



Presentation to LAFCO on
Agricultural and Open Space
Policies October 4, 2006

Keep 1993 Open Space Strategy and Update

- Maintain the existing urban services boundary based on 1993 assessment of critical resource conservation needs.
- Things have changed since 1993, but primarily in the direction of reinforcing the need for this urban boundary: knowledge of threatened species and native plants, adoption of habitat conservation plans, creation of preserves, destruction of agricultural land, Blueprint, financial constraints on infrastructure financing.



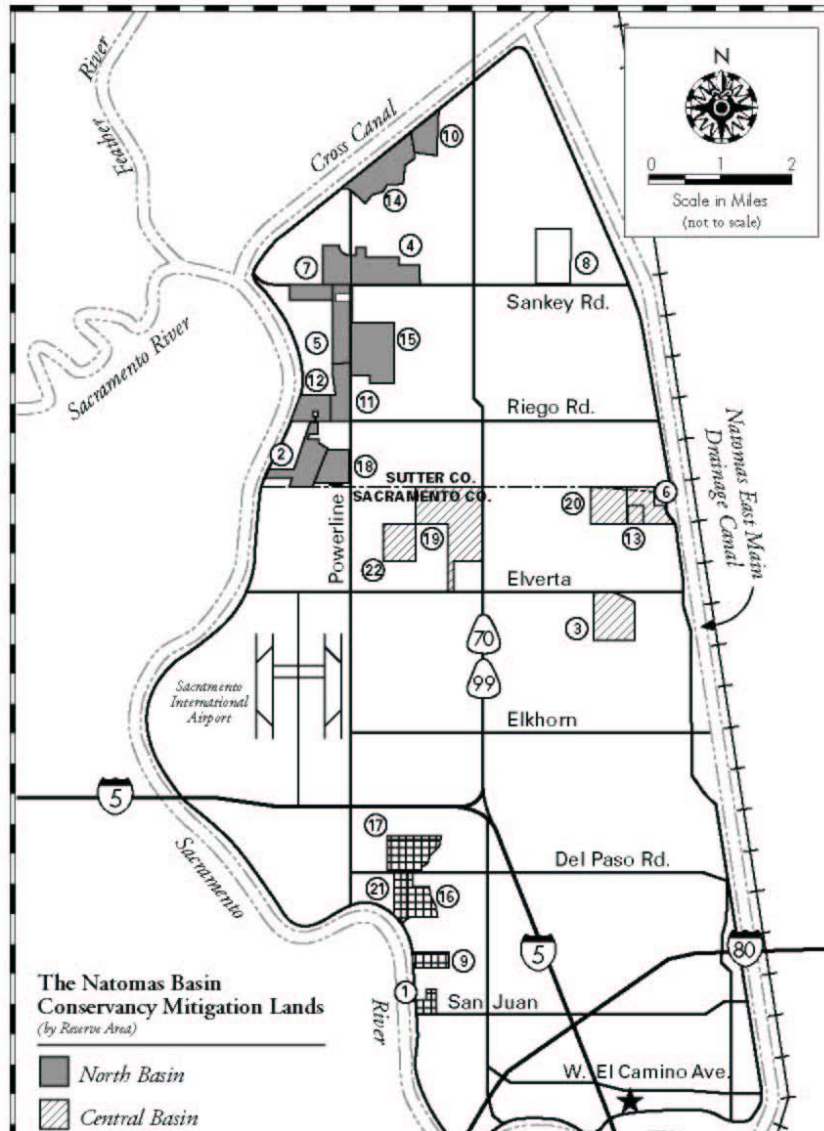
Recognize Habitat Conservation Plans and Requirements

- Understand obligations under state and federal law and funding gaps. Agricultural lands as habitat.
- Natomas HCP: Assumes private ag continuation & Swainson's Hawk zone protection. Limit on development. Lacks parkland funding to buffer ag/preserves.
- South County HCP – not complete. Jurisdictions using CEQA to mitigate with no overall plan for Cosumnes River/Stone Lakes/ Deer Creek Hills/ landscape.
- **Mitigation ratios being used today will not protect the species if development allowed beyond the 1993 USB.**
- Large unfunded obligation met now by urban limit line.
- Breaking up large agricultural properties degrades habitat; smaller fragmented parcels don't mitigate for large ag loss.

NATOMAS BASIN CONSERVANCY

2005

Base Map



Protect existing preserves and the opportunities to expand them.

- Keeping rural roads rural will require limiting access to rural roads that border nature preserves and potentially are or will be used by city commuters.
- Urban traffic through nature preserves is created when cities develop too close to sensitive habitat areas.
- Cities also propose widening roads that border nature preserves. LAFCO should discourage any development that impacts preserve land.

Preserves/Ag Land/Parks

- Ex: Natomas Swainson's Hawk Zone



Out of County Mitigation Doesn't Work for Wildlife *or* for People

- It sacrifices important local wildlife population groups that may be essential to long term survival of the species in California.
- Sacramento County residents want open space, habitat and wildlife preserved in Sacramento County.
- Greenbelts between urban communities and counties function well in other large metropolitan areas. If we don't have greenbelts, our community will be known as having **a low quality of life.**

Yolo ByPass -A Great Greenbelt that is Not Good Habitat for Swainson's Hawk or Giant Garter Snake



LAFCO Ag Policy

- LAFCO has specific responsibilities for protecting productive agricultural lands. Jurisdictions have different policies – is there a need for a countywide strategy?
- Ag residential is a threat to open space, habitat, connectivity, existing preserves and large ag. Plenty of room for ag res in other counties.
- The County has been allowing the breakdown of agricultural properties.
- Ag Residential causes problems for cities on the border of county approved ag res.

Ag Land Protection Policy

- LAFCO approvals for urbanization prior to “take permit” authorization by wildlife agencies artificially drives up prices for mitigation land.
- Ag land should remain ag land until agreement with wildlife agencies that it can be converted.
- Ag and habitat lands are intrinsically too valuable to use for urban purposes; they are irreplaceable.



Ag Conversion Wastes Public Infrastructure Dollars

- There is abundant empty and underutilized land inside city limits and unincorporated suburbs. These lands are served now with infrastructure, including very expensive investment in light rail and freeways.
- Enough infill opportunities exist to meet growth needs for decades.
- We can't afford not to develop empty urban land and redevelop vacant commercial areas. It is wasteful of the public's dollar to allow development outside the urban footprint.

Thank you.

