

Regional Conservation Authority

**REPORT REGARDING ACTIVITIES OF CONSULTANT
THOMAS B. MULLEN**

Staff Contact:

**Charles Landry
Executive Director
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Background:

As requested by the Board at the May 11, 2009 meeting, attached is a report regarding the activities of consultant Thomas B. Mullen

Staff Recommendation:

That the RCA Board of Directors receive and file the activity report regarding Thomas B. Mullen.

Attachment:

1. Activity Report

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.3

ATTACHMENT 1

**Tom Mullen
Activity Report**

Dates: July 2008 – June 2009

Current Contract Amount: \$190,000.00

Amount Paid: \$136,791.91

Anticipated End of Year: \$136,791.91

RAND Study: Tom Mullen provided input to RAND during their MSHCP study prior to completion of the study. Our MSHCP RAND Study is being analyzed by conservation and environmental groups throughout the U.S. It is the first major objective study showing the benefit of Habitat Conservation Plans. One of the major reasons we engaged RAND was to have an objective third party analyze whether the plan was effective in meeting the goals of protecting the environment while expediting infrastructure development, and to get a better cost estimate of the Plan. It appears that this third party analysis of the MSHCP is a powerful tool for us.

Environmental Funding: RCA has been working to assemble an environmental roundtable on infrastructure, the purpose of which is to secure and increase funding for the MSHCP from federal and other sources. We are having some success. Tom Mullen has been coordinating with various national foundations and national environmental groups. Many of these organizations have been on a parallel course. They share the concern that the extraordinary commitments made in the private and public sectors for billions in new infrastructure for cleaner energy and safer, more efficient transportation could fall short of the goal if projects cannot be delivered on time and on budget. This is even truer today with the billions committed in the stimulus bill. One of the major goals of our own MSHCP is to expedite the needed infrastructure for Western Riverside County. In the past year, Tom Mullen has been working with several organizations and agencies to achieve the RCA goal.

Tom worked to help form the California Habitat Conservation Plan Coalition to increase funding through Section 6. This is a coalition formed with most of the representatives of the HCP plans within California and led by The Nature Conservancy and others.

We have had discussions with the new administration on assistance to HCPs. Tom has met with the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Laura Davis, as well as the Deputy Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

A few years ago, Robin Lowe and John Petty introduced Doug Wheeler (former State Secretary of Resources) to Tom. Doug has been assisting Tom and RCA through this process and has provided a number of contacts to continue our dialogue. Tom has met with the Conservation Fund and a number of other foundations which fund environmental programs. These foundations include the Annenberg Foundation and the Packard Foundation.

With Tom in the lead we have been sharing information with these Foundations and environmental groups. Most of these groups have agreed that HCPs set up for infrastructure development should have increased HCP funding. Many have been on a parallel course with us. One national environmental foundation, The Conservation Fund has taken the lead to host a national conference.

The National Summit on Infrastructure and the Environment: Better Outcomes through Better Process is to be held from September 29 - October 2, 2009 at the National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, WV. The conference is to look at successful models of expedited environmental review processes such as ours. Our MSHCP is one of the three project models which will be discussed:

- Our MSHCP, including the results of the RAND Study
- A HCP established for coverage of an interstate pipeline (5 states)
- A third project

The conference will be chaired by the Governors of two states.

The RAND Study has figured prominently in these discussions since it is one of the first objective studies on the success of these HCPs. Our goal is to make sure that adequate funding is available to our HCP and others.

Meetings: Tom coordinated with Dave Kennett to set up meetings with House and Senate staff and agency administrators. Meetings included trips to Washington, D.C., to meet with staffs from the Senate and the House, as well as representatives from the Department of Interior and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mullen met with the Western Governors Association in Denver along with RCA's Executive Director to build support for RCA's funding goal. Meetings also were held with national foundations, the building industry and environmental groups including: National Association of Homebuilders, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, the California Habitat Planning Coalition, Endangered Habitats League, and others.