Overview of OCTA M2 NCCP/HCP – Approach and Status

EOC Meeting – June 18, 2012

Presentation Outline

- Introduction
- NCCP Background
- Project Approach
- Project Status

Introduction

- OCTA began preparing Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) in July 2010
  - Programmatic permit for endangered species compliance
- Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement
  - Public participation opportunities
  - Solidifies decision on the project
- Public draft by early 2013

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NCCP Background - Overview

- Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP)
  - State and Federal mechanism for resolving development and the protection of threatened and endangered species
  - Integrates acquired properties and restoration projects as mitigation and contribution to recovery
  - Outlines long-term management requirements for acquisition properties
  - Implementation agreement

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NCCP Background - Other Plans

- General land use agency Plans
  - Counties, cities with land use authority
    - Orange County Central-Coastal NCCP/HCP
    - Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP)
    - San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP)
- Infrastructure-oriented Plans
  - Provide contribution to regional conservation
    - SDG&E NCCP
    - San Diego County Water Authority NCCP/HCP
    - Joint Water Agencies NCCP/HCP

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NCCP Background - Advantages of NCCP

- Certainty in Endangered Species Act (ESA) permitting
  - Coverage of unlisted species under NCCP
  - No surprise clause
- Upfront agreements on impacts and mitigation
- Broader perspective on habitat conservation
- Long-term management and monitoring of habitat quality

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Project Approach - Overview

- ✓ Estimate impacts
- ✓ Set conservation targets
- ✓ Determine conservation strategy
- Conduct conservation analysis
- Set forth implementation plan and agreements

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Project Approach - Estimate Impacts

- Covered projects
  - 13 M2 funded highway construction projects
  - Preserve implementation
- Planning-level footprints for highway projects
  - Direct impacts
  - Indirect impacts (300-foot buffer)
- Biological Impacts
  - Natural communities (vegetation)
  - Covered species biological factors
    - Species habitat models
    - Known occurrences
    - Critical habitat

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Type and Amount of Impacts

- **Highway Improvement Projects**
  - **Direct**: 'planning-level' footprints for 13 covered highway projects — 115.7 ac.
  - **Indirect**: based on 300-foot buffer around 13 covered highway projects (per guidance provided by wildlife agencies) — 484.4 ac.
- **Conservation Strategy Implementation –**
  - **Preserve Implementation**: estimate of direct effects resulting from new trails, trailhead, maintenance facilities, kiosks, and other facilities within acquired preserves — 15 ac.

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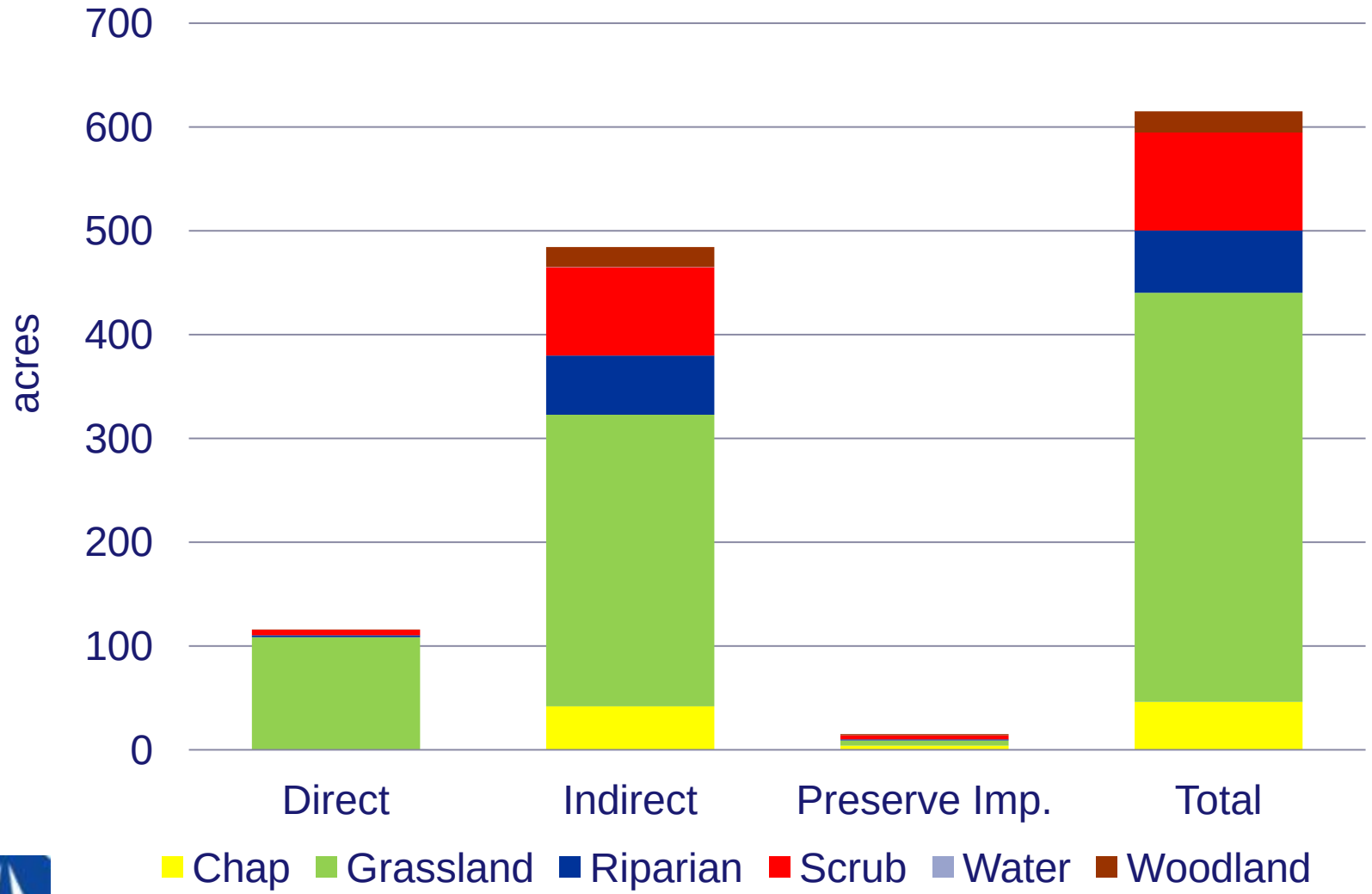
Impacts to Natural Communities



Impacts to Covered Species

Biometric	Highway Improvement Projects	
	Direct Impacts	Estimate of Indirect Impacts
Intermediate Mariposa Lily		
Predicted Species Habitat (acres)	0.4	28.1
Current Known Occurrences (count)	0.0	0.0
Critical Habitat (acres)	n/a	n/a
Coastal California Gnatcatcher		
Predicted Species Habitat (acres)	5.3	98.1
Current Known Occurrences (count)	3.0	2.0
Critical Habitat (acres)	11.9	123.9
⋮		
Mountain Lion		
Predicted Species Habitat (acres)	5.5	123.0
Current Known Occurrences (count)	0.0	0.0
Critical Habitat (acres)	n/a	n/a

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Project Approach - Set Conservation Targets

- Guide conservation strategy and serve a benchmark for conservation analysis
- Consistent with the amount and type of impacts
  - Targets established for overall habitat conservation as well as individual species habitat requirements
- Include level of conservation to address mitigation as well as contribution to recovery
- Target = (Direct x 2.0) + (Indirect x 0.5)

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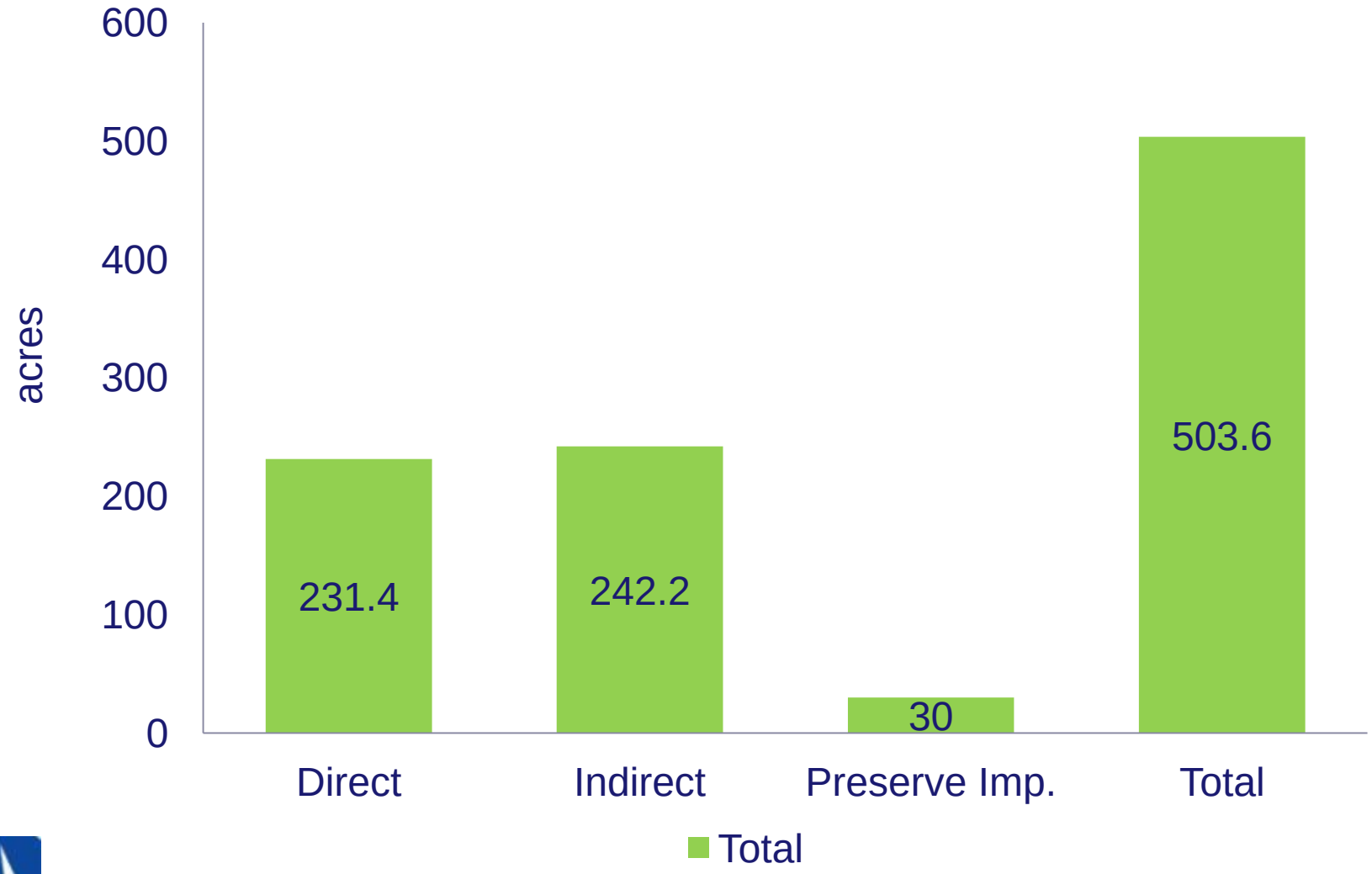
Conservation Targets - Total Natural Habitat



Conservation Targets - Individual Species Requirements

Biometric	Highway Improvement Projects		Conservation Target
	Direct Impacts	Estimate of Indirect Impacts	
Intermediate Mariposa Lily			
Predicted Species Habitat (acres)	0.4	28.1	14.9
Current Known Occurrences (count)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Critical Habitat (acres)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Coastal California Gnatcatcher			
Predicted Species Habitat (acres)	5.3	98.1	59.7
Current Known Occurrences (count)	3.0	2.0	7.0
Critical Habitat (acres)	11.9	123.9	85.8
⋮			
Mountain Lion			
Predicted Species Habitat (acres)	5.5	123.0	72.5
Current Known Occurrences (count)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Critical Habitat (acres)	n/a	n/a	n/a

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Project Approach - Conservation Strategy Overview

- Conservation actions to be included in Plan

1. Preserve Acquisitions
   - Five (5) preserve acquisitions acquired to date
   - Additional $7.8M allotted for future acquisition
   - Long-term management

2. Restoration Projects
   - Eleven (11) round one and two restoration projects funded to date
   - Remaining funds from round 2 (~$400,000) to be spent in 2012
   - An additional round of restoration projects in 2015/2016

3. Plan Protection Measures
   - Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures

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Conservation Strategy
1. Preserve Acquisitions

- Preserve acquisitions to date

Property	Total Acres	Acres of Natural Habitat
Ferber Ranch	399	397
Hafen	48	48
Hayashi	296	293
O'Neill Oaks	119	117
Saddle Creek South *	84	51
Total Natural Habitat	**946**	**906.0**

*** Credits shared with USFWS**

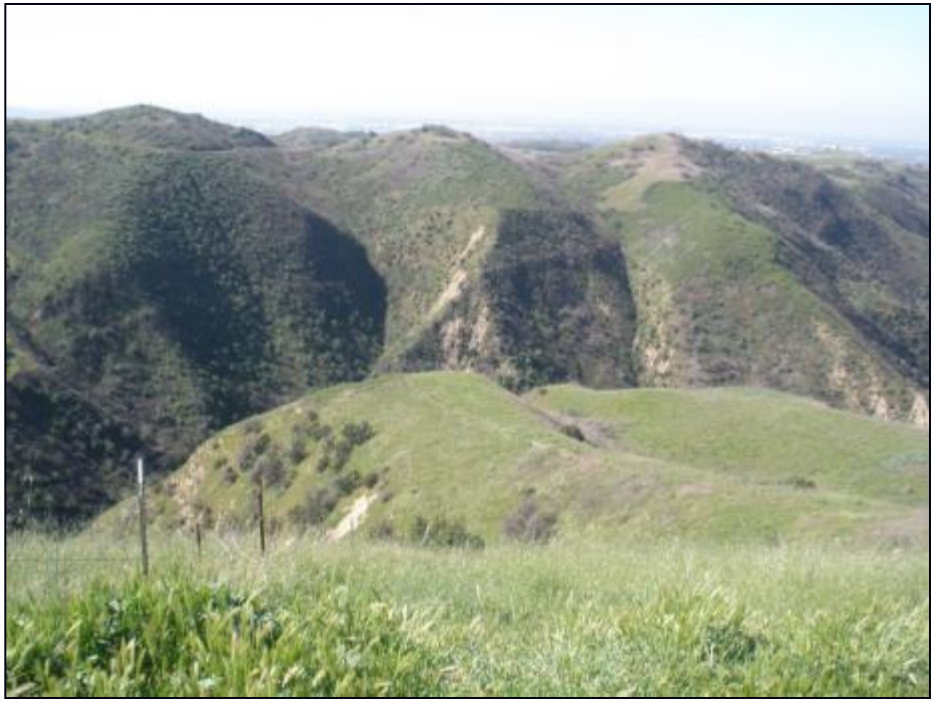
- Additional $7.8M (remaining from the $42M) allotted for acquisitions in 2012
  - Estimated to result in an additional 200 – 300 acres

- Preserve management
  - OCTA to establish endowments for long-term management and monitoring
  - Baseline surveys currently being completed

Ferber Ranch Property

Hafen Estates Property

Hayashi Property



O'Neill Oaks Property

Saddle Creek South

Conservation Strategy
2. Restoration Projects

- Per assurance letters from CDFG/USFWS, restoration projects will assist OCTA meet obligations of the Plan if restoration projects:

  (1) achieved success criteria, (2) have conservation easements, and (3) managed in perpetuity to maintain biological value.

- Restoration projects to date have occurred on existing public and/or conservation properties

- Long-term management and maintenance of the restoration projects will be folded into ongoing preserve management

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Conservation Strategy
2. Restoration Projects (cont.)

- Restoration projects contribute to obligations of the Plan based on the following assumptions:
  - 1:1 acres for natural communities
  - Species habitat
    - Riparian restoration – Least Bells' vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher
    - Coastal sage scrub – California gnatcatcher
    - Coastal cactus scrub – Cactus wren and California gnatcatcher
    - Scrub habitat - Reptiles (coastal horned lizard and orangethroat whiptail)
    - Riparian restoration – Western pond turtle – (upland and aquatic habitat)
    - Riparian restoration within specific watersheds – arroyo chub
- Restoration projects (11) result in 401 acres natural habitat

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Funded Restoration Projects

Restoration Project/Sponsor/Location	Proposed Funding	Watershed HUC* 8/HUC 10	Habitat Type/Acreage**
Agua Chinon and Bee Flat Canyon/Irvine Ranch Conservancy /County	**$1,450,000**	San Diego Creek	chaparral, CSS, coast live oak/sycamore, oak woodland, native grassland, and riparian/90 acres
Fairview Park/City of Costa Mesa/Costa Mesa	**$2,000,000**	Talbert Channel/Greenville Banning	wetlands, native grassland, CSS, willow scrub, oak woodland/23 acres
City Parcel /City of San Juan Capistrano/San Juan Capistrano	**$1,500,000**	San Juan Creek	riparian, upland coastal sage scrub (CSS), oak woodland, and native grassland/53 acres
Big Bend/Laguna Canyon Foundation/Laguna Beach	**$87,500**	Laguna Canyon Channel	upland CSS, riparian woodland/3.5 acres
UCI Ecological Preserve/Nature Reserve of Orange County/Irvine	**$325,000**	San Diego Creek	cactus scrub/8.5 acres
Total	**$5,362,500**		

*** HUC is defined as a Hydrologic Unit Code. The Hydrologic Unit system is a standardized watershed classification system developed by USGS. Hydrologic units are watershed boundaries organized in a nested hierarchy by size. They range in size from regions, to the smaller cataloging units (HUCs), which are roughly equivalent to a local watershed.**

****Estimated total habitats for each restoration project**

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Agua Chinon and Bee Flat Canyon Irvine Ranch Conservancy

Unincorporated Orange County

94.9 acres of restoration consisting of chaparral, coastal sage scrub, coast live oak, sycamore oak woodland, native grassland and riparian

Fairview Park
City of Costa Mesa

23 acres of restoration consisting of wetlands, native grasslands, coastal sage scrub, riparian, and oak woodland

City Parcel
City of San Juan Capistrano

53 acres of restoration consisting of riparian, coastal sage scrub, oak woodland, and native grassland

Big Bend
Laguna Canyon Foundation

City of Laguna Beach

3.5 acres of restoration consisting of coastal sage scrub and riparian woodland

UCI Ecological Preserve
Nature Reserve of Orange County

City of Irvine

8.5 acres of restoration consisting of cactus scrub

Photos of 2011 restoration efforts

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Funded Restoration Projects (cont.)

Restoration Project/Sponsor/Location	Proposed Funding	Watershed HUC* 8/HUC 10	Habitat Type/Acreage**
Aliso Creek/Laguna Canyon Foundation/ Laguna Niguel	**$1,105,000**	San Juan/Aliso Creek - Frontal Gulf of Santa Catalina	55 acres of riparian (30 acres of invasives removal and 55 acres of native plant installation)/55 acres
Chino Hills State Park/Chino Hills State Park/Brea and Yorba Linda	**$193,000**	Santa Ana/Lower San Gabriel River	15 acres of willow riparian and Oak-Walnut woodland and 6 acres of cactus scrub/21 acres
Harriett Weider Regional Park/City of Huntington Beach	**$475,000**	Santa Ana/Bolsa Chica Channel - Frontal Huntington Harbor	7.7 acres of native grassland and coastal sage scrub (CSS) as well as 0.5 acres riparian/8.2 acres
Lower Silverado Canyon/Irvine Ranch Conservancy/Irvine	**$1,399,580**	Santa Ana/Santiago Creek	Riparian/ 44 acres
North Coal Canyon/CA Dept. of Parks and Recreation/Yorba Linda	**$247,500**	Santa Ana	Riversidian Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub (CSS)/5.5 acres
West Loma/Irvine Ranch Conservancy/Irvine	**$1,296,000**	Santa Ana/Santiago Creek	80 acres of mostly upland, 3 acres of riparian/80 acres
Total	**$4,716,080**		

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**Estimated total habitats for each restoration project

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Aliso Creek
Laguna Canyon Foundation

City of Laguna Niguel

55 acres of riparian and transitional habitat

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Chino Hills State Park

Cities of Brea and Yorba Linda

15 acres of riparian restoration and 6 acres of cactus scrub restoration

Harriett Wieder Regional Park
Bolsa Chica Conservancy

City of Huntington Beach

8.2 acres of restoration consisting of grassland, coastal sage scrub and riparian habitat

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Lower Silverado Canyon
Irvine Ranch Conservancy

City of Irvine

44 acres of restoration consisting of riparian habitat

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North Coal Canyon
Chino Hills State Park

City of Yorba Linda

5.5 acres of restoration consisting of coastal sage scrub habitat

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West Loma
Irvine Ranch Conservancy

City of Irvine

80 acres of restoration consisting of coastal sage scrub and riparian habitat

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Conservation Strategy
3. Plan Protection Measures

- Avoidance and Minimization Measures (Project Level)
  - General
    - Avoidance and minimization based on biological field surveys
    - Stormwater BMPs
    - Design elements unique to wildlife/freeway interaction
      - Fire prevention techniques
      - Wildlife crossing (culverts)
  - Species specific

- Plan protection measures (Project Level) funded under construction budget

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Conservation Analysis

- Conservation analysis will consider overall habitat conservation as well as individual species requirements
- Net conservation = combination of preserve acquisition acres and restoration project acres compared to conservation target
- Preliminary conservation analysis shows the conservation actions to date achieve nearly all targets
- Additional items to be considered in conservation analysis:
  - Additional conservation acres from future acquisitions and/or restoration projects
  - Plan protection measures (AMMs)
  - Focused restoration actions may be required

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Set Forth Implementation Plan and Agreements

- Roles and responsibilities of OCTA and preserve managers
- Management and monitoring requirements by preserve managers
- OCTA annual reporting requirements
- Implementing Agreement

Land Management Plan

Short-term

- Secure agreements with interim land managers
- Maintain status quo of biological resources
- Address enforcement issues

Intermediate-term

- Develop draft interim resource management plans
- Establish endowments for long-term management

Long-term

- Secure long-term agreements with land managers
- Maintain biological resources consistent with NCCP/HCP
- Provide annual status reports to Wildlife Agencies

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NCCP/HCP Status

- Concurrence with wildlife agencies on essential elements and approach of Plan
- Draft impacts analysis
- Preliminary draft conservation analysis
- Working on plan protection measures

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Next Steps

- Complete acquisition and restoration expenditures
- Revisit program expenditures/revenues to determine potential future funding needs
- Complete draft NCCP/HCP and environmental documents
  - Outline management scheme
  - Determine long-term land management cost
  - Develop resource management plans
  - Execute Implementing Agreement
- Complete Regulatory Permitting Process and obtain permits

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