

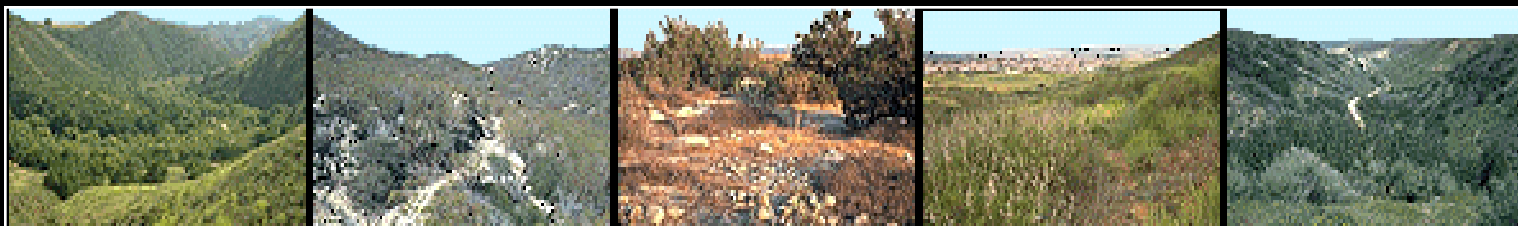


Trends in Preparing and Implementing Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs): Challenges and Opportunities

**Habitat Conservation Planning and Invasive Plant Management
Cal-IPC Symposium Special Conference
October 29, 2015**

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California Department of Fish and Wildlife

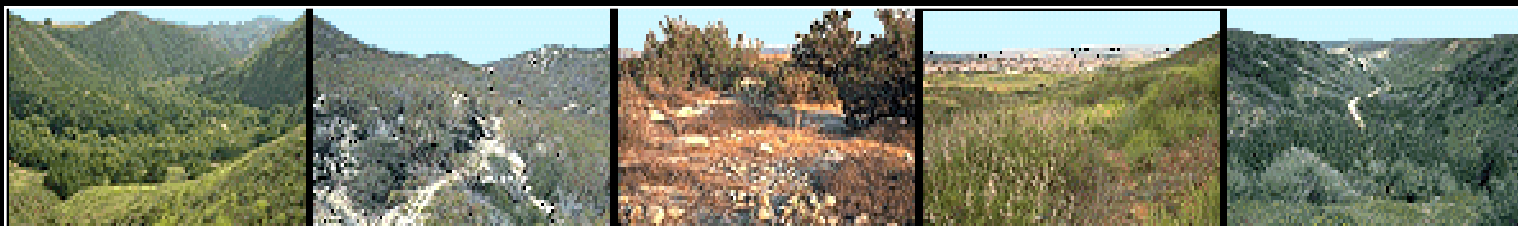




Where are the latest trends in HCP/NCCPs pointing?

Will the HCP/NCCPs of the future be more standardized and systematic in California?

When will all of the state be covered?



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Introduction: A Look at the Present

Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) Act

(1991, 2000, 2003)

**California Fish and Game Code
Chapter 10, Sections 2800-
2835**

**Alternative is Incidental Take
Permit (Section 2080 et seq.)**



NCCP Goals

- **Protect and recover biological diversity**
- **Prevent future species listings**
- **Allow compatible and appropriate use**



Characteristics of Regional Conservation Plans

- **Locally-driven collaborative partnerships**
- **Broad geographic scope**
- **Ecosystem-based approach**
- **Conservation, management, and monitoring in perpetuity**



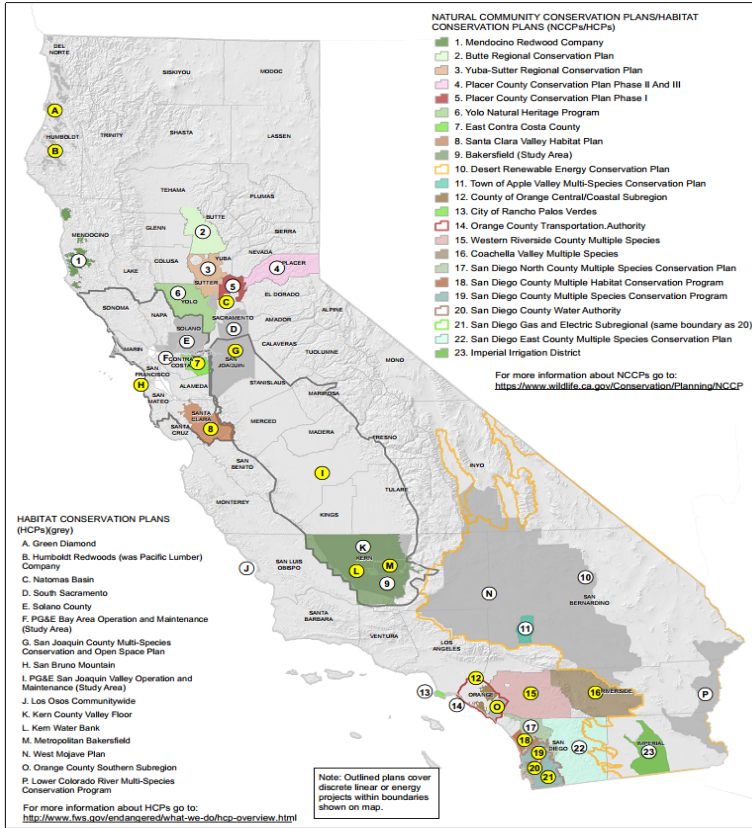
NCCP Standards

- **Independent Scientific Input**
- **Species Recovery Within the Plan Area**
- **Conservation Commitment Independent of Impacts**



CALIFORNIA REGIONAL CONSERVATION PLANS

August 2015



NCCP: Natural Community Conservation Plan (California Fish and Game Code §2800)

HCP: Habitat Conservation Plan (Federal Endangered Species Act Section 10)



- ① HCP/NCCP - Planning Stage
- ② HCP/NCCP - Implementation Stage
- Ⓐ HCP - Planning Stage
- Ⓐ HCP - Implementation Stage

Conservation plans may be 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: Conservation Planning Areas: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Mendocino Redwood Company, San Diego Association of Governments, and Coachella Valley Association of Governments, CALFED Bay Delta Program, City of Bakersfield.

Projection: Teale Atbers, units in meters, NAD83. D.Mastair 20150821

- 22 active NCCP/HCPs covering over 9.5 million acres
- 9 are approved and permitted; 13 are in the planning phase

Number of Species¹ in California Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs)²

August 2015

Species Covered by NCCPs	Plant	Invertebrate	Fish	Amphibian	Reptile	Bird	Mammal	Total
Total FE, FT, SE, ST	59	13	14	6	6	21	12	131
Total FE, FT, FC, FPT, SE, ST, SCE, SCT, SR	66	14	14	6	7	21	13	141
Total FE, FE, FC, FPT, SE, ST, SCE, SCT, SR, CSSC, CFP, CNPS	231	14	18	11	20	53	31	378
Total With and Without Special Status	282	26	18	14	34	88	46	508

Species With a Portion of Their Range in an NCCP Plan Area	Plant	Invertebrate	Fish	Amphibian	Reptile	Bird	Mammal	Total
Total FE, FT, SE, ST	84	18	21	7	8	21	19	178
Total FE, FT, FC, FPT, SE, ST, SCE, SCT, SR	97	20	21	7	8	21	21	195
Total FE, FE, FC, FPT, SE, ST, SCE, SCT, SR, CSSC, CFP, CNPS	646	20	33	18	26	52	61	856
Total Vertebrate Species With and Without Special Status			97	47	76	350	163	733

Legend

FE = Federal Endangered
 FT = Federal Threatened
 FC = Federal Candidate
 FPT = Federal Proposed Threatened

SE = State Endangered
 ST = State Threatened
 SCE = State Candidate Endangered
 SCT = State Candidate Threatened

SR = State Rare
 CSSC = California Species of Special Concern
 CFP = California Fully Protected
 CNPS = California Native Plant Society List 1 and 2

¹ The term species is used throughout this document, although special status may be at the level of species, subspecies, variety, or Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU).

² NCCPs in both preparation and implementation phases are included. To date, there are 22 NCCPs statewide – 13 in preparation and 9 in implementation.

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Funding

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Funding Challenge:

**Decrease in federal funding for
land acquisition related to
HCPs and NCCPs**

2010 - \$40.9 million

2011 - 28.6

2012 - 15.0

2013 - 14.2

2014 - 17.9

2015 - 20.3

**Perception that need is unique
to California**

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Funding Opportunity:

Formation of a National HCP Coalition that includes other states similar to California

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Funding Challenge:

State bond sources such as Proposition 84 funds are now limited.

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Funding Opportunities:

New sources of funds such as Proposition 1 Restoration Grants are compatible with NCCPs - \$285 million over a 10 year period, plus \$87.5 million in projects that benefit the Delta

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Funding Challenge:

NCCPs have traditionally relied on land development impact fees.

Some NCCPs will experience minimal development within their planning areas.

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Funding Opportunities:

Creative solutions are tied to impacts other than land development.

Voter Approved Sales Tax Increases for Transportation (Orange County, San Diego County)

Nitrogen Deposition Fees (Santa Clara County)

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



**New Planning and
Management
Challenges Such as
the Effects of
Climate Change**

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Climate Change Challenge:

Uncertainties in how species ranges may shift or natural communities assemble and disassemble.

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Climate Change Opportunity:

Large connected reserve systems required of NCCPs are still the primary strategy for mediating the effects of climate change on species distributions.

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Climate Change Opportunity:

We now know that future NCCPs need to include a more robust analysis of climate change and a more explicit adaptive management and monitoring strategy to respond to its effects.

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities

Climate Change Opportunity:

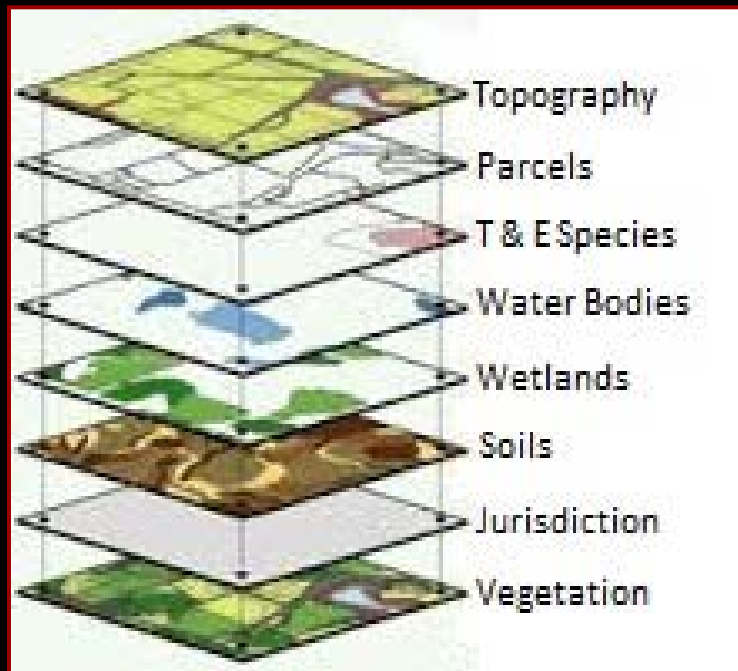


An increasing amount of data is available to incorporate into planning and management.

Climate change vulnerability assessments are one example:

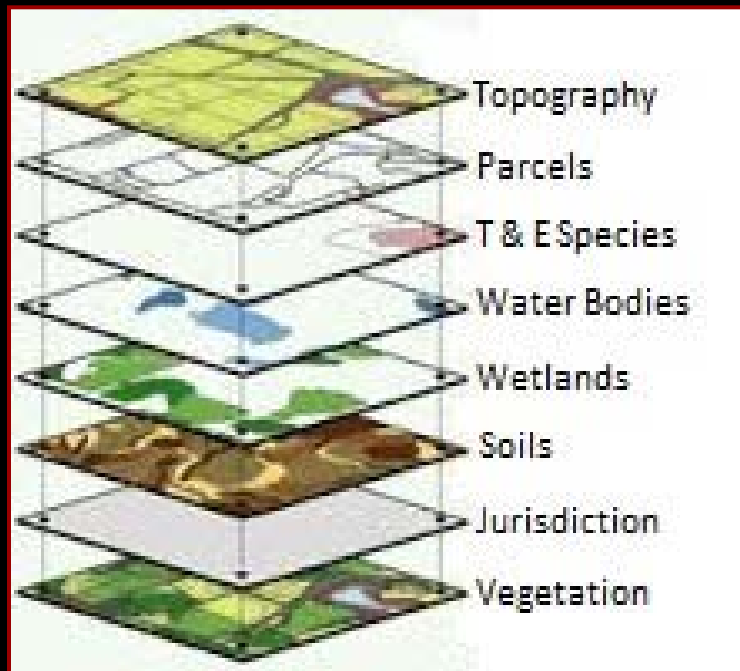
<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/NCCP/Climate-Change>

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Data and Technology

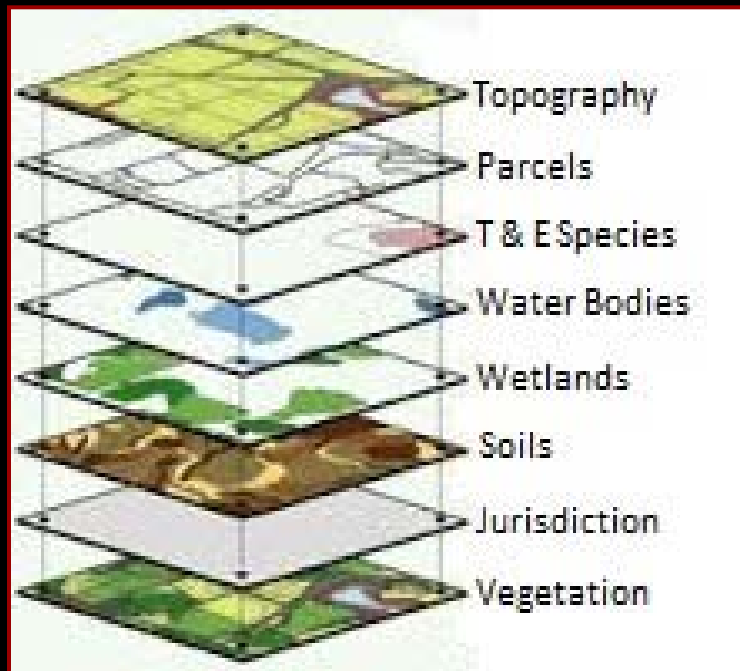
Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Data and Technology Challenge:

Regional conservation planning requires a lot of data!

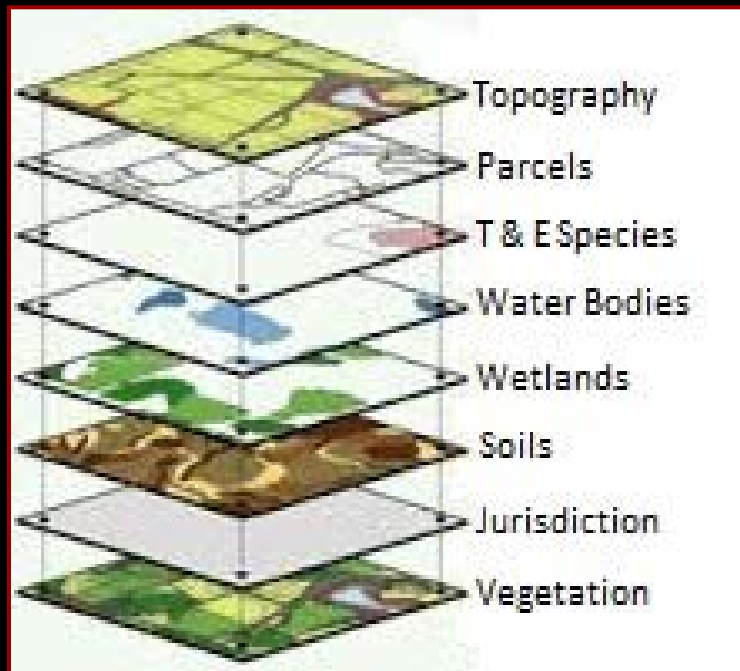
Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Data and Technology Opportunities:

Legislative support for meeting data needs (Section 1930.5 Fish and Game Code now includes direction to identify essential wildlife corridors and linkages and to prioritize vegetative data development.)

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Data and Technology Opportunities:

Technology such as cloud computing facilitates data sharing across agencies.

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



**Structure of the
Plans and Permits
Themselves**

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities

HCP (USFWS)

NCCP (CDFW)

Section
404
Clean
Water
Act
(USACE)

Section
401
Clean
Water
Act
(USEPA)



Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (SWQCB)
Master Streambed Alteration Agreement (CDFW)
Local Ordinances Related to Wetland Impacts

Plan and Permit Structure Challenge:

Trend is to integrate all regional permits into an NCCP or HCP.

Increasing complexity adds to time needed to prepare plans.

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Plan and Permit Structure Opportunity:

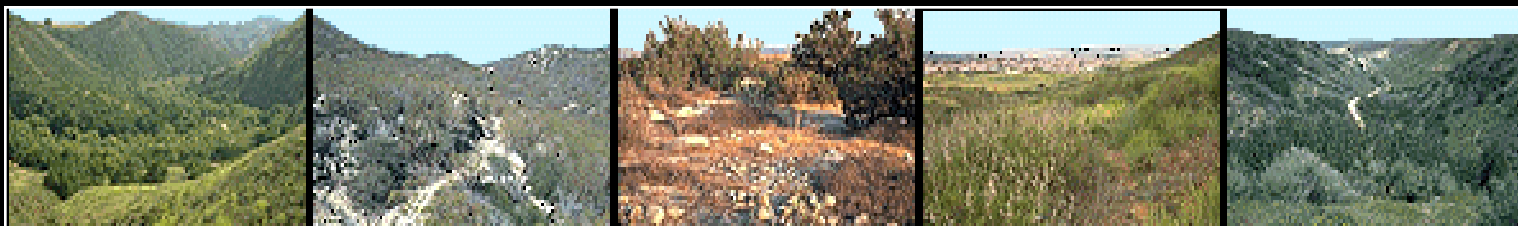
Stakeholders and public to benefit from real permit streamlining, which increases the support for regional conservation plans.

Latest Trends: Challenges and Opportunities



Plan and Permit Structure Opportunity:

Agencies also creating
planning process flowcharts
and planning document
templates, which leads to ...



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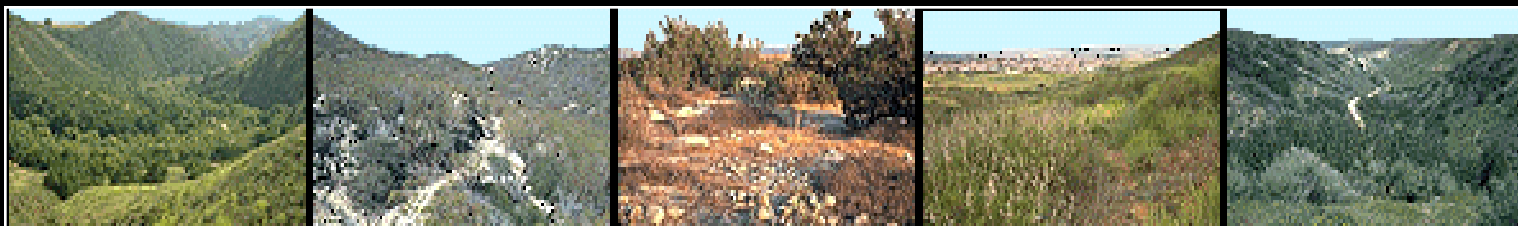
Will the HCP/NCCPs of the future be more standardized and systematic in California?

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Will the HCP/NCCPs of the future be more standardized and systematic in California?

Yes, we hope so. That is the plan.

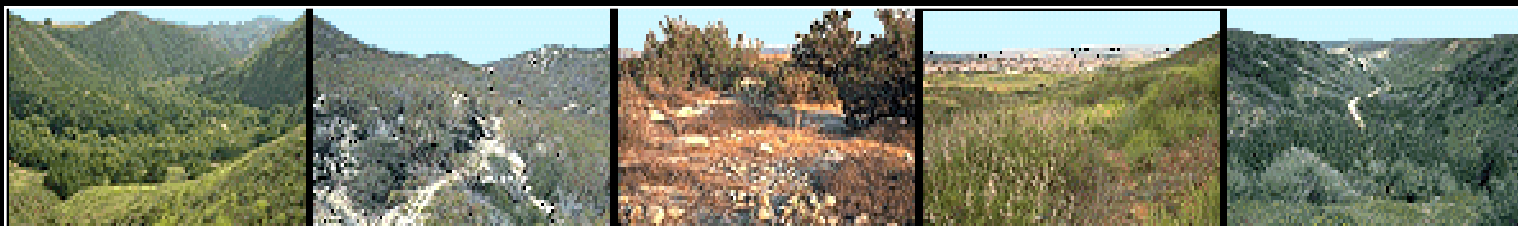


Will the HCP/NCCPs of the future be more standardized and systematic in California?

Two surveys were conducted in 2014 (HCP Coalition, CDFW, USFWS) on how to maximize efficiency in preparing regional habitat conservation plans.

Respondents suggested a number of templates would be useful for process flow, timelines, plan chapters, and Implementing Agreements.

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/NCCP/CDFW-Guidance>



Will the HCP/NCCPs of the future be more standardized and systematic in California?

Each new proposed plan presents new challenges.

Proposed Unconventional NCCPs

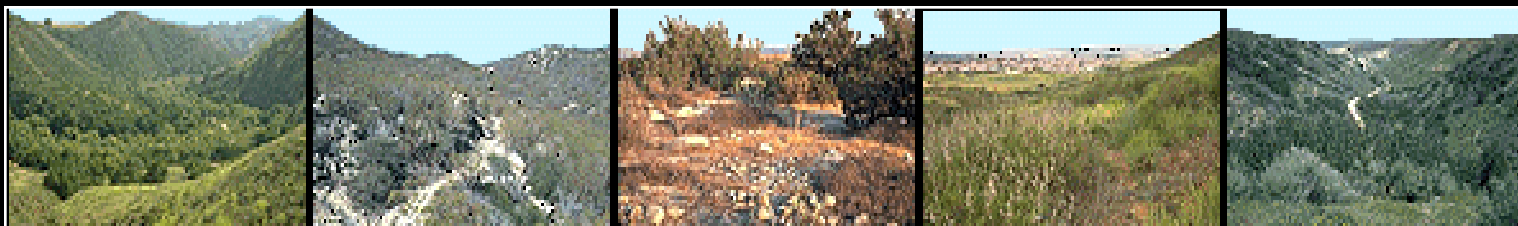
Aquatic based

Single Fully Protected species

Overlapping multiple land use jurisdictions, some of which have NCCPs underway

Working landscapes (timber harvest, agriculture) remaining in private ownership

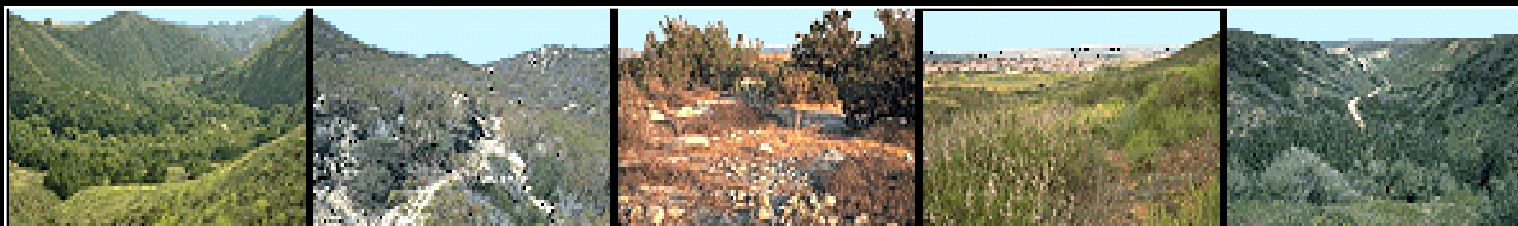




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When will all of the state be covered?

Not all proposals or areas of the state may be appropriate for an NCCP.



Concluding Thought:

**Despite challenges and
uncertainties ...**

**NCCP Act (2003) remains one of the
most powerful tools for biodiversity
conservation in California.**

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/NCCP>

