

Action 11:

Site Public Structures and Equipment Away From Constricted Portions of the Corridor or Outside the Study Area (when feasible)

Description:

Recommend that, to the extent feasible, public agencies constructing new facilities, storing equipment, or initiating new operations in the Caldecott area locate these facilities outside of constricted portions of the Corridor or construct them in a manner that minimizes impacts to the wildlife corridor, to fire safety, and to adjacent landowners. Private landowners with the flexibility to comply with this recommendation are also requested to do so, though it is recognized that many private landowners generally lack much ability to be flexible in this regard. Specific examples include:

- The proposed fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel (a feasibility study for this project is underway): If constructed, the fourth bore should be located in such a manner as to avoid or minimize further constriction of the Corridor and to avoid or minimize impacts to adjacent public and private property owners. Unavoidable impacts should be mitigated. Likewise, construction activities, including excavation, disposal, storage, and staging should be conducted in a manner which minimizes impacts to wildlife and adjacent property owners and which carefully minimizes fire ignition risks. Unavoidable impacts should be mitigated. Biological impacts associated with either

the location or construction of the fourth bore should be mitigated via acquisition or enhancement of habitat in the Corridor.

- The Park Security Residence/Maintenance Facility, located at the end of Old Tunnel Road (east-side) in the former Conley house: The EBRPD acquired this structure in the early 1990s as a part of a larger acquisition involving much of the undeveloped land on the eastern slope of the Corridor (the former Stone property), and now uses it both as a park security residence and as a facility to support park maintenance operations. The house was built in the 1960s or 70s on the site of the former gatekeepers cottage for the Old Tunnel (an architectural assessment of the property indicates that nothing of the original gatekeepers house, the Canary Cottage, has survived), and it provides the EBRPD with an existing facility for the two functions now performed there.

Unfortunately, the house is located in a critical portion of the Corridor. Though relocating the facility to another area is currently a low priority given the existing economic value of the structure, the expense of relocation, and the desired presence of park security and maintenance operations in the Corridor area, expansion of the facility or its use should be avoided if possible and economic options for relocating in the future should be explored.

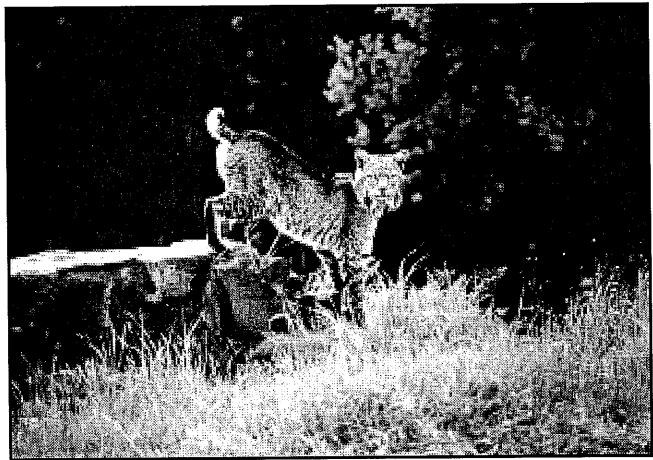
If relocation occurs, the structure should probably be removed (a State Historic Plaque commemorating the site of the Old Tunnel and the Canary Cottage might be appropriate) and the area restored with native vegetation. Purchase of the adjacent private land and structure could be combined with this action to assist partial closure of most of Old Tunnel Rd. (east-side) and restoration of natural vegetation.

Implementation:

Caltrans and the EBRPD are the agencies primarily involved with the two examples described above, though this action would apply to all public agencies with interests in the area, including EBMUD, Contra Costa County, the City of Oakland, and UC Berkeley (and, to a lesser extent, to private property owners). This recommendation should be conveyed to each agency and perhaps also conveyed to whatever organization conducts the potential feasibility study for the fourth bore (PG&E is not a public agency, but perhaps should be informed as well). Citizen and community group support for public agencies to heed this recommendation could be valuable. Mitigation fees for biological impacts in or near the corridor might be a source of funding for some actions taken under this recommendation.

Fiscal Impacts:

Costs depend upon the circumstances and the availability and suitability of a replacement site. In the second example above, the estimated cost to build a new structure (if required) to house EBRPD activities is: \$100,000 to \$200,000, not including any expenses that may be necessary to acquire a site for this structure. Relocation and planning costs are estimated to be \$5,000 to \$10,000 with demolition and restoration costs estimated at \$15,000 to \$50,000. An as yet unidentified source of funding for this relocation, such as mitigation from the fourth bore, will be necessary.



Bobcat (Patricia Matthews)

Anticipated results:

Maintained or improved wildlife corridor function due to avoidance of new (or reduction of existing) human activities, structures (and associated fire hazard mitigation requirements), fences, and or paved roads in a narrow portion of the corridor. Reduced fire ignition risks. Benefits to neighboring landowners.

Cautions:

Flexibility can be expensive. Also, in the second example, EBRPD's ability to supervise and manage its parks should not be compromised.