

Staff Communication

TO: Advisory Steering Committee Chair and Members

FROM: Maria Wong
Executive Director

DATE: July 1, 2008

SUBJECT: INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION OF ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS OF THE PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Recommended action: Allow presentation and discussion, then forward to SAC working groups for further analysis

BACKGROUND

This item is a follow up to the June 18, 2008 presentation on the proposed Agricultural Conservation Strategy.

ANALYSIS

The goal of the Agricultural Conservation Strategy for Yolo NHP is to provide a means to identify, evaluate, and monitor the habitat value on agricultural lands. Habitat value in agriculture can be defined as quantified contribution the agricultural type to one or more components of a species needs (e.g., breeding habitat, foraging habitat cover habitat, dispersal habitat. Yolo County's economy is centered on farming and ranching productivity, a focus that is reinforced in the current County's general plan update. Development of a sustainable Agricultural Conservation Strategy would be incomplete without consideration of the economic factors that influence grower preferences.

Dr. David Sunding joined the YNHP technical team in 2007. His work on the YNHP includes the economic analysis of the agricultural strategy, as well as assisting in the identification and evaluation of economic tools and incentives that support the goals of the YNHP. The topic areas described below form the basis for the economic component of the YNHP. These topics will be expanded on in Dr. Sunding's presentation.

Economic analysis of the agricultural strategy

- Develop a land allocation model of Yolo County.
- Utilize conservation targets for various target species and associated habitats.
- Develop probabilities and identify areas that are most likely to need public intervention to achieve the conservation goals of the YNHP.

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Implementing tools, including cost analysis

- Identify policy tools that can implement the conservation goals for agricultural land in the county (could include easements, price incentives and other tools).
- Assess how the mix of interventions may change over time as the funding picture changes and as more is known about how particular species use agricultural lands.

Preserve design and costs

- Inform development of the preserve design by evaluating the cost of various alternatives.

Economic and financial analysis of the overall plan and funding options

- Conduct an economic and financial analysis of the plan and help to identify funding options.
- Evaluate overall costs as well as expected annual costs throughout the duration of the program, together with a risk analysis that measures the effects of changes in the agricultural economy and in the amount and timing of urban development, among other factors.

Staff and consultant team will work closely with the SAC and its working groups to integrate economic considerations into the proposed Agricultural Conservation Strategy and the YNHP.

Staff Communication

TO: Advisory Steering Committee Chair and Members

FROM: Maria Wong
Executive Director

DATE: July 1, 2008

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF WORKING GROUP GUIDELINES

Recommended action: After presentation and discussion, forward the draft Working Group Guidelines to each work group for refinement

BACKGROUND

The Steering Advisory Committee is supported by several working groups. At this time working groups have been convened to allow more focused discussion on science based issues (Biological Working Group); issues related to the interface between conservation planning goals and the urban fabric (Urban-Interface Working Group); and issues related to the interface between farming and ranching, and conservation goals for the target species and habitats that will be addressed in the conservation plan (Ag-Interface Working Group). Additional work groups may be convened as needed.

Staff has provided suggested guidelines and language for the statements of purpose and scope for each work group (See Attachment A). This suggested language is intended as a framework for the working group process that will remain somewhat flexible and subject to modification as the process matures and the YNHP crystallizes. Staff recommends that the Committee provide general comments and suggestions for improving the draft Guidelines and then forward them to individual working groups for further refinement. Recommended changes will be consolidated and brought back to the SAC for adoption at the earliest opportunity.

Current work group membership is as follows:

Working Group	Membership
Biological Working Group	Jim Baxter Keith Fichtner Glen Holstein John Hopkins

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Urban Interface Working Group	Keith Fichtner Mitch Sears Todd Chambers
Ag Interface Working Group	Paul Robins John Hopkins Kent Lange

ATTACHMENT A

DRAFT STEERING ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORK GROUP GUIDELINES

Work Group Membership: Work Group Membership is limited to volunteers from the Steering Advisory Committee (“SAC”). SAC members may serve on more than one work group, but are encouraged to consider the time commitment involved. Work Groups may solicit input from groups or individuals with specialized expertise on an as needed basis.

Work Group Management: Each working group will identify a chair (or co-chairs). Functions of the chairs(s) include agenda setting; leading meeting discussions; task oversight; coordinating with related work groups; and reporting to the SAC. Work group chairs will receive staff and technical support from JPA staff and consultant team.

Work Group Function: Work Group functions include assisting in the development of draft YNHP concepts; reviewing and commenting on draft documents; identifying and referring discrete issues to the SAC for further evaluation; making recommendations to the SAC regarding issues within the scope of each work group. The SAC retains the responsibility for resolving conflicting recommendations.

Meeting Format: Working Group Meetings will be open to the public. Each working group will establish a set meeting time and location. Meeting information (including cancellations) will be posted on the YNHP website.

Work Products: JPA staff and consultants will be responsible for producing work products for and by working groups.

Meeting summaries: Meeting summaries will be compiled by JPA staff, approved by each working group and forwarded to SAC members as information items.

Communication across working groups: Working groups will only communicate during meetings that are open to the public. JPA staff will coordinate with work group chairs to schedule dual group meetings as needed.

Work Group Purpose and Scope

Biological Working Group

The Biological Working Group is focused on biological elements of the conservation planning process. JPA staff and the consultant team will provide technical support to the Biological working group. The primary objective of this working group is to review, analyze and recommend draft biological goals and objectives for the target species and habitats that will be addressed in the YNHP. Other tasks can be assigned on an as needed basis and with concurrence from the Steering Advisory Committee. This working group will also be responsible for reviewing and commenting on draft preliminary chapters of YNHP documents that cover biological issues. Development of final biological objectives and goals is an iterative process that will incorporate recommendations and work products generated by other SAC working groups.

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Consequently the Biological working group will need to coordinate closely with those groups as draft goals and objectives are formulated. The Biological working group is expected to meet throughout the remainder of the planning process.

Urban Interface Working Group

The Urban Interface working group is focused on elements of the conservation planning process that affect or are affected by urban activities and interests. JPA staff and the consultant team will provide technical support to the Urban Interface working group. This working group is to focus on development of the list of covered activities; coordinate development of the YNHP with general plan and advanced planning activities contemplated by Member Agencies; and review and comment on draft preliminary chapters of YNHP documents that cover the subject matter of this working group. Other tasks can be assigned on an as needed basis and with concurrence from the Steering Advisory Committee. This working group is expected to meet intermittently on an as needed basis.

Agricultural Interface Working Group

The Agricultural Interface working group is focused on elements of YNHP that affect or are affected by farming and ranching interests. JPA staff and the consultant team will provide technical support to the Agricultural Interface working group. Development of species conservation goals and objectives on working landscapes is an evolving discipline and the YNHP is expected to break new ground in this area. This working group will need to coordinate closely with the Biological Working Group as preliminary recommendations from both groups are formulated. This working group is to focus on development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for working landscapes; review, analyze and formulate recommendations to the SAC regarding issues on working landscapes; assist in the development of economic strategies that support the biological foals and objectives; and review and comment on draft preliminary chapters of YNHP documents that address working landscapes. Other tasks can be assigned on an as needed basis and with concurrence from the Steering Advisory Committee. The Agricultural Interface working group is expected to meet throughout the remainder of the planning process.