

Draft Statewide Framework for Regional Advance Mitigation Planning in California

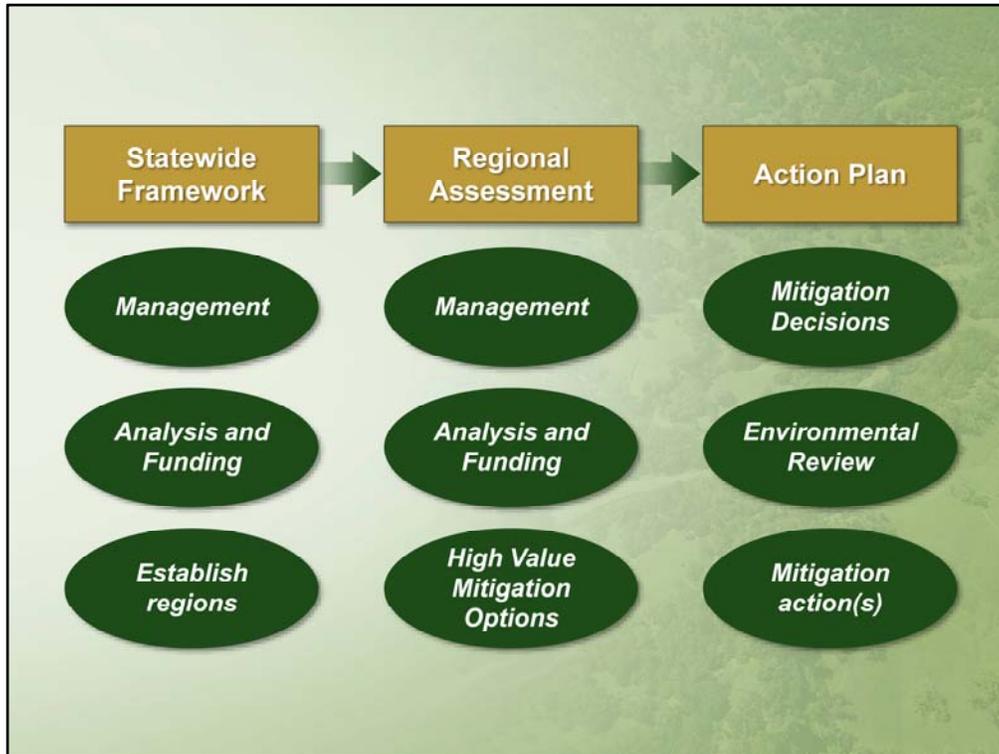


December 2012

{My name is _____} and I am here to talk to you about a multi-agency approach to integrated planning that is taking place in California. Two of the state's largest infrastructure agencies have joined together to do advance mitigation planning with new methods and tools. These methods and tools have recently been published in the Draft Statewide Framework for Regional Advance Mitigation Planning (typically known as RAMP).



In 2008, the agencies and stakeholders you see on the screen came together to explore faster and more effective ways to mitigate for infrastructure projects, rather than the current project-by-project mitigation process. This RAMP Work Group felt that we need to do planning in an innovative manner. We must think beyond project-by-project mitigation. We must begin to create tools that will bring us better, faster, and smarter approaches to mitigation. The Work Group believed that mitigation spending could be coordinated and lands could be targeted to create conservation outcomes. In 2009, leadership of the agencies signed or supported a Memorandum of Understanding that committed the agencies to do two things: 1) to develop an innovative regional or statewide RAMP initiative that achieves certain mitigation and conservation goals, and 2) to initiate a pilot project. This Draft RAMP Statewide Framework satisfies the first commitment, and the pilot project is under development in the Central Sacramento Valley.



The RAMP process is threefold. This graphic provides a high-level overview of the steps involved in RAMP planning: first, the broad vision document of the Statewide Framework, which describes the overall statewide initiative; secondly, a Regional Assessment that looks at project demand and high-value mitigation options in a specific area; and thirdly, the Action Plan, which includes a formal agreement that defines the implementation steps for mitigation actions in the region, and the accompanying financial plan describing partners' funding commitments.

Summary of Draft Statewide Framework

- **Purpose:** A Visioning Document – New Methods and Tools for Agencies
- **Contents:**
 - What is RAMP, why it's important and its methods
 - Includes suggestions on policy changes
 - Includes appendices with case studies
- **Level of Support:**
 - Cover letter signed by agency and department leadership
- **Living document:**
 - Next version will incorporate 'lessons learned'

The draft Statewide Framework document looks at RAMP from a landscape level, and it's a vision document. It includes new methods and tools to accomplish the vision of interagency, multi-year advance mitigation. It has high levels of support, and it continues to be developed further as the next phases are implemented.

Provides a Vision for RAMP

- Describes the purpose of RAMP and its benefits
- Statewide structure and regional methods
- Highest Priority:
 - financial/funding frameworks and
 - governance models

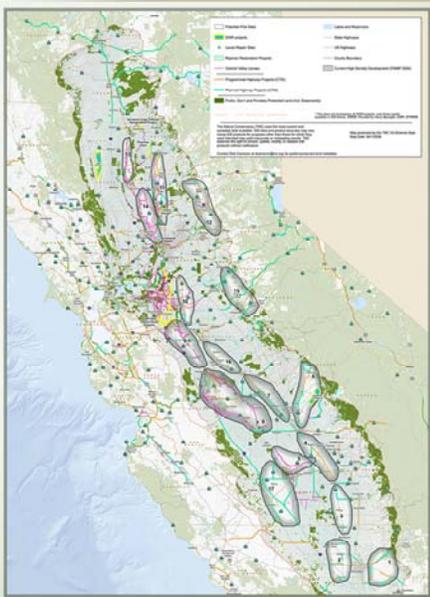
Goals

- a) improved regional mitigation and conservation planning;
- b) improved mitigation and conservation effectiveness; and
- c) improved efficiency (i.e., faster, better, cheaper).

The draft RAMP Statewide Framework provides a vision for RAMP. RAMP has 3 main goals that are presented here. There are obvious benefits to infrastructure agencies and the environment from having a program such as RAMP integrated into our planning for infrastructure projects. The document that was just published describes methods agencies can use to accomplish these goals.

We found the most important contribution RAMP could make relates to the financial and governance of advance mitigation. For too long agencies have been financing and managing their mitigation in isolation. RAMP describes a way to share the funding and responsibilities of advance mitigation so we can accomplish mitigation at a larger scale, and hopefully find ways to make mitigation with a greater conservation outcome.

Statewide Implementation



- Creation of Regions
- Management structure
- Financial changes
 - Policies to implement or change
 - Ways to incorporate transparency and accountability

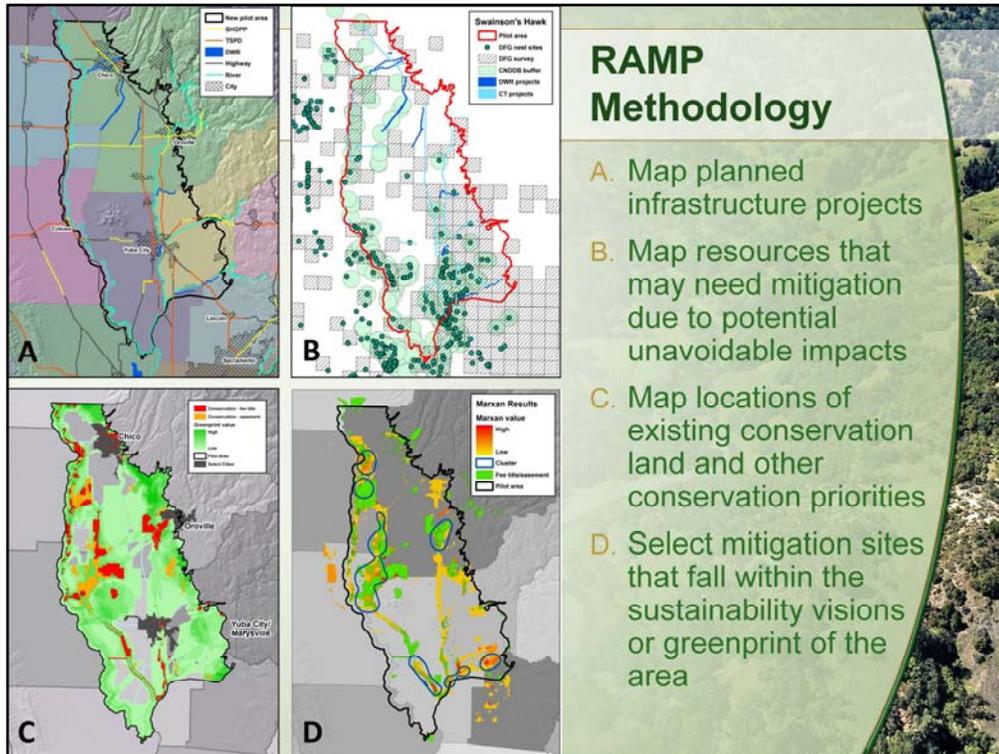
The draft Statewide Framework document proposes a program that can be implemented by the creation of “regions.” Regions allow those involved to do the planning needed at a scale that is manageable. We have experimented with using regions that extend beyond political boundaries, and depend instead on boundaries like rivers, or vegetation communities. We realize there are many ways to create these regions, and we hope to do more of this type of planning in the near future.

Beyond the concept of regions, RAMP is innovative because it potentially allows us to change our approach to management of our mitigation lands. We propose a larger steering group be given powers to select the highest value mitigation lands in a region that will best support the infrastructure agency needs in the “regions” that we create.

It also changes our approach to financing. To do this will take the implementation of policies that have not be utilized or even changes to policies or legislation to ensure we can properly use all the financial resources we have towards the highest conservation outcome. To do this we must find ways to combine funds in a way that incorporates levels of transparency and accountability.

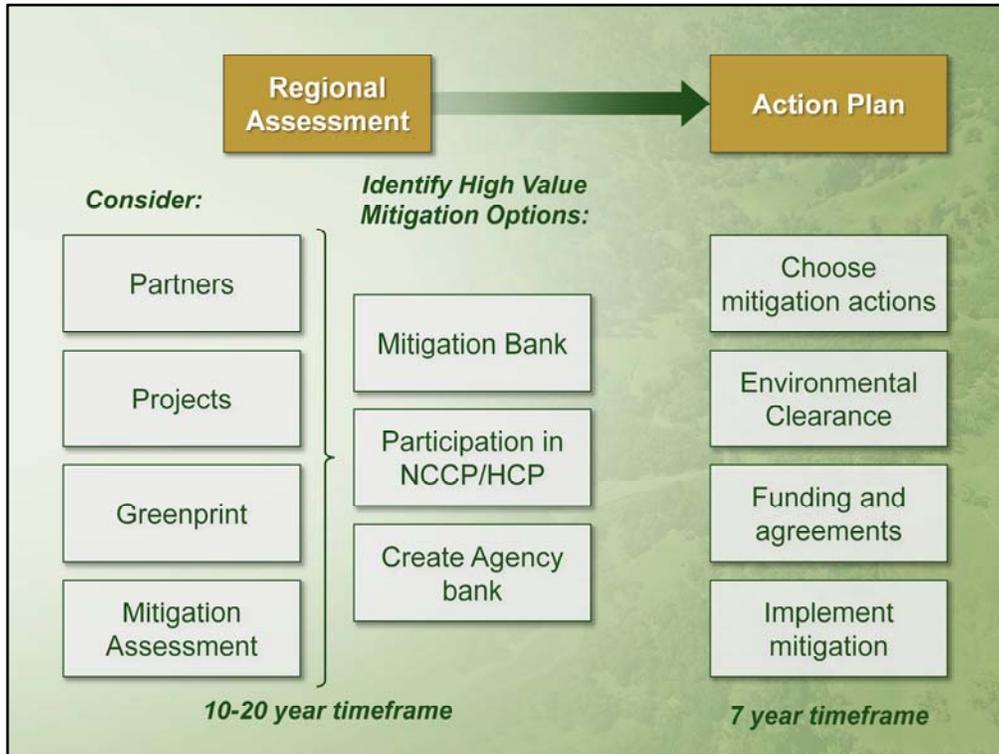


The Statewide Framework proposes that detailed planning at a regional level is a necessary step in the RAMP process. We have written a regional document which we termed a “Regional Assessment.” Regional Assessments are 20 year plans, and they identify how much mitigation demand is present, and all of the mitigation solutions within the Regional Assessment area. The administrative draft of the Regional Assessment has been released to the Work Group. The lessons we learn from the inaugural Regional Assessment implementation will inform the next version of the Statewide Framework.

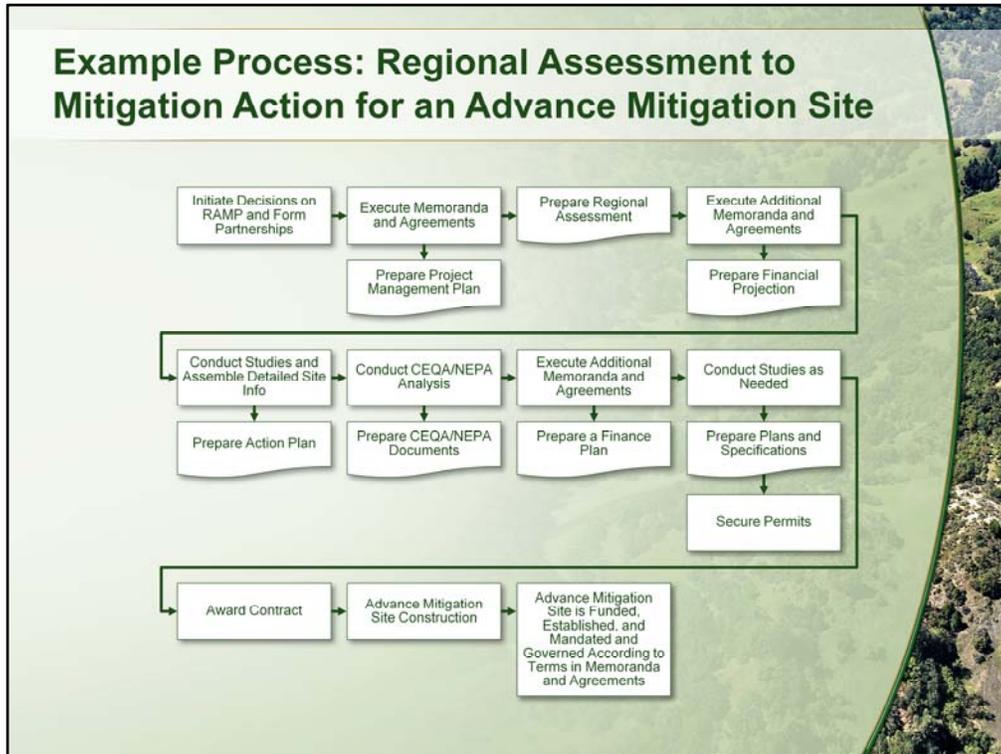


Here are some of the basic selection and assessment tools used in a region. The first analysis of any regional assessment is to create a map of everyone’s infrastructure projects. After mapping the projects, we then looked at how those projects might impact species and habitat. This helps us estimate the mitigation demand in a region. This is shown in maps A and B.

In parallel, and in a second landscape analysis, we took data from 8 various planning agencies and scientists who were planning for conservation of species or habitat in the pilot area to create a “greenprint”. Planning for growth is often referred to as a blueprint. Planning for conservation is a greenprint. That conservation map will be refined with criteria to identify selected mitigation sites. This is shown in Maps C and D.



This slide is an overview of the RAMP regional process, as we've talked about it so far. With the regional assessment, we are working still at the landscape level for the most part. The regional assessment considers various aspects of what is unique about the region, and what opportunities exist for mitigation options. The next step in the RAMP process is to write an Action Plan which will make a choice about the options and finalize agreements between agencies for implementation of that option.



In order to progress from the Regional Assessment to an Action Plan, the RAMP Work Group suggests that the flow of work follow the more detailed pattern shown here.

Legal and Policy Frameworks

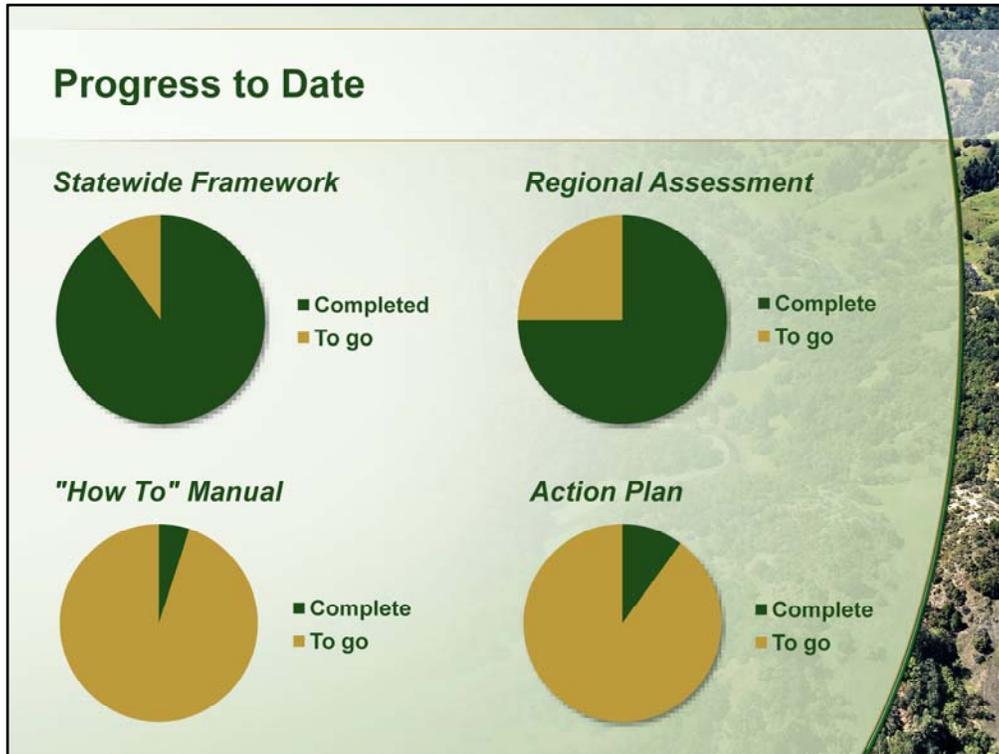
- What it is not
 - No changes to existing laws
 - CEQA, NEPA, Sec. 404, ESA, etc. compliance is done
- What is different
 - Landscape scale or ecosystem approach to mitigation and conservation planning
 - Meeting long term stewardship needs in partnership
 - Working and integrating with NCCPs/HCPs
 - Meeting state guidance on climate change
 - Financing larger solutions to mitigation

RAMP is something innovative and not everyone is clear on what status quo methods RAMP embraces, and where it takes a new path. This slide presents “what it is not” and “what is different” compared to the status quo of project-by-project mitigation.

Policy Changes Needed

- Examples of administrative actions needed
 - Institutionalize RAMP in the agencies' hierarchies
 - Develop accepted methods of regulatory support
 - Develop funding and financing models and approval processes for advance mitigation
 - Develop mechanisms to coordinate interagency funding and staff resources
- Examples of state legislation needed
 - Establish the management structure
 - Establish a revolving fund
 - Allow future bonds to be used in endowments
 - Allow the Wildlife Conservation Board to buy land for advance mitigation purposes

In developing the draft RAMP Statewide Framework, the RAMP Work Group discovered that their vision of integrated partnerships and sustainability goals have some policy challenges that will need agency-level administrative actions, as well as state legislative support, in order to move the statewide initiative forward.



This slide shows the progress the RAMP Work Group has made to date. The draft RAMP Statewide Framework is done, and staff is just gathering agency director’s signatures on a supporting cover letter before release. The Regional Assessment for the pilot region is three-quarters complete. A “How-to” manual effort is just beginning, with the intention of documenting the methods used so that other agencies can benefit from the RAMP Work Group’s body of knowledge. In addition, an Action Plan is in the beginning stages, as the RAMP Work Group tries to move forward and work on policy challenges as outlined in the previous slide.

RAMP Statewide Framework Timeline

	2008	JAN 2011	APR 2011	AUG 2011	APR 2012	Early 2013	2014
RAMP Workgroup formed	◆						
Administrative draft statewide framework for RAMP work group review							
Draft statewide framework for RAMP work group review							
2nd draft statewide framework for RAMP work group review							
Draft statewide framework ready for internal circulation for leadership approval							
Draft statewide framework approved for internal and limited external distribution							
Revise draft and produce final statewide framework for internal agency use and public distribution							

We are nearly at the end of the RAMP Statewide Framework timeline. We expect to revise the draft and produce a final statewide framework in 2014 for internal agency use as well as public distribution.

Engagement

- External engagement needs
 - Statewide Framework
 - Strategic Growth Council
 - Regional engagement
- Internal engagement needs
 - Education and feedback
 - Problem solving



We need to get the word out about the availability of the draft Statewide Framework, and review the proposed vision for RAMP with stakeholders. We are currently giving periodic updates to the Strategic Growth Council. The Strategic Growth Council is tasked with coordinating the activities of state agencies to distribute best practices that help cities, counties and regions incorporate state sustainability goals and objectives.

We also need to engage with entities in regions that we will be working in. This includes other state and local agencies, counties, and cities; tribal governments; flood control agencies; local maintaining agencies; water agencies; reclamation districts; transportation planning agencies; the agricultural community; the environmental community; landowners; elected officials; Integrated Water Management (IRWM) Groups; Joint Powers Authorities for HCP/NCCPs; academia; and Commercial Mitigation Bank Sponsors.

Internally, we need our staff members to know about how state government agencies are being innovative and stepping forward with RAMP and how RAMP could benefit their work. As a multi-agency effort, RAMP gives our agency credibility and develops goodwill amongst the partner agencies, and our Director supports the RAMP Initiative. We value staff knowledge of how projects are planned and implemented, and staff input into RAMP decision making and its organizational direction is valued and important. Help us help our agency's projects.

RAMP has many tools, but cannot be a solution for everything. {{DWR - While RAMP has a specific focus, and legacy projects are out of the scope of that focus, FESSRO has an interest in supporting completion of legacy projects and land acquisitions}}

Next steps

- Version 2.0 expected 2013-2014 with revisions from lessons learned and feedback
- “How to” Manual expected 2013-2014
- Continue to work on policy changes needed
- Comments on Statewide Framework accepted at: <https://rampcalifornia.water.ca.gov> (under Forum)
- Copies provided upon request:
Monique.Wilber@water.ca.gov

The public does have access to the official RAMP site. Address for that site is provided, note the lack of www and the use of httpS.

You can find articles about RAMP under the “Library.” tab at the top. And we are accepting comments on the Statewide Framework as part of a moderated Forum on this website. If you would like a copy of the draft RAMP Statewide Framework, request a pdf or hard copy from the email address on the screen.

Are there any questions?