



# NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

## YOLO HABITAT CONSERVANCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**TIME:** 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. on Monday, November 9, 2015

**PLACE:** Yolo County Administration Building  
625 Court St., Woodland, CA 95695  
Atrium Training Room (in the basement)

**INFORMATION:** Contact Susan Garbini at 530-723-5909 or [susan.garbini@yolocounty.org](mailto:susan.garbini@yolocounty.org)

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### AGENDA

1. **Call meeting to order and introductions – John Hopkins**
2. **Approve agenda order**
3. **Approve July 13, 2015 draft meeting summary; review status of action items**
  - Advisory Committee members requested to send in comments on Reserve System Design criteria and other elements related to conservation easements before the next meeting.
  - Members to provide suggestions for future meeting agenda topics.
4. **Update on Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) /Conservation Easement/Mitigation Receiving Site selection process (10 min)**
  - Woodland Regional Park
  - Dunnigan CTS site (CVPCP application; see item #5)
  - Peabody Ranch
  - Yanci Ranch
  - Summary of acres for MRS and CE
  - Future solicitation/criteria
5. **Application for grant for California Tiger Salamander conservation easement (CVPCP) (5 min)**

**6. Review and discussion of pre-public review draft HCP/NCCP (90 min)**

- Overview
- Preliminary comments [*written comments due by Nov 20*]
- Schedule for EIR/EIS and public release draft

**7. Update on the Local Conservation Plan – Steve Greco & Petrea Marchand (10 min)**

- Draft material to ICF by November 17
- Discuss “objectives”
- ICF draft to AC by February 10, 2016

**8. Announcements and updates: Advisory Committee members**

**9. Adjournment to next meeting date: February 10 , 2016, 4-6 pm, Room TBD**  
[*note this is a Wednesday*]

**Yolo Habitat Conservancy  
Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary  
November 9, 2015**

**ACTION ITEMS**

- **ACTION: Provide information on stacking issues: CDFW letter, the Conservancy Board easement stacking policy, and the YLT stacking policy**
- **ACTION: Check with the California Rangeland Trust about landowners interested in applications for conservation easements in areas with CTS habitat in Yolo County.**
- **ACTION: Ask wildlife agencies about the process for amending AMMs (avoidance and minimization measures) over the 50 year term of the permit.**
- **ACTION: Consider expanding areas designated as Priority 1 and 2 in planning area 5.**

**1. Call meeting to order and introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Yolo Habitat Conservancy Executive Director, **Petrea Marchand**. All those present introduced themselves.

*Attendees:*

**Advisory Committee Members, Liaisons, and Alternates**

Michelle Azevedo, Ridge Capital

John Brennan, Tule Basin Farms

Steve Greco, UC Davis

Glen Holstein, California Native Plant Society

Chad Roberts, Tuleyome/Yolo Audubon Society

Charles Tyson, Reynier Fund

Jeanette Wrynski, Yolo County Resource Conservation District

**Member Agency Staff and Liaisons**

Sean Denny, Yolo County, YHC Board

John McNerney, City of Davis

**GUESTS**

Michael Perrone, California Department of Water Resources

Ross and Julie Peabody, Yolo County landowners

**Conservancy Staff**

Petrea Marchand, Executive Director

Chris Alford, Deputy Director

Heidi Tschudin, Project Manager

Susan Garbini, Research Associate

Jim Estep, Consultant and Chair, STAC Chair

**2. Approve agenda order**

The agenda order was approved.

**3. Approve July 13, 2015 draft meeting summary; review status of action items.**

The July 13, 2015 meeting summary was approved. Chad Roberts had comments on one of the topics discussed in item 5 (Reserve System Design: Selection and Acquisition Criteria). See “Action Item” discussion below.

Action Item:

- *Comments on Reserve System Design Criteria - discussion of stacking of easements*

**Chad Roberts:** If we can’t pay farmers to add habitat easements to agricultural easements, we won’t get the conservation that we need to protect habitat in Yolo County.

**Petrea:** Although our Board approved stacking of easements, we got a letter from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife stating that they do not approved stacking of easements.

**Chris Alford:** To clarify, the issue was specific to mitigation receiving sites.

**Charles Tyson:** Did the Board approve this type of stacking?

**Petrea:** We will bring the staff report on this issue to the Advisory Committee for discussion. We can also look at the policy of the Yolo Land Trust and the Cache Creek Resources Management Program (CCRMP)

**Charles:** There is also a question about whether the federal/state appraisal reflects habitat value.

**Petrea:** When this permit is granted, we’ll be purchasing multi-species conservation easements. We purchase an easement that prevents orchards and vineyards. We’re just starting on our first appraisal. Appraisals don’t appraise habitat value.

**John Brennan:** The issue we would have is that if the Conservancy didn't allow stacking, then an owner couldn't donate that easement. How to assess the value?

**Charles:** There are restrictions on how donations are done.

**Michael Perrone:** Starting with an existing agricultural easement, you then restrict land further for Swainson's hawk.

**Chris:** This is specific to mitigation adding conservation for conservation purposes isn't a problem.

**Heidi Tschudin:** That is not clear from the Agency letter.

**Petrea:** It seems that stacking is ok for conservation purposes, but not for mitigation fee payment. We will bring back the letter from the Agencies at the next meeting and ask Todd Garner (CDFAW) to explain the restrictions.

**ACTION: Provide the Advisory Committee with a copy of the CDFW letter, the Conservancy Board easement stacking policy, the YLT stacking policy.**

#### **4. Update on STAC Process – Petrea Marchand/Jim Estep**

*Woodland Regional Park:*

**Petrea:** The Conservancy has been working with the City of Woodland on a conservation easement for the Woodland Regional Park. This started before the STAC process was developed. We are far along with drafting the easement and the appraisal process is starting soon. This is particularly difficult because of multiple uses of the property (e.g. public access). A small number of properties will have public access.

**Glen Holstein:** There was an appraisal a few years ago. I will provide a copy.

*Dunnigan Hills CTS site (CVPCP application):*

**Chris:** We are trying to get a head start on conservation of California tiger salamander (one of our covered species). The Bureau of Reclamation and the US Fish & Wildlife Service (– CVPCP/HRP grant program) recently solicited for project proposals for their grant program, which listed conserving habitat for CTS in Yolo County as a top priority area listed for this year's grant round. Jeanette Wrysinski at the Yolo RCD helped tremendously with outreach and helping us find a willing landowner.

We have submitted the application; they requested a site tour with the grant managers. We should hear back by February. We asked for a little under \$1 million.

**John Brennan:** The California Rangeland Trust has applications for conservation easements on land that may have CTS habitat.

#### *The Peabody Ranch*

The Peabody Ranch was submitted for consideration as a mitigation receiving site, but the STAC recommended that it be considered as a multi-species conservation easement. It has been recommended to the Board for approval at their next meeting.

**Jim Estep:** Most of these properties have multiple values. Peabody Ranch has riparian habitat on the Sacramento River, close to canal, and is adjacent to the Katchitule Restoration area. The ranch would enhance the habitat value of that whole area along the river. It has high habitat values for Swainson's hawk and burrowing owl. It's been planted in alfalfa and tomatoes for many years, and also is an organic farm.

**Ross Peabody:** Our ranch will never be developed, so it made sense to offer it for a conservation easement. It would be good for landowners to be able to reap benefits from maintaining good habitat.

#### *Yanci Ranch*

The Yanci Ranch was first submitted for consideration as a mitigation receiving site in the first Cycle of applications. The STAC recommended it be reevaluated as a multi-species conservation easement. They will revisit the site in the next month and complete a reevaluation on this revised basis.

#### *Summary of acres for MRS and CE (see handout)*

**Petrea:** One of Chris' main jobs is to move these easements forward. We are awaiting funding of some of the sites. We do have funds for the Mitigation Receiving Sites.

**Michelle Azevedo:** Who actually provides the appraisals?

**Petrea:** For a conservation easement, we go to outside firms. We will seek bids from multiple firms to determine expertise and cost. Appraisals are not needed for mitigation receiving sites.

### **5. Application for CVPCP grant for CTS in Dunnigan Hills - Chris Alford**

See discussion above.

## **6. Review/discuss HCP/NCCP pre-public review draft – Petrea Marchand**

*[See presentation on Conservancy website:  
<http://www.yolohabitatconservancy.org/Meetings/>]*

### *Discussion*

**Chad:** The Avoidance and Minimization Measures [AMMs] determined appropriate in 2017 are not likely to be the AMMs needed in 2028. What is the process for amending?

**Heidi:** For the most part, these are fairly generic. But that is a good point. Some adaptive management is included in the Plan, so that would be part of the path to change requirements.

**ACTION:** Ask wildlife agencies about the process for amending AMMs over the 50 year term of the permit.

**Charles:** What will the time frame be for the applicant to expect approval of proposed projects?

**Heidi:** The intent is to fit the new approach into the existing process and perhaps make it more efficient.

**Sean Denny:** Will there be a summary sheet that provides an example of the steps, costs, net benefit to landowners of becoming involved in the HCP/NCCP? It's so complex. What will sell this to them?

*[See "Landowner" section of the Conservancy website for public information about conservation easements and mitigation receiving sites.]*

**John McNerney:** The Conservancy is making projections; what happens if focused mapping comes up with very different information?

**Petrea:** We are not locked in place geographically for where our take is. We can assume there will be differences, mistakes in our data base. We may have to ask for amendments. We have erred on the side of being conservative. But if we are way off, then we would have to seek an amendment. Oversight and tracking important.

**Chad:** Also, what if climate change changes everything? This is why we will have to monitor, track, and determine necessary changes.

**Steve Greco:** The land cover map associated with the plan will be updated every five years.

**Petrea:** But that won't affect our take allocation (limits? requirements?)

**Jeanette Wrysinski:** Is the landowner mapping approach at the NRCS level sufficient? That is the planning that NRCS does with every landowner that they do projects with. Do you need exceptional detail? This provides soil types, slopes, farmland, woodland, etc. It has many layers.

**Heidi/Petrea:** We are not sure what we need to do. We need to see what resources are available.

**Steve:** Wouldn't the STAC be involved? Their expertise would be needed to determine habitat needs.

**Petrea:** That is possibly one of the roles of the STAC. Also, when the Conservancy is fully staffed, there will be a full-time biologist.

**Jim Estep:** There are lot of other conservation lands in the County that were not accepted under the definition.

The STAC has the ability to recommend other properties (or to shift focus) based on biological goals and objectives.

We were looking for SH habitat but now looking for multi-species habitat.

**Chad:** Try to connect Willow Slough to Cache Creek and provide more habitat in Capay Valley (along Cache Creek). I don't see the connectivity in this plan in that area (Capay Valley). There is a conservation break.

**Jeanette:** Also lack of connectivity in Willow Slough. This creates a gap in habitat connectivity

**Petrea:** The Local Conservation Plan will cover other areas outside the priority areas. My understanding is that the LCP will identify areas that need to be conserved outside the HCP/NCCP and seek grants to pay for conservation in these areas.

**Petrea:** We concentrate on the "hotspots".

**Chad:** Somehow some areas got left out. There needs to be a linkage in the west part of the County.

**Petrea:** STAC could identify properties in non-priority areas.

**Steve Greco:** It's not going to be a connected network in any case. The LCP would hopefully be able to fill in some of those gaps.

**Glen:** What about Area 5 – that seems underrepresented. It was called out as a priority area because of multiple species of raptors.



**Michael:** Green areas in the map are areas where species covered in the plan can be protected.

**Chad:** But in terms of overall conservation strategy for Yolo County, it needs more coverage.

**Petrea:** We are worried about the cost and where we will get funds. We worked hard to keep fees reasonable, and at the same time to conserve significant habitat.

**ACTION:** Consider expanding areas designated as Priority 1 and 2 in Planning area 5 (Note that the south end has better habitat than the north end) and areas along sloughs.

**Petrea:** Costs of the plan have been brought down from the 1<sup>st</sup> draft. The agencies have increased federal and state funding of plan.

**Chad:** What are mitigation fees in Natomas?

**John Brennan:** \$45,000 acre (!?!)

**Petrea:** You can't compare fees, land value is the basis for the fee. In our plan, one fee covers all 12 species. No separate mitigation payment.

*Remaining issues to be resolved with agencies:*

1. Covered species (possibly drop the white-tailed kite)
9. Plan templates (conservation easement and management plan; 3<sup>rd</sup> party beneficiary clarification)
11. Coordination w/County Parks (may help w/parks through Conservation easements)

We are still working on burrowing owl conservation strategy and the Yolo Wildlife Area lands role in the plan.

The majority of big issues have been resolved.

*Next steps:*

- 11/16 Board meeting
- Receive comments from the Advisory Committee and the wildlife agencies.
- Authorize moving forward with Public Review Draft.
- November 24 – formal start to EIR/EIS.

## **7. Update on the Local Conservation Plan – *Steve Greco***

See discussion above.

**Chad:** Language should be in the plan to describe the LCP and its role in rounding out the HCP/NCCP. We need to link the LCP to HCP/NCCP in order to fully realize the benefits of the HCP/NCCP.

## **8. Announcements and Updates**

None

## **9. Adjournment; Next meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on **WEDNESDAY**, February 10, at the Yolo County Administrative Building.