Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan

Joint Governing & Implementation Board Meeting

Burrowing Owl Survey Summary and Fee Map

January 15, 2015
Agenda

- Brief Overview of the Key Aspects of the Burrowing Owl Conservation Strategy
- Update on 2014 Survey Effort
- Review of New Burrowing Owl Fee Map
- Management and Monitoring at Don Edwards NWR
Burrowing Owl Conservation Strategy

Figure 5-14
Burrowing Owl Conservation Strategy - Habitat Types
Key Aspects of the Burrowing Owl Conservation Strategy

- Protect and manage occupied burrowing owl nesting habitat
- Increase survival rates at existing nest colonies
- Fund management activities on site that are occupied or have a high probability of future occupation by burrowing owls.
- Survey all undeveloped parcels within 7.5-miles of documented nest colonies in the North San José/Baylands Region
- Coordinate with other South Bay local governments, special districts, and non-profit organizations to assess status of the burrowing owl population
- Conduct two meetings annually of burrowing owl survey partners.
- Conduct pilot scientific studies to develop techniques to increase the survival of burrowing owls and the distribution of nesting colonies.
Survey Effort

South Bay Burrowing Owl Survey Network

- ICF International
- Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
- San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory
- Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge
- City of San Jose Water Pollution Control Plant
- NASA-Ames Moffett Airfield
- City of Mountain View – Shoreline Golf Course
- San Jose International Airport/USDA
Survey Coverage
Initial Results

South Bay Burrowing Owl Survey Network

• Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge – 11 adults
• NASA-Ames Moffett Airfield – 24 adults
• City of Mountain View – Shoreline Golf Course – 6 adults
• San Jose International Airport/USDA – 34 adults
• San Jose WPCP – 16 adults
• Other locations within study area
  – Various locations within the City of San Jose - 11
• Other locations outside of study area
  – Various location within the City of Santa Clara – 5 adults

• Estimated Total = 107 adults (~51 nesting pair) in the South Bay
Figure 4-3
Illustration of Burrowing Owl Take Allowance

- Take Limited to Conservation Actions
- Take Allowed for All Covered Activities if Population Performance Allows
- Example Annual Count of Burrowing Owls Due to Natural Fluctuations
- Theoretical Population Growth of 3 Adult Burrowing Owls Per Year

Legend:
- Take only for conservation actions (capture, harm, harassment).
- Take allowed for death, injury, capture, harm, and harassment (including passive relocation/eviction during the non-breeding season) at a level that would not drop the number of owls below the assumed growth rate.
1. No take will occur before year 10 except when related to conservation actions.
Why The Increase

• More Comprehensive Survey Effort.

• Restoration Efforts at the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant – City of San Jose & the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society.

• Restoration Efforts at the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge Warm Springs Unit – US Fish and Wildlife Service & the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.
Distribution of Occupied Burrowing Owl Habitat in the South Bay Area
Burrowing Owl Conservation Fee Map
Burrowing Owl Management At Don Edwards NWR
Burrowing Owl Conservation Strategy - Habitat Types

Legend:
- Habitat Plan Study Area
- Santa Clara County
- Water Bodies
- Major Streams
- Major Roads
- Burrowing Owl Conservation Zones
- Occupied Burrowing Owl Habitat
- Potential Burrowing Owl Nesting/Owning Habitat
- Overwintering Only Habitat

Prepared by: ICF

Data Sources:

Figure 5-14
Figure 3. Historic and more recent burrowing owl use of burrows in Warm Springs.
2014 Field Work
Management Planning and Monitoring

- **BUOW breeding and habitat assessment surveys**
  - Walk in line surveys (April & June)
  - Follow up surveys for breeding success (May to July)
  - Wintering owl survey
  - Habitat assessment surveys (winter-spring)

- **Vegetation management**
  - Activities to maintain short vegetation in the immediate area around active burrows (weed-whacking, manual weed pulling, spot herbicide spraying, salinization.

- **Enhancement of prey base availability**
  - Installation of 10 rock piles and 20 vegetative islands to increase the population of small reptiles and mammals in close proximity to breeding BUOW sites

- **Predator Control**
  - Trapping and removal of nonnative predators (Conducted by USDA APHIS Wildlife Services)
BUOW Actions Before Governing and Implementation Boards

Governing Board Action:
• Adoption of updated western burrowing owl fee zone maps as a result of 2014 owl surveys.

Implementation Board Actions:
• Approve agreement with SFBBO to manage western burrowing owl at the Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge Warm Springs Unit.
• Review updated western burrowing owl fee zone maps as a result of 2014 owl surveys.
Questions
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