

SANTA CLARA VALLEY

HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN/NATURAL COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PLAN

Stakeholder Group Meeting | September 26, 2007 | Morgan Hill Community & Cultural Center

IN ATTENDANCE:

Stakeholder Group Members:

Keith Anderson (South Valley Steams for Tomorrow)
Nancy Bernardi (Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District)
Jack Bohan (Representative of general public)
Kevin Bryant (California Native Plant Society)
David Collier (Sierra Club)
Craig Edgerton (Silicon Valley Land Conservancy)
Justin Fields (Santa Clara County Cattlemen's Association)
Jan Hintermeister (Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Commission)
Virginia Holtz (League of Women Voters)
Rick Hopkins (Home Builders Association of Northern California)
Bob Power (Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society)
Kenn Reiller (Pajaro River Watershed Council)
Bob Rohde (Natural Resources Conservation Service, San Benito & Santa Clara Counties)
Brian Schmidt (Committee for Green Foothills)
Jack Sutcliffe (Santa Clara County Farm Bureau)
Lloyd Wagstaff (The Nature Conservancy)

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Joan welcomed the group and reminded members that the meeting would be 30 minutes shorter than normal to provide time for dinner before the public meeting, scheduled to begin at 6:30 pm. Carolyn Tognetti was not able to attend today's meeting.

II. OVERVIEW OF CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

David Zippin reviewed the conservation strategy alternatives, covering both criteria for the conservation strategy and the nine focal areas for conservation. The presentation was designed to help participants see the big picture and provide a context for many of the topics the stakeholders have been discussing over the past several months. David answered questions from the group and also asked for some feedback on the presentation. He inquired if the stakeholders found the presentation helpful and if there were any areas that needed clarification. He received the following comments and questions:

Keith asked whether changes to the natural community definitions and mitigation/restoration plans were in preparation for the plan or would continue after implementation. They are in preparation for the plan.

One group member asked if the definition of critical habitat was HCP-specific or federal. It is federal.

Keith was surprised that steelhead were not included in the Pacheco Creek area. David Zippin acknowledged that this is also critical habitat for steelhead, but it's currently unclear what the plan can do for steelhead if no agreement is reached with the Pacheco Water District. Keith noted that if there is a new dam or restoration of the dam, there is great potential here for supporting steelhead through the HCP.

One group member asked for clarification of industry jargon—in this case, a K rail, which David Zippin defined as a median barrier. Another stakeholder asked what the significance of the colors on the map was. They signify data sources. However, is one more important than another? Yes, Jones & Stokes is targeting some corridors more than others because staff believe they are more important or have higher conservation values.

David Collier is concerned that some of the Jones & Stokes slides are not ready for public presentation yet—there are unanswered questions even for the stakeholder group, so will the public be able to make sense of these?

Kenn Reiller thanked the Project Team for the presentation, which he felt clarified a number of things.

Another stakeholder noted that some of the data is lost because of color and layout—can this be corrected to make things more clear? Possibly- there is a tendency to want to show everything, but possibly this can be narrowed to key data to simplify.

Brian is concerned that a 1:1 for perennial wetlands and 2:1 ratio for seasonal wetlands seems low—there is a large potential for failure there. David Zippin noted that these are actually quite high because they include both restoration and preservation. So some areas will be protected and enhanced, while others will be restored. Brian noted that the presentation should note this explicitly—preservation means preservation plus enhancement.

One group member noted that there seemed to be little fishery information related to Coyote Creek.

The Coyote Creek map needs to be clarified—it implies that there is a wildlife corridor goes right through Coyote Valley, which will be developed. Politically, this needs to be crystal clear! This confused other stakeholders, as well.

After the presentation, Virginia reported on a “Clean and Green” conference held today, and shared a copy of the report from the proceedings. She recommended several of the speakers, including venture capitalist John Doerer who spoke about the role technology can play. For those who are interested in obtaining the report, the web address is www.svlg.net.

III. GROUP DISCUSSION

The group continued its discussion of specific topics from Chapter 4, 5 and 6.

Matthew Jones of Jones & Stokes presented a map of the riverine fish assemblage data, also known as the “fish map”. He described how it was developed and its general purpose. Jerry Smith, a member of the Science Advisors Group, also provided comments and feedback during the presentation. There were numerous comments and questions from the stakeholders.

A representative from the Water District noted that this year, with half the normal rainfall, there may be only ten percent of the normal runoff, which leaves very little water to supplement flow with. So there are factors that may be difficult to overcome.

Jerry noted some errors in the map—dots for steelhead are showing up as dots for trout. This has been corrected once before, but needs to be again.

Kenn Reiller asked for clarification on the steelhead ranges.

David Collier asked if the group could reasonably ignore the distinction between spawning and rearing habitats for this analysis. Jerry Smith noted that the limiting factor is typically the rearing habitat, not the spawning habitat.

Keith noted that the distinction between spawning, rearing, and migration is important, because we can't help restore steelhead if, for instance, we only preserve migration paths and not rearing habitats.

Pat requested that Matthew speak on the life cycles of each affected fish to help clarify this.

Kenn Reiller asked about creating steelhead habitat along Pacheco Creek, where there is a potential area that could support this.

In the interest of closing on time, Joan brought the discussion to a close and asked the group what topics they wanted to continue discussing at the next meeting in October. Joan asked whether Justin wanted to address ag issues today or wait until the next meeting. He brought up the issue of burns and eagles eating insects, and also the note in the text about issues being specific to the East Bay. Other stakeholders requested the following topics:

Keith would like to discuss more riverine issues at the next meeting.

Lloyd would like to discuss enhancements versus acquisitions.

There was a request that we affirm that the needs identified by the plan are met. The group also requested clarification on what the three alternatives actually mean. The October agenda will be developed to include these topics.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

Joan thanked the group and reminded members that for the next meeting we will be back on our regular meeting schedule. The meeting will be on **Tuesday, October 23, from 4 pm to 6:30 pm** in the Dana Murphy Room.