Caltrans’ Advance Mitigation

Implementing Ecological Peer Exchange
March 11 – 12, 2015
Advance mitigation conceptualized to address mitigation needs:

- Demand for mitigation is rarely met with available supply
- Timelines to develop permittee responsible mitigation conflict with project delivery timelines
- Mitigation small, piecemeal, and hurried

Advance Mitigation developed in order to:

- Improve project delivery outcomes: to have the right type of mitigation available when needed
- Improve environmental outcomes: invest mitigation funds to strategically invest in achieving state conservation priorities
- Greater efficiency with state funds
Assess mitigation need at the landscape scale by looking at long range transportation plans:
- What types of projects
- Where located
- What footprint

Assess the conservation priorities
- Existing protected areas
- Scope out the existing natural resources, per the laws and regulations
- Identify areas in need of protection

Determine impacts by overlaying footprints with resources

Develop a mitigation strategy
- Avoidance and minimization
- Compensation: method, mode of delivery, means of tracking

Implement strategy

Transportation projects become programmed, go through environmental and permitting, and utilize the available mitigation
- Note that the advance mitigation process occurs prior to commencement of NEPA for the transportation projects
Advance Mitigation Initiatives

- **RAMP**
  - Regional Advance Mitigation Planning
  - Collaborative effort between Caltrans, DWR, CDFW and other state and federal resource agencies
  - Tries to consolidate all infrastructure impacts in a given region into large-scale mitigation projects
  - RAMP MOU

- **SAMI**
  - Statewide Advance Mitigation Initiative
  - Caltrans as sole infrastructure agency, with all resource agencies as signatories
  - SAMI MOU
**Advance Mitigation and Eco-Logical**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eco-Logical/IEF</th>
<th>Caltrans’ Advance Mitigation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Build and strengthen collaborative partnerships and visions</td>
<td>RAMP and SAMI are collaborative efforts with resource agencies</td>
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<td>2. Create a regional ecosystem framework</td>
<td>Regional assessment includes an assessment of regional conservation priorities</td>
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<td>3. Define transportation and infrastructure scenarios for assessment</td>
<td>Looks at projects on long range transportation plans &amp; estimates footprints</td>
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<td>4. Create an ecosystem and infrastructure development framework</td>
<td>Overlays footprints and conservation priorities to estimate impacts</td>
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<td>5. Establish and prioritize ecological actions</td>
<td>Develop action plan</td>
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<td>6. Develop crediting strategy</td>
<td>Part of action plan</td>
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<td>7. Develop programmatic consultation, biological opinion or permits</td>
<td>Implement action plan</td>
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<td>8. Deliver conservation and transportation projects</td>
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<td>9. Update regional ecosystem framework, scenarios, and regional assessment</td>
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Successes and Lessons

- $5 million annually in SHOPP for advance mitigation, beginning in 2016
- Pilot projects in Central Valley, and with High Speed Rail
- Potential pilot moving forward in the Bay Area
- Examining stand-alone fish passage barrier remediation and wildlife crossings as advance mitigation
- Internal engagement as important as external engagement
  - Much of the knowledge of programs and programming are at the district level
- Better to start small, while building a broader program at the same time
Challenges and Questions

- Funding
  - Caltrans not in control of all funds – SHOPP only
  - Where funds are available, there are competing interests for those funds
- Wildlife crossings are difficult to program as stand alone projects – authority for funding, crediting
- Missing information on conservation priorities
- Difficulties estimating project impacts early in the process, especially wetlands
What I hope to get out of the Peer Exchange

- I hope to get a sense of how other state’s processes differ from California’s
- I hope to get some ideas on how other states estimate wetland impacts
- I would like to learn how other states fund and implement their wildlife crossing projects
- FHWA can assist:
  - Establish/modify programs that establish funds for advance mitigation programs – so that the funds do not compete with other priorities
  - Establish grants that can be used as seed money for advance mitigation programs
  - Guidance on wildlife crossings as stand alone mitigation projects
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