



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Mary Lim
925-454-5036

Public to Participate in Habitat Conservation Strategy *Goal is to Preserve Eastern Alameda County Biological Resources*

Community participation is being sought to help prepare a habitat conservation strategy for eastern Alameda County aimed at resolving conflicts that can arise between development/infrastructure projects and the continued survival of endangered or threatened species.

A kickoff meeting for preparation of the East Alameda County Conservation Strategy will be held at 4 p.m. on Jan. 17 in City Council Chambers at Dublin City Hall, 100 Civic Plaza. Members of the public, including those interested in serving on an advisory panel, are invited to attend.

The conservation strategy, to be developed over the next 18 months, will provide a collaborative and consistent approach to preservation of the area's biological resources.

The regional effort is being undertaken collaboratively by Alameda County, the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency, the cities of Livermore, Pleasanton and Dublin; and the Valley's Zone 7 Water Agency, along with the Alameda County Resource Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The conservation strategy will be developed in close coordination with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The idea is to help coordinate and streamline mitigation requirements associated with various private development and public infrastructure projects, and to help base those mitigations on areas of eastern Alameda County that are of strategic biological value.

The current process of obtaining environmental permits and project mitigation lands is done on a piecemeal, project-by-project basis and has been costly and time-consuming not only for project proponents, but for regulatory agencies as well. The limited capacity and scope of the two mitigation “banks” in Alameda County have led to some mitigation for development or infrastructure projects occurring outside the county – despite permitting and local-agency preference. A regional approach to conservation will save time and money, while improving overall species habitat within Alameda County.

To assist in developing the conservation strategy, a Users Advisory Group will be established to review and comment on the draft conservation strategy material and, at critical stages of the process, make recommendations to the funding partners.

The Users Advisory Group will include a broad range of interests, including those of business and civic organizations, agricultural associations, environmental groups, resource-conservation and land-management groups and others. It is anticipated that the Users Advisory Group will meet approximately every other month over the next 18 months to two years.

Those interested in serving can get more information by attending the Jan. 17 workshop and-or by contacting EACCS Coordinator Mary Lim at 925-454-5036 or via email at m_lim@zone7water.com. Deadline to apply is Feb. 1.

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