

NATASHA TO DELIVER

•I am Natasha Nelson, Program Manager at the FESSRO Office, and I am here to talk **more** about better environmental planning and also about a new program being developed in the state called RAMP.

In my talk, I will be addressing one of the issues in the One Water, One Watershed Plan (Chapter 5) - Development of a habitat bank for water-oriented habitats throughout the watershed (multi-project, multi year). I will discuss the approach Caltrans and DWR are developing.

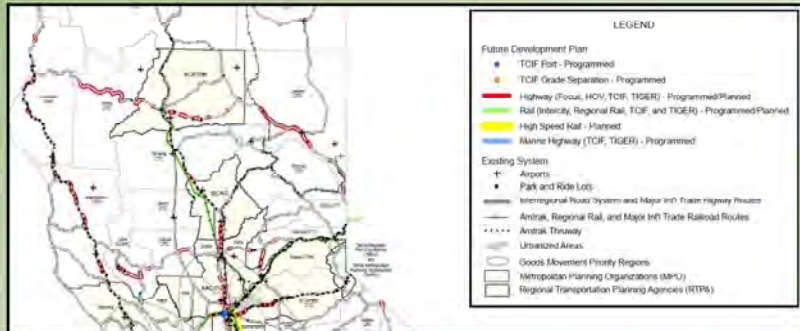


For three years state and federal agencies have worked side-by-side toward a common goal of creating a program that supports “statewide” regional advance mitigation planning. The agencies represent state agencies who build infrastructure (Caltrans and DWR) and federal and state resource agencies, such as Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Army Corps of Engineers.

The Nature Conservancy and Resources Legacy Fund became involved and secured several grants to keep the planning effort moving forward. They have been helping with the science and analysis, outreach, policy development, and the meeting support. RAMP has been able to tap into two of UC Davis’ modeling researchers to aid in development of planning tools. We are starting to add new partners as well , such as FHWA and SWRCB who have a statewide interest.

One of the benefits of the effort has been to change the dynamics of building infrastructure which can be a negotiation-based process to a more collaborative process. Agencies and stakeholders are sharing ideas, goals and methods to get to the larger goal of mitigation that is faster, cheaper and more effective than the status quo.

“The Push” Infrastructure Projects using Prop. 1E and 1B \$



Let's first look at why was RAMP started.

In 2006, voters went to the polls, and Proposition 1E was passed to fund Flood projects and Proposition 1B to fund Transportation projects. With passage of the bonds, it was anticipated that agencies would put billions of dollars to work immediately. This has happened. Miles of roads and critical levee works have been improved with these dollars, and more will still be done until the bonds' expiration in 2016.

A group of stakeholders formed in 2008 to review the impacts to the environment that might occur when this infrastructure was built. The group felt that mitigation spending could be coordinated and lands could be targeted to create conservation outcomes. This group wrote a Memorandum of Understanding (a type of formal agreement) that was signed by many agencies and the work to creating a better mitigation paradigm at the infrastructure agencies began.

This group felt we must do planning in an innovative manner. We must think beyond project-by-project mitigation.

Principles of RAMP's 2009 MOU

- Write Regional and Statewide Guidance
- Initiate a RAMP pilot project (implement)



The MOU has the signatories taking on two main tasks: Create guidance, and the implement in a pilot project.

The guidance is being created and I will speak to that in the next few slides. We are still trying to implement, although we have identified an area for future actions.

Document Type	Purpose
Statewide Framework	Set overarching goals and create a structure for multiple regional assessments
Regional Assessment	Establish the opportunities and constraints in a region
Action Plan	Select a course of action to pursue in order to get advance mitigation established in the region

In RAMP, the documents are tiered down from state, to region, to a specific location on the ground.

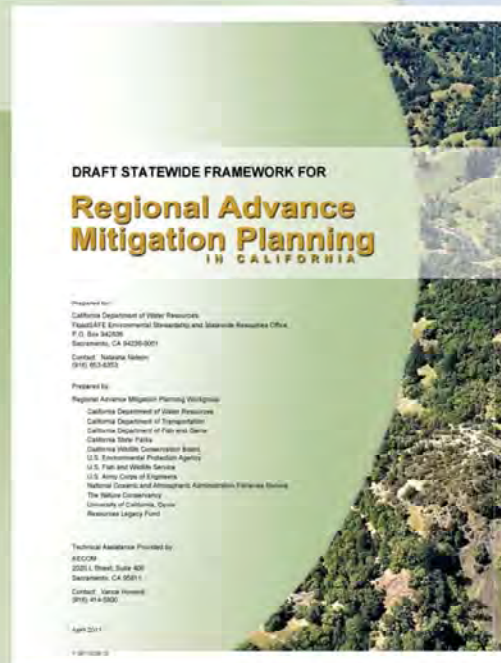
The SF was just reviewed by the Work Group and will be out in winter 2012 . We expected that Director Cowin and Secretary Laird will be showing support of the document through a cover letter. The SF document looks at RAMP from a vision level and proposes a program that can be implemented by the creation of “regions.”

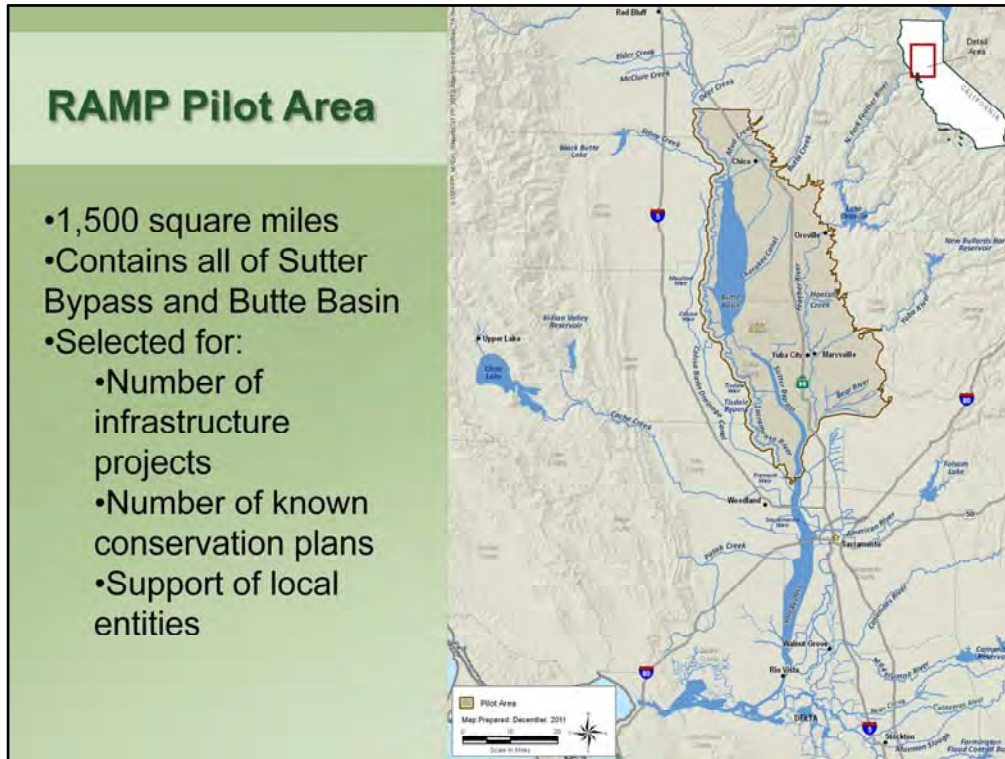
We already wrote a regional document termed a “Regional Assessments.” Regional Assessments are 20 yr plans, identify how much mitigation demand is present and all the mitigation solutions w/in the RA area. The administrative draft of the RA has been released to the Work Group. The pilot area for which it is written will be described shortly.

The next step is to create a proof of concept by making advance mitigation credits available for multiple agencies through an Action Plan. This will look at a natural sub-set of infrastructure projects and try to find a mitigation solution for that demand. We have not written one of these, but do have an outline proposed in the admin. draft Regional Assessment.

RAMP Statewide Framework

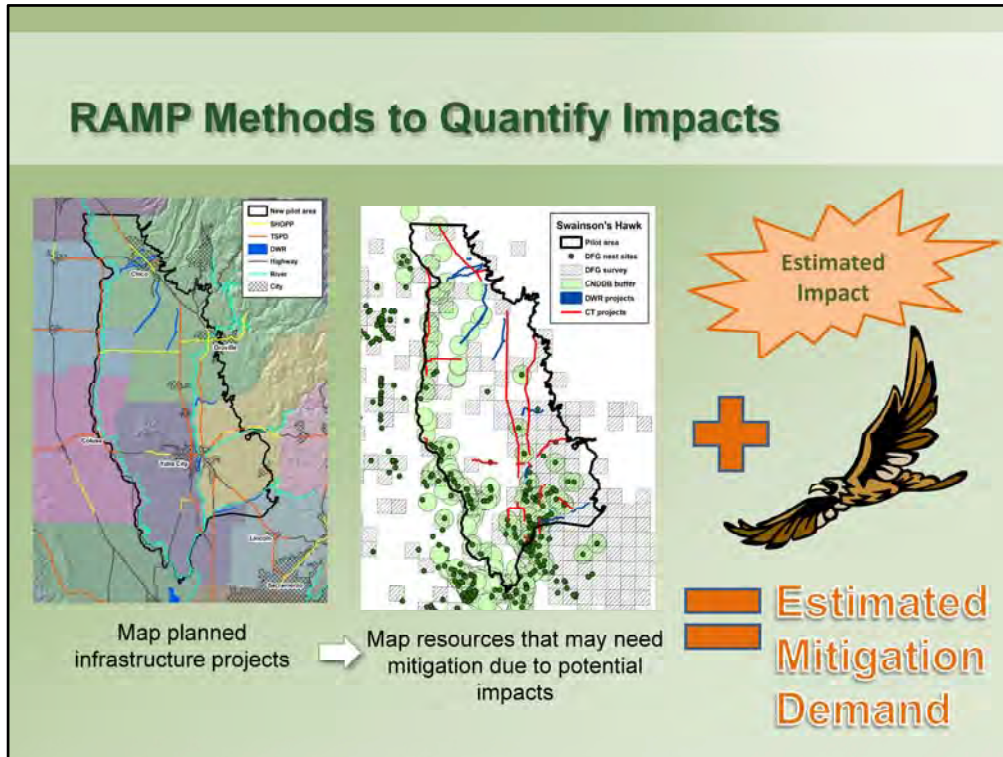
- Visioning document identifying the what, the why and a high level "how"
- Appendices with examples
- Cover letter signed by agency and department leadership (soon!)
- Living document; next version will incorporate 'lessons learned'
- Available upon request: Monique Wilber
mwilber@water.ca.gov





This map shows the pilot area for RAMP. This is where the methods and tools of RAMP will be tested. This pilot area contains the Sutter Bypass and Butte Basin to the south, goes to the Tehama county line to the north, and uses the Jepson Manual boundary for the Central Valley to the east. The area was selected for the criteria presented on the slide. We cross over 5 counties with this RAMP pilot region.

For this area, the RAMP Work Group created the first RAMP in 2011. It is called a Regional Assessment. Its purpose is to define a region and its values, gather together information on projects, and then make suggestions on the best locations for advance mitigation creation.



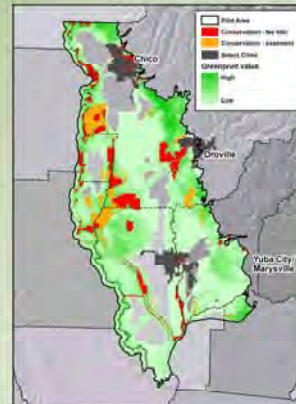
UC Davis has been helping us w/ the GIS analysis & modeling. We wanted a method to make an estimate of “planned mitigation demand” at the Landscape level, separate and different than your typical “on-site” analysis of impacts which allows you to apply for a permit or to write a Biological Assessment.

The first analysis of a **regional assessment** is to create a map of everyone’s projects. This map included examples of flood related projects, but it will be updated once the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan’s outreach to locals is completed and DWR has an evaluation of systemwide critical projects (maybe by 2014). Beyond updating flood projects, I anticipate RAMP could grow. And ALL the projects being built by DWR could be part of the analysis.

After mapping projects, we then looked at how those projects might impact species and habitat. This is an example of Swainsons’ hawk occurrences which was reviewed for impacts. Note this is not a final impact analysis for a regulatory permit. This is an estimate of demand, and only helps us become more focused in our planning.

Locating Mitigation in “Greenprint”

Planning Agencies	Data Type
DFG	ACE II; LAE; CAPP
USFWS	Vernal Pool Core Areas; Butte County Meadow Foam
CEHC	Ca. Essential Habitat Connectivity Report
Placer County	HCP/NCCP Acquisition Areas
The Nature Conservancy	Sac. River Project; Ecoregional Priorities
CRCC	Ca. Rangeland Cons. Coalition areas of high biological resources
Audubon Society	Important Bird Areas
Huber, UC Davis	Core conservation areas

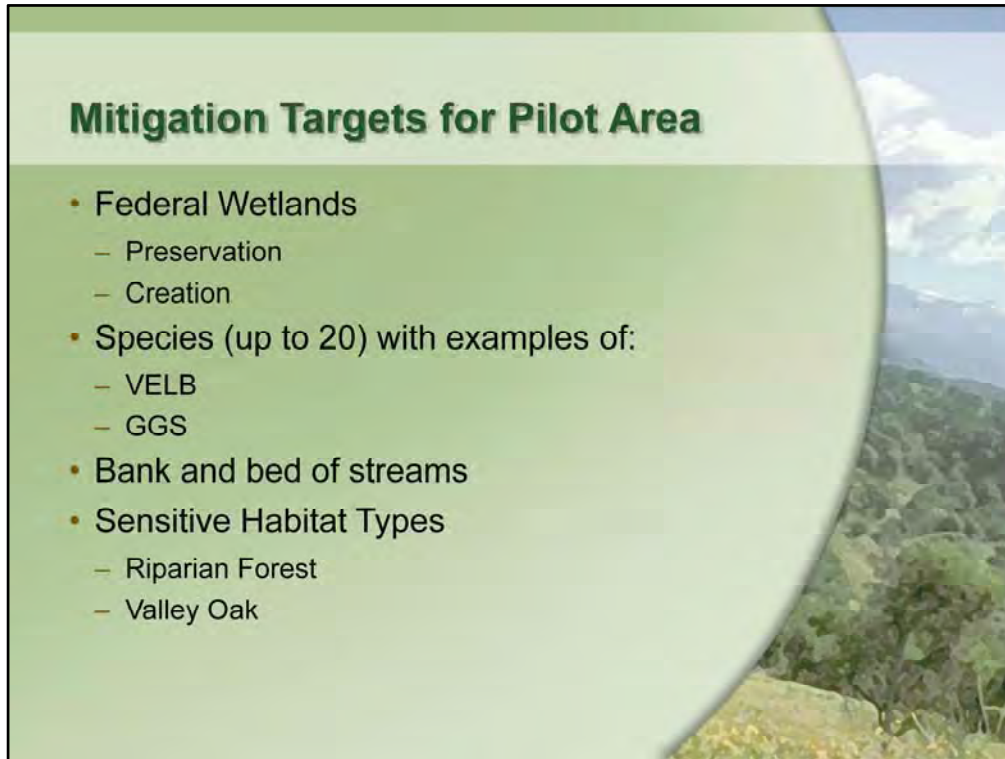


Supply

In a second Landscape analysis, we took data from 8 various planning agencies and scientists who were planning for conservation of species or habitat in the pilot area to create a “greenprint”. If there is a very dark green spot, then all 8 agreed that this is a high value location for species and habitat. The areas that are gray, no planning for species or habitat is proposed. There is also a preliminary map of conservation lands (fee title and conservation easement) on this map. The synergy is to find areas that have high value to the 8 groups and are also next to conservation lands so there can be large contiguous blocks of lands protecting state resources.

We are still awaiting the conservation priorities for the Butte County HCP/NCCP and others. The mapped values overall must go higher as we would want to incorporate all conservation priorities as data layers in the greenprint.

This is similar to the OWOW plan (Nov. 2007) which stated the methods of “consolidate the various vision plans” by various agencies regarding habitat conservation.



Mitigation Targets for Pilot Area

- Federal Wetlands
 - Preservation
 - Creation
- Species (up to 20) with examples of:
 - VELB
 - GGS
- Bank and bed of streams
- Sensitive Habitat Types
 - Riparian Forest
 - Valley Oak

We estimated the impacts using the “large” footprint of a project, (aka, a project that had no avoidance or minimization of impacts.) Some targets like wetlands and vernal pools will need to have preservation credits created. For others, restoration credits, and there is an element of chance as to which DWR and Caltrans will need in the future.

Like OWOW, we are looking for “economically effective” solutions, ones that minimize capital, O&M, and life-cycle costs, with high conservation values. We have explored using Marxan to provide this evaluation. It is a software application that can help your agency “fill gaps in riparian corridors” while also seeking solutions that were the most cost effective. I have other handouts on this item to share.

RAMP Progress to Date

- Two MOUs signed (Statewide RAMP and SAMI)
- Draft Statewide Framework ready for input
- Central Sacramento Valley pilot underway
- Strategic Growth Council identifies RAMP as a priority, with a focus on the high speed rail project
- Implementation opportunities

Just an overview of where we are with RAMP. As I said we are working still at the landscape level for the most part. The items in the top 3 bullets set up the RAMP program at the 3 agencies, DWR, DFG and Caltrans.

Right now we are working with SGC to see how HSRA could forward RAMP and do more strategic mitigation planning along their routes

Through a competitive bid process, FESSRO has received several proposals for the pilot area. We will evaluate these in light of both DWR and Caltrans needs for mitigation over the next 5 – 10 years. Similar to OWOW Projects, we will use characteristics such as multiple benefits, ready to implement, and multi-jurisdictional to evaluate the proposals.

Contacts and Information

- <https://rampcalifornia.water.ca.gov>
- DWR Magazine Spring/Summer 2012
(www.water.ca.gov/publications/dwrNewsMag.cfm)
- UC Davis paper in *Ecology and Society*
www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss1/art47/

Natasha Nelson, FESSRO, (916) 653-6353
[nelsonN@water.ca.gov]

Monique Wilber, FESSRO, (916) 651-0183
[mwilber@water.ca.gov]



The public does have access to the official RAMP site. You can find articles about RAMP under the “Library.” tab at the top. Address for that site is provided, note the lack of www and the use of httpS.

There is a nice summary of RAMP in the latest DWR Magazine which is on-line or in hard copy.

An example of Marxan can be found in Ecology and Society which is on the RAMP website along with other advance-planning documents.

I am happy to answer any questions you have for me today, but feel free to follow up with either me or Monique at any time. Feel free to contact me about doing webinars during “brown bags” or when other groups you are associated with are meeting.