



Connections

April 2010

Wildlife Crossings

Ecosystems, native plants, and wildlife populations depend on habitat connectivity to survive. *Habitat connectivity* is necessary for natural movement, including foraging, reproduction, and migration.

Roads and highways create a barrier effect for wildlife movement, resulting in habitat fragmentation and habitat loss, the two leading causes of species decline. *Habitat fragmentation* occurs when development bars natural ecological processes and movement. Urban areas are far more likely than rural areas to suffer from habitat fragmentation, but continued growth pressures in rural areas threaten habitat connectivity.

Habitat loss occurs when people build infrastructure on land previously used by wildlife. As roads and highways are built, land development around the transportation corridors diminish natural resources and ecosystems. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) estimates 40 percent of the world's mammals are affected by habitat loss.

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AB 32 Implementation Needs Williamson Act

In the last several years, Governor Schwarzenegger signed two landmark bills, AB 32 and SB 375, which mandate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and congestion related to urban sprawl. But a previously enacted piece of legislation, proven crucial to these goals, languishes waiting for funding to be restored: The California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act.

SACOG recently asked the Governor and the Legislature to restore Williamson Act support to rural counties which suffer from a disproportionate loss of property tax revenue when agricultural lands are preserved for farming rather than development.

Farmers use the tax relief offered in exchange for land preservation and agricultural production simply to stay in business. The California Farm Bureau Federation recently polled Williamson Act participants and found that one in three could not continue farming or ranching without the program, putting their land at risk for development. Such land conversion would have

serious impacts to congestion and air quality, making AB 32 and SB 375 difficult to implement.

So how would carbon emissions change if these lands lost Williamson Act protections? SACOG projected urban growth trends for 2035 and various levels and amounts of development on these parcels. The scenarios were compared to a

baseline condition where the same construction happened in designated urban growth areas.

The results show a significant effect on Blueprint implementation and carbon emissions. As much as 22 percent of the

population that would have otherwise located in Blueprint growth areas could end up in low density rural development. This is for the six-county region alone; the statewide impacts would be many times greater. In *one day*, these households would produce carbon emissions that are roughly equal to one year's worth of carbon emissions from agriculture.

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GRAS : Green Restaurant Alliance Sacramento

Chefs from Winters to Elk Grove tout local and organic produce on their menus, but an industry group is helping them do much, much more. The Green Restaurant Alliance is a coalition of chefs, staff, diners, local growers, wineries, distributors, vendors, and municipalities "dedicated to making Sacramento a leading sustainable food community and a leader in the green restaurant industry." Program areas include Composting, Cork Recycling, Water Conservation, Recycling, Local Farms/Produce, Beverage containers, to-go containers and a Legislative watch on related issues.



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Sacramento Area Council of Governments

Williamson Act (continued)

In our region, the Williamson Act protects an estimated 740,000 acres of farmland, while statewide 16.5 million acres are kept in business. Along with agriculture-related businesses, these lands contribute stable economic growth and jobs in California.

Include the fact that our farmland provides food security for California and the nation, and multiple environmental benefits necessary for AB 32 and SB 375, it is clear that we need Williamson Act subventions back in action.

For more information contact David Shabazian at (916) 340-6231 or dshabazian@sacog.org.



Project Information

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Wildlife Crossings

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Habitat fragmentation affects humans as well as wildlife. Every year up to 1.5 million animal-vehicle collisions are reported in the United States, killing more than 200 people and injuring nearly 30,000. In 2006, there were 104 animal-vehicle collisions in the SACOG region, 65 percent of which occurred in rural areas.

Wildlife crossings are counter-measures that can link natural habitats and prevent animal-vehicle collisions. According to Dr. Fraser Shilling, Co-Director of the UC Davis Road Ecology Center, roads should be thought of as “continuous obstacles to habitat connectivity,” and need solutions that fit the problem. For example, removing barriers for large mammals may require infrastructure investment, whereas removing obstacles for birds may require something as simple as planting trees along the highway to force birds to fly above vehicles.

For more information contact Christine Scherman at (916) 340-6262 or cscherman@sacog.org.

Book Release Party

April 18, 1-4 p.m.

Price: \$10

The Blue Goose, 3550 Taylor Road, Loomis

PlacerGROWN hosts a book release party for *Placer County Real Food*, by **Joanne Neft** and **Laura Kenny**. Tasting menu of April recipes, PlacerGROWN wines, live music, and book signing.

Authors Neft and Kenny hosted a 52-week long dinner party, shopping weekly at the Auburn Farmers' Market, testing and preparing recipes from locally-produced meat, fruit vegetables and nuts. The book celebrates the bounty of Placer County along with the producers who feed us.

For more information: (530) 889-7398
www.placercountyrealfood.com



Film Series

“RETAKE YOUR PLATE FILM SERIES” - A Benefit for PlacerGROWN sponsored by Whole Foods. April 22-24, 7 PM at Magic Circle Theatre, 241 Vernon Street, Roseville.

Three witty and provocative documentaries will be shown, with local vendor displays, samples and coupons in the theater at each screening. Tickets are \$5 at the Magic Circle Theatre Box Office or at the Whole Foods Roseville store.

Apr. 22 – **Food Inc.** (Green Carpet Event for VIP's)

Apr. 23 – **What's on your Plate?™**

Apr. 24 – **Fast Food Nation**

For more information:

(916) 782-1777

www.placergrown.org

www.letsretakeourplates.com



Conference: Farmers for the 21st Century

April 21, 7:30-9 p.m.

UC Berkeley

Moderator **Lisa M. Hamilton**, author of *Deeply Rooted: Unconventional Farmers in the Age of Agribusiness*, will be joined by three agriculturists who are doing more than growing food: **Carole Morison**, the defiant Maryland poultry farmer featured in “Food Inc.”; third-generation rancher and holistic manager **Tony Malmberg**; and farmer **Jered Lawson**, founder of Pie Ranch in Pescadero.

Presented by SAFE/Agrariana, in cooperation with Community Alliance for Family Farmers (CAFF) and Analog Books. For more information email: agrofoodecology@gmail.com

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