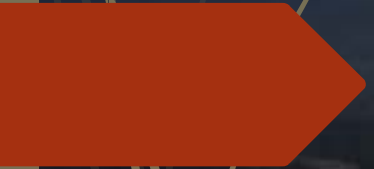


Regional Advance Mitigation Planning

Regional/Landscape Level Mitigation Planning
for the California Department of Transportation





Overview

- Advance Mitigation: Background Information
- Advance Mitigation and the HCP/NCCP process
- Prospects for Consideration



Background:
Advance Mitigation

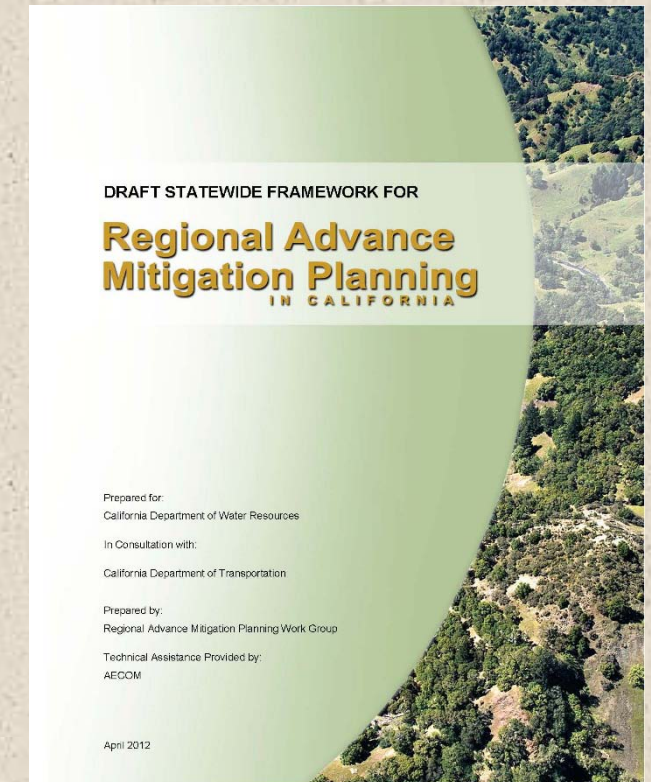


Background on Advance Mitigation

- ▶ Refers to mitigation *in advance*:
 - ▶ Of incurrence of impacts
 - ▶ Of project delivery
 - ▶ Of projects being programmed and having preferred alternatives selected
 - ▶ Projects identified from long range transportation plans
- ▶ Goals of Advance Mitigation
 - ▶ To improve project delivery outcomes by having appropriate mitigation already in place when needed
 - ▶ To improve environmental outcomes by consolidating potential compensatory mitigation needs from multiple projects in a given area and investing them strategically to address conservation priorities
 - ▶ Landscape scale mitigation
 - ▶ To improve mitigation outcomes by having better planned and delivered mitigation projects that are successful and compliant
- ▶ Refers to compensatory mitigation, but also to avoidance and minimization
 - ▶ Early identification of resources to avoid
 - ▶ Early identification of needs that may require structural design elements – wildlife crossings and fish passage barrier remediation

Current Initiatives

- These efforts are interagency initiatives that have the goals of establishing agreed upon policy, agreements, procedures, and guidelines for conducting advance mitigation
- RAMP
 - Regional Advance Mitigation Planning
 - RAMP MOU: July 2009
 - Draft Statewide Framework for Regional Advance Mitigation Planning: April 2012
 - Central Valley Pilot Project
 - Bay Area RAMP
- SAMI
 - Statewide Advance Mitigation Initiative
 - SAMI MOU: February 2011, expires February 2016, under renewal
 - Advance Mitigation Program in the SHOPP
 - 2016 SHOPP: 3 Projects
 - 2018 SHOPP: 7 Projects



Advance Mitigation Process

► Regional Assessment

- Planning phase of advance mitigation.
- Identify upcoming transportation projects from long range transportation plans
- Identify eco-regional groupings of the transportation projects
 - Establish Regions for which advance mitigation projects will be created
- Coordinate with CDFW and other resource agencies to identify conservation priority locations and resources of concern in these eco-regions
- Perform an Impact Assessment to obtain an estimation of resources that must be avoided, transportation projects that will need structural elements incorporated into design for minimization, and potential compensatory mitigation need

► Action Plan

- Project development phase of advance mitigation projects
- Given the findings of the regional assessment(s), what advance mitigation projects will be needed and how will they be implemented and funded?
- CEQA/NEPA for advance mitigation projects

► Implementation

- Bidding and construction phases
- Advance mitigation projects can use a variety of bidding mechanisms
- Can be third party (preferred) or Caltrans-owned and operated

Pilot Project in the Central Valley

- ▶ Proof of concept for RAMP
- ▶ Focused on Butte and Sutter Counties
 - ▶ Parts of surrounding counties
 - ▶ From Sacramento River to Sierra Foothills
- ▶ Status: updating the Regional Assessment
 - ▶ Original emphasis on DWR projects, now more emphasis on Caltrans
 - ▶ Testing and revising the impact assessment methods for the mitigation needs assessment
 - ▶ Conservation priority identification methods
 - ▶ Funding: currently through the SHOPP program
 - ▶ 2018 SHOPP
 - ▶ Bulk credit purchase for GGS, Swainson's Hawk
 - ▶ Approved for PID development
 - ▶ Mitigation project through Sacramento Corps' ILF with NFWF
 - ▶ In SHOPP tool, but not approved for PID development

A Reference Manual for Caltrans Staff on Regional Advance Mitigation Impact Assessment Methods

Prepared for California Department of Transportation

Prepared by University of California, Davis

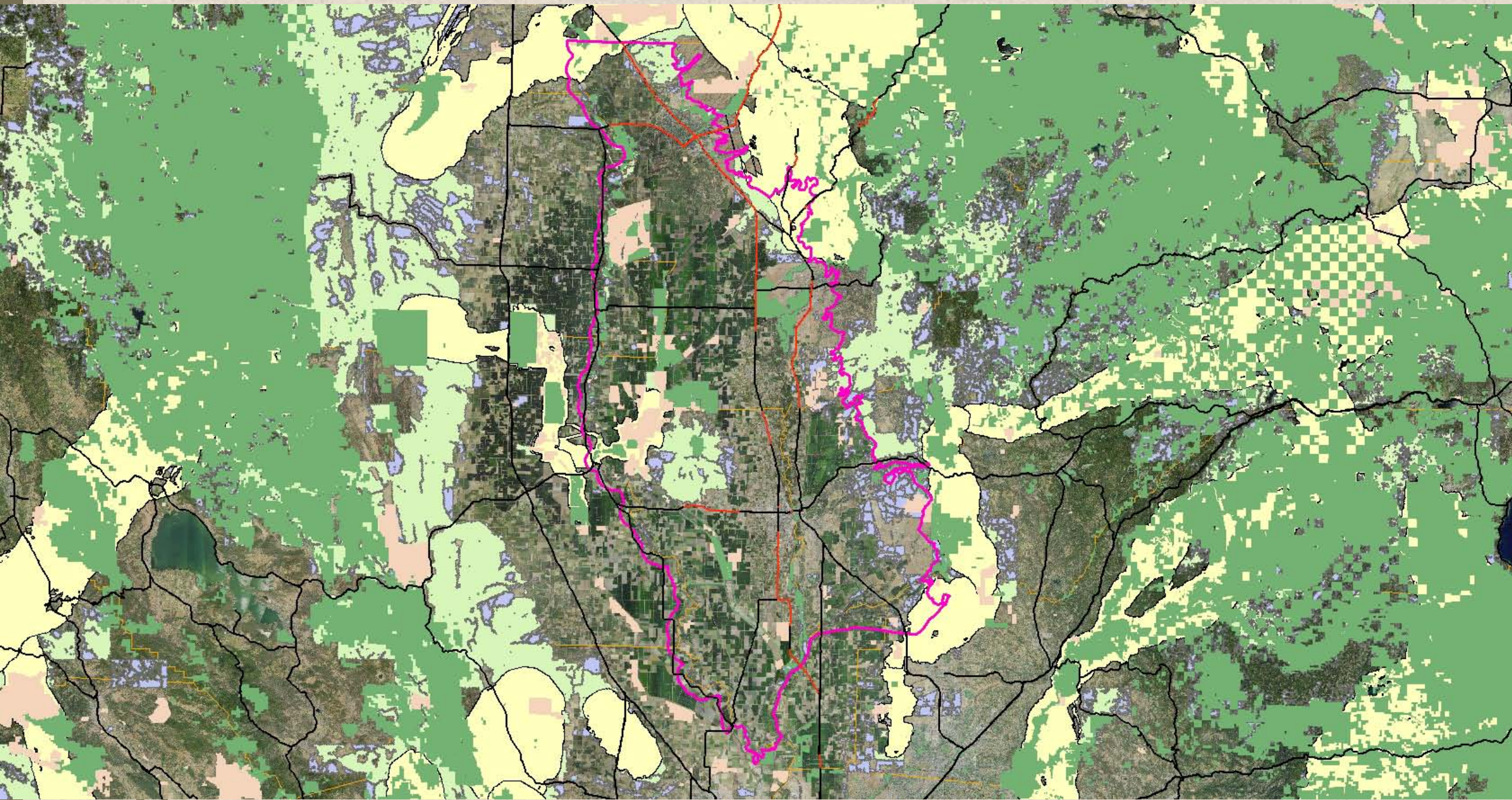
James H. Thorne, Jacquelyn Bjorkman, and Patrick R. Huber

March 2015




Photo Credit: Patrick Huber

Funding for this work was provided by Caltrans, contract number 74A0711.






Advance Mitigation and the HCP/NCCP Process



Opportunities



- ▶ Alignment of Goals
 - ▶ Landscape level planning
 - ▶ Directing resources toward conservation priorities
 - ▶ Streamlines infrastructure project delivery while furthering the recovery plans of the resource agencies
- ▶ Conservation Planning Component
 - ▶ Provides information that is needed for Regional Assessments
 - ▶ Identification of conservation priorities
 - ▶ Provides land use planning and land use authority that can situate mitigation sites



Constraints



- ▶ HCPs/NCCPs do not provide all of Caltrans' mitigation needs
 - ▶ Only for Section 10 of the federal ESA and California ESA
 - ▶ Does not cover waters and wetlands (CWA, CFGC §1600)
 - ▶ Protecting land alone is often insufficient to meet the standard under the regulations for mitigation.
- ▶ Timeline Issues
 - ▶ Caltrans increasingly having to do more work with fewer resources on accelerated timeframes
 - ▶ HCPs/NCCPs take a long time to implement
- ▶ Ability to participate varies across the state
- ▶ Terms of HCPs/NCCPs are geared more towards local development
 - ▶ Caltrans can often negotiate better terms
 - ▶ Caltrans is often required to get permits and agreements anyway
 - ▶ The permitting component is not required, just the mitigation



Prospects



Prospects

- ▶ Dynamic interfaces
 - ▶ Mitigation Banks and In-Lieu Fee Programs within HCPs/NCCPs
 - ▶ USACE ILF within the Coachella Valley MSHCP
 - ▶ Local governments acting as mitigation brokers through agreements
 - ▶ SANDAG
 - ▶ OCTA
 - ▶ Allows Caltrans the ability to participate in HCPs/NCCPs on their own schedule and on their own terms
- ▶ Strategies
 - ▶ Identifying lands that may not be of the highest conservation value, but that provide opportunities for restoration or enhancement
 - ▶ Situate to provide buffering to the core conservation lands
 - ▶ Allows for invasive species control in the areas around HCP/NCCP core lands



Questions?

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