

2020 Year in Review

East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan/ Natural Community Conservation Plan



Land Acquisition



Project Permitting



Habitat Restoration



Partnerships

Photo credits, top to bottom: Stephen Joseph, Contra Costa Water District, Nomad Ecology, Save Mount Diablo

The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan (the "ECCC HCP/NCCP") gives local jurisdictions control over state and federal endangered species permitting in the region.

Through the ECCC HCP/NCCP, project proponents pay a fee or provide their own conservation, conduct limited avoidance measures and receive species permits from their local land use agency. Mitigation fees and grants fund Preserve System conservation acquisitions, management, research and restoration.

The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy ("Conservancy") implements and ensures compliance with the Plan and oversees assembly and operation of the ECCC HCP/ NCCP Preserve System.

2020

The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy continued to implement the East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP. In 2020, streamlined permitting through the ECCC HCP/NCCP provided permit coverage for 26 projects; these include residential and commercial development, transportation, utility, rural infrastructure, rural operation and maintenance, and habitat restoration projects. The Conservancy, together with East Bay Regional Park District, conserved two properties totaling 8.3 acres of habitat for the ECCC HCP/NCCP's growing Preserve System. The Conservancy continued to implement conservation actions ahead of what is required for permitted impacts.

Conservancy Governing Board

Juan Antonio Banales | City of Pittsburg

Joel Bryant | City of Brentwood

Diane Burgis | Contra Costa County

Carl "CW" Wolfe | City of Clayton

Randy Pope | City of Oakley



Project Permitting

The ECCC HCP/NCCP gives local cities and agencies control over state and federal endangered species permitting in their jurisdiction. In 2020, 26 projects received take coverage under the Plan, including 13 urban development projects, 1 rural infrastructure project, 7 rural operations and maintenance projects, and 5 Preserve System activities. These projects total approximately 306 acres of permanent impacts, including 22 linear feet of permanent impacts on streams and 32 acres of temporary impacts on terrestrial land cover types, including 4,273 linear feet of temporary impacts on streams. Note that approximately 4,000 feet of the temporary impacts on streams is from a large restoration project constructed on Marsh Creek .

The ECCC HCP/NCCP was designed to enable permit streamlining to extend beyond endangered species regulations and include regional permitting under state and federal laws for impacts on jurisdictional wetlands and waters. On May 4, 2012, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued Regional General Permit 1 (RGP) aligned with the ECCC HCP/NCCP. This Permit was reissued on April 12, 2017 and has a five-year duration. The RGP streamlines wetland permitting in the entire Plan Area by aligning the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures in the Plan with the Corps' wetland permitting requirements. To date, 23 covered projects and three Conservancy restoration projects have benefitted from coordinated permitting under the RGP.

Permitting Program Highlights:

- **Residential:** The City of Brentwood permitted The Groves project which includes the subdivision of a 20+/- acre property. The proposed project includes 160 homes with associated landscaping, street network, and two community parks. The City of Pittsburg permitted the Tuscany Meadows project to subdivide a 173+/- acre property into 917 single-family residential units. The proposed project includes 14.6 acres designated for multi-family development.
- **Commercial:** The City of Oakley permitted the Oakley Logistics Center project, which will construct a 150-acre logistics center for the transportation and distribution of commercial goods.
- **Utility Infrastructure:** The City of Brentwood proposed to construct Phase 2 of a non-potable water distribution system to provide recycled gray water to existing landscape irrigation customers. The project includes a new water pipeline and water storage tanks with associated pumps and valves.

ACTIVITIES BY THE NUMBERS

Projects Permitted

In 2020: 26
Cumulative: 200

Acres Impacted

In 2020: 306
Cumulative: 1,149

Acres Conserved

In 2020: 8
Cumulative: 12,549

Mitigation Fees

In 2020: \$3,550,837
Cumulative: \$22,950,200

Restoration Projects

In 2020: 0
Cumulative: 11

Grants & CTR

In 2020: \$828,682
Cumulative: \$74,251,400

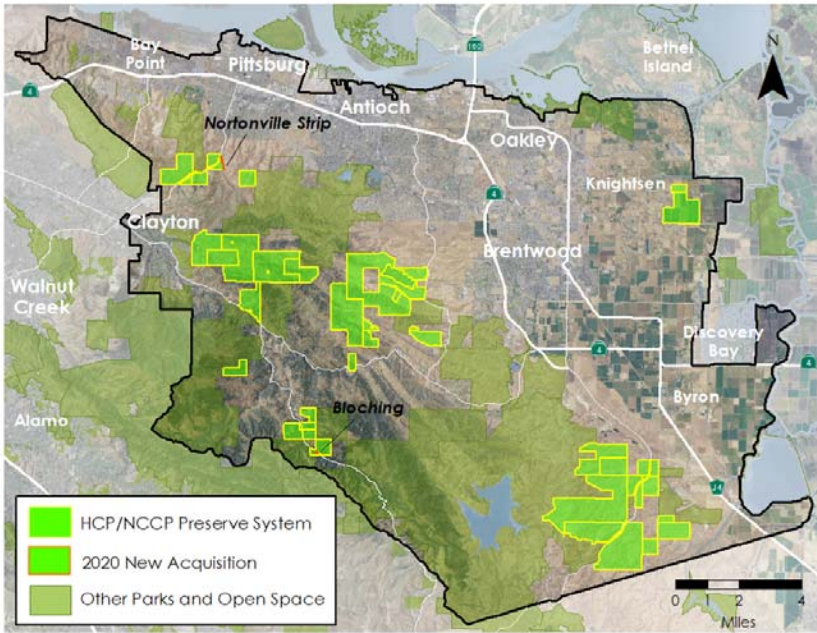
Note: The Conservancy periodically reviews our databases and as a result, cumulative totals reflect refinements and corrections.

Partnerships

The Conservancy continues to work closely with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) and Save Mount Diablo on land acquisition opportunities, management of Preserve System lands, and habitat restoration projects. The EBRPD has been the Conservancy's primary partner in Preserve System acquisitions in the Plan implementation. These acquisitions total 8.3 acres of newly protected land in 2020.

The Conservancy's other partners include State and Federal regulatory and funding agencies, as well as members of the development community, conservation advocates, agricultural representatives and members of the public. The Conservancy will continue to build on these partnerships and expand on collaborative conservation projects and efforts in the HCP/NCCP Plan Area.

Land Acquisition



The Conservancy funds land acquisition from willing sellers to assemble the Preserve System. The Conservancy has made significant progress toward acquisition goals during the first twelve years of Plan implementation. In 2020, two properties were acquired, adding 8.3 acres of land to the Preserve System, which totals 12,549 acres of conserved land. All but one acquisition to date have been completed in partnership with EBRPD, where EBRPD owns and manages those Preserve System lands. The Viera North Peak property, acquired in 2017 from Save Mount Diablo, is owned by the Conservancy with the anticipation of transferring the property to California State Parks. The Conservancy continues to stay ahead of the average pace necessary to assemble the 30,300-acre Preserve System estimated to be required by Year 30 of the Plan (2037).

Highlights of achievements:

- Over 1/3 of the Preserve System has been assembled by year 13 of Plan implementation.
- Acquisition of the Bloching and Nortonville Strip properties adds 8.3 more preserved acres to the Preserve System, both connecting to existing Preserve System land.

Habitat Restoration and Creation

The Plan requires stream, wetland and pond restoration and creation to compensate for impacts to these habitat types. The Conservancy has aggressively pursued wetland and pond restoration requirements. To date, 11 restoration projects have been constructed. These restoration projects provide a range of benefits to covered species.

Conservancy projects are monitored and managed to ensure that they achieve habitat goals. This monitoring continues for a minimum of five years. Close monitoring of restoration sites has informed management actions including: reseeding areas, adjusting grazing patterns, and aggressively combating invasive weeds.

No new restoration projects were constructed in 2020. Six of the Conservancy's restoration projects have met success criteria and are no longer monitored annually against their restoration success criteria. In 2020, the Conservancy monitored the following restoration projects - Irish Canyon Riparian Restoration Project, Ang Riparian Restoration Project, and the Horse Valley Creek and Wetland Restoration Project. Monitoring efforts in 2020 were severely restricted due to the shelter-in-place orders that were implemented statewide in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and hazardous air quality conditions due to the extensive Lightning Complex wildfires burning around the Bay Area.

The Conservancy is actively working on restoration plans for multiple other sites that will be constructed in future years.

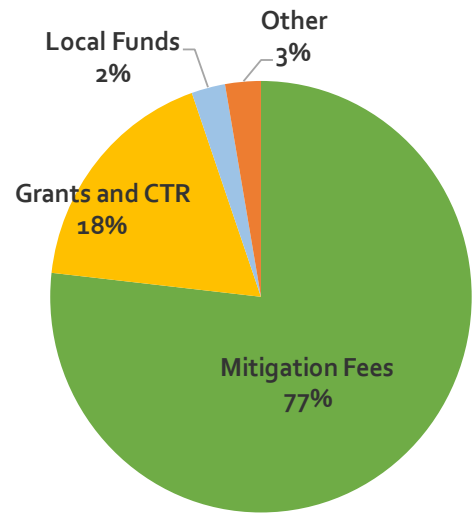


Riparian planting area at the Ang site, Fall 2020. Photo credit: Save Mount Diablo

Funding

The Conservancy receives revenue from the following primary sources: mitigation and permitting fees (development, wetland, and temporary impact fees, administrative/staff time fees, and contributions to recovery payments) and grants. These sources fund Preserve System acquisitions, management, monitoring, and restoration projects.

<u>Revenue in 2020</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Mitigation Fees ¹	\$3,550,837
Grants and CTR ²	\$828,682
Other ³	\$119,645
Local Funds ⁴	\$126,233
Total	\$4,625,837



¹ Development fees, wetland fees, and temporary impact fees.

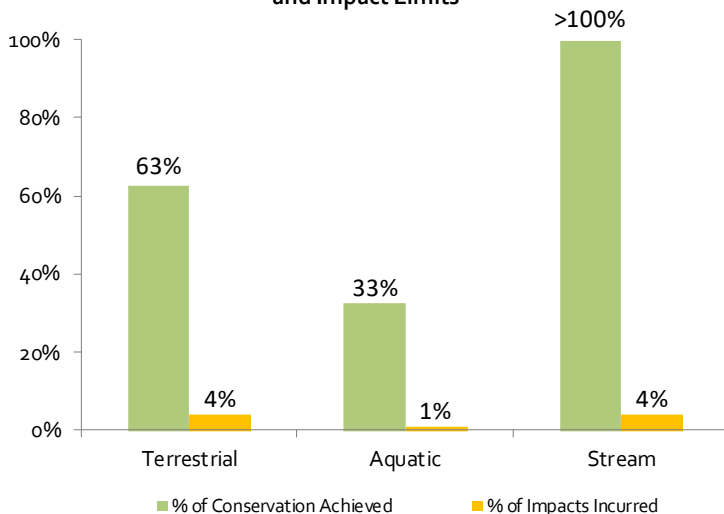
² These are grants from various state and federal agencies including CDFW, USFWS, and WCB. The amount shown includes grant funds spent (not grants awarded).

³ CTR are Contributions to Recovery, and includes temporary impact fees.

⁴ Other includes staff time/administrative fees, interest, and miscellaneous.

⁵ Local funding includes contributions by the East Bay Regional Park District of its own funds or grant funds for joint acquisitions and preserve management.

Progress Toward Conservation Goals and Impact Limits



Staying Ahead

For streamlined permitting to continue under the HCP/NCCP, conservation must stay ahead of impacts. The HCP/NCCP specifies detailed metrics that the Conservancy uses to track progress of Plan implementation.

The summarized data displayed (left) illustrates all categories of conservation are ahead of the impacts to these habitat types.

A more detailed accounting of conservation, restoration, creation, and impacts is provided in the 2020 Annual Report.

PARTNERS IMPLEMENTING THE HCP/NCCP

City of Brentwood
 City of Clayton
 City of Oakley
 City of Pittsburg
 Contra Costa County
 Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
 East Bay Regional Park District
 East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy
 California Department of Fish and Wildlife
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Agricultural representatives
 Building Industry Association of the Bay Area
 California Farmland Trust
 California Native Plant Society
 Contra Costa County Farm Bureau
 Discovery Builders Inc.
 East Bay Leadership Council
 Friends of Marsh Creek Watershed
 Rural/suburban residents
 Save Mount Diablo

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information about the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy can be found online at www.cocohcp.org.

The HCP/NCCP Overview booklet and the 2020 Annual Report can be both downloaded from the website. To reach the Conservancy, please contact maureen.parkes@dcd.cccounty.us or 925-655-2909.