

MEMO

March 31, 2008

TO: Kara Heckert, Sotoyome Resource Conservation District

FR: Ken Kirkey, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Planning Director

RE: FOCUS Priority Conservation Area Nominations Received – Status Update

Thank you again for submitting a nomination for consideration as a Priority Conservation Area (PCA) through the FOCUS Program. Since your submission, FOCUS staff has communicated with applicants, local governments, regional policy bodies, attendees of county-wide workshops, and review panelists to learn more about each of the nominations and to help us refine our recommendations. The large number of nominations received demonstrates the need for continued and expanded support for land conservation in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

The nominations received were reviewed against the nomination criteria: regional significance, level of consensus, and urgency for protection. The initial staff recommendation for your nomination is as follows:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Initial Staff Recommendation</u>
<i>Upper Mark West Watershed</i>	<i>Designate</i>

As a regional council of governments, ABAG's mission is to strengthen cooperation and coordination among local governments. In doing so, ABAG addresses social, environmental, and economic issues that transcend local borders. Given how central local governments are to our charge, ensuring local government support was a key factor in determining the level of consensus for protection of a nominated area. Local jurisdictions were contacted to ensure that they did not oppose the nominations made within their boundaries. If a nomination was not supported by a local government or did not meet the other nomination criteria, staff is recommending that the nomination not move forward this year. Future nomination opportunities are expected annually, and applicants will be encouraged to coordinate with local governments in future nomination cycles.

As a next step, a letter will be sent out to local jurisdictions with this recommendation to notify them of the status of a nomination made within their boundaries. This initial staff recommendation will be forwarded on to our regional committees and eventually ABAG's Executive Board for adoption unless we receive information that would substantially change our evaluation of this area against the nomination criteria. Final staff recommendations for PCA adoption will be presented to ABAG's Executive Board at its meeting in July, 2008. After adoption, staff will work with PCA contacts on a report and workshop that highlight these conservation opportunities for funding entities and land conservationists to leverage conservation dollars and forge new partnerships.

Please do not hesitate to contact *Jackie Guzman, Regional Planner* at *JackieG@abag.ca.gov* or *510.464.7994* with questions or for more information about the PCA process. We look forward to continuing a dialogue with nominating entities around a regional strategy for development and conservation through the FOCUS Program.