



MEMORANDUM  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**TO:** BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**FROM:** Supervisors Kirk Uhler and Robert M. Weygandt

**SUBJECT:** Update from the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP) Ad Hoc Committee

**DATE:** September 23, 2008

**SUMMARY:** Supervisors Uhler and Weygandt are updating the Board on the status of the PCCP Ad Hoc Committee deliberations. The Board formed the Ad Hoc Committee and approved a map to initiate discussions with the Resource Agencies on January 23, 2007. The Ad Hoc Committee is now recommending that the Board authorize staff to prepare the PCCP consistent with the principles and objectives outlined in the Conservation Strategy Report (Exhibit A).

**BACKGROUND:** The PCCP is intended to provide 50 years of compliance for state and federal regulations including the Federal Endangered Species Act, the California Endangered Species Act and Natural Communities Conservation Act, Sections 404 and 401 of the Federal Clean Water Act and Section 1600 Fish and Game Code for Master streambed modification agreements.

**FISCAL IMPACTS:** No specific fiscal analysis has been prepared at this time. Chapter 5 of the Conservation Strategy Report (Exhibit A) provides general information on the costs association with the implementation of the PCCP. Implementation will require one-time expenditures to acquire and restore property, as well as long-term expenditures on activities associated with administration, land management, monitoring and permit processing.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Supervisors Uhler and Weygandt recommend that the Board take the following actions:

1. Direct County staff to continue to coordinate with the participating entities including the City of Lincoln, the Placer County Water Agency, and the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority on the preparation of the PCCP, and continue to communicate and coordinate with the City of Roseville as a non-participating agency.
2. Direct staff to continue to work with the Ad Hoc Committee for general direction and guidance on the preparation of the Conservation Plan.
3. Direct staff to prepare a Conservation Plan, a Finance Plan, EIR/EIS and Implementation Agreement
4. Direct staff to coordinate the preparation of the PCCP with the Resource Agencies, stakeholders and the interested public.
5. Direct staff to remove the District 5 boundary from the PCCP Phase 1 Reserve Area and from the covered activities area.



**COUNTY OF PLACER**  
Community Development Resource Agency

PLANNING

**TO:** BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**FROM:** Supervisors Kirk Uhler and Robert M. Weygandt

**SUBJECT:** Update from the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP) Ad Hoc Committee

**DATE:** September 23, 2008

**SUMMARY**

Supervisors Uhler and Weygandt are updating the Board on the status of the PCCP Ad Hoc Committee deliberations. The Board formed the Ad Hoc Committee and approved a map to initiate discussions with the Resource Agencies on January 23, 2007. The Ad Hoc Committee is now recommending that the Board authorize staff to prepare the PCCP consistent with the principles and objectives outlined in the Conservation Strategy Report (Exhibit A).

**BACKGROUND**

**Regulatory Coverage**

The PCCP is intended to provide 50 years of compliance for the following state and federal regulations:

1. Incidental Take Permit - Federal Endangered Species Act – administered by: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service
2. Natural Communities Conservation Plan - California Endangered Species Act and Natural Communities Conservation Act – administered by: California Department of Fish and Game
3. Section 404 and 401 of the Federal Clean Water Act related to wetlands and water quality – administered by: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board
4. Section 1600 Fish and Game Code - Master streambed modification agreements – administered by: California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)

The regulatory coverage provided by these permits and agreements is intended to apply to public sector infrastructure and transportation projects (e.g., Placer Parkway) and a wide range of private sector activities. In particular, the PCCP will provide regulatory coverage for the construction of the Placer Parkway project and the Sacramento River Diversion project sponsored by PCWA. A complete list of covered activities is listed in Exhibit A.

In June 2005, the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries, submitted a co-signed letter to Placer County that

provided a critique of a standards-based conservation strategy prepared by the County. One of the key issues raised was the need to identify the "location and specific acreage objectives of conservation lands." The preparation of a reserve map coupled with the development of acreage objectives for key resources has been the primary role of the Ad Hoc Committee since January 2007.

### **Updated Baseline Data**

The Ad Hoc Committee directed staff to update two data layers for purposes of this analysis. The first update was to change the projection of growth from a horizon year of 2050 to 2060 in order to reflect the 50-year term of the permit (assuming a implementation date of 2010). This updated projection was coordinated with SACOG and utilized both its Blueprint and 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan projections. The projection will result in a new impact assessment that is being prepared at this time.

The second data set is the landcover baseline. This is a key data set in that it identifies the numerous vegetation communities of western Placer County as well as the extent and location of developed lands. The conversion of the landscape over time results in the impacts that the PCCP seeks to address. At this time, only changes resulting from new urban/suburban growth over the past three to four years have been identified. If the work program proceeds, additional updates are expected including data that may identify additional vernal pool grasslands beyond that which have been identified to date.

The development of data is a time-consuming and expensive element of the PCCP and staff has not recommended a comprehensive update to the data set until such time that it is determined that the work program should proceed.

### **AD HOC COMMITTEE STATUS**

On January 23, 2007, the Board of Supervisors created an Ad Hoc Committee to be comprised of two members of the Board of Supervisors (Uhler/Weygandt) and two Council Members of the City of Lincoln (Cosgrove/Santini). The Board also directed staff to prepare a draft PCCP Reserve Map that combined two draft reserve map alternatives (Alternatives 4 and 14) as the starting point of discussions with the Resource Agencies. The January 23, 2007 Draft Reserve Map is attached as Exhibit B.

Since February 2007, the Ad Hoc Committee has been meeting with the City of Lincoln to discuss the PCCP. A significant amount of time has been devoted to the preparation of a Reserve Map. The Ad Hoc Committee has also met with staff and management of the Resource Agencies to discuss a draft Reserve Map and the Ad Hoc Committee's approach to developing a conservation plan.

At this time, the Ad Hoc Committee is prepared to present to the Board of Supervisors its findings and recommendations. The Conservation Strategy Report (Exhibit A) describes the key elements of a conservation strategy, including a reserve map, conservation standards and specific objectives that would serve as the foundation for a conservation plan. This memorandum provides the background information for the Board in its consideration of this report and the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee to complete the preparation of a conservation plan.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Conservation Strategy Report serves as the foundation for the Conservation Plan to be prepared over the next two years. The Report describes some of the key elements that will be comprehensively addressed in the Conservation Plan. These elements include the following:

- Preparation of a reserve map that helps identify clear conservation goals and objectives
- Avoidance of a significant percentage of vernal pool complexes
- Watershed level connectivity in the Bear River and Coon Creek watersheds
- Incorporation of the draft County Aquatic Resources Permit (CARP) Buffer
- Incorporation of Low Impact Development Standards for water quality
- Consideration of 50 years of growth
- Coverage for Placer Parkway and PCWA Sacramento River Diversion

The following discussion outlines some of these key elements.

### **Draft Ad Hoc Reserve Map:**

In August 2008, a draft Reserve Map was finalized which addresses the collective consensus of the four elected members of the Committee. The map is intended to serve as the basis for the preparation of the Conservation Plan and is subject to change and refinement as more information is gathered and discussions with the Resource Agencies commence. All mitigation and conservation measures are proposed to take place within western Placer County; no out-of-county mitigation has been proposed. A copy of the draft Reserve Map is attached to the back of Exhibit A.

The PCCP Draft Ad Hoc Reserve Map consists of four basic elements: 1) The Reserve Area, 2) the Development Transition Area, 3) the County Aquatic Resources Permit Area, and 4) the Development Opportunity Area. A fifth area, depicted in gray, represents the boundaries of the non-participating Cities of Roseville, Rocklin, Auburn and the Town of Loomis. The County is proposing to provide coverage for the PCCP in the Spheres of Influence for Roseville for the Sunset Industrial Area and Auburn for the North Auburn Area.

### Reserve Area:

The "Reserve Area" (depicted as purple and green) consists of two elements: 1) the Existing conserved area (green) which are lands already protected as a consequence of local, state, federal and private sector conservation activities, and 2) the Reserve Acquisition Area which includes lands that would be acquired during the term of the permit (50 years) for permanent conservation. The Reserve Area consists of approximately 91,667 acres. The entire Reserve Area would not be protected; only those lands necessary to meet the conservation objectives of the PCCP would be acquired. Some areas of the Reserve Area will have a higher priority for acquisition than other areas. Boundaries of the Reserve Area could be change once the biological goals and objectives are further refined.

#### Development Transition Area:

The "Development Transition Area" (depicted in blue) is a 21,862-acre area that includes the City of Lincoln's General Plan update growth areas and unincorporated areas of the County that could urbanize (e.g., the Curry Creek Community Plan area). Because the DTA contains a large amount of vernal pool grasslands and is adjacent to the Reserve Area, the DTA will serve as a transition between future urban development and the permanent conservation areas to the west and north.

There are two conservation objectives in the DTA: 1) the protection of 2,100 acres of vernal pool grasslands; and 2) the protection of the floodplain of the major stream corridors (e.g., Auburn Ravine, Pleasant Grove Creek and Markham Ravine). In order to meet the overall conservation requirements of the PCCP, approximately 10 percent of the overall DTA would need to be set aside as a part of the Reserve Area.

The specific boundary of the future Reserve Area lands inside the DTA is not identified at this time. Instead, specific standards will be developed in the Conservation Plan to insure that the appropriate lands are acquired and that they can retain their essential functions in perpetuity.

#### CARP Area:

The County Aquatic Resource Permit (or CARP) area represents those areas along major stream corridors that would be protected from future incompatible development (depicted as purple along the stream corridors). The CARP area contains a number of key resources including streams, riparian habitat, floodplains and vernal pool grasslands. The CARP boundary is unique in that it is considered a viable habitat corridor that passes through areas where the landscape is dominated by urban development. The key objective of the CARP boundary is to protect important stream corridors for their sensitive habitat, to conserve wetlands within those corridors, maintain or improve water quality, provide connectivity between upper and lower watershed areas and to protect the integrity of the floodplains.

#### Development Opportunity Area:

The Development Opportunity Area (depicted in white) receives the majority of regulatory relief through the implementation of the PCCP. Infill development, ongoing rural residential development and new urban/suburban development is the dominant feature in the landscape. The Development Opportunity Area also includes the Placer Parkway Corridor (Note: the Ad Hoc Committee has directed that the Reserve Map depict one of the five Placer Parkway alternatives for purposes of analysis).

#### **Conservation Standards, Performance Criteria & Biological Goals and Objectives**

Comprehensive performance criteria and conservation standards will need to be developed as a part of the PCCP Conservation Plan. These standards would apply to acquisition and restoration activities throughout the entire PCCP boundary, and not just to the Reserve Area. It will be the obligation of the participating agencies to insure that these standards are met over time through monitoring and adaptive management activities.

Because of the importance of the DTA to the success of the Conservation Plan, specific standards will be developed for the DTA emphasizing the conservation of vernal pool complexes. A summary of these standards is included in the Ad Hoc Committee's Conservation Strategy Report (Exhibit A). If the work program proceeds, discussions will be initiated with the Resource Agencies to insure that the DTA standards specifically, and the conservation goals and objectives in general, address the concerns and mandates of those agencies. It is proposed that the standards will address, at a minimum, the following issue areas:

- Connectivity to other reserve lands and CARP lands
- Minimum parcel size
- Buffers/edge effect/adjoining land use
- Short term/long term viability of hydrologic conditions
- Monitoring/Adaptive Management
- Grazing/burning of vernal pool grasslands as a part of long-term management efforts

#### **City of Roseville**

The County continues to meet and coordinate with the City of Roseville regarding the development of the PCCP. More recently, the Ad Hoc Committee has reviewed correspondence from the City of Roseville requesting a number of changes to the PCCP Reserve Map. Supervisors Uhler and Weygandt met with the City on September 15, 2008 to discuss the City's requests for changes. The City's requests focus primarily on property adjacent to the City that is being considered for development and the Reason Farms property owned by the City for flood control purposes.

Supervisors Uhler and Weygandt have directed County staff to meet with City staff and the Resource Agencies in order to address the City's concerns. The Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations in this report will insure that communication with the City will continue throughout the development of the work program.

#### **District 5 Boundary**

At the November 7, 2007 hearing, Supervisor Kranz requested that the Ad Hoc Committee consider removing the District 5 boundary from the PCCP Reserve Area. Exhibit C is a depiction of the Ad Hoc Committee's recommended Reserve Map with District 5 highlighted as an area that would be excluded. This area could be considered in a second phase of the PCCP at such time that work commenced in this area. (Phase 2 consists of the upper foothills of the west slope and the Sierra Summit east to the County line.)

The District 5 area was initially included primarily because it contains the upper portion of the Coon Creek watershed, and a portion of the Bear River as well as large blocks of unfragmented oak woodlands. No endangered species are known within this area although some habitat exists which could result in their presence. Salmon and steelhead spawn west of this boundary and cannot reach further into this portion of the watershed because of waterfalls and water diversion structures.

The removal of the District 5 area will remove the regulatory coverage for this area as well. Projects within this area will need to comply with state and federal laws consistent with status quo procedures at the time an application is filed. The existing reserve areas already protected within this area would be unaffected by removing District 5 from the Phase 1 boundary.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Preparation of the PCCP was initiated in late 2001, and a significant amount of work has been completed. Most notably, the baseline data collection has been completed, the NCCP Planning Agreement has been executed, a draft County Aquatic Resources Plan has been prepared and a draft Conservation Plan has been prepared. Additionally, a Notice of Preparation of Notice of Intent has been posted to initiate the preparation of an EIR/EIS.

To complete the Conservation Plan, the following work program tasks will be completed:

- Revise and update the June 2005 Conservation Plan consistent with the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations
- Preparation of the Draft and Final EIR/EIS utilizing the Conservation Plan as the project description
- Preparation of a Draft and Final Finance Plan
- Preparation of the County Aquatic Resource Program and implementing ordinance
- Identification of the governance structure

Completion of the PCCP will require a minimum of two years effort. Sufficient revenues are available in the Planning Department's budget to move the work program forward this fiscal year. General Fund support in subsequent fiscal years will be required to complete the plan.

### **SUMMARY**

The Ad Hoc Committee is of the opinion that the essential elements of a conservation plan have been identified and that a Reserve Map that meets local needs and state and federal regulatory requirements has been identified. A significant amount of work remains to be completed, and a significant commitment of funding and staff resources will be required.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Supervisors Uhler and Weygandt recommend that the Board take the following actions:

1. Direct County staff to continue to coordinate with the participating entities including the City of Lincoln, the Placer County Water Agency, and the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority on the preparation of the PCCP and continue to communicate and coordinate with the City of Roseville as a non-participating agency.
2. Direct staff to continue to work with the Ad Hoc Committee for general direction and guidance on the preparation of the Conservation Plan.

3. Direct staff to prepare a Conservation Plan, a Finance Plan, EIR/EIS and Implementation Agreement
4. Direct staff to coordinate the preparation of the PCCP with the Resource Agencies, stakeholders and the interested public.
5. Direct staff to remove the District 5 boundary from the PCCP Phase 1 Reserve Area and from the covered activities area.

**EXHIBITS:** The following exhibits are provided for the Board's consideration:

**Exhibit A:** Ad Hoc Committee Conservation Strategy Report September 2008

**Exhibit B:** January 23, 2007 Board of Supervisors Reserve Map for Negotiations

**Exhibit C:** Ad Hoc Committee Recommended Reserve Map Excluding District 5

cc: Rod Campbell, City of Lincoln  
Einar Maisch, PCWA  
Stan Tidman, PCTPA/SPRTA  
Resource Agencies  
Biological Stakeholder Working Group  
Conservation Strategy Group  
Resources Law Group