
Roles & Responsibilities of Consultants in Developing NCCP/HCPs

Ingrid Hogle
Graduate Fellow, California Department of Fish & Game
Sustainable Communities Leadership Program
2002

Recommendations

The NCCP planning process has evolved into a complex and rewarding endeavor since its inception in 1991. Because we learn more about successful strategies with each planning effort, CDFG recommends that applicants communicate directly with the wildlife agencies before deciding to prepare an NCCP/HCP and throughout the planning process. CDFG is committed to improving the process, and thus sponsors program evaluations and guidance such as this to transmit those “lessons learned” to people new to NCCP planning. Guidance is available regarding successful strategies used by consultants, appropriate timing of tasks, interpretation of the NCCP Act, and other topics relevant to NCCP/HCP development. CDFG staff are available and receptive to requests to clarify or expand on the guidance available online at CDFG’s NCCP website (<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/nccp/>).

CDFG advocates the designation of a Lead Consultant to coordinate the efforts of other consultants working on the plan and to serve as the point of contact between the applicant and the consultant team.

Based on the results of this study, CDFG recommends that applicants seek to hire consultants who are:

- * Objective (neutral) in their analyses and conclusions
- * Regarded as having high standards of professional integrity
- * Honest
- * Respected and trusted by all plan participants
- * Forthright about scientific conclusions
- * Committed to the goal of completing a successful NCCP/HCP
- * Pragmatists with realistic expectations
- * Skilled in listening and communicating
- * Open minded and flexible
- * Able to maintain a professional manner under pressure
- * Knowledgeable about biology, economics, environmental law and policy, and local planning as they relate to NCCP/HCP development and implementation

CDFG advises consultants to educate themselves about NCCP/HCPs and the requirements of the NCCP Act before developing their scope of work and at each new

phase of work. Information can be obtained through CDFG's NCCP website, researching other plans, and attending professional workshops and conferences.

A team approach is recommended by CDFG. Plan consultants should not work in isolation, but should collaborate with the planning partnership throughout plan development. Consultants will be most successful if they are perceived as being respectful of this partnership. By being advocates for the plan rather than advocates for just their client, they will foster a fair and impartial, problem-solving atmosphere for plan development.