

## Definitions of Key Terms And Concepts

**Adaptive management.** A method for examining alternative strategies for meeting measurable biological goals and objectives, and then if necessary, adjusting future conservation management actions according to what is learned (65 FR 106 35242–35257, June 1, 2000).

**Anthropogenic.** Caused or produced through human agency.

**Baseline.** The existing environmental state, which includes past and present impacts as well as the anticipated impacts of all permitted projects in the inventory area.

**Biodiversity.** The variety of organisms considered at all levels, from genetic variants of a single species through arrays of species to arrays of genera, families, and higher taxonomic levels; includes the variety of natural communities and ecosystems.

**Biological opinion (BO).** The document stating the opinion of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Marine Fisheries Service as to whether or not a federal action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat (50 CFR 402.02). A biological opinion is one of the decision documents of a consultation under Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act.

**Biological goals.** Broad guiding principles for the operating conservation program of the HCP/NCCP. They help define land acquisition or restoration targets and they provide a framework for the monitoring and adaptive management plan. Biological goals may be categorized by species or habitat, depending on the structure of the operating conservation program and are typically qualitative (65 FR 106 35242–35257, June 1, 2000).

**Biological objectives.** The various components needed to achieve the biological goal such as preserving sufficient habitat, managing the habitat to meet certain criteria, or ensuring the persistence of a specific minimum number of individuals.

Biological objectives are smaller, more manageable units than biological goals and are quantitative whenever possible (65 FR 106 35242–35257, June 1, 2000).

**Broad goals (or program goals).** Broad guiding principles for the entire HCP/NCCP. These goals represent a summary of the “project purpose and need” for the Plan and may be incorporated as a mission statement for the process and the plan. These are a different set of goals than the biological goals and objectives.

**CEQA species.** Plant and animal species that are considered endangered, threatened, or rare under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and thus must be considered in CEQA documents, but are not species covered by the HCP/NCCP (670.2 or 670.5, Title 14, CCR). See also *endangered species* and *threatened species*.

**Changed circumstances.** Changes in conditions or other circumstances affecting a covered species or the geographic area covered by the HCP/NCCP that can reasonably be anticipated by the Permittees and that can reasonably be planned for in the HCP/NCCP (e.g., new species listings, fire, or other reasonably foreseeable natural catastrophic events).

**City limits.** Official jurisdictional boundary of a city.

**Compliance monitoring.** Monitoring that tracks the status of plan implementation, ensuring that planned actions are executed, including reserve design and creation, implementation of management activities, and implementation of monitoring activities (Atkinson et al. 2004).

**Conservation.** According to the federal Endangered Species Act, *conserve*, *conserving*, and *conservation* are the methods and procedures necessary to bring any endangered or threatened species to the point at which the measures provided under the Act are no longer necessary. Such methods and procedures include, but are not limited to, activities associated with resource management such as research, census, law enforcement, habitat acquisition and maintenance, propagation, live trapping, and transportation (16 USC 1532 [3]). According to the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act, *conserve*, *conserving*, and *conservation* are the use of methods and procedures within the Plan area that are necessary “to bring any covered species to the point at which the measures provided pursuant to [the California Endangered Species Act] ... are not necessary, and for covered species that are not listed pursuant to [the California Endangered Species Act] ..., to maintain or enhance the condition of a species so that listing pursuant to [the California Endangered Species Act] ... will not become necessary.” In other words, the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act defines *conservation* as the steps necessary to remove a species from the California threatened or endangered species list (Cal. Fish & Game Code 2085[d]).

**Conservation measure.** A management action that, when implemented, will partially or wholly achieve HCP/NCCP objectives for covered species, natural communities, biodiversity, or ecosystem function.

**Conservation strategy.** The sum of all conservation measures, or the plan laid out in the HCP/NCCP to achieve all conservation goals and objectives. This includes the distribution of land that will be protected, the design of the reserves, the species covered by the plan, the biological goals and objectives for individual covered species, and recommended management activities (Atkinson et al. 2004).

**Construction monitoring.** Monitoring by biologists of construction activities to ensure that conservation measures are implemented and impacts to biological resources are avoided or minimized in accordance with Plan requirements.

**Contribute to recovery.** Actions that measurably increase the baseline conditions necessary to support covered species and that contribute to the eventual delisting of a listed species or prevention of listing of a nonlisted species. A contribution to recovery does not include actions necessary to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts of covered activities.

**Cover (also canopy cover, areal cover).** The area of ground covered by vegetation of particular species or vegetation type, generally expressed as a percentage.

**Covered Activities.** Those activities addressed in the Plan and for which the Permittees will seek a Natural Community Conservation Planning Act take permit pursuant to Section 2835 of the California Natural Community Conservation Planning Act, and an incidental take permit pursuant to Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act.

**Covered species.** Those species addressed in the Plan for which conservation measures will be implemented and for which the Permittees will seek authorization for take under Section 2835 of the California Natural Community Conservation Planning Act and Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act.

**Critical habitat.** An area designated as critical habitat by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [or by the National Marine Fisheries Service](#) pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act. Critical habitat areas are specific geographic areas that may or may not be occupied by listed species or not, that are determined to be essential for the conservation and management of listed species, and that have been formally described and designated in the Federal Register (16 USC 1532 [5]).

**Dominance.** The extent to which a given species predominates a community by virtue of its size, abundance, or coverage.

**Effectiveness monitoring.** The measurement of variables that allow the program to assess the success of the HCP/NCCP in meeting its stated biological objectives (Atkinson et al. 2004).

**Ecosystem.** A community of organisms and their physical environment interacting as an ecological unit.

**Ecosystem function.** The sum total of processes operating at the ecosystem level, such as the cycling of matter, energy, and nutrients.

**Ecosystem restoration.** The reestablishment of ecological functions within an area that historically supported those functions.

**Endangered species.** A native species, subspecies, ~~variety of organism, or distinct population segment (DPS)~~ which is in serious danger of becoming extinct throughout all or a significant portion of its range due to one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, overexploitation, predation, competition, or disease (16 USC 1532[6], Cal. Fish & Game Code Section 2062).

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**Endemic.** A species, subspecies, or variety found only in the region defined.

**Environmental gradient.** A shift in physical and ecological parameters across a landscape, such as changes in topography, climate, land cover types, or natural communities.

**Ephemeral stream.** Stream that flows only in response to rain events and receives no groundwater input.

**Extinct species.** A species no longer in existence.

**Extirpated species.** A species no longer surviving in regions that were once part of its range.

**Geographic Information System (GIS).** Computer-based mapping technology that manipulates geographic data in digital layers and facilitates a wide array of environmental analyses.

**Greenline.** San Jose's urban growth boundary, beyond which urban development is prohibited (City of San Jose 2006).

**Habitat.** The environmental conditions that support occupancy of a given organism in a specified area (Hall et al. 1997). In scientific and lay publications, habitat is defined in many different ways and for many different purposes. For the purposes of the HCP/NCCP, habitat is defined as the specific places where the environmental conditions (i.e., physical and biological conditions) are present that are required to support occupancy by individuals or populations of a given species. Habitat may be occupied (i.e., individuals or a population of the species are or have recently been present) or unoccupied. See also *unoccupied habitat*.

**Habitat creation.** The establishment of a vegetation community in an area that did not previously support it. For example, stock ponds can be created in areas that previously did not support them by grading and installing a check dam.

**Habitat enhancement.** The improvement of an existing degraded vegetation community. Habitat enhancement involves improving one or more ecological factors, such as species richness, species diversity, overall vegetative cover, or wildlife value. Enhancement activities typically occur on substrates that are largely intact.

**Habitat quality.** The ability of the environment to provide conditions that support the persistence of individuals and populations (Hall et al. 1997). The precise meaning of habitat quality varies by species and depends on the subject species' specific needs in the context of a particular area. High-quality habitat for some species comprises only foraging and resting elements; for others it comprises foraging, resting, and nesting elements; for still others it may encompass all elements needed for the species to complete its lifecycle. Low-quality habitat would include only the minimal elements that support occurrence of the species. High-quality habitat tends to support larger numbers of species than low-quality habitat.

**Harass.** An intentional or negligent act or omission that creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering (50 CFR 17.3). One component of the legal definition of "take" under the federal Endangered Species Act.

**Harm.** An act that kills or injures wildlife. Such an act may include significant habitat modification or degradation which results in injury of or death to wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering (50 CFR 17.3). Harm is one component of the legal definition of "take" under the federal Endangered Species Act.

**Hydrology.** The movement of surface and subsurface water flows in a given area. The hydrology of an area is intimately connected with its precipitation, soils, and topography.

**Incidental take.** Any take otherwise prohibited, if such take is incidental to and not the purpose of the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity (50 CFR 17.3).

**Implementing Entity.** [The Implementing Entity is the agency or organization that will be responsible for fully implementing the HCP/NCCP. The Implementing Entity will be identified later in the planning process.](#)

**Indicator species.** A species, the presence or absence of which is indicative of a particular habitat, community, or set of environmental conditions (Lincoln et al. 1998).

**Interim project.** A project within the HCP/NCCP study area that is proposed before adoption of the HCP/NCCP and that has the potential to conflict with preliminary conservation objectives stated in the Planning Agreement.

**Invasive species.** A species that is non-native to the ecosystem and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health (Atkinson et al. 2004; EO 13112).

**In-kind/like-value creation.** Establishing a vegetative community or habitat that would provide the same ecological values over time as the vegetation community or habitat affected. For example, creating an artificial vernal pool that supports species similar to those found in an affected vernal pool would be in-kind/like-value creation.

**Intermittent stream.** A stream that is supplied by both rainfall runoff and groundwater; intermittent streams tend to be seasonal, flowing during the rainy season and into the late spring or early summer.

**Keystone predator.** The dominant predator, often the top predator in a given food web; a predator having a major influence on community structure, often in excess of that expected from its relative abundance (Lincoln et al. 1998).

**Keystone species.** A species whose impacts on its community or ecosystem are large, and much larger than would be expected from its abundance (Meffe and Carroll 2005).

**Land-cover type.** The dominant feature of the land surface discernible from aerial photographs and defined by vegetation, water, or human uses.

**Land-use designation.** The designation, by parcel, in an adopted city or county General Plan of the allowable uses.

**Local Partners.** The jurisdictions preparing the HCP/NCCP and applying as Permittees: the County of Santa Clara, Cities of Gilroy, Morgan Hill, and San Jose; Santa Clara Valley Water District; and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. Also referred to as *Local Agencies* in the Planning Agreement.

**Metapopulation.** A group of partially isolated populations belonging to the same species that are connected by pathways of immigration and emigration. Exchange of individuals occurs between such populations, enabling recolonization of sites from which the species has recently become extirpated (Lincoln et al. 1998).

**Mitigation.** Actions or project design features that reduce environmental impacts by avoiding, minimizing, or compensating for adverse effects (Fulton 1999).

**Natural community.** Broad habitat categories or biological communities that are defined in each NCCP/HCP and are provided some level of protection under the Plan (Atkinson et al. 2004).

**Non-native species.** A species that is not native to the ecosystem under consideration.

**“No surprises assurances.”** Assurances to permit holders that if unforeseen circumstances arise, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service will not require more land, water, or money or additional restrictions on the use of land, water, or other natural resources beyond the level stated in the HCP without the consent of the Permittee (63 FR 35, February 23, 1998). Applies as long as Permittee is implementing terms and conditions of the HCP properly. See also *unforeseen circumstances*.

**No-take species.** Species for which take is not authorized under the HCP/NCCP. In order to comply with the terms of the Plan, applicants for coverage under the Plan must avoid all direct and indirect impacts on no-take species.

**Out-of-kind/like-value creation.** Establishing a similar, but not identical, vegetative community ~~or habitat which over time, develops~~ some of the same ecological functions and values as the affected vegetative community ~~or habitat~~.

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**Participating special entity.** A public agency such as a water, school, irrigation, transportation, or other special district that is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Permittees but requests and receives coverage under the HCP/NCCP during implementation according to the terms of the Plan.

**Perennial stream.** Year-round stream that is supplied by both rainfall runoff and groundwater, as well as by substantial dry-season inputs.

**Performance indicator.** An environmental variable that is quantitatively measured over time to determine whether enhanced, created, or restored natural communities have successfully met HCP/NCCP biological goals and objectives.

**Performance objective.** In monitoring, the optimal desired value for each performance indicator. Performance objectives establish a higher threshold for each indicator than that established for performance standards. Funding, design, and management objectives for enhanced, created, or restored natural communities are established at levels that are designed to ensure that the performance objectives are achieved. Failure to meet a performance objective would not constitute a changed circumstance or require remedial measures.

**Performance period.** In monitoring, the time over which performance standards must be met.

**Performance standard.** In monitoring, a minimum requirement necessary to achieve biological goals and objectives. Failure to achieve a performance

standard could constitute a changed circumstance and require that remedial measures be implemented.

**Permittees.** Those entities requesting a Section 10(a)(1)(B) incidental take permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service and a take permit under the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act from the California Department of Fish and Game for the species and activities covered in the accompanying HCP/NCCP. The Permittees for this HCP/NCCP are Santa Clara County; the cities of San Jose, Gilroy, and Morgan Hill; Santa Clara Valley Water District; and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. See also *Local Partners*.

**Planning Agreement.** Document executed by the County of Santa Clara; Cities of Gilroy, Morgan Hill, and San Jose; Santa Clara Valley Water District; the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority; California Department of Fish and Game; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pursuant to the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act to guide the preparation of the HCP/NCCP. It defines the parties' goals and obligations with regard to development of a legally sufficient and approvable HCP/NCCP that will form the basis for take permits for covered activities and covered species.

**Planning surveys.** Surveys conducted by applicants for HCP/NCCP coverage and used in the project-planning process to identify constraints and determine which HCP/NCCP conservation measures are applicable. Planning surveys also include surveys conducted by the Implementing Entity on potential preserve lands to evaluate whether these lands will meet Plan requirements. See also *Implementing Entity*.

**Population.** A group of individuals of the same species inhabiting a given geographic area, among which mature individuals reproduce or are likely to reproduce. Ecological interactions and genetic exchange are more likely among individuals within a population than among individuals of separate populations of the same species.

**Practicable.** Referring to an action, available and capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics in light of overall project purpose (45 FR 85344, December 24, 1980: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Part 40 CFR 230.3, Definitions).

**Preconstruction surveys.** Surveys conducted for certain biological resources immediately prior to construction, by applicants for HCP/NCCP coverage, to ensure that species are adequately protected and that habitat avoidance and minimization measures can be effectively implemented during construction of covered projects or implementation of covered activities.

**Preservation.** Preventing changes in land use from a natural state by, for example, acquiring land or a conservation easement.

**Recovery goal.** An established goal, usually quantitative, in a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [or by the National Marine Fisheries Service](#) recovery plan that identifies when a listed species is restored to a point at which the protections of the federal Endangered Species Act are no longer required.

**Reserves.** Discrete areas of conserved habitats managed as single units under the HCP/NCCP.

**Reserve system.** All HCP/NCCP reserves considered collectively.

**Permittees.** The jurisdictions applying to the Wildlife Agencies for endangered species permits: the County of Santa Clara; Cities of Gilroy, Morgan Hill, and San Jose; Santa Clara Valley Water District; and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

**Permit Term.** For an HCP/NCCP, the length of time for which the incidental take permits are valid and during which Permittees (see also *Permittees*) may undertake activities covered by the permit. The permit term is also the time period in which all land acquisition, habitat restoration, and other mitigation and conservation measures must be accomplished.

**Protect habitat.** To maintain the existing or enhanced extent of species habitat through acquisition, easements, or other practicable processes for bringing unprotected sites under protected status.

**Range.** The geographic area a species is known or believed to occupy.

**Recovery plan.** A document published by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [or by the National Marine Fisheries Service](#) that lists the status of a listed species and the actions necessary to remove the species from the endangered species list.

**Recovery.** The process by which the decline of an endangered or threatened species is arrested or reversed or threats to its survival neutralized so that its long-term survival in nature can be ensured. Recovery entails actions to achieve the conservation and survival of a species (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service 1998), including actions to prevent any further erosion of a population's viability and genetic integrity, as well as actions to restore or establish environmental conditions that enable a species to persist (i.e., the long-term occurrence of a species through the full range of environmental variation).

**Restoration.** Establishment of a vegetation community [or habitat](#) in an area that historically supported it, but no longer supports it because of the loss of one or more required ecological factors. Restoration may involve altering the substrate to improve a site's ability to support the historic vegetation community [or habitat](#).

**Riparian habitat.** Vegetation associated with river, stream, or lake banks and floodplains.

**Ruderal.** A species or plant community that occurs on a highly disturbed site.

**Signature.** Characteristic value, color, or texture on an aerial photograph that correlates to a particular land-cover type.

**Special-status species.** Plants and animals that are legally protected under ESA, CESA, or other regulations, and species that are considered sufficiently rare by the scientific community to qualify for such listing.

**Sphere of influence.** Line determined by the Local Area Formation Committee (LAFCO) indicating the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local government agency.

**Study area.** Geographic area studied by the Plan.

**Succession.** The change in the composition and structure of a biological community over time. Successional patterns often shift dramatically following a major disturbance (e.g., fire, flood, anthropogenic clearing of land).

**Suitable habitat.** Habitat that exhibits the characteristics necessary to support a given species.

**Take.** According to the federal Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1532 [19]), *take* means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. According to California Fish and Game Code (Cal. Fish & Game Code Section 86), *take* means to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or to attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill.

**Threatened species.** A native species, subspecies, variety or distinct population segment (DPS) of an organism that, although not presently threatened with extinction, is likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future throughout all of a significant portion of its range (16 USC 1532 [5], Cal. Fish & Game Code Section 2067;).

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**Unoccupied habitat.** Habitat that exhibits all the constituent elements necessary for a species, but which surveys have determined is not currently occupied by that species. The lack of individuals or populations in the habitat is assumed to be the result of reduced numbers or distribution of the species such that some habitat areas are unused. It is expected that these areas would be used if species numbers or distribution were greater. See also *suitable habitat*.

**Unforeseen circumstances.** Changes in circumstances affecting a covered species or geographic area covered by the HCP/NCCP that could not reasonably have been anticipated by the plan developers, and that result in a substantial and adverse change in the status of a covered species. Under the state permit, this refers to changes affecting one or more species, habitat, natural community, or the geographic area covered by a conservation plan that could not reasonably have been anticipated at the time of plan development, and that result in a substantial adverse change in the status of one or more covered species.

**Urban growth boundary (UGB).** An officially adopted and mapped line dividing land to be developed from land to be protected for natural or rural uses, including agriculture. UGBs are regulatory tools, often designated for 20 or more years to provide greater certainty for both development and conservation goals.

**Urban limit line (ULL).** [definition pending]

**Urban service area.** The area within a city's sphere of influence where utilities such as gas, water, sewer, and electricity, and public services such as police, fire, schools, and parks and recreation are and will be provided.

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**Wildland-urban interface.** The area where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland (University of Wisconsin n.d.).

**Wildlife Agencies.** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and California Department of Fish and Game.