

HCPA East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan Association

September 21, 2005

To: Interested Parties

Subject: Notice of Availability for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/
Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the East Contra Costa County Habitat
Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan (ECC HCP/NCCP)

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Enclosed please find the above-referenced Notice of Availability. The Notice of Availability provides pertinent information on the purpose of the plan, the availability of draft documents, the comment deadline (December 1, 2005), where to send comments, and the date, time and location for public meetings on the proposed project (October 27, 2005 at 1 and at 6 at Pittsburg City Hall).

The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan Association (HCPA) will continue to hold regular meetings of its various committees during and after the comment period. The HCPA Coordination Group, the committee of stakeholders and agency representatives that advised in the development of the Draft HCP/NCCP will continue to meet on selected Thursdays at 1 p.m. at the City of Pittsburg Offices at 65 Civic Drive to discuss the planning effort. The next meetings will be October 6, October 27, and December 15. The HCPA Executive Governing Committee, the body of elected officials governing the HCPA, will meet on October 27, 2005 at 5:30, also at Pittsburg City Offices (the October 27 meetings of the Coordination Group and the Executive Governing Committee will double as the formal public meetings referenced in the Notice of Availability). All meetings of HCPA committees are open to the public. Please contact me if you wish to be added to the distribution list for agendas for these meetings.

Thank you very much for your interest. Please feel free to contact me at the Contra Costa County Community Development Department at (925) 335-1227 with any questions.

Sincerely,

John Kopchik, Principal Planner
Contra Costa County Community Development Department, Coordinating Agency
East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan Association

**EASTCONTRA COSTA COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN ASSOCIATION
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY**

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the Draft East Contra
Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan**

This notice announces the availability of the draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the draft East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan (ECCC HCP/NCCP or Plan) for public review and comment. This notice is provided pursuant to noticing requirements found in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Sec. 21092), and the State CEQA Guidelines (Guidelines Sec. 15087).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed HCP/NCCP is being prepared by the ECCC Habitat Conservation Plan Association (HCPA), a joint powers authority that is comprised of the Cities of Brentwood, Clayton, Oakley, and Pittsburg; Contra Costa County; the Contra Costa Water District (CCWD); and the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). The HCPA was formed to manage and fund development of the proposed HCP/NCCP for submission to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).

The proposed ECCC HCP/NCCP is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional plan that provides for regional species conservation and habitat planning while allowing the local land use or jurisdictions that are applicants under the proposed HCP/NCCP to better manage anticipated growth and development in the Plan area (Figure 1-1). The proposed HCP/NCCP provides a coordinated process for permitting and mitigating the take of covered species as an alternative to the current project-by-project approach.

USFWS and CDFG, by approving the proposed HCP/NCCP and issuing incidental take permits (ITPs), would provide the local authorities with take authorization for specific species during the course of otherwise lawful activities. Local authorities could then issue endangered species permits to project proponents that comply with the conditions of the proposed HCP/NCCP. The local authorities, through an implementing authority, would also be responsible for collecting fees from project proponents to implement broad conservation measures, including establishment of large preserve areas.

The purpose of this EIR/EIS for the ECCC HCP/NCCP is to inform agency decision makers and the public regarding the anticipated significant environmental effects of the proposed project, potential measures to mitigate these significant effects, and reasonable alternatives that could reduce the significant environmental impacts of the proposed project to a less-than-significant level. The EIS/EIR evaluates the potential impacts of approval of the ECCC HCP/NCCP, including issuance of ITPs by USFWS and CDFG, and adoption of an implementing agreement (IA) for the proposed HCP/NCCP and other alternatives, including the no-action alternative.

PROJECT IMPACTS: Before mitigation, the DEIR identifies significant project impacts on biology, water quality cultural resources, geology, traffic, noise, air quality, and mineral resources. After mitigation, the project would not have any significant unavoidable impacts nor impacts which would be cumulatively considerable. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15087(c)(6), it is noted that sites included on the lists of sites enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code (such as hazardous waste sites and underground storage tanks) are found at certain locations within the Plan Area since the Plan Area includes a large portion of eastern Contra Costa County.

COMMENT DEADLINE: Comments on the draft Plan, draft Implementing Agreement, and draft EIS/EIR will be accepted through December 1, 2005. Send comments by mail or facsimile to: (1) Lori Rinek, Division Chief, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605, Sacramento, California 95825; facsimile (916) 414-6713; and (2) John Kopchik, Principal Planner, Contra Costa County Community Development Department, 651 Pine Street, Fourth Floor North Wing, Martinez, California 94553, facsimile (925) 335-1299.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: Copies of the draft Plan, draft Implementing Agreement and draft EIS/EIR are available for public review from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, at the Contra Costa County Community Development Department (651 Pine Street, Fourth Floor North Wing, Martinez, California 94553). These documents also are available on the Association's website at: <http://www.cocohcp.org>.

Electronic copies of all documents may also be obtained on a compact disk at no charge. Paper copies of all documents may also be purchased for price equal to the cost of reproduction. Contact John Kopchik (see information below) for more information or to request a compact disk or paper copy.

In addition, copies of all documents are also available for public review at the following Contra Costa County Library and city office locations:

Contra Costa County Libraries

- 751 Third Street, Brentwood, CA
- 6125 Clayton Road, Clayton, CA
- Freedom High School, 1050 Neroly Road, Oakley, CA
- 80 Power Avenue, Pittsburg, CA
- Riverview Middle School, 205 Pacifica Avenue, Bay Point, CA

City Offices

- City of Brentwood, Community Development Department, 104 Oak Street, Brentwood, CA 94513
- City of Clayton, Community Development Department, 6000 Heritage Trail, Clayton, CA 94517
- City of Oakley, Community Development Department, 3231 Main Street, Oakley, CA 94561
- City of Pittsburg, Planning Department, 65 Civic Drive, Pittsburg, CA 94565

PUBLIC MEETING: Two public meetings will be held on: Thursday, October 27, 2005, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The public meetings will be held at: Pittsburg City Hall, 65 Civic Drive, Pittsburg, CA, 94565. As a reminder, written comments should be received on or before December 1, 2005.

STAFF CONTACT: John Kopchik
Contra Costa County Community Development Department
651 Pine Street, Fourth Floor, North Wing
Martinez, California 94553
Phone: 925-335-1227
Facsimile: (925) 335-1299
E-mail: jkopc@cd.cccounty.us