

Caltrans' Advance Mitigation

Implementing Ecological Peer Exchange

March 11 – 12, 2015

Advance Mitigation: Need and Goals

- 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

Advance Mitigation

- 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

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

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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