

UPPER SANTA ANA RIVER WASH LAND MANAGEMENT AND HABITAT  
CONSERVATION PLAN TASK FORCE

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING: HABITAT ISSUES SUMMARY

April 7, 2015

**PRESENT**

Jeff Beehler  
Geary Hund  
Tim Krantz  
Seve Villalobos  
Miranda Losing  
Brandon Anderson  
Joyce Schlachter  
David E. Raley  
Angie Quiroga

**REPRESENTING**

SBV Water Conservation District  
US Fish & Wildlife Service  
University of Redlands  
RBF Consulting  
RVA, Inc.  
Bureau of Land Management  
Bureau of Land Management  
SBV Water Conservation District  
SBV Water Conservation District

1. **SELF INTRODUCTIONS**

Those present introduced themselves.

2. **WASH PLAN HABITAT SCOPING PRESENTATION**

Jeff Beehler explained this meeting is provided due to additional habitat questions from the March 18<sup>th</sup> Wash Plan Public Scoping Meeting. The documents presented are based on comments from “Plan B”. The current plan has a decrease in mining, water conservation areas are smaller and there is an increase in habitat areas. It is a more traditional HCP. Certain species have been included and called out in the HCP, detail has been added to covered activities and currently working on environmental documentation. The goal is to have a package HCP with supporting environmental documentation, implementing agreement and habitat management plan ready by summer.

Geary Hund provided a background on how the HCP was started and where it is now. He provided map of conservation areas and additional areas that have been added in order to provide enough habitat coverage for all partners’ projects. Mining was scaled back and new mining areas are adjacent to existing pits to minimize habitat disturbance. SB County Flood Control agreed to add conservation easements to their land. A net increase of 494 acres of conservation over previous plan. Interstitial areas between the new proposed spreading basins will now be managed as habitat. Large blocks of habitat such as the Woolly Star Preserve Area (WSPA) are planned including connectivity between habitats and to areas outside the Wash Plan. Ecological process areas that are still working are not to be disturbed. Geary reminded attendees he mapped every polygon of the plan and converted it to GIS in order to assign habitat values and help determine where to conserve. He described coloring of the maps show varying degrees of habitat

suitability for SBKR. Tim Krantz noticed the red layer, highest habitat, distinctly marks the 1938 and 1969 break out channels and also correlates strongly to the wooly-star occurrence. Geary noted a contingency parcel of land which cannot be used unless the miners show success of spineflower elsewhere. Jeff discussed the Spineflower Working Group and stated some testing will be done including determining if sheet flow is what the species likes. Tim offered to join the group to provide his knowledge of spineflower. He suggested simulating a scour for the wooly star, opposite the spineflower, since this area lacks natural flood events. Joyce Schlachter inquired about the BLM land exchange. The exchange results in higher quality habitat for the species being conserved and managed: a net plus for conservation. Mining is a relatively small subset of the exchange.

Geary discussed SBVWCD's decision to include cactus wren in the HCP and that a quick baseline survey was completed. SBKR have inhabited along the EBX pipeline because much scouring occurred during construction. Tim stated we need to simulate events that have been prevented ever since the dam was built. Geary noted data gaps for SBKR. Negative SBKR areas were manually added to GIS mapping. It was decided in areas where CA gnatcatcher exist to thin non-native grasses for SBKR but leave shrubs alone for the gnatcatcher. Jeff discussed SBVWCD's Plunge Creek project in which scour will be re-created along sections of the creek.

Management prescriptions were discussed. A preliminary idea is had of where some of the most commonly used treatments can go. A pilot or test spot burns will take place to see if they will work. Herbicide is for non-native grasses and can pretty much be used everywhere. Some areas are marked provisional with measures to protect rare appointments. GIS is being utilized as a tool to decide what management prescriptions can be used where. Sheep use is preferred to herbicide as much as possible. Hypothesis that wooly star can handle occasional burns. Thinning will take place south of the borrow pit which has good substrate to simulate what flooding would have done. Thinning is expensive and will be minimally used. Looking to use BLM rangers to control illegal use of the Wash Plan area. Discussed the development of public trails. It was agreed that if you allow the public access, they too will become like a neighborhood watch.

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tim Krantz commended work done on the GIS. He suggested if the HCP is approved to incorporate a conservancy with the major land owners. Together, the conservancy can manage the area regardless of ownership and can deal with day to day management issues that come up. He offered to provide a written letter of support.

### 4. WASH PLAN HCP: NEXT STEPS

Discussed in presentation.

### 5. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 3:25 P.M.