

**Yolo Natural Heritage Program
Steering Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
January 25, 2010**

Note: *“The policy in preparing meeting summaries is to produce a record of discussion by all participants. Statements do not necessarily reflect the views of the YNHP Steering Advisory Committee or the JPA Board of Directors.”*

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by John Hopkins

2. Introductions and Welcome

All those present introduced themselves, including Emily Reeves from Yocha Dehe and James Navicky, from the California Department of Fish & Game, who will serve as the main liaison to the plan from CDFG. Jim stated that he will be able to devote substantial time to the Yolo plan (and to Placer County). His colleague, Kent Smith, will also be available to the project.

Attendees:

Steering Committee Members

Dan Efseaff, Yolo RCD
Keith Fichtner, Development
Vinton Hawkins, Sierra Holdings
Glen Holstein, California Native Plant Society
John Hopkins, Institute for Ecological Health
Kent Lang, Yolo County Farmer
Yvonne LeMaitre, Yolo County Farm Bureau
Stefan Lorenzato, Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District
Tim Miramontes, Yolo Farm Bureau
Chad Roberts, Yolo Audubon Society

JPA Member Agency Staff and Liaisons

Bruce Boyd, City of Davis
Warren Westrup, Yolo County Parks and Resources
John Young, Yolo Agricultural Commission

JPA Staff

Maria Wong, Executive Director
Kate Montieth, Assistant to the Director
Susan Garbini, Graduate Fellow

Interested Parties

James Navicky, California Department of Fish & Game
Catherine Portman, Burrowing Owl Preservation Society
Emily Reeves, Yocha Dehe
Kent Reeves, Yolo County Parks and Resources
Charles Tyson, Yolo County landowner
Kathryn Tyson, Yolo County landowner

3. Approval of agenda order

Phil Pogledich, the JPA legal counsel, is unable to attend tonight's meeting due to duties with the Board of Supervisors. Therefore, agenda item 5 ("Presentation regarding the Brown Act") will be deferred to the next meeting of the SAC. Phil sends his regrets and apologies.

4. Meeting Summaries and Action Items

The draft meeting summary for the Riparian Conservation Strategy workshop on December 14 will be available at the next Riparian Conservation Strategy Workshop (meeting date TBD). It is more appropriate for all participants in the workshops to have the opportunity to review those proceedings before preparing a final draft.

Action Items

- The action item from the December 14 workshop was to form a working group to draft a definition of "riparian" for the next meeting. [*Volunteers:* Chad Roberts, Glen Holstein, John Hopkins, Steve Greco]. The group will meet on February 2.

5. Presentation regarding Ralph M. Brown Act (*deferred*)

6. Working Draft Outline – Chapter 5: Conservation Strategy

[Available at http://www.yoloconservationplan.org/yolo_pdfs/steering/steering-2010/2010-01-25-SAC-Chp5-draft-outline.pdf]

The draft outline is available for review and comment. At this stage, it is generic to some extent and needs to be customized for Yolo County. Some completed sections will shortly be available for review: the Upland Strategy and the Agricultural Strategy.

Of particular concern is to ensure that the pieces of the plan interrelate in a consistent way. The Fish & Wildlife Service is rethinking how to reorganize documents so that they can be produced more efficiently and are more accessible and understandable to the public and other readers. As a consequence of these ongoing revisions, the format or chapter organization may change in the final version.

COMMENT: Covered activities might need to be addressed differently in different landscape categories.

COMMENT: Documentation of "grassland communities" still needs to be clarified.

RESPONSE: These are still under consideration.

Q: What section will describe canals, drainage ditches, etc? Is this "agricultural drainages"? Where do the other drainage systems fit in, particularly areas outside the reserve?

Q: Are the take provisions going to apply throughout the area?

RESPONSE: They will apply broadly within the planning area. Details are still to be confirmed.

COMMENT: This document will be the primary guide to people implementing the plan over a long time period – people who are not in this room now in most cases. It must be clear and accessible to future users.

COMMENT: Chapter 5 will be “vast” – it covers a huge amount of information. Perhaps it should be broken up into smaller chapters in the interest of clarity.

RESPONSE: This is a suggestion that we will bring to the FWS and the DFG. The document will be iterative, changing over time. We will have a better sense of the total document by April 2010.

7. Meeting Guidelines, collaborative decision making tools and skills - review

Maria Wong [See summary document: *available at* http://www.yoloconservationplan.org/yolo_pdfs/steering/steering-2010/2010-01-25-SAC-mtg-guidelines.pdf]

The Steering Committee meeting guidelines were reviewed to remind SAC members about appropriate meeting behavior, debate, and decision making processes. Members were reminded that their attendance and participation is critical for the success of the plan. While the comments of all members are appreciated, discussion needs to be expanded to include more members. In the future, a “heavier hand” will be employed to encourage broader participation. Everyone needs to feel free to comment.

It is also important to differentiate between discussion and decision making. We will make it more explicit in the future when decisions are being made. In all cases, decisions are recommendations to the JPA.

Collaboration is a structured process where participants agree to focus on their self interest, while posing no harm to other’s self interest. Conflicting interests may arise during discussion. There is requirement to agree with others’ viewpoints; however expression of all interests will be allowed. We are always in the process of looking for compromise in order to move forward.

Our task overlaps with other tasks underway in the county (e.g. the County General Plan). We need to stay in our “decision space”.

The manner in which we bring our individual experiences, beliefs, and opinions into action is important for achieving effective communications as a group. While we should strive to be “assertive communicators,” we also need to remember the following tenets:

- Value everyone’s needs
- Hold myself and others accountable
- You have the right and responsibility to ask for what you need.
- Be an empathetic listener.

COMMENT: It is important to receive meeting materials sufficiently in advance of the meetings to allow members time to review and comment on documents at the meeting.

RESPONSE: This is our goal and we will commit to providing materials at least 1 week in advance or the item is removed from the agenda.

QUESTION: Many of the issues are complex. How transparent or necessary is it for the whole committee to get involved in each decision. Is it appropriate for them to take direction from a sub-committee?

RESPONSE: It is likely that some decisions will go to a smaller sub-group to formulate a recommendation for discussion. There needs to be enough information in the SAC discussion to enable an outside observer to determine how the decision was made. Debate should be fact-based.

COMMENT: The key points necessary to formulate opinions are not always “all the facts” in an academic sense, but the facts that matter in the process.

QUESTION: When will we get a chance to look at the agricultural model developed by Dr. Sunding?

RESPONSE: We are still planning to hold a meeting for those who want to probe more deeply into the details of the model.

8. Progress report on development of draft Riparian Conservation Strategy

Maria Wong

- We plan to schedule a third Riparian Conservation Strategy Workshop once the consultant team has developed a straw proposal for consideration by the group. Their contracts are being reauthorized at the JPA meeting on February 8.
- The riparian definition sub-group will meet on February 2 and draft a definition for review at the next Workshop.
- A new “Riparian Workshop” portal is available on the YNHP web page and all information related to the Riparian Conservation Workshops and Strategy will be posted there [<http://yoloconservationplan.org/riparian-wkshp-portal.htm>].

9. Working Group Updates

The working groups will be reconvened beginning in February. All members are welcome to participate. If you have participated in the past, please let Susan know of your interest.

- *Biological Working Group*

The Biological Working Group will continue reviewing biological issues That affect the plan.
Agricultural-Habitat Interface Working Group

The Agricultural Working Group will consider agricultural issues that are important to the YNHP plan.

- *Urban Interface Working Group*

This group will revisit covered activities and discuss governance issues when they resume meeting.

10. Public Comment

Staff received a request to change the SAC meeting schedule so that the first meeting of the month starts at 4:00 pm and the second meeting starts at 6:00. All agreed upon this change. A revised meeting schedule will be sent out next week.

QUESTION: How does the Bay Delta Conservation Plan process affect us?

RESPONSE:

- More than 90,000 acres of land in Yolo County are included in the BDCP area.
- They are the funding “gorilla” since they are mandated under the Governor’s office
- Their wetlands restoration activities could affect our terrestrial habitat.

For more information on the BDCP, visit <http://baydeltaconservationplan.com/> and consider attending some of their meetings, which are listed in their schedule. Big decisions are teed up for February that affect lands in Yolo County. Participation in reviewing material is encouraged. Coordination is crucial to our planning effort.

11. Announcements and Updates

The JPA Board will meet on January 8, at 5:30 pm. The Directors will consider contracts for completing our plan, as well as for the EIA/EIS (environmental impact assessment/ environmental impact statement process). You or your organization are encouraged to communicate your views about the YNHP process to the JPA, and to attend their meetings.

Susan attended the Sacramento River Watershed Program Annual Stakeholder’s meeting held in Sacramento on January 21. The SRWP brings together dozens of groups and thousands of people, concerned about the health of the Sacramento River and its watershed. It also collects and disseminates information about the health of the river with regard to water quality for public health and for wildlife habitat. An agenda and presentations from the meeting can be found at http://www.sacriver.org/events/content/20100121_meeting.php .

Susan also attended the meetings of the National Research Council Committee on Sustainable Water and Environmental Management in the California Bay-Delta, held at UC Davis January 24-26. The NRC committee has been requested by Congress and the Department of the Interior to review the scientific basis of actions necessary to achieve an environmentally sustainable Bay-Delta and develop recommendations on how to most effectively incorporate science and adaptive management into programs for management and restoration of the Bay-Delta. at the same time, maintain a reliable water supply. Information about the committee can be found at <http://www8.nationalacademies.org/cp/CommitteeView.aspx?key=49175>.

12. Summary and Next Steps

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee is scheduled for Monday, February 22 , at 6:00 p.m. The change in meeting room to the DESS building is related to the problems of locked doors at other meeting venues. Law requires that all meetings be open to the public throughout the duration of the meeting.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.