

**Yolo Natural Heritage Program
Steering Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
June 22, 2009**

Action Items

- Arrange for presentation to SAC on Bay Delta Conservation Plan.
- Confirm schedule for Biological Working Group meetings.

Summary

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by John Hopkins

2. Introductions and Welcome

All those present introduced themselves.

Attendees:

Steering Committee Members

Jim Baxter, CSUS and Davis resident
Dan Efseaff, Yolo County RCD
Keith Fichtner, Development
Glen Holstein, California Native Plant Society
John Hopkins, Institute for Ecological Health
Stefan Lorenzato, Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District
Chad Roberts, Yolo Audubon Society

JPA Member Agency Staff and Liaisons

Warren Westrup, Yolo County Parks and Resources
Sandra White, City of West Sacramento

JPA Staff

Maria Wong, Executive Director
Susan Garbini, Student Intern
Dan Airola, Airola Environmental Consulting
Paul Cylinder, SAIC

3. Approval of agenda order

The order of the agenda was approved.

4. Continued discussion of conceptual draft species goals and conservation strategies

Dan Airola and Paul Cylinder, YNHP Support Team [see handout: "Steering Advisory Committee Update"]

Progress is being made toward achieving milestones for the plan and it will soon be possible to add numbers to the draft plan. The broad activities for "covered activities" for regulatory coverage by the plan have been delineated and review is in progress. The broad categories are "Urban development", "New infrastructure", "agriculture", and "habitat management". The list continues to evolve.

Discussion

Q: What about designated growth areas in the county (e.g. Dunnigan and Madison)? Do they need to be treated as landscape areas?

Q: Solar farms are projected to be huge in cropland and pastureland settings in the Central Valley. How can these be included as "covered activity"? Also, there is potential for habitat damage that needs to be assessed.

Q: Where does agricultural water infrastructure and drought management activities that are intermittent (based on drought cycles). What about new water use? Where will water go in the future?

A: Areas are based on the Yolo County Proposed 2030 General Plan, but with some long-term capacity built in. A few new categories may need to be added.

Upland Conservation Strategy

Conservation Goals: Goals setting and criteria are not linear, but are very complex. Urban areas will also be treated as habitat where appropriate. The conservation approach will be different for different landscapes: upland, riparian/wetland/agriculture.

Discussion

Q: Are we going to create a conservation network? What about practices for the rest of the landscape?

A: We will focus on creating a set of practices that will use the entire landscape for habitat conservation. The preserve system is likely to be interconnected in terms of conservation functions. The intervening working landscape would not be covered by the plan in terms of covered activities, but it still would have to be compatible with the plan. There are different types of landscapes, different categories of land ownership, so that we would need different land management categories. The term "preserve system" is meant loosely. "Conservation lands" may be a better term.

Riparian Conservation Strategy

Some riparian habitat does not fit into the overall "system". Riparian habitat occurs in many different settings, which must all be addressed. Our plan needs to recognize the importance of riparian habitat in all settings. We will use a variety of voluntary tools to implement a flexible conservation program.

Agricultural Lands Conservation Strategy

We will assess the ability to meet species goals associated with agricultural habitats: crops, species, changes, incentives. We need to consider regional issues and land use patterns, cropping patterns. These will affect future patterns in Yolo County. Even if certain crops are phased out, certain functions may be preserved through other managed activities or crops. Different combinations of crops and areas can achieve habitat goals.

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan will cause some changes in our strategy for achieving goals. We need to take that into account in our functional analysis, e.g. the loss of terrestrial habitats due to flooding of the Yolo Bypass. Our strategy will be based on habitat function.

There are tradeoffs between agricultural and riparian habitat conservation goals, that will likely be challenging for planning.

Process and Schedule

The draft conservation strategy chapter will be ready by August/September. The administration draft is expected to be ready by December/January.

5. Discussion of procedures regarding review of draft work products.

The procedure for review of draft work products has been revised to make it more efficient. The draft chapters will be created with line numbers. An electronic standard comment form will be created in which comments will be made by section, page, and line numbers.

Chapter 2: (ecological influences on vegetation, covered species) could be available soon (2 weeks)

6. Working Group Updates

▪ *Biological Working Group*

The Biological Working Group hasn't met for awhile. They are in the process of setting a schedule for regular meetings and what the focus should be.

Agricultural Habitat Interface Working Group

The Agricultural Habitat Interface Working Group has been working on a matrix of "covered actions" or "covered activities" related to agricultural operations. They first developed a set of lists for agricultural activities, operations, and lands and a table with general headings and subcategories. A template table has now been prepared for each crop type to indicate the timing of specific agricultural activities (i.e. summer, fall, winter, spring) and will be filled in by working group members over the next few weeks

A draft table is in preparation on activities related to storm water and flood control, including water-related public infrastructure.

The Ag Working Group meets regularly on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. at the Conference Room in the Department of Parks and Resources, 120

W. Main St., Suite C, Woodland. The July 1 meeting has been cancelled. The next meeting of the Ag Interface Working Group will be held on Wednesday, July 15.

- *Urban Habitat Interface Working Group*

The Urban Habitat interface Working Group met on February 9. Members have provided feedback and updates to lists of potential "Covered Activities" --- planned projects for each City and the County (including rural areas) for inclusion in the Yolo Natural Heritage Program habitat conservation plan.

This working group will set a schedule of meetings soon.

7. Public Comment

NOAA Fisheries sent a Biological Opinion to the bureau of Reclamation regarding Folsom and Shasta Dams for the Sacramento watershed, requiring that water be made available for salmonid conservation if possible. One alternative might be to create salmonid and steelhead habitat in Putah or Cache Creek. This may lead to a plan to reattach Cache Creek to the Delta as fish habitat. We may be asked to incorporate them into our HCP as covered species – an issue that is now open.

8. Announcements and Updates

We expect to send out our YNHP e-newsletter in a couple of weeks. This is intended as a vehicle for communication with the public. Please let us know if you are willing to write an article for it.

We are developing an exhibit for the Yolo County Fair (August 19-23), which will include an interactive computer element at our kiosk. The exhibit will later travel around the County and will be a way for the public to learn about the Yolo County HCP.

9. Summary and Next Steps

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee is scheduled for Monday, July 13, 2009, at 4:00 p.m. at the Yolo County Administration Building in Woodland. We expect to hold all of our meetings at the Yolo County Administration Building for the foreseeable future, due to logistical issues with other meeting locations.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.