

REGIONAL CONSERVATION INVESTMENT STRATEGIES (RCIS) PROGRAM

Overview and Status

2020 RCIS Symposium



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The Nature
Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.

WHY WAS THE RCIS PROGRAM CREATED?

- Desire for faster and cheaper conservation planning
- Need for voluntary conservation planning
- Desire for more flexible advance mitigation options
- Incentivize early investment in conservation priorities



RCIS PROGRAM – KEY FEATURES

- Guides regional conservation, advance mitigation
- Voluntary
- Not a permit; no conservation commitment
- Non-binding on land use authorities

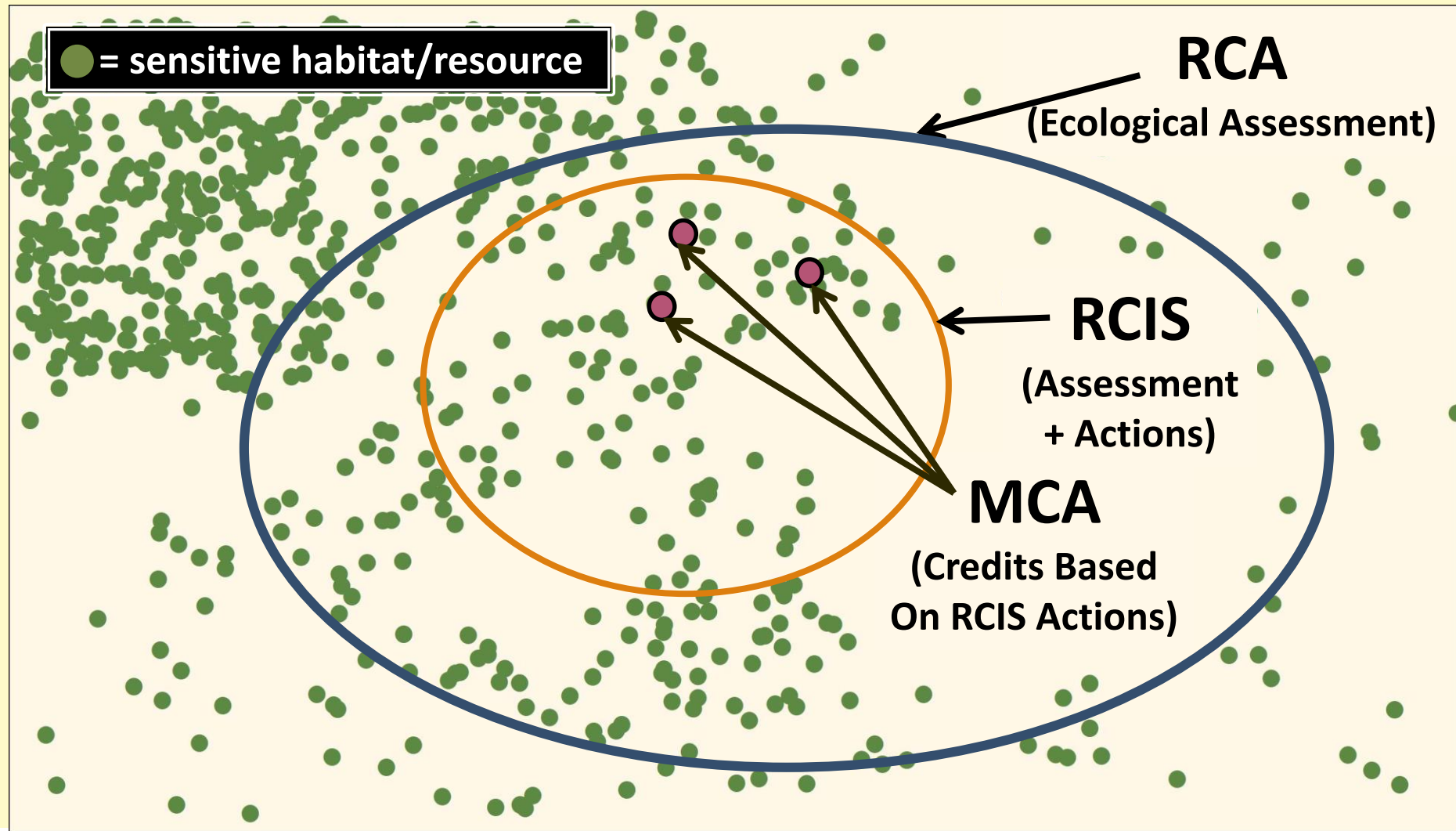


RCIS PROGRAM COMPONENTS

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



RCIS PROGRAM COMPONENTS



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 – KEY INFORMATION

- Existing conditions within the RCIS area
 - Including pressures and stressors
- Focal Species and other conservation elements
- Goals, objectives, actions, and priorities

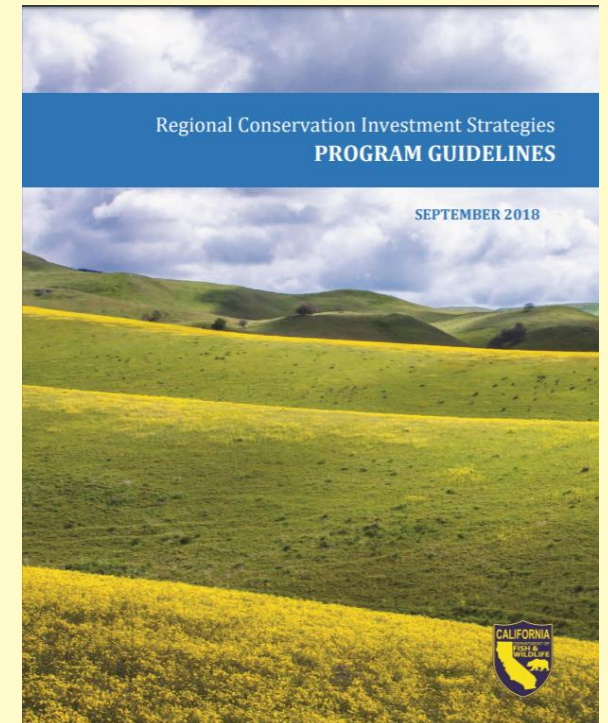
POTENTIAL CONSERVATION & ENHANCEMENT ACTIONS

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



RCIS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- Statute (FGC 1850-1861)
- Program Guidelines (Sept. 2018)
- Outreach and Engagement
 - Local land use authorities
 - Public meeting and document review
 - Encourages stakeholder engagement



RCIS POTENTIAL USES

- Conservation (e.g. grants)
- Advance mitigation (e.g. Mitigation Credit Agreements)
- Guide infrastructure development
- Possible land-use planning efforts



MITIGATION CREDIT AGREEMENTS

- Anyone may apply for an MCA
- Based on conservation & habitat enhancement actions in an *approved* RCIS
- MCAs ***implement*** RCIS actions as mitigation credits



MCA KEY FEATURES

- Advance mitigation, transferrable credits
- Offset impacts under CA Laws (CESA, CEQA, LSA)
- Potential to offset other local, state or federal impacts
- *Excess* project enhancements can be used as credits
- Offset permanent or *temporary* impacts
- Potential credits for wildlife crossings and fish passage



POTENTIAL FUNDING & COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES

- **Proposition 68** – ~ \$3M (remaining, of \$5M) to develop RCISs (www.wcb.ca.gov)
- **SB 1, SB 103** – advance mitigation for transportation
- **Agencies** - transportation, water, other local agencies



THE RCIS PROGRAM STATUS

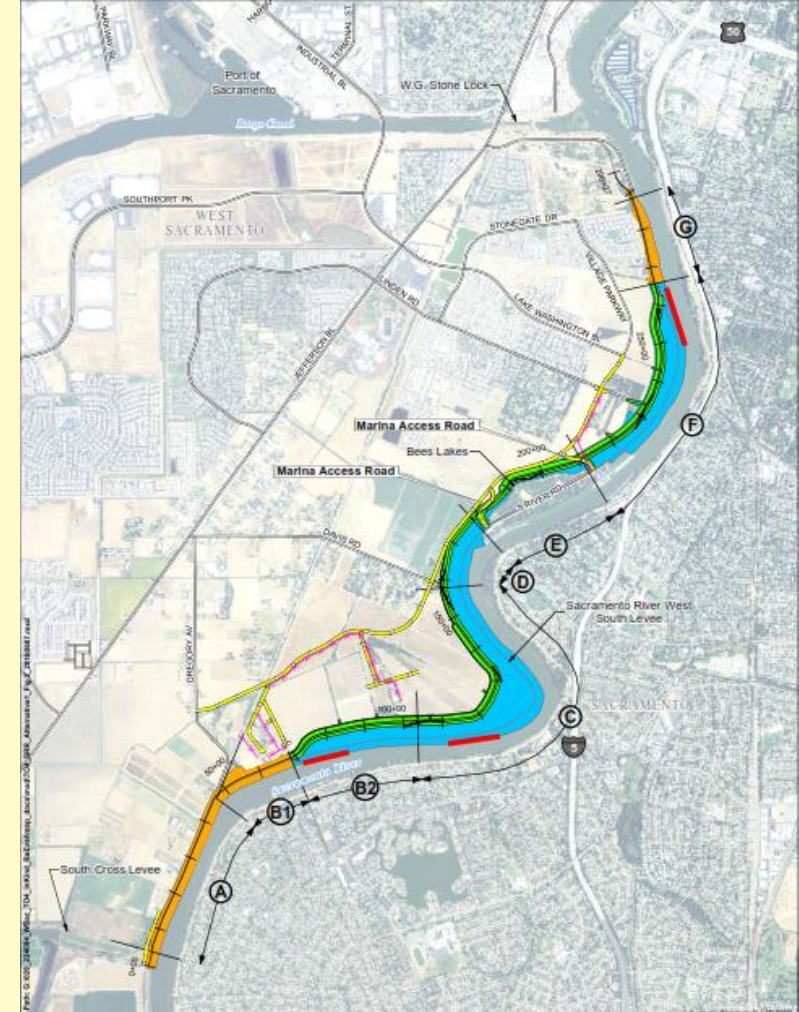
RCIS	Proponent	Status
Santa Clara County	Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority	Approved
Yolo	Yolo Habitat Conservancy & DWR	Approved
Mid-Sac Valley	Reclamation District 108	Near-final
East Bay	California State Coastal Conservancy	Near-final
Antelope Valley	Desert Mountains Conservation Authority	Post-public/ substantive review
Monterey County	Transportation Agency for Monterey County	Public/substantive review
West San Bernardino	San Bernardino County Transportation Authority	In development
Santa Cruz	Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission	In development
Kaweah Subbasin	East Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency	In development



PILOT MCA PROGRAM

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
- Setback levee creates 120 acres of new floodplain habitat
- On-site mitigation for Southport project impacts and **advance** mitigation for remainder of federal project





QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

FOR FURTHER RCIS PROGRAM INFORMATION

Please visit

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/
Regional-Conservation](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/Regional-Conservation)

Landscape Conservation Planning Program

Habitat Conservation Planning Branch

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