

## CONSERVATION AND PARK PLANNING



We have been involved with conservation and park planning since our first project in 1970, involving a five-year study for The Sierra Club of tourist impacts in the Sierra Nevada. Since that time, our company has continued to maintain strong interest and expertise in conservation planning. We prepared one of the first natural resource inventories for the California State Parks Department (Castle Rock State Park) in the early 1980's. We have contributed to numerous conservation plans and park planning efforts for clients ranging from public agencies and conservation groups to private conservation banks.

We have used our ecological expertise as a basis for sound conservation planning. Many of our ecologists gained experience within state (CDFG), Federal (USFS, BLM, Peace Corps), and international (CARE) agencies specializing in conservation planning and natural lands management and restoration prior to joining our firm.

Our recent conservation planning efforts have included assisting the State of California with developing a comprehensive conservation strategy, helping Ducks Unlimited with conservation banking issues, processing and permitting a vernal pool mitigation bank, and working with Defenders of Wildlife to help institute biodiversity conservation planning programs in other states. We developed natural resource inventories, wildlife management plans and monitoring programs for the State of California Off Highway Vehicle Parks, and helped dozens of county parks with natural resource inventories and management plans.

The combination of our ecological expertise and in-house landscape architecture provides for the development of park plans that seamlessly address the protection of sensitive resources and accommodation of public uses. We also prepare landscape plans and specifications for park, conservation area, and open space lands.

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## TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR CONSERVATION PLANNING – PORTLAND, OREGON

The Defenders of Wildlife, a major national conservation organization, was interested in defining their continuing role in landscape based conservation planning. Based on experiences with the Oregon Biodiversity Project, Natural Communities Conservation Planning (NCCP) Program in southern California and others, we developed an educational training approach for the Defenders of Wildlife. That program is aimed at encouraging and helping other state and local agencies to more actively engage in landscape-based conservation planning in the U.S. We identified specific areas of the country where there was significant interest in establishing landscape-level conservation initiatives, and developed training workshops to help facilitate their efforts. Recently (2001), we helped the Defenders implement this training program at the Department of Natural Resources, State of Tennessee.

*Client: Defenders of Wildlife*

## AGUA FRIA MULTI-SPECIES CONSERVATION BANK, HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN - Merced County.



The proposed Agua Fria Multi-Species Conservation Bank is located on 3,139 acres of rangeland in western Merced County. The landowner is developing the conservation bank on land that is known to provide habitat for the threatened San Joaquin kit fox, the Burrowing Owl, and within the designated Critical Habitat for the California red-legged frog. Other special status species could occur, with proper management of the site. We conducted extensive surveys of the property, and developed the management plan for the site. That management plan included cost analyses, and the use of the Center for Natural Lands Management's PAR program. We are also assisting with the conservation banking agreement, and processing the agreements through the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The submittal packages are in review at this time (2001), with approvals expected in late 2001. Once approved, the bank will be one of the largest in the state of California.

*Client: The Agua Fria Conservation Bank*

## CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE PARKS WILDLIFE SURVEYS AND MANAGEMENT PLANS - *Statewide*

We conducted detailed wildlife and vegetation surveys at two State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRA): Ocotillo Wells SVRA in San Diego County and Hungry Valley SVRA in Los Angeles County. This work was part of a larger study being conducted in 5 SVRA's by San Jose State University. Quarterly wildlife surveys were conducted

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in major habitats of the sites, comparing wildlife use of areas used by off-highway vehicles (OHV) and those beyond the range of potential OHV impact. A census, which included birds, mammals, reptiles and vegetation, was then conducted. We established baseline conditions, compared used with unused areas, and assisted with the development of wildlife management plans.

*Client: San Jose State University Foundation for California State Parks*

### MERCED MITIGATION BANK – Merced County, California

Working with a private family landowner, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game, we are establishing one of the first vernal pool wetland mitigation banks in Merced County, the Vierira-Sandy Mush Road Wetland Mitigation Bank. This mitigation bank consists of 330 acres of land containing approximately 26 acres of vernal pool wetlands that serve as home to numerous special status species including tadpole shrimp, fairy shrimp, and California tiger salamander. Upland habitat supports Burrowing Owls and may support additional San Joaquin Valley endangered mammal species. The bank will be available to developers in need of mitigation credits for special-status species throughout much of Merced County.

*Client: Manual Vierira*

### SANTA CLARA COUNTY TRAILS MASTER PLAN EIR - Santa Clara County

We prepared all of the biological materials in support of the Master Plan for a countywide trails system in Santa Clara County. The proposed project covered 535-miles of off-road trail, of which 105-miles exist today. An additional 100 miles of on-street bicycle trails were also included. As a member of a multi-disciplinary team headed by 2M Associates, our firm was responsible for the following: 1) Providing criteria by which to measure the biological values and impacts of selected trail alignments and staging areas; 2) Assessing and recording biological impacts for all 535 miles of trail alignments proposed for study within the county; 3) Ranking selected trail alignments according to biological criteria; 4) Proposing mitigation measures for significant impacts; and, 5) Preparing the biological sections of the Initial Study and EIR. The resulting reports were provided to the Trails Advisory Committee to assist them in selecting the most appropriate trails for future detailed study and design.

*Clients: 2M Associates and the Santa Clara County Department of Parks and Recreation*

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### SAN FRANCISCO BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE MASTER PLAN - *Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties*

We assisted with the master planning for the newly created 23,000-acre National Wildlife Refuge in the San Francisco Bay, south of the San Mateo Bridge. We described habitats in the south bay area, including marshes, mudflats, open water and salt ponds. We compiled background information on the refuge's flora and fauna, and provided habitat requirements for fishes, birds and mammals. We evaluated their tolerance to human activity within sites considered for interpretive activities. One report made particular reference to the recreational fishery and evaluated present and potential opportunities for sport fishing by boat. We then proposed guidelines to develop an interpretive plan for the wildlife refuge.

*Client: EDAW, Inc. for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

### OTHER REPRESENTATIVE CONSERVATION AND PARK PLANNING PROJECTS:

- WILDERNESS IMPACT STUDY – *Santa Clara County*  
*Client: Sierra Club National Outing Committee*
  
- PINTO LAKE COUNTY PARK MASTER PLAN  
– *Santa Cruz County*  
*Client: Santa Cruz County Parks Recreation and Open Space*