



Questions and Answers

Wildlife Conservation Board; Inner Coast Range Program (ICRP) May 19, 2016

The Inner Coast Range

The Northern Inner Coast Range is a globally significant region, including world renowned geological, biological, and cultural resources, a national monument, many large public land areas that are open for public use, resourceful people, and resilient rural communities. The region is an important part of the State's economy, providing substantial agricultural products, timber, water, fishery, and other biological resources, ranching, tourism, and recreation.

Q. What are examples of similar programs?

A. The concept for the Inner Coast Range Program was originally based on California's Conservancies, which were established by legislation to supplement its traditional state natural resource and public recreation agencies and help to protect regional resources of statewide significance. California's ten existing conservancies are intended to act as creative problem-solving, cross-agency, collaborative, and environmentally integrative agencies to both facilitate the implementation of and increase the extent of natural resource protection, restoration, or enhancement programs in the conservancy region. The conservancies balance and integrate the often-conflicting goals of resource protection and public use. All are independent agencies within the California Natural Resources Agency, and are governed separately by independent bodies. Conservancies may work with local governments, nonprofit organizations, private businesses, academic institutions, and other organizations to carry out the conservancies' identified missions. All of the conservancies are non-regulatory, collaborative, state-local partnerships. (See Fact Sheet for more information on State Conservancies.)

The proposed Inner Coast Range Program would serve in a similar capacity for our region. While the establishment of the Inner Coast Range Program is not structurally the same as a Conservancy, if established, there is an opportunity to review the program for a transition into a stand-alone Conservancy within 10 years.

Q. What will the Inner Coast Range Program do?

A. In cooperation with local governments, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the public, the Inner Coast Range Program can help do all of the following:

1. Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation.
2. Protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, cultural, archeological, historical, and living resources.

3. Aid in the preservation of working landscapes.
4. Reduce the risk and severity of natural disturbances, such as wildfires, and restore resiliency to natural landscapes.
5. Protect and improve water supply and water and air quality, and improve water use efficiency.
6. Assist the regional economy through the operation of the conservancy's program.
7. Identify the highest priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed.
8. Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.
9. Support efforts that advance, in a complementary manner, environmental preservation and restoration as well as the economic well-being of the region's residents.

Q. Why do we need the Inner Coast Range Program?

A. Public programs and entities, such as the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, State Coastal Conservancy and the proposed Inner Coast Range Program, are known to get critical, important, and effective projects "On-the-Ground". These entities can receive State allocations, bond funds, and grants for on-the-ground projects. They can provide funding through contracts with and grants to local entities to carry out conservancy goals. They provide a coordinated, collaborative, regional approach to address issues such as forest resiliency and fuel reduction, water quality and aquatic habitat improvement, and abandoned mine cleanup. Much of the Inner Coast Range region is underrepresented in regional stewardship programs such as the California Headwaters Partnership although the FireScape Mendocino collaborative stakeholder group is a step in the right direction. The Northern Inner Coast Range region is largely underserved and merits an agency Program (and possible future Conservancy) as a matter of fairness and equity.

Q. What issues might be addressed?

A. The Inner Coast Range shares many issues with lands in the Sierra Nevada, including forest resilience and fuels management; water quality and water supply protection and enhancement; recreation; abandoned mine remediation; unregulated marijuana cultivation that is destructive to the environment; and climate change impacts to the landscape. In addition the Inner Coast Range has enhanced regional concerns for aquatic habitat and salmonid population sustenance, and a substantial presence of Native American communities which depend on continued ties to the land.

Q. How are the boundaries determined?

A. The boundaries will be determined by local counties choosing whether to participate or not. The Inner Coast Range Program can include all or parts of Solano, Yolo, Napa, Lake, Trinity, Colusa, Glenn, Tehama, Shasta, Siskiyou, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties.

Q. What is the governance structure?

A. The Inner Coast Range Program will be run and administered by the Wildlife Conservation Board in consultation and cooperation with a 13 member Advisory board comprised of 1 representative from each participating county.

Q. Isn't this just another level of regulation?

A. No, the Program is not a regulatory agency. Local cities, counties, and other agencies retain all of their decision-making and regulatory authority. The Program shall not exercise the power of eminent domain. The Program has no regulatory power over water rights held by others.

Q. Isn't this just another way for the government to acquire private land?

A. The State of California may own land when necessary to carry out projects. Normally, title to land or an easement will be purchased or received by a local entity pursuant to a contract or grant, and will remain with the local entity. Acquisitions may only be obtained by mutual agreement of parties. The proposed Inner Coast Range Program **shall not exercise the power of eminent domain** and all land use decisions remain under the **existing authority of cities and counties**.