



## Conservation Steering Committee (CSC) Ground Rules / Terms of Engagement

These ground rules are intended to serve as guidelines for the members of the Conservation Steering Committee (CSC). They are intended to complement the Board adopted General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) Guidelines and provide the basis for collaborative communication among stakeholders charged with making recommendations. They are also intended to serve as boundaries for fair and civil behavior and group decision making.

### Basic Conduct and Decision Making:

1. **Problem Solving Approach:** Disagreements between participants will be regarded as problems to be solved rather than battles to be won.
2. **Decision-Making:** The CSC will achieve its decisions by consensus with meeting minutes reflecting any dissention. No decisions can be made if fewer than a quorum is present.
3. **Clear and Timely Communication:** Every participant is responsible for communicating his or her position on issues under consideration. Each participant is also encouraged to clearly state their intentions and concerns at the earliest possible time in the course of the discussions.
4. **Information Sharing:** Relevant information can play an important role in the development of informed consent. At the same time, too much information or information of limited relevance can cause confusion and slow down the process. Where individual members wish to share written or printed information with the group as a whole, such information should be provided to County Staff at least 72 hours prior to any scheduled meeting to allow for duplication and/or distribution prior to the meeting.
5. **E-mail Communication:** Electronic communication shall be guided by the same general protocols for communication, problem solving and negotiation that are followed when the group is in general face-to-face sessions. All email correspondence shall be directed through the County Staff at least 24 hours in advance of meetings if possible. Avoid emailing or phone calls that can create a chain that could violate the Brown Act.
6. **Participation and Observation by Members of the Public:** All CSC meetings are open to the public and observers are welcome. Members of the public will have an opportunity to address the CSC at the beginning of each meeting and at each agenda item.
7. **Absence when Decisions are Made:** When members cannot attend a meeting of the CSC, they should communicate their views to the County Staff prior to that meeting; however members must be present to participate in consensus decision making. Members may participate via conference call.

### Participant Roles:

1. **Santa Barbara County's Roles:** The Santa Barbara County Office of Long Range Planning serves as the convener of the Regional Conservation Strategy process, and is the agency with the responsibility of preparing the Plan. In this regard, it will rely on the decisions of the CSC to provide guidance in crafting a document that is responsive to the stakeholder goals.
2. **Group Roles & Responsibilities:** The following points are offered as examples of behavior consistent with constructive dialogue, mutual respect and a commitment to collaboration:
  - Offer respect of different viewpoints and attention when others speak.

- Share the responsibility of ensuring the success of the process and the quality of recommendations.
  - Make a best good faith effort to work towards reaching an agreement.
  - Represent the perspectives, concerns, and interests of agencies or constituencies whenever possible to ensure that agreements and recommendations developed by the group are acceptable to the organizations, agencies, or constituents being represented.
  - Ask questions of each other for clarification and mutual understanding.
  - Verify assumptions when necessary and avoid characterizing the motives of others.
  - Acknowledge and try to understand others' perspectives.
  - Stay focused on the task at hand and share airtime with others.
  - Refrain from distracting others through side conversations; silence all cell phones during meetings.
  - Concentrate on the content of discussions and allow the facilitator to focus on how to promote productive discussion.
  - Alternate members will be allowed opportunities to speak during public comment periods and at each agenda item. Alternates will be allowed to participate on an equal basis with committee members when they are filling in for their respective committee member in the member's absence.
3. **Subcommittees:** When the CSC determines that a specific topic or agenda item requires a higher level of analysis and focus than allowed for during its meetings, it may appoint a Subcommittee to address specific information needs, refine options or resolve differences of opinion outside of its regular meetings. Subcommittees are not empowered to make decisions in place of the group as a whole, but rather to frame and refine issues and information needs for resolution by the CSC. They must number fewer than a quorum of the full CSC. Subcommittees are "opportunistic" and "ephemeral" groups in that they exist only as long as it is necessary for them to accomplish their task.