

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

YOLO HABITAT CONSERVANCY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TIME: 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. on Monday, August 14, 2017

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

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

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AGENDA

1. Call meeting to order and introductions
2. Approve agenda order
3. Approve June 12, 2017, draft meeting summary
4. Update on Local Conservation Plan/Regional Conservation Investment Strategy– Chris Alford/Ellen Berryman
 - Chapter 2 discussion and comments
 - RCIS/LCP Public meeting: September 14, 2017, 5:30-7:00 pm, Cache Creek Meeting Room, Yolo County Dept. of Community Services, 292 W. Beamer St., Woodland, CA 95695
5. HCP/NCCP Update; report release; Public Meetings, Outreach Activities – Petrea Marchand

6. Status of Outstanding Action Items– Chris Alford/Ellen Berryman

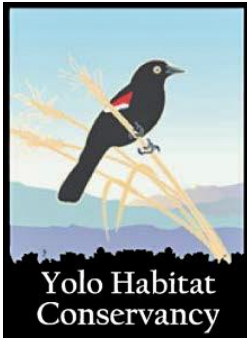
- The Conservancy and ICF will review the current neighboring landowner program. [See handout]
- YHC will research costs associated with baseline surveys and whether the Conservancy or the landowner will bear those costs.
- ICF will distribute RCIS/LCP goals and objectives for the Advisory Committee to review.
- YHC will work with ICF on the species list to incorporate language that distinguishes the planning species from the rare species.

7. Announcements and updates: Advisory Committee members

8. Adjournment to next meeting date: Monday, September 11, 2017

Location: *Cache Creek Meeting Room
292 W. Beamer St.
Woodland, CA*

ⁱ Printed copies of Chapter 2 will be available at the meeting for Advisory Committee members and members of the public. They are also available upon request by contacting the Yolo Habitat Conservancy office at 530-723-5504.



Yolo Habitat Conservancy

County of Yolo • City of Davis • City of Winters • City of West Sacramento
City of Woodland • University of California, Davis

YOLO HABITAT CONSERVANCY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

August 14, 2017

ACTION ITEMS

- Comments for Chapter 2 and 3 are due by the September 11 meeting. Chapter 3 will be sent out on Friday, August 18.
- Provide Chapter 7 text for neighboring landowner program.
- *RCIS/LCP Public meeting: Thursday, September 14, 2017, 5:30-7:00 pm, Cache Creek Meeting Room, Yolo County Dept. of Community Services, 292 W. Beamer St., Woodland, CA 95695*

1. Call meeting to order and introductions

Meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm by Chair John Hopkins. All present introduced themselves.

Committee Members

John Hopkins
Jeanette Wrynsinski
Glen Holstein
Steve Greco
Kent Lang
Chad Roberts

Guests

Bruce Rominger

YHC Staff & Consultants

Petrea Marchand
Chris Alford
Susan Garbini
Ellen Berryman

2. Approve agenda order

The agenda was approved with the exception that discussion of Action Items was deferred to follow after agenda items 4 and 5.

3. Approve June 12, 2017, draft meeting summary

The June 12 meeting summary was approved with no changes.

**4. Update on Local Conservation Plan/Regional Conservation Investment Strategy–
Chris Alford/Ellen Berryman**

- *Chapter 2 discussion and comments*

Comments have been received only from Jeanette Wrynski at this point.

The question was raised whether larger scale plans should be included such as the Riparian Bird Conservation Plan (by California Partners in Flight), the Central Valley Joint Venture, Shorebird Conservation Plan, and others. Do we want to add descriptions? Or just mention them or provide summaries? There was also discussion about the California State Wildlife Action Plan and how it is currently referenced in several portions of the RCIS/LCP but does not have its own plan summary in Chapter 2.

All the RCIS plans have to incorporate information from other regional plans. This is happening to some extent in chapter 2. We added some species that were not previously part of the LCP because they are species identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan. The ultimate test is what the CDFW requires in the guidelines for RCIS plans. The Yolo RCIS/LCP Chapter 2 is much more thorough than similar chapters from other RCIS plans. We followed the guidelines for preparing the RCIS.

Discussion

The approach in Chapter 2 seems to be a step backward from the HCP/NCCP in the level of organization. For example, placing the discussion of the regulatory framework in the environmental setting chapter doesn't seem to be in a logical order. It was suggested that some reorganization of the chapter would improve the flow and logic of the discussion, perhaps by adding some sub-headings to better delineate the discussion between the physical environmental setting and the regulatory and planning framework. This would not entail a change in content.

There is concern about making the agreed-upon deadlines and that changing the organization of the chapters would make that more difficult. There is some pressure to produce this document which is forcing a hurry-up approach. The solution is more time.

We are going slower than the agreed-upon schedule already. We might need to delay the deadlines again. The current timeline is to complete and submit the draft RCIS/LCP to CDFW in December. This document is important to us as part of the County's local conservation strategy and therefore it needs to be done well.

It was noted that the deadline for comments on the HCP/NCCP and EIR/EIS is August 30 and that this has a higher priority.



ACTION ITEM:

Comments for Chapter 2 and 3 are due by the September 11 meeting. Chapter 3 will be sent out on Friday, August 18.

A public meeting is required under the RCIS. The intent is to provide an overview and background to the interested public. Representatives of the DWR and natural resources agencies will be there (along with Yolo County and the YHC).

**RCIS/LCP Public meeting: Thursday, September 14, 2017, 5:30-7:00 pm,
Cache Creek Meeting Room, Yolo County Dept. of Community Services, 292 W. Beamer
St., Woodland, CA 95695**

**5. HCP/NCCP Update; report release; Public Meetings, Outreach Activities –
Petrea Marchand**

We have completed nine public meetings on the HCP/NCCP. To-date, there has not been any opposition testimony during any of the public meetings. We have been received endorsement/support from 16 organizations so far. Working on getting some op eds timed for when the comment period ends. Our biggest concern is a negative reaction from the farming community. We are working with the Farm Bureau to resolve issues and expect a comment letter from them based on a survey they sent out to their membership.

We have received a letter from Bruce Guelden, a former City of Winters council member, which is critical of the plan. Overall, public commenters have asked good questions.

We are drafting a new schedule for final plan and permit issuance: end of April 2018 is anticipated. We are recruiting for a new Executive Director in January 2018.

6. Status of Outstanding Action Items– Chris Alford/Ellen Berryman

- **The Conservancy and ICF will review the current neighboring landowner program.**
[See handout]

There is additional information in chapter 7 that is not in the handout. This information will be added for the next meeting.

- **YHC will research costs associated with baseline surveys and whether the Conservancy or the landowner will bear those costs.**

We are asking landowners to pay for the baseline survey. The take acreage for covered activities assumes something is converted from habitat. The neighboring lands situation will still be counted as habitat – only above and beyond for individuals, not acreage. It's still a cap.



ACTION ITEM: Provide Chapter 7 summary.
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- **ICF will distribute RCIS/LCP goals and objectives for the Advisory Committee to review.**

This is part of Ch 3 and will be provided on Friday with chapter 3.

- **YHC will work with ICF on the species list to incorporate language that distinguishes the planning species from the rare species.**

That will show up in next version of Chapter 1. The planning species include species such as the ground squirrel, mule deer, etc. that are very common and necessary to building an ecological reserve. They are not threatened or endangered species.

There may be confusion between focal and conservation species.

Group 1: Species that are listed or likely to be listed – focal species – includes species in HCP/NCCP plus fish and some other species.

Group 2: Additional species that were previously in the HCP/NCCP.

Group 3: Additional species added to the RCIS/LCP

7. Announcements and updates: Advisory Committee members

The annual Northern California Conservation Planning Partners (NCCPP) meeting will be held in Vacaville on October 25. Information will be sent to AC members.

8. Adjournment to next meeting date: Monday, September 11, 2017, 4-5:45 pm

Location: *Cache Creek Meeting Room
292 W. Beamer St.
Woodland, CA*

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 pm.



5.4.3.4 Conservation Strategy Implementation

Some habitat enhancement activities could result in harassment of covered species. For example, planting emergent vegetation in aquatic California tiger salamander habitat could temporarily disturb amphibians occupying the pond. Tractors and other farming equipment could disturb or injure covered species on cultivated lands in the reserve system.

Monitoring and research activities required by the Yolo HCP/NCCP (Chapter 6, Section 5.5, *Monitoring and Adaptive Management*) could also disturb wildlife. For example, to determine the presence of some covered species (e.g., California tiger salamander larvae), individuals may need to be handled by a qualified biologist. Such handling constitutes harassment—a form of take—under FESA and requires authorization. Translocation activities, which must be coordinated with and approved by CDFW and USFWS, could also cause take through injury or loss of individuals due to capture, handling, transportation, release, and/or the inability of the individual to find new shelter.

5.4.4 Neighboring Landowner Protection Program

The conservation strategy aims to increase populations of covered species through habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement. Certain covered species may disperse from the reserve system, in response to this active management, onto neighboring private lands that are not part of the reserve system. The Yolo HCP/NCCP includes a neighboring landowner protection program to protect landowners in the Plan Area near reserves on agricultural lands from the regulatory consequences of covered species dispersal.

The neighboring landowner protection program only applies to normal agricultural practices described in Appendix M, *Yolo Agricultural Practices*. The neighboring landowner protection program also only provides coverage for species that disperse onto lands after the creation of the neighboring reserve (i.e., only for take authorization above baseline levels on the neighboring land as determined by surveys). Take granted through the neighboring landowner protection program could slightly reduce the beneficial effects of the conservation strategy due to take of individuals that disperse off the reserve lands. There would be no additional take of covered species habitat (or natural communities) as a result of the neighboring landowner protection program. The neighboring landowner protection program is described in detail in Chapter 7, Section 7.7.7.1, *Neighboring Landowner Protection Program*.

The effects associated with the dispersal of covered species from the reserve system onto neighboring lands are anticipated to be very limited and restricted to the species that meet the criteria listed below.

- Covered species that are expected to increase in numbers on the reserves.
- Covered species that are likely to spread from the reserve system onto neighboring lands as their populations increase.
- Covered species for which there is a reasonable likelihood of take from routine, ongoing agricultural activities that would occur on the neighboring lands.

Based on the criteria above, only four of the 12 covered species have the potential to disperse onto adjacent properties and result in take: valley elderberry longhorn beetle, giant garter snake, California tiger salamander, and western pond turtle. Take coverage is therefore only available through this program for these four covered species.

Participation in this program is voluntary. Interested landowners wanting coverage must sign an Opt-in Agreement with the Conservancy. Owners of private lands that are actively used for agricultural purposes (e.g., crop production) adjacent to reserve system lands will receive take coverage for one or more of these four species under the Yolo HCP/NCCP if they opt in to this program. Take coverage by species is based on the neighboring land's distance from the nearest reserve land. A radius was set for each species over which the program applies based on the species' typical dispersal distance. Although these species are capable of dispersing further than these distances, each radius accounts for the most likely area of effect.

- Valley elderberry longhorn beetle = 0.25 mile.
- Giant garter snake and western pond turtle = 0.5 mile.
- California tiger salamander = 1.0 mile.

Coverage will be provided to agricultural operations only for take beyond the baseline condition that existed prior to the establishment of the neighboring reserves. Furthermore, this coverage will be limited only to ongoing and routine agricultural activities on lands enrolled in the neighboring landowner protection program. Ongoing and routine activities would include normal farming practices. Coverage under the neighboring landowner protection program expires when the Permits expire. See Chapter 7, Section 7.7.1, *Neighboring Landowner Protection Program*, for additional details of this program, including the process for landowner notification, request for coverage, and extension of take coverage. The neighboring landowner protection program does not transfer if the property is sold (Section 7.7.7.1, *Neighboring Landowner Protection Program*).

Based on the landowner participation in other counties with approved HCPs and NCCPs (e.g., San Joaquin County, East Contra Costa County, Santa Clara Valley) that have similar programs, it is assumed that up to three percent of eligible lands will enter into neighboring land agreements, for a total of no more than 2,347 acres. Of this, it is assumed that most of the potential effects will occur on land cover types that support farming (agricultural and grassland land cover types), which are used by California tiger salamander and western pond turtle for non-breeding, secondary foraging, or dispersal habitat, and not as breeding or primary habitat. The habitat for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle and western pond turtle on cultivated lands is typically of low value (and non-breeding), so the magnitude of impacts is expected to be low or very low. Giant garter snakes may use wetlands, rice lands, and irrigation channels adjacent to reserves for foraging, cover, or dispersal. Although rice lands and irrigation ditches can provide high-value habitat for the giant garter snake, ongoing agricultural practices are not expected to adversely affect populations of this species, as giant garter snakes commonly persist in cultivated landscapes, particularly rice lands.

Adverse effects from allowable agricultural activities on giant garter snake, and western pond turtle could result from rodent control, active farming practices, vehicle and machinery travel, runoff from fields, or disturbance to adjacent streams or wetlands.

The amount of take to be authorized for giant garter snake, western pond turtle, California tiger salamander, and valley elderberry longhorn beetle through this program includes up to all individuals (or elderberry shrubs, in the case of valley elderberry longhorn beetle) that are above baseline conditions within up to 2,347 acres enrolled in the neighboring landowner protection program. The amount of take to be authorized for giant garter snake individuals are those above baseline up to the take total included for all covered activities as listed in Table 5-2(b).