



Overview of the Yolo

Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan

Background

The Yolo Habitat Conservancy completed the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (Yolo HCP/NCCP) in 2018 and began Yolo HCP/NCCP implementation on January 11, 2019. The Yolo HCP/NCCP is a countywide conservation plan to provide Endangered Species Act permits and associated mitigation for infrastructure (e.g. roads and bridges) and development activities (e.g. agricultural facilities, housing, and commercial buildings) identified for construction over the next 50 years in Yolo County. The Yolo HCP/NCCP coordinates mitigation to maximize benefits to species, as well as conserve habitat above and beyond required mitigation for the following 12 identified species:

- Palmate-bracted bird's beak • Valley elderberry longhorn beetle • California tiger salamander**
- Western pond turtle • Giant garter snake • Swainson's hawk • White-tailed kite • Western yellow-billed cuckoo**
- Western burrowing owl • Least Bell's vireo • Bank swallow • Tricolored blackbird**

The plan strikes a sensible balance between natural resource conservation and economic growth in the region. Prior to completion of the Yolo HCP/NCCP, local agencies required project proponents to mitigate for environmental impacts on a project-by-project, species-by-species basis, including securing land to meet mitigation requirements. The Yolo HCP/NCCP replaces this piecemeal process with a new process that requires proponents to pay a fee to the Conservancy in exchange for Endangered Species Act coverage for all 12 species. The Conservancy will adjust the fees annually to ensure mitigation costs are fully covered.

Benefits

The Yolo HCP/NCCP requires the Conservancy to protect 33,362 acres over 50 years, primarily through the acquisition of habitat conservation easements on agricultural land, including 8,231 acres above and beyond mitigation requirements. The Yolo HCP/NCCP coordinates these conservation efforts to ensure that lands are selected consistent with a strategy based on biological criteria, including the selection of lands that provide habitat to multiple species; and are located near existing protected lands and riparian areas. The Yolo Habitat Conservancy also consults regularly with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), as well as the Conservancy's Advisory Committee and other partners. This approach provides the following benefits:



Local control.

The Yolo HCP/NCCP moves compliance with state and federal endangered species laws for public and private activities from state and federal agencies to the local level. The Conservancy administers the permits with wildlife agency oversight to streamline the existing process while still providing comprehensive regulatory coverage for currently listed species and those that may be listed in the future.



Improved and increased species conservation.

Coordinated conservation planning through the Yolo HCP/NCCP provides significant benefits to endangered and threatened species as it replaces piecemeal mitigation and adds conservation beyond mitigation.



Streamlined permitting process.

The Yolo HCP/NCCP replaces the project-by-project mitigation process characterized by uncertainties associated with timing, costs, and litigation. This provides an economic benefit to public agencies and other projects in the form of streamlined Endangered Species Act permitting.

Covered Activity Categories

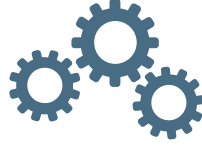
The Yolo HCP/NCCP covers a total of 21,559 acres of activities in five categories. This includes 17,550 acres for urban and rural projects, 706 acres for public/private operations and maintenance, 956 acres for conservation strategy implementation, and 2,347 acres for neighboring landowner agreements.



Urban projects and activities



Rural projects and activities



Public/private operations and maintenance



Conservation strategy implementation



Neighboring landowner agreements

Conservation Commitments

In addition to strengthening local control over land use and species protection, the Yolo HCP/NCCP will provide a more efficient process for protecting natural resources by creating a new reserve system that will be larger in scale, more ecologically valuable, and easier to manage than the individual mitigation sites. As an NCCP, the Yolo HCP/NCCP also provides for conservation beyond mitigation requirements.

Land Conservation Commitments

33,362 total acres of conservation commitments



- Mitigation land
- Existing conservation land
- New conservation land beyond mitigation
- Restoration of riparian and wetlands

Yolo HCP/NCCP Development Fees

In return for permit coverage for 12 species, the Conservancy charges project proponents a land cover fee that provides the Conservancy with funding to build and manage the reserve system, as well as comply with permit conditions. The Conservancy will update the fees annually. If a project affects wetlands, the Conservancy will add one of the three additional fees to the land cover fee.

Yolo Regional Conservation Investment Strategy / Local Conservation Plan (Yolo RCIS/LCP)

The Yolo Habitat Conservancy is also preparing the Yolo Regional Conservation Investment Strategy / Local Conservation Plan (Yolo RCIS/LCP) in partnership with local stakeholders, Yolo County, the California Natural Resources Agency, and the Department of Water Resources. This voluntary, landscape-scale conservation plan will identify conservation priorities to guide public and private conservation actions and investment, such as habitat restoration and protection. It will provide a blueprint for further voluntary, non-regulatory conservation in Yolo County that addresses conservation needs not addressed in the Yolo HCP/NCCP.

