



DRAFT COMMUNICATION PLAN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY REGIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Purpose: The purpose of the communication plan is to ensure the process of developing the Regional Conservation Strategy is open and transparent. This communication plan goes well beyond the minimum legal requirements for public noticing with the intent of ensuring timely communication of everything that is happening with any potentially interested parties.

The purpose of going beyond that which is required is to:

- Ensure there are no surprises
- Defuse apprehension about the process
- Provide amplified channels of access to the process
- Respond to the diverse needs of the public, stakeholders, interest groups, and the cities and communities within Santa Barbara County.

Staff and the Conservation Steering Committee (CSC) will use this communications plan as a framework for determining how information is developed and disseminated.

Community-wide Communications

Web Site: Presently there is a web site, <http://www.countyofsb.org/plandev/comp/programs/RegionalConservation/default.asp>. The web site should be the central point of access for all information, notices, meeting minutes, publications, studies, etc. that concern the project. An alias will be established to allow people to log on easily without having to navigate the County's website. The site is conveniently referenced as a "Featured Site" on the County's home page, but would be easier to access with a simpler alias. The alias will be sbcountyplanning.org/rcc and will be accessible soon.

Publications, videos, brochures, etc.: These may be created as specific needs arise.

Newspaper Ads: Display ads should be placed in all major newspapers in advance of community meetings and any decision-maker meetings.

Media Contacts: Media contacts will be handled by staff in a manner consistent with current County practice and rules.

Periodic Informational Meetings

Community Meetings: Staff and the CSC should evaluate the need to hold periodic specially noticed informational meetings for the public. As the plan progresses and receives attention, general public meetings may be held at locations convenient for citizens throughout the County with particular emphasis on North County. Locations and meeting times should be chosen to maximize attendance.

Community meetings could be held concurrently with CSC meetings and focus on disseminating information or answering questions. As topics arise that will be of particular interest to certain groups, CSC meetings or subcommittee meetings can be held that are designed to accommodate additional public input. This will ensure policies developed for the plan will take into account the input and concerns of the affected stakeholders and the general public.

Special Meetings: Staff and the CSC should evaluate the need to offer informational presentations to community planning groups, stakeholder groups (farmers, ranchers, builders, landowners), and citizen interest groups (environmental groups and others).

The purpose of these special meetings is to present factual information to special interest groups and give them a chance to understand and evaluate exactly how the plan may affect them, and in turn, give them a chance to ask questions and engage the CSC and staff in constructive dialogue.

It is not expected that any of these meetings will eliminate controversy from the process. The hope is they will reduce misinformation and misinterpretation, and give people the chance to ask as many questions as they wish about the plan and the process to develop it.

Stakeholder and Interest Group Liaison

As the plan progresses and after it is adopted, it will be necessary to provide special channels of communications for stakeholders and interest groups to obtain specific information about very specific issues. It will be the responsibility of the CSC member to keep their organization and the constituents they represent well informed with correct information pertaining to the development of the plan.

The RCS plan should include designation of specific staff to be the point(s) of contact once the plan is adopted and is being implemented. Landowners, farmers and builders should be given a point of contact to ask questions about

the application of the plan to specific projects and properties. The point or points of contact for these inquiries must be knowledgeable about the plan and the process.

General Public Notice

At least once during the process of developing the plan, notice should be mailed to all property owners within the area of the plan. These are necessary for owners who do not reside in the county, and owners who, for one reason or another, will not see other notices of the work on the plan. Preferably, notices will be sent inviting landowners to attend the community meetings described above.

In addition, notices will be sent prior to the Board's consideration of adoption of the draft plan.