

**Santa Barbara County
Regional Conservation Strategy**

Conservation Steering Committee Meeting

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors Hearing Room
Betteravia Government Center
511 E. Lakeside Parkway, Santa Maria
Wednesday, September 26, 2007

Approved Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Jerry Bunin – Home Builders Association
Katie Drexhage – Fish and Wildlife Service
Rhonda Lucas – Santa Barbara County Farmer Growers
Susan Petrovich – Ranching Community, (Hatch & Parent)
Martin Potter – CDFG
Bill Shipsey – Local Jurisdictions, (City of Santa Maria – Community Development)
Sam Sweet – Environmental Community, (PhD Biologist UCSB)
Tom Maloney – The Nature Conservancy

Alternate Committee Members Present:

Teri Bontrager – Farm Bureau of Santa Barbara
Willy Chamberlin – Ranching Community, (S.B. County Cattlemen Association)

Project Staff Present:

Joy Hufschmid – Project Manager, Santa Barbara County
Whitney Wilkinson – Assistant Planner, Santa Barbara County
David Villalobos – Board Assistant Specialist
Mike Ghizzoni – Chief Deputy County Counsel

Other Participants:

Jack Boysen – Fifth District Executive Staff Assistant
Andy Caldwell, COLAB
Larry Hunt, Consulting Biologist

1. Public Comment on non-agenda items and CSC Comment Period

There was a comment regarding the concern of landowners who may attempt to gain take coverage for species covered in the conservation strategy but find they are still liable for other sensitive species found on their property that are not covered in the plan. The concern is that even if landowners participate in the plan and gain take coverage for the California tiger salamander on their properties, they may still be prevented from conducting desired activities because of the presence of other listed species that were not addressed in the conservation strategy.

2. Presentation and Discussion of Covered Species – By Katie Drexhage of USFWS with support from Martin Potter of CDFG and Dr. Sweet of UCSB:

2.1. The committee asked that the last slide (map) of the power point presentation be given to staff to print out on legal sized paper, as this will make it easier to read.

- 2.2. Consensus was reached that a matrix would be created that includes all federal and state endangered, threatened, and species of concern within the CTS range. These include the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), California Red-Legged Frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), La Graciosa Thistle (*Cirsium loncholepis*), Southwestern Pond Turtle (*Actinemys marmorata pallida*), Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*), Western Spadefoot Toad (*Spea hammondi*), and Seaside Bird's-beak (*Cordylanthus rigidus ssp. Littoralis*). The matrix would identify habitat, the types of activities that could affect each species, and those that would require take authorization. This is to be brought back to the committee for further review.
- 2.3. It was suggested that the habitats of all eight species be indicated on a single map through the cooperation of GIS staff of various agencies represented on the committee.
- 2.4. In anticipation of a discussion on covered activities at the October meeting, committee members were asked to contribute ideas that would assist in the formation of a list of potential covered activities. These contributions should be emailed to the project manager.

3. Consideration of Minutes:

- 3.1 **The Minutes of August 22, 2007 were considered as follows:** Approved without alteration.

4. Scheduling remainder of 2007 meetings.

- 4.1. **October 24** – Kevin Merrill's vineyard in Los Alamos contains CTS habitat including ponds and upland habitat. He has offered to open up the winery for a committee site visit. The committee will convene at the Palmer Road exit from northbound Highway 101 at 10:00 a.m. Staff will provide the committee with directions to the property in advance of the meeting. Following the site visit the committee will reconvene at a site TBD in Los Alamos.
- 4.2. **November 28** – The hearing room at the Betteravia Center is unavailable, as the County Planning Commission will be holding a meeting on this date. A consensus was reached to search for a site in Santa Barbara for this meeting.
- 4.3. **December** – It was agreed to cancel the December meeting and reconvene in January 2008.

5. Presentation by the Facilitator: "Where do we go from here?": A discussion of difficult questions and the process moving forward"

- 5.1. This was a general discussion of the San Diego process for creating a regional HCP and some questions the committee may be faced with in developing a plan/strategy in Santa Barbara County. No action was taken by the CSC.
- 5.2. The committee suggested that it might be helpful to review the list of covered activities that was drafted for the San Diego HCP case study as well as other jurisdictions with similar project goals when considering the creation of a list for Santa Barbara County.

5.3 Stakeholder positions: Cattleman would like to see productive movement of the plan. Agriculture would like there to be coexistence between agriculture and the species. Although dissatisfied with the progress to date, the agricultural community is still at the table and continues to give the RCS a chance. All other stakeholders gave their general support for continuing work on the plan.