



# Connections

June 2010

## Land Use Innovations

Through a series of papers and stakeholder workshops over the last 14 months, SACOG staff has worked with farmers and ranchers, local government staff, and other stakeholders to identify land use challenges and opportunities and key innovations that can support the viability of agriculture in the region.

In June, SACOG staff is presenting its findings and a set of innovations to the SACOG Board of Directors (for a list of innovations, see page 2). Staff studied current land uses in rural areas and the effects on agriculture. Staff also reviewed planning and policy innovations—many of which are practiced in the region—that further support agricultural viability.

Innovations were compiled into two categories: innovations at the rural-urban edge, and innovations for agricultural viability and environmental sustainability. The first category includes innovations that address the conflicts that occur between rural and urban land uses. From development encroachment to complaints about farm operations to traffic impacts, managing the rural-urban edge was identified as critical to supporting agricultural viability.

The second category of innovations includes innovations ranging from land conservation and stewardship efforts to supporting agriculture-related industries, such as processing or

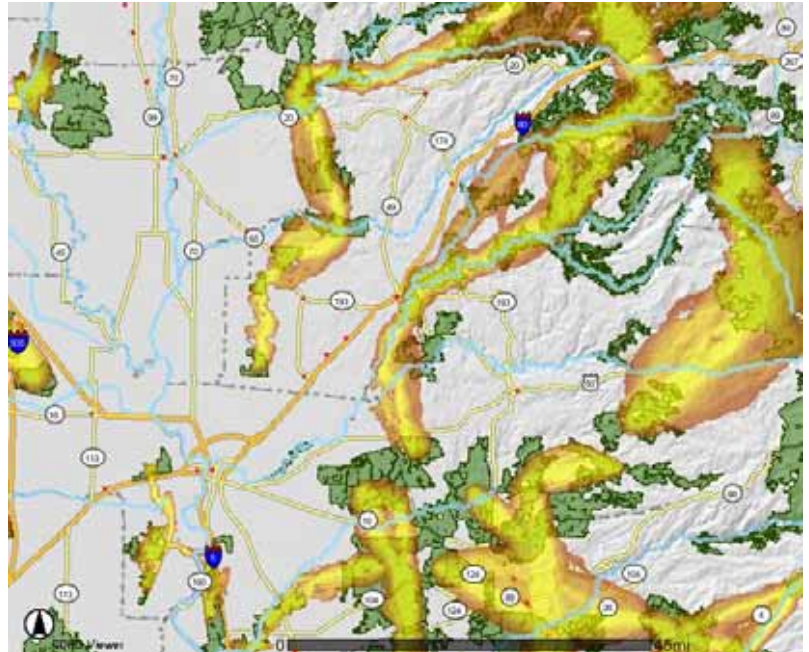
continued on page 2

## Mapping Habitat Linkages to Protect Wildlife

A statewide analysis of habitat connectivity commissioned by the California Department of Fish and Game and Caltrans is now available. “The California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project: A Strategy for Conserving a Connected California” identifies large remaining blocks of intact habitat or natural landscape and models linkages between them that need to be maintained, particularly as corridors for wildlife.

“Landscape level connectivity is critically important to enhancing the value of lands currently designated for conservation and, more importantly, for providing the bridge for wildlife adapting to California’s changing climate,” said Department of Fish and Game Chief Deputy Director Kevin Hunting.

Direction for Department of Fish and Game to identify essential habitat connectivity was provided by Assembly Bill 2785. One goal of the effort is to integrate natural



*Habitat linkages in the Sacramento region*

resources considerations into transportation and land use planning. Caltrans will use the products to comply with Section 6001 of the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005, which requires that impacts to environmental resources such as habitat connectivity are evaluated during the transportation planning process.

The state involved a multidisciplinary team of 200 people representing more than 60 agencies provided input during the process of creating these products. Represented were federal, state, tribal, regional and local agencies involved in biodiversity conservation, land use planning and land management. Funding was provided by the Federal Highways Administration.

Links to view the maps and download the geographic information system (GIS) data and report may be found at: [www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon).

Essential  
Connectivity  
Areas

More Permeable

Less Permeable

Potential Riparian  
Connections

Natural Landscape  
Blocks

Interstate  
Connections

## What's Grown Locally in June?

### Crops

Green Beans  
Broccoli  
Cabbage  
Carrots  
Chard  
Mustard Greens  
Leeks  
Red & Yellow Stockton  
Onions  
Torpedo Onions  
Potatoes  
Spinach  
Summer Squash  
Cherry & Early Girl  
Tomatoes

### Herbs

Lemon Verbena  
Rosemary  
Spearmint

### Fruits

Apricots  
Figs  
Navel & Valencia  
Oranges  
Plums

### Nuts

Almonds  
Walnuts

Find a farmers' market, CSA, farm, or other outlet for these great local products at:

[www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org).

## Project Information

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Stay current on rural-urban issues  
at [www.sacog.org/rucs](http://www.sacog.org/rucs)

## Land Use Innovations (continued)

agritourism. A number of examples are offered throughout the summary

to illustrate successful efforts in this region to support agriculture and environmental services.

In May, SACOG staff presented local markets innovations to the board. In August, staff will talk about rural transportation innovations. Following that, staff will be seeking guidance from the board on areas to focus initial implementation efforts and develop strategies and tools to help stakeholders implement innovations from the RUCS project.



## Renewable Energy and Efficiency Improvements Grants



*Methane digester at Tollenar Dairy in Sacramento County*

The Rural Energy for America Program will provide funds to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements. The grants are awarded on a competitive basis and can be up to 25 percent of total eligible project costs. Grants are limited to \$500,000 for renewable energy systems and \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements. Grant requests as low as \$2,500 for renewable energy systems and \$1,500 for energy efficiency improvements will be considered.

Proposals are due June 30. For more information or to apply, visit:

[www.tinyurl.com/REAP-Grant](http://www.tinyurl.com/REAP-Grant)

## RUCS Land Use Innovations

### Innovations at the Rural-Urban Edge

- Growth Boundaries
- Rural Reserves
- Re-examine Spheres of Influence
- City-County Agreements to "Plan for Agriculture"
- Voter Initiatives on General Plan Amendments of Agricultural Land
- Stricter Policies Regulating Rural Residential Rezoning
- Infill and Revitalization of Existing Communities
- Agricultural Parks
- Agriculture Buffers
- Right-to-Farm Ordinances

### Innovations for Agricultural Viability and Environmental Sustainability

- Agricultural Mitigation
- Transfer of Development Rights
- Williamson Act and Super Williamson Act
- Agricultural Zoning and Farm Home Sites for Owners and Workers
- Less Restrictive Zoning for On-site Processing, Sales, and Agritourism
- Agricultural Districts
- Conservation Easements
- Habitat Conservation Plan and Agriculture-Friendly Easements
- Stewardship Programs
- Regional Open Space Collaborative

To learn more about these innovations, including examples of best practices, visit:

[www.tinyurl.com/RUCS-Land-Use](http://www.tinyurl.com/RUCS-Land-Use) or contact David Shabazian at (916) 340-6231 or [dshabazian@sacog.org](mailto:dshabazian@sacog.org).