

## Placer County Conservation Plan and County Aquatic Resources Program

The first phase of the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP) encompasses approximately 227,530 acres of unincorporated western Placer County and the City of Lincoln. The PCCP will be a joint Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) planning document. Direction for completing this planning process originated in the 1994 Placer County General Plan and was further expressed in the 2000 Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program Implementation Report.

Currently, the agencies applying for regulatory coverage in this process include Placer County, the City of Lincoln, the Placer County Water Agency, and the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority. The PCCP will provide state/federal Endangered Species Act permit coverage to these agencies for certain identified development activities occurring within their Phase 1 jurisdictions over the duration of a 50-year permit term. In addition to this process, Placer County is preparing a County Aquatic Resources Program (CARP), which will provide compliance with Federal Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 404 as well as California Fish and Game Code Section 1600. The CARP process is a separate regulatory process that will run parallel to the PCCP. The CARP is intended to integrate with the goals and objectives of the PCCP. Collectively, these two complementary permitting programs will provide for complete environmental permitting coverage for development activities occurring within the Phase 1 area while also providing for comprehensive, landscape level resource protection.

Currently, the list of activities that will be covered in the PCCP is wide-ranging and includes such activities as residential, commercial, and industrial development; transportation facility installation; flood control and waste management activities; and habitat restoration activities. When all impacted natural communities are considered, it is estimated that 56,300 acres of land will be impacted by development authorized by participating agencies through the year 2050. The total area of the Phase 1 boundary subject to this permit is approximately 163,000 acres. Much of this land contains important habitats that provide food, coverage, forage, nesting, etc. for a number of sensitive species. The Conservation Plan is seeking permit coverage for 5 plants and 27 animals and will also provide for the conservation of natural communities occurring in the Phase 1 planning area. The predominant natural communities addressed in the PCCP include oak woodlands, riparian and riverine systems, annual grasslands, and vernal pool complexes.

Challenges with the planning process thus far include program funding, plan implementation, balancing the amount of land impacted with the amount of land where avoidance will occur, determining the long-term viability of different habitat restoration options being considered in the conservation plan, sustaining political will, and adhering to the projected planning timeline. The County is currently in review of the administrative draft Conservation Plan and intends to release the draft plan for public review early next year.