



2021 WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

Abstract

The 2021 Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan Framework provides guidance for State Vehicle Recreation Area staff to develop their Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan in light of Senate Bill 249.

Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division & Natural Resources Division
California Department of Parks and Recreation

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1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF 2021 WHPP FRAMEWORK

This 2021 Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan (WHPP) Framework Document was created to provide a roadmap for revision and update of the Wildlife Habitat Protection Plans (WHPPs) for the nine State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs), spanning 145,000 acres, within the California State Park System. As a direct result of the passage of Senate Bill 249 (SB249) in October 2017, WHPPs have taken on additional significance and scope. SB249 amended the Public Resources Code (PRC §5090), altering a number of the requirements for the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CSP). Specific PRC §5090 language relating to the WHPPs are outlined below:

PRC §5090.32. (g), calls for Off-Highway Vehicle Division (Division) to “Prepare and implement management and wildlife habitat protection plans for lands in, or proposed to be included in, state vehicular recreation areas, including new state vehicular recreation areas. These plans shall be developed in consideration of statutorily required state and regional conservation objectives. However, a plan shall not be prepared in any instance specified in subdivision (c) of Section 5002.2. Trails may only be added or included as components of existing trail systems when developing or updating plans in state vehicular recreation areas, upon completion of full environmental review.”

PRC §5090.35. (c) (1), calls for the Division to “compile and, when determined by the department to be necessary, periodically review and update an inventory of wildlife populations and prepare a wildlife habitat protection plan that conserves and improves wildlife habitats for each state vehicular recreation area. By December 31, 2030, the division shall compile an inventory of native plant communities in each state vehicular recreation area to inform future plan updates. (2) If the division determines that the wildlife habitat protection plan is not being met in any portion of any state vehicular recreation area, the division shall close the noncompliant portion temporarily until the wildlife habitat protection plan is met. (3) If the division determines that the wildlife habitat protection plan cannot be met in any portion of any state vehicular recreation area, the division shall close and restore the noncompliant portion pursuant to Section 5090.11.”

PRC §5090.35. (d), calls for the Division to “monitor annually in each state vehicular recreation area to determine whether soil conservation standards are being met and the objectives of wildlife habitat protection plans are being met.”

PRC §5090.39. (a), calls for the Department to “require that: (1) Any soil conservation standard, wildlife habitat protection plan, or monitoring program, required by this chapter, applies best available science. (2) All standards, plans, and monitoring programs subject to paragraph (1) shall provide opportunities for public comment, including, but not limited to, written comments and public meetings, as appropriate. (b) Nothing in this chapter relieves the division from compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, including permit requirements”

PRC §5090 also provides language on conserving and improving natural resources within SVRAs which further informs the scope and purpose of WHPPs:

5090.35. (a) The protection of public safety, the appropriate utilization of lands, and the conservation of natural and cultural resources are of the highest priority in the management of the state vehicular recreation areas. Additionally, the division shall promptly repair and continuously maintain areas and trails, and anticipate and prevent accelerated and unnatural erosion and other off-highway vehicle

impacts to the extent possible. The division shall take steps necessary to prevent damage to significant natural and cultural resources within state vehicular recreation areas.

5090.35. (f) The division shall protect natural, cultural, and archaeological resources within the state vehicular recreation areas.

5090.43. (a) State vehicular recreation areas consist of areas selected, developed, and operated to provide off-highway vehicle recreation opportunities. State vehicular recreation areas shall be selected for acquisition on lands where the need to establish areas to protect natural and cultural resources is minimized, the terrain is capable of withstanding motorized vehicle impacts, and where there are quality recreational opportunities for off-highway motor vehicles. Areas shall be developed, managed, and operated for the purpose of providing the fullest appropriate public use of the vehicular recreational opportunities present, in accordance with the requirements of this chapter, while providing for the conservation of cultural resources and the conservation and improvement of natural resource values over time.

5090.43. (b) After January 1, 1988, no new cultural or natural preserves or state wildernesses shall be established within state vehicular recreation areas. To protect natural and cultural resource values, sensitive areas may be established within state vehicular recreation areas where determined by the department to be necessary to protect natural and cultural resources. These sensitive areas shall be managed by the division in accordance with Sections 5019.71 and 5019.74, which define the purpose and management of natural and cultural preserves.

5090.43. (c) If off-highway motor vehicle use results in damage to any natural or cultural resources or damage within sensitive areas, appropriate measures shall be promptly taken to protect these lands from any further damage. These measures may include the erection of physical barriers and shall include the restoration of natural resources and the repair of damage to cultural resources.

2 UPDATING WHPPs USING THIS FRAMEWORK

The 2021 WHPP Framework was developed to provide SVRA natural resource staff with specific guidance for incorporating the new requirements of the Public Resource Code as amended by SB249.

All SVRAs currently have existing WHPPs, developed in the 1990s and updated/revisited in 2010. Additionally, all SVRAs currently have existing wildlife habitat protection programs that include such activities as invasive plant management, erosion control, and habitat restoration.

The PRC identified in Chapter 1 led to the creation of the specific objective of the 2021 update to (or development of) the WHPP for each SVRA. These objectives show how each WHPP will meet the requirements of the PRC. The specific 2021 WHPP objectives are to:

- Use updated inventories of wildlife populations to prepare a wildlife habitat protection plan that conserves and improves wildlife habitats (PRC §5090.35. (c)(1)).
- Identify rare or endangered plant and animal species and their supporting habitat for sensitive area consideration (5090.43 (b)).
- Incorporate objectives which target the protection, conservation, and improvement of natural resources within SVRAs.

- Incorporate consideration of statutorily required state and regional conservation objectives for existing and new SVRAs (PRC §5090.32. (g)).
- Develop and incorporate an annual monitoring program which assesses whether objectives of the WHPP are being met (PRC §5090.13 & PRC §5090.35. (d))
- Incorporate best available science (PRC §5090.39.(a)).
- Incorporate public comment into the development process (PRC §5090.39.(a)).

3 ORGANIZATION OF THIS FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

The 2021 WHPP Framework document is meant to guide the revision of the 2021 WHPP update for each SVRA. The document has been organized in a way that it will help provide clear and concise WHPP content requirements and guidance for staff at each SVRAs on how to meet these requirements.

This document begins with a discussion of Required Planning Principles (Chapter 4) and the importance of their implementation at SVRAs and in the WHPP process.

Following the Required Planning Principles Chapter is the Contents Chapter (Chapter 5), which serves as an outline for an individual SVRA’s WHPP and includes informative text on how to revise each section of the 2021 WHPP; an outline for WHPP development can be found in Appendix 1 of the Framework. Most sections in Chapter 5 also include guidance for revising specific sections of the 2021 WHPP.

Following the 2021 WHPP Contents Chapter, Chapter 6 presents information on the timeline and strategy for completion of all WHPPs. Chapter 7 provides the referenced literature used in the development of this Framework document.

4 REQUIRED PLANNING PRINCIPLES

4.1 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

With the passage of SB249, Section §5090.14 was added to the PRC to more accurately define adaptive management within State Parks’ Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) program:

“Adaptive management” means to use the results of information gathered through a monitoring program or scientific research to adjust management strategies and practices to conserve cultural resources and provide for the conservation and improvement of natural resources.

This addition to PRC §5090 defined adaptive management as the foundation and guiding force behind SVRA monitoring programs and an integral part of updating the WHPP. Adaptive management is inherently linked to the application of best available science (DPR 2020, DSC 2013). Therefore, it is important to establish the principles, structure, and importance of the adaptive management process and how it relates to the management of natural resources.

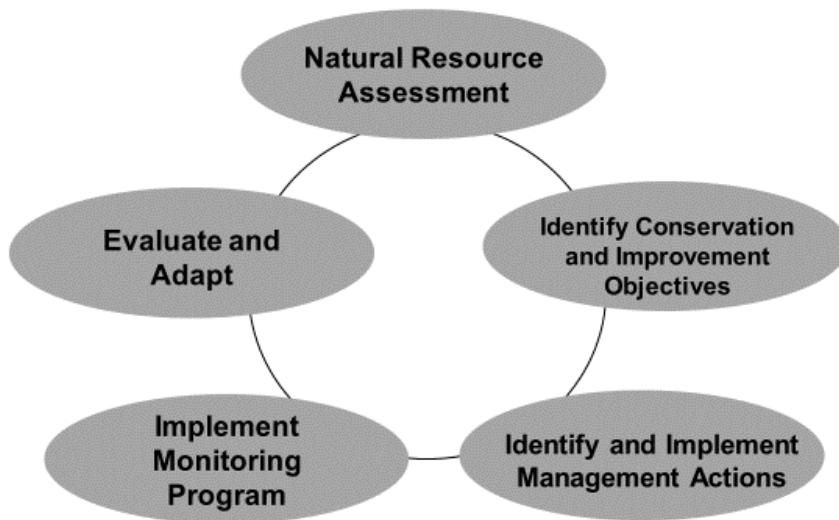


Figure 1. An example of an adaptive management loop that should be incorporated into the WHPPs.

The 2021 WHPPs will define the adaptive management approach that guides resource management decisions at their respective SVRAs. Adaptive management programs at SVRAs will work to address each of the steps listed in Figure 1. In general, adaptive management loops at SVRAs should address natural resource assessments, identifying objectives, implementing management actions, developing and implementing a monitoring program, and evaluating and adapting management based on monitoring results. Each 2021 WHPP will be written with the next five years in mind and should include projects expected to occur within that time. Some projects may not be known during 2021 WHPP creation; however, the 2021 WHPP should explain how adaptive management is incorporated into all projects.

4.2 BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE

4.2.1 LEGAL MANDATE

SB 249 added Section 5090.39 (a) to the Public Resources Code which states, “any soil conservation standard, wildlife habitat protection plan, or monitoring program, required by this chapter applies best available science”. Most SVRAs have already successfully integrated best available science in their natural resource management programs. In order to meet this requirement in each 2021 WHPP, the following section discusses BAS in the context of SVRAs and the 2021 WHPPs.

4.2.2 Best Available Science Guidelines

The Department is currently developing Best Available Science Guidelines, which provide specific guidance on the concept of using BAS to meet regulatory requirements or legislative requirements such as PRC §5090.39(a). The guidelines will provide a definition of the minimum standard for scientific information and provide clarity on what is “Best” and “Available” science. They also will provide a set of BAS principles, a taxonomy of the sources of scientific information (e.g. peer reviewed literature, unpublished technical reports, expert opinion, etc.), and criteria for peer review. In summary, the

Guidelines will provide additional detail on the factors relating to BAS, listed in section 4.2.3. The BAS Guidelines are anticipated to be finalized by June 2021.

4.2.3 Methods of Ensuring Best Available Science in the 2021 WHPP

As each WHPP is updated or developed, authors should consult the Best Available Science Guidelines for detailed information on what is Best Available and Scientific, the principles and taxonomy of information, and specific guidance on components of the WHPP. WHPPs should be developed to be consistent with the below guidance.

Each WHPP will address several factors relating to the application of BAS. These factors include:

- Clear, well-stated, quantitative, and measurable objectives.
- Comprehensive and inclusive treatment of scientific evidence.
- Use of information that is relevant to the management unit, ecosystem type, or ecological issue of interest.
- Clear articulation of the issue timeframe or planning horizon.
- Clear connection between the policy/management question, operational goals, scientific hypotheses, and findings/inference.
- Clear and transparent documentation and use of assumptions, utilization of conceptual graphical models, description of methods used, and presentation of summary conclusions.
- Logical and appropriate experimental design, standardized methods, rigorous specification of variables, all informed by conceptual model and expert knowledge.
- Proper documentation of data and analytical tools used in analyses and syntheses.
- Analyses that identify and describe assumptions and uncertainties in the data used to quantify relationships between the target species, its habitat, and potential environmental stressors.
- Data engaged in support of the agency determination are presented in spatially explicit context and format.
- Enables understanding of likely environmental consequences of proposed policy or management decisions.
- Recognizes limitations of data and knowledge gaps.
- Tools for handling uncertainty and disagreement, including adaptive management and a need to revisit conclusions to address limitations and uncertainties.
- Peer review that ensures quality and that information is collected and analyzed appropriately via scientific methods.

Each WHPP will undergo a review and determination by the Department prior to implementation to ensure BAS was applied in its development (see PRC §5090.39(a)). To initiate this review, resource staff will develop documentation which clearly describes how BAS was applied to the 2021 WHPP. Resource staff will then send the prepared documentation and Draft WHPP to the Natural Resource Division (NRD) with a request to determine that BAS was applied to the 2021 WHPP. NRD will use the Best Available Science Guidelines as review criteria to make this determination.

4.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

4.3.1 Legal Requirement

SB249 includes specific requirements to ensure that the public has an opportunity to review these plans and is provided opportunities for written comments and public meetings. The corresponding Public Resource Codes are shown below for reference.

PRC §5090.32 (m) Post on the Departments Internet website all plans, reports, and studies related to off-highway vehicle recreation developed by the Division.

PRC §5090.39 (a)(2) All standards, plans, and monitoring programs subject to paragraph (1) shall provide opportunities for public comment, including, but not limited to, written comments and public meetings, as appropriate.

4.3.2 Individual SVRA 2021 WHPPs

Each SVRA will provide the opportunity for the public to review and provide written comments on their 2021 WHPPs. Please note that some information within the WHPP may be confidential, such as location of cultural resources or sensitive biological resources. Be sure to exclude confidential information within the public version of the WHPP. In addition, ensure that the public version of the WHPP and associated documents are made ADA compliant. Keep in mind that if the WHPP requires an accompanying CEQA document, that CEQA document may also require a separate public review.

At a minimum, staff at each SVRA need to complete the following steps to comply with the PRC mandate for public review and comment:

- Provide notice to the public of 30-day public review and comment period.
 - Make the Draft WHPP publicly available during the public comment period on the OHVMVR Webpage.
 - Within the public notice, include the information for at least one public meeting where the Draft 2021 WHPP will be presented.
 - Provide the notice to all known stakeholders and interest groups who may be interested in the 2021 WHPP. This may include but is not limited to conservation groups, neighboring landowners, Friend-of groups, OHV advocate groups, etc.
- Within the 30-day public comment period, present the WHPP at an OHV Commission meeting.
 - Be sure to coordinate with OHMVRD for scheduling the presentation with the OHV Commission.
- Once the Draft WHPP is adopted, post the Final WHPP, Public Comments, and CDPR's Responses to Public Comment on the OHMVR website, within the respective SVRA webpage.

5 2021 WHPP CONTENTS

This Chapter of the WHPP Framework document presents an outline of the contents that will be included with each SVRA's 2021 WHPP update. In some instances, a discussion of the topic follows. The contents of this chapter have been organized so that they align with the adaptive management process presented in Chapter 4 above.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 Purpose and Scope of 2021 WHPP

Open this section with standard language (*italicized*) to describe the scope and goal of the 2021 WHPP. The following paragraph is a suggested starting point; edit as necessary to encompass your SVRA's individual circumstances.

The goal of a 2021 WHPP is to present the full picture of a SVRA's wildlife and habitat management effort and is to act as a dynamic working document that provides land managers with guidance for the management of habitat, along with short- and long-term habitat goals and the methods to achieve these goals. Each 2021 WHPP utilizes scientific literature, expert opinion, and staff expertise in setting goals and describing land management activities. The scope of a WHPP encompasses the full spectrum of land management and visitor use activities that affect wildlife habitat at an SVRA. It includes existing settings, goals, all management actions, and a plan for why and when management actions are implemented, among other items.

5.1.2 Legal and Operational Requirements

In this section, use standard language to describe the legal mandate of 2021 WHPP. The following paragraph is a suggested starting point; edit as necessary to encompass your SVRA's individual circumstances.

Since 1988, California Public Resources Code (PRC) required a Wildlife Habitat Protection Program for each SVRA that focused on sustaining viable species composition. In 2017, SB 249 amended the PRC to require that a Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan that conserves and improves wildlife habitats be developed for each SVRA. SB 249 also added other specific requirements, including that WHPPs consider statutorily required state and regional conservation objectives, apply best available science, and that annual monitoring is undertaken at each SVRA to ensure WHPP objectives are being met.

5.1.3 Relationship with other SVRA Plans

This section focuses on identifying applicable SVRA plans that are directly related to the 2021 WHPP. Include any of the following that apply: General Plan, Roads and Trails Management Plan, Wildfire Management Plan, Storm Water Management Plan, Watershed Management Plan, Soil Conservation Standard, Dust Control Plan, Grazing Management Plan, and others. Describe how other plans interact with this 2021 WHPP document. Provide guidance with reference to where these other plans can be found (online or in an appendices). Example: For further details on the park facilities, local parks, etc. see the General Plan (chapters 1 and 2) found online at: <website>. See Figure 2 below for a generalized representation of the overall State Parks Planning Structure, indicating where the WHPP fits.



Figure 2. State Parks’ Park Planning Structure

5.1.4 CEQA Compliance

Open this section with standard language (*italicized*) to clearly address that each project and/or action identified within the WHPP will be reviewed for CEQA compliance. Be sure to consider CEQA compliance during WHPP development. The standard language, provided below, is not meant to preclude a District from strategically taking another approach such as completing a CEQA analysis on an entire management program (i.e. the WHPP) for efficiencies sake, if deemed appropriate or necessary. The standard language may be edited, as needed, per each individual WHPP needs.

The overall purpose of this WHPP is to present a full picture of the SVRA’s resource and resource monitoring programs. As a part of this process, the WHPP also identifies resource objectives, and general types of projects and/or actions that can or will be taken to ensure progress on meeting the WHPP objectives. The CEQA process (not necessarily the product) begins at this stage. If discretionary projects or actions are identified, CSP will follow Department procedure for meeting CEQA compliance. Once a project or action has been selected for implementation, it will undergo CEQA review at that time using the CSP Project Evaluation Form.

5.1.5 Update Cycle and Approval Process

WHPPs are to be updated at least once every five years. In the case of land acquisitions or other changes at an SVRA, WHPPs can be updated more frequently as needed. Routine updates include a brief summary of wildlife habitat protection, conservation, and restoration at the SVRA since the previous WHPP revision and a description of the goals and objectives for the next 5 years. All WHPP updates are required to reflect changes to landcover, land use, species occurrence and disturbance, as well as land acquisitions, and updates to monitoring protocols or technology.

Describe the update procedure for the WHPP document at the SVRA. List the anticipated timeline for document updates, peer review, and necessary management approvals. Standard language to be included is provided below.

This WHPP will be evaluated at least once every five years. Each revision will encompass wildlife habitat protection and restoration planning in the SVRA over the next 5 years. Updates will include a brief summary of wildlife habitat protection and conservation at the SVRA since the previous WHPP revision and a description of the goals and objectives for the next 5 years. The update will reflect changes to landcover, land use, species occurrence and disturbance, as well as land acquisitions, and updates to monitoring protocols or technology. WHPP updates will undergo a review by Natural Resource Division to ensure BAS was applied and be approved by the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division.

Once completed, an updated WHPP will be approved by District Natural Resources Program Manager and District Superintendent, submitted to NRD for BAS Determination, and submitted to Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division (OHMVRD) for review and approval.

5.2 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Adaptive management is a fundamental component of implementing best available science in natural resource management. The section below provides information on natural resource planning for each step of the adaptive management process as introduced in section 4.1 (Figure 1). This includes the application of adaptive management within SVRAs using the resource management unit structure (see the DOM 0313.1.1.1.2). It also includes guidance for conducting a natural resource assessment, developing resource objectives based on the goals set forth in the PRC, identifying management actions to achieve the identified goals and objectives, conducting performance monitoring, and informing future resource management.

5.2.1 Management Units

Resource Management Units (MUs) provide a structure for implementing natural resource management activities. MUs are defined areas of land with unique identifiers which constitute manageable-sized areas for organizing and scheduling management work. For the WHPP, organizing, describing, and planning habitat management and on-going maintenance is described for each MU within an SVRA.

5.2.1.1 Description of MUs

Briefly describe the MUs within the park. Include maps zoomed in to the level of each MU, incorporating elements that are discussed here.

5.2.2 Natural Resource Assessment

A natural resource assessment provides an understanding of the presence and condition of the natural resources within an SVRA. Further, the assessment provides an understanding of important conservation issues. Last, it serves as the basis for adaptive management. This section describes elements that are typical in natural resources assessments, including review of regional context and land use, elements that are required by the PRC including wildlife and native plant inventories, and specific elements that address the needs of wildlife species including landscape connectivity. Each of the following elements in subsection 5.2.2.1 – 5.2.2.3 provide the information for 1) developing objectives based on the PRC goal of conservation, protection, and restoration, 2) identifying and implementing management actions which achieve these goals and objectives, and 3) providing metrics, baselines, and targets for a monitoring program to assess annually and inform subsequent management. Therefore, a natural resource assessment is developed as the initial phase of a monitoring program, as described in PRC 5090.13 & 5090.14.

5.2.2.1 General Assessment Elements

5.2.2.1.1 Location and regional context

Discuss the SVRA's location as well as its geographic and biological context within the State of California. Include a **map** showing the SVRA in spatial relation to relevant natural and man-made features, including mountains, highways, streets, and county and city boundaries, along with an inset map showing the SVRA's location within the state of California.

5.2.2.1.2 Regional Land Use

Discuss the existing land use around the SVRA, and local land use trends. Much of this information can be found in each SVRA's General Plan, if recently updated. Include regional land uses that could positively or negatively affect the wildlife habitat. Discuss local resource-intensive land uses, examples include: mining, agriculture, cattle grazing, urban areas, roads, and rural residential areas. Mention any utility corridors or other easements that exist within the SVRA. Discuss any local conservation lands, including other parks and protected lands, including conservation easements; describe regional and local conservation plans. If possible, include a description of adjacent neighbors' land uses and inholdings; discuss local county or city general plans, as applicable. Include a **map** showing all of these items to provide context and allow the reader to judge proximity to the SVRA. If applicable, describe adjacent State Parks properties and management goals.

5.2.2.1.3 Relevant SVRA and regional history

Summarize any relevant regional historical events and land uses within the SVRA, examples include: Native American land use (historical or current) mining, agriculture, cattle grazing, and fire events. Include any **maps** that may be helpful for visualizing the history of the SVRA. For example, you may include a map showing the fire history, to the extent that it is known, with fire history annotated, along with any other spatial data that would be relevant to this section.

5.2.2.1.4 Abiotic Environmental Factors

Discuss the environment in and around the SVRA, including discussions of local climate, hydrology/watersheds, geology, topography, soils, minerals, air quality, noise, and cultural resources. Include **maps** of these factors as relevant. This section does not need to include biological resources as the rest of the document pertains to these specifically.

5.2.2.1.5 SVRA Use Level

Discuss facilities and types of recreation that occur within the SVRA. Include annual SVRA attendance and any other pertinent information. Include the intensity of recreational use and range of OHV impacts detected within the SVRA. Incorporate the “Use Areas” from the SVRA’s General Plan to establish the level of recreation intensity in different portions of the SVRA. Include a **map(s)** showing trails, campgrounds, facilities, and exclusions, along with Use Areas, if available from General Plan.

5.2.2.2 *Assessment Elements from the Public Resource Code*

5.2.2.2.1 Soils

Discuss and describe the soils present within each SVRA with a focus on those elements that relate to the ecology of the habitats present (e.g. riparian soils, desert or dune soil stabilization, aquatic/wetland soils). See the 2020 Soil Conservation Standards and Guidelines 2.5.2 “Use of Assessments” which provides detailed guidance on physiographic data, modeling tools, and approaches to conducting an assessment of soil condition. Denote the soil types in a **map**. Assess the condition of waterways and stream-courses for unnatural erosion. Inventory SVRA for areas where OHV is creating unnatural erosion or impacts to waterways. Ensure this section is consistent with information being developed with the Soil Conservation Plan for each SVRA.

5.2.2.2.2 Wildlife Inventory

Conduct both desktop and field-based assessments to meet the PRC terms, which call for an updated wildlife inventory which allows the development of a habitat protection plan that conserves and improves habitat. Discuss your desktop research and field assessment methods and results in this section.

Update your Wildlife Inventory to include all plant and animal species found within your desktop research, in a table format. Include your updated Wildlife Inventory Table as appendix 1 of your WHPP. Guidance for conducting and reporting on this section is provided below. An example Wildlife Inventory Table and additional guidance for developing the Table is provided in appendix 2 of the Framework.

5.2.2.2.2.1 *Desktop Research Guidance*

Conduct desktop research to develop a list of species that may be present within your SVRA. Compile this list using searches of the CDFW California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC), CNPS Rare Plant Inventory, and other available natural resource databases. When conducting your research be sure to use a 5-mile buffer around the SVRA boundary to ensure nearby species occurrences are captured.

Be sure to document the databases consulted to compile your list, record the date reports were pulled, and save the generated reports from each database. The generated reports from each database do not need to be included in your WHPP.

5.2.2.2.2.2 *Field Assessment Guidance*

Conduct and update field-based wildlife assessments using standard methods. You may use your field-based assessments conducted over the past 10 years to assist with the update of the Wildlife Inventory list. Field assessment may include any type of surveys conducted within the past 10 years which identified the presence of a species. Ensure comprehensive geographic coverage of field assessments. If the regularly occurring annual field assessments and monitoring at your SVRA provide a comprehensive

snapshot of the park's biodiversity, no new field assessments may be required. If your SVRA has not conducted comprehensive field assessment which capture the park's biodiversity, new field assessments will need to be conducted to inform the Wildlife Inventory.

When discussing your field assessment methods, be sure to include parameter estimation for both error and bias¹. Document the biological parameters (e.g. presence-only, presence-absence, relative abundance, density, vital rates, organism condition) being estimated through survey work. Provide explicit discussions of the limitations of field survey work and analyses involving data.

5.2.2.2.3 Native Plant Community Inventory

Develop a spatially explicit inventory of native plant communities based on California's Vegetation Standard² (which utilizes the National Vegetation Classification Standard (NVCS)). Map plant communities at the association or alliance level (with rationale behind the level selected) at a scale that informs habitat management (e.g. 1-acre minimum mapping unit). Update the map regularly (every 5 years). This information serves as the measurable foundation for tracking land use and land cover protection and restoration actions undertaken at the SVRA. Vegetation mapping is based on recent (within 2 years) publicly available aerial photography (e.g. National Aerial Imagery Program [NAIP] mapping products), or more granular datasets such as those gathered through drone surveys or other aerial captures.

5.2.2.2.4 Sensitive Resource Areas

Discuss the type and presence of areas of outstanding natural or scientific significance. Discuss the presence of established sensitive resource areas. Discuss the methods used to survey and delineate these resource conditions.³ Include a **map** showing the location of these resource and/or designated areas of the SVRA. Resources of interest identified in PRC 5019.71 include features such as "rare or endangered plant and animal species and their supporting ecosystems, representative examples of plant or animal communities existing in California prior to the impact of civilization, geological features illustrative of geological processes, significant fossil occurrences or geological features of cultural or economic interest, or topographic features illustrative of representative or unique biogeographical patterns".

5.2.2.2.5 Rare or endangered plant and animal species and their supporting habitats

Discuss the presence, spatial distribution, and habitats and processes of any special status species that are found within the SVRA and denote their habitat (known or modeled) on a **map**, along with any CNDDDB or other occurrence data. Discuss any designated critical habitat for special status species that are located in or around your SVRA. Discuss the methods and parameters that were estimated through surveys or modeling⁴. Update the datasets on a regular basis (i.e. at least every 5 years).

¹ See discussion of error and bias estimation with regard to scientific information criteria in appendix 2, under the Department's Best Available Science guidance.

² Fish and Game Code 1940; <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/VegCAMP>

³ PRC 5090.43 (b)&(c).

⁴ Guidance for rare plant surveys can be found at: <https://www.cnps.org/plant-science/field-protocols-guidelines>

5.2.2.3 Additional Focused Assessment Elements

5.2.2.3.1 Non-native Invasive (Exotic) Species

Discuss the presence of problematic non-native invasive (exotic) species of management concern and denote their distribution on a **map**. Species of particular concern are those that significantly impact a habitat by taking over physical space, competing for food and nutrients, and disrupting food webs, modifying physical habitat structure, and preying upon native species. Update the datasets on a regular basis (i.e. at least every 5 years).

5.2.2.3.2 Sensitive Aquatic Habitats

Discuss the presence and location of watercourses within an SVRA and include a **map** which denotes the watercourse and lake protection zones as identified within the 2020 Soil Conservation Standard and Guidelines.

5.2.2.3.3 Wildlife Movement

If the SVRA adjoins other public land or otherwise provides connectivity or habitat connectivity/linkages for wildlife, discuss that here and include **map(s)**. If important wildlife movement features, such as wildlife corridors that are found within the SVRA, discuss that here and include **map(s)**.

5.2.3 Identify Conservation and Improvement Objectives

Setting goals and objectives provides clarity around the outcomes to be achieved through implementation of annual management activities to protect and maintain habitat health as well as restoration targets to achieve ecological lift of “habitat improvement” as required by law. In addition, well-crafted goals and objectives can identify targeted resource conditions while also allowing for flexibility to apply innovative techniques to achieve desired conditions.

5.2.3.1 WHPP Goals

Present the goals (see following discussion) of the WHPP document.

The Public Resources Code provides the goals to be achieved through the WHPPs. Specifically, PRC §5090.35 (c) (1) calls for the Division to “...prepare a wildlife habitat protection plan that *conserves and improves* wildlife habitats for each state vehicular recreation area.” Further, PRC §5090.10 defines “Conservation” and “conserve” as “...activities, practices, and programs that *protect and sustain* soils, plants, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources”. And PRC §5090.11 defines “restoration” and “restore” to mean “upon closure of the unit or any portion thereof, the restoration of land to the contours, the plant communities, and the plant covers comparable to those on surrounding lands or at least those that existed prior to off-highway motor vehicle use.”

Given the language provided by the PRC, the fundamental habitat **goals** of each WHPP are:

- 1) *the conservation or long-term protection of soils, plants, wildlife, and habitats*
- 2) *the improvement or increase in the quality or extent (hereafter, “restoration”) of soils, plants, wildlife, and habitats*

5.2.3.2 WHPP Objectives

Discuss the objectives of the WHPP document, which tier directly from goals and indicate a specific desired outcome for each resource category. Development of objectives requires delineation of MUs

(see section 5.2.1), and an assessment of ecological conditions within each MU (see section 5.2.2). Management actions can then be identified and implemented which directly apply to each of the objectives to be achieved.

5.2.3.2.1 Conceptual Models

Develop and present conceptual models for the resource categories (i.e. soils, plants, wildlife, and habitats) to demonstrate the habitats, critical ecological processes, stressors, and management actions addressed by your WHPP. An example Conceptual Model is provided in appendix 3.

Conceptual models provide a means of clearly and graphically representing targeted natural resources, their corresponding natural processes, and the stressors and management actions acting on them. They are employed in adaptive management to transparently document and communicate natural resource management problems and are a key part of developing objectives and identifying relevant management actions.

In your conceptual model(s), include management actions which target conservation and long-term protection by addressing stressors acting on existing resources. Include management actions which target restoration of degraded conditions or areas where resources have been eliminated from the landscape.

5.2.3.2.2 Conservation and Long-term Protection Objectives

Present your WHPP's *conservation and long-term protection* objectives. Objectives have a clear connection to, and are based on the information assembled within, the Natural Resource Assessment (Section 5.2.2). The PRC goal of resource "conservation and long-term protection" is achieved through setting resource objectives that target the protection and maintenance of the existing extent and condition of the specific soils, plants, wildlife, and habitats within an SVRA. This is dependent on gathering assessment data that is quantitative, measurable, and spatially explicit, and identifying monitoring metrics that have a clear linkage to the conservation and long-term protection management actions that are employed. Annual monitoring evaluates the efficacy of management actions that seek to achieve this target.

5.2.3.2.3 Restoration Objectives

Discuss your WHPP's *restoration* objectives. The PRC goal of "restoration" is achieved through setting objectives that target the improvement of degraded conditions or re-establishment of the specific soils, plants, wildlife, and habitats within an SVRA. Setting objectives for restoration requires an analysis to quantitatively identify areas where degraded conditions exist or where resources have been lost from the landscape. This analysis is based on the elements of the natural resource assessment, which describe resource conditions, and identifies acres of habitat to be restored or enhanced through management actions. Annual monitoring evaluates metrics that clearly link to the restoration management actions.

5.2.3.2.4 S.M.A.R.T. Objectives

Present the S.M.A.R.T objectives in a table, with their corresponding management actions and monitoring. Objectives should be obtainable, relevant, and must avoid ambiguity. The best way to

approach creating and maintaining resource objectives for your SVRA is to follow the S.M.A.R.T.⁵ objectives format. Table 1 (below) provides an example of goals, objectives, management actions, and corresponding monitoring.

⁵ S.M.A.R.T. refers to objectives which are “specific” (i.e. describe the desired end- result in a way that is focused and well defined), “measurable” (i.e. monitoring will enable resource managers to know if the objective has been achieved), “achievable/attainable” (i.e. can be completed based on evidence of success on similar reference sites), “realistic” (i.e. take into consideration the amount of available resources and potential constraints such as staffing, equipment, long-term management, etc.) and “timely” (i.e. include a deadline, when the objective should be accomplished).

Goals and objectives for each resource category within an MU contribute directly to the protection and improvement of habitats within the SVRA as a whole. Project-level goals and objectives should align themselves with the overall goals of the program.

Table 1. Goals, Objectives, corresponding management actions and monitoring for resource categories for a given Management Unit.

Goal from PRC 5090.35(2)(c)(1)	Resource Category from PRC 5090.10	SMART Objectives	Management Actions	Monitoring
Conservation and long-term protection	Soils	- Implement 2020 Soil Standards by 2021	- Develop & Implement Soil Conservation Plans - BMPs in project work	- Annual Soil Assessment - Water Quality Monitoring - Air Quality Monitoring - Trails Surveys
	Vegetation	- Maintain existing acres of natural communities annually	- Maintain single-track - Prevent unauthorized trail development	- VegCAMP surveys every 5 years - Annual Vegetation Transects - Rare Plant Surveys
	Wildlife	- Protect and maintain California Red-legged Frog (CRLF) annually - Protect bat populations annually	- Close area XX to riding during RLF breeding season - Identify and exclude areas sensitive to bats	- Red-legged frog surveys annually - Bat surveys annually
	Habitats	- Protect and maintain water sources with CRLF habitat annually	- Exclude OHV use on shore of water sources - Implement BMPs at water crossings	- Annual assessment of RLF habitat
Improvement or increase in the quality or extent	Soils	- Restore 10 acres of eroded land by 2023 - Restore 2 miles of degraded trail by 2023	- Maintenance Planning - Project 1 - Project 2 - Project 3	- Monitor project sites per Soil Conservation Plan requirements
	Vegetation	- Restore 5 acres of riparian vegetation by 2022	- Project 1 - Project 2	- Monitor willow recruitment in riparian zone - Monitor oak recruitment

		- Improve quality of 4 acres of Blue Oak Woodland by 2022		
	Wildlife	- Increase small mammal populations in 1 acres of dune vegetation over 2 years	- Exclude riding and actively restore dune vegetation through planting	- Conduct small mammal surveys at dune restoration
	Habitats	- Restore 1 acre of CRLF habitat by 2022	- Project 1	- Conduct habitat assessment and RLF surveys

5.2.3.3 Statutorily Required State and Regional Conservation Objectives

Discuss the state and regional conservation objectives you considered when developing your WHPP. PRC Section 5090.32(g) requires that WHPPs be developed in consideration of statutorily required state and regional conservation⁶ objectives. Conservation objectives are a central tool in planning and implementing effective resource management. Specifically, they are instrumental in identifying the need for and prioritizing, securing support for, and communicating the successes around ecosystem improvement and conservation (Williams and Madsen 2013, Carwardine et al. 2009, Margules and Pressey 2000, and Johnson et al. 2009).

Consider the targeted resources within applicable state and regional conservation objectives (i.e. targeted soils, plants, wildlife, and habitats, and cultural resources) to:

- 1) Inform the sources which are inventoried and evaluated in development of a habitat condition baseline for the SVRA.
- 2) Highlight areas of contribution to statewide and/or regional conservation objectives through implementation of WHPP habitat goals and objectives.
- 3) Avoid habitat management actions on State Parks land which conflict with state or regional or conservation objectives.

Table 2. provides examples of State and regional plans which contain conservation objectives. Use this table to select plans that should be considered in your 2021 WHPP. The narrative below the table provides more detail on the contents of each of the state and regional plans and their corresponding objectives. These resources provide a template for use when revising your 2021 WHPP.

Table 2. Summary of State and regional plans, their geographical relationship to a specific SVRA, and whether the updated WHPP contributes to relevant State or regional conservation objectives.

	<i>Geographical Overlap with SVRA</i>	<i>Contains Relevant Target Resources</i>	<i>Contributes to Conservation Objectives</i>
State-wide Documents with Conservation Objectives			
State Wildlife Action Plan	X		
California Water Resilience Portfolio			
California Water Plan			
California Biodiversity Initiative	X	X	X
Safeguarding California Plan			
State of California Sea-level Rise Guidance			
Carbon Forest Plan			

⁶ Per PRC 5090.10 “Conservation” and “conserve” mean activities, practices, and programs that protect and sustain soils, plants, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources in accordance with the standards adopted pursuant to Section 5090.35.

Regional Conservation Documents with Conservation Objectives			
Habitat Conservation Plans			
Natural Community Conservation Plans			
Regional Conservation Investment Strategies			
Watershed Plans			
Weed Management Area Plans			

5.2.3.3.1 Statutorily Required State and Regional Conservation Objectives – Example Discussion

The following section provides a discussion of four state-level documents with conservation objectives. Update this section as necessary to reflect which documents should be considered for your SVRA. Each paragraph includes discussion of a publication’s date and purpose, and details on the alignment of goals and objectives with the document’s and 2021 WHPP’s conservation objectives.

Following the discussion of state-level documents, insert a section on regional-level documents with conservation objectives. Follow the same format for the regional-level documents, using the table above to determine applicability.

State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)

This plan, developed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in concert with a number of partners statewide, provides a blueprint for conservation of wildlife and their habitats in the context of a growing human population and a changing climate. The plan complies with the requirements of the federal State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (STWG) Program. One of the priority goals of the Plan is to maintain and improve ecological conditions vital for sustaining ecosystems in California by, in part, improving ecosystem connectivity and community structure. This 2021 WHPP supports these SWAP goals by seeking to maintain and improve wildlife habitat over time within the SVRA.

The SWAP has divided the state of California into seven provinces and developed regional conservation strategies for each. XXX SVRA is located within the XXX Province. *[Insert a discussion of the SWAP’s Province-Specific goals applicable to the habitats found within your SVRA.]*

California Forest Carbon Plan (CFCP)

Released in May of 2018, the CFCP seeks to increase forest resilience across the state of California through a variety of strategies aimed at improving the health of wildland and urban forests. The Plan provides a path for California’s forests to act as long-term carbon sinks rather than sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to help the state reach its GHG reduction targets. The strategies laid out in the Plan include forest restoration, fuels treatment, and improved land use planning, among others.

[Insert discussion of specific actions from the WHPP that align with these goals. Sample text follows.]

This Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan aligns with the CFCP’s forest restoration and fuels treatment goals by incorporating a long-term goal of oak woodland restoration in XXX management unit and the development of a fuels treatment plan for XXX management unit. In addition, this WHPP lays out a plan

for exclusion of riparian forest along XXX creek and individual trees in the campgrounds, ensuring the continued health of these trees within the SVRA.

2018 Safeguarding California Plan

Developed by the California Natural Resources Agency, the updated 2018 Safeguarding California Plan purpose is to layout guidelines for how agencies can incorporate strategies necessary to address climate change into their future planning efforts. The 2018 update included a chapter specific to parks, chapter PC-5, which included the following recommendations to incorporate climate change in all California State Park and conservancy planning and decision-making. To meet the chapter PC-5 recommendation the plan identifies the step to prioritize conservation, protection and restoration of natural resources in climate change adaptation projects and planning to ensure sustainable recreational opportunities for the public. XXX WHPP can contribute to this plan by conserving and improving habitat while evaluating whether recreational opportunities are sustainably managed.

One of the primary goals and objectives specific to the XXX Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan is to conserve and improve the identified habitats through specific management actions directed by research and monitoring. In addition to conserving and improving habitat, the XXX WHPP acts to provide XXX SVRA management information and recommendations necessary to maintain sustainable recreation opportunities to the public.

State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance

The California Ocean Protection Council along with representation from the California Natural Resources Agency, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and the California Energy Commission developed the updated 2018 Sea Level Rise Guidance to include guidance to local governments in addition to State agencies. Sea Level Rise Guidance is intended to provide science-based methods to analyze and assess risks associated with sea-level rise, and to incorporate sea-level rise into their planning, permitting, and investment decisions. The Oceano Dunes SVRA Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan can contribute and utilize the Sea Level Rise Guidance by incorporating recommended guidelines for pre and post project assessment with projects that are designed to improve and conserve shoreline habitats.

5.2.4 Identify and Implement Management Actions

Identify the management actions associated with conservation and long-term protection and restoration objectives developed in section 5.2.3. Use conceptual models developed in section 5.2.3.2.1 and table 1 (in section 5.2.3.2.4) to demonstrate linkages between objectives and management actions.

Management actions are responses that can be taken to improve habitat, reduce impacts to habitat, respond to triggers, and attempt to reach success criteria, all with the intention of moving toward your habitat goals and objectives. These actions are informed by the SVRAs resource objectives, success criteria, and management triggers.

Examples of management actions include: temporarily excluding OHVs during a part of the year to protect a biological resource, conducting restoration of volunteer trails, and implementing best management practices and trail maintenance that reduces unnatural erosion.

For projects anticipated to occur within the next five years, you may choose to keep the project information more general if project details are unknown. If detailed information is available for an upcoming project, you may include the project details here. Please keep in mind that projects will need to be evaluated for CEQA compliance. We encourage you to reach out to OHMVRD for assistance in ensuring CEQA compliance.

Present the actions taken to achieve the success criteria; include a **table**. Discuss any planned management actions for reaching the success criteria. This may include projects that are anticipated over the next five years, best management practices, and other actions that will be used to help achieve goals identified within the WHPP. If specific management actions have not been planned, present a list of potential management actions to reach the success criteria. Do not include detailed descriptions of management action implementation here. Provide a comprehensive list and description of all reasonably feasible management actions in the appendix 2 titled Management Action Details. Direct the reader to the appendix for further information on management actions cited in this section.

Discuss SVRA operations that benefit resources, on-going natural resources maintenance activities and natural resource-related facility maintenance work. Examples include night closures, red/green sticker seasons, wet weather closures, routine invasive plant removal, trail maintenance, fencing, vertical mulching, and sediment basin clean-outs.

5.2.5 Develop and Implement Monitoring Program

Discuss the monitoring program⁷ you use to provide periodic evaluation of the condition of resources and inform adaptive management within your SVRA. The Natural Resource Assessment section (5.2.2) is the initial assessment within a monitoring program. A monitoring program also includes identification and documentation of a set of performance indicators that demonstrate progress and achievement of the objectives developed for each resource category as described in section 5.2.3. Performance indicators are evaluated at regular intervals (e.g. annually) and results are used in the adaptive management approach to inform future management of targeted resources.

Within this section, please include a list of all resource monitoring currently being conducted in the SVRA, along with relevant maps. Include a separate list for future planned monitoring. Many existing monitoring programs are robust; this section should only include information on what is being monitored, the goal of the monitoring, how it informs management decisions, and how it helps to determine whether the objectives of the WHPP are being met. If monitoring objectives were derived from previous statutory requirements (e.g., viable species composition), that should be stated.

Please include more detail regarding your Monitoring Methodology as appendix 3. This should include data collection protocols, monitoring site selection, type of surveys conducted, sampling design, and data analysis methodology.

5.2.5.1 Performance Indicators

For this section, discuss the set of performance indicators (i.e. performance measures, focal resources, etc.) that you have selected for periodic evaluation. Performance indicators provide evaluation of the effects of management actions on targeted natural resources. Clearly document the linkage of the performance indicator with the targeted resource, identified objective, and management actions being

⁷ PRC 5090.13

implemented to achieve the objective. Refer to Chapter 4 of the Framework, for more detail on the specific elements to consider in applying best available science.

Develop at least one performance indicator for each resource category objective (i.e. for each objective that has been identified for soils, wildlife, plants, habitat). More than one performance indicator may be desired to fully measure whether an objective is being achieved. To meet best available science guidance, performance indicators must be based on robust and accepted methods, have clear linkage with the question or hypothesis being evaluated, and have well-documented methods, and treatment of bias, uncertainty, gaps, and limitations.

Performance indicators have three important components:

- 1) **Metric** – this is the actual parameter that is being measured using standard and scientific methods, for example acres of a vegetation association, linear miles of stream course, relative abundance, density, or reproductive success of an organism. To be an effective and relevant indicator, the metric must provide information on the effects of a management action on the soil, wildlife, plant, or habitat of management concern.
- 2) **Baseline** – this is the existing condition of the soil, wildlife, plant, or habitat of management concern. The baseline is developed using best available science, including estimation of error, bias, and discussion of gaps and limitations. Baselines inform the management actions being identified and implemented at the time that the WHPP is being developed.
- 3) **Target** – this is the S.M.A.R.T. objective identified for a given soil, wildlife, plant, or habitat of management concern. This is either based on the goal of conservation and long-term protection, or an analysis of restoration potential from the natural resource assessment data. The target is measured against the baseline for each indicator and includes clear articulation of the timeframe for which it is to be achieved.

5.2.5.2 *Scientific Research*

For this section, describe scientific research being undertaken which will provide management relevant information. This includes monitoring work that does not have a direct nexus with the effects of management actions on natural resources. This work provides contributions (i.e. journal publications, technical reports to the body of applied fields of resource management science, or information that may inform the need for performance indicators or other areas of research.

5.2.6 Evaluate and Adapt

5.2.6.1 *Reporting*

Each SVRA will produce an annual report for their WHPPs. Annual reports will provide a “snapshot” of current resource conditions and describe the management actions that were implemented by natural resource management staff in the previous year. The report will also discuss plans for next year’s resource management program. The OHMVRD will use annual reports to evaluate the SVRA’s 2021 WHPP program. Layout the guidelines for report contents, the expected review process, and annual timing expectations for final report submittal. Annual reports are to be submitted to OHMVRD and NRD. OHMVRD will provide final approval of the annual report, in close coordination with NRD.

5.2.6.2 *Guidance on Decision-making and Reporting*

5.2.6.2.1 *Adaptive Management Decisions*

Outline the SVRA's process for implementing new or altered natural resource management actions. Include the approval process for implementing adaptive management actions at the park, district, division, and department levels.

5.2.6.2.1.1 *Matrix Management and Chain of Command*

Discuss how adaptive management decisions will be made within your SVRA, as it relates to this WHPP, including the process for a variety of management decision types

Many adaptive management decisions are relatively straightforward changes to resource management activities or treatments that can be approved and undertaken by program staff within afforded authorities. Others require changes to operational decisions, require additional resources, or include other factors which require SVRA management to be informed and engaged in assessing alternatives to address mandates. Thus, the process of approval of decisions that grow out of adaptive management processes will necessarily engage a particular SVRA's and the District's chain of command. Make sure to identify the decision-making process at your SVRA and District ahead of time to ease implementation of recommended new or altered management actions.

In addition, many of the alternative approaches to addressing management actions triggered by adaptive management may also engage other divisions – including the OHMVRD, NRD, or the Service Centers – in a matrix management policy interpretation, policy formation, or project support role. Thus, depending on chain of command structures, the process for implementing or changing any adaptive management decisions may vary considerably by topic or scope. You should work to identify and characterize these pathways as part of your WHPP, but consistently update decision-making protocols as staff and managers change.

5.2.6.2.1.2 *Identifying Matrix and Chain of Command*

The District and SVRA's Chain of Command structure should already be established and consistent with the standard park's command structures and policies outlined in the DOM. Depending on the District, it is also possible that District variability will alter from the standard park's command structure. In these cases, please identify your alternative model approval process. Please consult DOM 0202 for more information.

5.2.6.2.1.3 *Approval Process*

Discuss your SVRA's process of getting approval for management actions, which is influenced by whether the management action in question is included in the approved 2021 WHPP currently being implemented in the SVRA.

Identify the approval processes within the SVRA / District for the implementation and / or modification to management actions that have been identified in the 2021 WHPP and the implementation of new management actions that are not covered in the 2021 WHPP.

It is important to involve all members of the core team as well as District and Sector Superintendents in WHPP development as it is essential to forge alignment on the range of management actions that are

applicable, and the range of potentially available adaptive management actions that could be required for different scenarios.

In your discussion of the approval process, it may be necessary to break down and discuss high- and low-level management actions and what qualifies as low-level and high-level management action decisions. It should be noted that the rules regarding high- and low-level adaptive management decisions need to closely follow the guidelines put forth by the DOM and Departmental Notices. At minimum, implementation of high-level changes in natural resources management in an SVRA needs to be approved by the SVRA's Natural Resources Program Manager and District Superintendent or their current position equivalents.

5.2.6.2.2 *Reporting Guidance*

5.2.6.2.2.1 Annual WHPP Report

Open this section with standard language (*italicized*) to describe the purpose and contents of Annual WHPP Reports. The following paragraph is a suggested starting point; edit as necessary to encompass your SVRA's individual circumstances.

Annual WHPP Reports will be used to capture the full natural resources program over the previous year, including adaptive management decisions, project implementation, and monitoring results. Annual WHPP Reports serve as a review of the application of the habitat management strategy and adaptive management approach of the SVRA.

Reports at minimum will include the following:

- The resources goals and objectives for the prior year
- An analysis and review of the results of the prior year's monitoring data.
- The SVRAs management triggers from the prior year.
- All management action decisions that were implemented during the past year and a review of their level of success and ability to inform management decisions.
- Plans, goals, and objectives for monitoring and management within the coming year.

5.2.6.2.2.2 Report Review Process

Open this section with standard language (*italicized*) to describe the review process of Annual WHPP Reports at your SVRA. The following paragraph is a suggested starting point; edit as necessary to encompass your SVRA's individual circumstances. Then outline the specific review process for the report.

5.2.6.2.2.3 Report Timing

WHPP Annual Reports are to be reviewed at many different levels within State Parks' Chain of Command. These levels include SVRA, District, Division, and Department. After review at the SVRA and District levels, WHPP Annual Reports are to be sent to OHMVRD and NRD technical team staff for review to determine if the goals and objectives established by the SVRA's 2021 WHPP are being met.

Discuss the anticipated schedule for submittal of your SVRA's Annual WHPP Reports, including specific dates and deadlines.

WHPP Annual Reports will be submitted annually to OHMVRD and NRD HQ resources staff following the review process defined above. Report generation, Program review, and District review should be completed annually with final reports submitted to OHMVRD and NRD by March 31st, following the year to which the annual report applies.

5.3 CONSTRAINTS

Discuss the factors that may limit staff's ability to accomplish the goals and objectives laid out in the WHPP. Each SVRA's potential constraints vary, but may include stochastic events, weather cycles, climate change, staffing issues, funding, or legal obligations. **Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.**

Constraints are factors which may limit DPR's ability to achieve management objectives to improve habitat. Each SVRA exists in a different cultural, political, and institutional context; therefore, the Constraints section of the 2021 WHPP documents will vary considerably. Below is a discussion of a variety of categories of constraints you may want to include in this section of your 2021 WHPP. It is up to the staff of each SVRA to determine which constraints are applicable to their SVRA's natural resource management program.

Examples of constraints factors include:

Stochastic Events

Stochastic (random) events are unpredictable events which may impact the land or draw resources which would otherwise be directed towards management. These could be natural or human caused. Examples: wildfire, flood, large scale hazmat event.

Annual Weather Cycles

California is known to have extremely variable weather cycles. Some projects will be dependent on necessary weather conditions.

Staffing

Staff is required to implement each portion of the Habitat Improvement Strategy. 2021 WHPPs should be written with a projected level of staffing in mind. You may want to discuss how altered staffing patterns should be addressed. Consider what work may be contracted out when staff is not available to do it and the limitations of outsourcing. Perhaps include the use of administrative staff to assist with contract management.

Legal or Regulatory Obligations

Existing or new legal obligations could become a constraint when they redirect staff, funds and/or other resources towards one monitoring or management action preventing others from occurring.

Public Engagement

Activities at SVRAs receive a great deal of scrutiny from many interested members of the public. While these entities often have competing agendas, active engagement with organizations or public members is often required to successfully implement needed resource management work. When engaging with the public, staff should be mindful of the differing public interest within the SVRA and communicate with the public effectively.

Allowable Uses

Identify the allowable uses identified in the General Plan or other management documents? Are these in conflict with accepted levels of impacts to resources? Do the General Plan guidelines agree with the 2021 WHPP?

Financial

These are financial constraints that affect the ability of the resources program to fully operate according the WHPP based on changes in the expected financial income of the park. Financial constraints will most-likely closely link or associate with the Staffing and Funding constraints identified above.

However, this is the area where you identify exactly where the loss of funding originated from.

Examples of financial constraints include: economic downturns such as recessions, budget cuts, or other changes in the source funding or the amount of source funding available to the park.

Other Constraints

There may be other constraints that apply to one or several SVRA MUs but not to others. These should be identified and discussed in individual WHPPs.

5.4 REFERENCES CITED

Include all of the sources consulted in the revision of this 2021 WHPP document.

5.5 APPENDICES TO INCLUDE IN 2021 WHPP

5.5.1 Appendix 1. Wildlife Inventory

Include inventories of native and non-native plants and animals, special status species, etc.

5.5.2 Appendix 2. Management Action Details

Include a comprehensive list of management actions that are being used or could feasibly be applied at the SVRA. This list will include any action such as projects, best management practices and more, which help achieve the goals of the WHPP. Include descriptions of methods for implementing management actions, if necessary.

5.5.3 Appendix 3. Monitoring Methodology

Include detail regarding your monitoring methodology as appendix 3. This should include data collection protocols, monitoring site selection, type of surveys conducted, sampling design, and data analysis methodology.

6 TIMELINE AND STRATEGY FOR COMPLETION OF ALL WHPPS

It is the goal OHMVRD to have half of the SVRA WHPPs completed by December 31 2021, and the other half by December 31 2022. Which half of the SVRAs complete their WHPPs in 2021 and 2022 will be determined by OHMVRD, in close coordination with the SVRAs and NRD. Splitting the WHPPs revisions into two years will allow OHMVRD and NRD to have more resources available to assist with the development and surveys for each WHPP.

We encourage SVRA staff to stay in close coordination with the OHMVRD and NRD WHPP working group throughout the update process of each individual WHPP. The WHPP working group will remain available to provide as much assistance to each SVRA with their WHPP update, as needed.

The project timeline for updating each of the WHPPs will differ based on each SVRA's information needs and constraints. Below is a general timeline for the main phases of WHPP update to use as a guide.

January – April Planning, Information Gathering, and Surveying

April – July Develop Draft WHPP

July – August OHMVRD and NRD Review of Draft WHPP

September Make Draft WHPP Revisions Based on OHMVRD and NRD Review

October – Mid November Public Review Period, OHV Commission Presentation, & NRD Review for Determination of BAS Application.

Mid November - December Make Draft WHPP Revisions Based on Public Comment

Early December Executive and Legal Review

Late December Make Draft WHPP Revision Based on Executive and Legal Review

December 31 WHPP Update Finalized and Adopted

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8 APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan Outline

2021 WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

Abstract

The 2021 Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan Framework provides guidance for State Vehicle Recreation Area staff to develop their Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan in light of Senate Bill 249.

Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division & Natural Resources Division
California Department of Parks and Recreation

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF 2021 WHPP
- 1.2 LEGAL AND OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS
- 1.3 RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER SVRA PLANS
- 1.4 CEQA COMPLIANCE
- 1.5 UPDATE CYCLE AND APPROVAL PROCESS

2 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

2.1 MANAGEMENT UNITS

- 2.1.1 Description of MUs

2.2 NATURAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

2.2.1 General Assessment Elements

- 2.2.1.1 Location and regional context
- 2.2.1.2 Regional Land Use
- 2.2.1.3 Relevant SVRA and regional history
- 2.2.1.4 Abiotic Environmental Factors
- 2.2.1.5 SVRA Use Level

2.2.2 Assessment Elements from the Public Resource Code

- 2.2.2.1 Soils
- 2.2.2.2 Wildlife Inventory
 - 2.2.2.2.1 Desktop Research Guidance
 - 2.2.2.2.2 Field Assessment Guidance
- 2.2.2.3 Native Plant Community Inventory
- 2.2.2.4 Sensitive Resource Areas
- 2.2.2.5 Rare or endangered plant and animal species and their supporting habitats

2.2.3 Additional Focused Assessment Elements

- 2.2.3.1 Non-native Invasive (Exotic) Species
- 2.2.3.2 Sensitive Aquatic Habitats
- 2.2.3.3 Wildlife Movement

2.3 IDENTIFY CONSERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES

- 2.3.1 WHPP Goals
- 2.3.2 WHPP Objectives
 - 2.3.2.1 Conceptual Models
 - 2.3.2.2 Conservation and Long-term Protection Objectives
 - 2.3.2.3 Restoration Objectives
 - 2.3.2.4 S.M.A.R.T. Objectives
- 2.3.3 Statutorily Required State and Regional Conservation Objectives
- 2.4 IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
- 2.5 DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT MONITORING PROGRAM
 - 2.5.1 Performance Indicators
 - 2.5.2 Scientific Research
- 2.6 EVALUATE AND ADAPT
 - 2.6.1 Reporting
 - 2.6.2 Guidance on Decision-making and Reporting
 - 2.6.2.1 Adaptive Management Decisions
 - 2.6.2.1.1 Matrix Management and Chain of Command
 - 2.6.2.1.2 Identifying Matrix and Chain of Command
 - 2.6.2.1.3 Approval Process
 - 2.6.2.2 Reporting Guidance
 - 2.6.2.2.1 Annual WHPP Report
 - 2.6.2.2.2 Report Review Process
 - 2.6.2.2.3 Report Timing

3 CONSTRAINTS

4 REFERENCES CITED

5 APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Wildlife Inventory

Appendix 2. Monitoring Methodology

Appendix 3. Management Action Details

Appendix 2

Example Wildlife Inventory Table & Table Development Guidance

Example Wildlife Inventory Table

Below is an example Wildlife Inventory Table.

Guidance for Developing the Wildlife Inventory Table

To develop the Wildlife Inventory Table, conduct your desktop research using searches of the CDFW California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC), CNPS Rare Plant Inventory, and other available natural resource databases. When conducting your desktop research be sure to use a 5-mile buffer around the SVRA boundary to ensure nearby species occurrences are captured. Be sure to document the databases consulted to compile your list, record the date reports were pulled, and save the generated reports from each database. The generated reports from each database do not need to be included in your WHPP.

Within the Wildlife Inventory Table, include a column for known species. Known species are species known to occur within the SVRA based on field assessments, monitoring, incidental sightings, and/or scientific database occurrences within the past 5 years. Organize the table by taxon group, organize each individual within the taxon group alphabetically.

When conducting your desktop research, begin with the CNDDDB reports. The CNDDDB report will give you the table headers (row 4), and information for columns A-N, hide columns D, E, H, I, L, and O. You can copy this information by downloading your CNDDDB report in excel format. The person compiling the reports will be responsible for inputting the information for columns P-R. Use red text for columns P and Q for values that are Moderate, High, and Yes.

For Columns P, Q, and R, use your best professional judgment to complete these fields. For Column P, responses shall be limited to None, Low, Moderate, or High. For column Q, responses shall be limited to No or Yes. For column R, include a brief justification for your responses to Columns P and Q.

Appendix 3

