

## **DRAFT**

### **Yolo Habitat NCCP/HCP Steering Committee Meeting Summary September 24, 2007**

#### **Action Items**

1. CCP will send the meeting calendar to members and have it posted as a separate item on the website.
2. CCP will post the summaries from the April, June and July meetings on the website so that they can be approved at the October meeting.
3. CCP will email the action items from this and future meetings within a week of the meeting date.
4. Maria Wong will resend the save-the-date flyer for the Northern California Habitat Planning Partners November conference.
5. Maria Wong will forward to the technical team information about local experts on the tricolor blackbird (Bob Meese and Ted Beatty).
6. CCP will contact members of the Urban Interface Working Group to set meeting dates.
7. Maria Wong and CCP will draft a process overview chart and a draft workplan for the Steering Committee for review at the November meeting.

#### **Summary**

##### **1. Call Meeting to Order**

The meeting was convened at 6:10 p.m.

##### **2. Approval of Agenda Order**

John Folk-Williams indicated that item #6 on the agenda, Habitat Planning Process Update, would be deferred to the October 15th meeting when new members would be joining the Steering Committee. At that time the Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Wildlife Service would provide an overview of habitat planning.

##### **3. Introductions**

Attendees:

Steering Committee Members

Glen Holstein  
John Hopkins  
Chad Roberts  
Paul Robins  
Mitch Sears  
Dan Sokolow  
Sandra White

JPA Executive Director

Maria Wong

Interested Parties

David Shpak, City of West Sacramento

Facilitator

John Folk-Williams, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP)

**4. Approval of Meeting Summary**

Approval of summaries for the meetings of 4/23/07, 6/25/07 and 7/23/07 was deferred until the next meeting.

**5. Update on JPA and Related Activities**

Maria Wong provided updates on a number of activities relevant to the Yolo Natural Heritage Program.

- ▶ The County Board of Supervisors approved a preferred land use alternative for the General Plan Update to begin the environmental review process. She said there were no surprises and that the Board approved changes that had been discussed at earlier meetings. The alternative includes three agricultural districts in Clarksburg, Capay Valley and Dunnigan Hills.
  - The NCCP/HCP technical team will soon be meeting with the General Plan Update team to develop a shared understanding of the two plans.
- ▶ Warren Westrup, coming from a long career with the State Parks, is the new director of the newly formed Yolo County Parks and Resources Department. Julia McIver, the Interim Director, will be staying on as the Water Resources Coordinator.
- ▶ The JPA Board will consider adding new members to the Steering Committee at its next meeting on October 1st. There may be 3 or 4 new members; at this point the only name that is public is that of Kent Lang, a farmer who served on the County Planning Commission in the 1990s.
- ▶ John Gerlach, an original member of the H.T. Harvey team, is returning to the project as a TAIC team member. He is extremely knowledgeable about Yolo County issues, has good relationships with UCD and provides an important local presence for TAIC, which is based in San Diego.
- ▶ Department of Fish and Game has announced that it is awarding \$25,000 for a native pollinator study that will be extremely helpful to development of the habitat plan.
- ▶ Reporting on progress of the TAIC technical team, she indicated that Jim Estep has completed the breeding group survey of Swainson's Hawks. This data is being cross-referenced with crop data. Data has been developed to create three benchmarks – in the 80s, 90s and 2005. This represents the first time data on crop patterns has been

aggregated with Swainson's Hawk data. An update will be presented at the October meeting and perhaps a full presentation in November.

- ▶ The researcher at UC Davis working on oak woodlands mapping has recovered from a serious accident and will be able to renew her efforts. A request for supporting that research will go to the JPA Board in November.

## 6. Working Group Guidelines

Maria Wong and John Folk-Williams briefly summarized the purpose, structure and membership of the Working Groups for the benefit of the members who had not participated in those discussions. Sandra White volunteered to join the Urban Interface Working Group, and CCP will contact members to set meeting dates in the near future.

Maria Wong also indicated that members could expect that the pace of the process would be picking up from this point forward. She said that the considerable data gathering work and thought on how to structure the plan to meet the unique circumstances of Yolo County were converging this fall. A lot of material will be presented for review by the Steering Committee. To help organize this work, a timeline covering the next 5-6 months would be developed to complement the longer term timeline the consultants have been working with.

One member said that he needed to see as soon as possible a schematic of the whole process, including the big ticket items. He lacked a feeling for what the group was supposed to be doing and asked for a workplan to give him a better sense of what the Committee was expected to do and what its results would be. He indicated that the lack of that big picture framework was harmful, not only to his effectiveness as a Committee member, but also to the public perception of the credibility of the process. Maria indicated that the purpose of the wildlife agencies' presentations at the next meeting was to give that kind of overview and bring all members up to speed. Another member said that he needed to know several basic things so that his organization could advise him of their concerns. This would include a presentation on how we develop the plan, what's covered, what's not covered, what the permits allow, etc. He emphasized the need to focus on how the purposes of the plan could be achieved through direct discussion with stakeholders.

There was additional discussion about the role of agriculture in the process, and questions were raised about how plans in other areas had responded to the needs of this sector. Maria Wong indicated she had been working with various agriculture groups, including traditional farmers and ranchers, organic growers and winegrape producers. Different agricultural points of view would be represented in the Steering Committee by the addition of the new members.

## 7. Presentation and Discussion on Anticipated Covered Activities

Maria Wong gave a slide presentation introducing the subject of Covered Activities. Some of the key points related to the following issues and procedures.

- ▶ Definition of *covered activities*, including *projects* that involve one-time construction of a wide variety of facilities and operation and maintenance *activities* of an ongoing nature, all of which can have negative impacts on species, habitat and communities.
- ▶ Importance of identifying covered as well as *non-covered* activities for informing the list of covered species as well as the preserve design and for providing the basis of the Incidental Take permits that are a key outcome of the planning process.

- ▶ The process for developing the list of covered activities as an iterative and participative one that involves stakeholders and also helps inform the plan applicants of the totality of impacts of project activities.
- ▶ Next steps, including review by wildlife agencies, staff development of a draft list and review of that list by the Urban Interface Working Group of the Steering Advisory Committee.

Questions and comments by Steering Committee members related to the following issues:

- ▶ The importance of assessing ongoing *non-covered* activities for their impacts and finding ways to address those impacts in the plan.
- ▶ Clarification of the iterative nature of the process for developing the covered activities list as inclusive of stakeholder concerns as well as those of plan applicants.
- ▶ Discussion of the issue of habitat impacts created by changes in agricultural cropping patterns, the fact that the wildlife agencies have not internalized these types of impacts in the permitting process and the lack of legal mechanism for dealing with agricultural changes.
- ▶ Concern about inclusion of the SACOG plans in preparation of the list based on the fact that the Blueprint and Greenprint are not subject to the local land use regulatory processes.
- ▶ Clarification that projects and O&M activities relating to parks, other recreational facilities and habitat restoration are included in the covered activities list.
- ▶ Concern about the wildlife agencies thinking about reducing permit terms to 30 years instead of the 50 assumed thus far in the planning process.
- ▶ Report of recent controversy over the potential for development of infrastructure within preserve boundaries after they have been established.
- ▶ Concern over the contrast between the stated goals of the NCCP to focus on protection of communities and the legal standard in the state and federal acts that focuses on species rather than communities. The NCCP act seemed to rely on protection of communities once all the preserve lands have been added over the course of the plan's term, but members pointed out that there was no clear standard as to how much was enough to include in the preserves to achieve this purpose.

## **8. Public Comments**

There were no public comments regarding planning activities. Dave Shpak introduced himself as a planner with the City of West Sacramento and announced that he would be attending future meetings to assist in representing city concern's to the Steering Advisory Committee.

## **9. Announcements**

Chad Roberts announced that the Yolo Audubon Board had given him direction to educate them about planning activities and to advocate in a more focused way on bird species and habitat. He referred to his recent suggestion and email to members of the Biological Working Group that two additional bird species be added to the Covered Species list as an example of this recent direction.

John Hopkins reported on a meeting of California Partners in Flight. He said that they had identified suites of bird species in riparian habitat, grasslands and other habitat types. The group emphasized that each species dependent on grasslands had different needs. He pointed out

that the Covered Species List covered species with varied needs but also excluded several birds with habitat requirements that were not met by the ones covered. He said that a solution could be to keep adding species to the list, which might get impractical. Another approach that he would like to suggest be considered is to identify a series of indicator species for management and monitoring purposes. That could be a way of addressing needs of the non-covered species.

**10. Adjournment of the Steering Committee to October 15, 2007**

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

**Handouts:**

Agenda

Slide handouts for presentation on Covered Activities