

**Santa Barbara County  
Regional Conservation Strategy**

**Conservation Steering Committee Meeting  
Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, Santa Maria  
Wednesday, April 25, 2007**

**Approved Minutes**

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**Committee Members Present:**

Katie Drexhage – Fish and Wildlife Service  
Tom Maloney – The Nature Conservancy  
Martin Potter – CDFG  
Bill Shipsey – Local Jurisdictions, (City of Santa Maria – Community Development)  
Susan Petrovich – Ranching Community, (Hatch & Parent)  
Sam Sweet – Environmental Community, (PhD Biologist UCSB)  
Ronda Lucas – Farm Bureau

**Committee Members Absent:**

Jerry Bunin – Home Builders Association

**Alternate Committee Members Present:**

Willy Chamberlin – Ranching Community, (S.B. County Cattlemen Association)  
Wendy Stockton – Local Jurisdictions (City of Santa Maria – Attorney)  
Suneil Thomas – The Nature Conservancy  
Teri Bontrager – Santa Barbara Farm Bureau

**Project Staff Present:**

Joy Hufschmid – Project Manager, Santa Barbara County  
Whitney Wilkinson – Assistant Planner, Santa Barbara County  
Mike Ghizzoni- Chief Deputy County Counsel  
Robert Copper – Facilitator

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Formation of the Brown Act Committee and Presentation of Committee Guidelines:

1. Ground Rule Amendments:
  - 1.1. There was clarification of ground rules stating that a quorum consists of 5 members of the Committee.
  - 1.2. In the section “Basic Conduct and Decision Making”:
    - 1.2.1. In Ground Rule #2, “business” will become “decisions.” The sentence will read: “No decisions can be made if less than a quorum is present.”
    - 1.2.2. In Ground Rule #6, a consensus was reached that rules on public participation reflect decisions finalized in the 11-29-06 minutes and now read: “Members of the public will have an opportunity to address the CSC at the beginning of each meeting and at each agenda item.”
    - 1.2.3. In Ground Rule #7, the Committee added language to allow for the participation of members via conference call.

2. In the section “Participant’s Roles:”
  - 2.1. In #1, the word “is” will be inserted. The sentence shall read:

“The Santa Barbara Office of Long Range Planning serves as the convener of the Regional Conservation Strategy process, and is the agency with the responsibility of writing the plan.”
  - 2.2. In Ground Rule #2, bullet three, the word “our” will change to “a” and will read:

“Make a best good faith effort to work towards reaching an agreement.”
  - 2.3. In Ground Rule #2, in the final bullet, the text “and at each agenda item” will be added. The text shall read “Alternate members will be given opportunity to speak during public comment period and at each agenda item.”
  - 2.4. Consensus was reached that alternate members’ comment period would not be restricted because of their intimate involvement in the process.
3. In section #3 “Subcommittees,” the word “Chair” will become “Committee.” The sentence will read,

“When the Committee determines that a specific topic or agenda item requires a higher level of analysis and focus than allowed for during the meetings, it may appoint a subcommittee to address specific information needs, refine options or resolve differences of opinion outside of its regular meetings.”
4. County Counsel reviewed Brown Act rules and guidelines pertaining to acceptable communication among members outside of public meetings.
  - 4.1. Concerns of discussing RCS subject matter outside of public committee meetings were addressed. County Counsel informed the Committee that Brown Act violations would occur if discussion or communication that is intended to build consensus occurs among a quorum of committee members.
  - 4.2. County Counsel explained that subcommittees would not be in violation of the Brown Act because they do not constitute a quorum. The actual subcommittee will consist only of committee members and/or alternates and is able to receive input from outside sources as appropriate.
5. The need to have adequate public outreach was discussed to ensure community members are well informed about the project. The facilitator and staff will work to produce a draft Communication Plan that will outline a definitive process to adequately inform and involve the public. The draft will be brought to the Committee for approval.

Election of Committee Officers:

6. The consensus of the Committee was that elected officers (chair, vice chair, recording secretary) are not needed at this time. The Committee reserves the right to elect officers in the future should they deem it necessary.

Discussion and Approval of Minutes:

7. The 11-29-06 Minutes were approved after the following amendments were included:

- 7.1. All amendments in section 3a discussed in the 1-24-07 meeting were adopted including striking the term “per item.” The text will now read:

“Discussed Committee’s wish on placement and duration of public comment on agenda items to conform to the Brown Act. The consensus of the Committee was to allow public comment at the beginning of the meeting and at each agenda item. In both cases comments may be limited to 3 minutes per person if needed to limit total public comment time. Total public comment period on non-agenda items shall not exceed 15 minutes. Further, the consensus of the Committee is to keep public participation unrestricted; imposing the agreed upon limitations only when necessary given the level of public participation.”

In section 5a, “roll” shall be changed to “role.” Also the term “Deputy” will be inserted into the position title of Bob Copper. His title will now read “recently retired Deputy CAO from San Diego County.” Text was added to the last sentence to read:

“Consensus was that names and resumes of individuals that other committee members may know will be brought to the next meeting, and the Committee will decide which to interview.”

8. The 1-24-07 Minutes were approved after the following amendments were included:

- 8.1. In section 2.1.2, “requested” will become “request” so that it reads: “Steve Henry, FWS alternate committee member, called in to request that Bob Copper be proposed...”

9. Approval of the 3-28-07 Minutes resulted after the following edits were made:

- 9.1. An omitted comment will be added as 1.2 stating: “A provision for the use of speaker phone participation was suggested and will be used in the future should the necessity arise.”

- 9.2. In 3.1.2. The additional question will contain a question mark and will read, “Is it feasible to do an HCP on a single species?”

## Schedule and Process:

10. Consensus was to strike all dates from the chart at this time, and to continue to seek input from regulatory agencies on the process the conservation strategy will follow and approximate time allocation needed for that process.
11. FWS addressed a question regarding the feasibility of finding a federal nexus and using an MOU and the Section 7 process versus a Section 10 HCP process. The FWS representative explained the local office supports doing an HCP through the Section 10 process primarily because a legally defensible federal nexus is difficult to establish in this county, there are bonus assurances with the Section 10 method, and the ease in using the Section 7 process can change depending on the political climate.

## Discussion of Project and Individual Stakeholder Goals

12. Amendments to the Draft Project Goals.
  - 12.1. In the Mission Statement, more clarification on the term “covered species” was sought by the committee. To be consistent with language used in the Board of Supervisors’ Resolution, the project mission statement will read:

“Contribute to the protection of the California tiger salamander and potentially other threatened or endangered species within its range through designated approaches to conservation, while sustaining or enhancing long-term economic activity important to Santa Barbara County through enhanced agriculture, development, biodiversity, and government efficiency.”
  - 12.2. In Goal #6, “incidental” shall be inserted so that it reads: “..satisfies the requirements of the federal ESA resulting in the incidental take authorization for the covered species.”
  - 12.3. An 11<sup>th</sup> goal was added and shall state: “Develop a strategy/plan that does not preclude adaptation to a wide range of properties and projects.”
  - 12.4. With incorporation of the above amendments, the draft goals were approved.
13. Individual stakeholder goals and concerns were discussed by each member of the Committee. Consensus determined that before the next meeting all committee members would compile a list of goals and concerns from all stakeholder interests they represent. The list should include what their constituents are saying good or bad and what they want out of the process.

## Consensus Definition

14. The consensus definition was adopted after the following amendments were included:
  - 14.1. In the second paragraph, it was decided to strike the phrase “there has been a sufficient meeting of the minds that the.” It now states, “Consensus is reached when the decision is acceptable to all members.”
  - 14.2. In the third paragraph, “can not” will become “cannot,” and “within” will become “in.” It will now state:

“Where consensus cannot be reached on a specific issue, the dissenting participants may prepare minority reports for presentation to the Committee in a prompt and timely manner...”

15. It was determined that when addressing complex issues regarding the conservation strategy, the Committee should be well informed about all aspects of the plan before proceeding to come to consensus on key decisions. The Committee expressed interest in having presentations on several topics including a biological resources presentation by a local biologist that will present the best science currently available.
16. A presentation on agriculture in the county was suggested. The presentation may involve the County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office.
17. The Committee expressed interest in having a presentation on the important elements of the Section 7 MOU and Section 10 HCP processes. Consensus was to have a discussion at a future meeting.
18. A potential future meeting topic is the value of preparing an NCCP as part of this process. A representative from the Department of Fish and Game may be able to brief the Committee at a future meeting.