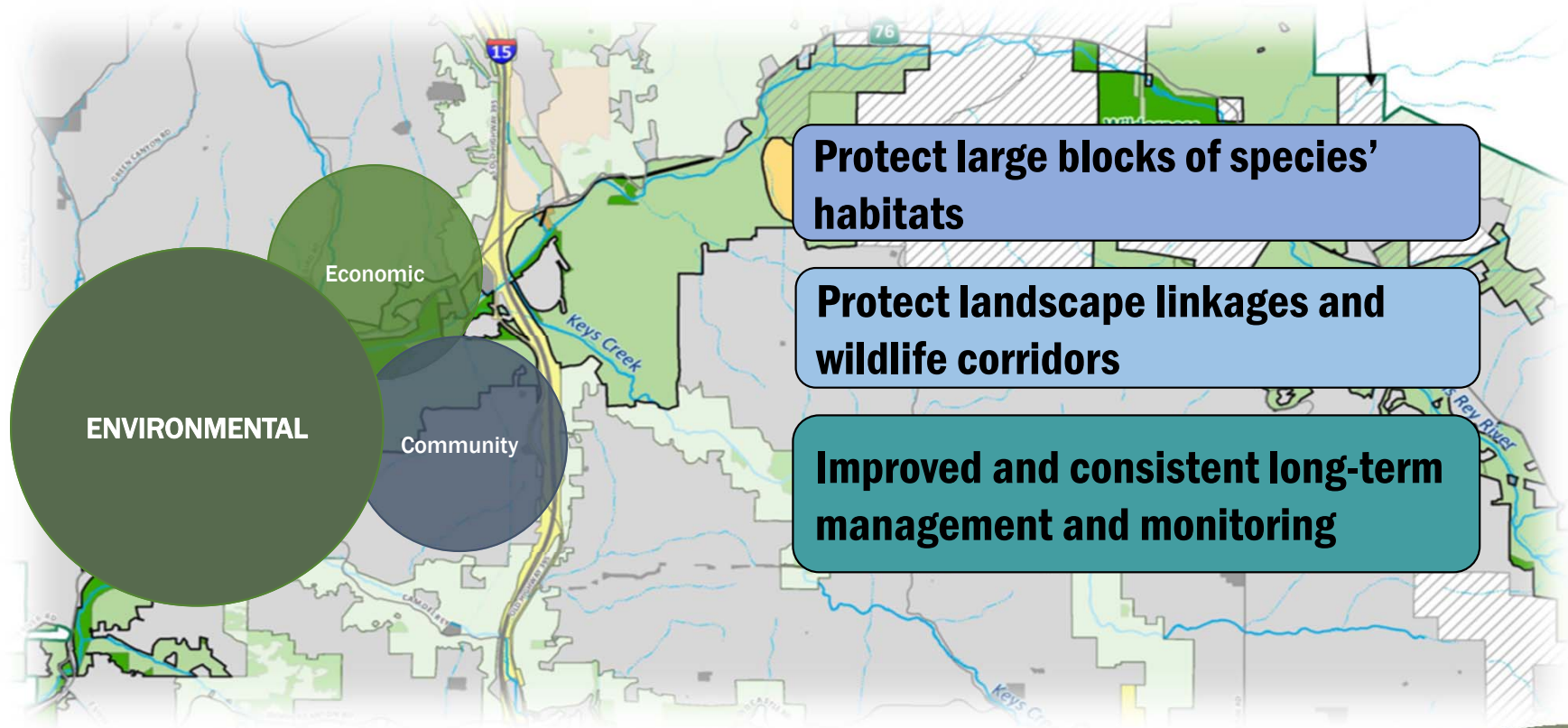
Why do an MSCP?



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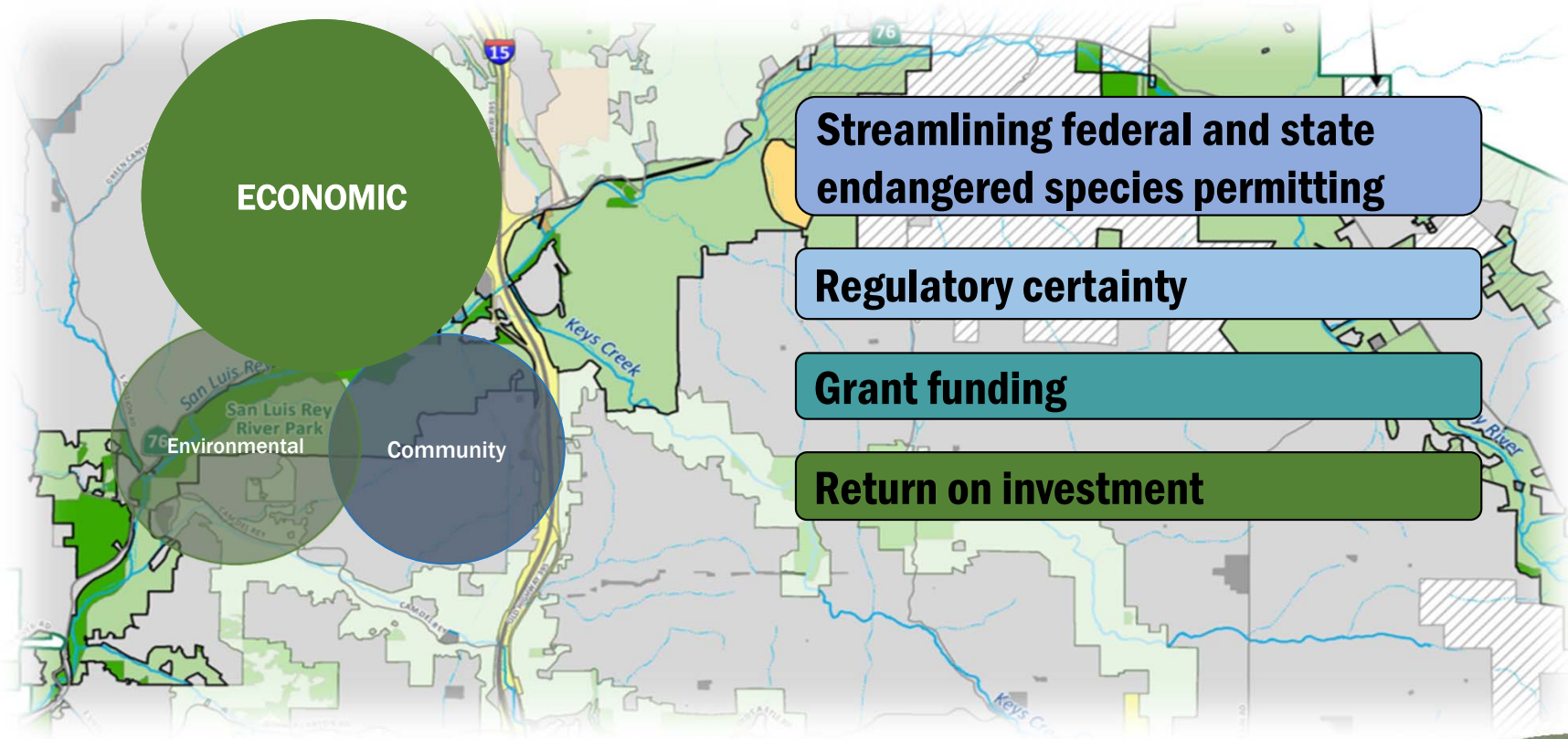
Environmental Benefits



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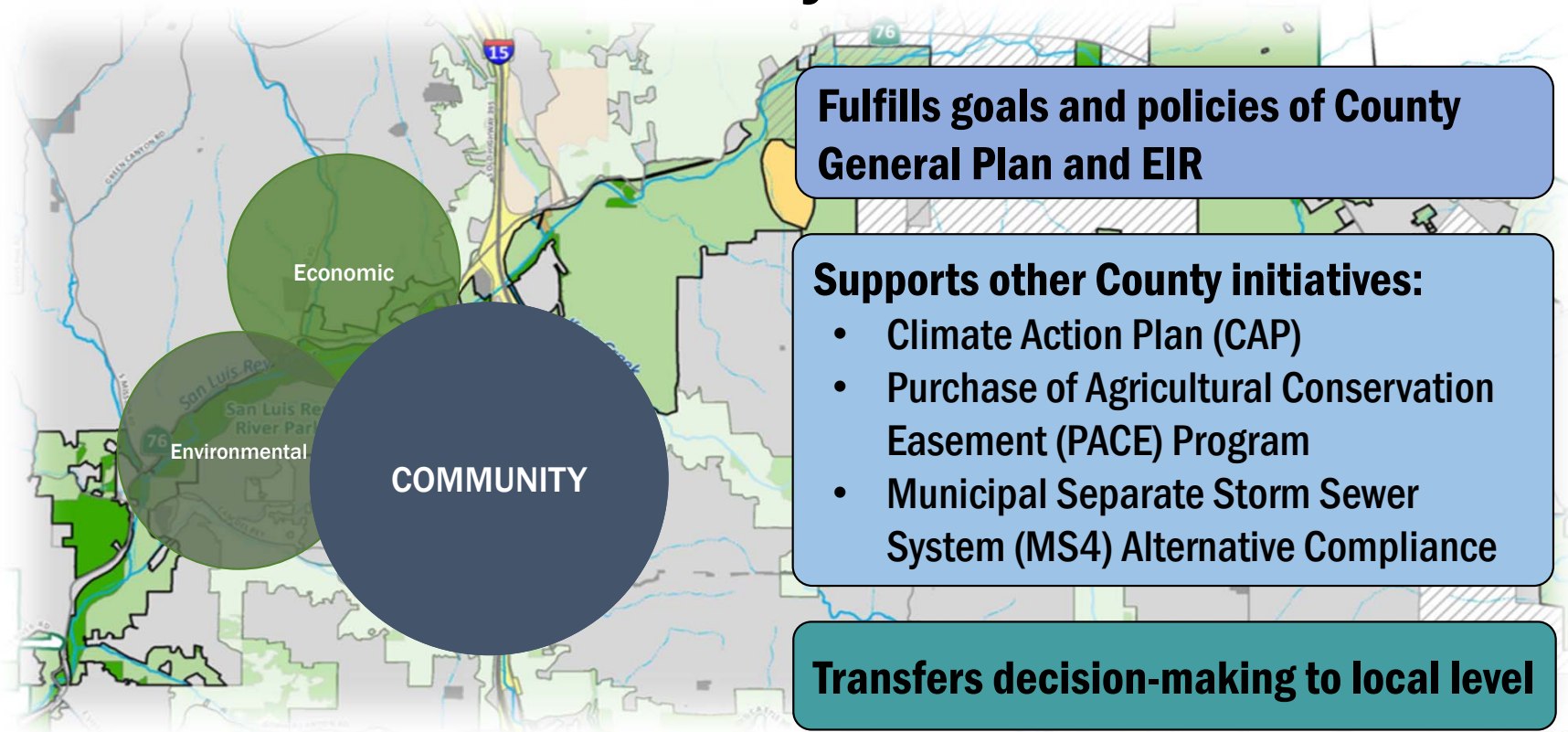
Economic Benefits



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Community Benefits



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**Why consider
the County's
options?**

**How were
options
developed?**

- Options range in level of effort and complexity – as well as the degree of environmental, economic and community benefits
- More regulatory assurances, more difficult to complete
- There are different approaches to endangered species compliance used throughout California



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County Options for Consideration

1. Project-by-Project
ESA/CESA Compliance

2. Conservation Strategy

3. HCP/2081 –
County Covered
Activities Only

4. HCP/2081 –
Public and Private
Covered Activities

5. Revised North County
Plan (NCCP/HCP)



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County Options for Consideration

Option #1: Project-by-Project ESA/CESA Compliance

BENEFITS

- Immediate savings in staff time and consultant fees
- Fewer environmental requirements and commitments than NCCP
- If no listed species - faster-paced projects

DRAWBACKS

- Does not meet County General Plan commitments
- Increased permit timelines and costs
- Reduced conservation benefits
- No grants
- Loss of long-term investment



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County Options for Consideration

Option #2: Conservation Strategy

BENEFITS

- Less time and effort to complete
- Streamlined mitigation
- Considers work already completed

DRAWBACKS

- Does not meet County General Plan commitments
- Permitting is still project-by-project
- Reduced conservation benefits
- No federal grants



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County Options for Consideration

Option #3: HCP/2081 (County Covered Activities)

BENEFITS

- Take authorized for County Activities
- Less time and effort to prepare
- Lower costs to implement

DRAWBACKS

- Does not implement County General Plan commitments
- Does not support private development
- Reduced conservation benefits
- Fewer grant opportunities



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County Options for Consideration

Option #4: HCP/2081 (Public and Private Covered Activities)

BENEFITS

- Lower mitigation standard = lower cost to developers

DRAWBACKS

- Does not meet County General Plan commitments
- Fewer species covered
- Fewer grant opportunities



County Options for Consideration

Option #5: Revised North County Plan (NCCP/HCP)

BENEFITS

- Consistent with County initiatives and General Plan
- Best for balancing biological protection with development
- Streamlines permitting
- Qualifies for most grant opportunities

DRAWBACKS

- More time and effort to complete
- Certainty of completing plan is lower than other options
- More expensive to implement



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Benefits Comparison

	Project-by-Project ESA/CESA	Conservation Strategy	HCP/2081 (County Only)	HCP/2081 (Public-Private)	Revised North County Plan
<i>Economic Benefits</i>					
Reduce project mitigation costs	○	◐	◑	◑	●
Reduce project survey requirements	○	○	○	○	●
Ensure faster project review	○	◐	◑	●	●
Attract grant funding for implementation	○	◐	◐	◐	●
Return on investment already made	◐	◑	◑	●	●
<i>Environmental Benefits</i>					
Protect large blocks of habitat	◐	◑	◐	●	●
Protect landscape corridors and wildlife movement	◐	◑	◐	●	●
Improve long-term management and monitoring	◐	◑	◐	◑	●

¹ Legend: ● = fully achieves potential benefit; ◑ = mostly achieves potential benefit; ◐ = partially achieves potential benefit; ◐ = somewhat achieves potential benefit; ○ = no contribution to potential benefit or makes condition worse.

	Project-by-Project ESA/CESA	Conservation Strategy	HCP/2081 (County Only)	HCP/2081 (Public-Private)	Revised North County Plan
<i>Policy, Regulatory, and Other Benefits</i>					
ESA decision making transferred to local level	○	○	◑	◑	●
Federal regulatory assurances	○	○	◑	◑	●
State regulatory assurances	○	○	◐	◐	●
Establishes more favorable mitigation ratios	○	○	◐	◑	●
Take exemptions for coastal sage scrub loss remain in place	○	○	○	○	●
Priority agency attention through batching meetings	○	○	○	○	●
Potentially streamlines wetlands permitting	○	◐	◐	◑	●
Fulfills goals and policies of General Plan	◐	◐	◐	◑	●
Fulfills mitigation requirement of General Plan Update EIR	◐	◐	◐	◑	●
Progress towards a countywide HCP/NCCP program	○	○	○	○	●
Simplifies CEQA compliance for County projects	○	◐	◑	◑	●
Simplifies CEQA compliance for private projects	○	◐	◐	◑	●
<i>Provides Efficiencies For Other County Initiatives</i>					
2018 CAP	◐	◐	◐	◑	●
PACE Program	◐	◐	◐	◑	●
MS4 Alternative Compliance	◐	◐	◐	◐	◑



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Options Ranked by Estimated Cost

	Project-by-Project ESA/CESA	Conservation Strategy	HCP/2081 (County Only)	HCP/2081 (Public-Private)	Revised North County Plan (HCP/NCCP)
County Cost	3	1	2	5	4
Developer Cost	5	3	5	2	1
Overall Cost	5	1	3	3	2

In general, the options with fewer regulatory assurances are less expensive to prepare since they are less complex and require fewer stakeholders.

However, when the long-term cost of mitigation and implementation are considered, the options with greater regulatory assurances become more cost effective over time.



ICF Recommendations for Moving Forward with the North County Plan

1. Improve the process
 - a) Strengthen and expedite the process to complete the NCMSCP
 - b) Develop clear issue resolution and elevation process to reduce delays
2. Develop a North County Plan independent of the South County Plan
3. Focus on regulatory requirements and permit issuance criteria
4. Remove Rancho Guejito from the plan area
5. Restructure preserve assembly methods and assumptions
6. Establish clear guidelines for trails in preserves
7. Set measurable take limits based on habitat
8. Strengthen implementation structure



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Next Steps

1

Stakeholder Outreach:

- Meetings with Wildlife Agencies
- Meetings with Steering Committee and public

2

County to summarize input and recommendations

3

Board of Supervisors hearing in 2020



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Decision for Board of Supervisors

- In 2020, the Board will provide direction to County staff on whether and how to move forward
- Board to be informed by feedback from
 - North County Plan Steering Committee
 - North County Plan Stakeholders
 - General public
 - Wildlife Agencies (USFWS and CDFW)



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Upcoming Stakeholder Meetings

Public Outreach Meetings

- March 17 @ 10 am: County Operations Center
- March 25 @ 5:30 pm: Ramona Library
- April 9 @ 5:30 pm: Bonsall Community center

Steering Committee Meeting #2 – Potential Dates

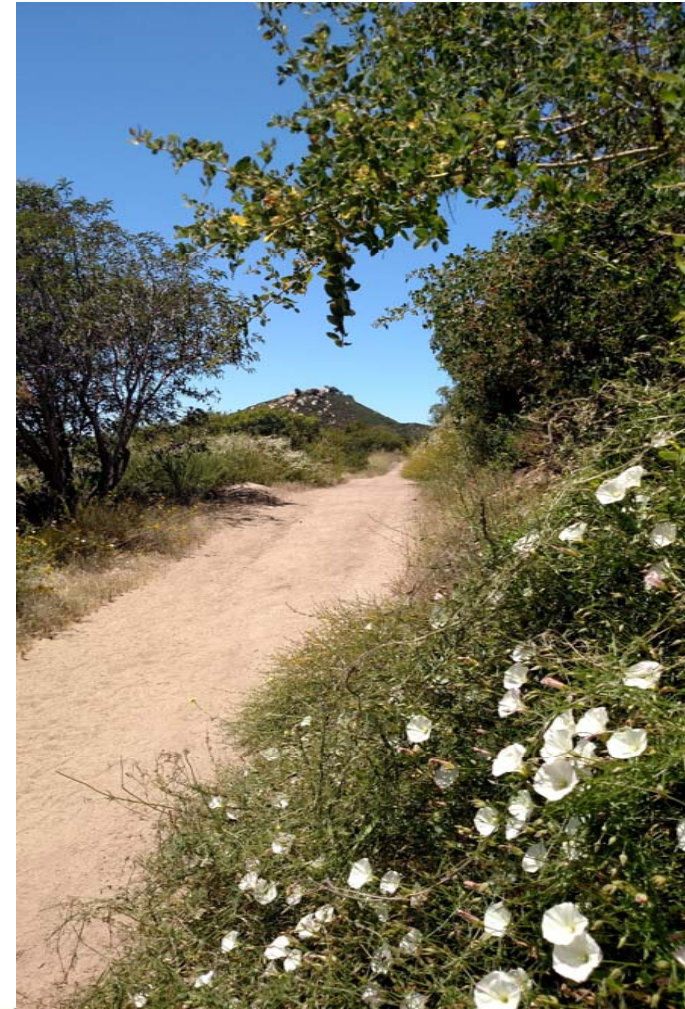
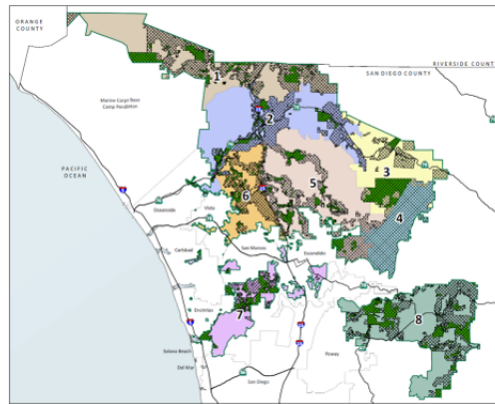
- April 13: 10 – 11:30 am or 12:30 – 2 pm
- April 15: 10 – 11:30 am
- April 16: 8:30 – 10 am
- May 1: 1 – 2:30 pm or 3 – 4:30 pm



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Questions and Discussion



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