

2015 Year in Review

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

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 "ECCC HCP/NCCP") gives local jurisdictions control over endangered species permitting.

Under the ECCC HCP/NCCP, project proponents pay a fee or provide their own conservation, conduct limited avoidance measures and receive species permits from their local land use agency. Mitigation 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 ECCC HCP/NCCP Preserve System.

Conservancy Board Members

Joel Bryant
City of Brentwood

Salvatore Evola
City of Pittsburg

Keith Haydon
City of Clayton

Mary Piepho
Contra Costa County

Randy Pope
City of Oakley



LAND ACQUISITION



HABITAT RESTORATION



PROJECT PERMITTING



PARTNERSHIPS

The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy continued to experience success in 2015. Streamlined permitting through the ECCC HCP/NCCP provided permit coverage for 17 economic development, infrastructure, and habitat restoration projects. The Conservancy with its funding and acquisition partners have preserved and incorporated over 266 acres of biologically-rich habitat into the ECCC HCP/NCCP's growing Preserve System. In the fall of 2015, the Conservancy completed a vernal pool habitat restoration project, now successfully occupied by vernal pool fairy shrimp, increasing 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. Seventeen projects received take coverage under the Plan in 2015, including 10 urban development projects, 3 rural operations and maintenance projects, 2 restoration activities, and 2 preserve management projects. These projects total approximately 102 acres of permanent impacts and 9 acres of temporary impacts on terrestrial and aquatic land cover types.

The ECCC 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 ECCC HCP/NCCP. The RGP streamlines wetland permitting in the entire 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 3 Conservancy restoration projects have benefitted from coordinated permitting under the RGP.



SR 160/SR 4 Bypass Phase 2 Connectors Project

Permitting Program Highlights:

- **Mangini Residential Development Project:** This development project in the City of Brentwood involves the subdivision of a 9.77-acre property located south of O'Hara Lane and the terminus of Bond Lane. The subdivision will create 36-single family residential lots. Construction began fall 2015.
- **State Route 4/Balfour Road Interchange Improvements Project:** This road infrastructure project consists of widening SR 4 from San Jose Avenue to approximately 3,400 feet south of Balfour Road and construction of an interchange at Balfour Road in the City of Brentwood. The project addresses current and projected traffic congestion at the at-grade SR 4/Balfour Road intersection and along the segment of SR 4. Construction is expected to begin summer 2016.

ACTIVITIES BY THE NUMBERS

Projects Permitted

In 2015: 17

Cumulative: 91

Acres Impacted

In 2015: 102

Cumulative: 461

Acres Acquired

In 2015: 226 acres

Cumulative: 12,283 acres

Fees and CTR* Received

In 2015: \$1,417,854

Cumulative: \$13,285,300

Restoration Projects

In 2015: 1

Cumulative: 9

Grants Received

In 2015: \$2,234,579

Cumulative: \$48,488,500

Partnerships

The Conservancy works closely with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) staff in managing the Preserves. The image on the cover is from a field training in 2015. Staff from the two agencies participated in multiple trainings to learn to identify rare and special status plants on the Preserve Lands. Over 25 field staff participated in Spring and Fall plant identification workshops. Future activities will focus on other special status species targeted for recovery by the Conservancy. The effort is only one example of EBRPD and the Conservancy collaborating on species conservation efforts.

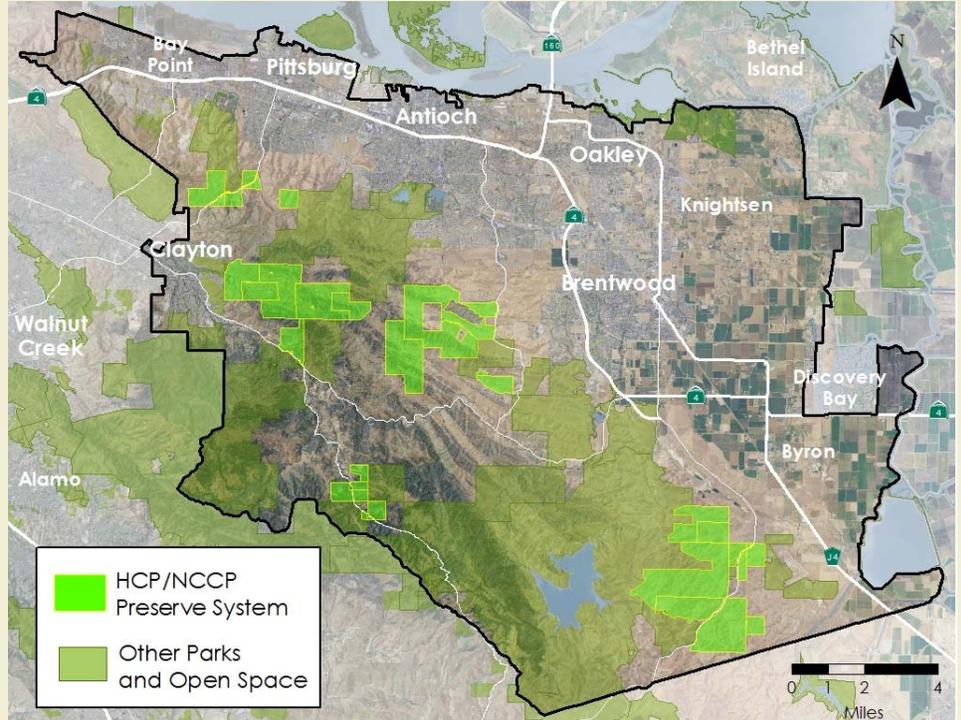
*Contributions to Recovery

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 eight years of Plan implementation. In 2015, two acquisitions were completed adding 266 acres of land to the Preserve System. All acquisitions to date, totaling 12,283 acres, have been completed in partnership with East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), where EBRPD owns and manages 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 achievements:

- ◆ Over 1/3 of the Preserve System has been assembled by year 8 of Plan implementation
- ◆ Acquisition of the Viera/Perley property in 2015 resulted in preservation of over 2.2 miles of stream (perennial and intermittent combined), totaling to 54.5 miles of streams preserved to date
- ◆ Acquisition of the Viera/Perley property nearly doubles the amount of riparian woodland habitat preserved to date, totaling 60 acres
- ◆ 40 known occurrences of covered plants have been preserved to date



Habitat Restoration and 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, nine restoration projects have been constructed. These restoration projects provide a range of benefits to covered species.

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 habitats in 2015 included the Vaquero Farms South Wetland Creation and Repair Project. This project created a 0.15-acre new wetland suitable for vernal pool branchiopods. The project also included the repair of an eroded area immediately adjacent to a wetlands created in 2013. This project adds to the Conservancy's prior restoration projects in the southeastern portion of the Preserve System.

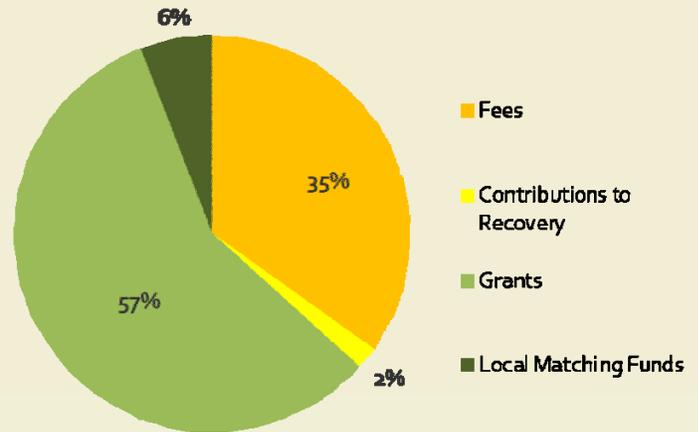


Vaquero Farms South Wetland Creation and Repair Project

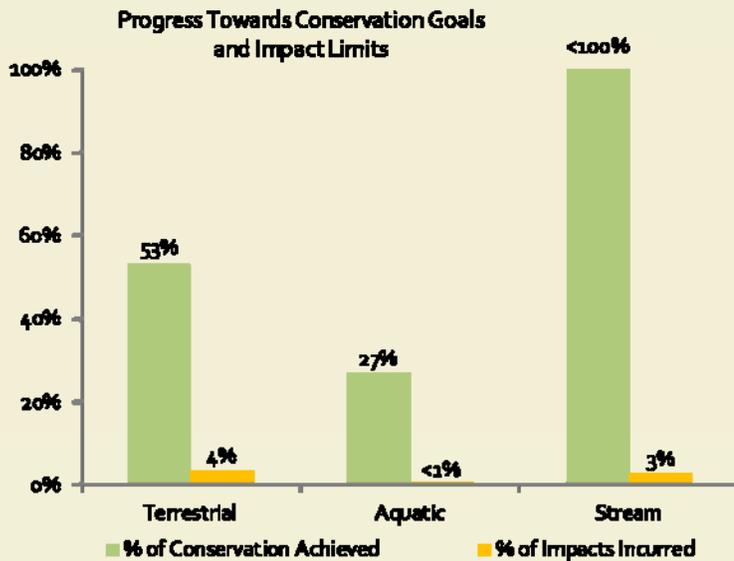
Funding

The Conservancy receives revenue from three primary sources: fees (development and wetland fees), grants, and contributions to recovery. These sources fund Preserve System acquisitions, management, monitoring, and restoration.

Conservancy Revenues in 2015	Amount
Mitigation and Permitting Fees *	\$1,351,145
Contributions to Recovery **	\$66,709
Grant Funds ***	\$2,234,579
Local Matching Funds ****	\$224,250
Total	\$3,876,684



* Development, wetland, stream, and administrative fees.
 ** Payments by permit recipients that fund habitat improvements beyond required avoidance and mitigation measures.
 *** The grants in 2015 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 acquisitions and management.



Staying Ahead

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

The 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 2015 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
- Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust
- California Native Plant Society
- Contra Costa County Farm Bureau
- Discovery Builders Inc.
- East Bay Leadership Council
- 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 2015 Annual Report can be both downloaded from the website. To reach the Conservancy, please contact maureen.parkes@dcd.cccounty.us or 925-674-7203.