

Appendix B  
**Public Outreach**

---

RECEIVED

AUG 15 2017  
YULO COUNTY  
CLERK/RECORDER

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE  
YOLO REGIONAL CONSERVATION INVESTMENT STRATEGY/LOCAL  
CONSERVATION PLAN  
and  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING ABOUT  
YOLO REGIONAL CONSERVATION INVESTMENT STRATEGY/LOCAL  
CONSERVATION PLAN**

**Published August 15, 2017**

**Description of Proposed Regional Conservation Investment Strategy:** A steering committee including the California Natural Resources Agency, Yolo County, the Yolo Habitat Conservancy, the Department of Water Resources, and other stakeholders is preparing a Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) for Yolo County. Regional Conservation Investment Strategies are new, voluntary, landscape-scale conservation planning tools that will identify conservation priorities to guide public and private conservation actions and investment, such as habitat restoration and protection. Guided by state legislation signed by the Governor in 2016 (AB 2087). If the Yolo RCIS is approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) in 2018, conservation actions identified in the RCIS could be used by state or local agencies to develop mitigation credit agreements with the Department for water, transportation, and other projects not already covered by the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (Yolo HCP/NCCP). The Yolo RCIS is part of a broader effort to implement regional advanced mitigation planning in the state to facilitate landscape-scale conservation and improve the delivery of water, transportation, and other public infrastructure projects.

The Yolo Habitat Conservancy is leading an effort in coordination with local stakeholders to develop a voluntary Local Conservation Plan (LCP) for the purpose of addressing conservation needs not addressed in the Yolo HCP/NCCP, which is currently out for public review (<https://www.yolohabitatconservancy.org/documents>).

Due to the overlap between the two conservation planning efforts, the involved parties have decided to combine the RCIS and LCP into a single document, the Yolo RCIS/LCP.

The Yolo RCIS/LCP:

- Is a voluntary, non-binding assessment of conservation priorities;
- Is being developed based on existing plans and other information, including the *Yolo HCP/NCCP* and the *Central Valley Flood Protection Plan*, among others;
- Is designed to be compatible with efforts to maintain and further conservation actions that support agricultural sustainability in coordination with willing landowners;

- Is designed to be compatible with efforts to maintain and further conservation actions that support agricultural sustainability in coordination with willing landowners;
- Coordinates various types of conservation investments, such as:
  - local, state, and federal government conservation projects;
  - private foundation and conservation organization (e.g. land trust) projects;
  - mitigation projects by private entities and public agencies;
- Considers the focal species listed in Table 1, below. For the LCP component, it also addresses multiple “conservation species” to be prioritized for conservation;
- Considers sensitive habitats, and addresses working lands, proposed infrastructure, and development projects;
- Is designed to be consistent with and complement the Yolo HCP/NCCP, a regional HCP/NCCP that covers Yolo County;
- Is being developed by a Steering Committee consisting of the California Resources Agency, the California Department of Water Resources, Yolo County, Yolo Habitat Conservancy, and partner organizations and agencies and with the assistance of a consultant team, through a planning process providing opportunities for public input; and
- Will be submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for their review and approval for the purposes of the RCIS portion of the document.

**Table 1. Proposed Focal Species for Yolo RCIS/LCP**

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Status (Federal/State/CNPS)<sup>a</sup></i>
<b>Plants</b>		
alkali milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus tener</i> var. <i>tener</i>	-/-1B
brittlescale	<i>Atriplex depressa</i>	-/-1B
San Joaquin spearscale	<i>Atriplex joaquiniana</i>	-/-1B
Heckard’s pepper-grass	<i>Lepidium latipes</i> var. <i>heckardii</i>	-/-1B
Baker’s navarretia	<i>Navarretia leucocephala</i> ssp. <i>bakeri</i>	-/-1B
Colusa grass	<i>Neostapfia colusana</i>	T/E/1B
Solano grass	<i>Tuctoria mucronata</i>	E/E/1B
<b>Invertebrates</b>		
Conservancy fairy shrimp	<i>Branchinecta conservatio</i>	E/-/-
vernal pool fairy shrimp	<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>	T/-/-
midvalley fairy shrimp	<i>Branchinecta mesovallensis</i>	-/-/-
California linderiella	<i>Linderiella occidentalis</i>	-/-/-
Vernal pool tadpole shrimp	<i>Lepidurus packardi</i>	E/-/-
Valley elderberry longhorn beetle	<i>Desmocerus californicus dimorphus</i>	T/-/-
<b>Fish</b>		
white sturgeon	<i>Acipenser transmontanus</i>	-/-/-
green sturgeon	<i>Acipenser medirostris</i>	T/CSC/-
delta smelt	<i>Hypomesus transpacificus</i>	T/E/-

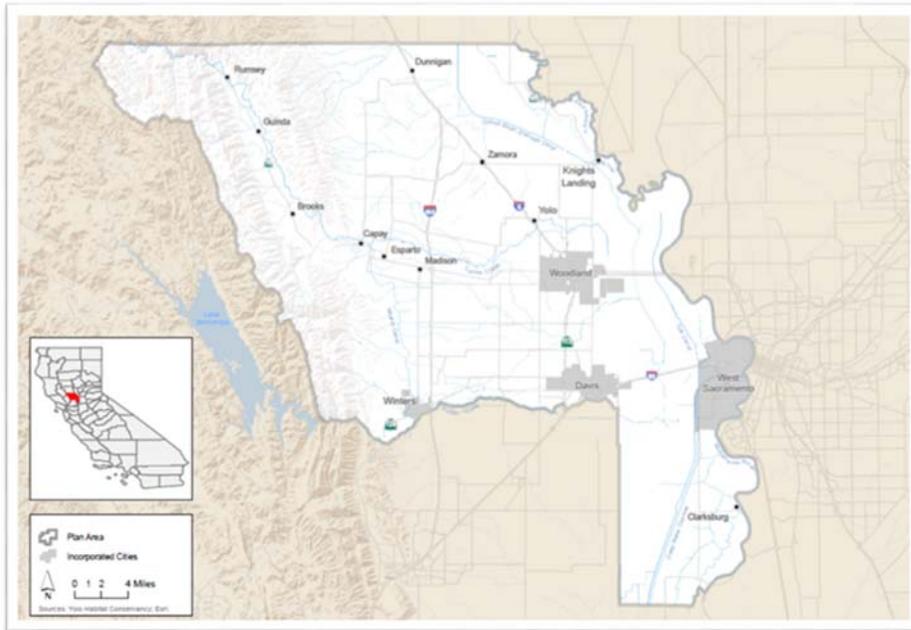
<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Status (Federal/State/CNPS)<sup>a</sup></b>
Central Valley steelhead	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	T/CSC/-
Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	E/T/-
Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	T/T/-
Central Valley fall- and late fall-run Chinook salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	-/CSC/-
Sacramento splittail	<i>Pogonichthys macrolepidotus</i>	-/CSC/-
<b>Amphibians</b>		
California tiger salamander	<i>Ambystoma californiense</i>	T/T/-
foothill yellow-legged frog	<i>Rana boylei</i>	-/CSC/-
western spadefoot	<i>Spea hammondi</i>	-/CSC/-
<b>Reptiles</b>		
western pond turtle	<i>Actinemys marmorata</i>	-/CSC/-
giant garter snake	<i>Thamnophis gigas</i>	T/T/-
<b>Birds</b>		
tricolored blackbird	<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>	-/T/-
grasshopper sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	-/CSC/-
western burrowing owl	<i>Athene cunicularia hypugaea</i>	-/CSC/-
Swainson's hawk	<i>Buteo swainsonii</i>	-/T/-
greater sandhill crane	<i>Grus canadensis tabida</i>	-/T, FP/-
northern harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	-/CSC/-
black tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	-/CSC/-
western yellow-billed cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>	T/E/-
white-tailed kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	-/FP/-
California black rail	<i>Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus</i>	-/T, FP/-
loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	-/CSC/-
yellow-breasted chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>	-/CSC/-
bank swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	-/T/-
least Bell's vireo	<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	E/E/-
<b>Mammals</b>		
Townsend's big-eared bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	-/CSC/-
Notes: a. Status: C = Candidate for listing under the FESA E = Listed as endangered under the FESA or CESA PT = Proposed as threatened under the FESA T = Listed as threatened under the FESA or CESA b. Formerly <i>Cordylanthus palmatus</i> .	FP = Fully Protected under California Fish and Game Code CSC = California Species of Special Concern - = No designation CESA = California Endangered Species Act FESA = Federal Endangered Species Act 1B: Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere 2B: Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, But More Common Elsewhere 3: Plants About Which More Information is Needed - A Review List 4: Plants of Limited Distribution - A Watch List	

Once finalized, the RCIS aspect of the Yolo RCIS/LCP can help expedite delivery of public infrastructure projects by facilitating regional advance mitigation planning: a

process in which the environmental mitigation for impacts from multiple projects is pooled and conducted in advance, resulting in larger conservation projects that have greater benefits, while expediting delivery of public infrastructure projects such as transportation or water supply projects and minimizing impacts on agriculture and other land uses. Conservation goals and objectives and conservation priorities described in the Yolo RCIS/LCP will guide and coordinate future conservation actions throughout Yolo County.

**Location:** The geographic area covered by the Yolo RCIS/LCP includes all of Yolo County (Figure 1)

**Figure 1. Geographic Area Covered by the Yolo RCIS/LCP**



**Public Meeting:** Pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 1854(c)(3), the Yolo Habitat Conservancy will hold a public meeting to provide information about the Yolo RCIS/LCP and to give the public an opportunity to provide written and oral comments for consideration in its development. Interested parties are invited to attend.

**Meeting Date and Time:** September 14, 2017, 5:30 to 7:00 PM

**Meeting Location:** Yolo County Department of Community Services, Cache Creek Conference Room (292 West Beamer Street, Woodland, CA 95695)

**Contact Person:** Chris Alford, Yolo Habitat Conservancy Deputy Director  
Address: 611 North Street, Woodland, CA 95695  
Phone: 530-723-5504  
Email: [chris@yolohabitatconservancy.org](mailto:chris@yolohabitatconservancy.org)

\* \* \*

# Yolo Regional Conservation Investment Strategy / Local Conservation Plan

Public Meeting, September 14, 2017

## Public Comments

Name/Organization (Optional):

DON SCHATZEL WEST SAC TRAIL RIDERS

Questions/Comments on the Content of the Presentation: Were there items that were unclear? Did any topics need more explanation? We would like feedback to inform future outreach.

How would it actually work?

ACRONYMS HARD TO FOLLOW FOR NON  
PLANNERS.

Suggestions for Public Outreach/Engagement: How should the public best be informed about the development of the Yolo RCIS/LCP?

HAVE MEETINGS IN EACH  
COMMUNITY.

Additional feedback about the Yolo RCIS/LCP: How do you foresee the RCIS/LCP being applicable to your interest/organization? What would you expect to see in a regional conservation document, such as an RCIS/LCP?

EQUESTRIAN USE SEEMS TO BE COMPLETELY  
CONSISTENT WITH THIS EFFORT.

How did you hear about the public meeting?

W SAC NEWSLETTER - PAPER.

We welcome written comments on the material presented in this meeting by November 3, 2017 to:  
Yolo Habitat Conservancy, Attn: Yolo Habitat Conservancy, 611 North Street, Woodland, CA 95695;  
OR [info@yolohabitatconservancy.org](mailto:info@yolohabitatconservancy.org)

**DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION**

2101 Stone Blvd., Suite 210  
West Sacramento, CA 95691  
(916) 375-4800 / FAX (916) 376-3962  
[www.delta.ca.gov](http://www.delta.ca.gov)



**Skip Thomson, Chair**  
Solano County Board of  
Supervisors

**Oscar Villegas, Vice Chair**  
Yolo County Board of  
Supervisors

**Don Nottoli**  
Sacramento County Board of  
Supervisors

**Chuck Winn**  
San Joaquin County Board of  
Supervisors

**Diane Burgis**  
Contra Costa County Board of  
Supervisors

**Juan Antonio Banales**  
Cities of Contra Costa and  
Solano Counties

**Christopher Cabaldon**  
Cities of Sacramento and  
Yolo Counties

**Susan Lofthus**  
Cities of San Joaquin County

**George Biagi, Jr.**  
Central Delta Reclamation  
Districts

**Justin van Loben Sels**  
North Delta Reclamation Districts

**Robert Ferguson**  
South Delta Reclamation Districts

**Brian Kelly**  
CA State Transportation Agency

**Karen Ross**  
CA Department of Food and  
Agriculture

**John Laird**  
CA Natural Resources Agency

**Brian Bogsch**  
CA State Lands Commission

Ex Officio Members

**Honorable Susan Talamantes  
Eggman**  
California State Assembly

**Honorable Cathleen Galgiani**  
California State Senate

September 14, 2017

Chris Alford  
Deputy Director  
Yolo Habitat Conservancy  
611 North Street  
Woodland, CA 95695

Re: Notice of Intent to Prepare Yolo Regional Conservation  
Investment Strategy/Local Conservation Plan (SCH#  
2017082046)

Dear Ms. Alford:

Thank you for providing the Delta Protection Commission (Commission) the opportunity to review the Notice of Intent to Prepare Yolo Regional Conservation Investment Strategy/Local Conservation Plan (Project). The Project encompasses new, voluntary, landscape-scale conservation planning tools that will identify conservation priorities to guide public and private conservation actions and investment.

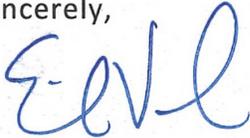
The Commission is a state agency charged with ensuring orderly, balanced conservation and development of Delta land resources and improved flood protection. The Project is subject to the Commission's land use jurisdiction because it is located in the Primary Zone of the Legal Delta and meets the definition of "development" as described in Public Resources Code Section 29723(a). State law requires local government general plans in the Primary Zone to be consistent with the Commission's Land Use and Resource Management Plan (LURMP). The Commission has found the Yolo County General Plan to be consistent with the LURMP. Local government actions concerning development projects in the Primary Zone can be appealed to the Commission.

We appreciate the Conservancy's efforts to promote agricultural sustainability and comprehensive habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement in Yolo County, which would be located on private as well as public lands. The Commission urges the Conservancy to review the Project for compliance with LURMP policies, particularly those related to conversion of agricultural

lands to other uses, acquisition of agricultural conservation easements, protection of natural resources, and compatibility between agricultural and natural habitat uses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. Please contact Blake Roberts, Senior Environmental Planner, at (916) 375-4237 for any questions regarding the comments provided.

Sincerely,



Erik Vink  
Executive Director

cc: Oscar Villegas, Yolo County Board of Supervisors and Commission Vice Chair

## Appendix B Public Comments

---

This appendix describes the public outreach conducted during Yolo RCIS/LCP development, and provides responses to written comments received on the Notice of Intent and on the Public Review Draft Yolo Regional Conservation Investment Strategy / Local Conservation Plan (RCIS/LCP).

### Notice of Intent and Public Meeting

California Fish and Game Code (FGC) §1854(c)(1) states, “A public agency shall publish notice of its intent to create a regional conservation investment strategy. This notice shall be filed with the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research and the county clerk of each county in which the regional conservation investment strategy is found in part or in whole.” §1854(c)(3)(A) further states, “A public agency proposing a strategy or amended strategy shall hold a public meeting to allow interested persons and entities to receive information about the draft regional conservation investment strategy or amended strategy early in the process of preparing it and to have an adequate opportunity to provide written and oral comments. The public meeting shall be held at a location within or near the strategy area.”

A public meeting was held on September 14, 2017 at the Yolo County Department of Community Services in Woodland, California. The Conservancy posted the notice of intent to prepare this RCIS and notice of this public meeting with the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, with the Yolo County Clerk Recorder, and on the Conservancy’s website on August 15, 2017 (at least 30 days prior to the public meeting). The Conservancy provided the notice to CDFW, each city and county within or adjacent to the regional conservation investment strategy area, and to the Conservancy’s general Listserv. The Notice of Intent is included in Attachment 1 to this appendix.

The Conservancy and other Steering Committee representatives invited interested persons to provide oral and written comments. The Conservancy received a single written comment during the public meeting from Dan Schatzel of the West Sac Trail Riders and a letter from Eric Vink of the Delta Protection Commission during the 60 days after the public meeting. Written public comments, and responses to those comments, are included in Appendix B, *Public Outreach*.

A list of invite and meeting materials provided for each Public Meeting. These items are available upon request from the Conservancy.

### Comments and Responses on Notice of Intent

FGC §1854(c)(3)(B) states, “In a draft regional conservation investment strategy or amended strategy submitted to the department for approval, the public agency shall include responses to written public comments submitted during the public comment period.”

At the public meeting, the Conservancy provided comment cards and requested that individuals or parties wishing to provide comments shall provide written comments in order for those comments to be included in this RCIS with the RCIS proponent's response. Two written comments were received during or after (i.e., within 60 days) the public meeting held on September 14, 2017. The two written comments are included in Attachment 1. Summaries of the comments and responses are provided below.

## **1. West Sacramento Trail Riders, Dan Schatzel, September 14, 2017**

### **Summary of Comment 1-1**

This comment requested clarification on how the RCIS/LCP would work and an explanation of the acronyms used. The commenter suggests a public meeting be held in each community and notes "equestrian use seems to be completely consistent with these effort".

### **Response to Comment 1-1**

Please read Chapter 4, Implementation, of the Yolo RCIS/LCP when it is circulated for Public Review to understand how the RCIS/LCP would work. The Yolo RCIS/LCP will include an index of acronyms for reference, to assist those who are not familiar with them. We will consider this approach for the public review process when the Yolo RCIS/LCP is complete. It will depend in part on the availability of funding to conduct multiple meetings. Thank you for your comment. Correct – the RCIS/LCP facilitates the establishment of an open space system, and does not prohibit equestrian use of the open space system. Thank you for your comments.

## **2. Delta Protection Commission, State of California – Natural Resources Agency, Erik Vink, Executive Director, September 14, 2017**

### **Summary of Comment 1-1**

The letter states that the Yolo RCIS/LCP meets the definition of "development" as described in Public Resources Code Section 29723(a), and must therefore be consistent with the Commission's Land Use and Resource Management Plan (LURMP).

### **Response to Comment 1-1**

Thank you for your comment. As described in the LURMP glossary, "development" means "... change in the density or intensity of use of land, including, but not limited to any other division of land including lot splits, except where the land division is brought about in connection with the purchase of the land by a public agency for public recreational or fish and wildlife uses or preservation . . ." The definition further states that "development" does not include, "The planning . . . by a state agency or local agency of any water supply facilities or mitigation enhancement activities undertaken in connection therewith." The RCIS/LCP does not meet this definition of "development." We believe, however, that the RCIS/LCP is not inconsistent with the LURMP.

## Public Review of the Yolo RCIS/LCP

The 45-day public review period and comment period for the Administrative Draft Yolo RCIS/LCP (March 2018) was from May 18 to August 28, 2018. The document was accessible at CDFW's <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=157451&inline>.

### Responses to Comments on Public Review Draft Yolo RCIS/LCP

Nine written public review comment letters were submitted to the Yolo Habitat Conservancy (Conservancy) and CDFW during the Yolo RCIS/LCP public comment period. **Table 1-1** summarizes the commenting party, comment letter signatory, and date of the comment letter.

**Table 1-1. List of Public Review Comment Letters**

Letter	Agency/Organization/Individual	Comment Letter Signatory	Date
1	California Native Plant Society, Sacramento Valley Chapter	Dr. Glen Holstein – Chapter Botanist	June 20, 2018
2	Institute for Ecological Health	Dr. John Hopkins - President	July 8, 2018
3	California Native Plant Society, Sacramento Valley Chapter	Dr. Glen Holstein – Chapter Botanist	August 12, 2018
4	California Native Plant Society, Sacramento Valley Chapter	Dr. Glen Holstein – Chapter Botanist	August 20, 2018
5	The Habitat Institute	Thomas O' Neill	August 27, 2018
6	Caltrans	Carin Loy – Senior Environmental Planner	August 28, 2018
7	Yolo County	Patrick S. Blacklock – Yolo County Administrator	August 28, 2018
8	Institute for Ecological Health	Dr. John Hopkins - President	August 28, 2018
9	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Bronwyn Hogan	April 28, 2018

## Comments and Responses

### 1. California Native Plant Society, Sacramento Valley Chapter, Dr. Glen Holstein, Chapter Botanist, June 20, 2018

#### Summary of Comment 1-1

The commenter requested an extension to the public review and comment period until after the Mitigation Credit Agreement (MCA) guidelines are available.

#### Response to Comment 1-1

Development of the RCIS was guided by FGC Sections 1850-1861, which include regulations and requirements for creation of credits through an MCA. The steering committee expects that CDFW's forthcoming MCA guidelines will be consistent with the FGC, and that the FGC provide enough information to evaluate how the RCIS will be implemented.

See the CDFW website for the latest MCA guidelines  
(<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/Regional-Conservation>).

## **2. Institute for Ecological Health, Dr. John Hopkins, President, July 8, 2018**

### **Summary of Comment 2-1**

The commenter stated that figures are missing from the draft document.

### **Response to Comment 2-1**

Figures have been updated and inserted into the RCIS document. The comment period was extended for 45 days to provide sufficient time to review the RCIS with the figures.

## **3. California Native Plant Society, Sacramento Valley Chapter, Dr. Glen Holstein, Chapter Botanist, August 12, 2018**

### **Summary of Comment 3-1**

The comment notes the web page for accessing the Administrative Draft Yolo RCIS/LCP is no longer available.

### **Response to Comment 3-1**

The web page error was resolved during the public comment period, and the comment period was extended to provide reviewers sufficient time to access the website.

## **4. California Native Plant Society, Sacramento Valley Chapter, Dr. Glen Holstein, Chapter Botanist, August 20, 2018**

### **Summary of Comment 4-1**

The commenter is impressed with the overall document, however, he provides multiple comments identifying minor editorial mistakes (i.e. typography, grammar, missing citations etc.).

### **Response to Comment 4-1**

Revisions have been made to the draft Yolo RCIS/LCP to address the minor editorial mistakes.

In regard to the comment on moving Keck's checkerbloom from Group 3 to Group 1, per C. Deng and D. Potter's research, *Investigating the identities of populations of Sidalcea (Malvaceae) in the North Coast Ranges in California*, presented at the Northern California Botanist Symposium on January 13, 2020, intermediate plants from Northern California are more closely related to *S. diploscypha* and probably should not be treated as *S. keckii*. The research findings further suggest these individuals may represent a new taxon (e.g., variety, subspecies, or perhaps species). Based on this research, moving Keck's checkerbloom from Group 3 to Group 1 is not warranted, at this time.

Additionally, the Steering Committee did not identify a demand for generating mitigation credits for this species, since it is unlikely to be affected by activities planned within the next 10 years. Groups 2 and 3 of the LCP were based on whether species accounts were available for the species. Since

completion of the LCP depended on a limited budget, the Advisory Committee agreed that species accounts would not need to be completed for those species they wished to add to the plan (i.e., the Group 3 species). If funding or volunteer effort becomes available to create a species account for Keck's checkerbloom, in the future, the LCP may be amended to move the species from Group 2 to Group 3. Similarly, if the need for mitigation arises associated with activities in the strategy area, an RCIS/LCP amendment would allow moving the species from Group 3 to Group 1.

### **Summary of Comment 4-2**

The commenter requested consistency on reference to California prairie, noted that a description of the ecological value of California prairie is missing, and requested additional details about California prairie. The commenter also recommended Tuleyome be included as a "non-governmental organization in the SPA" to Appendix G, *Invasive Species Strategy*.

### **Response to Comment 4-2**

Additional details on the ecological value of California prairie have been included in Appendix E, *Conservation Strategy Rationale*, E.2.2. Goal CP1: *Large contiguous patches of California prairie to support native species*. Inconsistencies regarding the use of "grassland" and "prairie" in Section F.2.2 have been resolved. Figure 2-9 has been revised and annual grassland has been renamed California prairie to be consistent with the RCIS/LCP text.

Regarding the nonprofit conservation organization, Tuleyome, while we recognize the organization's work in the Cache Creek watershed, Appendix G of the RCIS/LCP sites the Central Valley Flood Protection (CVFPP) Conservation Strategy. We have no authorization to make changes to the CVFPP Conservation Strategy.

### **Summary of Comment 4-3**

The commenter noted that a list of persons who prepared the various sections of the RCIS/LCP, prepared significant background materials, or participated to a significant degree in preparing the RCIS/LCP is not included in the draft document.

### **Response to Comment 4-3**

A list of contributors to the RCIS/LCP is now included as Chapter 5 of the Final RCIS/LCP.

## **5. The Habitat Institute, Thomas O' Neil, August 27, 2018**

### **Summary of Comment 5-1**

The commenter advocates use of the Habitat Institute's "Combined Habitat Assessment Protocols (CHAP)" as a way to address compensatory or advance mitigation needs. CHAP meets the "Best Available Science" criteria in the State of California for defining a mitigation metric for Mitigation Credit Agreement, as defined in Assembly Bill 2087.

### **Response to Comment 5-1**

The Yolo RCIS/LCP Steering Committee (Steering Committee) respectfully acknowledge the value of CHAP as a possible tool for addressing advance mitigation and this tool would be worthwhile for considering for the development of MCAs.

*See the CDFW website for the latest MCA guidelines*

*(<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/Regional-Conservation>).*

## **6. Caltrans, Carin Loy, Senior Environmental Planner, August 28, 2018**

### **Summary of Comment 6-1**

The commenter recommended that the RCIS/LCP incorporate roles of local County and City parks, local Federal and State land managers, UC reserves, local agricultural working lands, non-profit conservation organizations, and others in Yolo RCIS, acknowledging that though their land may not be protected with a conservation easement, they can be managed in a way that contributes to conservation in Yolo County.

### **Response to Comment 6-1**

The revised Yolo RCIS/LCP added language in recognition of the various entities who contribute to conservation in the strategy area, and acknowledging that many lands in the strategy area are managed for conservation even if they are not protected under conservation easements. See revised language in Section 3.2.1, *Conservation Gap Analysis*.

### **Summary of Comment 6-2**

The commenter recommended coordinating with transportation planning agencies (Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, County Transportation Commissions, and Caltrans) early in RCIS development to confirm proper transportation planning info is included.

### **Response to Comment 6-2**

Comment has been noted and Section 2.13.2.1 *Transportation* has been revised. The section now includes information on reasonably foreseeable transportation projects in the RCIS strategy area. This section incorporates projects identified in the Yolo County General Plan, Caltran District 3 Corridor System Management Plan and Transportation Concept Report, the State Transportation Improvement Program, State Highway Operation and Protection Program, and Sacramento Region Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

### **Summary of Comment 6-3**

The commenter suggested identifying non-listed species, such as large mammal species, with needs for connectivity, identify their CDFW management status, and reference or profile scientific studies on species' occurrences and connectivity needs, to assist in CEQA planning.

### **Response to Comment 6-3**

The Yolo RCIS/LCP includes large mammals, such as tule elk, mountain lion, and American black bear, in Group 3 Conservation Species. Additionally, black-tailed deer and tule elk are included as Planning Species in the LCP. These species require large blocks of land and large-scale landscape connectivity to accommodate migration and foraging needs and are identified as rare or declining, and/or important to local conservation. Habitat connectivity is essential for wildlife, such as large mammals, to find mates, seasonal habitat, dispersal/migration habitat, and food important and to the long-term conservation and resilience of Yolo County ecosystems. Habitat Connectivity is discussed in the RCIS/LCP in Section 1.5.7.4 *Habitat Connectivity*, and in Section 2.9.4 *Habitat Connectivity and Linkages*.

The RCIS/LCP conservation strategy is composed of goals, objectives, actions, and conservation priority areas (see Table 3-3 *Conservation Goals and Objectives and Applicable Conservation Actions*). The RCIS/LCP identifies suites of conservation actions and habitat enhancement actions that if implemented, would contribute towards achieving the RCIS/LCP's habitat connectivity conservation goals and objectives. Landscape and natural community-level conservation goals and objectives can be used to guide conservation actions for large mammals. For example, Goal L.1 Large Interconnect Landscapes, Objective L1-1 Landscape Connectivity would establish landscape connectivity within and between natural communities and maintain connectivity within Yolo County and ecologically significant landscape elements outside of Yolo County. Objective L1-2.3, protects habitat for area-limited planning species, species with large home ranges or migratory patterns, such as American badger and black-tailed deer. Natural Community objectives, such as Objective CP1-2 Increase and enhance California prairie, would create large areas of native grasses and forbs and provide for native ungulate foraging habitat. Objective WF2.1 Protect upland oaks and Objective WF2.2 Increase upland Oaks, would prioritize protection of oak woodland surrounded by natural lands and increase the extent of upland oak woodland, thereby contributing to habitat and connectivity for large mammals. Likewise, Objective R1.1 Protect riparian areas and Objective R1.2 Increase riparian Habitat Areas would provide key landscape linkages thereby facilitating large mammal movement.

### **Summary of Comment 6-4**

The commenter noted that the RCIS focuses primarily on establishing new conservation easements and recommended that the RCIS/LCP expand to include contribution of public land restoration and other conservation activities on public land.

### **Response to Comment 6-4**

The intent of the RCIS/LCP is to include the contribution of public land restoration and conservation activities. See revisions in Section 3.2.1, *Conservation Gaps Analysis*.

### **Summary of Comment 6-5**

The commenter recommended that protected areas data sources listed in Section 3.2.1, paragraph 4, be consistent with the data sources cited in Section 2.4, *Protected Areas*.

### **Response to Comment 6-5**

Section 3.2.1, paragraph 4 has been revised so that the data sources are consistent with Section 2.4, *Protected Areas*.

### **Summary of Comment 6-6**

The commenter noted that Section 2.11.2, page 2-87, and *References Cited*, Caltrans 2015 citation should be revised to “Caltrans 2017”. Yolo County Economic Forecast is from 2017.

### **Response to Comment 6-6**

The citation and reference have been updated, now to 2019.

### **Summary of Comment 6-7**

The commenter noted Section 2.11.7, page 2-98, and *References Cited*, Caltrans 2015 citation should be revised to “Caltrans 2015 in CDFW 2015”. The commenter also request the addition of the Caltrans 2015 *California Transportation Plan 2040* to the References.

### **Response to Comment 6-7**

The citation and reference have been properly updated.

### **Summary of Comment 6-8**

The commenter suggested revisions to Section 2.13.2.1, *Transportation*. The commenter requested the addition of a “Sacramento Area Council of Government” subsection; revising the “California Department of Transportation” subheading; replacing the “Yolo County Transportation District” subheading; and adding subheadings for various cities in Yolo County.

### **Response to Comment 6-8**

Section 2.13.2.1, *Transportation* has been revised following the preferred language and suggested text change as provided by Caltrans.

### **Summary of Comment 6-9**

The commenter requested clarification on the terms “priority area” and “landscape matrix”.

### **Response to Comment 6-9**

Priority areas are defined in Section 3.2.4.2, *Conservation Actions and Priority Areas*. The Yolo RCIS/LCP uses *priority area* for RCIS (Group 1) focal species to highlight important locations where conservation actions should occur in the next 10 years.

The term *landscape matrix* refers to landscape conditions that consist of multiple habitat types and non-habitat, consisting of natural lands, working lands, and developed areas. The entire landscape matrix must be considered when planning for habitat connectivity and climate change, and to accommodate population dynamics for species conservation.

### **Summary of Comment 6-10**

The commenter requested clarification on Table 3-1, that success is to be measured only by increased number of protected lands, and if so, that the definition of protection should be broadened.

### **Response to Comment 6-10**

Table 3-1 does not provide the conservation goals, objectives, or success criteria for the Yolo RCIS/LCP. Rather, it provides the results of the gap analysis, demonstrating how much land has been protected in the strategy area, and how much is still unprotected.

Success was not meant to be measured solely based on increases in the amount of land permanently protected. Rather, success is intended to be measured based on achievement of all of the conservation goals and objectives, including habitat enhancement actions and other actions that benefit focal species and other conservation elements without permanent protection. The RCIS allows for habitat enhancement on lands beyond those that have easements.

Protection with conservation easements is just one method to meet the conservation goals and objectives. Many of the conservation, goals, and objectives are related to management and enhancement, which may be done on lands that are already protected.

### **Summary of Comment 6-11**

The commenter requested a conceptual model for how the combined efforts of securing easements, private land management, and public land management identified in Table 3-3 are expected to contribute to landscape-level goals, and lay out the strategy in such a way that it is clear and inclusive of various property ownerships so that MCAs are feasible with willing partners.

### **Response to Comment 6-11**

A conceptual model is beyond the scope of the RCIS. A conceptual model or something similar may be worthwhile to pursue, to clarify how the pieces work together. This could be an implementation task if outside funding becomes available.

The RCIS/LCP is a voluntary, non-binding conservation strategy intended to be broad enough to guide conservation investment and mitigation on lands independent of how the land is owned. Use of MCA credits for compensatory mitigation will be dependent, in part, on the responsible regulatory agency's requirements, and rules and restrictions regulating the creation and use of MCAs (to be described in the MCA guidelines). Conservation goals can be achieved through a combination of permanent protection (i.e., including conservation easements) and restoration and enhancement of resources on public and private lands.

### **Summary of Comment 6-12**

The commenter requested clarification on how Table 3-4 augments the biological goals and objective table (Table 3-3). The comment also notes that patch size and habitat configuration analysis and least cost path/ corridor analysis was performed.

### **Response to Comment 6-12**

The text that references Table 3-4 on Page 3-62 of the RCIS has been updated to Table 3-3 in response to the comment.

### **Summary of Comment 6-13**

The commenter requested clarification on how Table 3-5 (Greater sandhill crane habitat value) should be applied and augments the BGO table (Table 3-3).

### **Response to Comment 6-13**

Table 3-5 in the RCIS provides the foraging habitat values for various crop types found within the strategy area in order to meet Objective GSHC1.1: *Protect Foraging Habitat* in Table 3-3, *Conservation Goals and Objectives and Applicable Conservation Measures*.

### **Summary of Comment 6-14**

The commenter requested the addition of Fish and Game Code Section 1600 to regulations requiring mitigation.

### **Response to Comment 6-14**

The regulations were added to Section 4.6.1, *Mitigation Credit Agreements*.

### **Summary of Comment 6-15**

The commenter recommended a matrix of all conservation actions that would be suitable for Mitigation Credit Agreements (MCAs) under the RCIS.

### **Response to Comment 6-15**

The Yolo RCIS/LCP identifies suites of conservation actions that if implemented, would contribute towards achieving the RCIS's conservation goals and objectives. The conservation actions are to be implemented as voluntary conservation investments or to create credits for focal species and other conservation elements. Any of the conservation actions could be implemented to create credits through an MCA if implementation of those actions contributes towards achieving one or many of this RCIS's conservation goals and objectives for focal species and/or other conservation elements. The conservation actions described for each focal species and other conservation element can be implemented to create credits under an MCA, to contribute towards achieving a corresponding goal and objective for a focal species or other conservation element. In many cases, implementing one conservation action could contribute towards achieving multiple objectives.

It is up to MCA sponsors to determine the conservation actions for each MCA based on site conditions, market forces, and other variables.

## **7. Yolo County, Patrick S. Blacklock, Yolo County Administrator, August 28, 2018**

### **Summary of Comment 7-1**

The County supports the multi-benefit approach to state infrastructure projects as discussed in Section 3.1, *Overview* and Section 3.2 *Multi-Benefit Approach*, and intends to promote the multi-benefit approach during RCIS/LCP implementation.

### **Response to Comment 7-1**

The RCIS/LCP sponsors appreciate this comment.

### **Summary of Comment 7-2**

The County is concerned that CDFW guidance on MCA is not yet available and would like the opportunity to review the MCA Guidelines before approving the Yolo RCIS/LCP.

### **Response to Comment 7-2**

Fish and Game Code requires the Implementing Entity approval of an MCA within its permit area. Given this, the Implementing Entity has a strong mechanism for preventing creation of MCAs that would undermine successful implementation of the RCIS. Further information is provided in Chapter 4.2 Goals of Implementation, and 4.6, *Regulatory Uses of the RCIS*.

### **Summary of Comment 7-3**

The County stated that they generally agree with the positions on RCIS implementation and recommend that the Conservancy continue to take a prominent implementation role in the RCIS/LCP to ensure consistency with the Yolo HCP/NCCP.

### **Response to Comment 7-3**

The comment has been noted.

## **8. Institute for Ecological Health, Dr. John Hopkins, President, August 28, 2018**

### **Summary of Comment 8-1**

The commenter noted there are multiple minor editorial corrections are required to figure titles, figure numbering, and figure legends etc. Additional minor corrections were requested to figure references, and clarification on figure descriptions,

### **Response to Comment 8-1**

Corrections have been made in the final RCIS/LCP.

In regard the question on impacts on Yolo conservation if projects use out of county mitigation banks, the Steering Committee feel it is difficult to predict the impact on Yolo County conservation if

projects use out of county mitigation banks, however the presence of an RCIS provides an opportunity to do MCAs, which increases the opportunities and therefore the likelihood of doing conservation in Yolo County.

### **Summary of Comment 8-2**

Need to clarify which BGOs apply to the RCIS and which apply to the LCP. The comment states the BGOs are too broad – need to create clear 10-year achievable objectives for the RCIS and differentiate them from the broader long-term LCP “wish list”.

### **Response to Comment 8-2**

We have revised the goals and objectives, all of which now apply to both the RCIS and the LCP. We have also coordinated with CDFW to develop specific, measurable objectives that are achievable within a 10-year period.

### **Summary of Comment 8-3**

The commenter stated that the RCIS/LCP must link monitoring and adaptive management plan for each MCA to the Yolo HCP/NCCP monitoring program, and that adaptive management should include consultation with Conservancy.

### **Response to Comment 8-3**

Although MCA monitoring and adaptive management is not required to be linked to the Yolo HCP/NCCP, Section 3.5 has been revised to explain the Conservancy will ensure that monitoring and adaptive management strategies approved under the Yolo RCIS/LCP are compatible with and, to the extent possible, complement the Yolo HCP/NCCP adaptive management program.

### **Summary of Comment 8-4**

The commenter stated that he would like progress reports and public meetings made mandatory, and that he supports the role of the Conservancy as a public advisory committee.

### **Response to Comment 8-4**

The RCIS is a voluntary, non-binding conservation strategy, so progress reports and public meetings cannot be deemed mandatory as it is not required by Fish and Game Code as a condition of RCIS approval by CDFW. The RCIS implementation sponsor may voluntarily agree to this, subject to available funding.

### **Summary of Comment 8-5**

The commenter stated that the plan short-changes the LCP and the species that aren't RCIS focal species.

### **Response to Comment 8-5**

The RCIS/LCP incorporates the entire draft LCP prepared in close coordination with the Advisory Committee. The plan has not dropped any elements of the LCP, but has only added elements required for an RCIS.

### **Summary of Comment 8-6**

Need to separate out the documents and create a free standing LCS.

### **Response to Comment 8-6**

Thank you for your comment. From the beginning of the RCIS process, the LCP has been an integral component of this plan, focused on a long-term conservation strategy through conservation investments in Yolo County. This focus originated with extensive consideration by the Yolo Conservancy's Advisory Committee of a "county-wide conservation plan" that incorporated all "Conservation Species" identified in the RCIS/LCP, all of the Yolo County landscape, and extensive landscape connectivity as elements in the development of the now-adopted HCP/NCCP. Ultimately these elements were not included in the HCP/NCCP, and the LCP arose as a locally based conservation framework to achieve goals beyond the focus of the HCP/NCCP. Most of the plan is relevant to both the RCIS and the LCP, so it was infeasible to separate out the RCIS component from the LCP components without substantial work and a very redundant document. The Steering Committee, therefore, requested that CDFW accept a proposal that involved leaving the RCIS/LCP as a single plan, but more clearly distinguishing between the RCIS and LCP. CDFW responded with several options provided in an attachment to an email dated August 8, 2019. We implemented option #1 from that correspondence, which was very similar to our proposal.

A disclaimer has been included under the heading of each section to clearly identify which section is applicable to the RCIS and/or LCP or both.

### **Summary of Comment 8-7**

The commenter recommended that the LCP to be occasionally (i.e., every 5 years) updated with new information and scientific understanding.

### **Response to Comment 8-7**

The LCP may be updated as funding is available. A requirement to update the plan every five years may not be feasible if the funding is lacking.

## **9. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bronwyn Hogan, April 28, 2018**

### **Summary of Comment 9-1**

The commenter stated the RCIS/LCP should clearly spell out how the sponsor will track actions taken through the RCIS to ensure they are not also being accounted for as meeting Yolo HCP/NCCP mitigation requirements.

### **Response to Comment 9-1**

RCIS actions and HCP/NCCP mitigation actions can overlap, provided the RCIS actions are not counted as mitigation under an MCA. The MCA agreement and tracking would need to ensure against overlap.

Any MCA proposed within the permit area must be approved by the Implementing Entity and shall not duplicate or replace mitigation requirements set forth in the natural community conservation plan. FGC 1856(j) provides details on how the Implementing Entity can approve an MCA for use as mitigation. If this is done, then the Implementing Entity will track mitigation provided through MCA credits as it would with other types of mitigation.

### **Summary of Comment 9-2a**

The commenter requested clarification, stating that Section 2.10.2.4, *California Tiger Salamander Hybridization* is inconsistent with information in the Yolo HCP/NCCP

### **Response to Comment 9-2a**

Section 2.10.24 has been updated consistent with the Yolo HCP/NCCP to state that California tiger salamander hybrids are not known to occur in the RCIS strategy area.

### **Summary of Comment 9-2b**

The commenter requested clarification in Section 4.5.1.2 to state that both CDFW and FWS would determine if something is consistent with the Yolo HCP/NCCP.

### **Response to Comment 9-2b**

Section 4.5.12 of the RCIS/LCP has been reorganized and is now replaced by Section 4.6.1, *Mitigation Credit Agreement*. The language currently in the RCIS is appropriate. The HCP/NCCP implementing entity is the party responsible for determining whether an MCA is consistent.

### **Summary of Comment 9-2c**

The commenter requested that the RCIS authors double check that the NFWF ILF includes ESA rather than only credits for USACE resources in Section 4.6.3 In-Lieu Fee Programs.

### **Response to Comment 9-2c**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) In-Lieu Fee (ILF) was approved for impacts on aquatic species and habitat covered under the Clean Water Act, Rivers and Harbor Act, Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and Endangered Species Act (National Fish and Wildlife Federation 2019). NFWF ILF includes Endangered Species Act.