



PERMITTING RESTORATION

Helping Agricultural Land Stewards Succeed
in Meeting California Regulatory Requirements
for Environmental Restoration Projects





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Executive Summary

Environmental regulation is an important mechanism for protecting our natural resources. While members of the California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment (CRAE) have varying perspectives on the degree and scope of regulation that is appropriate for a range of agricultural activities, there is a common belief that regulatory frameworks must be effective in protecting our environment and natural resources, coordinated, and should minimize unnecessary burdens for the agriculture community, particularly in cases where landowners are voluntarily undertaking environmental enhancement projects.

Agricultural and environmental leaders participating in CRAE are aware that even well-intended habitat restoration projects can cause adverse environmental impacts if not designed and implemented appropriately. As a result, growers seeking to implement on-farm environmental restoration projects must navigate a complex regulatory process. When properly carried out, voluntary restoration projects on private lands, such as wetland restoration or stream bank repairs, provide a broad range of public benefits, including improvements in California's environmental quality.

Restoration project proponents face several obstacles in navigating the permit process, including inadequate resources and staffing at agencies, long processing times, high costs, complications in identifying required permits and obtaining multiple permits from several different agencies, inconsistent messages from agencies, and varying interpretations and requirements from different agency staff.

CRAE member organizations have identified potential opportunities to better coordinate regulatory processes and help these agricultural producers implement environmentally beneficial projects by fostering more cooperation and synchronization among permitting agencies and between agencies and stakeholders, and the efficient use of limited resources in ways that are consistent with California's environmental regulatory programs. CRAE proposes several actions including:

- Developing an online permit assistance tool,
- Streamlining permit application processes,
- Developing mechanisms to expedite review of voluntary restoration projects,
- Expanding programmatic permitting,
- Establishing project feedback mechanisms,
- Enhancing inter-agency communications,
- Improving agency capacity and training,
- Holding periodic permitting workshops throughout the state, and
- Ensuring adequate staffing and resources at key agencies.

CRAE recommends that an inter-agency permit coordination task force be established to carry out these activities. Finally, a high-level systematic review should be conducted to further assess obstacles to permitting voluntary restoration projects and identify the improvements necessary to facilitate, and even incentivize, environmental restoration and enhancement projects that benefit California.

Background

California is home to the largest and most diversified agricultural economy in the nation. It is also home to an unparalleled range of plant and animal species and habitats, many of them unique to this state. Many of these species and habitats are found on privately owned land, much of it agricultural or grazing land. Many stewards of agricultural land across California voluntarily initiate or participate in environmental conservation, restoration, and enhancement projects on their

land. For the purposes of this paper, the definition of an environmental restoration project is a voluntary project (i.e., one that is not required by law or regulation) intended to conserve, restore, or enhance environmental conditions. Examples of these projects include, but are

not limited to, in-stream projects (e.g., fish habitat structures and culvert upgrades or replacements to allow fish passage), stream bank repairs, riparian and wetland habitat restoration, and the construction and maintenance of small stock ponds. These projects represent an important vehicle for meeting environmental goals in California. As such, the successful implementation of these projects is of benefit to all Californians.

Recognizing that some projects that modify land and water may have adverse environmental impacts, the people of

California have enacted a range of environmental laws, through both the legislature and the initiative process, and have funded environmental protection activities through voter-approved bond acts. As required by law, state agencies have developed numerous regulations to implement these laws and to allocate bond funding. A key element in almost all of these regulations is the requirement for project applicants to acquire permits or other forms of approval from the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies. The agencies are required to ensure that the processes by which permits are issued provide for adequate review and analysis of mandated elements, with the goal of ensuring that only suitable projects without significant environmental impact move forward.

Several CRAE member organizations and organizations involved in environmental restoration work, such as local Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), report that the high costs, level of effort, and uncertainty of outcome associated with the permitting process discourage voluntary projects intended to benefit the environment. RCDs have described needing to establish the priority of projects on which they will partner based on the feasibility of permitting rather than on the magnitude of environmental benefits. Proposed projects with definitive goals to advance environmental benefits may be the most likely to lack the resources and personnel needed to complete the permitting process. Many agency staff and leaders are increasingly aware of the challenges in shepherding restoration projects through the process and share

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concern and interest in developing strategies to facilitate the permitting of these activities. Interest in resolving issues of regulatory coordination is growing, as reflected by the growing number of efforts to understand and address these problems. See Appendix I for some examples.

Permitting issues are not the only factor contributing to these delays and difficulties. Other factors include a lack of resources or capacity at the entities charged with assisting landowners in restoration projects, changes in federal policies, limited funding windows, and local ordinances. However, the costs, complexities, and time demands of permitting processes pose a key challenge for agricultural land stewards who want to provide environmental benefits through restoration work. For example, a recent survey¹ showed that two thirds of those who sought to undertake voluntary conservation projects on private lands downsized or cancelled projects as a result of problems with permitting.

Through a collaborative effort, CRAE member organizations have identified some preliminary recommendations that will help sponsors of environmentally beneficial restoration projects obtain regulatory approvals. CRAE member organizations emphasize that they are not advocating any form of rollback of the substantive requirements of statutes and regulations that protect the environment. Nor do they support efforts that would impair the ability of individual agencies to apply their

expertise and ensure that their primary concerns are adequately addressed. Finally, we note that this report seeks to identify regulatory improvements from the perspective of project applicants and does not attempt to evaluate the adequacy of existing regulations to prevent or mitigate harmful restoration projects—a concern for several CRAE members.

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1. Ochwat, Keith and Schohr, Tracy (2008). California Restoration and Enhancement Permitting: Challenges to California's Permitting Process for Restoration and Enhancement Projects. California Rangeland Conservation Coalition.

Approach

This white paper does not quantify the difficulties associated with permitting voluntary environmental restoration projects, but does identify the types of problems experienced and provide recommendations for their mitigation.



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This paper draws on the broad experience of several agricultural associations, technical assistance agencies, conservation organizations, and regulatory partners, several of which are CRAE member organizations. As a

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multi-stakeholder alliance, CRAE has worked hard to include a diversity of perspectives from the regulated and regulatory communities. This paper is the product of many hours of group discussions and deliberations, committee meetings, and the hard work of individual CRAE members. To fill gaps in knowledge and to ensure a balanced view, CRAE staff used a structured protocol to conduct telephone interviews with key stakeholders. These stakeholders included representatives from the regulated community, and representatives of organizations involved with agriculture and conservation in California, including:²

- (a) Agriculture organizations: *Western United Dairymen, California Cattlemen's Association, California Association of Winegrape Growers;*
- (b) Regulatory agencies: *US EPA Region 9, Cal/EPA, California*

Department of Fish and Game, State Water Resources Control Board, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board;

- (c) Agricultural conservation support entities: *Sustainable Conservation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Marin County Resource Conservation District, San Mateo County Resource Conservation District, Trout Unlimited.*

Additional representatives from regulatory agencies worked with CRAE to provide input into the paper.³

2. Italics indicate CRAE members and institutional partners.
3. Please refer to Acknowledgements (Page (i)) for more detail.

Challenges

Obstacles faced by land stewards seeking approval for environmental restoration projects

CRAE member organizations have identified the following difficulties that project applicants may encounter when seeking regulatory approval of a habitat restoration project. A select number of case studies highlighting several permitting challenges, as well as models for minimizing them, have been compiled by Ag Innovations Network and are available online.⁴

Lag time and costs

Securing permits for on-farm environmental enhancement projects can require a lot of time and money. As reported in the 2002 paper, *Removing Barriers to Restoration*, permitting fees can “easily range in the thousands of dollars” and project review “frequently stretches well over a year, even for relatively simple projects.”⁵ Particularly in cases where biological, hydrological, and other studies are required to ensure successful project implementation while minimizing impacts, project approval can cost tens of thousands of dollars. Federal and state grants and cost-share programs incentivize these projects, some of which might not be feasible without this support.

The time required for completing permit applications, waiting for their approval, and then actually carrying out the project itself is a significant disincentive to pursuing on-farm environmental enhancement activities. Delays in obtaining permits can increase the

cost of projects, and can also jeopardize the timely implementation of public or private grants. Costs for materials and labor tend to increase as time passes, and often the environmental problem the project is designed to address (e.g., stream bank erosion) can get worse and require a larger and more expensive solution. Private consultants, who are often familiar with issues that landowners would encounter, including permitting requirements, resources issues and the role of permitting agencies, often serve a useful role, however they can add substantially to project costs.

2 Multiplicity of agencies and permits

Voluntary environmental restoration projects often trigger permitting requirements from three levels of government – federal, state, and local. Table I shows the number of statutes and regulations that could be triggered by a proposed conservation, enhancement, or restoration project. Agencies typically have focused expertise and limited, but somewhat overlapping, jurisdiction rather than overall responsibility for all aspects of a project. As a result, a project proponent may be required to obtain approval from multiple agencies, each with its own requirements and timetable. Regional variation in permitting guidelines and requirements is an added factor for landowners whose properties span two

4. Case studies can be accessed at: http://foodsystemalliance.org/crae/category/environmental_regulation/

5. Task Force on Removing Barriers to Restoration (2002). *Removing Barriers to Restoration*. Page iii. <http://resources.ca.gov/publications/Barriers2002-full.pdf>

or more regulatory jurisdictions. Other regulatory processes related to permitting might include issuance of biological opinions by resource agencies, wetland determinations, protocol-level surveys for special status species, species protection plans, ecological training for construction crews, periodic inspections by biologists or engineers, annual monitoring for implementation and effectiveness, and reporting.

The challenge most commonly cited by landowners who cancelled or scaled back projects as a result of permitting problems was the difficulty in securing permits from multiple agencies.⁶ Some Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) have expressed concern that they are frequently unable to encourage landowners to pursue projects that require extensive permits that would jeopardize meeting grant funding timelines, make projects too costly, or risk alienating the landowner from participating in voluntary conservation practices. Some landowners are reluctant to provide

regulatory agencies access to their properties out of concern that additional permitting requirements may be identified. Sometimes, decisions about which projects to pursue are driven by the perceived feasibility of obtaining permits rather than the anticipated conservation value of the project. In some cases, federal and state monies for conservation work had to be returned to the source agencies because permits could not be secured in a timely manner.

3 Intra- and inter-agency coordination

The lack of consistency in communications and decision-making within and among regulatory agencies, and between agencies and support organizations like NRCS and RCDs, can hinder permitting processes. It is important for all regulatory agencies to communicate with each other and with project proponents in order to facilitate voluntary restoration projects. Improved

Table 1⁷

Regulation	Responsible Agency
Federal Endangered Species Act	US Fish and Wildlife Service National Marine Fisheries Service
Federal Clean Water Act; Porter-Cologne Act, California Water Code	US Environmental Protection Agency US Army Corps of Engineers State Water Resources Control Board Regional Water Quality Control Boards
California Coastal Act	California Coastal Commission
Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments Section 6217	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration US Environmental Protection Agency
Fish and Game Code Section 1601 and 1603; California Endangered Species Act	California Department of Fish and Game
California Environmental Quality Act	Various state and local agencies
Erosion and Grading Ordinances, Development Standards, Habitat Conservation Plans, Local Coastal Plans and other local permits	County government

6. Ochwat and Schohr, op. cit.

7. Primary source: Task Force on Removing Barriers to Restoration, op. cit.

inter-agency protocols are needed to:

- (a) Have common understanding of permitting processes and application requirements among all interested parties,
- (b) Build trust and collaboration among agencies, and
- (c) Improve coordination among federal, state, and local requirements.

In addition, regulatory agencies can have conflicting or incompatible requirements, further complicating the permitting process. Agencies with overlapping jurisdictions might require different levels of mitigations, or mitigations with the same purpose but with different language and requirements. For example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game subscribe to wetland delineation based on one parameter while the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and local consultants often employ a three-parameter method. Two agencies concerned with minimizing sediment discharge might prescribe different measures (e.g., straw mulch and/or seed mixes vs. slash packing). Occasionally, the conflicts are more direct. For example, in one project in the Central Coast that aimed to replace a perched culvert with a bridge to allow for fish passage, the California Coastal Commission prohibited the removal of vegetation at the project site in order to protect dusky-footed wood rats, while the California Department of Fish and Game required hand-removal of the vegetation to help identify the presence of San Francisco garter snakes.

4 Inadequate staffing and resources at resource agencies

Agencies often have insufficient staff and resources to fully implement their own missions and may lack the resources, capacity, or incentives to coordinate

internally and with other agencies, at both the permitting and implementation levels.

5 No special consideration for environmental enhancement

With some exceptions (such as the CEQA exemption for small habitat restoration projects), regulatory agencies in California do not necessarily distinguish between permit applications for environmental restoration projects which seek to provide a public benefit through environmental enhancement and those for conventional development projects (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial). Permit applications from all sources are considered alongside one another in the permitting process and compete for permitting priority. In general, restoration activities do not receive priority status or incentives through the permit process.

6 Consistency of interpretation

Regulatory agency staff turnover and the associated loss of institutional knowledge in agencies, as well as varying individual interpretation of existing regulations by permitting staff, can present an additional challenge to on-farm environmental enhancement projects. While project applicants typically desire a predictable process, many regulations provide discretion to agency staff to accommodate site-specific conditions and needs. As a result, individual agency staff can have divergent readings of a given regulation. Land stewards who operate in multiple regions may find themselves engaging in two or more different permitting processes for the same type of project in different regions. While agencies must be able to take project and site-specific factors into account in making decisions, these decisions should be grounded in a consistent interpretation of statutory law.

Recommendations

Permitting processes for voluntary environmental restoration, conservation, and enhancement projects should be transparent, rational, timely, and consistent yet responsive to varying needs and biogeography. There should be regulatory agency accountability for the smooth implementation of environmental permitting requirements. Meeting these goals in a time of steep budget reductions and systemic under-staffing at environmental agencies will be challenging. CRAE recommends that the following actions be taken.

Enhance permitting processes through the following mechanisms:

A. Develop permit assistance tools.

In the short-term, an online assistance tool and roster of key agency contacts should be created as a top priority to help permit applicants be aware of, and successfully navigate, both single- and multi-agency regulatory processes.

- i. **Online assistance tool:** An accurate, web-based interface for landowners could supply applicants with clear instructions regarding permit requirements based on key project parameters. It should be designed to be user-friendly so as not to overwhelm applicants. Requirements should be laid out up front so that applicants can, for example, design studies that satisfy multiple agencies at once. Steps and timelines in the permitting process should be identified. The interface should also include designated permitting staff contacts for relevant agencies in each county. Bridges for local, state, and federal permits should be explored and integrated. Such an online tool would be an important complement to improved coordination among regulatory

agencies and restoration entities. Several models are included in Appendix II.

- ii. **Agency roster:** A roster of key agency contacts in each county should be developed, made available in hard copy, and disseminated widely to address the needs of landowners who may not have readily available internet access.
- iii. **Hotline:** A telephone resource for project applicants with the capacity to answer basic questions.

B. Streamline permit application processes. Develop simplified and coordinated permit application processes for environmental restoration projects to streamline agency processes and reduce duplicative submission requirements, possibly in conjunction with (A) above. These streamlined permitting processes would not reduce environmental compliance requirements or individual review by each agency. Instead, this effort could create efficiencies for applicants by consolidating information submittal and fostering concurrent, rather than sequential, review (e.g., one application form for a project of this type). The Regional General Permit (RGP 12) issued by the San Francisco Corps

District in August 2010 for the California Department of Fish and Game Fisheries Restoration Grant Program and the Biological Opinion for Fisheries Restoration Projects issued in June 2006 by the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service in the North Central Coast region may provide examples for this type of permitting approach.⁸

C. Expedite projects with clear environmental benefits. Identify and implement mechanisms to expedite evaluation and decision-making for on-farm projects with clear environmental restoration or enhancement benefits, including having agency leaders assign staff to expedite small-scale restoration projects on private lands to achieve express environmental goals. The results of such an initiative should be monitored. Agencies should consider creating specific divisions or assigning specific staff within permitting departments to be dedicated to restoration permitting.

D. Scale-up programmatic permitting. Work with the government agencies that administer regulatory programs so that permits associated with specific project types or categories (e.g., reduction of sedimentation) can be scaled up from the watershed/countywide level to the regional/statewide level, and increased in term length. Seek full agency support from federal and state agencies for a statewide, programmatically permitted private lands restoration program that

can be adapted and applied by districts, field offices, and regional offices of the agencies involved. The scaled-up program should be fashioned around a core of habitat enhancement and erosion control practices linked to detailed environmental protection measures and standardized monitoring and reporting requirements. The goal would be to create a master document that covers the issues that will be common to all individual projects within the program that would then be tiered off of to account for additional, project-specific issues. The participating state agencies should include the California Coastal Commission, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the Water Boards (State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards). The California Department of Conservation should be the primary agency link to Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs). The federal agencies that should be involved include the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service.

E. Build project feedback mechanisms. Help to flag regulatory agency concerns about projects early on, and enhance the ability of project proponents to incorporate mitigation measures. This can be challenging with limited agency resources, but would likely lead to a net savings of time and resources.

8. CRAE members have not reviewed the programmatic details of these programs.

- F. Enhance inter-agency communications.** Implement measures to enhance communication and coordination among regulatory agencies, and between agencies and technical support organizations.
- G. Improve agency capacity.** Make recommendations for restructuring or creating necessary positions in specific departments to maximize permitting efficiencies. Support technical support agencies in hiring or dedicating staff, such as permit coordinators, to further facilitate the permit process for project applicants. We recommend that agencies assign a point of contact to address applicants' questions about permitting and collaborate with other agencies to maximize coordination.

- H. Evaluate budget shortfalls and explore opportunities for closing the gap.** Many California regulatory agencies have faced steadily declining budgets since 2008. For example, between 2007 and now, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has experienced a 20% decrease in its "Program 20" budget, which is the primary budget for environmental review and permitting. In the recently passed 2010-11 budget, Governor Schwarzenegger line item vetoed \$1.5 million from DFG's Timber Harvest Plan (THP) review program, reducing THP review staff from 17 to 2 staff members.⁹ Even with the streamlining measures proposed above, enhanced staffing is needed to process permits in a timely way. Key agencies should assess minimum staffing needs to process permits in a reasonable time period.

- I. Improve agency-stakeholder communication.** We believe that the regulatory system will work better if there is less space between agencies and stakeholders. We recommend that agencies, using trusted partners like NRCS and the RCDs, engage in outreach to stakeholders regionally—for example, through workshops—to identify what's working and what isn't, and resolve specific issues.

2 Create inter-agency permit coordination task force

Create a high-level inter-agency permit coordination task force to carry out the portfolio of responsibilities listed in (I) above. The task force should build on the recommendations in this white paper to develop a plan of action to support and expedite environmental restoration and enhancement projects on California agricultural land. The task force should be able to act quickly; its focus should include evaluation of agency efficiency, review of improvement implementation, and development of accountability mechanisms. The task force should be empowered to seek federal funds from farm bill conservation programs and other programs to help implement the recommendations and goals described above.

The task force should include representatives of all state and federal regulatory agencies that issue permits for environmental restoration and enhancement projects in California. The representatives should have experience in issuing permits

9. For the Budget Year (BY) 2007-08, DFG's Program 20 budget was \$168 million. For BY 2010-11, DFG's Program 20 budget was \$127 million. The \$1.5 million reduction in DFG's THP budget can be found at <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/pdf/...Summary.pdf> Page 32.

or handling restoration projects. As the number of individuals familiar with the on-the-ground realities is limited, care should be taken not to exacerbate the problems by removing staff who are actively assisting landowners. Other federal agencies overseeing relevant regulations should also be involved in order to enhance federal-state coordination. Members should include representatives from the following agencies:

- California Department of Fish and Game
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Regional Water Quality Control Boards (one or more representatives that act as a liaison with staff at the other Regional Water Quality Control Boards)
- California Coastal Commission
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
- US EPA Region 9
- Army Corps of Engineers
- California State Association of Counties
- California Association of Resource Conservation Districts

3 Institute internal training programs

Regulatory agencies should train all permitting staff to ensure a consistent interpretation and administration of rules and regulations. All agencies should also be trained in the permitting requirements of the other agencies so that they can be a position to inform applicants early on about what permitting requirements they will need to cover.

4 Conduct high-level review

Voluntary on-farm restoration and enhancement projects have substantial public benefits, including improving air and water quality, enriching environmental health, and providing aesthetic value, and their hindrance presents a substantial setback for California. The recommendations presented above are important first steps in supporting environmental restoration on private lands.

A significant effort will be needed to find solutions for the problems discussed above. CRAE members recommend that the Little Hoover Commission undertake a systematic study to identify and assess the specific permitting challenges and improvements necessary to facilitate voluntary environmental restoration and enhancement projects on California agricultural land.

This study should build on prior work in the area. In particular, it should include a review of implementation of the recommendations in the 2002 report, commissioned by the California Resources Agency, entitled “Removing Barriers to Restoration,” and build on efforts such as the 2010 assessment of Sustainable Conservation’s Partners in Restoration Program. In the interim, regulatory agencies should initiate their own assessments of their permitting programs including considerations such as overall program efficiency, permit processing time, and consistency of decision-making.

Conclusion

Environmental regulations in California serve to minimize the environmental impacts of land modification activities, including those with intended environmental benefits. Yet the current constellation of permit requirements and their implementation have had the unintended consequence of hindering environmental restoration projects that offer benefits to private landowners, the public, and environmental health. CRAE has presented several recommended actions that its members believe are important elements in minimizing conflicts and better coordinating environmental permits. CRAE members are hopeful that the high level of interest from all stakeholder groups in resolving the challenges inherent in the permitting process for voluntary restoration projects will create an environment where collaboration and resolution can take place.

Appendix I

Additional efforts addressing coordination of environmental regulations pertaining to agriculture in California

Several recent initiatives have addressed one or more aspects of regulatory barriers hindering environmental outcomes on California farms. Some of these efforts include:

Ag Vision 2030

The California State Board of Food and Agriculture has spearheaded a strategic planning process for the state's food and agriculture system. A series of workshops over a two-year period resulted in, among other products, the publication of seven short-term action priorities, one of which promotes improving regulatory administration. More information is available at <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/agvision>

The Pacific Southwest Organic Residuals Symposium (PORS)

PORS brings together organic residuals industry professionals, municipalities, regulators, researchers and other stakeholders to collaborate on the best management options for manures, biosolids, food wastes, and other organic residuals. The special focus of the 2010 symposium was on improving regulatory coordination in addressing air, water and resource recovery issues, so as to promote those projects with the greatest overall environmental benefits. Organizers collaborated on a white paper entitled, "Organic Residuals Project: Addressing Cross-Media Regulatory Conflicts: Impediments to Achieving Greenhouse Gas Reductions and Watershed Restoration," and an appendix entitled "Environmental Cross-Media Issues: Potential Solutions," which can be accessed

at <http://www.epa.gov/region9/organics/symposium/>

California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

The California Rangeland Conservation Coalition has been active in addressing regulatory challenges to conservation efforts on ranch land. The group recently conducted a survey of organizations and entities engaged in conservation and restoration activities, the findings of which are published in the report "California Restoration and Enhancement Permitting: Challenges to California's Permitting Process for Restoration and Enhancement Projects"

Sustainable Conservation: Partners in Restoration Assessment

Sustainable Conservation recently conducted an in-depth review of their Partners in Restoration program, an effort to simplify the regulatory process for landowners through collaboration and programmatic permitting. The organization will be publishing a series of recommendations to further improve the regulatory process for landowners across California. Visit <http://suscon.org/pir/index.php> for more information.

Task Force to Remove Barriers to Restoration

In 2003, the California Resources Agency commissioned a task force to investigate impediments to environmental restoration for landowners, and develop recommendations for removing them.

The task force report, “Removing Barriers to Restoration,” has been an important reference point since it was published, although not all of the recommendations have been implemented. The report can be retrieved at <http://resources.ca.gov/publications/Barriers2002-full.pdf>

UCLA and UCB Law: Room to Grow

The UCLA and UC Berkeley Schools of Law undertook a study to determine the most effective mechanisms for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture in California. A series of multi-stakeholder workshops and extensive research resulted in a report addressing regulatory obstacles to advancing renewable energy technologies and issues recommendations to address these challenges. The report, “Room to Grow: How California Agriculture Can Help Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions” is available at http://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Room_to_Grow_March_2010.pdf

Appendix I I

Examples of permit assistance tools with online application

The following are several examples of tools aiming to streamline permit application processes.

1. California Association of RCDs – Guide to Watershed Project Permitting for the State of California

This manual was created to assist restoration project proponents in getting started in the permitting process by providing basic information about navigating the permit process and directing applicants to sources of additional information. A copy of the guide can be accessed at <http://carcd.org/Watershed/guidetowatershed.pdf>

2. Sacramento River Watershed Program – Online Regulatory Permitting Guide

This permit guide was designed to assist project proponents determine which permits they may need when doing certain types of restoration work, in particular river and floodplain restoration projects such as bank stabilization and invasive plant removal. <http://www.sacriver.org/watershed/permit-guide/>

3. The Freshwater Trust, Oregon – StreamBank

Developed by The Freshwater Trust, StreamBank is a unique and innovative web-based platform that enables landowners and restoration professionals to address permitting and funding bottlenecks by efficiently funding, permitting and implementing a restoration project. With StreamBank, projects are completed in a

matter of months, while maintaining the same or better project quality. <http://www.thefreshwatertrust.org/streambank>

4. Washington State Governor’s Office of Regulatory Assistance – Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application

Developed through a collaborative effort by multiple local, state and federal regulatory agencies, the Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) is one application form that project proponents in Washington State can use to apply for more than one environmental permit at a time. The Office of Regulatory Assistance has also established an information center and phone line to further support permit applicants. http://www.epermitting.wa.gov/site/alias__resourcecenter/jarpa_introduction/10042/introduction.aspx

5. The California Financing Coordinating Committee

The California Financing Coordinating Committee (CFCC) developed an application form and process that allows applicants to access resources from across several agencies. CFCC includes seven funding agencies, six at the state level, and one federal agency. According to the Committee’s website, “CFCC members facilitate and expedite the completion of various types of infrastructure projects by helping customers combine the resources of different agencies. Project information is shared between members so additional resources can be identified.” More information at <http://www.cfcc.ca.gov/>



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The California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment (CRAE) is an alliance of agricultural, environmental, regulatory, and social justice leaders seeking to promote an agriculture and food sector that is economically viable, environmentally sound and socially responsible. Since Fall 2004, CRAE has been building consensus among agriculture and environmental interests on key issues impacting the food system. CRAE works primarily at the policy level, providing information and perspective based on sound policy and science to state and federal legislators and regulators. Ag Innovations Network is the convener/facilitator of CRAE, and its mission is to promote the long-term health of the food system and in particular, of agricultural production, by facilitating critical dialogues within the food system and between food system stakeholders and the wider public.

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