



### **What are HCPs and ITPs?**



The Cache Slough Complex Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is a planning document, which is part of an application for a federal Incidental Take Permit (ITP). To comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), an ITP including terms and conditions of the HCP is required to authorize the lawful “taking” of a threatened or endangered species from implementation of covered activities. A map showing the HCP plan area and points of diversion may be found on the County HCP webpage. The County webpage link is listed at the end of this FAQ.

### **What are the Goals of the HCP?**

The primary goal of the HCP is to provide regulatory compliance for continued water supply operations and in-water maintenance while addressing the potential impacts on listed fish species.

### **Which intakes are proposed to be covered under the HCP?**

Existing intake facilities with permitted and licensed water rights located in the Lower Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Complex region that are owned or operated by landowners or local governments for existing agricultural or municipal water supply uses are proposed to be covered under the HCP. Municipal water intakes covered under existing permits or State or Federal water intake facilities will not be covered under the HCP.

### **What key benefits do HCPs offer?**

The HCP program establishes a consistent approach to regulatory compliance and assurances through a coordinated take permit and mitigation program with the following benefits:

- Allows an ITP holder and its enrolled participants to legally proceed with water intake operations and limited in-water maintenance activities that would otherwise result in the unlawful “taking” of a listed species and potential penalties.
- Streamlines intake permitting requirements. Enrolled intake owners are collectively covered under the HCP without acquiring individual ITPs.
- Provides long-term regulatory assurances for ESA compliance.
- Benefits the environment by establishing an efficient, effective program to conserve listed and at-risk species and their habitats.

### **How long is the Permit Take Coverage?**

The County is coordinating with the regulatory agencies to establish a 35-year permit term. The final permit term will be determined once the HCP is accepted when the regulatory agencies issue their respective ITPs.

### **Who is responsible for developing the HCP?**

Development of the HCP is guided by the HCP Steering Committee consisting of local and state agencies including City of Vallejo, Solano County (County), California Department of Water Resources (DWR), Reclamation District (RD) 2068, Yolo County, Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, and Solano County Water Agency. County in partnership with the DWR is overseeing the HCP development efforts with assistance from ICF (consultant).

### **Who is the permit holder and who is covered under the ITPs?**

Solano County will be the permit holder under the ITP but will extend take coverage to qualified intake owners/operators, who are willing to participate and enroll through the HCP process. Three ITPs are required to satisfy federal and state ESAs: one each from the federal agencies National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (federal), and one from California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**What are the conservation strategies proposed in the HCP?**

*Conservation Measure 1* – Construct a minimum of 150 acres of tidal habitat restoration (i.e., Little Egbert Multi-Benefit Project) located in the HCP plan area (responsible parties – County, DWR, NMFS, and USFWS).

*Conservation Measure 2* – Establish an outreach program to educate and support enrolled intake owners/operators on intake screening (responsible parties – County and DWR).

*Conservation Measure 3* – Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) during intake maintenance (responsible parties – intake owners).

**If I sign up for the HCP, am I required to screen my intake?**

No. Screening intakes is voluntary. However, if you decide to consider screening your intake, entrainment studies would need to be performed in the region to determine whether screening is beneficial for fish species. Additional feasibility evaluations would also be conducted based on physical limitations and other localized constraints.

**What is the benefit of screening my intake?**

The purpose of intake screening is to minimize the loss through entrainment of covered fish species during intake operations.

**Do I have to pay for installing and maintaining a screen on my intake if I decide to have one installed?**

No, DWR is committed to financing up to two intake screens including construction and the associated annual operation and maintenance costs.

**What are entrainment and green sturgeon telemetry studies?**

The entrainment study is conducted to monitor and evaluate the extent of loss of covered fish species through the operation of an intake. The result of the entrainment study analysis will inform whether an intake screen can reduce loss of listed and threatened species. Similarly, the green sturgeon telemetry study evaluates the distribution and movement of tagged green sturgeon in the HCP area and its associated risks to entrainment.

**Who will pay for entrainment studies and screen installation and maintenance?**

DWR will fund green sturgeon telemetry and entrainment studies, and the installation and maintenance of up to two screened intakes.

**If the entrainment or green sturgeon studies show that fish are entrained in my intake, would I be required to screen my intake?**

No. Enrollees are not required to install intake screens. Enrolled intake operators are encouraged to consider screening their intakes if the results of the entrainment studies show that screens can help to minimize fish loss.

**What mandatory requirements are to be implemented by the HCP enrollees?**

As part of conservation measure 3, all enrollees shall participate in an environmental training program to review best management practices (BMPs) for maintenance activities that minimize the take of covered species. The enrollees will also have to comply with reporting requirements on an annual basis.

For more information:

[www.solanocounty.com/depts/rm/delta\\_and\\_water\\_programs/cache\\_slough\\_habitat\\_conservation\\_plan.asp](http://www.solanocounty.com/depts/rm/delta_and_water_programs/cache_slough_habitat_conservation_plan.asp)

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