REGIONAL CONSERVATION INVESTMENT STRATEGIES PROGRAM (AB 2087)

California’s New Conservation & Advance Mitigation Program

California Department of Fish & Wildlife
RCA and RCIS Guidelines Public Workshop
June 21, 2017

Ron Unger, Program Manager
Landscape Conservation Planning Program
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch
WORKSHOP AGENDA

• RCIS Program Overview
• RCA Overview & Guidelines
• RCIS Overview & Guidelines
• MCA Overview
• Examples of Uses
• Fees, Next Steps, & Contacts
• Questions and Answers
RCIS PROGRAM
OVERVIEW
RCIS PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Regional Conservation Assessments (RCA)
- Regional Conservation Investment Strategies (RCIS)
- Mitigation Credit Agreements (MCA)
RCIS PROGRAM PURPOSE

RCA - **ASSESS** conservation opportunities

RCIS - Develop a conservation **STRATEGY**

MCA - Provide an **ADVANCE MITIGATION** tool
RCIS PROGRAM IS TO:

- Achieve more strategic, effective conservation
- Promote resiliency to climate change & other pressures
- Support infrastructure & other projects with efficient mitigation delivery
THE ASSESSMENT HIERARCHY

- **Local Planning**
  - **RCAs**: Regional
  - **RCISs**: Multi-county to sub-county
  - **MCAs**: Land base

- **Ecological**
  - **Ecoregion Section**
  - **Sub-Ecoregion**
  - **Vegetation Community/Habitat**
REGIONAL CONSERVATION SCALES

RCA

RCIS

MCA
REGIONAL CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT (RCA) OVERVIEW & GUIDELINES
RCA is an assessment to identify areas for long-term ecosystem conservation success.
• RCA is voluntary, non-regulatory
• Non-binding on land use authorities
• Proposed by any public agency
• Public review not required, but recommended
• *RCA not required to do an RCIS*
RCA COMPONENTS

• Required Components:
  • Description of RCA Area
  • Natural Communities Information
  • Biodiversity & Species Information
  • Habitat Connectivity Values
  • Existing Conservation Areas
  • Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments
  • Other Pressures and Stressors
  • Major Infrastructure & Development

• Consistent with Regional Conservation Plans
• Data Sharing and Access
REGIONAL CONSERVATION INVESTMENT STRATEGY (RCIS) OVERVIEW & GUIDELINES
RCIS is a strategy with actions to achieve regional conservation.
RCIS OVERVIEW

- Voluntary, non-regulatory
- Non-binding on land use authorities
- **RCIS required for MCAs**
- Proposed by any public agency
- State agency sponsor letter required
- Good for up to ten years
- Can be extended, updated or amended
- CDFW can approve eight (those with a letter from a state water or transportation infrastructure agency requesting RCIS approval are exempt from this limit)
Required Components Include:

- RCIS Conservation Purpose
- Description of RCIS Area
- Focal Species and Other Conservation Elements
- Conservation and Habitat Enhancement Actions
- Summary of Banks in RCIS Area
- Consistency with NCCPs, HCPs, other plans
- Best Available Scientific Information
- Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments
- Major Infrastructure & Development

Data Sharing and Access
Public Notice Requirements
CDFW Review and Approval Process
RCIS CONSERVATION PURPOSE

- Align with State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)
- Enhance resiliency to climate change, other pressures
- Be consistent with overlapping NCCPs, HCPs
- Consider working lands conservation benefits
- Not allowed for Delta water conveyance facilities
- *Identify conservation and enhancement actions*
• **Focal Species**
  • SWAP Species of Greatest Conservation Need
  • Native vulnerable species
  • Indicator species and wide-ranging species
  • Special-status species

• **Other Conservation Elements**
  • Natural communities
  • Water resources
Species & conservation elements in an MCA must be covered by the approved RCIS
Conservation Goals and Measurable Objectives
  • Address climate change and other pressures

Conservation and Habitat Enhancement Actions
  • Prioritize by species & conservation elements
  • Amounts and types of habitats that will benefit
  • Evaluate effectiveness of actions
• Acquire and protect land
• Restore creeks and rivers
• Restore habitat on public land
• Install wildlife crossings
• Remove fish barriers
• Create/restore rearing habitat
RCISs provide a basis for conservation investments – philanthropic and mitigation
RCIS APPROVAL PROCESS

Public Agency proposing RCIS publishes Notice of Intent to prepare an RCIS

Start Preparing RCIS

Notice public meeting

Prepare RCIS

Hold public meeting in RCIS area

Prepare RCIS

Submit Draft/Amended RCIS to CDFW

CDFW decides within 30 days if Draft/Amended RCIS is complete

Public agency notifies county boards and city councils

Key

- Action by RCIS Sponsor
- Public Review
- Action by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

Notes

1. File with Governor’s Office of Planning and Research and county clerk of all overlapping counties (filing not required if RCIS started before Jan. 1, 2017).
2. Notice public meeting to 1) each city or county within or adjacent to the RCIS, 2) each implementing entity for overlapping HCPs or NCCPs, and 3) each agency, organization, or individual who has filed a request for such notices, including those who have filed a general request with CDFW to receive all RCIS notices.
3. Hold public meeting “early in the process of preparing it” to allow adequate opportunity for the public to provide written and oral comments. If RCIS started before January 1, 2017, the public meeting can occur anytime as long as occurs at least 30 days before submitting draft RCIS to CDFW.
4. Notify county boards of supervisors and city councils in RCIS area at least 60 days prior to submitting final RCIS to CDFW for approval, and allow them at least 30 days to submit written comments.
MITIGATION CREDIT AGREEMENT OVERVIEW
MCAs* implement the conservation strategy!

* MCA guidelines not released yet
MCA ENABLES:

- *Advance* mitigation
- *Transferable* credits
- *Excess* project conservation & enhancements used as credits
- Offset impacts under CESA, CEQA, LSA
- Offset permanent and temporary impacts
- On *public* or private land
Anyone may apply for MCA
Based on conservation & habitat enhancement actions in approved RCIS
Consistent with CDFW’s Banking Program
NCCP Implementing Entity approval required
RCIS PROGRAM
EXAMPLES OF USES
RCIS PROGRAM POTENTIAL USERS

- State agencies
- Infrastructure agencies
- Local governments and public agencies
- Non-governmental organizations
- Mitigation and conservation bankers
- NCCP Implementing Entities
- Other public and private entities
PROGRAM USES – CONSERVATION

- sensitive habitat/resource

- Federal, State, or Regional Conservation Areas (acquisitions)
PROGRAM USES – TRANSPORTATION

= sensitive habitat/resource

RCA

RCIS

New Roadway
PROGRAM USES – TRANSPORTATION

= sensitive habitat/resource

RCA

RCIS

Corridor Impact

New Roadway

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PROGRAM USES – TRANSPORTATION

- RCA
- RCIS
- MCA

- Corridor Impact
- New Roadway

= sensitive habitat/resource
PROGRAM USES – FLOOD CONTROL

- Setback Levee
- MCA
- RCIS
- RCA

● = sensitive habitat/resource
PROGRAM USES – UTILITIES

- RCA
- RCIS
- MCA

= sensitive habitat/resource

New Powerline

RCA
RCIS

MCA
D
PROGRAM USES – DEVELOPMENT

- RCA
- RCIS
- Conserved Areas
- Development

○ = sensitive habitat/resource
PROGRAM USES – PARKS

- RCA
- RCIS
- State or Local Park

= sensitive habitat/resource
RCIS PROGRAM FEES, NEXT STEPS & CONTACTS
• RCIS Program is entirely fee-based:
  • RCA Review/Approval - $22,000*
  • RCIS Review/Approval - $28,500*
  • MCA Review/Approval – to be determined

* Notes:
  • Additional fees apply for revisions and amendments
  • CDFW may adjust fees after June 30, 2018
CDFW’S NEXT STEPS INCLUDE:

- CDFW is currently developing the fee structure and schedule for MCAs
- Revise program guidelines as needed
- Approve RCAs, RCISs, and MCAs
Submit to:
Richard Macedo, Branch Chief
RCIS Program
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
1416 Ninth Street, 12th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

To receive RCIS and MCA notifications:
rcis@wildlife.ca.gov or address above
RCIS PROGRAM RESOURCE LINKS

- RCIS Program Website:
  - https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/Regional-Conservation
- CDFW Conservation Resources (BIOS, etc.):
  - https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation
- Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments:
  - https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Climate-Science/Resources/Vulnerability
- Landscape Conservation Planning Program (NCCP, Conservation Banks, etc.)
  - https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning
WHERE TO SUBMIT RCIS PROGRAM QUESTIONS

Submit to:
Ron Unger, Program Manager
RCIS Program
Landscape Conservation Planning
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

RCIS@wildlife.ca.gov
(916) 653-3779
QUESTIONS?
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