

POWER IN NATURE

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SCAG Approves Widely Supported Policy Framework for Regional Mitigation

Regional Advance Mitigation Planning (RAMP) expedites transportation projects and supports conservation.

February 3, 2023, LOS ANGELES – Yesterday, the Regional Council of Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) unanimously approved a Regional Advanced Mitigation Planning (RAMP) policy framework. SCAG’s 2020 Regional Transportation Plan anticipated projects using the RAMP could generate a billion dollars for conservation.¹

RAMPs are a proven tool for expediting infrastructure and development projects by planning comprehensively for required mitigation to reduce environmental impacts. SCAG’s widely supported decision ensures projects included in a RAMP are streamlined and critical conservation efforts are also realized. The environmental community and building industry aligned to support the program, which also benefits the community as a whole.



Riverside County has successfully implemented an advance mitigation program that could protect a wildlife crossing near Temecula.

PHOTO CREDIT: MELANIE SCHLOTTERBECK

“I want to express my gratitude for the Regional Council’s approval,” says Melanie Schlotterbeck, the 30x30 Southland lead and Green Vision project coordinator for Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (FHBP). “This informed vote will improve the quality of life for all residents in the region by expediting smart developments, providing community-centered housing, improving our transportation system, protecting our natural resources, and ensuring clean air and water. This policy has been more than a decade in the making.”

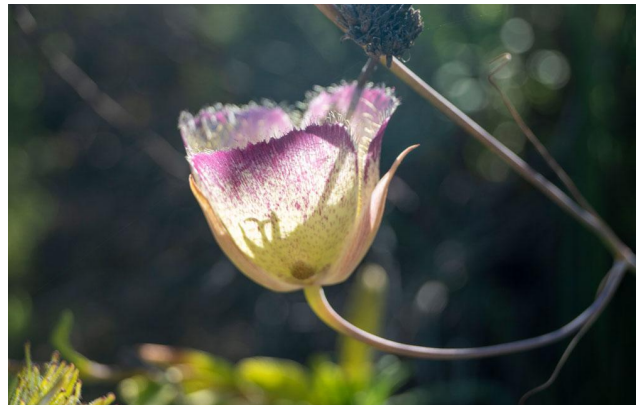
The regional non-profit worked closely with numerous advocacy, conservation, social equity, and environmental justice groups, as well as housing advocates and transportation agencies to advance the RAMP policy framework. Approval of the framework further supports the State of California’s 30x30 goal to conserve 30% of California’s lands and waters by 2030, approved by Governor Newsom via Executive Order [N-82-20](#). The 30x30 target

¹ [SCAG Connect SoCal Transportation Project List](#), p.415.

requires the state to protect six million acres of land and half a million acres of coastal waters over the next seven years. Meeting 30x30 demands a substantial commitment to acquire, restore, and manage properties, which is exactly what the RAMP helps to do. Institutionalizing advance mitigation is one of the 10 ways identified by the California Natural Resources Agency in its [Pathways to 30x30](#) document.

While typical environmental mitigation project-by-project, RAMPs protect large landscapes for mitigation ahead of time prior to environmental damage occurring. This program will positively impact the six Southland counties.

The decision creates a mitigation mechanism for SCAG jurisdictions that don't have mitigation programs, such as Ventura, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles Counties—and complements areas that do have a mitigation program. A few examples of projects that can benefit from this RAMP policy framework are: Los Angeles County's Airport Metro Connector and the I-405 Express Lane Projects; San Bernardino County's Redlands Passenger Rail and Phase 1 West Valley Connector; and additional Route-23 lanes and HOV lane construction in Ventura County. These projects are critical for the region's economy and improves mobility and goods movement.



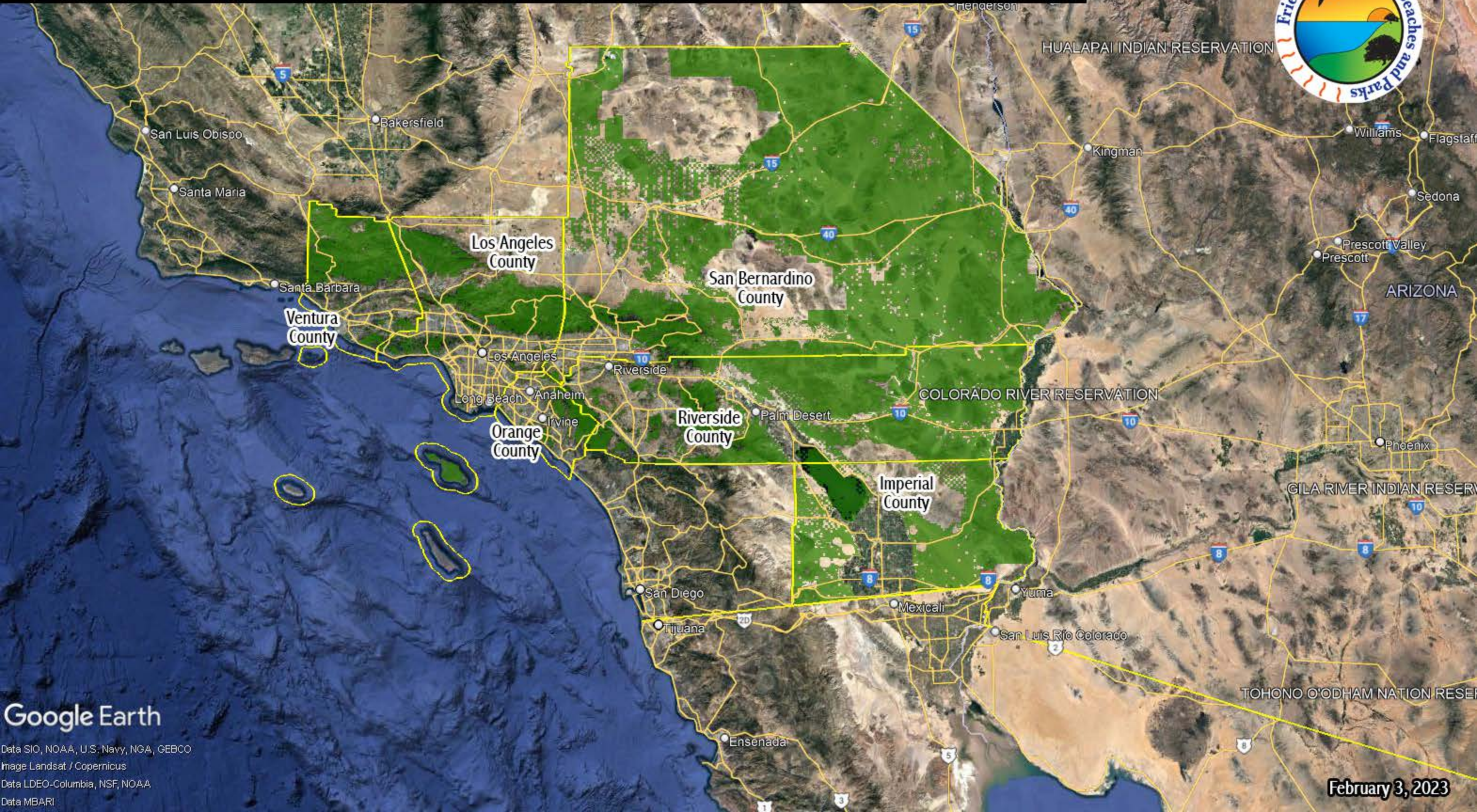
The Orange County Transportation Authority's advance mitigation program protected seven preserves and offers multiple community hikes and rides for residents to experience nature. The intermediate mariposa lily is one of the 13 species protected through the Authority's mitigation program. PHOTO CREDITS: MELANIE SCHLOTTERBECK

Approving the RAMP Policy Framework:

- Creates a mechanism to bundle projects and project impacts, which by SCAG's estimate could generate a billion dollars for land conservation to offset environmental impacts.
- Adopts a program that simultaneously allows projects to be built and meets conservation goals in alignment with the SCAG Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy, as well as the California Natural Resource Agency's Pathways to 30x30.
- Offers a tool to achieve the state's 30x30 goals by protecting important landscapes through conservation acquisition projects and habitat restoration efforts.
- Improves coordination between transportation, infrastructure, and permitting agencies to streamline projects and project approvals—saving time and money.
- Streamlines advance mitigation projects that achieve multiple benefits like protecting biodiversity, improving climate resilience, and providing managed public access.

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The Southern California Association of Governments Region with Already Conserved Lands



Google Earth

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image Landsat / Copernicus
Data LDEO-Columbia, NSF, NOAA
Data MBARI

February 3, 2023