

99c-125

4.5 PSP Cover Sheet (Attach to the front of each proposal)

Proposal Title: SOUTH SACRAMENTO COUNTY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN
Applicant Name: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, SACRAMENTO COUNTY
Mailing Address: 927 7TH ST. ROOM 230, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
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Amount of funding requested: \$ 125,000 for 1 year(s)

Indicate the Topic for which you are applying (check only one box).

- Fish Passage/Fish Screens
- Habitat Restoration
- Local Watershed Stewardship
- Water Quality
- Introduced Species
- Fish Management/Hatchery
- Environmental Education

Does the proposal address a specified Focused Action? yes no

What county or counties is the project located in? SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Indicate the geographic area of your proposal (check only one box):

- Sacramento River Mainstem
- Sacramento Trib: SACRAMENTO TRIBUTARIES
- San Joaquin River Mainstem
- San Joaquin Trib: _____
- Delta: _____
- East Side Trib: _____
- Suisun Marsh and Bay
- North Bay/South Bay: _____
- Landscape (entire Bay-Delta watershed)
- Other: _____

Indicate the primary species which the proposal addresses (check all that apply):

- San Joaquin and East-side Delta tributaries fall-run chinook salmon
- Winter-run chinook salmon
- Late-fall run chinook salmon
- Delta smelt
- Splittail
- Green sturgeon
- Migratory birds
- Other: FAIRY SHRIMP CRUSTACEAN
CRASS, SWAINSON'S HAWK, TADPOLE SHRIMP
- Spring-run chinook salmon
- Fall-run chinook salmon
- Longfin smelt
- Steelhead trout
- Striped bass
- All chinook species
- All anadromous salmonids

Specify the ERP strategic objective and target (s) that the project addresses. Include page numbers from January 1999 version of ERP Volume I and II:

VOL I SPECIES: SWAINSON'S HAWK P.150, VERNAL POOL SPECIES P. 279,
GIANT GARTER SNAKE P.319, CALIF TIGER SALAMANDER P.322, WESTERN
SPADE FOOT P.325, CALIF RED-LEGGED FROG P.328



COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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Tricia Stevens, Principal Planner
Application Processing

Ana Rhodes, ASO III
Administration

Grant Application for CALFED Funding for Phase IIB-2

South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan

Sacramento County
Department of Planning and Community Development
827 7th Street, Room 230
Sacramento, CA 95818

Peter Morse
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April 16, 1999

Executive Summary

The South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan is a regional approach to addressing issues related to urban development, habitat conservation and agricultural protection. The lead agency for the plan is the County of Sacramento. The principal consultant for the plan is Jones and Stokes Associates. The subconsultant is Economic Planning Systems. The HCP Steering Committee, which meets monthly and oversees the planning process, includes representatives from the development, environmental, agricultural and regulatory communities (Attachment 1). Additionally, the Biologic and Economic Subcommittees and the Technical Advisory Committee meet regularly to provide direction to the Steering Committee, County staff and consultants.

The HCP will mitigate for habitat loss by preserving habitat for a proposed 51 species of wildlife and plants, including listed vernal pool fairy and tadpole shrimp, Swainson's hawk and Orcutt grasses. Habitats included in the HCP area are mixed grasslands, vernal pools, woodlands, riparian and freshwater marsh. The HCP will direct mitigation to the most suitable areas thereby consolidating habitats, enhancing species recovery and improving long-term conservation.

The HCP will minimize regulatory hurdles and streamline the permitting process for developers by providing a predictable mitigation/compensation process to comply with state and federal environmental regulations. The plan will provide an economically attractive one-time per acre fee option for mitigating habitat and species impacts. The fee will be used to protect habitat both inside and outside the County's Urban Services Boundary (USB).

Project Description

Proposed Scope of Work

The South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan is seeking funding for Phase IIB-2 for final drafting of the plan. Sacramento County, Planning and Community Development Department, contracting with Jones and Stokes Associates, has completed Phase I and Phase IIA of the HCP and will complete Phase IIB-1 in October 1999. Phase I examined HCP feasibility for Sacramento County. Phase IIA completed the HCP framework document. The current phase, IIB-1, will identify the preferred HCP conservation/economic strategy.

During the current phase, the consultant for the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan is generating four draft conservation alternatives. The alternatives will address a number of important issues including mitigation opportunities both inside and outside the USB, fee structure, and regulatory compliance. In May of this year the HCP Steering Committee will finalize the four alternatives. In August the Committee will select a preferred alternative for analysis. In October they will accept a final preferred conservation alternative. The Steering Committee anticipates a fully supported conservation alternative. In November, providing funding is available, the County will direct the consultant to complete the draft HCP. This grant request is seeking funding to complete the HCP document, Phase IIB-2.

Resource management issues to be addressed in the final phase of the HCP include mitigation bank policies, reserve and management guidelines, and a cultural resources summary. Economic issues to be addressed in the final phase of the HCP include mechanisms for fee adjustment, cost effectiveness of protection methods, and identification of landowner incentives to preserve habitat. Continued public outreach, plan consistency with local, state and federal policy, and drafting the implementing agreement are also included in the final phase. Tasks for completing the final phase of the HCP follow below.

Task 1. Policies/Guidelines.

- *Mitigation banking policy* – develop mitigation banking criteria consistent with state and federal policy.
- *Preserve guidelines* – develop guidelines for establishing preserves that protect biological values.
- *Management guidelines* – develop management guidelines for habitat mitigation sites, conservation easements and reserves.
- *Cultural resources summary* – resource analysis addressing historic and prehistoric sites.

Task 2.

- *Strategies for advance funding* – funding for planning and upfront acquisition.
- *HCP fee and cost effectiveness* – identify a biologically and economically defensible per acre fee or fee structure.

Task 3.

- *Outreach/Landowner issues* – conduct public educational outreach and analyze potential benefits and impacts to property owners in the HCP area.

Task 4.

- *Draft HCP* – draft the habitat conservation plan consistent with state and federal policy.

Task 5.

- *Consistency with local, state and federal policies* – evaluate consistency of HCP for compliance with local, state and federal regulations.

Task 6.

- *HCP implementation agreement* – working with local, state and federal counsel, develop an agreement to implement the HCP.

Location and/or Geographic Boundaries of the Project

The boundaries of the HCP are State Highway 50 to the north and Interstate 5 to the west. Excluded from the HCP area are the cities of Galt and Sacramento, the developed and entitled areas of Laguna and Elk Grove (Attachment 2). Within this 314,000 acre HCP planning area approximately 78,000 acres inside the USB have development potential. The remaining 236,000 acres are designated to remain as agriculture, agricultural/residential or open space.

Ecological/Biological Benefits

Ecological/Biological Objectives

Working with the HCP Steering Committee, Jones and Stokes will develop mitigation banking criteria consistent with federal and state mitigation banking guidelines. Criteria will include goal setting, site selection considerations, technical feasibility, role of preservation, inclusion of upland areas, and watershed planning. The consultant will consider the need for banking opportunities both inside and beyond the Urban Services Boundary, in particular the economic equity issues as they relate to land costs for banks inside the USB compared to cost outside the USB. Banking opportunities will remain in Sacramento County.

The HCP will establish preserve guidelines that protect high biological values, preserve species populations, protect biodiversity and ecological functions, are manageable in size, do not significantly conflict with adjacent land uses, and are consistent with land use and transportation plans. Guidelines will consider species and habitat conservation goals, viability of recovering target species populations, viability of in perpetuity habitat protection, biologic functions and values, and management constraints including existing on-site constraints and adjacent land uses.

The HCP will develop management guidelines, including adaptive management guidelines, for habitat mitigation sites, conservation easements, and reserves. *Adaptive management* is defined as a process of testing alternative ways of meeting objectives and adjusting future management action according to what is learned. Guidelines will: A) outline species specific management needs, including the natural or artificial disturbance regimes of fire, grazing, flooding, and other factors that contribute to species demographics and habitat functioning; B) recognize watershed structure, season and multi-year fluctuation of surface and groundwater, and ensure that water levels continue at normal levels and frequencies; C) address reserve stressors such as how to control or eliminate non-native weedy plant species and determine the appropriate levels of domestic animal grazing and seasonal timing; D) determine the size, function, and capacity to protect the core preserve area from external influencing factors that may be incompatible with the reserve goals; E) develop detailed monitoring programs that will evaluate the species populations and habitat use, habitat quality, other biological functions and values, and physical environmental characteristics to determine whether the preserve is improving and maintaining a healthy and diverse species population, in perpetuity, as prescribed in the biological standards and guidelines.

The HCP will clearly identify all the natural resource issues and economic considerations. Sufficient background information will identify why the HCP is needed and how its implementation will benefit the resources while providing a reliable, streamlined, consistent regulatory process for applications going through federal, state and local regulatory permitting.

Linkages

The funding we are seeking from CALFED will assist in finalizing the draft HCP. The previous phases of the project have included development of habitat maps, biological functions and values, species and habitat management strategies, four conservation strategy alternatives leading to the preferred conservation alternative, impact minimization, wetland mitigation policies and long-term preservation strategies. The project will implement CALFED goals as well as federal

and state wetland and endangered species regulations. Sacramento County will be the HCP permit holder.

The HCP is an established comprehensive public process that overlaps with CALFED's goals and objectives and its study area encompasses most of the remaining vernal pool complexes in south Sacramento County and most of the watershed areas for Morrison, Laguna, Deer Creeks and the Cosumnes River. The HCP will result in benefits to habitats and species in the watershed areas. The County has stakeholder involvement, a professionally qualified team, and the commitment for federal and state resource agencies.

System-wide Ecosystem Benefits

The South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan will complement preservation projects at the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and the Cosumnes River Preserve. In addition, the HCP will assist the Sacramento Valley Open Space Conservancy's (SVOSC) Vernal Pool Preservation Project, Sacramento County's Swainson's Hawk Trust Fund, and Sacramento County's Wetlands Restoration Trust Fund. Common goals of the above projects are consistent with the South Sacramento HCP, including preservation of native habitats to aid and enhance species recovery, preservation of wetland habitat and agricultural lands to provide nesting and foraging sites for local and migratory species, and creation of linkages between habitats to prevent habitat fragmentation.

Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

Land that is acquired through the HCP will potentially buffer Stone Lakes and provide foraging habitat for migratory waterfowl that use the refuge. Acquisition of land or easements by the HCP may serve to link the Refuge and the Cosumnes River Preserve with outlying portions of Sacramento County. These efforts will create a landscape conservation approach to preserving habitat that will not only benefit Sacramento County, but enhance restoration efforts of the entire Bay-Delta ecosystem.

Cosumnes River Preserve

The HCP will preserve unprotected portions of the Cosumnes River and surrounding property that will act as a buffer. While TNC continues to preserve and enhance the Cosumnes River in the southern portion of the County, the HCP may provide opportunities to preserve portions of the river ecosystem north of the existing preserve.

Vernal Pool Preservation Project

SVOSC has developed a strategy to preserve a series of large vernal pool complexes inside the Urban Service Boundary. SVOSC is coordinating grant monies, including Packard Foundation funding, to pursue property and/or easement acquisition. Their vernal pool strategy is being directed by the development of the HCP.

Swainson's Hawk Trust Fund

By preserving land in rural Sacramento County, the Swainson's Hawk Trust Fund is complementing the HCP by preserving valuable foraging and nesting habitat for the Endangered Swainson's hawk. The trust fund will sunset with HCP adoption.

Wetland Restoration Trust Fund

The Wetlands Restoration Trust Fund complements the HCP by preserving, upfront, vernal pool habitat. The trust fund will sunset with HCP adoption.

Compatibility with Non-Ecosystem Objectives

The South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan will preserve large tracts of wetland habitat that filter ground water and provide large areas of land where ground water recharge can occur. By managing agricultural uses, through easements, limiting development, and preserving natural vegetation, the HCP will reduce actions and processes that contribute to soil erosion, thus keeping sediment contamination from reaching rivers and streams. Preserving land within the flood plains of the Cosumnes River and local streams will eliminate the need to build new and/or maintain current levee systems.

Technical Feasibility and Timing

Regulatory documents and permits will be prepared and coordination will be conducted for compliance with federal and California Endangered Species Acts, the Clean Water Act, the California Environmental Quality Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act. In addition, an implementing agreement that provides commitment to the adopted HCP will be developed and signed by all participants.

Monitoring and Data Collection Methodology

Monitoring protocol, including adaptive management strategies, will be drafted during this planning phase of the project. Biological monitoring will occur after HCP implementation.

Most of the data collection, including seasonal wetlands mapping, species distribution, land use, land ownership, hydrologic data, and soils data has been completed or is being gathered and analyzed during the current phase of the HCP. In addition, during the current phase, the HCP Steering Committee and the consultant are developing strategies for protecting the watershed and habitats, developing alternative conservation strategy plans, identifying a preferred conservation strategy plan, and developing funding and financing mechanisms. During the next phase, pertinent to this funding request, the committee and the consultant will develop land management guidelines for inclusion in the HCP. Management guidelines will include development of adaptive management strategies to allow for evolving management techniques and future scientific data to benefit the habitat and species.

Local Involvement

The County of Sacramento is the lead agency on the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan. Four committees oversee development of the HCP: the Steering Committee, the Biological Subcommittee, the Economic Subcommittee, and the Technical Advisory Committee. The Steering Committee develops policy and guides the consultant in cooperation with the Planning and Community Development Department. The Steering Committee is comprised of individuals from the business, environmental, regulatory and agricultural communities. The two subcommittees provide biologic and economic recommendations to the Steering Committee. The Technical Advisory Committee provides peer review of materials developed by the consultant.

Costs

Budget

Task	Labor hours - consultant	Salary total
1. Policy/guidelines	400	20,000
2. Fee analysis	100	10,000
3. Outreach/landowner issues	190	19,000
4. Draft HCP	300	50,000
5. Regulatory consistency	95	9,500
6. Implementation agreement	165	16,500
Total		\$125,000

Quarterly Budget

Task	Oct-Dec 99	Jan-Mar 00	April-Jun 00	Total
Task 1	5,000	5,000	5,000	15,000
Task 2	5,000	5,000		10,000
Task 3	7,000	6,000	6,000	19,000
Task 4	15,000	20,000	20,000	55,000
Task 5		4,500	5,000	9,500
Task 6		8,000	8,500	16,500
Total	32,000	48,500	44,500	125,000

Cost Sharing

The County will provide inkind salary costs for staff time to oversee project management of the consultant and to serve as staff to the Steering Committee, Biologic Subcommittee, Economic Subcommittee and Technical Advisory Committee. In addition, the County has identified a potential \$49,000 to pay for the yet unscoped task of environmental documentation (CEQA/NEPA compliance).

Applicant Qualifications

County Staff

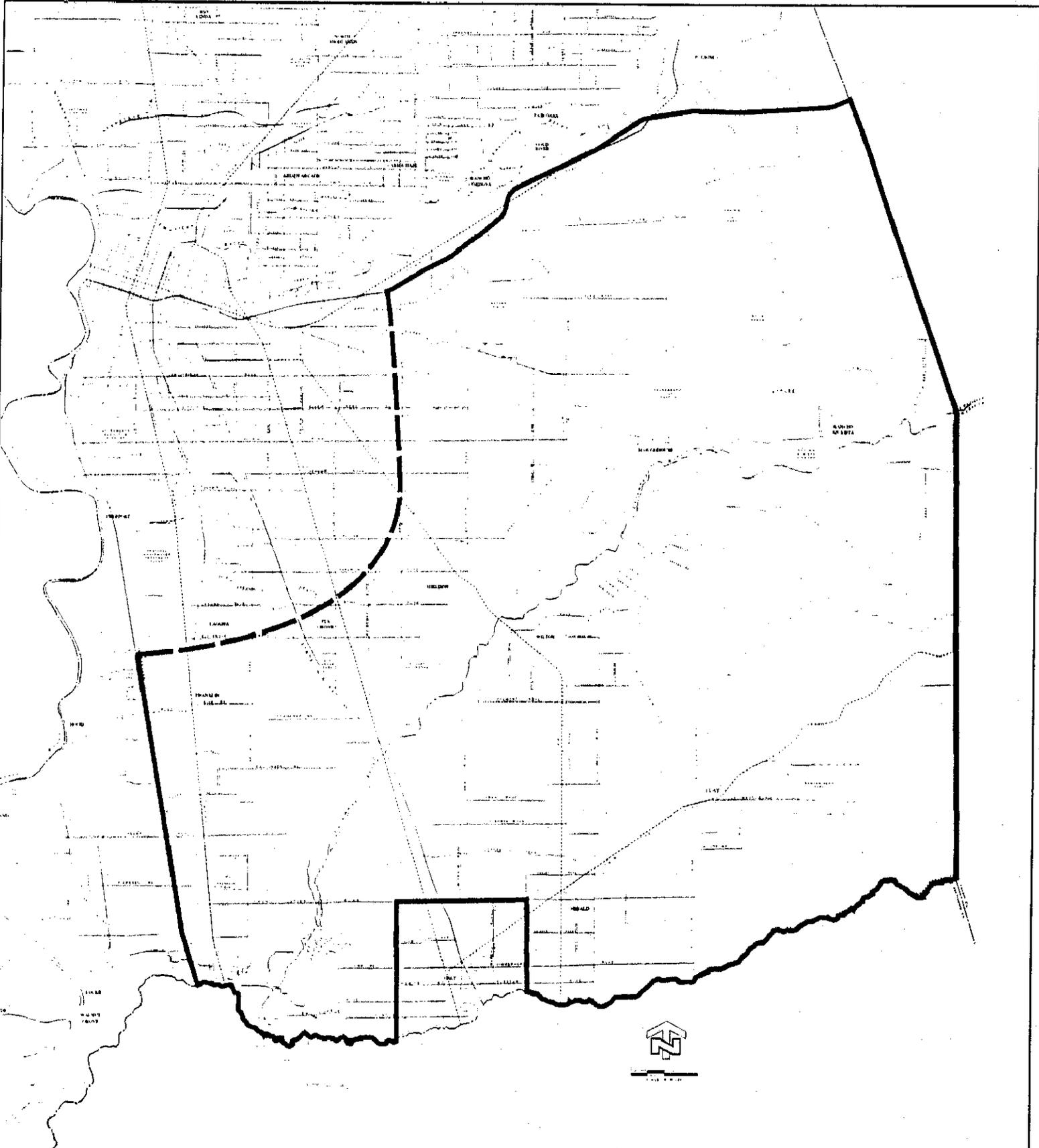
Peter Morse, Associate Planner, Long Range Planning Section, Department of Planning and Community Development. BA, Education. MA, Geography. Project manager on HCP since 1996. Oversees all environmental, long range planning projects for County Planning.

Richard Radmacher, Planning Aid, Long Range Planning Section, Department of Planning and Community Development. BA, Environmental Studies. BS, Biology (in -process). Assists HCP project manager in administering the HCP since 1998. Assists in the administration and development of environmental policy and projects for County Planning.

Jones and Stokes Associate

Niall McCarten, PhD., Jones and Stokes Associates, manager of the South Sacramento County HCP, Los Osos/Baywood Park greenbelt conservation and management plan, Orange County eastern transportation corridor NCCP, and Santa Rosa Plains Vernal Pool Ecosystem Preservation Plan in Sonoma County.

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TIM MANOLIS AUDOBON SOCIETY		BRUCE GOLDSTEIN, OBSERVER



Study Area **Attachment 2**
 South Sacramento County
 Multi-Species/Multi-Habitat Conservation Plan

Note: Project boundary line approximates urbanizing areas of Laguna and Elk Grove, which are excluded from the study area.