



NEWS RELEASE

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Final South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan Released

Adoption hearings to start in June 2018

Sacramento, Calif., May 15, 2018 – In another major step forward for the proposed South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), its final Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report today was made publicly available, opening a 30-day review period that ends on June 14, 2018.

The South Sacramento HCP will streamline permitting processes and drive more decision making to the local level for development and infrastructure projects in much of south Sacramento County while strategically conserving habitat, open space and agricultural land.

The South Sacramento HCP plan area encompasses 317,656 acres bordered by Highway 50 on the north, San Joaquin County on the south, El Dorado County and Amador County to the east and the Sacramento River to the west. It includes Galt and most of Rancho Cordova. Within the plan area, 36,282 acres will become part of an interconnected preserve system, including approximately 1,000 acres of vernal pool habitat. Twenty-eight plant and wildlife species, and their natural habitats, will be protected under the plan.

“The South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan will protect precious habitat while clarifying some of the regulations that can interfere with agricultural holdings and with new projects,” said District 2 Sacramento County Supervisor and Board Vice Chair Patrick Kennedy. “It’s been a cooperative effort among agricultural, development, and environmental interests. “

Under the federal and state Endangered Species Acts, jurisdictions and agencies participating as plan partners in the South Sacramento HCP – Sacramento County, Galt, Rancho Cordova and the Capital SouthEast Connector Joint Powers Authority – will be able to permit proposed covered projects, saving time and money compared to the current process that requires project sponsors to obtain permits on their own from state and federal agencies.

The South Sacramento HCP also will produce an interconnected regional preserve system, which will be more beneficial to species and habitat than the current piecemeal mitigation process.

The related Aquatic Resources Program will also enable the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to set up an abbreviated permitting process under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act. The integration of endangered-species and aquatic-resource permitting into one streamlined local process will be the first of its kind under existing federal regulations.

A public hearing on proposed adoption of the South Sacramento HCP, EIS/EIR, Aquatic Resources Program and Implementing Agreement currently is scheduled to be held at the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors in June. The Sacramento County Planning Commission on April 9 voted to recommend approval. Hearings will also be held by the Galt Planning Commission, Capital SouthEast Connector JPA, Galt City Council and Rancho Cordova City Council. Permit issuance to the plan partners from state and federal agencies will follow.

Under the South Sacramento HCP, property owners or project sponsors required to mitigate species and habitat impacts will either dedicate land to the preserve system or pay fees to support free-market easement or property acquisitions.

The South Sacramento HCP was developed through a multi-jurisdiction partnership that includes Sacramento County; the cities of Rancho Cordova and Galt; the Sacramento County Water Agency; the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District; and the Capital SouthEast Connector Joint Powers Authority. It will be managed by a joint powers authority called the South Sacramento Conservation Agency (SSCA) that includes Sacramento County, the City of Galt and the City of Rancho Cordova.

The agency will hold title to conservation easements and, in limited cases, fee title to preserved lands. It also will oversee cooperative agreements with other entities that will own or manage preserves or conservation easements as part of the South Sacramento HCP preserve system.

The final documents and other information are available on the South Sacramento HCP website at www.southsachcp.com.

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