EAST CONTRA COSTA COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVANCY

2014 Year in Review

The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan/ Natural Community Conservation Plan

The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan (the "Plan") gives local cities and agencies control over endangered species permitting in their jurisdiction.

Under the Plan, project proponents pay a fee or provide their own conservation, conduct limited avoidance measures and receive species permits from their local land use agency. Fees and grants fund Preserve System acquisitions, management and restoration.

The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (the "Conservancy") implements and ensures compliance with the Plan and oversees assembly and operation of the HCP/NCCP Preserve System.

Conservancy Board Members

Joel Bryant
City of Brentwood

Keith Haydon
City of Clayton

Randy Pope
City of Oakley

Salvatore Evola
City of Pittsburg

Mary Piepho
Contra Costa County

The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy continued to experience success in 2014. The Conservancy permitting program had its busiest year to date. Streamlined permit coverage was provided for over 20 economic development and infrastructure projects. The Conservancy with funding and acquisition partners have preserved over 2,800 acres of biologically –rich habitat which have been successfully incorporated into the Plan's growing Preserve System. In late Fall 2014, the Conservancy completed a large restoration project that augments the Conservancy's efforts to stay ahead of restoration targets in the region.

East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy

PROJECT PERMITTING

The ECCC HCP/NCCP gives local cities and agencies control over state and federal endangered species permitting in their jurisdiction. Twenty-two projects received take coverage under the Plan in 2014, including 7 urban development projects, 12 rural infrastructure projects, 1 rural operations and maintenance project, and 2 restoration projects totaling approximately 46.14 acres of permanent impacts and 168.68 acres of temporary impacts on terrestrial and aquatic land cover types.

Bridge repair along Marsh Creek Road—CCC Public Works

The HCP/NCCP was designed to enable permit streamlining to extend beyond endangered species and include regional permitting under state and federal laws for impacts on jurisdictional wetlands and waters. On May 4, 2012, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued Regional General Permit 1 (RGP) related to the HCP/NCCP. The RGP is designed to streamline wetland permitting in the entire HCP/NCCP Plan Area by coordinating the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures in the Plan with the Corps' wetland permitting requirements. To date 10 covered projects and 2 Conservancy restoration projects have benefitted from coordinated permitting under the RGP.

Permitting Program highlights include:

- Ferro/Ronconi Residential Development Project: This project, located in the City of Brentwood, will create 160 single-family detached lots, a public park, and a water treatment detention basin. This project is one of the first major subdivision project covered under the HCP/NCCP.
- Marsh Creek Detention Center Bridge Replacement Project: This transportation infrastructure project replaced a structurally deficient and functionally obsolete one-lane bridge in east/central Contra Costa County. Permits for this project were acquired through the HCP/NCCP and the Corps' RGP. This project is an example of how the HCP/NCCP and coordinated wetland permitting helps to streamline and facilitate infrastructure projects in the County.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Conservancy is a joint exercise of powers authority formed by the Cities of Brentwood, Clayton, Oakley, and Pittsburg and Contra Costa County to implement the region's HCP/NCCP. The Conservancy partners with state and federal agencies to expand the collaborative efforts to streamline permitting while conserving habitat and contributing to the recovery of species.

In April 2014, Sally Jewell, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, toured the Conservancy's Preserve System and met with local leaders including representatives from local jurisdictions, the development community, and conservation groups. The photo on the cover shows Secretary Jewell meeting with the Conservancy Board, local partners as well as representatives from state and federal wildlife agencies overlooking East Contra Costa County.

ACTIVITIES BY THE NUMBERS

2014 and cumulative since 2008

Projects Permitted
In 2014: 22
To date: 78

Fees and CTR* Received
In 2014: $1,376,538
To date: $11,867,400

Acres Impacted
In 2014: 46
To date: 351

Restoration Projects Constructed
In 2014: 2
To date: 9

Properties Acquired
In 2014: 2
To date: 27

Acres Acquired
In 2014: 2,817
To date: 12,160

Grants Received
In 2014: $16,204,377
To date: $46,253,900

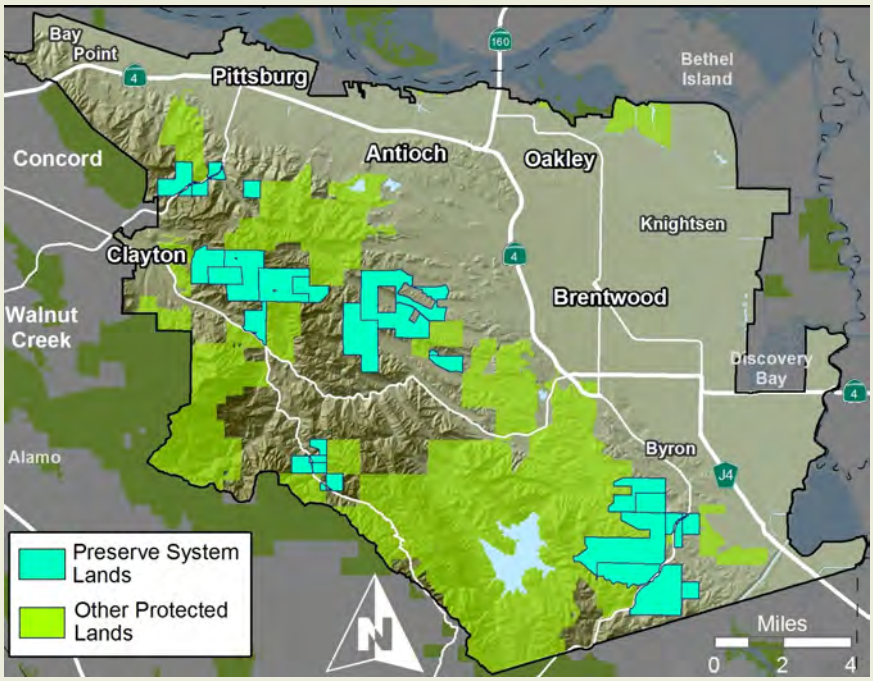
*Contributions to Recovery

LAND ACQUISITION

The Conservancy funds land acquisition from willing sellers to assemble the Preserve System. The Conservancy has made significant progress toward acquisition goals during the first seven years of Plan implementation. In 2014 two large acquisitions were completed adding 2,817 acres of land to the Preserve System. All acquisitions to date, totaling 12,160 acres, have been completed in partnership with East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), where EBRPD will own and manage Preserve System lands. These lands will also become part of the regional park system. The Conservancy continues to stay ahead of the average pace necessary to assemble the 30,300-acre Preserve System estimated to be required by Year 30 of the Plan (2037).

Highlights of the Preserve System include the following achievements:

- Over 1/3 of the Preserve System has been assembled by year 7 of Plan implementation
- Acquisition of the Smith and Roddy Ranch properties resulted in preservation of 15 miles of stream (perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams combined) bringing the total amount of streams preserved to date to 53 miles
- 30 acres of riparian woodland habitat preserved to dates
- Roddy Ranch is the largest property acquisition to date
- 46 occurrences of special status plants preserved to date



ECCC HCP/NCCP Preserve System

HABITAT RESTORATION & CREATION

The Plan requires stream, wetland and pond restoration and creation to compensate for impacts to these habitat types. The Conservancy has aggressively pursued wetland and pond restoration requirements. To date, eight restoration projects have been constructed. The eight restoration projects provide a range of benefits to covered species.

The Hess Creek Channel Restoration project site

Conservancy projects are monitored and managed to ensure that they achieve habitat goals. This intensive monitoring and management continues for a minimum of five years. Close monitoring of restoration sites has informed management actions including: reseeding areas, adjusting grazing patterns, and aggressively combating invasive weeds.

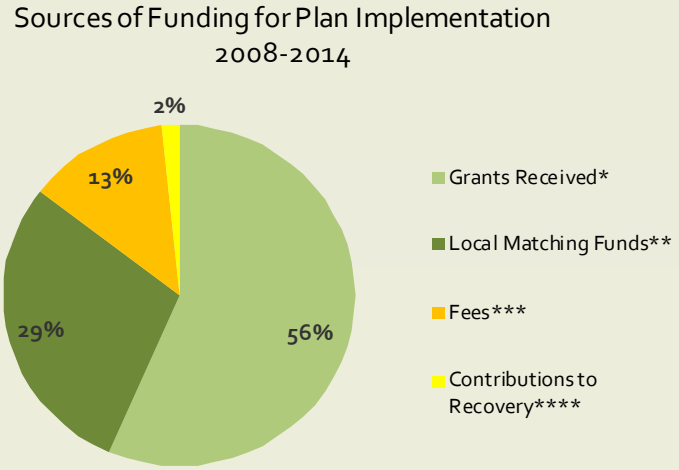
Conservancy efforts toward restoration and creation of wetland habitat types in 2014 were focused on the construction of the Hess Creek Channel Restoration Project. This project restored and created nearly 2.5 acres new wetland and creek habitats and 730 linear feet of stream. The Hess Creek Channel Restoration Project adds to the Conservancy's previous restoration projects in the western portion of the Preserve System.

FUNDING

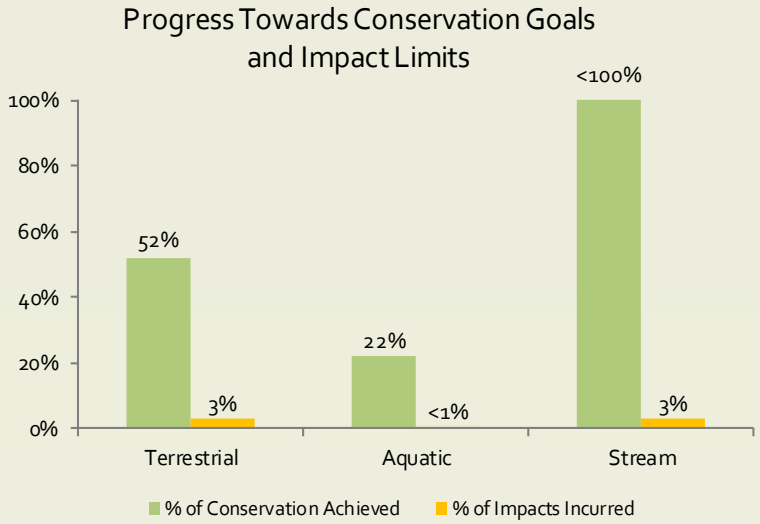
The Conservancy receives revenue from three primary sources: fees, grants, and contributions to recovery. These sources fund Preserve System acquisitions, management, monitoring, and restoration. Various federal, state, and private funding sources generously granted $16,204,377 to Conservancy activities during 2014. Fees received from the 22 projects permitted in 2014 totaled $1,338,240, while contributions to recovery received from 7 projects totaled $38,298. Local matching funds, which include funds provided by or grants awarded to local partners, totaled $4,618,113.

New Conservancy Revenues in 2014	Amount
Grant Funds received in 2014*	$16,204,377
Local Matching Funds leveraged in 2014**	$4,618,113
Fees received in 2014***	$1,338,240
Contributions to recovery received in 2014****	$38,298
Total new funding in 2014	**$22,199,027**

* The grants in 2014 were awarded by various State and Federal Agencies including CDFW, USFWS, and WCB.
** Local matching funds include contributions by the East Bay Regional Park District of its own funds or grant funds for joint acquisition and management.
*** Development, rural infrastructure, wetland, stream and administrative fees.
**** Payments by permit recipients that fund habitat improvements beyond required avoidance and mitigation measures.



STAYING AHEAD



For streamlined permitting to continue under the Plan, conservation must stay ahead of impacts. The Plan specifies detailed metrics that the Conservancy uses to track progress of Plan implementation.

Summarized data displayed (left) illustrates that all categories of conservation are ahead of the impacts to these habitat types.

A more detailed accounting of conservation, restoration, creation, and impacts is provided in Figure ES-1 and Table 14 in the 2014 Annual Report.

PARTNERS IMPLEMENTING THE HCP/NCCP

City of Brentwood
City of Clayton
City of Oakley
City of Pittsburg
Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
East Bay Regional Park District
East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Agricultural-Natural Resources Trust of Contra Costa County
California Native Plant Society
Contra Costa Council
Contra Costa County Citizens Land Alliance
Contra Costa County Farm Bureau
Discovery Builders Inc.
Friends of Marsh Creek Watershed
Home Builders Association of Northern California
Rural/suburban residents
Save Mount Diablo

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information about the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy can be found online at www.cocohcp.org.

The HCP/NCCP Overview booklet and the 2014 Annual Report can be both downloaded from the website. To reach the Conservancy, please contact maureen.parkes@dcd.cccounty.us or 925-674-7203.