

**EIS/EIR APPENDIX E**  
*Alternative Formulation and Screening*



Table E-1. First Tier Alternatives Screening

Remove Lands Outside USB From the Planning Area Boundary	Remove Lands West of Interstate-5 From the Planning Area Boundary	All Habitat Preservation and Project Mitigation Is Located Outside of the USB	Preserve 50% of all Vernal Pools in the Planning Area	Recovery Plan Alternative (Preserve 95% of Total Acreage of the MCRA)	Preserve 76% of the Total Acreage of the MCRA	Preserve 49% of the Vernal Pools within the MCRA	Preserve More of the Highest-Quality Swainson’s Hawk Habitat	SSHCP	Reduced Permit Term
<i>Would the potential alternative include an interconnected preserve system throughout the Planning Area that is large enough to maintain in perpetuity each type of natural community that is native to the Planning Area, maintain in perpetuity each type of native plant and animal species present within the Planning Area, and maintain in perpetuity or expand the existing distribution of each native animal and plant species within the Planning Area?</i>									
Not likely because the USB is already highly developed and the opportunities for preserve establishment are limited.	Not likely because it would not allow for establishment of preserves in lands that provide valuable habitat for greater sandhill crane.	Not likely because it would not include any additional conservation in the MCRA, which would likely make conservation of vernal pool tadpole shrimp not possible.	Not likely because it would not include sufficient preservation of vernal pools to maintain the existing distribution of native animal and plant species in the Planning Area.	Not likely because it would not be possible to establish a preserve system that meets the mandate of 95% vernal pool preservation in the MCRA.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative locate preserves in areas that maximize protection of native plant and animal species and the ecosystems on which they depend?</i>									
Not likely because it would not allow for establishment of preserves in the areas of the Planning Area that retain the most intact habitat.	Not likely because it would not allow for establishment of preserves in lands that provide valuable habitat for greater sandhill crane.	Not likely because it would not allow for protection of special-status plant species that only occur within the USB.	Not likely because it would not include sufficient preservation of vernal pools to maximize protection of native plant and animals species and their ecosystems.	Not likely, as the high burden for preservation in the MCRA would reduce the amount of development fees available for preservation of other habitat types outside the MCRA.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative locate preserves in areas that maximize the protection of intact watersheds and watershed functions?</i>									
Not likely because the watersheds in the USB are the most disturbed in the Planning Area; the intact watersheds are generally located outside the USB.	Possibly.	Not likely because it would not allow for establishment of preserves in all watersheds of the Planning Area.	Not likely because it would not prioritize preservation of vernal pools in the MCRA, resulting in preservation of vernal pools scattered around the Planning Area.	Possibly, although this alternative is not feasible for the reasons listed under Screening Criteria #1.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative protect large, contiguous blocks of species habitat. Provide habitat linkages between preserves that are wide enough to allow dispersal of individual native animals and plants and allow genetic exchange between species populations?</i>									
Not likely because large, contiguous blocks of species habitat are mostly gone from the USB.	Possibly.	Not likely because it would not allow for establishment of linkage preserves in the USB to connect existing preserves.	Possibly.	Possibly, although this alternative is not feasible for the reasons listed under Screening Criteria #1.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative protect sufficient cropland and irrigated pasture to provide important foraging habitat on which some native animal species now depend (e.g., Swainson’s hawk, white-tailed kite)?</i>									
Not likely, because most of the habitat for these species is outside the USB. Although no Covered Activities would occur outside the USB, it is likely that development would still proceed outside the USB. However, it would not occur under the mitigation framework of an HCP.	Not likely because it would not allow for establishment of preserves in lands that provide valuable habitat for greater sandhill crane.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Not likely, as the high burden for preservation in the MCRA would reduce the amount of development fees available for preservation of other habitat types outside the MCRA.	Not likely, because the high avoidance within the MCRA would limit the available mitigation fees that would allow for acquisition of cropland and irrigated pasture. Preventing development in the MCRA would also shift development pressure to other lands, including those that currently contain cropland and irrigated pasture.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.

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<i>Would the potential alternative preserve adequate greater sandhill crane roosting habitat and foraging habitat between the existing Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and the existing Cosumnes River Preserve, to maintain or increase the population of greater sandhill crane over-wintering within the Planning Area?</i>									
Not likely because it would not allow for establishment of preserves in lands that provide connectivity between Stone Lakes and the Cosumnes River Preserve.	Not likely because it would not allow for establishment of preserves in lands that provide connectivity between Stone Lakes and the Cosumnes River Preserve.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly, although this alternative is not feasible for the reasons listed under Screening Criteria #1.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative protect the long-term viability of ranching and farming operations in the Planning Area (consistent with other objectives)?</i>									
Not likely, as some ranching and farming operations outside the USB would be threatened by development if it is not included in the Plan Area.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly, although this alternative is not feasible for the reasons listed under Screening Criteria #1.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative protect all currently documented and any newly discovered occurrences of Sacramento Orcutt grass and slender Orcutt grass in the Planning Area?</i>									
Not likely, because if Orcutt grasses are found outside the USB they could not be included in the Preserve System.	Possibly.	Not likely, because Orcutt grasses are located inside the USB and then could not be included in the preserve system.	Possibly.	Possibly, although this alternative is not feasible for the reasons listed under Screening Criteria #1.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative avoid or minimize impacts to state and federally listed species and their habitats, to the maximum extent practicable?</i>									
Possibly.	Not likely because it would not allow for establishment of preserves in lands that provide valuable habitat for greater sandhill crane.	Not likely, because Orcutt grasses are located inside the USB and then could not be included in the preserve system.	Not likely because it would not include sufficient preservation of vernal pools to avoid or minimize impacts to state and federally listed species to the maximum extent practicable.	Not likely, as the high burden for preservation in the MCRA would reduce the amount of development fees available for preservation of other habitat types outside the MCRA.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative avoid or minimize impacts to the existing physical, chemical, and biological functions and services of wetlands and streams in the Planning Area, to the maximum extent practicable?</i>									
Possibly.	Possibly.	Not likely, because wetlands and streams in the USB would not be protected in preserves.	Possibly.	Possibly, although this alternative is not feasible for the reasons listed under Screening Criteria #1.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative achieve no net loss of the existing functions and services of aquatic resources in the Planning Area? Methods used to achieve no net loss may include the re-establishment and establishment of vernal pools, riparian, and other aquatic land cover types?</i>									
Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Not likely because it would result in insufficient preservation of vernal pools than to mitigate Covered Activities and achieve no net loss.	Possibly, although this alternative is not feasible for the reasons listed under Screening Criteria #1.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.

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<i>Would the potential alternative include a long-term preserve monitoring and habitat management program sufficient to maintain or improve habitats of targeted native plant and animal species in perpetuity?</i>									
Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly, although this alternative is not feasible for the reasons listed under Screening Criteria #1.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative support the development and implementation of streamlined water-resource permitting programs under CWA Section 404, CWA 401, the Porter–Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code (Streambed Alteration Agreements) by the federal and state agencies with responsibility for implementing those statutes within the Planning Area?</i>									
Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly, although this alternative is not feasible for the reasons listed under Screening Criteria #1.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative facilitate the recovery of federally listed species, and provide sufficient preservation of federally designated recovery areas within the Planning Area?</i>									
Not likely, as it would not result in preservation of habitat in the Cosumnes/Rancho Seco Core Recovery Area.	Possibly.	Not likely because it would not include any additional conservation in the MCRA, which would likely make conservation of vernal pool tadpole shrimp not possible.	Not likely because it would include sufficient preservation of vernal pools ESA core recovery areas that are now designated within the Planning Area.	Not likely, as the high burden for preservation in the MCRA would reduce the amount of development fees available for preservation of other habitat types outside the MCRA including the Cosumnes/Rancho Seco Core Area.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Score (# of “Possibly”)</i>									
5	9	5	9	9	13	14	14	14	14
<i>Carried Forward to Second Tier Screening?</i>									
No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Table E-2. Second Tier Alternatives Screening**

Preserve 76% of the Total Acreage of the MCRA	Preserve 49% of the Vernal Pools within the MCRA	Preserve More of the Highest-Quality Swainson’s Hawk Habitat	SSHCP	Reduced Permit Term
<i>Would the potential alternative avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant environmental effects of the proposed project?</i>				
Possibly.	Possibly	Not likely, because the proposed project would have minimal effects on Swainson’s hawk. This is especially true since the withdrawal of the City of Elk Grove from the Plan Area, as that was the area with by far the greatest impacts to Swainson’s hawk habitat from Covered Activities.	Does not apply, as this alternative is the proposed project.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative address one or more significant issues related to the proposed action?</i>				
Possibly.	Possibly	Not likely, because the proposed project would have minimal effects on Swainson’s hawk. This is especially true since the withdrawal of the City of Elk Grove from the Plan Area, as that was the area with by far the greatest impacts to Swainson’s hawk habitat from Covered Activities.	Does not apply, as this alternative is the proposed project.	Possibly.
<i>Score (# of “Possibly”)</i>				
2	2	0	N/A	2
<i>Carried Forward to Third Tier Screening?</i>				
Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

**Table E-3. Third Tier Alternatives Screening**

Preserve 76% of the Total Acreage of the MCRA	Preserve 49% of the Vernal Pools within the MCRA	SSHCP	Reduced Permit Term
<i>Would the potential alternative accommodate the existing transportation, utility, and other infrastructure master plans that have been prepared by the SSHCP permit Applicants (County of Sacramento, City of Galt, City of Rancho Cordova, SCWA, SRCSD, and Connector JPA)?</i>			
Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative allow an adequate amount of urban development within the currently adopted spheres of influence for the City of Rancho Cordova and the City of Galt, and the currently adopted USB for Sacramento County, to discourage expansion beyond these boundaries and maintain the sound land use planning principles these boundaries encourage (e.g., preventing sprawl outside the USB and leap-frog development; consolidating development to support the efficient provision of utilities and infrastructure; promoting compact mixed use development that supports viable transit and walkable areas; creating communities with a variety of housing types that support different income levels and socioeconomic conditions; and maintaining compliance with air quality laws and regulations that influence, or are influenced by land use decisions such as Assembly Bill 32, Senate Bill 375, and the Clean Air Act).</i>			
Not likely, because “displaced” development outside the USB would require additional development of utilities and infrastructure, lead to more urban sprawl with more vehicle trips, and would not promote compact mixed-use development that supports viable transit and walkable areas. This development outside the USB may also conflict with requirements of AB32 and SB375 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through land use planning that minimizes vehicle trips.	Not likely, because “displaced” development outside the USB would require additional development of utilities and infrastructure, lead to more urban sprawl with more vehicle trips, and would not promote compact mixed-use development that supports viable transit and walkable areas. This development outside the USB may also conflict with requirements of AB32 and SB375 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through land use planning that minimizes vehicle trips.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative include an adequate amount of urban development with associated fees to meet first tier screening criteria, above? In addition, the associated mitigation-fee structure must be practicable, with fees that are analogous to fees collected under other Northern California permitted HCPs that have similar species habitats and similar impacts.</i>			
Not likely, because the resource agencies did not take into account the feasibility of obtaining these lands for permanent habitat preservation when the 2011 Agency Conceptual Design was prepared. In order to acquire these lands, the development fee would need to be increased to such an extent that it would not be consistent with fees charged by other HCPs.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative include as covered activities the SSHCP Permit Applicant's transportation, utility, and other infrastructure activities and projects as described in the approved master plans of the SSHCP permit Applicants (County of Sacramento, City of Galt, City of Rancho Cordova, SCWA, and Connector JPA)?</i>			
Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Would the potential alternative rely on willing sellers for the purchase of land or easements when establishing habitat preserves; do not include condemnation or imminent domain to meet the project needs, purposes, and objectives?</i>			
Not likely, as this alternative would require establishing preserves in nearly all of the remaining undeveloped land within the MCRA. One or more landowners would most likely refuse to sell.	Not likely, as this alternative would require establishing preserves in nearly all of the remaining undeveloped land within the MCRA. One or more landowners would most likely refuse to sell.	Possibly.	Possibly.
<i>Score (# of “Possibly”)</i>			
3	3	5	5
<i>Carried Forward to Analysis in the EIS/EIR?</i>			
No	No	Yes	Yes

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