



Yolo Habitat Conservancy

County of Yolo • City of Davis • City of Winters • City of West Sacramento
City of Woodland • University of California, Davis

To: Lucas Frerichs, Chair
Members of the Board

From: Chris Alford
Interim Executive Director

Re: Approve the Davis Site as a candidate Yolo HCP/NCCP pre-permit reserve system site and authorize staff to proceed with negotiating the terms of a Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions with the National Park Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and County of Yolo and a separate agreement with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to ensure that the conservation commitments of the Yolo HCP/NCCP are maintained if the site is enrolled in the reserve system

Date: July 21, 2025

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

1. Approve the Davis Site as a candidate Yolo HCP/NCCP reserve system site
2. Authorize staff to proceed with negotiating the terms of a Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions with the National Park Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and County of Yolo and a separate agreement with the USFWS and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to ensure that the conservation commitments of the Yolo HCP/NCCP are maintained if the site is enrolled in the Yolo HCP/NCCP reserve system

BACKGROUND:

The 314-acre Davis Site is located approximately 3 miles southeast of the City of Davis, within Yolo HCP/NCCP Planning Unit 15. The Davis Site was specifically identified in the Yolo HCP/NCCP as a site that could contribute as pre-permit lands (i.e., land that is, or will be, held in fee title by a member agency and provides suitable habitat for HCP/NCCP species) and is eligible for enrollment in the Yolo HCP/NCCP.

Due to the site's prior use by the Department of Defense as a global telecommunications site, the majority of the property has never been disced or developed and contains one of the few remnant alkali vernal pool complexes and associated upland grassland prairies in Yolo County. The grasslands on the site provide valuable foraging habitat for a variety of raptor species and have historically provided nesting habitat for burrowing owls while the vernal pools on the site provide habitat for a variety of rare and endemic plant and animal species. Yolo HCP/NCCP Science and Technical Advisory Committee

(STAC) representatives conducted a site visit on the Davis Site, on July 14, 2025. The STAC recommends enrolling the property in the Yolo HCP/NCCP reserve system due to the presence of grasslands that provide habitat for covered species, including: burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, white-tailed kite, and tricolored blackbird. The primary Yolo HCP/NCCP goals and objectives that the site would contribute towards if enrolled in the Yolo HCP/NCCP reserve system and the STAC's recommendation are summarized in the transmittal memo (Attachment A).

The property is currently held in fee title by the National Park Service. Yolo County and the National Park Service have been engaged in ongoing efforts to transfer the property to the County through the Federal Lands to Parks Program to preserve the site's natural resources and provide educational and passive recreation opportunities to the public in tandem with the adjacent Grasslands Regional Park. The County and the National Park Service are in the process of preparing a Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions that are required to be recorded against the property as part of the federal surplus property transfer process to ensure the site is utilized as envisioned and to reserve the federal government's right to retake the property if the landowner fails to do so.

While the Yolo HCP/NCCP identifies the establishment of conservation easements as the primary method for protecting lands that support the biological goals and objectives of the Yolo HCP/NCCP and enrolling them in the reserve system, the reversionary clause that is required as part of the federal property surplus transfer process prevents the establishment of a conservation easement on the Davis Site. Section 6.4.1.3 of the Yolo HCP/NCCP recognizes that the establishment of a conservation easement may not always be possible, particularly when substantial habitat restoration is anticipated or when a site has significant habitat value. In lieu of placing an HCP/NCCP conservation easement on the site, Conservancy staff propose to work with the National Park Service, Yolo County, USFWS and CDFW to establish language in the Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions that is substantially consistent with the terms and conditions of the Yolo HCP/NCCP easement template language and to work with USFWS and CDFW to develop an agreement that documents the Conservancy's commitment to enroll replacement lands in the Yolo HCP/NCCP in the unlikely event that the federal government utilizes its reversionary rights and retakes possession of the property if there is a breach of any of the terms of the conditions and covenants. If these recommended actions are approved, Conservancy staff would return to the Board for final approval of these documents and approval to enroll the Davis Site in the reserve system.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A. Transmittal memo recommending the Davis Site for inclusion in the Yolo HCP/NCCP reserve system

