

Facts about the Eastern Alameda County Conservation Strategy For Landowners

1. *What is the Eastern Alameda County Conservation Strategy (EACCS)?*

The EACCS is a collaborative effort to preserve endangered species by developing a shared vision for long-term habitat protection. The EACCS will assess areas all across Eastern Alameda County for their conservation value and establish guiding biological principles for conducting conservation in the county. Part of that guidance will include working with willing landowners to implement long-term conservation in the form of conservation easements that would offset impacts from local land use, transportation, or other infrastructure projects.

2. *Will the EACCS be a Habitat Conservation Plan?*

No; the effort will produce a conservation strategy and not a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The Fish & Wildlife Service and local governments and agencies agree that preparing a Habitat Conservation Plan is unnecessary because of the relatively low level of planned development that would typically justify the need for or adequately fund an HCP. As such, the EACCS will not provide local agencies with permits allowing implementation of projects that could adversely impact threatened or endangered species; but it will instead provide guidance on the permitting process that will ensure that impacts are offset in a biologically effective manner.

3. *Who is pursuing the EACCS and why?*

There are a number of infrastructure projects planned for the eastern part of Alameda County over the coming years, and these projects will benefit from a reliable biological framework to guide environmental mitigation. The EACCS is funded by Alameda County Community Development Agency, Alameda County Congestion Management Agency, Alameda County Waste Management Authority, the Cities of Dublin, Livermore and Pleasanton, East Bay Regional Parks District, Zone 7 Water Agency, and by a CalFed grant obtained by the Alameda County Resource Conservation District. The EACCS should help to improve mitigation programs, increase the benefit to local endangered species, and involve willing landowners more directly in regional conservation efforts. A primary goal of this strategy is to reduce project delays and consequently, project costs.

4. *Will the EACCS restrict my land use?*

No; the purpose of the EACCS is to provide guidance to local agencies and private developers about favorable mitigation strategies that can be used to offset the impacts of their projects. EACCS is not intended to be a land use tool that would affect individual land use or property rights. Private land owners will never be forced to participate in mitigation programs on their property. All conservation on private lands will be voluntary.

5. *Will you be conducting land surveys on my property?*

No; we will use publicly available existing data, obtained from state and local sources as well as interpretation of aerial photographs. We do not foresee a need to conduct new surveys. Landowners that would like to have surveys conducted on their property to assess conservation potential or value should contact the Alameda County Resource Conservation District or Natural Resource Conservation Service to negotiate access through their private landowner programs.

6. Will the EACCS disclose habitat or species related information about my property?

No; while the EACCS will provide general information about biological values across the eastern part of the county, the conservation strategy will not provide information on a parcel basis or direct conservation toward specific properties.

7. How will the EACCS benefit me?

The EACCS will benefit willing landowners by helping to create an accessible and equitable market for land with conservation value for threatened and endangered species habitat. EACCS can also help to preserve working landscapes in Eastern Alameda County by supporting conservation transactions on private lands and acknowledging the importance of grazing and other land uses that support the preservation of endangered species. Although the Conservation Strategy will be primarily focused on preservation of endangered species and habitats, if implemented through conservation easements with willing, private landowners, the Strategy could directly contribute to the preservation of working landscapes in Eastern Alameda County.

8. How will you pursue acquisition of land for conservation purposes?

The acquisition of land for conservation purposes through fee title or conservation easements will be accomplished by working only with willing and interested sellers.

9. How will the EACCS affect or benefit vineyards and other croplands?

The plan is focused on conservation of species and habitats. There may be some crop lands that could contribute to species conservation; however these parcels are not likely to provide the same level of biological conservation benefit as other, more natural landscapes.

For more information:

EACCS Website

<http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/eaccs/eaccs.htm>

EACCS Coordinator Contact Information

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