

WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTI-SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES DECEMBER 7, 2000

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS.

Gail Wanczuk-Barton called the meeting to order at 2:45 p.m. The following were in attendance:

Won Yoo*	Property Owner
Mary Beth Woulfe*	U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Jeff M. Newman	U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Robin Maloney-Rames* (Glenn Black)	California Department Fish & Game
Gail Wanczuk-Barton *	Property Owner / Committee Chair
Borre Winckel*	Building Industry Association
Michele Staples* (Cindy Domenigoni)	Jackson, DeMarco & Peckenpaugh
Jane Block *	Property Owner
Shelli Lamb *	Riverside-Corona RCD
Kerwin Russell	Riverside-Corona RCD
Steve Ruddick * (Robin Reeser Lowe)	WRCOG
Bruce Colbert * (Barry Burnell)	Riverside Co. Property Owners Assoc.
Bob Wheeler *	EMA / RCD
Sharon Bolton *	Riverside County Farm Bureau
Wendy Picht *	MWD
Dan Silver *	Endangered Habitats League
Tom Scott *	University of California, Riverside
Peter Kiriakos *	Sierra Club
Tracey Alsobrook *	Southern California Edison
Greg Reden *	Property Owner
Clem Lagrosa *	U.S. Forest Service
Kristi Lovelady	Riverside County TLMA
Bill Sullivan *	Lockheed Martin Corporation
James Henderson	Sverdrup, Inc.
Sarah Lozano	Dudek
Joe Monaco	Dudek
Richard Masyczek	City of Hemet
Laurie Thrower	Press Enterprise
Barbara Darracq	Warmington Land Company
Erin Warmington	Warmington Land Company
Gerald A. Ginn	Realty Investment Assoc/Cons. Alliance
Jerry Geller	Conservation Alliance
Geary Hund	California State Parks
Alison Shilling	California Native Plant Society
Ileene Anderson	California Native Plant Society

James Bryant	Riverside Municipal Museum
Mike Allen	University of California, Riverside
Jim Sullivan	University of California, Riverside
Nanette Pratini	University of California, Riverside
Michael Rowe	Property Owner
Debra Pember	Diversified Project Management
Brian Grattidge	Governor Davis' Office
William Sweeney	Property Owner
Pamela Miod	CFTV
Garry Grant	Property Owner
Jim Bessant	Property Owner
Mary L. Thomas	Cleveland National Forest
Jeff Montejano	Stoorza Communications
Chris Ormsby	City of Moreno Valley
Monica Lawrence	Nossman Law Firm
Mark Jennings	Lennar
Sandy Wilson	Property Owner
Steve Lech	Riverside County Waste Management
Jim Miller	City of Murrieta
Ed Sauls *	Property Owner
Richard Lashbrook	TLMA

*Denotes Advisory Committee member

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Garry Grant, property owner Meadowbrook, expressed concern over the process of setting land aside to protect endangered species, and asked that the burden of cost be placed upon all of the people within the state through a ballot initiative.

James Bryant, Riverside Municipal Museum, stated that the fallacy of the concept of the MSHCP is that too little is known to establish range and quantity by species and, by allowing take, the MSHCP could be in violation of the Endangered Species Act. He added that ecosystem management is not a scientific practice and that an MSHCP would not ensure persistence of any species. He suggested the following guidelines be followed: 1) Areas should be assumed to be capable of supporting the optimum number of species. 2) Support of the biological infrastructure should be a requirement of developers. 3) Developers should be required to demonstrate that their projects would provide for the support of an optimum number of properties' indigenous species. 4) Retention of natural character be required to help ensure that what is not yet understood scientifically would be left intact to be studied.

3. ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS CONCERNING ISSUES NOT ON THE AGENDA.

Peter Kiriakos expressed concern that inadequate acreage would be set aside in Alternative 1 for narrow endemics. Gail Wanczuk-Barton asked that the narrow endemic issue be discussed by the Funding & Implementation Sub-Committee and that the group report back to the full committee.

4. DISCUSSION CONCERNING JOINT USFWS/CDFG WRITTEN RESPONSE TO THE ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT (ALTHOUGH NOT AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF THIS MAILING, THE CORRESPONDENCE WILL BE SENT TO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS UNDER SEPARATE COVER AS SOON AS THE COUNTY RECEIVES THE DOCUMENT.)

Bob Wheeler commented on the thoroughness of the letter written by the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Mr. Wheeler stated his agreement with the suggestion that a facilitator / mediator be appointed to assist with the process. Subsequent discussion focused around the role of a facilitator. Gail Wanczuk-Barton suggested, and the committee agreed, that the topic be taken up at the Integration Committee meeting.

Dan Silver commented on problems identified in the document referencing flood control district issues relevant to the San Jacinto River and Murrieta Creek and agreed that this issue needs to be addressed. He suggested that the Board of Directors, also known as County Supervisors, for Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District be asked to provide such direction. Additional discussion was held regarding the conservation of grasslands as it related to the needs of individual species. Jane Block, property owner, and Sharon Bolton, Farm Bureau, exchanged discussion regarding the preservation of farmland.

Discussion was held regarding the identification of highly constrained areas. It was agreed that these areas should be specifically identified. Comments were offered on the participation of the cities and the potential effects should one or some withdraw from the plan.

5. DISCUSSION OF COMMENTS RECEIVED ON ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT.

Borre Winckel asked if the resource agencies could perform an economic analysis and offer their opinion on plan viability. Bob Wheeler agreed and stated that an economic analysis of benefit and cost is essential. Additional discussion was held regarding different aspects of an economic analysis including the cost of not doing an MSHCP project. Richard Lashbrook added that a definition of the objectives would need to be formulated. Gail Wanczuk-Barton informed the group that it would be agendaized for January.

Michele Staples asked for clarification on the recommendation that is going to be made to the Board of Supervisors and questioned whether or not it is a recommendation to commence with the preparation of an EIR / EIS. Joe Monaco responded that the decision before the Board is to direct Dudek to perform a conservation analysis on one of the proposed alternatives. Mr. Monaco added that an EIR document would address each of the alternatives and the variations thereof pursuant to CEQA requirements; NEPA requires that all alternatives be analyzed under the same conditions. Additional discussion was held relevant to NEPA, CEQA and preferred alternative choices and requirements.

Public Comment was taken on this item. Ileene Anderson, California Native Plant Society, asked the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service about whether or not there was information available on the remaining 53 species. Jeff Newman answered that he believed for most of the 53 there is, but further analysis was going to have to be done.

Richard Masyczek indicated that Hemet endorsed the concept of preparing an MSHCP realizing that it may be cost prohibitive to do a plan on their own. Garry Grant endorsed an independent economic analysis. Steve Lech, Waste Management Department, pointed out that there are public lands identified in the Badlands that have a long-term commitment to landfill activity. Geary Hund, State Parks, summarized a letter that had been submitted on behalf of State Parks and reiterated their support of Alternative 1. Mr. Hund requested consideration of their comments relative to connectivity, configuration and composition, buffers and potentially utilitarian corridors and their affects on core reserves. Mr. Hund expressed concern over linkages being designed between areas that the State Parks considers crucial for habitat and the development of corridors.

6. PRESENTATION OF REVISED DRAFT FUNDING MATRIX.

Richard Lashbrook gave a presentation of the revised Draft Funding Matrix. Questions were asked upon the completion of the presentation.

Garry Grant, property owner Meadowbrook, stated that he did not agree with the benefits of the monies received by the El Sobrante project. Jim Bessant, property owner, expressed concern that the County does not currently endorse density transfers or clustering. Richard Lashbrook answered that plans and policies would need to be established and integrated to support such land use tools. Jim Bessant and Michael Rowe questioned formulations and concepts, but offered praise for the organization, compilation and ideas expressed. Mr. Lashbrook responded that these were his personal concepts and that members of the Funding & Implementation Sub-Committee might have different perspectives.

7. REVIEW ROLE OF SCIENTIFIC REVIEW PANEL (see attached SRP contract and letter from the County to Dr. Allen) AND DISCUSS WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS REGARDING THE SCIENTIFIC REVIEW PANEL'S RESPONSE TO THE ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT (see attached letter on behalf of Cindy Domenigoni)

Michele Staples stated that the SRP response was not written in an objective tone. Paraphrasing her letter, Ms. Staples stated that the SRP letter fails to answer the core question of the MSHCP planning effort as well as other basic questions. She opined that the SRP should have provided the information needed to support each of the four alternatives, as opposed to a general statement that Alternative 1 is the lesser of all evils.

Jane Block suggested that decisions need to be based on the best available information and that scientific data and input from the scientists comprising the SRP is helpful in determining the proper direction. Sharon Bolton, Farm Bureau, responded that the issues raised are viable questions needing answers. Tom Scott clarified that the report did not supply enough information on Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 and it is difficult for the scientists to fill in that information. Mr. Scott added that Alternative 1 may be difficult to achieve. Bob Wheeler added that the principles of conservation biology were not being met as written in the alternatives document. Mr. Scott stated that scientists do not want to inadvertently create policy and appear bias. He added that the substance of the letter would not change.

Ms. Staples countered stating that the scientists were asked to submit information and she believes that they did not do that. Kristi Lovelady replied that the role of the SRP is to respond to a specific list of questions submitted at four specific points in the MSHCP and the EIR/EIS development process. Subsequent discussions focused on the role of the SRP and whether or not the written request offered by Ms. Staples was within the scope of questions originally posed to the SRP.

Mike Allen, SRP, advised that the objective of their group was to address the science and not form policy. Mr. Allen explained the key issues that were addressed which were 1) connectivity 2) maintenance of genetic diversity and, 3) population maintenance in the face of extinction, adding that Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 failed to address those issues. Richard Lashbrook suggested that staff look at the letter and speak with UCR. Mr. Lashbrook added that there are contract concerns regarding additional work and suggested that Ms. Staple's concerns be addressed through discussion.

Following a brief discussion of the scientific deficiencies of Alternatives 2, 3 and 4, it was agreed that, to the extent Ms. Staples concerns fell within the scope of the original questions posed to the SRP, Dr. Allen would formulate a written addendum for purposes of clarification.

8. QUESTIONS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

None offered.

9. NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting is December 14, 2000.

10. FINAL PUBLIC COMMENTS.

Garry Grant, property owner Meadowbrook, asked the panel if they understood what species were being discussed in the SRP document, i.e., birds and insects, relevant to connectivity. Ileene Anderson, California Native Plant Society, encouraged the Advisory Committee to keep an open mind and take advantage of all of their resources.

11. ADJOURNMENT.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.