



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING YOLO COUNTY HCP/NCCP JPA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TIME: 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 11, 2015

PLACE: Yolo County Farm Bureau, Board Room; 69 W. Kentucky Ave.
(between West St. and Cottonwood St.), Woodland CA 95695

[NOTE MEETING LOCATION]

INFORMATION: Contact Susan Garbini at 530-723-5909 or susan.garbini@yolocounty.org

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AGENDA

1. **Call meeting to order and introductions – John Hopkins**
2. **Approve agenda order – John Hopkins**
3. **Approve January 12, 2015 draft meeting summary; review and approve March 9, 2015 draft meeting summary; review status of action items**
4. **AC membership issues: renewal of members, search for new members**
5. **Report on the Local Conservation Strategy working group; schedule of tasks – Steve Greco**
6. **Update on 2nd Administrative Draft; schedule for Public Review Draft – Petrea Marchand**
7. **Review/Discuss AC Member Comments on 2nd Administrative Draft HCP/NCCP**
8. **Announcements and updates: Advisory Committee members**
9. **Adjournment to next meeting date: Monday, June 8, 2015**

**Yolo Habitat Conservancy
Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
May 11, 2015**

ACTION ITEMS

- Comments on 2nd Administrative Draft are due by May 29
- Staff to send all AC comments to members

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Call meeting to order and introductions

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Chair **John Hopkins**. All those present introduced themselves.

Attendees:

Advisory Committee Members, Liaisons, and Alternates

Steve Greco, UC Davis

Glen Holstein, California Native Plant Society

John Hopkins, IEH

Chad Roberts, Yolo Audubon Society

Steve Thompson, Conaway Ranch

Jeanette Wrysinski, Yolo County Resource Conservation District

Jennifer Garcia, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

JPA Member Agency Staff and Liaisons

Sean Denny, Yolo County JPA Board

Eric Parfrey, Yolo County CAO

GUESTS

Michael Perrone, California Department of Water Resources

John Brennan, Brennan & Sons

Ed Whisler, Biological Consultant/STAC member

Catherine Portman, Burrowing Owl Preservation Society

John Anderson, Hedgerow Farms

Bruce Guelding, Winters citizen

JPA Staff

Petrea Marchand, Executive Director

Heidi Tschudin, Project Manager

Susan Garbini, Research Associate

2. Approve agenda order

The agenda order was revised to discuss item #5 first.

5. Report on the Local Conservation Strategy working group; schedule of tasks – *Steve Greco*

The Local Conservation Strategy working group met on April 29.

- Discussion focused on how to simplify and reduce the amount of work needed to produce the Local Conservation Strategy.
- It was agreed that monitoring should focus on changes in land cover – primarily through remotely sensed data that will be required as part of the HCP/NCCP. Additional monitoring would be contingent on acquiring funds. Because most change is a result of human activity on the landscape, changes in land cover should provide adequate information to guide adaptive management for the LCS.
- It is likely that the August 11 deadline for completion of Advisory Committee tasks related to the LCS will have to be extended, but hopefully only by a few weeks.
- It would be useful to organize the species of local concern into groups based on their association with specific habitat types and elements.

Members of the Working group agreed to complete the following tasks by June 30 (next meeting of the working group):

1. Organize species into groups based on association with habitat types and elements: *Glen Holstein*
2. Prepare a simplified version of Chapter 2 (“Environmental Setting/Ecological Conditions”) for the LCS: *Glen*
3. Define biological goals and objectives for the LCS: *Chad Roberts/Steve Greco*
4. Develop an adaptive management framework for the LCS: *Chad*
5. Review and comment: *Michael Perrone/John Hopkins*

Discussion

It was agreed to change the name of the Local Conservation Strategy to Local Conservation Plan.

The work of the LCP working group members is intended to help reduce costs for developing the plan. The ICF Consultants have a work scope. That is all they will do for a certain cost. Other tasks will be done by the working group members.

Discussion of species to include in the LCP: “Species of local concern”?

SEAN: Is there a way to have a broad spectrum without listing the species? Or is that too broad?

GLEN: We could discuss significant habitats. That would be an easier way to achieve this.

STEVE GRECO: I think there needs to be a reference list for what is found in Yolo County. It doesn't have to be complete and could be updated in the future. We would produce a subset list that does not include HCP/NCCP species – a list of species of local concern.

MICHAEL PERRONE: I'm interested in defining a scope that we can realistically accomplish. I'm not interested in having all species on the list. Who is going to use the list? What is it for? I would like to focus on the species I'm most concerned about.

PETREA: The compromise is to develop a list of species of local concern, but with the broader goal of benefitting all species in the County.

JOHN: It would be a very time-consuming task to type up a list of all the species.

GLEN: Some counties do try to list all species in the county. Typically that is the lifework of one individual.

STEVE: We could assemble lists that already exist e.g. all vertebrate terrestrial animals. Take it off the shelf.

CHAD: We made a commitment to have tasks completed by June 30.

3. Approve January 12, 2015 draft meeting summary; review and approve March 9, 2015 draft meeting summary; review status of action items.

Both meeting summaries were approved.

4. Advisory Committee membership issues: renewal of members, search for new members – *Petrea Marchand*

There are vacancies in the Advisory Committee membership for an additional agricultural member, a landowner member, and 2 development members. Staff are soliciting members in these categories.

This is a crucial year; a lots of activity is anticipated over the next 2 years as the plan moves towards implementation in 2017. The Advisory Committee will have a lot of work to do to help with this process.

6. Update on 2nd Administrative Draft; schedule for Public Review Draft - *Petrea*

The 2nd Administrative Draft was sent out on March 31; the comment deadline is May 29. John Hopkins will present an update on Advisory Committee comments at the May 18 Board meeting.

JOHN: We have told the Board that we won't have everything together by May 18, but we will provide comments from members. This is not the same as a set of comments "approved by the Advisory Committee".

PETREA: We have about 15 issues left to resolve with the wildlife agencies. Staff are meeting on June 1 to discuss how to resolve them. We have to provide a revised draft of the plan to ICF for July in order to start the EIS/EIR process in August or September. We interviewed firms last week and will announce the selection at the upcoming Board meeting.

We are in the process of trying to seek a final grant from the feds and the state for completion of the plan.

So far, I have not heard of any major fatal flaws, although there are issues that need to be resolved. We would like a heads-up on any serious problems before May 29.

CHAD: I have a question about monitoring issues.

PETREA: We have certain requirements that we have to meet: effectiveness, compliance, ecological monitoring for the NCCP. The costs associated with monitoring in the present version of the plan are very high. The issue is to reduce the cost and scope of monitoring; putting that money into additional conservation easements and fee title acquisitions.

JENNIFER GARCIA: The present plan proposes almost too much costs for monitoring, not enough for conservation.

CHAD: But you can't make management adaptations unless you know where you are (and that information is acquired through monitoring).

JENNIFER: But you need a management focus. It is just a need to rebalance and reallocate. There are many management tools available.

PETREA: We will have a proposal in writing for how we will address these issues.

JOHN: It will be important to think about what monitoring is essential.

SEAN: It would be good to have an easy access to understanding the “tools in the toolbox”. Directions for how to quickly move forward.

CHAD: What triggers action? What findings? What are the crucial thresholds?

STEVE: We need to identify our monitoring as an adaptive management trigger.

SEAN: If you hit a threshold, who comes out to take action?

CHAD: It is the management team, and consultants.

PETREA: It all has to be within the context of agreements with landowners and subject to the conditions of the easements and agreements.

STEVE THOMPSON: It's a struggle. We know some things, but we have a lot to learn. Landowners will be concerned about how much time you spend on the property and want to make sure you stay within the framework of the agreement. The main thing is to get the right baseline monitoring. It is important to understand how to stay flexible and adaptive from the landowner's perspective.

JOHN: This makes life difficult in the long run, because the conservation is in perpetuity. Especially when it is so heavily easement based. It will also require the landowner to be in agreement.

JENNIFER: It's a balancing act. Species changes occur for a variety of reasons. We can't plan for everything. We work from a baseline and implement management actions in order to achieve goals. I don't see any of these adaptive strategies requiring radical shifts in management. There are many different tools.

ELISA SABATINI: The Cache Creek Natural Resources Plan operates with different requirements from this program. Every 10 years we have to take stock of what we have done. Then we evaluate what's working, what is not working. Why are we doing certain monitoring, what would be more valuable? Then we make changes in the implementation plan as appropriate.

PETREA: Long-term management is mentioned in our plan, but not the time frame. We want flexibility. Perhaps we need to beef up this section. We could also provide actual actions that we might take to improve this section.

STEVE GRECO: I suggest we put a maximum amount of time instead of no interval. “At least every 10 years”.

STEVE THOMPSON: We need to describe how to monitor, how much, what to monitor? This is a huge challenge. It will determine how to allocate money for adaptive

management. A lot of plans put too much money up front for monitoring, not enough for implementing and operating. Costs for monitoring tend to increase.

CHAD: I want to know what the target goal is, what are we trying to accomplish? What do I have to monitor to know if we are on track to achieve our goals?

STEVE THOMPSON: We might want to look at the Natomas Plan. There is a lot of value in saying we would sit down every so often to reevaluate.

JOHN: Periodic review is also important for receiving input from stakeholders, landowners, and ensuring a transparent process, rather than actions taken behind closed doors.

CHAD: I'm presuming there would be criteria, e.g. numbers of breeding pairs for Swainson's hawk. A red flag would go up if the threshold is not achieved.

JENNIFER: A secondary goal is to determine why things are occurring, e.g. land conditions, climate. That's why monitoring is so key.

PETREA: We have a Table with examples of effectiveness criteria. You want to be able to change these.

ELISA: We map elderberry every 5 years; every year we establish monitoring transects to find out if we are trending up or trending down. There are problems with "unforeseen consequences".

JENNIFER: I would appreciate feedback on adaptive management. It needs to be flushed out, and provide more description.

STEVE GRECO: We're not planning to do an implementation plan.

PETREA: No, that can be prepared later.

STEVE GRECO: The implementation plan will be prepared by the Habitat Conservancy that is formed once the plan is approved?

PETREA: Yes. We are now concerned with what needs to go into the plan to provide direction, while maintaining flexibility for the Conservancy -- what needs to be required to ensure that we stay on track.

STEVE THOMPSON: Financial planning needs to be connected to the biologists or the costs will skyrocket.

JOHN: We will need to prioritize monitoring.

ED WHISLER: Some species like the burrowing owl can be a challenge to monitor; they are not typical. Their population can change very rapidly.

JENNIFER: We are developing a burrowing owl plan. It is complex. We acknowledge that.

JOHN: We need to avoid destroying owls who have come to construction sites.

7. Review/Discuss AC Member Comments on 2nd Administrative Draft HCP/NCCP

PETREA: Heidi wants us to have “consensus” comments. It depends on how many we have.

JOHN: Judging by today’s discussion, there is little to zero conflict. We hear significant amounts of approval of the document. If it turns out that there is conflict, we’ll have to resolve any substantive issues.

CHAD: I think you should basically tell ICF all sides of the conflict so that they can understand why there is a conflict.

ELISA: Are county/community comments going to the Advisory Committee?

PETREA: No their comments will go to the Board.

JOHN: What is the rationale for this process (i.e. that the public cannot submit comments except through their representatives?)

JENNIFER: You have already had an administrative draft, but because this is a revised administrative draft, the Fish and Wildlife Service requested that it come out in a way that they could be reassured that the red flags in the 1st admin draft are cleared. Then the next draft will go out the door. Technically it is still ours to own and review to ensure that issues are addressed before public review. That saves a lot of heartburn.

JOHN: I thought the outstanding “issues” had been resolved.

JENNIFER: Chapter 6 has some areas where there are major issues outstanding. As an HCP this plan is in good shape, but as an NCCP, there is a way to go. I believe we will accomplish it, but there are issues outstanding before it could be released for public review.

SUSAN: I will send out the comments from Advisory Committee members to all AC members and liaisons.

PETREA: All comments are addressed and have been and will be.

8. Announcements and Updates

PETREA: Do we need a June meeting?

JOHN: Let's skip the June meeting.

JEANETTE WRYSINSKI: The RCD is hiring a new project manager who will spend significant time working on the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, managing agricultural leases there. The Dixon RCD is getting out of that role. We had 50 applicants. We've been doing water conservation workshops: City of Woodland, City of Winters, City of West Sacramento, and others. We have a regular "dog and pony" show and can present.

CHAD: The Bogle suit was resolved last Friday.

PETREA: Thanks to John Brennan, Jeanette, and Elisa for helping with wildlife agency tours of Yolo County. A great tour around Conaway Ranch led by Steve Thompson.

CATHERINE PORTMAN: October 24, California Burrowing Owl conference at San Jose State University.

JOHN: The Vacaville HCP workshop will be held on November 18: "Habitat Planning: Tahoe to the Bay".

JOHN: SB317, DeLeon's bill, Park Bond bill. The bill does very little for conservation plans, except for protection of wildlife corridors in "climate resilience" section. Statewide coalition is seeking to add \$90 million for Regional HCPs and NCCPs, \$100 million for broad watershed protection.

We are also trying to get money from the Cap & Trade world for oak woodlands and rangeland protection.

9. Adjournment; Next meeting

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Monday, July 13 at the Yolo County Administrative Building.