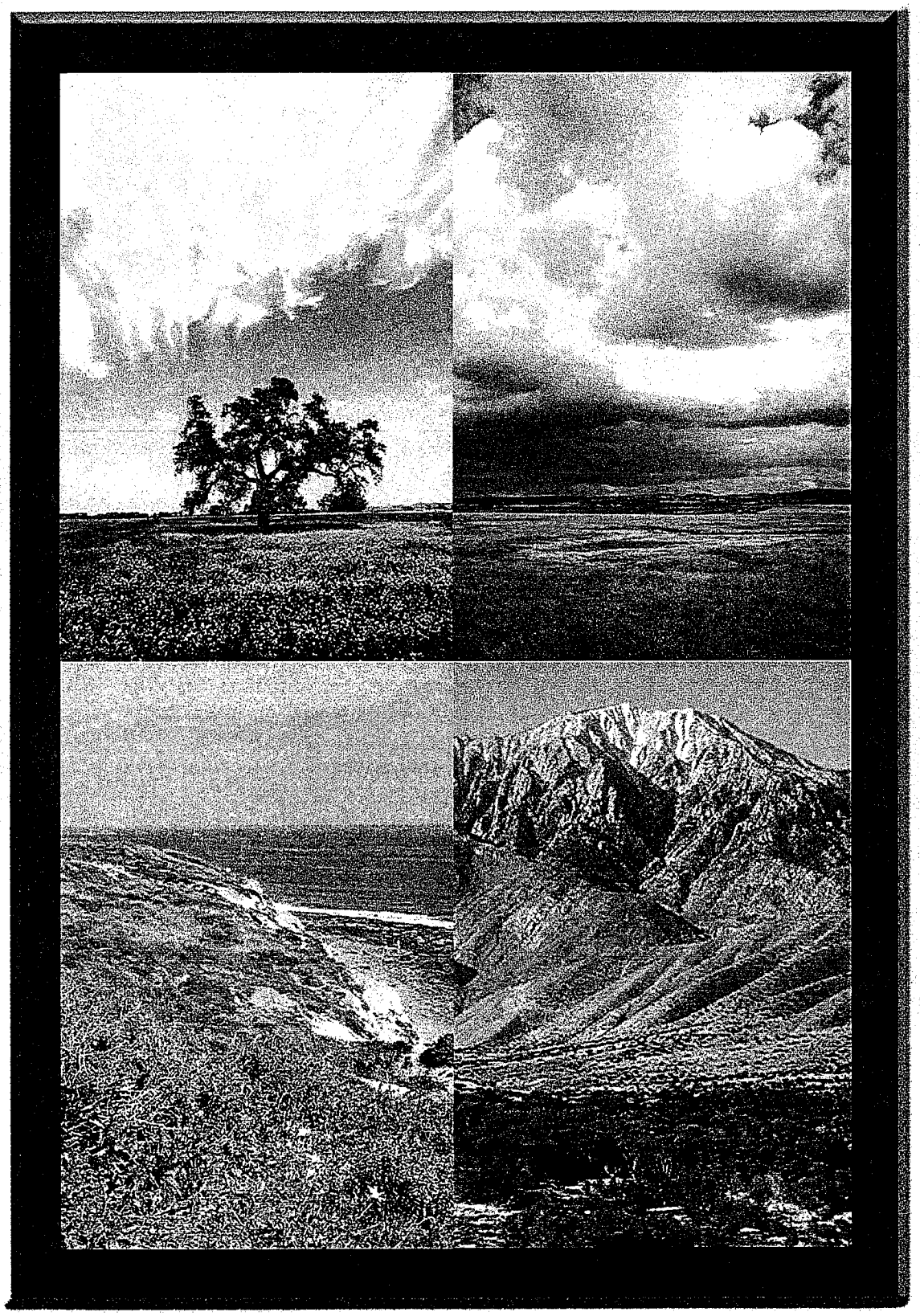
California Habitat Conservation Planning Coalition

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund:

Fiscal Year 2011 Funding Request



March 2010

REQUEST

The California Habitat Conservation Planning Coalition requests that funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (the "Fund") increase from the $85 million Fiscal Year 2010 level to $100 million in Fiscal Year 2011. This increase would bring the program closer to the FY2001 funding level of $125M, corrected for inflation, and help satisfy the urgent need for funding for endangered species conservation efforts, particularly conservation associated with regional Habitat Conservation Plans. The California Habitat Planning Coalition consists of local agencies, conservation organizations and business organizations supporting regional Habitat Conservation Plans.

SUPPORTED BY

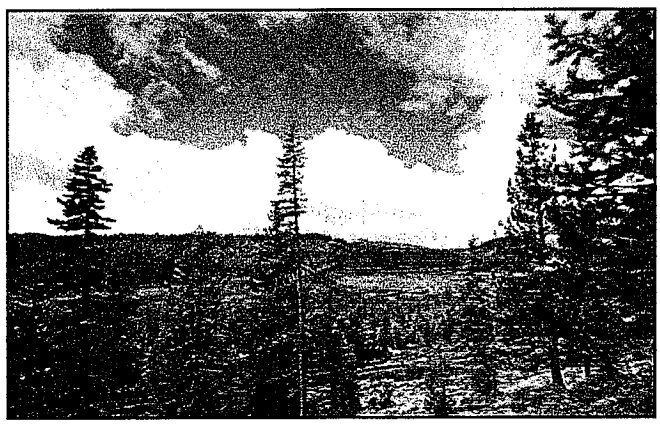
Local Agencies:
California State Association of Counties
Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Coachella Valley Conservation Commission
Contra Costa County
Delta Counties Coalition
East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy
Placer County
Riverside County
Sacramento County
San Diego County
San Joaquin Council of Governments
Santa Clara County
Solano County Water Agency
Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority
Yolo County

Conservation Organizations:
California Land Conservancy
California Native Plant Society
Endangered Habitats League
Friends of the Desert Mountains
Institute for Ecological Health
The Nature Conservancy

Business/Infrastructure:
Building Industry Association of San Diego County
Building Industry Association of Southern California
Home Builders Association of Northern California
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
The Sauls Company

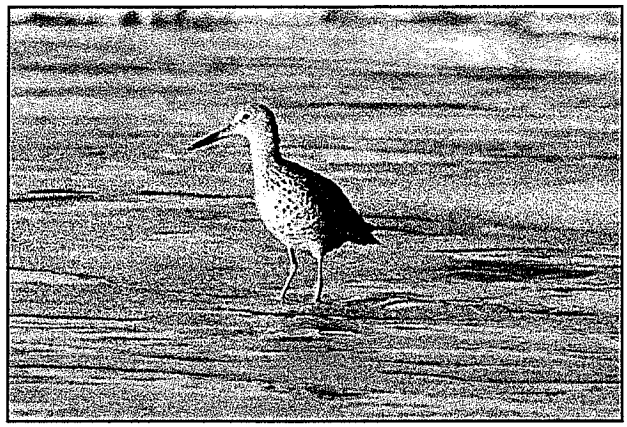
CALIFORNIA HCPs

Key Regional HCPs:
Yuba- Sutter HCP/NCCP
Yolo Natural Heritage Program
Western Riverside County MSHCP/NCCP
South Sacramento HCP
Solano HCP
Santa Clara Valley HCP/NCCP
San Joaquin County Multi-Species Conservation and Open Space Plan
San Diego North County Multiple Species Conservation Program NCCP
San Diego Multiple Habitat Conservation Program NCCP
San Diego County Multiple Habitat Conservation Open Space Plan NCCP
San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Program NCCP
Placer County Conservation Plan
Natomas / Metro Air Park HCPs
East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP
Coachella Valley MSHCP/NCCP
Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP)

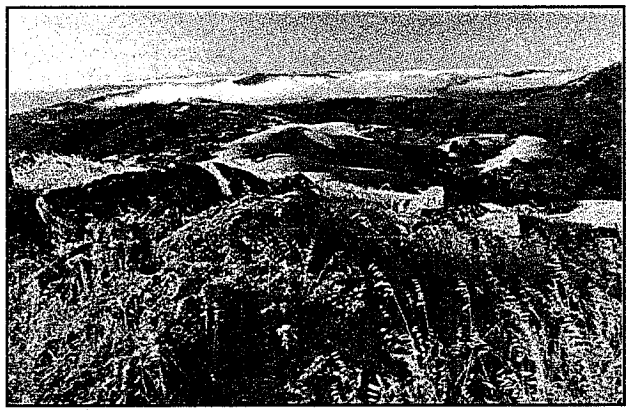


THE VALUE OF HCPs AND THE COOPERATIVE ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND

HCPs Benefit Business and the Environment: Regional Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) establish a coordinated process for permitting and mitigating the incidental take of endangered species. This process creates an alternative to the project-by-project approach. Rather than individually surveying, negotiating, and securing mitigation and permit coverage, proponents of public and private projects are covered by an umbrella regional permit. Habitat preservation, restoration and stewardship are conducted in a coordinated way by a local conservancy. Some benefits of regional HCPs are:



- Purchase, restore, and permanently protect large, interconnected and biologically rich blocks of habitat.
- Redirect money away from the process of permitting and toward the protection of resources.
- Improve regulatory certainty and permitting efficiency for local jurisdictions and the development community.
- Provide fair compensation to willing landowners for permanent protection of their land.



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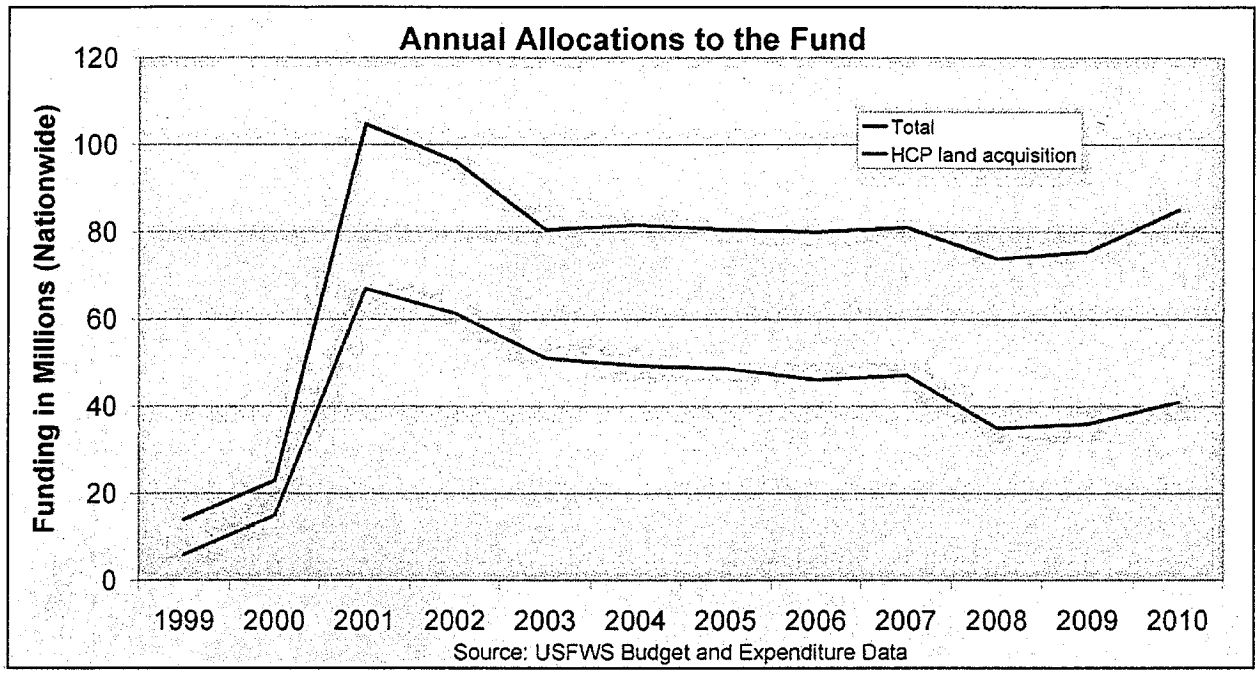
Federal Funds Spur Substantial State and Local Investments: The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (Fund) provides grants to states for land acquisition consistent with approved HCPs, for assistance with preparation of HCPs and for other projects that help endangered species to recover. Funds for HCP land acquisition are by far the largest component. In California, the funds are subsequently granted to local agencies.

Major advantages of the Fund are that it leverages federal dollars and promotes regional HCPs. Grants from the Fund typically require a substantial non-federal match. The potential for grants from the Fund provides a key incentive for state and local agencies to develop and implement HCPs for the benefit of federally protected species.

WHY THE FUND ALLOCATION NEEDS TO INCREASE

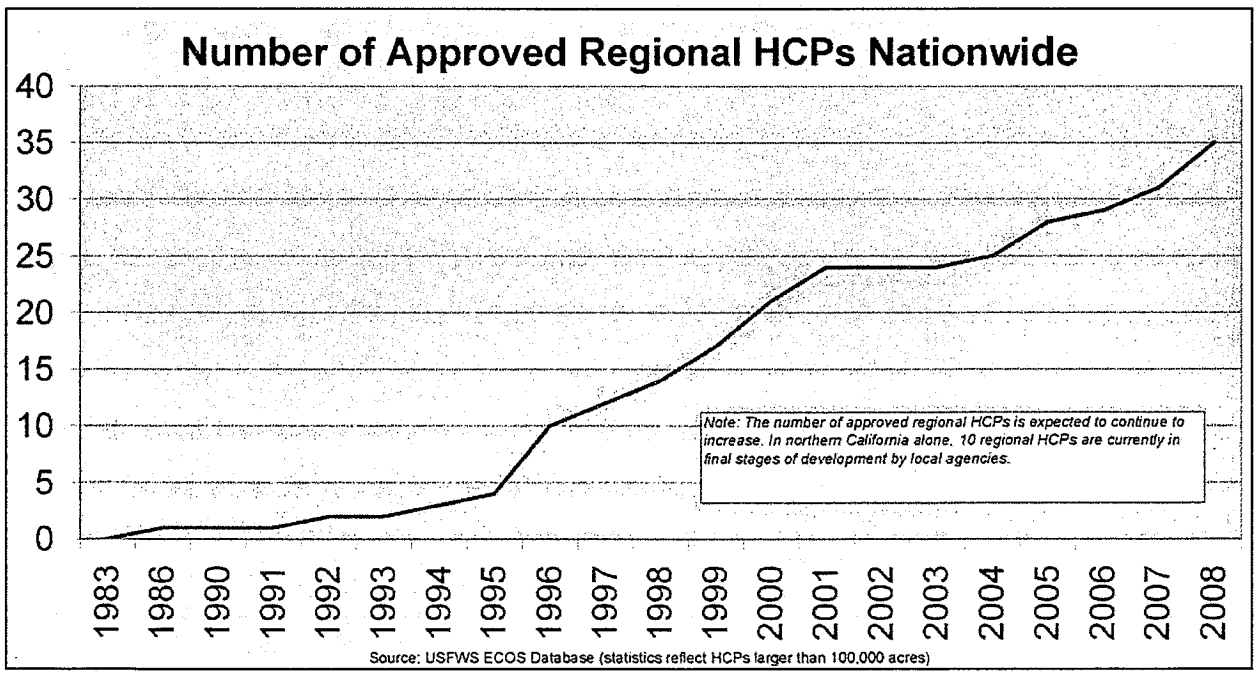
A) Funding Levels Have Declined and Stagnated

Allocations to the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund have declined & stagnated over the last decade. The Fund is currently down 20% from the FY2001 high of $104.7 million.



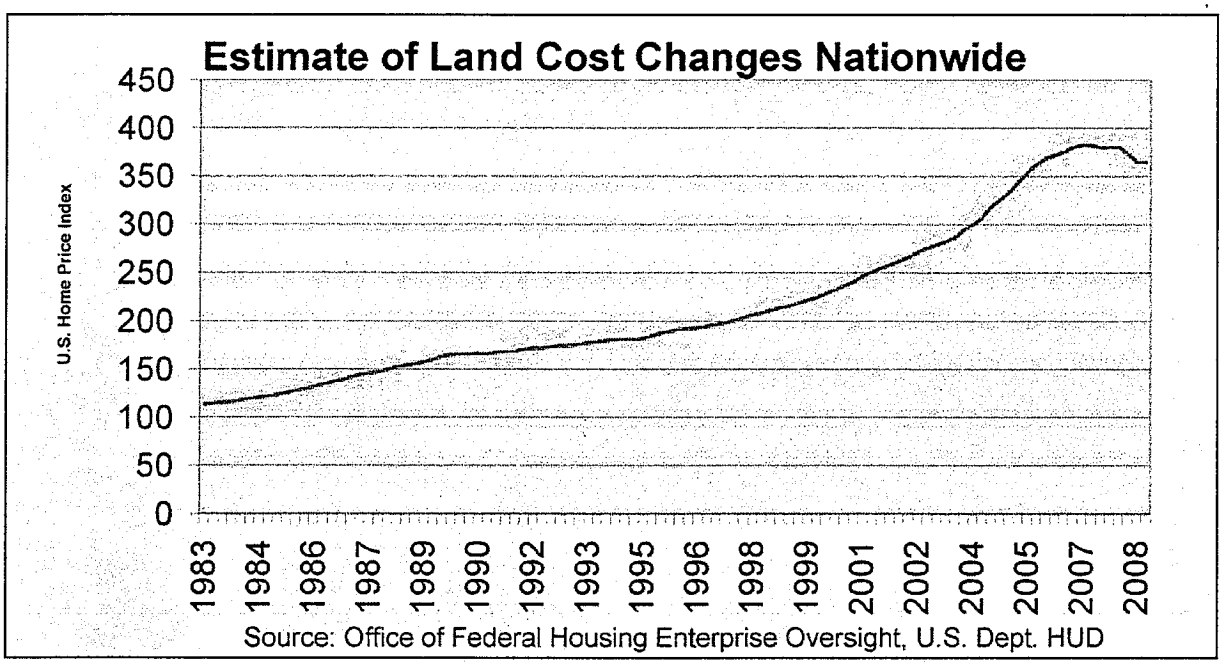
B) The number of Approved HCPs Continues to Grow

While funding has declined, the number of approved HCPs that need such funds has increased dramatically. The number of approved, large-scale HCPs in the country has grown from one in 1983 to 35 in 2008.



C) Land Conservation Costs Have Grown

While funding has declined, the costs of preparing and implementing HCPs have steadily increased. For example, land acquisition costs for many HCPs have almost doubled in the last decade.



INCREASING THE FUND TO $100 MILLION IN FY 2011

The California Habitat Conservation Planning Coalition proposes increasing the Fund to $100 million in FY2011 in order to bring it closer to the FY2001 funding level of $125 million, corrected for inflation. To attempt to keep pace with the actual funding needs and the prolific growth in the number of regional HCPs, the Fund needs to increase more substantially in future years when Federal funds are less constrained. In FY 2008, grant applications from California alone eclipsed the total value of the Fund. Demand will multiply rapidly in the near future. Approximately ten regional HCPs are in the final stages of preparation in California alone.

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CONSERVATION BENEFITS OF CALIFORNIA HCPs

Regional HCPs in California are a primary mechanism for the conservation of land and species in some of the fastest growing areas of the state. Collectively, regional HCPs in California will conserve more than 1.4 million acres of land. Conserved land will be restored, enhanced and managed for the benefit of the widest array of species found in the United States. Conserved land will also provide valuable open space to residents and visitors, protecting the natural beauty of these regions and providing numerous recreational opportunities.

Plan Name	Covered Species	Acres To Be Conserved*
Butte Regional Conservation Plan	41	n/a
Coachella Valley MSHCP/NCCP	27	240,000
East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP	28	30,000
Natomas / Metro Air Park HCPs	22	9,000
Placer County Conservation Plan	33	60,000
San Diego County Multiple Habitat Conservation Open Space Plan NCCP	263	158,000
San Diego MSCP - County Sub Area Plan	85	98,000
San Diego North County MSCP / NCCP	63	107,000
San Joaquin County Multi-species Conservation and Open Space Plan	97	101,000
Santa Clara Valley HCP/NCCP	30	45,000
Solano HCP	36	30,000
South Sacramento HCP	40	58,000
Western Riverside County MSHCP/NCCP	146	500,000
Yolo Natural Heritage Program	64	n/a
TOTAL		1,436,000

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF CALIFORNIA HCPs

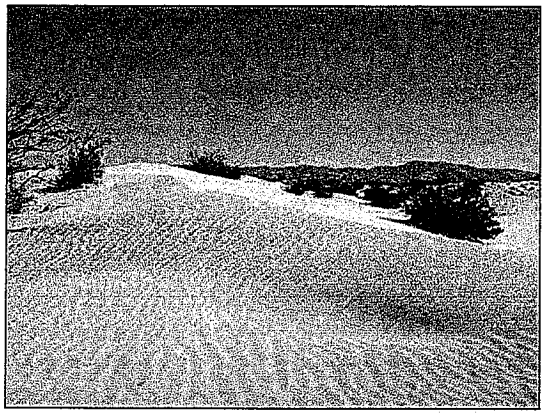
Regional HCPs in California provide coordinated, regional permits for public infrastructure and private development projects. These regional umbrella permits last 30 to 75 years, transfer authority to local government, and improve certainty of the permit process for project proponents. Regional HCPs in California are expected to permit projects with a cumulative value of $1.6 trillion.

Plan Name	Regional Permits* Thru...	Est. Value of Covered Activities**
Butte Regional Conservation Plan	2041	n/a
Coachella Valley MSHCP/NCCP	2083	$300 billion
East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP	2037	$12 billion
Natomas / Metro Air Park HCPs	2053	$18 billion
Placer County Conservation Plan	2061	$115 billion
San Diego County Multiple Habitat Conservation Open Space Plan NCCP	2061	$228 billion
San Diego MSCP - County Sub Area Plan	2047	$118 billion
San Diego North County MSCP / NCCP	2060	$104 billion
San Joaquin County Multi-species Conservation and Open Space Plan	2051	$109 billion
Santa Clara Valley	2060	$25 billion
Solano HCP	2040	$12 billion
South Sacramento HCP	2061	$45 billion
Western Riverside County MSHCP/NCCP	2079	$500 billion
Yolo Natural Heritage Program	2041	n/a
TOTAL		$1.6 trillion

* The term of regional permits is estimated for those HCPs in preparation.
** Assumes a value of $1 million per acre for every acre of development that may be covered under the HCP.

EXAMPLES OF CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Preserving the Sand Dune Ecosystem, the Coachella Valley Multiple Species HCP/NCCP: In two separate purchases, $5,542,000 from the Fund were matched with $5,558,680 in state and local funds to acquire 1,560 acres adjacent to existing preserves for the Coachella Valley Fringe Toed Lizard, helping to conserve the remaining active desert dunes in the Coachella Valley. In total, more than 65,000 acres has been acquired since 1996 when the Plan was initiated. Local, state, other federal and non-profit sources contributed the vast majority of the necessary funds.



Benton 36, Western Riverside County MSHCP: Acquired 36 acres in the middle of a rapidly developing area in the southern portion of the county using $1.3M from the Fund leveraged with $700,000 from local sources. This key acquisition expanded the Core 2 reserve in the vicinity of the Cities of Murrieta and Temecula. The purchase provides excellent coastal sage scrub habitat while protecting populations of California Gnatcatcher and Quino Checkerspot Butterfly.

Ramona Grasslands, San Diego MSCP: Acquired 2,780 acres at the County of San Diego Ramona Grasslands Preserve utilizing $19.9M from the Fund, leveraged with $7M of State funding and $3.4M County General Funds. The Ramona grasslands, west of the town of Ramona, feature habitat that has all but disappeared in the county. Its vernal pools, alkali playas, and native grasses make this an exceptional part of the natural heritage of San Diego.

Fox Ridge, East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP : Acquired 222 acres at risk for rural residential development for $1.76M. The Fund covered one third ($555K) of the purchase price. Funds from a private foundation and from two local agencies covered the remainder. The acquisition protects the lower reaches of Briones Valley, a key wildlife corridor for San Joaquin kit fox. The acquisition also protects more than two miles of Briones Creek, suitable habitat for California red-legged frog.

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A coalition of local agencies, conservation organizations and business organizations supporting regional Habitat Conservation Plans.

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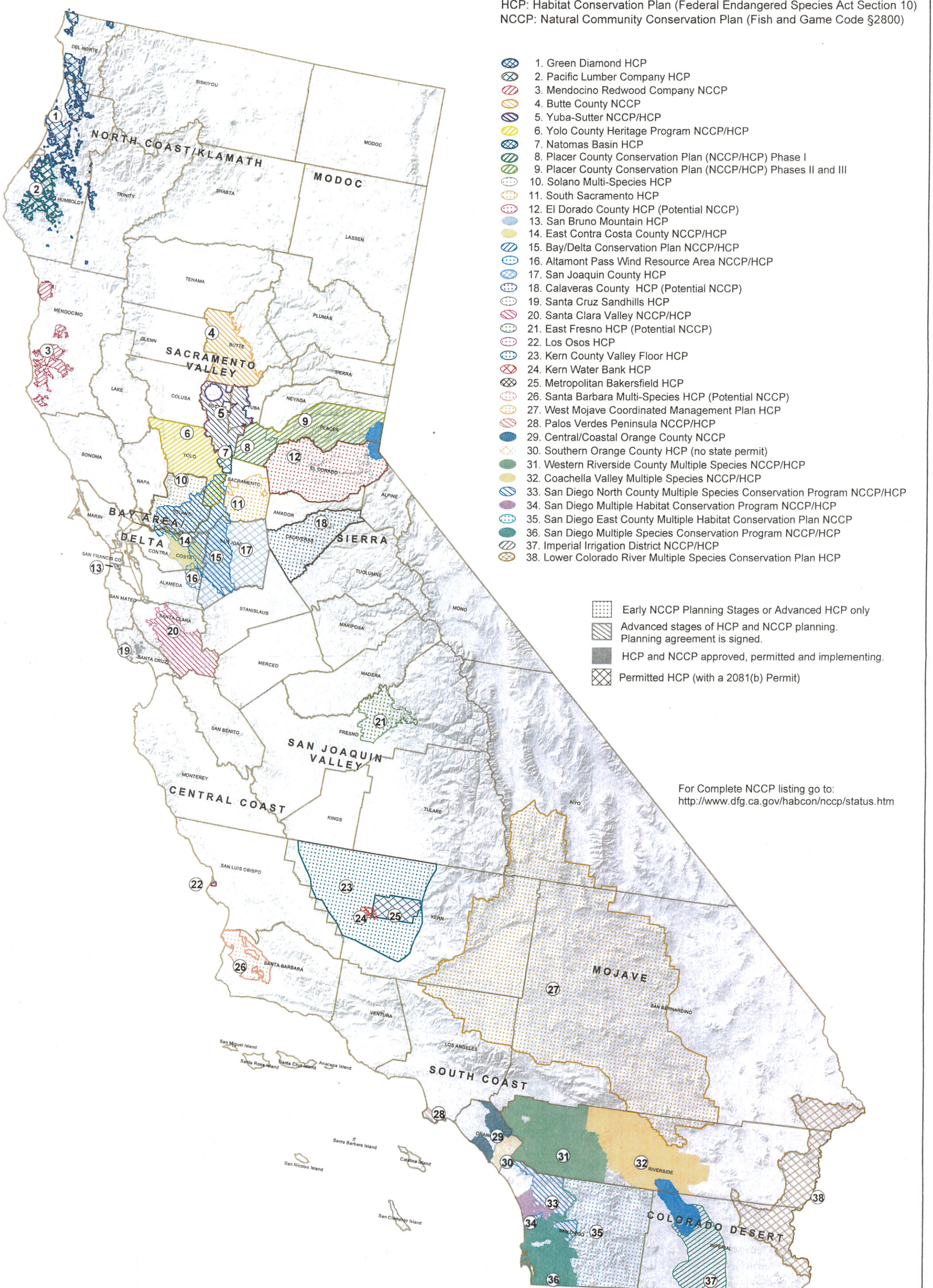
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL CONSERVATION PLANS

FEBRUARY 2010



RESOURCES AGENCY CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT FISH & GAME

0 25 50 75 100 Miles

0 40 80 120 160 Kilometers

1:3,157,515

Habitat plans are in various stages of review, and subject to change. In some cases, boundaries have not been submitted by participants, and are estimated locations.

Data Sources: Bioregions:California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (1992); Conservation Planning Areas: California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, CALFED Bay/Delta Program, Mendocino Redwood Company, San Diego Association of Governments, and Coachella Valley Association of Governments.

Projection: Teale Albers, units in meters, NAD83. LGUSTAFSON 02/24/10.