



RCIS Symposium Meeting Summary

A summary of the meeting held on September 20, 2022 to discuss best practices and foster a learning network for stakeholders involved in the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy Program

Amanda DeMarco

Liz O'Donoghue

Francie Mitchell

Tom Biering





Executive Summary

The fourth annual Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) Symposium had a high level of interest and was well attended. This year's Symposium was held on November 20, 2022 and began with an introductory webinar hosted by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The afternoon panels featured keynote speakers and three discussion panels to report on the successes of the RCIS Program thus far and gather feedback on how to improve the Program moving forward. The agenda for this year's meeting highlighted:

- Innovations within the RCIS Program. This panel explored the innovative approaches taken by proponents of the Mid-Sacramento Valley RCIS, Santa Cruz RCIS, and the Kaweah Groundwater Subbasin RCIS. The discussion highlighted proponents' motivations, preparation, engagement, and implementation within their RCISs.
- Mitigation Credit Agreements (MCA) currently under development. This panel featured key proponents of the Southport MCA pilot project in the Yolo County RCIS, a key project currently informing development of the MCA Guidelines, and the Highway 17 connectivity project in the Santa Clara County RCIS.
- Facilitated dialogue with policy leaders and stewards of the RCIS Program, including Jennifer Norris, Deputy Secretary for Biodiversity and Habitat at the California Natural Resources Agency and Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan of the 16th Assembly District.
- North Baylands RCIS. This panel featured proponents and stakeholders of the North Baylands RCIS and explored questions such as: how can the North Baylands RCIS help communities, infrastructure and conservation agencies achieve multi-benefit outcomes and meet critical goals such as climate resilience, transportation, and conservation?

The day concluded with an in-person reception hosted at The Nature Conservancy's Sacramento office. Symposium hosts are grateful to have brought together a diverse group of stakeholders and practitioners that are committed to fostering an RCIS learning network and community of practice (Appendix G).



RCIS Program Overview

Speakers:

- Ami Olson, RCIS Program Coordinator, CDFW
- Karen Weiss, Environmental Program Manager, CDFW
- Brandon Amrhein, Senior Environmental Scientist, CDFW

The day began with an optional introductory session by CDFW's lead RCIS Program staff, where they provided a brief history of California's Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) Program and its successes thus far (Appendix A).

The RCIS Program is a voluntary, non-regulatory regional planning process used to assess the conditions of regional focal species, their associated habitats, and conservation status to support conservation investments and advance mitigation actions that further long-term conservation. This program went into effect on January 1, 2017 after being signed into law by former Governor Brown in September 2016. The RCIS Program is composed of three key components:

- Regional Conservation Assessment
- Regional Conservation Investment Strategy
- Mitigation Credit Agreement

The RCIS Program seeks to provide high-quality conservation outcomes, and guide conservation and infrastructure investments across the state by identifying and prioritizing the regional conservation needs of vulnerable species and natural communities, with an emphasis on habitat connectivity and climate resilience.

Successes thus far

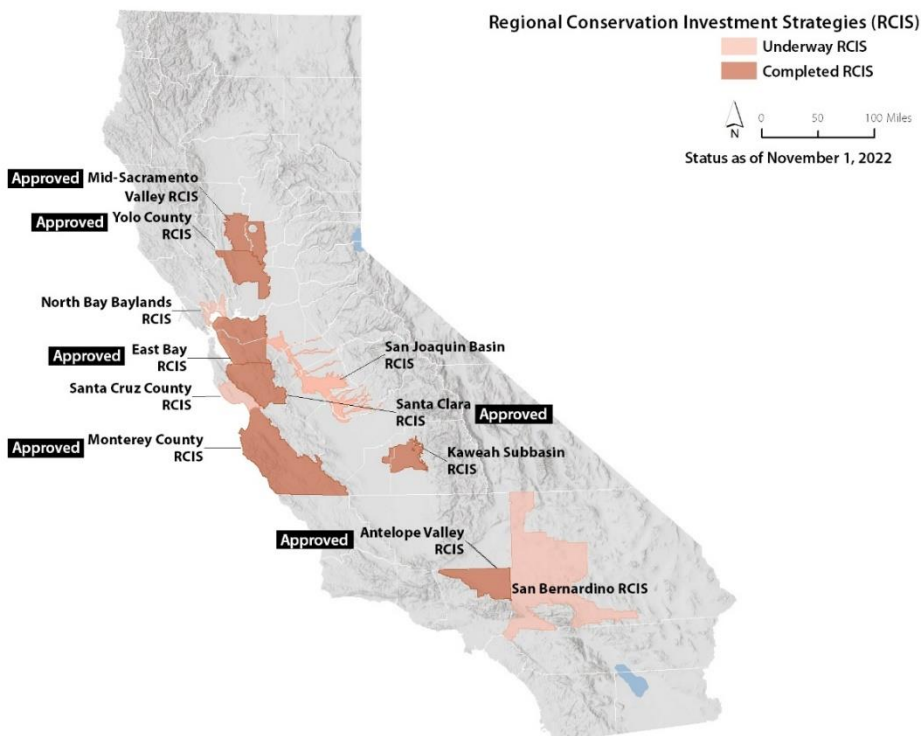
RCIS practitioners have celebrated a number of wins this year, most recently, with the passage of Assembly Bill 2805 (Bauer-Kahan), which made enhancements to the existing RCIS Program. The 2022 Budget also appropriated a total of \$5 million, \$2 million in 2022/23 and \$3 million in 2023/24, in new funding to the Wildlife Conservation Board to support RCIS development.



Assembly Bill 2805

- Clarifies the RCIS approval process
- Clarifies mitigation credit creation requirements
- Removes the statewide cap on total number of RCISs allowed under the program
- Enables an advance mitigation framework to allow for a suite of mitigation actions under one MCA
- Authorizes MCAs to be combined with other instruments or agreements to fulfill compensatory mitigation requirements established in permits issued by other federal, state, or local agencies

There are currently eleven RCISs at various stages of development or approved throughout California that correspond to over 11 million acres or about 10% of the state. Upon completion of this year's report, seven RCISs have been approved across the state.





The Future of the RCIS Program

- **Integrate.** Integrate existing work on the RCIS Program to continue to build successes.
- **Amplify.** Amplify the value and benefits and understanding of RCIS' to meet state and regional goals.

Symposium attendees were lucky to hear from this year's keynote speaker: Director Chuck Bonham from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).



Charlton “Chuck” Bonham was appointed as Director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in 2011. Director Bonham has been a valuable steward of the RCIS program's implementation since its inception in 2017. In his remarks, Director Bonham highlighted the finalization of seven RCIS' within the last two years, which cover over 11 million acres in California.

Director Bonham noted that CDFW is actively working to review and approve the Southport MCA pilot project. The Southport project has not been without its challenges as the inaugural MCA project. Director Bonham also expressed his enthusiasm for AB 2805 and highlighted the \$5 million approved in the 2022 Budget to the Wildlife Conservation Board for RCIS development. Director Bonham emphasized the importance of integration and amplification of the RCIS program to align goals and build trust within the RCIS community of practice.



Lightning Talks: RCIS Innovation

Innovations in RCIS: Motivations, preparation, engagement, and implementation

Facilitator: Karen Weiss, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Speakers:

- Meegan Nagy, Reclamation District 108
- Lisa Lurie, Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District
- Mike Hagman, East Kaweah Groundwater Management Agency
- Anna Shiller, Environmental Defense Fund

The first panel of the afternoon was made up of RCIS proponents working on the Mid-Sacramento Valley RCIS, Santa Cruz RCIS, and the Kaweah Groundwater Subbasin RCIS to discuss the motivations, benefits and challenges associated with pursuing a Regional Conservation Investment Strategy. Key discussion topics included:

Motivations & Benefits

- Mid-Sacramento Valley RCIS proponents identified that prior to the RCIS Program's inception, no tool or program existed to leverage working lands and address land use issues for the benefit of natural communities and ecosystem functions. Proponents identified the RCIS Program as a useful tool for facilitating early mitigation planning and leveraging working knowledge and encourage local collaboration.
- Santa Cruz RCIS proponents emphasized their interest in pursuing a locally developed RCIS and utilization of existing collaborative conservation efforts in Santa Cruz County. This RCIS is focused on natural communities and ecosystem function as a core conservation strategy.
- A motivator for proponents of the Kaweah Groundwater RCIS was to provide conservation and mitigation opportunities, and spark conversation among landowners and other stakeholders in the face of depleting groundwater levels in the region. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act empowers local agencies to bring critically over drafted groundwater basins in California to sustainable levels of pumping and recharge by 2040.

Challenges

- Mitigation credit agreements. MCAs are a significant motivating factor for stakeholders interested in pursuing a RCIS. Potential proponents and partners have expressed hesitancy in the MCA development and approval process. The uncertainty in timeline and guideline approval has been a key challenge.
- Interagency collaboration. Building and sustaining collaboration between state agencies is an ongoing challenge in the RCIS development process. Additional support and buy-in from sister agencies was identified as a key need to overcome this challenge.
- Measuring outcomes & transparency. Measuring conservation outcomes within an RCIS and communication of subsequent results remains a question for RCIS proponents.

Opportunities & Solutions

- The Coalition for Urban Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES) was identified as a potential model for facilitating interagency collaboration. This organization was founded to support education for agricultural and urban communities and has been successful in aligning the water quality goals of agricultural water quality coalitions and regional water boards.
- All project proponents identified project implementation as a key measure of success for their respective RCISs. Additionally, a broad and diverse set of partners implementing projects was identified as a key measure of success.
- Kaweah Groundwater RCIS proponents reported an unexpected benefit of collaboration through the RCIS process. Through RCIS convenings and associated discussions around groundwater, agriculture and conservation in the region, there was a ready-made collaboration that enabled the East Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency to apply for and secure a \$10 million grant from the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program at the CA Department of Conservation. The grant will result in the development of a toolbox for assessing and selecting multibenefit land repurposing activities that protect the land-based economy, managed groundwater supply, provide drought relief, restore wildlife habitat, and provide direct benefits to disadvantaged communities.

While each of the projects featured in this panel vary greatly in terms of regional ecology and biodiversity, the consensus was that the RCIS Program is a valuable tool that can be used to achieve and implement broad-scale conservation. That is not to say that challenges do not remain ubiquitous. Implementation of projects will continue to provide new challenges.



Discussion Panel: Mitigation Credit Agreements in Progress

Facilitator: Chris Beale, Resources Law Group LLC

Panel members:

- Paul Dirksen, West Sacramento Flood Control District
- Julie Andersen, Midpeninsula Open Space District
- Jeff Drongesen, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Mitigation credit agreements (MCA) under the RCIS Program enable the implementation of identified conservation or habitat enhancement actions within a RCIS. MCAs are intended to build on the success of mitigation banking with the goal to expand advance mitigation. MCAs can be used to create credits for temporary impacts, create credits on multiple sites over time under one MCA, create habitat connectivity credits that remove barriers to fish and wildlife movement, and offset projects impacts under various local, state and/or federal agency requirements.

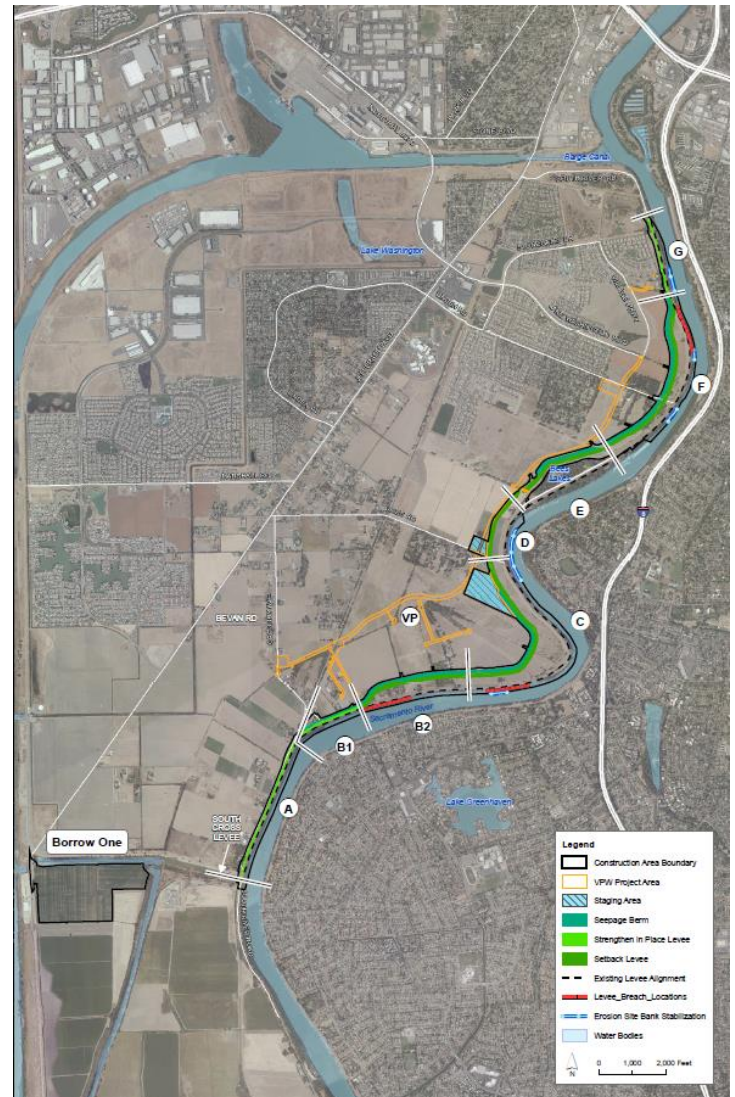
There are currently no approved MCAs. MCA Draft Guidelines are anticipated to be released for public review in November 2022 and will be finalized in early 2023. The second panel of the day featured discussions on MCA projects currently in progress, the Southport Levee Setback Improvement Project in the Yolo RCIS area and the Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossing in the Santa Clara County RCIS area.

Southport Levee Setback Improvement Project

The West Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (WSAFCA) is working to develop an MCA, for its Southport Levee Setback Improvement project under the Yolo RCIS. This project consists of three phases:

- Relocation of the South River Road;
- Improvement of 5.8 miles of levees, including the construction of a setback levee that will create 120 acres of new floodplain habitat;
- Floodplain restoration designed to create riparian forest habitat and waters of the U.S.

The main objectives of this project include meeting project mitigation requirements, meeting both CDFW and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permitting requirements, agreeing on necessary easements to achieve mitigation goals, and agreeing on a long-term financing approach. Project proponents hope to explore the remaining levees and assess any vulnerabilities to identify future improvements and mitigate any future impacts. This project and its development are directly informing CDFW as they develop the latest MCA Guidelines.

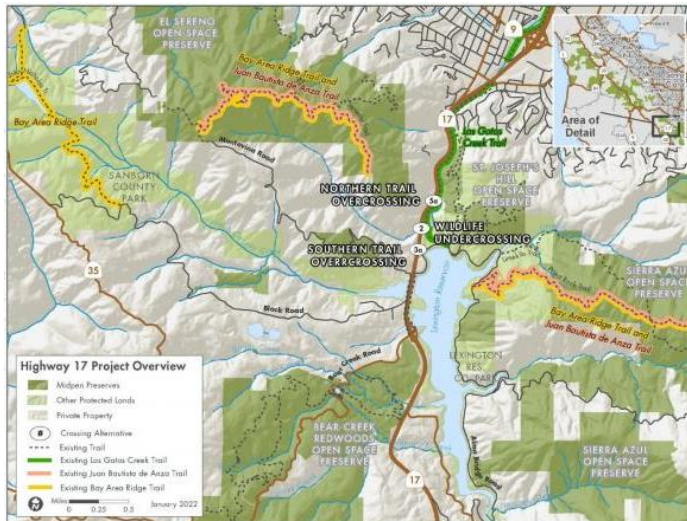


Note: Map courtesy of the City of West Sacramento.



Highway 17 Wildlife and Trail Crossings

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is exploring the feasibility of developing two road crossings across state route 17 (Highway 17) in the Santa Cruz Mountains. This project would create a wildlife undercrossing and a recreational trail overcrossing to connect over 30,000 acres of habitat and protected lands, maintain healthy wildlife populations, improve motorist safety and connect over 50 miles of existing regional trails, including the Bay Area Ridge Trail, Juan Batista De Anza National Historic Trail and Los Gatos Creek Trail.



Note: Map courtesy of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Highway 17 project proponents are exploring the feasibility of developing an MCA under the Santa Clara County RCIS. An MCA could feasibly offset potential ecological impacts from construction to the benefit of priority species, like the mountain lion, California red-legged frog, American badger, and western pond turtle. An MCA could also feasibly generate excess credits that could be used to help fund additional project maintenance and construction and/or be sold to other entities to offset impacts from other projects.

Proponents are actively exploring partnerships with local habitat and transportation agencies. Project proponents are also drafting a connectivity credit valuation proposal with lead scientists at TNC and CDFW, completing CEQA and NEPA reviews, and intending to submit an MCA application during permitting to begin the multi-agency review and approval process.

CDFW emphasized habitat connectivity as a key habitat feature that must be addressed and are exploring MCAs as a mechanism for developing wildlife connectivity credits. CDFW is currently developing capacity at regional and headquarter offices to develop guidelines on habitat connectivity under SB 790 requirements. SB 790, signed into law in October 2021, authorized CDFW to approve mitigation credits for wildlife connectivity projects. CDFW anticipates releasing draft guidelines for public review in mid-2023.

Facilitated Dialogue with Policy Leaders

Challenges and opportunities facing California and how the RCIS Program can advance state goals

The Symposium featured the perspectives of key stewards of the RCIS Program: Dr. Jennifer Norris, Deputy Secretary for Biodiversity and Habitat at the California Natural Resources and Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan of the 16th Assembly District. Jay Ziegler, Director of External Affairs and Policy at The Nature Conservancy facilitated the discussion around the ability and relevance of the RCIS Program to make a meaningful difference in achieving climate, conservation, infrastructure and housing goals in California.



Deputy Secretary Jennifer Norris leads California's 30x30 Initiative to protect 30% of the state's lands and waters by 2030, accelerating the conservation of California's natural and working lands and is also charged with overseeing CNRA's "Cutting the Green Tape" Initiative. This program aims to increase the pace and scale of landscape scale habitat restoration. Deputy Secretary Norris emphasized the importance of leveraging existing regional planning and conservation efforts to propel better mitigation outcomes forward. She also highlighted the role of equity and engagement with tribal partners as a critical factor for consideration for prospective RCIS developers. When asked about how to reconcile the seemingly opposing goals of climate change, housing, energy and infrastructure, Deputy Secretary

Norris honed in on pre-planning as a tool, pointing to State Route 37 as an example. Deputy Secretary Norris has extensive experience in conservation policy and endangered species protection and ecosystem management. She previously served as the field supervisor for the Sacramento Office at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan was elected in 2018 to represent California's Assembly District 16. Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan played an integral role in stewarding the passage of AB 2805, which made important enhancements to the existing RCIS Program. The Assemblymember highlighted the RCIS as a critical tool to help balance the varying interests across conservation and development while ensuring high quality and cost-effective mitigation. She also emphasized the importance of pre-planning and communicating the importance of conservation outcomes across stakeholders including state transportation agencies and local project partners. The Assemblymember has a long track record of advocating for environmental protection and compliance, in her additional role as an environmental attorney and currently serves as the chair of the Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife.



Spotlight: North Baylands RCIS

Silo busting: how can the North Baylands RCIS help communities, infrastructure and conservation agencies achieve multi-benefit outcomes and meet critical goals such as climate resilience, transportation, and conservation?

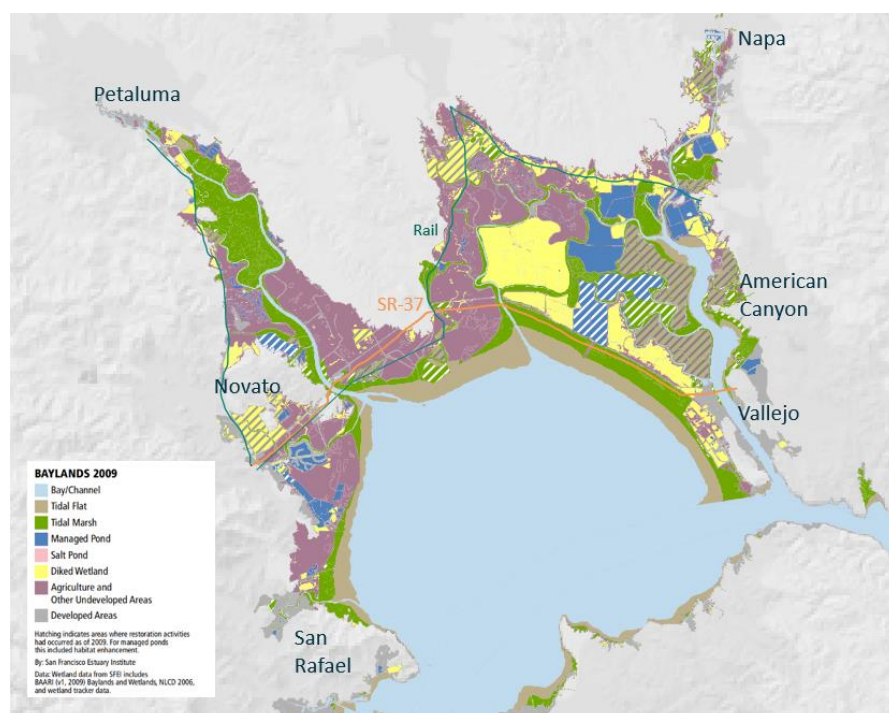
Introduction: Katie Dudney, ESA

Facilitator: Liz O'Donoghue, The Nature Conservancy

Panel members:

- Amy Hutzel, California Coastal Conservancy
- Chris Caputo, Caltrans District 4
- Suzanne Smith, Sonoma County Transportation Authority
- Frankie Malamoud-Roam, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Erin Chappell, CDFW Bay Delta Region

The North Bay Baylands, also known as the San Pablo Bay Baylands, is located in the northern end of the San Francisco Bay and encompasses portions of Marin, Sonoma, Napa, and Solano Counties. Historically, this area was predominately made up of tidal marsh habitat. Over the past two hundred years, this landscape has become segmented by roadway, rail lines and levees to make way for agricultural lands, diked wetlands, and managed ponds, interspersed with remnant and restored tidal marsh. This area and its associated infrastructure is extremely vulnerable to sea level rise, and already experiences flooding during king tides and storm events. North Baylands project proponents saw the RCIS Program as a tool to accelerate climate resilience and restore historic habitat and ecosystem processes, while also addressing these future conditions throughout the Baylands. North Baylands RCIS proponents anticipate completion of a draft in spring 2023 and hope to receive CDFW approval by the end of 2023.



Map courtesy of the San Francisco Estuary Institute

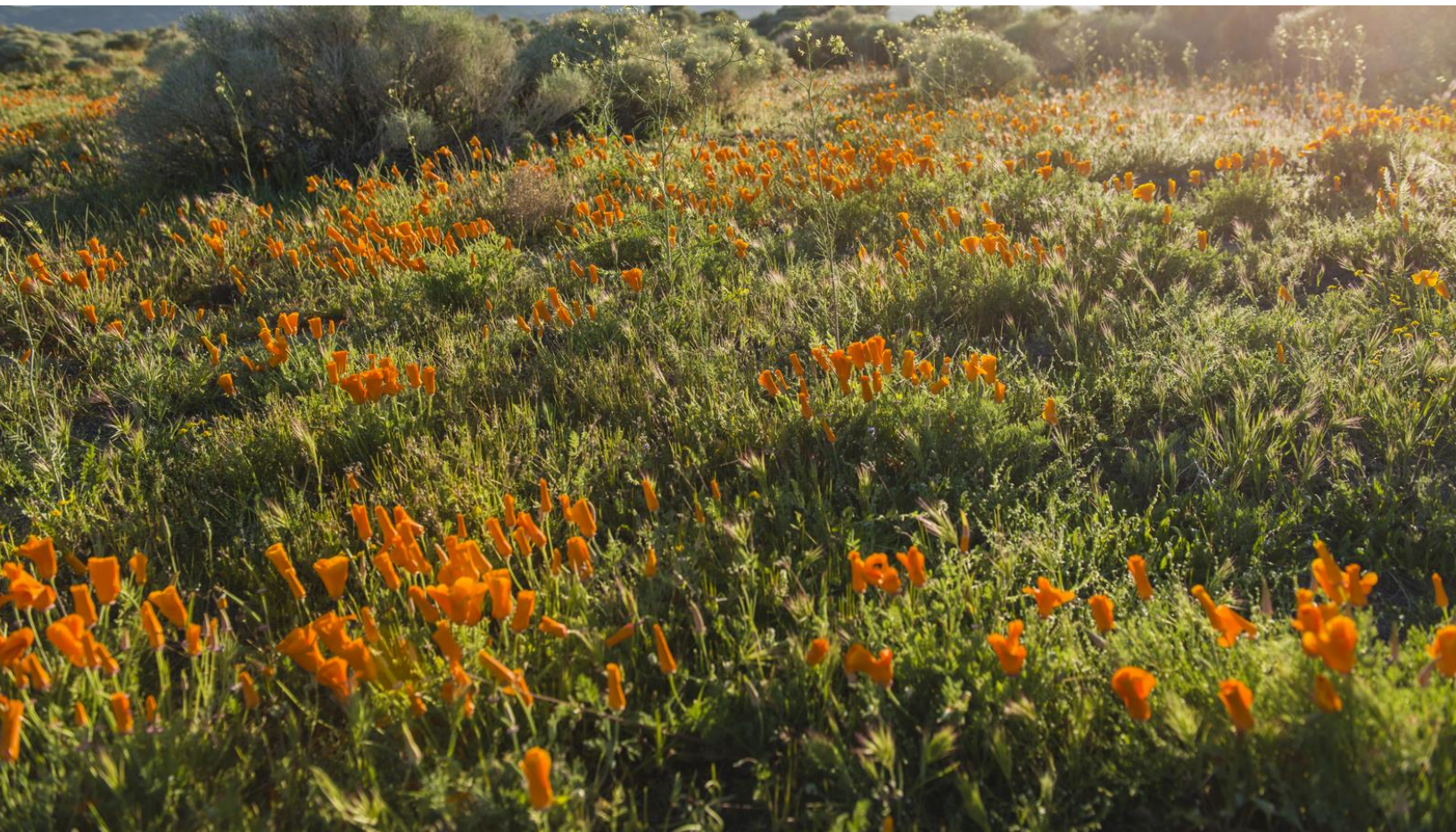
Project proponents identified their motivations for involvement in this RCIS, which included:

- **Opportunity.** All panelists emphasized the opportunity for RCISs to integrate needs across agencies, habitat, species, and infrastructure. More specifically, the RCIS was highlighted as useful for addressing restoration needs at speed and scale, and meeting multiple goals across equity, transportation, and conservation.
- **Integrated Planning.** Project proponents from the Coastal Conservancy and Sonoma County Transportation Authority identified integrated planning as a key motivating factor. Proponents were hopeful that this RCIS will inform integrated project design that focuses on the complexities of the Napa and Sonoma marshes and addresses the conservation, transportation and restoration needs of the region.
- **Early stakeholder engagement & consensus.** Engaging and reaching consensus early on with stakeholders across conservation and transportation was identified as valuable in identifying the highest and best needs and deliver successful projects. Transportation agency representatives identified this point as being a priority in developing RCISs, and, as a benefit of identifying valuable projects in advance.
- **MCAs & compensatory mitigation.** Representatives from CDFW identified the North Baylands RCIS as a valuable location to demonstrate large landscape restoration and meet focal species and connectivity needs.
- **Alignment of state & federal permitting processes.** Representatives from Caltrans and the Army Corps of Engineers identified RCIS' as helpful for aligning the impact analyses and meeting avoidance, minimization, and mitigation requirements.

Ultimately, the North Baylands RCIS was identified as a concrete example to showcase the value of the RCIS Program and accelerate conservation and mitigation. Project proponents also identified their ideal short-term outcomes and what mechanisms exist to achieve them:

- **Mitigation Credit Agreement.** Sonoma County Transportation Authority identified the creation of an MCA as a key outcome as they develop the North Baylands RCIS. Funding was also identified as a critical need to teeing up the project for success.
- **Successful project delivery.** Caltrans identified project delivery as a key outcome and need for tackling the urgent crises posed by climate change.
- **Restoration proposals.** The Army Corps of Engineers would like to move beyond just planning and see a concrete restoration proposal, which are likely to be complex and time-consuming.
- **Self-mitigating project.** The California Coastal Conservancy emphasized the importance of creating a self-mitigating project which will meet multiple restoration, transportation conservation goals.

- **Establishing roles.** Proponents emphasized the need to establish roles and responsibilities for agencies involved in the development of these projects. and to leverage the respective expertise and differing perspectives to make decisions that will accelerate the desired outcomes, possibly through an interagency team.



Thank you!

Thank you for reading the 2022 RCIS Symposium meeting summary. The Nature Conservancy, Conservation Strategy Group and CDFW are looking forward to providing more opportunities for practitioners and state and federal agencies to connect and to continue to foster a community of practice for the RCIS Program. We'd like to thank the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation for their support for this annual RCIS Symposium.



Appendix

Appendix A - RCIS Overview Slides



RCIS – KEY INFORMATION

- Existing conditions within the RCIS area
 - Existing habitats/land cover types
 - Existing protected areas
 - Pressures and stressors
 - Existing & foreseeable future development
- Focal Species and other conservation elements
- Goals, objectives, actions, and priorities

A BIT OF PROGRAM HISTORY

- 2016 – Governor signs AB 2087 into law
- 2017 – Fish & Game Code 1850-1861 in effect
- 2018 – Current Version of RCA & RCIS Guidelines
- 2019 – Draft MCA Guidelines; on hold for pilot MCA effort
- 2022 – AB 2805*
- 2023 – Updated Program Guidelines



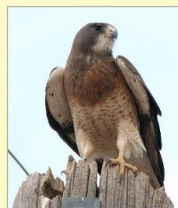
RCIS KEY CONSIDERATIONS & FEATURES

- Prepared by public entity or federally recognized tribe*
- Guides regional conservation, advance mitigation
- Voluntary
- No conservation commitment (not a permit)
- Non-binding on land use authorities

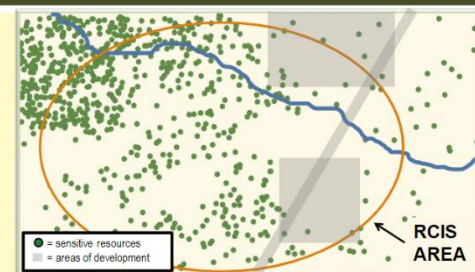


RCIS PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- **Regional Conservation Assessment (RCA)**
 - Ecoregional ecological assessment
- **Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS)**
 - Regional ecological assessment with conservation strategy (goals, objectives, and actions)
- **Mitigation Credit Agreement (MCA)**
 - Advance mitigation credits to offset CESA, CEQA, LSA, & other impacts based on RCIS actions



RCIS EXISTING CONDITIONS

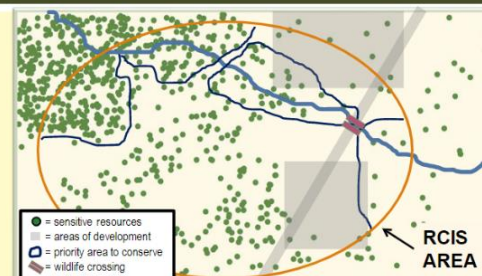


RCA – KEY INFORMATION

- Regional pressures and stressors, including climate change
- Areas of high biological diversity
- Areas for habitat connectivity
- Consider existing & foreseeable future development
- Best available science



RCIS STRATEGY WITH PRIORITIES



POTENTIAL CONSERVATION & ENHANCEMENT ACTIONS

- Create/restore habitat
- Acquire and protect land
- Protect wildlife/habitat corridors
- Restore creeks and rivers
- Restore habitat on public land
- Install wildlife crossings
- Remove fish barriers



MCA CONSIDERATIONS

- Must implement actions of an approved RCIS
- Description of credit types and how they are quantified (Credit ledger and release schedule)
- Ecologically-based service areas
- Land Conservation mechanism (i.e., conservation easement or long-term durability agreement)
- Adaptive management, monitoring, and reporting
- Securities and long-term funding (e.g., endowment)
- Public review is required for approval

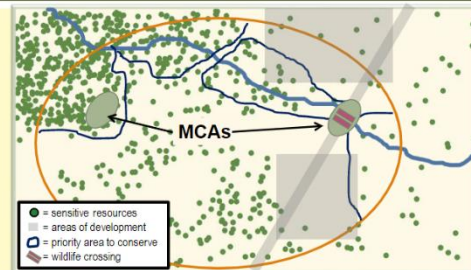
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CURRENT STATUS OF RCISs

RCIS	Proponent	Status
Santa Clara County	Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority	Approved
Yolo	Yolo Habitat Conservancy & DWR	Approved
Mid-Sac Valley	Reclamation District 108	Approved
East Bay	California State Coastal Conservancy	Approved
Antelope Valley	Desert Mountains Conservation Authority	Approved
Monterey County	Transportation Agency for Monterey County	Approved
West San Bernardino	San Bernardino County Transportation Authority	In development
Santa Cruz County	Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission	In development
Kaweah Subbasin	East Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency	Near Final
North Bay Baylands	Metropolitan Transportation Commission	In development
San Joaquin Basin	Reclamation District 2092	In development



RCIS IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH AN MCA



MCA PURPOSE

- Create a flexible advance crediting mitigation mechanism
- Within the boundary of an approved RCIS
- Allows for compensatory mitigation for impacts to an array of ecological resources
 - Threatened and endangered species
 - Other sensitive species
 - Natural communities
 - Ecological processes
 - Wildlife corridors



MCA CONCEPT



MCA KEY FEATURES

- Any entity can create an MCA to sell or use credits
- Offset impacts under CA Laws (CESA, CEQA, LSA)
 - Potential to meet other Agency mitigation requirements
- Credits for permanent or temporary impacts
- Can be established on private or public lands
- Allows for advance credit purchases
- Excess project enhancements can be used as credits
- Potential credits for wildlife crossings and fish passage

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MCA CONCEPT – WILDLIFE CROSSINGS



COMPARING MCA AND BANKS HOW DO THEY DIFFER?

MCA's		Mitigation Banks
Must occur within an approved RCIS	vs	No conservation strategy needed
Temporary & permanent credits	vs	Permanent
Long term durability agreement (temporary) or CE (permanent)	vs	Requires CE
Can occur on public owned lands	vs	Generally not on public lands
Framework*	vs	No framework
CDFW program – other agencies can be included as signatories if desired	vs	Under MOU includes up to 8 agencies (BEI)
Allows for wildlife crossing credits	vs	SB 790 guidelines will allow for wildlife crossing credits
Public review required for MCA approval	vs	No public review
Tribal notification required	vs	Cultural resources review typically conducted

FOR FURTHER RCIS PROGRAM INFORMATION

Please visit:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/Regional-Conservation

Or contact us at:

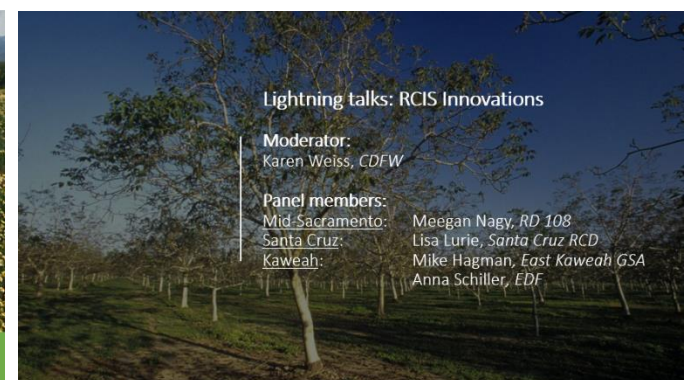
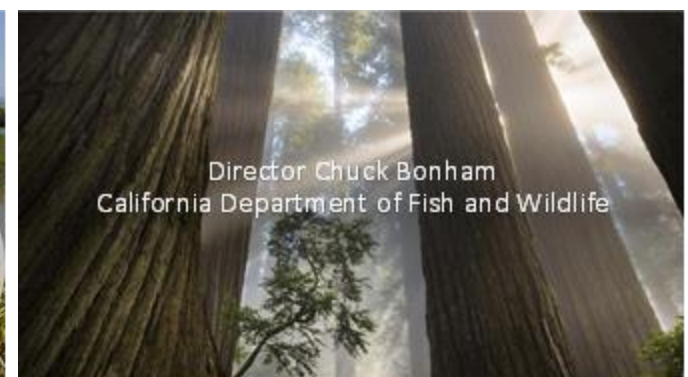
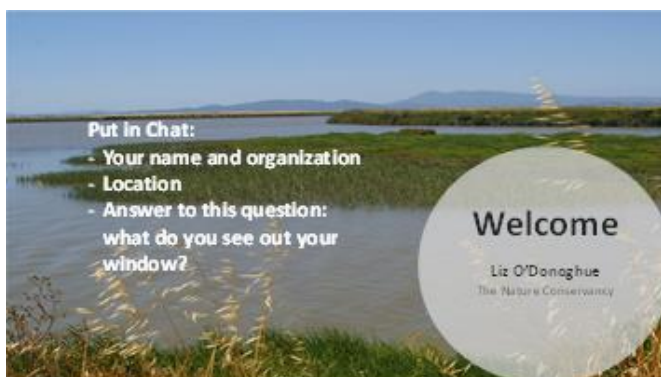
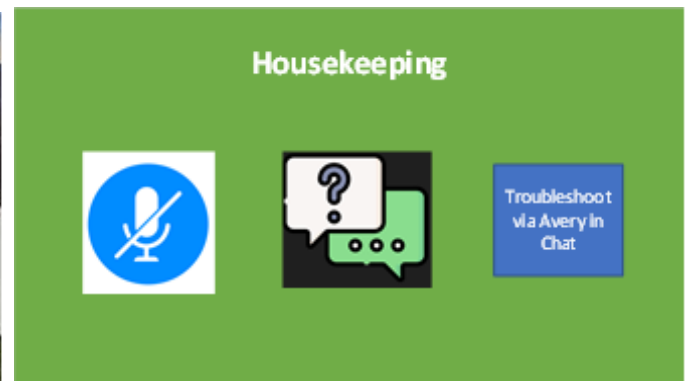
RCIS@wildlife.ca.gov

Ami Olson, RCIS Coordinator
(916) 531-4570

Karen Weiss, Landscape Conservation
Planning Program Manager
(916) 207-1171

Brandon Amrhein, MCA Coordinator
(916) 531-8563

Appendix B - 2022 RCIS Annual Symposium Slides





Santa Cruz County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy

Lisa Lurie
Executive Director
Resource Conservation District of Santa
Cruz County

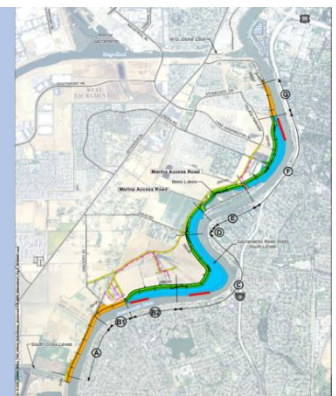


Kaweah Subbasin- Agriculture, Habitat and Groundwater Sustainability



Southport Levee Improvement Project

- 5.6 miles of new or improved levees
 - 3.8 miles of new setback levee
 - 1.8 miles of in-place improvements
- Relocation of South River Road
- Setback levee creates 120 acres of new floodplain habitat
- Floodplain restoration designed to create Riparian Forest Habitat and Waters of US
- On-site mitigation for Southport project impacts and *advance* mitigation for remainder of federal project



A natural communities approach



Southport pilot informing the MCA guidelines

Southport Review:

- Identified Lake and Streambed requirements and project excess mitigation
- Worked through the MCA Template and the draft Conservation Easement
- Reviewing the Development Plan and credit exhibits
- Identifying and developing potential alternative securities and funding options
- Discussing long-term management and overlapping floodway easements

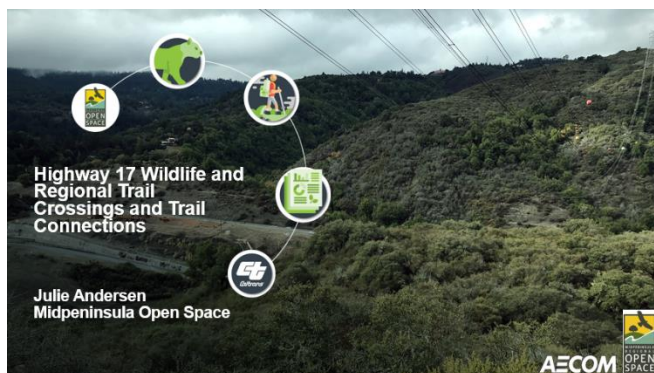
Southport Pilot has helped inform:

- MCA purpose
- Pilot and MCA fees based on Southport
- Pilot and draft checklist
- MCA terms and definitions
- RCIS actions that relate to the MCA
- Necessary securities

NEXT STEPS

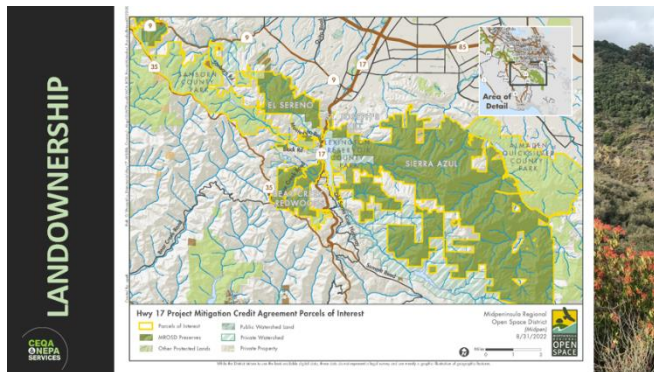
- Draft connectivity credit valuation with TNC and CDFW
- Complete Project CEQA/NEPA
- During permitting, submit MCA application
 1. Multi-agency review, refine, and approve
 2. First credit release

AECOM



Mid-Pen informing connectivity

- Exploring MCAs as a mechanism for wildlife connectivity credits
- Thinking about how to calculate credits - may help inform SB 790 guidelines
- Early engagement with other agencies has allowed Mid-Pen identify multi-agency credits types
- Identified potential partnership with transportation agencies and users of credits
- MCA credits could help offset costs to the project



Exploring Partnerships



SANTA CLARA VALLEY
HABITAT AGENCY

- Supportive of the MCA
- Could they administer credits?
- If not an MCA, enroll private lands to protect the corridor?
- Currently a Project Sponsor and Project Delivery Partner (next phase)
- Midpen currently the MCA proponent.
- How might this change when VTA leads the project?



Spotlight: North Bay Baylands RCIS

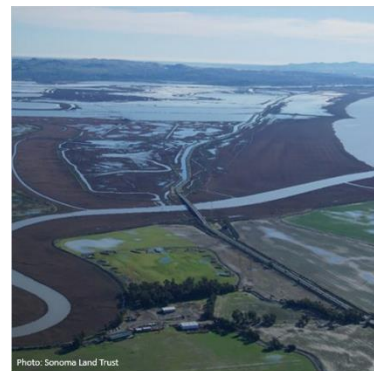
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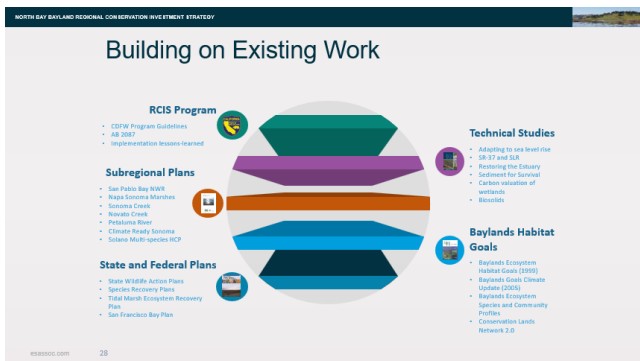
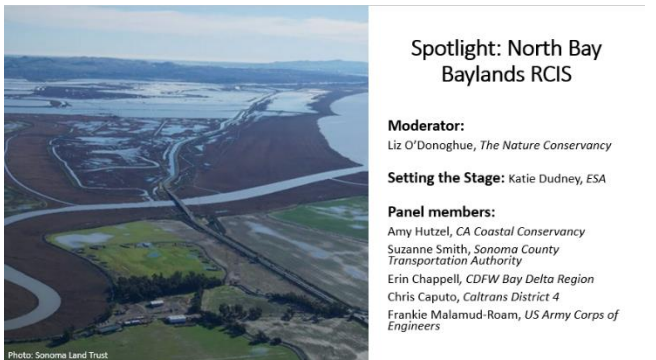
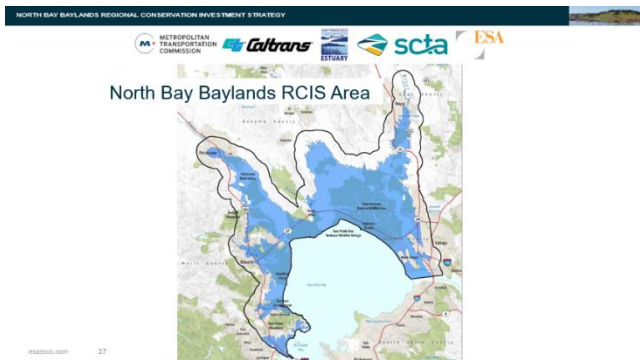
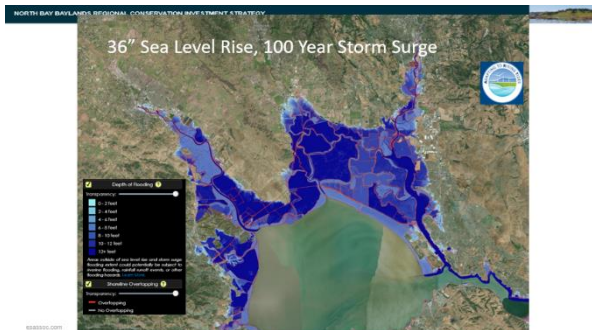
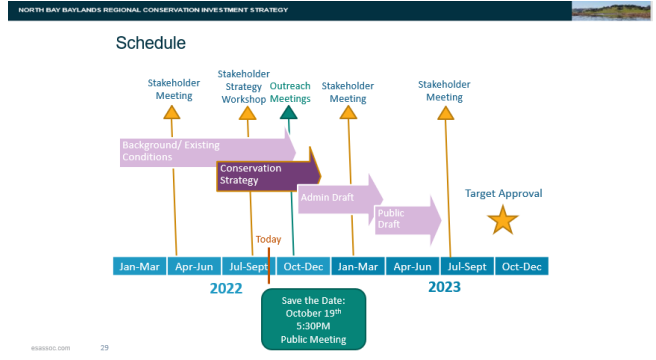
Liz O'Donoghue, *The Nature Conservancy*

Setting the Stage: Katie Dudney, *ESA*

Panel members:

Amy Hutzel, *CA Coastal Conservancy*
Suzanne Smith, *Sonoma County Transportation Authority*
Erin Chappell, *CDFW Bay Delta Region*
Chris Caputo, *Caltrans District 4*
Frankie Malamud-Roam, *US Army Corps of Engineers*







Thank you
Francie Mitchell!!!



Appendix C - Speaker Biography - Discussion #1: Lightning Talks: RCIS Innovation

Name	Title	Organization	Bio
Karen Wiss	Environmental Program Manager, Landscape Conservation Planning Program	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Karen Weiss is the Environmental Program Manager for CDFW's Landscape Conservation and Planning Program which includes statewide coordination, implementation, and legislation for the RCIS Program and other related programs.
Meegan Nagy	Deputy Manager	Reclamation District 108	Meegan Nagy is the Deputy Manager of Reclamation District 108, the proponent for the Mid-Sacramento Valley RCIS focusing on the integration of working lands and restoration.
Lisa Lurie	Executive Director	Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District	Lisa Lurie works to advance collaborative solutions to steward the conservation of the Santa Cruz regions unique natural resources. Lisa is experienced in community-based watershed management, and co-leads development of the Santa Cruz RCIS.
Mike Hagman	General Manager	Lindmore Irrigation District, representing East Kaweah Groundwater Management Agency	Mike Hagman is the General Manager of the Lindmore Irrigation District and Executive Director of the East Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency.
Anna Schiller	Program Manager, Climate Resilient Water Systems	Environmental Defense Fund	Anna Schiller leverages her expertise in water resources management and conservation planning to build collaborative solutions for water and land use in California and beyond.

Appendix D - Speaker Biography - Discussion #2: Mitigation Credit Agreements in Process

Name	Title	Organization	Bio
Chris Beale	Attorney	Resources Law Group	Chris Beale is an attorney at Resources Law Group and works on complex natural resources management issues and advises cities, counties, and other public agencies and private landowners on state and federal natural resource protection laws, conservation planning, open space preservation, and the development of environmental mitigation strategies. Chris provided expert consultation throughout the drafting and passage of the original AB 2087 legislation.
Paul Dirksen	Flood Protection Planner	City of West Sacramento	Paul Dirksen is the Flood Protection Planner for the West Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency and is currently the project manager of the Floodplain Restoration Project, which is the basis for the MCA pilot to develop and implement a mitigation crediting agreement for West Sacramento's Levee Improvement Program.
Julie Andersen	Senior Resource Management Specialist	Midpeninsula Open Space District	Julie Andersen serves as the wildlife program lead at the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and specializes in natural resources planning and compliance with NEPA & CEQA. Project manager for the Highway 17 project.
Jeff Drongesen	Chief, Habitat Conservation Planning Branch	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Jeff Drongesen is the Chief of CDFW's Habitat Conservation Planning Branch, with over 27 years at CDFW and has been involved with various programs around the state, including CEQA, CESA, NCCP, and RCIS/MCA.

Appendix E - Speaker Biography - Discussion #3: Spotlight: North Baylands RCIS

Name	Title	Organization	Bio
Jennifer Norris	Deputy Secretary- Biodiversity and Habitat	California Department of Natural Resources	Jennifer Norris serves as Deputy Secretary for Biodiversity and Habitat at the California Natural Resources Agency. She leads the state's 30x30 initiative and oversees "Cutting Green Tape" in support of landscape scale habitat restoration. Jennifer has held numerous positions in federal and state government including most recently as supervisor of the Sacramento Office for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. She has extensive experience in conservation policy, endangered species protection and ecosystem management.
Amy Hutzel	Executive Officer	State Coastal Conservancy	Amy Hutzel is Executive Officer at the State Coastal Conservancy, which works to protect and restore habitats, increase public access and recreation, and plan and implement nature-based climate change adaptation along the California Coast, in coastal watersheds, and in the San Francisco Bay Area.
Suzanne Smith	Executive Director	Sonoma County Transportation Authority	Suzanne Smith is Executive Director of sister agencies -the Sonoma County Transportation Authority and the Regional Climate Protection Authority. She has been in that role since 1997 on the transportation side and managed the creation of the climate agency more than a decade ago. She also chairs the State Route 37 Executive Steering Committee -made up of Marin, Sonoma, Napa and Solano Transportation Authorities plus Caltrans and MTC -that staffs the Joint Policy Committee and oversees project development in the corridor.
Erin Chappell	Bay Delta Regional Manager	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Erin Chappell serves at the Bay Delta Regional Manager for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Bay Delta Region strives to enhance, protect, and manage the region's diverse habitats and species for their long-term sustainability and use and enjoyment by the public through research, monitoring, restoration, permitting, education, and outreach.
Chris Caputo	Chief	Caltrans District 4	Chris is Chief, Office of Cultural Resource Studies at Caltrans for District 4, which covers the North Baylands/SR 37 area.
Frankie Malamud-Roam		US Army Corps of Engineers	Frances Malamud-Roam has been working at the Corps for 7 years in Regulatory, prior to that she was at Caltrans District 4 in the Biological Sciences and Permits Office. Since 2020, she has been a member of the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT), a team of staff members from 6 state and federal regulatory agencies who work collaboratively to improve the permitting process for multi-benefit habitat restoration projects.

Appendix F - Final Agenda

Regional Conservation Investment Strategy Symposium (virtual) September 20, 2022

Registration: <https://regionalconservation22.splashthat.com/>

Time	Topic	Who
11am – 12pm	RCIS Program Overview (optional) <i>Overview of the RCIS Program including purpose, history, components, and future</i>	CA Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Habitat Conservation Staff: Ami Olson, Brandon Amrhein, Karen Weiss
1pm – 1:05pm	RCIS Symposium Kickoff	Liz O'Donoghue, The Nature Conservancy
1:05pm – 1:15pm	Opening Speaker	Director Chuck Bonham, CDFW
1:15pm – 1:45pm	Lightning Talks: RCIS Innovation <i>Innovations in RCIS: Motivations, preparation, engagement, and implementation</i>	<u>Facilitator:</u> Karen Weiss, CDFW <u>Speakers:</u> Meegan Nagy, Reclamation District 108 Lisa Lurie, Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District Mike Hagman, East Kaweah GMA Anna Shiller, Environmental Defense Fund
1:45pm – 2:15pm	Discussion Panel: Mitigation Credit Agreements (MCAs) in Progress	<u>Facilitator:</u> Chris Beale, Resources Law Group <u>Panelists:</u> Paul Dirksen, West Sacramento Flood Control District Julie Andersen, Midpeninsula Open Space District Jeff Drongesen, CDFW
2:15pm – 2:25pm	BREAK	
2:25pm – 2:45pm	Facilitated Dialogue with Policy Leaders <i>Challenges and opportunities facing California and how the RCIS Program can advance state goals</i>	<u>In Discussion:</u> Secretary Wade Cronfoot, Natural Resources Agency (tentative) Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer – Kahan Jay Ziegler, The Nature Conservancy
2:45pm – 3:25pm	Spotlight: North Baylands RCIS <i>Silo busting: how can the North Baylands RCIS help communities, infrastructure and conservation agencies achieve multi-benefit outcomes and meet critical goals such as climate resilience, transportation, and conservation?</i>	<u>Facilitator:</u> Deputy Secretary Jennifer Norris, Natural Resources Agency <u>Background:</u> Katie Dudney, ESA Associates <u>Panelists:</u> Amy Hutzler, CA Coastal Conservancy Chris Caputo, Caltrans District 4 Suzanne Smith, Sonoma County Transportation Auth. Frankie Malamoud-Roam, US Army Corps of Engineers Erin Chappell, CDFW Bay Delta Region
3:25pm – 3:30pm	Conclusion, Feedback	Liz O'Donoghue, The Nature Conservancy
4:30pm – 6pm	In-Person Reception	TNC's office: 830 S Street, Sacramento

Appendix G - Organizations in attendance

LA County Department of Regional Planning
CA Senate
The Nature Conservancy
California Department of Water
River Partners
CA High Speed Rail
Sequoia Riverlands Trust
LA County Department of Regional Planning
WRA, Inc
GEI Consultants

AECOM
LA County Department of Regional Planning
CA Water Boards
Environmental Science Associates (ESA)
Resource Environmental Solutions
Sequoia Riverlands Trust
Bren School of Environmental Science UCSB
Westervelt Ecological Services
Santa Cruz County
CreativEnvironment Group LLC
Sonoma County Transit Authority
Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
Area West Environmental Inc.
Ecosystem Investment Partners

California Air Resources Board
Conservation Strategy Group
State Coastal Conservancy
Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
AWE
The Conservation Fund
ECORP Consulting
Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge
Alford Environmental LLC
Resources Law Group, LLP
Mountains Recreation & Conservation
Authority
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
U.S. EPA
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Conservation Innovations Group
California Native Plant Society
USFWS
DWR
Caltrans
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Metropolitan Water District
Caltrans
Santa Clara Valley Water
Solution Strategies