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MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION PROGRAM WORKING GROUP

The Environmental Mitigation Program Working Group may take action on any item appearing on this agenda.

Tuesday, November 12, 2013

1 to 3 p.m.

SANDAG, 7th Floor Conference Room
 401 B Street
 San Diego, CA 92101-4231

Staff Contact: Keith Greer
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AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

- **BOBCATS MOVEMENT STUDIES**
- **GENETIC CONNECTIVITY OF CACTUS WREN IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

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ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION PROGRAM WORKING GROUP

Tuesday, November 12, 2013

ITEM #		RECOMMENDATION
1.	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Chair, Carrie Downey, Regional Planning Committee Appointee)	Estimated Start Time: 1:00 – 1:05 p.m.
+2.	SUMMARY OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2013, MEETING Review and approve the meeting summary of the September 10, 2013, meeting.	APPROVE Estimated Start Time: 1:05 – 1:10 p.m.
3.	PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS Members of the public shall have the opportunity to address the Environmental Mitigation Program Working Group (EMPWG) on any issue within the jurisdiction of SANDAG that is not on this agenda. Anyone desiring to speak shall reserve time by completing a “Request to Speak” form and giving it to the EMPWG coordinator prior to speaking. Public speakers should notify the EMPWG coordinator if they have a handout for distribution to EMPWG members. Public speakers are limited to three minutes or less per person. EMPWG members also may provide information and announcements under this agenda item.	COMMENT Estimated Start Time: 1:10 – 1:15 p.m.
REPORTS		
4.	QUICK HITS FROM AROUND THE REGION (Bruce April, Caltrans; Kristina Cary, City of San Diego; Ron Rempel, San Diego Management and Monitoring Program; and Carlton Rochester, United States Geological Survey) Several wildlife movement studies are being conducted around the region. A brief update will be provided on the status of the State Route 76 wildlife culverts, Del Mar Mesa motion camera study, engineering studies on State Route 94, and United States Geological Survey (USGS) wildlife connectivity research.	INFORMATION Estimated Start Time: 1:15 – 1:40 p.m.
5.	BOBCATS MOVEMENT STUDIES (Dr. Megan Jennings and Dr. Rebecca Lewison, San Diego State University) Open space and wildlife corridors are being assessed for its ability to protect biodiversity in the face of climate change, by tracking bobcats. Bobcats are an ideal species for this research because they are sensitive to fragmentation and human impacts on their habitat, they are widespread in San Diego County, and they may function as an umbrella species in local habitats. Data gathered through Global Positioning System tracking, remote cameras, and trapping of bobcats will be used to assess open space and its ability to protect biodiversity, connectivity between open spaces, effects of human activity on wildlife movement, and barriers to linkages across the landscape. This information will be combined with data from the USGS, Caltrans, and other partners to create a meta-analysis that can be used for conservation planning.	INFORMATION Estimated Start Time: 1:40 – 2:10 p.m.

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| <p>6. GENETIC CONNECTIVITY OF CACTUS WREN IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (Dr. Barbara Kus, United States Geological Survey)</p> <p>Wildfires in 2003 and 2007, are thought to have caused the decline of the coastal cactus wren by as much as 80 percent in San Diego County. Population of cactus wren never recovered after a similar size fire in Laguna Hills Fire in 1993. The USGS researchers, funded in part by <i>TransNet</i>, have collaborated across the five counties in Southern California to evaluate the connectivity between cactus wren populations using field observations and genetic testing. Their studies are able to identify barriers to movement and locations where habitat restoration could improve genetic connectivity. This data will assist in the management and facilitate the recovery of this species throughout San Diego and Southern California.</p> | <p>INFORMATION</p> <p>Estimated Start Time:
2:10 – 2:40 p.m.</p> |
| <p>7. STATUS AND FUTURE OF CONNECTIVITY STRATEGIC PLAN (Ron Rempel, San Diego Management and Monitoring Program)</p> <p>The Connectivity Strategic Plan (CSP) was completed in January 2011, as a road map to direct monitoring of species movement and connectivity across the region, and for identifying and informing adaptive management actions to maintain, restore, or improve connectivity between conserved areas of San Diego County. Mr. Rempel will provide an update on the status of the CSP and the next steps in its implementation.</p> | <p>INFORMATION</p> <p>Estimated Start Time:
2:40 – 2:55 p.m.</p> |
| <p>8. NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT</p> <p>The next meeting of the EMPWG is scheduled for Tuesday, January 14, 2014, from 1 to 3 p.m.</p> | <p>INFORMATION</p> <p>Estimated Start Time:
2:55 – 3:00 p.m.</p> |

+ next to an agenda item indicates an attachment

San Diego Association of Governments
ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION PROGRAM
WORKING GROUP

November 12, 2013

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **2**

Action Requested: APPROVE

SUMMARY OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2013, MEETING

Members in Attendance:

Carrie Downey (Chair), Regional Planning Committee Appointee
Anne Harvey, San Diego Conservation Network
Bill Tippetts, The Nature Conservancy
Bobbie Stephenson, County of San Diego
David Mayer, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
Emily Young, The San Diego Foundation
Glen Laube, Chula Vista, South County
James Whalen, Alliance for Habitat Conservation
Joan Cardellino, California Coastal Commission
Kevin Mallory, City of Santee, East Urban Communities
Kristen Forburger, City of San Diego
Matt Adams, Building Industry Association
Michael Beck, Endangered Habitats League
Mike Grim, City of Carlsbad
Richard VanSant, Army Corps of Engineers
Richard Whipple, City of Poway, North County Inland
Robert Fisher, United States Geological Survey (USGS)
Susan Wynn, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Others in Attendance:

Amy Vandergest, USGS
Anthony Santare, AMEC
Barbara Kus, USGS
Brendan Ward, Conservation Biology Institute (CBI)
Carlton Rochester, USGS
Cathy Chadwick, EDI
Cheryl Brehme, USGS
Crystal Crawford, Ygrene Energy Fund
Dan Marschalek, San Diego State University
Emily Perkins, San Diego Management and Monitoring Program (SDMMP)
Gail Sevrens, CDFW
Jerre Stallcup, CBI
Jessie Vinje, CBI
Katie O'Conner, CBI
Kevin McKernan, San Diego River Conservancy

Kris Preston, SDMMP
Kristina Cary, City of San Diego
Markus Spiegelberg, Center for Natural Lands Management
Megan Hamilton, San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation
Michelle Mattson, ICF
Mike Hastings, LPCF
Patricia Gordon-Reedy, CBI
Ron Rempel, SDMMP
Rosanne Humphrey, ESA
Sarah Kreja, San Diego Habitat Conservancy
Scott Fleury, ICF
Tom Oberbauer, AECOM
Tosha Comendant, CBI
Yvonne Moore, SDMMP

SANDAG Staff in Attendance:

Allison King, SANDAG
Keith Greer, SANDAG
Rob Rundle, SANDAG
Sarah McCutcheon, SANDAG

ITEM #1: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Carrie Downey, Regional Planning Committee Appointee, called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

ITEM #2: SUMMARY OF JULY 9, 2013 MEETING

Mike Grim, City of Carlsbad, motioned to approve the meeting minutes, and Bill Tippets, The Nature Conservancy, seconded the motion. Motion carried without opposition.

ITEM #3: PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Keith Greer, SANDAG, informed the Environmental Mitigation Program Working Group (Working Group) that an article was published on the release of zoo-raised western pond turtles in the Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve. The USGS, along with the San Diego Zoo, CDFW, and SANDAG were responsible for the success of the project.

Mr. Greer presented three photographs to the Working Group, provided to him by Bruce April, Caltrans. The photographs, taken on three different days, were of bobcats using a new undercrossing on State Route 76 near Jeffrey's Ranch. In each picture the bobcats were carrying prey in their mouth. Mr. Greer pointed out the variability of time and temperature when the pictures were taken. One of the photos was from around 1 p.m. on an 88 degree day.

Robert Fisher, USGS, shared that a paper was released last month that focused on Cheryl Brehme's conservation biology work, concerning the permeability of roads and the movements of lizards and small mammals. The study was conducted in Rancho Jamul and the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge.

Mr. Greer showed the group the trailer for the documentary *Highway Wilding*, which focuses on innovative wildlife crossing structures. The full movie is available for a free download at www.highwaywilding.org/hw_movie.php.

Ron Rempel, SDMMP, announced that San Diego State University's Engineering Department will create a preliminary design for a crossing of State Route 94. The crossing will hopefully help connect the State refuge back together with Otay Water District land. The students will work on the design as a class project and will provide cost estimates. The students will not be able to construct the final design, but the preliminary design will provide a good idea of the feasibility of the project.

ITEM #4: CALIFORNIA LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVE (Rebecca Fris, California Landscape Conservation Cooperative Science Coordinator)

Rebecca Fris, California Landscape Conservation Cooperative (CA LCC) Science Coordinator, provided a presentation via webex on climate smart conservation for natural resource managers. She gave the Working Group a brief summary of the background of the CA LCC. The CA LCC is a self-directed public-private partnership from a 2010 Department of the Interior initiative. The CA LCC works across jurisdictions to jointly establish conservation objectives. The organization is focused on providing science and technological support at the landscape scale for conservation purposes. There are 22 Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) in the United States, spreading into Canada and Mexico. There are four LCCs in California: the Great Basin LCC, the North Pacific LCC, the Desert LCC, and the California LCC. LCCs are about supporting existing partnerships and bringing science to them. The CA LCC does not buy any land or fund any dirt moving activities, but the organization does provide the tools for decision making. The program is non-regulatory and joined voluntarily.

The CA LCC has a five-year strategic plan in place, which is available online. The vision is to support the diversified ecosystem through lasting cooperative conservation partnerships. The five-year goal is to develop a community of managers and scientists. The CA LCC sees the need and is working to bring scientists and land managers together for improved communication. There is an emphasis on preserving an adaptable ecosystem in the face of environmental change. In California the LCCs are discussing climate change and how the landscape will be managed in the face of environmental change.

Ms. Fris informed the group that the fifteen-member steering committee consists of: Point Blue, The Bureau of Reclamation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USFWS, USGS, National Marine Fisheries Service, California State Coastal Conservancy, National Resource Conservation Service, CBI, CDFW, The Nature Conservancy, and three joint ventures.

Ms. Fris shared the three objectives of CA LCC's Strategic Plan:

1. Conduct and coordinate information exchange between scientists and managers to advance decision-making and conservation at a landscape scale.
2. Enhance climate-smart conservation (nature-based adaptation and mitigation) on a landscape scale.

3. Ensure the CA LCC provides effective and lasting outcomes that support California's diverse and thriving ecosystems.

Ms. Fris shared that the CA LCC is hopeful that they have reached the point where projects will begin wrapping up. This will free some of the climate scientists to help with regional climate planning, as well as provide support tools to land managers, resource agencies, and others. The CA LCC wants to determine how the LCC community can help connect across Habitat Conservation Plan areas.

Ms. Fris highlighted a few CA LCC funded projects:

1. Pacific Coast Sea-Level Rise Research (conducted by USGS) and Climate Change Adaptation.
2. Fire Management Strategies for at-risk species in Southern California by University of California Riverside.

The CA LCC provides more opportunities to work at an ecoregional level, and they are looking to integrate different types of regional workshops. There are also opportunities to partner under different projects, and there is the annual LCC workshop.

Ms. Fris addressed questions from the Working Group:

- Susan Wynn, USFWS, asked if a webinar was available for Helen Regan's presentation. Ms. Fris answered that a webinar is available for Ms. Regan's work on *Ceanothus* on the CA LCC website. When the final report is complete she will send it out to the Working Group.
- Dr. Fisher asked if the CA LCC was engaged with the military. Ms. Fris answered, officially CA LCC was not working with the military. There was some interest from the United States Navy and the Department of Defense, but CA LCC would be a third priority.
- Crystal Crawford, Ygrene Energy, voiced that she hopes that the CA LCC was speaking with the California Biodiversity Council. Ms. Fris answered that the CA LCC was speaking with them, and they are having ongoing meetings to figure out how to best work together. The CA LCC is trying to determine how they can help the California Biodiversity Council, in terms of focusing its efforts.
- Michael Beck, Endangered Habitats League, asked what the funding source and annual budget for the CA LCC was. He wanted to know how the CA LCC chooses projects. Ms. Fris answered that their funding is through USFWS, and they have received about \$800,000 in funding for science activities. For the last three years, the CA LCC has had an annual process for soliciting projects based on priorities developed by their science team. They evaluate proposals and fund around eight to ten projects each year.

ITEM #5: SAN DIEGO FORWARD: THE REGIONAL PLAN: ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE WHITE PAPER (Allison King, SANDAG)

Allison King, SANDAG, presented to the Working Group progress of the climate change white paper in development by SANDAG staff for San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan (The Regional Plan). Climate change was not addressed in the 2004 Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), so SANDAG staff wanted to use The Regional Plan as an opportunity to highlight what is occurring in the region relating to climate change. They also hope to highlight gaps where there could be more regional collaboration and consistency.

Ms. King shared several of the most likely impacts of climate change to the region. The impact categories are public health, habitat and biodiversity, coastal resources, agriculture, and San Diego's water management system. Ms. King highlighted some of the SANDAG climate change-focused efforts:

- The 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and its Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)
- Regional Energy Strategy (RES) and the climate action strategy
 - Help to inform policies in the SCS
- Energy Roadmap Program
 - SANDAG works with local jurisdictions to save energy in its facilities and around the community
- Plug-in electric vehicle and alternative fuel planning

Climate change is beginning to receive more consideration on the capital project side as well. Sea-level rise is now considered in the analysis for coastal projects, and so is energy efficient design and electric vehicle charging in transit stations. Local jurisdictions are doing a fair amount of climate change planning as well. Thanks to The San Diego Foundation, all jurisdictions have a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory. Jurisdictions are working on Climate Action Plans (CAP) that set targets for reductions, highlight mitigation measures needed to achieve those reductions. SANDAG is working collaboratively with the local communities, The San Diego Foundation, San Diego Gas and Electric, and other organizations.

Ms. King opened the Working Group up for questions, comments, and discussion:

- Mr. Tippets commented that he believes the white paper can be a great thing. There has been a lot of input through SANDAG so far, but the fact that SANDAG approved The Regional Plan to be a combination of the RTP, SCS, and RCP, it seems to be missing from the outline and hasn't been discussed much. Regardless of what comes out of The Regional Plan it will be more than an update to the existing RTP that is in litigation. Mr. Tippets felt that was important to mention since there may be things that are not considered essential in an RTP, but are in a comprehensively done regional plan. It should be addressed upfront what the regional perspective on the guidance from the State of California is. Assembly Bill 32 (Nunez, 2006) is mentioned, which requires the 1990 base level by 2020, and 8 percent below that baseline by

2050, but none of the CAPs from local governments or SANDAG mention if that is a standard that they would try to achieve. The current RTP reduction goals of 7 percent by 2020, and 13 percent by 2050, are easily achieved by existing land use plans. To be a progressive blueprint for the future, Mr. Tippetts would like to see much more robustness in the plan. There were documents released in the last couple years that have gained a lot of attention that Mr. Tippetts feels should be utilized and incorporated into The Regional Plan.

- James Whalen, Alliance for Habitat Conservation, shared that the County of San Diego had a great General Plan Update for GHG emissions. The County was sued for it and lost. He inquired how SANDAG would integrate the real world into this plan.
- Chair Downey explained that, at this point, SANDAG staff is just looking for input on the plan. Everyone attending the Working Group is there as subject matter experts to make sure everything about the habitat plans is included in the SANDAG evaluation.
- Dr. Fisher commented that wildfires were not included as a source in the San Diego County GHG inventory pie chart. The County's burn rate is increasing, especially in 2003, and 2007. In 2003, wildfires were the largest source of GHG emissions over transportation. That shows, that depending on the year, the top GHG emission sources can change.
- Ms. Wynn asked if the emissions from military activities were included in the pie chart in the 4 percent "other" category, or not at all. If no, then there is a significant source of emissions in the region that are not accounted for.
- Emily Young, The San Diego Foundation, commented that it would be helpful in the white paper to talk about the connection between land use and transportation decisions and the region's vulnerability to climate change. She shared that there was interesting research that the CBI was involved with that looks at different patterns of growth and development. It shows that sprawl-oriented development tends to increase vulnerability to wildfire by six times.
- Joan Cardellino, The California State Coastal Conservancy, shared that The California State Coastal Conservancy is working with USGS on the most robust model for sea level rise that combines seasonal fluctuations with storm surges and sea level rise. Not all of the needed funding has been met yet to complete the report and they are still looking for funding sources. She added that it would be great if all government used the model as a tool and kept the consistency. The model looks at the greatest possible impacts. The report will cover the entire Southern California area.
- Michelle Mattson, ICF, added that rain in San Diego is already a flashy episodic event, which will only get more intense as more water falls in a smaller amount of time.
- Matt Adams, Building Industry Association, added that it was important to note that this white paper and subsequent regional plan, could lead to some beneficial continuity in the regulatory process. He explained that it seems that multiple jurisdictions are trying to figure out the problem, but no one really knows the answer. The paper could lead to some certainty for the regulatory agencies and the jurisdictions.

- Mr. Tippetts commented that green infrastructure, such as native open space and urban forestry reduces impervious surfaces, thus helping with water quality and very useful for reducing GHG, as well as improving communities.

ITEM #6: MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN (Ron Rempel, San Diego Management and Monitoring Program)

Ron Rempel, Kris Preston, and Yvonne Moore, SDMMMP, discussed the process of putting together the Management Strategic Plan (MSP), the goals and objectives of the plan, and the tracking the implementation of the plan.

Mr. Rempel thanked everyone who submitted comments that contributed to the revision of the MSP. He informed that the version date for each MSP is included in the document, so that viewers know if they have the most recent version. He emphasized the fact that the plan is the strategic plan for conserved lands, lands that have the ability to be managed, rather than all undeveloped lands. The document can be downloaded off of the SDMMMP website in PDF format.

The purpose of the MSP is to provide a biologically-based foundation to support decision making and funding priorities for managing species and vegetation communities on conserved lands in western San Diego County. The MSP is broken into three volumes.

Volume 1: Includes the introduction, approach, explanation of the area, management units, and how it is put together, data, and next steps. Key terms that needed definitions were pulled out.

Volume 2: Includes the nuts and bolts pieces. It focuses on goals and objectives, species and vegetation, threats and stressors, next steps, and definitions.

Volume 3: Includes the background information, species profiles, and the geographic areas of the MSP. The MSP is divided into eight management units that have similarities for species and vegetation communities and an affinity for long-term management. The boundary lines were drawn in a way that was easy for people to see. For the most part, roads and highways were used as boundaries since they are easy to see.

Mr. Rempel presented a graph to explain how the MSP fits with all other plans. The MSP incorporates pieces of the other plans such as the Fire and Wildlife Strategic Plan, the Invasive Plant Strategic Plan, and Connective Strategic Plan. It is also closely linked to the preserve management plans.

The MSP started addresses 110 species which are divided into two larger groups; specific species management and species managed as part of the vegetation community that it occurs in.

Dr. Preston presented the technical aspects of the plan related to the collection information on species occurrence, life history, threats, and key aspects for prioritization. Dr. Preston shared the status of the goals and objectives for fourteen species.

Ms. Moore shared the key organizations involved with the implementation process for the MSP. She showed a diagram of the MSP implementation process and the roles and responsibilities. SDMMMP has recommended to updating the MSP every four to five years.

There are a number of databases that are important to the MSP, such as The Conserved Lands Database and the South Coast Multi-Taxa Database. In addition to those two, there are three that are new to the MSP: the Master Occurrence Matrix, the Strategic Plan Tracking Database, and the SC-MTX web portal.

Mr. Rempel concluded with the next steps for the implementation of the MSP.

SDMMP staff opened the Working Group up for questions, comments, and discussion:

- Mr. Whalen commented that he could see the real estate development community being concerned with this since they feel that the cost of managing habitat is already expensive. He asked the SDMMP staff what their thoughts were on that.
- Mr. Rempel thought that the group first needs to think about how the Home Owners Association (HOA) lands fits into the plan. In some cases, the land may just have linkage issues, in which case not much may need to be done.
- Ms. Wynn added that the MSP serves as a means of prioritizing existing money. Ms. Wynn added that the MSP could provide the justification for grant funding needs to protect and manage those HOA lands.
- Mr. Tippetts voiced that it would be nice to see where implementation plans fit into the diagram. He felt that preserve managers may think following the MSP is more than they can do without realizing it is just a prioritization of existing funding.
- Mr. Beck complemented the SDMMP staff on the document. He believes that the MSP is a huge benchmark for the region. The efficiency of implementing the MSP is going to depend on the communication and coordination among land managers. He recommended that there be some funding available so that the SDMMP, independent scientists, wildlife agencies, and all the land managers within the given management unit can attend a workshop to determine the management priorities for the management unit. Mr. Beck added that tribal lands need to be included in the MSP, since most management units include tribal lands. He understands why the management unit lines were drawn, but stressed the need for communication to occur on both sides of the boundaries.
- Ms. Wynn asked if edits and tweaks to the MSP could be ongoing since it is a "living" document.
- Mr. Greer asked the group to accept the document. The next phase is to take the FY 15 money to the next steps for the MSP. He added that the document can be tweaked in terms of alignment with fiscal year funding for FY 15.
- Chair Downey asked for a motion to accept the MSP.
- Ms. Wynn shared that she was not comfortable accepting the document without first rereading it. Mr. Greer explained to her that she would be accepting that the document is complete and will be used in the future for making recommendation on prioritizing actions and funding to the Regional Planning Committee.

- Mr. Rempel voiced that he will be the first to admit that not all of the goals and objectives are correct. He informed that they will need to be modified as they acquire more information.
- Mr. Greer suggested that Ms. Wynn accept the document on the conditions that changes and modifications are allowed in the upcoming years.
- Ms. Wynn accepted the document with those conditions and motioned to approve the document on the condition that they maintain the flexibility to review and edit. Dr. Young seconded the motion. Motion carried without opposition.

ITEM #7: NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting of the Working Group is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12, 2013, from 1 to 3 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m. by Chair Downey.