

# 2019 Year in Review

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



Land Acquisition



Project Permitting



Habitat Restoration



Partnerships

Photo credits, top to bottom: Conservancy, Contra Costa Water District, Conservancy, Save Mount Diablo

The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan (the "ECCC HCP/NCCP") gives local jurisdictions control over state and federal endangered species permitting in the region.

Through 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 conservation acquisitions, management, research and restoration.

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

### 2019

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The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy continued to implement the East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP. In 2019, streamlined permitting through the ECCC HCP/NCCP provided permit coverage for 15 economic development, infrastructure, and habitat restoration projects. The Conservancy, together with East Bay Regional Park District, acquired one property totaling 115 acres of biologically-rich habitat for the ECCC HCP/NCCP's growing Preserve System. The Conservancy continued to implement conservation actions ahead of what is required for permitted impacts.

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#### Conservancy Governing Board

Juan Antonio Banales | City of Pittsburg

Joel Bryant | City of Brentwood

Diane Burgis | Contra Costa County

Tuija Catalano | City of Clayton

Randy Pope | City of Oakley



# Project Permitting

The ECCC HCP/NCCP gives local cities and agencies control over state and federal endangered species permitting in their jurisdiction. In 2019, 15 projects received take coverage under the Plan, including six urban development projects, three rural infrastructure projects, three rural operations and maintenance projects, two Preserve System activities, and one East Bay Regional Park District pond repair project. These projects total approximately 40 acres of permanent impacts and 23 acres of temporary impacts on terrestrial land cover types: 0.026 acre of temporary impacts on aquatic habitats and 131 linear feet of temporary impacts on streams.

The ECCC HCP/NCCP was designed to enable permit streamlining to extend beyond endangered species regulations 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) aligned with the ECCC HCP/NCCP. This Permit was reissued on April 12, 2017 and has a five-year duration. The RGP streamlines wetland permitting in the entire Plan Area by aligning the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures in the Plan with the Corps' wetland permitting requirements. To date, 17 covered projects and two Conservancy restoration projects have benefitted from coordinated permitting under the RGP.

## Permitting Program Highlights:

- **Residential:** The City of Oakley permitted the Vines at Oakley project which included the subdivision of a 10+/- acre property into 64 lots. The proposed project includes 62 single-family residential houses, a community parking lot, and landscaping.
- **Commercial:** The City of Pittsburg permitted a development by Praxair Inc. to construct a secure cylinder storage facility. The project entailed construction of a 0.16 acre storage facility and associated utility infrastructure. The facility was required to expand Praxair's capability to provide local customers with timely deliveries. The new facility will be used to store palletized cylinders and to load and unload these pallets from shipping containers.
- **Utility Infrastructure:** Pacific Gas & Electric Company upgraded its gas transmission pipeline L-191-1 to allow for future in-line inspection as a method of threat assessment by rebuilding the existing SP3/L191 Meter Station in the City of Pittsburg, and installing equipment which will allow inspection technologies to navigate through the station. The Project included the excavation and modification of the existing facilities at the station over a two-year period.

## ACTIVITIES BY THE NUMBERS

### Projects Permitted

In 2019: 15  
Cumulative: 175

### Acres Impacted

In 2019: 40  
Cumulative: 842

### Acres Acquired

In 2019: 115  
Cumulative: 14,221

### Mitigation Fees

In 2019: \$670,459  
Cumulative: \$19,399,400

### Restoration Projects

In 2019: 0  
Cumulative: 11

### Grants & CTR

In 2019: \$872,661  
Cumulative: \$73,422,700

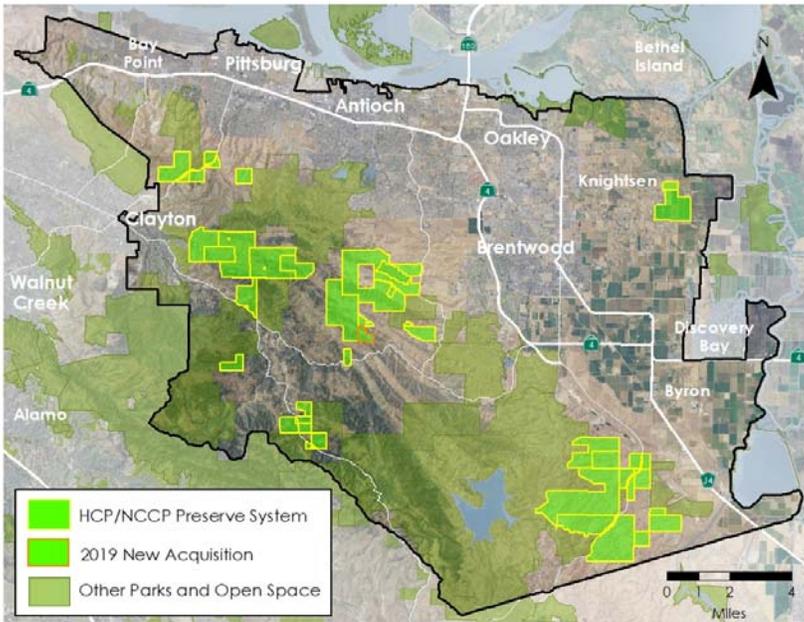
## Partnerships

The Conservancy continues to work closely with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) and Save Mount Diablo on land acquisition opportunities, management of Preserve System lands, and habitat restoration projects. The EBRPD has been the Conservancy's primary partner in Preserve System acquisitions in the Plan implementation. These acquisitions total 300 acres of newly protected land in 2018.

The Conservancy's other partners include State and Federal regulatory and funding agencies, as well as members of the development community, conservation advocates, agricultural representatives and members of the public. The Conservancy will continue to build on these partnerships and expand on collaborative conservation projects and efforts in the HCP/NCCP Plan Area.

# 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 twelve years of Plan implementation. In 2019, one property was acquired, adding 115 acres of land to the Preserve System, which totals 14,221 acres. All but one acquisition to date have been completed in partnership with EBRPD, where EBRPD owns and manages those Preserve System lands. The Viera North Peak property, acquired in 2017 from Save Mount Diablo, is owned by the Conservancy with the anticipation of transferring the property to California State Parks. 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 12 of Plan implementation.
- Acquisition of the Olesen/Duke property in 2019 adds 115 more preserved acres to Briones Valley, and adds to the existing protected land in that area, connecting to the Poppi/Halstead and the Smith properties.

# 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, 11 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.

No new restoration projects were constructed in 2019. In 2019, the Conservancy monitored the following six restoration projects—the Upper Hess Creek Watershed Habitat Restoration Project (constructed in 2011), Vaquero Farms Seasonal Wetland Creation Project (Seasonal Wetlands 1 and 2) (constructed 2012), Hess Creek Channel Restoration Project (construction 2014), Vaquero Farms Seasonal Wetland 3 Creation (constructed 2015), Ang Riparian Restoration Project (constructed 2017), and the Horse Valley Creek and Wetland Restoration Project (constructed 2018). Monitoring in 2019 demonstrated advancement toward achievement of site-specific restoration objectives.

The Conservancy is actively working on restoration plans for multiple other sites that will be constructed in future years.

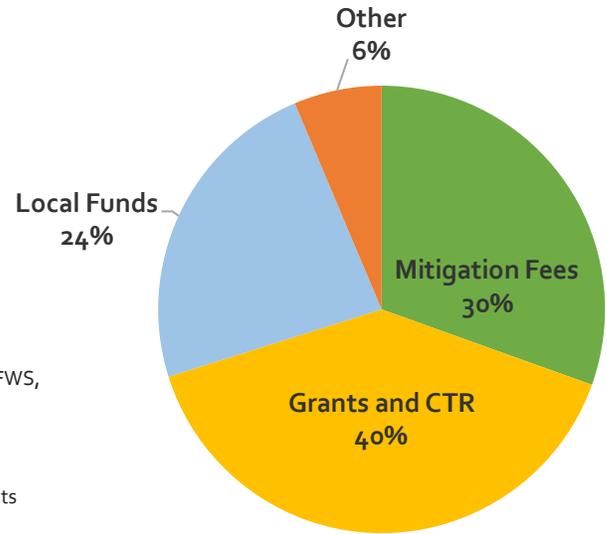


Fairy Shrimp Surveys at Roddy Ranch, February 2019

# Funding

The Conservancy receives revenue from the following primary sources: mitigation and permitting fees (development, wetland, and temporary impact fees, administrative/staff time fees, and contributions to recovery payments) and grants. These sources fund Preserve System acquisitions, management, monitoring, and restoration projects.

<u>Revenue in 2019</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Mitigation Fees <sup>1</sup>	\$670,459
Grants and CTR <sup>2</sup>	\$872,661
Other <sup>3</sup>	\$139,655
Local Funds <sup>4</sup>	\$517,797
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,200,571</b>



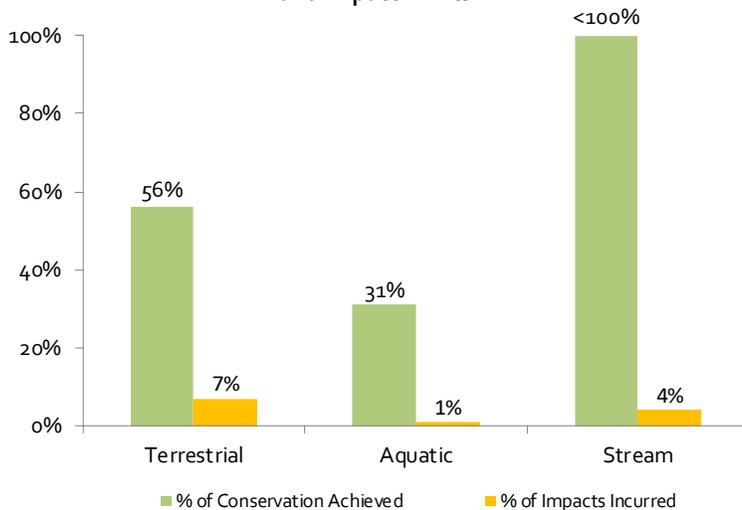
<sup>1</sup> Development fees, wetland fees, and temporary impact fees.

<sup>2</sup> These are grants from various state and federal agencies including CDFW, USFWS, and WCB. The amount shown includes grant funds spent (not grants awarded). "CTR" are Contributions to Recovery, and includes temporary impact fees.

<sup>3</sup> Other includes staff time/administrative fees, interest, and miscellaneous.

<sup>4</sup> Local funding includes contributions by the East Bay Regional Park District of its own funds or grant funds for joint acquisitions and preserve management.

## Progress Toward Conservation Goals and Impact Limits



## 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 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 the 2019 Annual Report.

### PARTNERS IMPLEMENTING THE HCP/NCCP

City of Brentwood  
 City of Clayton  
 City of Oakley  
 City of Pittsburg  
 Contra Costa County  
 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 representatives  
 Building Industry Association of the Bay Area  
 California Farmland Trust  
 California Native Plant Society  
 Contra Costa County Farm Bureau  
 Discovery Builders Inc.  
 East Bay Leadership Council  
 Friends of Marsh Creek Watershed  
 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](http://www.cocohcp.org).

The HCP/NCCP Overview booklet and the 2019 Annual Report can be both downloaded from the website. To reach the Conservancy, please contact [maureen.parkes@dcd.cccounty.us](mailto:maureen.parkes@dcd.cccounty.us) or 925-674-7831.