

**SUMMARY of DISCUSSION of the
PLANT AND WILDLIFE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(PAWTAC)
July 1, 2010**

Members in Attendance:

Sue Britting
Dan Corcoran
Jim Davies
Todd Gardner
Ray Griffiths
Mahala Young

Members Absent:

Jim Brunello
Elena DeLacy
Bill Frost
Jeremiah Karuzas
Craig Thomas
Valeria Zentner

Others in Attendance:

Rick Lind, SEA
Jordan Postlewait, SEA
Frasier Schilling, SEA
Robert Smart, SEA
Peter Maurer, EDC
Beverly Savage, EDC

The July 1, 2010, meeting was called to order by Chair Todd Gardner at 9:14 AM. There was no quorum to conduct committee business. It was decided that those members in attendance would discuss agenda items.

A. Approval of Minutes

There was no quorum to approve Minutes. Summary of May 6, 2010, discussion was accepted with a correction by Sue Britting.

B. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

C. INRMP

Jordan Postlewait, SEA, referred to the updated "Focus Points for Upcoming ISAC/PAWTAC Meetings." The current task, Wildlife Movement Corridors, is behind schedule due to lack of quorum at recent meetings.

C. 1. Recommendation on Draft Indicator Species Report

(The Agenda was reordered with Indicator Species Report discussion moved before Board of Supervisors follow-up.) Frasier Schilling, Ph.D., SEA, led the discussion, asking Committee members for input on the Draft Report by July 8. Comments should be submitted via e-mail to Peter Maurer.

The following comments and discussion points were provided:

- There was discussion regarding a suggestion that the Red-tailed Hawk should be considered for inclusion as an indicator species. Data for this species is readily available. As the species can tolerate some degree of urbanization, a decline in its numbers would indicate a major disturbance to the habitat.
- Some species, such as the Red-tailed Hawk, are displaced at certain times of the year by other species. Data should be gathered at the correct time of the year, when the species is not temporarily displaced.

C.2. Review and follow-up to Board of Supervisors direction of June 22, 2010

Peter Maurer presented. The Board of Supervisors approved the Habitat Inventory and Mapping Report as a working document that will most likely change during the INRMP process. Supervisor Sweeney submitted a list of questions/comments, "Technical Issues Outline." Staff is preparing a response.

The following comments and discussion points were provided:

- Frequent updates, as outlined in the scope of work, will be provided to the BOS.
- It was suggested that the person who provided the technical issues to Supervisor Sweeney be invited to attend the PAWTAC and ISAC meetings.
- Some assumptions in the "Technical Issues Outline" are incorrect.

C.3. Introduction to Wildlife Movement Corridors

Dr. Schilling presented. Introductory presentation of the topic was provided. General Plan Policy 7.4.2 provides direction. Habitat loss and habitat fragmentation are identified in the Wildlife Action Plan for the State of California as the greatest threats to species. All of the indicator species need to move in order to survive. This is also true of the plant species that rely on movement or dispersal for survival. Movement requirements vary greatly by species. A PowerPoint presentation was reviewed and will be sent to Committee members. Dr. Schilling asked Committee members for their input regarding fundamentals to consider when addressing connectivity. Specifically, Committee recommendations were sought regarding rationale for including fish and aquatic organisms in the study.

The following comments and discussion points were provided:

- An observation was made that ditches create barriers. Specifically, EID canals create barriers. EID has installed fences and other mitigation upgrades at the canals.
- Aquatic connectivity is important. CalTrans is conducting a study of culverts. The USFS also maintains data on culverts. EID data regarding forest service lands is available on their website.
- It was noted that people generally think about species that walk when considering connectivity. All species categories and their connectivity needs must be considered during this process.
- Some species of birds will only fly over contiguous connected habitats, while other species will fly over open areas to reach other habitats.
- CalTrans might be interested in developing vegetated underpasses. In creating vegetated underpasses, it is important to connect underpasses with the habitat; do not leave open areas to the underpass. Also, consider location of water in selecting locations. Natural bottoms should be used when possible.
- An observation was made that connectivity seems to focus on Highway 50. There may be greater opportunities to achieve connectivity in the north-south direction, before development occurs. Culvert design recommendations should be made now. Transportation grant funds may be available.
- Some members of the public are concerned about the INRMP and its potential to block future development. Connectivity discussions should focus on removing existing impediments as well as setting guidelines for new development.
- The County should coordinate with neighboring counties and cities to create wildlife corridors across boundaries.
- A suggestion was made that plants be considered as stand-alone organisms requiring connectivity and also as surrogate or supporters of other species.

Chair Gardner invited public comment on the topic.

- An opinion was expressed that the Committee should very early in the process identify the goal of connectivity and look at the data that already exists. For instance, if the Red-tailed Hawk is selected as an indicator species, what will he tell us that will result in future policy? Further, if field studies will not be conducted in the future, consider this when selecting species.

D. Committee member comments; next meeting agenda items

Next meeting will be August 5, 9:00 a.m.

- Committee members are appointed by the BOS. Staff will draft a recommendation to the BOS regarding membership. The BOS will be notified that recent meetings have not had a quorum and that staff has been contacted by members of the public interested in serving.

- It was suggested that Todd Gardner and Jeremiah Karuzas be invited to participate as ex-officio members. Mr. Gardner has attended regularly but remains open to suggestions that will result in quorums at future meetings.
- A member asked if the Committee membership was selected to represent various expertise. Staff was uncertain if specific expertise were selected and suggested that a broad range of expertise is represented. A suggestion was made that the BOS recommendation include a statement that the Committee desires membership consisting of a diverse group of technical advisors representing a wide range of expertise.

Meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.