

## **Summary Statement on Regional Conservation Funding Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Coalition (WHCC) October 11, 2017**

### **I. Objective**

Our objective is to secure funds to support the San Diego regional habitat conservation program in perpetuity. In 2010, the funding gap was estimated by SANDAG's Environmental Mitigation Program Working Group to be \$2B for 40 years or \$ 3B to fund in perpetuity.

### **II. Long Term Considerations/Actions Needed to Secure Funding**

Six habitat/species conservation plans have been adopted and four more are in the process of development. Implementation of these plans has created and will continue to add to an integrated network of conserved lands across San Diego County. While substantial acreage has been permanently conserved, additional acres must be acquired and the conserved lands must be maintained and monitored to ensure that sensitive local plants and wildlife do not become extinct.

The failure of SANDAG's Measure A in November of 2016 highlighted the disconnect between voters and critical regional issues. The WHCC believes that a county-wide funding source, or a combination of targeted sources, must be created and utilized to make certain the habitat conservation plans' objectives are met. There is a multitude of ways funding could be established, each with advantages and disadvantages. But, key foundational issues must first be addressed. These include the following.

- More **coalition building** is needed to unite the environmental community – the conservation community does not have the capacity to succeed on its own.
- A stable, reliable, and trustworthy **Lead Agency** must be identified and secured.
- The conservation community must develop a **compelling story** for the public and elected officials.

### **III. Short Term Considerations/Actions**

- **Reduce the Regional Funding Gap** The to-be-completed Natural Communities Conservation Plans (NCCPs) must include full funding and not contribute to the gap. Efforts to secure funds in ways that do not require voter approval need to continue such as support for SB 5, the 2018 Statewide Park Bond, and allocation of Cap and Trade funds.
- **Prepare Better Foundational Research** The San Diego Foundation has done research on inequities in access to parks and green space, but no cost estimates. The Trust for Public Land has a comparison scorecard on parks for the 100 largest cities in the U.S. [www.parkscore.tpl.org](http://www.parkscore.tpl.org). More foundational research and polling is needed.
- **Engage Recreationists** The WHCC seeks opportunities to work with active recreationists around our common interests. Together, we could forge a powerful advocacy coalition for funding more land acquisition for conservation while also gaining access to more active recreation areas.
- **Find and Cultivate One or More Local Champions** This was a key to LA's success. We need to find and cultivate those aspiring or existing elected officials who are connected to our issues in a way that will motivate them to become effective political champions – for our issues and for those of a broader coalition.