

Notice of Public Availability

From: Carl Wilcox, Central Coast Region
California Department of Fish & Game
Post Office Box 47
Yountville, CA 94599

Subject: Notice of Public Availability of Proposed Planning Agreement

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) is considering the entry into a Planning Agreement under the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act (NCCPA) (as amended in 2002 by SB107 and SB2052) with the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan Association (HCPA) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). This notice announces the availability of the proposed Planning Agreement for public review and comment for twenty-one (21) days, pursuant to Section 2810, subdivision (d) of the NCCPA as revised by SB107. Please note, the Draft Planning Agreement has not yet been reviewed by the solicitor for FWS.

The NCCPA encourages broad-based planning to protect and conserve the state's wildlife heritage while allowing appropriate development and growth. DFG is authorized to approve natural community conservation plans (NCCPs) pursuant to the NCCPA, and to enter into agreements with other public agencies or private entities for the conservation of species and habitats.

The HCPA is a Joint Powers Authority of seven local public agencies formed to prepare a regional conservation plan for Eastern Contra Costa County. The plan will be both a NCCP and a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) pursuant Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act. The HCPA desires to design and implement a NCCP/HCP that describes the measures that local agencies will perform in order to conserve biological resources while providing a permit for urban growth and public infrastructure projects.

The primary purpose of the Planning Agreement is to define the goals and obligations in the development of a NCCP/HCP for Eastern Contra Costa County. Among other things, it also provides a preliminary list of the natural communities, and the endangered, threatened, candidate, or other species that are found, or may be found, in those communities, to provide an initial focus of the NCCP/HCP. The execution of the Planning Agreement is not an approval of the NCCPHCP, but rather an agreement among DFG, FWS and HCPA to a process for the development of a proposed NCCP/HCP.

DFG invites the public to review and comment on the proposed Planning Agreement. The document can be viewed on the internet at DFG's website at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/nccp> or the HCPA's website at <http://www.cocohcp.org>. Upon request, a paper copy also can be sent by mail or facsimile by contacting Ms. Kathy Geary (707) 944-5566 or picked up in person at the Central Coast Regional Office of DFG at 7329 Silverado Trail, Napa, CA 94558

All comments should be sent to the address listed at the top of this Notice. The period for public review and comment will close twenty-one (21) days after the date of this Notice. Comments received on or before September 2, 2003 will be reviewed.

Date: 12 August 2003

Signature _____
Printed name: Carl Wilcox
Title Environmental Program Manager
Telephone (707) 944-5525