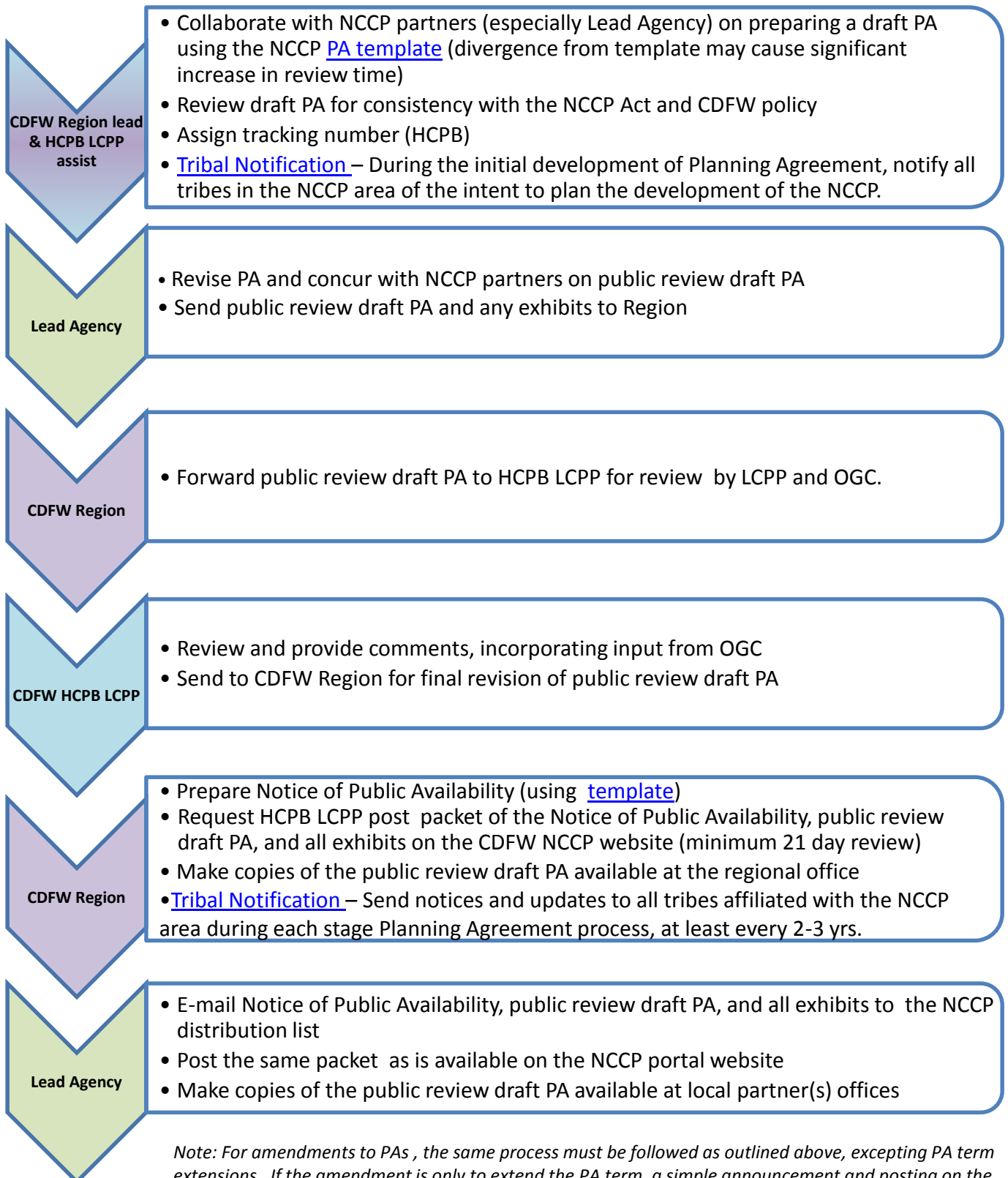


# Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) Planning Agreement (PA) Review and Approval Process

See attached description of CDFW roles



*Note: For amendments to PAs, the same process must be followed as outlined above, excepting PA term extensions. If the amendment is only to extend the PA term, a simple announcement and posting on the Plan's webpage will be adequate. At Region's discretion, the amendment may follow the usual approval/signature steps without a public review period.*

# Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) Planning Agreement (PA) Review and Approval Process

CDFW Region

- Review public comments for substantive PA-related issues
- Summarize comments and distribute final draft to NCCP partners, including USFWS and HCPB LCPP
- Modify PA if necessary, in collaboration with NCCP partners

CDFW Region

- Prepare internal tracking sheet, sign-off, and then attach to final PA (with appropriate number of originals)
- Send package to HCPB LCPP

CDFW HCPB LCPP

- Submit package to OGC then HCPB Branch Chief for sign-off
- Send approved package back to Region

CDFW Region

- Send approved package to lead agency representative(s) for the plan\*, then USFWS Field Supervisor (and other federal agencies if appropriate) for approval/signature.
- Send signed package to HCPB LCPP with tracking sheet

CDFW HCPB LCPP

- Forward PA, Deputy Directors Action Request (DDAR), and tracking sheet to HCPB Branch Chief, OGC, and Ecosystem Conservation Division Deputy Director for approval/signature
- Retain original in HCPB LCPP
- Send all copies back to Region

CDFW Region

- Send one complete signed copy to each signatory for their files

*\* After approval by local boards and councils*

# CDFW Internal Roles and Responsibilities

**Region** - The CDFW region in which the plan area is located is the lead CDFW contact for planning and implementation. The regional staff have the greatest knowledge about resources in the plan area, and likely already have a working relationship with the local government(s) or land owner(s). Regional staff are responsible for guiding the development of the NCCP planning agreement, plan documents, and associated NEPA/CEQA documents, and drafting the CEQA and NCCP findings and NCCP permit, with assistance and guidance from HCPB LCPP. Due to the sensitive negotiations that will ensue and the need to understand and work within political realities, it is generally appropriate to assign primary responsibility for leading the effort to a regional Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist or Supervisor), although Environmental Scientists are sometimes assigned this role. The regional Environmental Program Manager provides the first layer of support during negotiations, and the Regional Manager provides a second layer, such as working with elected officials to initiate the effort or get through difficult issues.

**HCPB LCPP** – The Landscape Conservation Planning Program (LCPP) in the CDFW Habitat Conservation Planning Branch's (HCPB) has the role of policy lead and provides statewide coordination for the NCCP Program. LCPP provides guidance on the NCCP Act and standards, shares strategies used in other plans around the state, and aids the regions in interpreting policy, reviewing documents, and solving problems during negotiations. HCPB LCPP also assists with negotiating planning and implementing agreements and drafting findings and permits. All major plan issues and documents are generally sent from the region to LCPP, and then to other entities at Headquarters as appropriate (OGC, HCPB Branch Chief, ECD Deputy Director). The LCPP is the statewide repository of knowledge about the NCCP Program; it maintains historical documents, files, original signed agreements and permits, and copies for all plans. The LCPP Environmental Program Manager (EPM) provides oversight on all NCCP plans statewide and attends plan meetings, or assigns an LCPP staff member to do so, when a Headquarters presence is warranted. The LCPP EPM coordinates with the EPMs in the regions, and provides information on escalating problems to the HCPB Branch Chief and Directorate. The HCPB Branch Chief assists with the most difficult level of problem solving when NCCP issues get elevated to the Regional Manager or Deputy Director.

**OGC** - The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) contributes legal advice and assists with negotiating the planning and implementing agreements. An attorney is assigned to each plan when negotiations on the planning agreement begin. Both planning and implementing agreements require OGC to approve the agreements before they are officially signed by the CDFW Deputy Director.

**Deputy Director** - The Deputy Director of the Ecosystem Conservation Division (ECD) may be briefed on specific NCCP progress and status, and on the program in general by the HCPB Branch Chief and LCPP EPM. Like the Regional Manager, the Deputy Director also deals with elevated and difficult issues. The Deputy Director approves by signature both NCCP planning and implementing agreements, as well as the NCCP permit.