

**Yolo Natural Heritage Program
Steering Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
May 11, 2009**

Action Items

- The Agricultural Habitat Interface Working Group will review county programs and projects that relate to the ag/riparian and ag/oak woodland interface to ensure communication with our plan.

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

Mike Hall, Conaway Ranch
Vinton Hawkins, Sierra Holdings
John Hopkins, Institute for Ecological Health
Stefan Lorenzato, Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District
Chad Roberts, Yolo Audubon

JPA Member Agency Staff and Liaisons

Mitch Sears, City of Davis
Warren Westrup, Yolo County Parks and Resources

JPA Staff

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

Interested Parties

Jonathan Edwards, the Davis Enterprise
George Phillips, Conaway Ranch
Catherine Portman, Burrowing Owl Preservation Society

3. Approval of agenda order

The order of the agenda was approved.

4. Meeting Summaries and Action Items

The Committee reviewed the April 27, 2009 meeting summary. It was approved with minor changes.

Action Items

The following action items from the April 27 meeting summary were discussed:

- *Send out meeting schedule for May – December (SAC and Working Groups).*

The meeting schedule needs to be approved by the JPA before it can be sent out. This is expected to happen at their next (May 18) meeting. In the meantime, we are staying with the existing schedule of meeting on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month, alternating starting times between 4:00 and 6:00, and with venues to shift among Woodland, Davis, and West Sacramento. If any committee members wish to make suggestions about changing this schedule, please contact Maria or Susan with your comments. Meetings of the SAC through June are as follows:

May 18, 6:00 pm, Atrium Training Room, Yolo County Administration Building,
Woodland

June 8, 4:00 pm, Civic Center Galleria, 1110 West Capitol Ave.
West Sacramento

June 22, 6:00 pm, Civic Center Galleria, 1110 West Capitol Ave.
West Sacramento

- *Arrange presentation from BDCP.*

This is still planned to take place as soon as schedules can be coordinated with BDCP.

- *Send out draft Chapter 1.in WORD format for revision and comment.*

Done

- *Send out a draft outline of the Goals and Objectives section.*

This was provided to the Biological Working Group for review.

- *Provide link to BDCP website for information about upcoming meetings.*

Done

- *Follow up with wildlife agency leadership to ensure agency participation.*

Committee members would like staff to encourage agency attendance at our meetings, but the current federal and state budget crisis has made this unlikely at the present time. Nevertheless, communication is taking place in regular meetings between wildlife agency and YNHP staff.

- 5. Overview and discussion of conceptual draft species goals and conservation strategies** Dan Airola and Paul Cylinder, YNHP Support Team [see handouts: “Steering Advisory Committee Update” and “Process & Schedule”]

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

This discussion is continued to the next meeting.

7. Working Group Updates

- *Biological Working Group*

The biological working group has reviewed the first draft of the “Goals and Objectives” section of the Plan, looking at these issues by habitat and by species. They are generally pleased with the first effort, but there are lots of blanks and quantitative information will be filled in later.

Some discussion has taken place about the following technical issues: the scale of reserves, the species’ ranges, the prioritization of areas, and criteria for selection or “assembly rules”. “Assembly rules” are the term of art for guidelines for selecting lands to be included in preserves or to be designation as requiring protection for wildlife purposes. The “assembly rules” will be used to identify lands for conservation.

Discussion is ongoing regarding the definitions of “grasslands” (or prairie land) and “irrigated pasture”. Final definitions are still to be determined.

The Biological Working Group meets regularly on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. However, their next meeting scheduled for May 27 has been rescheduled and will be held on Friday, May 22 in the Small Conference Room of the Davis Library. After May, the Davis Library will be closed for remodeling, so they will meet in another venue – possibly the CDFG Yolo Bypass Area Headquarters on Chiles Road in Davis.

- *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. Descriptions of the activities will be added to the table.

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 next meeting of the Ag Interface Working Group will be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2009.

- *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 meet on an as-needed basis.

8. Public Comment

Mention was made of the TANC Powerline Project, which has the potential to affect areas of important natural habitat in Yolo County. More information about this will be sent to SAC members.

9. Announcements and Updates

Staff are involved in a 5-county coordination effort related to the ongoing process of preparing the BDCP. The first meeting of this group will be held in the middle of May – it is public and information can be found on the BDCP website (<http://www.resources.ca.gov/bdcp/>). This is a complex debate that has many implications for the Yolo County HCP. If committee members are interested, we can make a discussion of the BDCP a focus of a meeting in the near future and invite the BDCP Director, Carla Nemeth, to address our group.

As indicated in an earlier e-mail sent to committee members, the Yolo Natural Heritage Program received \$634,988, the largest of 3 awards for conservation planning assistance in California, from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as part of the 2009 Endangered Species Land Acquisition and Conservation Planning Grant program. This is the second time the YNHP has been awarded a grant from this program and it is the largest recipient in California.

The pollinator field trip was successful – we visited vernal pools, HedgeRow Farms, and have also received a Congressional letter of support for pollinator research.

Our new intern, Traci Ng will be working on two projects for the YNHP. One is to prepare an e-newsletter on our activities, The other is to develop 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.

10. Summary and Next Steps

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee is scheduled for Monday, May 11, 2009, at 6:00 p.m. in Woodland. The JPA will hold a meeting there from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., so we might start a little late. It would be a good idea to have a follow-up meeting of our group on Monday, May 18, so that we can tackle some of our pending tasks in depth. We expect to have more draft sections of the Plan available for review prior to these meetings. A poll will be sent out to committee members to determine if this is a viable schedule.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 pm.