



# Monterey County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy

*Transportation Agency for Monterey County*

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) is developing a Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS). A stakeholder meeting was held on May 7, 2019 to introduce the project to interested organizations and agencies and begin developing a list of priority goals and focal species to include in the plan. Additional meetings will be held at key points of the RCIS development, along with additional ways for local organizations, agencies, and residents to be involved.

## What is the RCIS?

The Monterey County RCIS is a voluntary, non-regulatory conservation strategy to achieve regional conservation of focal species and their associated habitats through strategic, scientifically grounded actions and investments. Enabled by California Assembly Bill 287, and approved by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), RCISs establish goals, objectives, priorities and actions that will contribute to species and habitat conservation.

Please visit the Monterey County RCIS website to stay up-to-date with meetings and information:

<https://www.tamcmonterey.org/programs/regional-conservation-investment-strategy/>.

For information on the RCIS purpose, process, FAQs, and the official RCIS guidelines please visit

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/planning/regional-conservation>

## May 7, 2019 Meeting Highlights and Themes

The May 7, 2019 stakeholder meeting was attended by representatives from Federal, State, and local agencies and organizations. Highlights and themes from the meeting are below.

- The RCIS team is actively reaching out to the cities within Monterey County and surrounding counties for involvement. Caltrans and CDFW are working closely with the team throughout the process as well.
- There will be opportunities for stakeholder involvement at key points of the RCIS development, and interested community members are also encouraged to connect with the project team.
- The participants worked in groups to develop overarching conservation goals for Monterey County:
  - + Locate/improve infrastructure in a way to minimize impacts and maximize function.
  - + Sustain resilient, connected landscapes for the full range of native species, native habitats, and ecological functions.
  - + Regional, connected, and well-coordinated conservation strategy to streamline project delivery and develop meaningful mitigation. Facilitate the integration of advanced mitigation such as wildlife crossings into transportation projects.
  - + Sustain and enhance the biodiversity and ecological function of habitat for the benefit of biological communities and focal species.
  - + Facilitate the integration of advanced mitigation such as wildlife crossings into transportation projects.

- Participants were asked to evaluate a list of suggested focal species to include in the RCIS and add any species that should be considered for inclusion. Focal species are “Sensitive species that are identified and analyzed in an RCIS and will benefit from conservation actions and habitat enhancement actions set forth in the RCIS...” The draft final list of focal species will be shared once updated by the project team.
- Participants also worked in groups to show the general areas a focal species will occupy to help the project team know where to focus conservation efforts, while it was acknowledged that the activity is not an official data gathering method and this information will require greater research and aid from local biologists.

## **We Need Your Help**

Input and information from knowledgeable residents and organizations of Monterey County are essential to creating a plan that is effective and comprehensive. We’re asking for your help to make sure we have the best data and the most effective strategies for protecting natural resources.

### **Join our Team**

Our next stakeholder meeting will be held this summer. Be on the lookout for the invitation and other requests for feedback and data. Please connect with the project team in the meantime if you have questions, information, or suggestions for the RCIS – we’d love to hear from you!

### **Recruit your Colleagues**

Attached to this email is the list of stakeholders we have invited to be part of the RCIS development. If you know someone who should be included, please let us know and invite them to participate!

***Thank you for creating a more resilient Monterey County!***

