

## Participate in the scoping meetings

To begin developing the CCP, Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex will hold three public scoping meetings to help identify issues and gather information. We've selected three different locations and dates, hoping that one will work for you. Meetings will begin with a presentation by the FWS. Afterward, FWS staff will be available to gather your input at several stations located in the meeting rooms.

# Hopper Mountain, Bitter Creek and Blue Ridge National Wildlife Refuges

## Planning Update #2 - April 2010

### Public Scoping Begins Soon

#### *Greetings from the Refuge Complex Project Leader*

### Public Meetings

**Tuesday, April 20, 2010**

**6:00 - 8:00 PM**

**Fillmore City Hall, Council Chambers**

**250 Central Avenue**

**Fillmore, California 93015**

**For a map and directions, visit:**

**<http://www.fillmoreca.com/>**

**Wednesday, April 28, 2010**

**6:00 - 8:00 PM**

**The Historic Fort Taft**

**Main Auditorium/Meeting Room**

**915 North 10th Street**

**Taft, California 93268**

**Thursday, May 6, 2010**

**4:30 - 6:30 PM**

**Forest Supervisor's Office**

**Sequoia National Forest**

**1839 South Newcomb Street**

**Porterville, CA 93257**

**For more information, visit our web site at:**

**[www.fws.gov/hoppermountain](http://www.fws.gov/hoppermountain)**

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Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Complex) includes the Hopper Mountain, Bitter Creek, and Blue Ridge National Wildlife Refuges (NWR). We invite you to participate in the public scoping process to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the three refuges. This multi-year master planning process will produce a plan to help guide the management of the refuges for 15 years.

Your ideas and comments will be an important part of the planning process. Recently we mailed Planning Update #1, which provided background about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the Complex, as well as explained how comprehensive conservation planning

fits into the overall picture of refuge management.

Throughout the CCP process we will frequently refer to the background materials provided in the first planning update. If you did not receive a copy and would like one, please let us know and we will be glad to send you one. Please return this issues workbook by mail or to any refuge staff member by May 20, 2010.

I hope you will feel free to contact me or Refuge Planner Sandy Osborn (email: [fw8plancomments@fws.gov](mailto:fw8plancomments@fws.gov)), if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at one of our future meetings.

*Marc M. Weitzel, Project Leader  
Hopper Mountain NWR Complex*

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# Hopper Mountain, Bitter Creek and Blue Ridge NWRs – Refuge Vision Statements and Goals

## Draft Vision Statements and Goals

The following are draft refuge “Vision Statements” and draft management goals for the three refuges. A refuge vision statement consists of a description of the refuge setting and a concise statement of desired future conditions for the refuge. The vision statement should reflect the mission of the refuge system, the purposes for which the refuge was established and any other relevant mandates. We invite you to comment on the draft vision statements.

A goal is a descriptive, open-ended, and often broad statement of desired future conditions that conveys a purpose, but does not define measurable units. Refuge goals must be consistent with the refuge purpose and set the framework for developing future objectives and management actions. The final goals that are developed will be the foundation of our CCP. We will refine and refer to these goals during our planning process. Please review the draft goals for each refuge and provide comments.

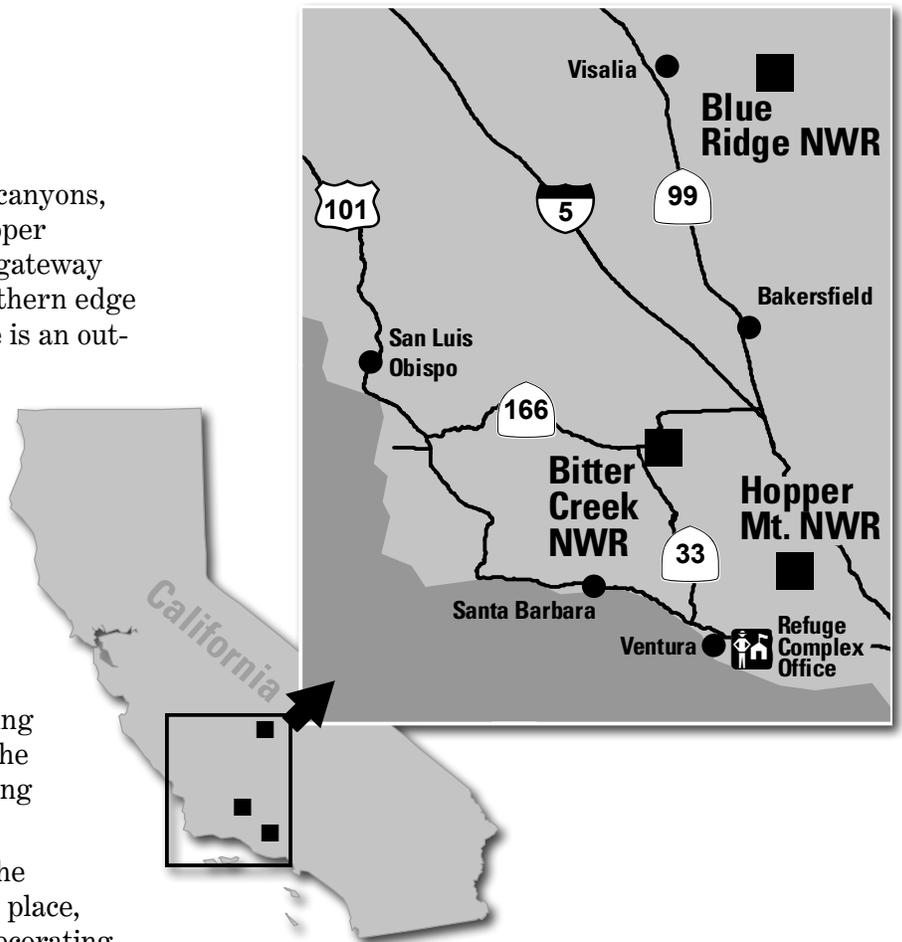
## HOPPER MOUNTAIN NWR

### Draft Refuge Vision Statement for Hopper Mountain NWR

A high mountain valley encircled by deep canyons, steep ridge lines and rocky pinnacles, Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge is the gateway into California condor country. On the southern edge of the Sespe Condor Sanctuary, the refuge is an outpost on the edge of the steep and rugged terrain where California condors safely forage, nest and roost. A diverse collection of fauna finds home in the equally varied vegetative communities. Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge supports thriving examples of oak woodlands, grassy potreros, dense chaparral forest, coastal sage scrub, seasonal wetlands, steep unsullied riparian drainages and some of the last remaining stands of California black walnut west of the Rocky Mountains as a complete and working ecosystem.

The dramatic landscape is forever held in the memories of those who are able to visit this place, such as the indigenous Chumash people. Decorating the rock spires where condors now perch, preserved Chumash rock art symbolizes their connection to both these lands and the sacred bird. As a gateway into wilderness and isolation, Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge emanates a sense of stewardship and conservation to its neighboring lands. The refuge exemplifies productive relationships with neighboring landowners and partners.

Once the primary staging area for the reintroduction of the California condor, refuge facilities now serve as



resources for the scientific community and academic institutions to conduct vital biological research.

### 1997 Interim Goals for Hopper Mountain NWR

- Provide essential rearing and monitoring facilities as well as foraging, roosting, and nesting habitat, to accomplish the goals of the California condor recovery plan.
- Restore and maintain a native diversity of wildlife and their habitats.

## BITTER CREEK NWR

### Draft Refuge Vision Statement for Bitter Creek NWR

With California condors in the skies above and herds of native wild ungulate on the diverse landscape below, the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge provides a showcase of conservation in action.

As a hub of condor activity and research opportunities, Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge is a unique keystone at the apex of two mountain ranges encompassing much of the historical range of the California condor and serving as an important wildlife corridor. The refuge protects portions of a rare east/west mountain range and provides movement corridors for populations of the once extirpated tule elk and pronghorn antelope. These movements extend beyond refuge boundaries and exemplify our contribution to a much larger conservation initiative partnering with public and private land owners. Under the umbrella of these charismatic mega-fauna, so too can lesser known threatened and endangered wildlife and plant species thrive within this intact and functioning ecosystem. Also protected under this umbrella are cultural resources of Native Americans and the historic remnants of early 19th century homesteads.



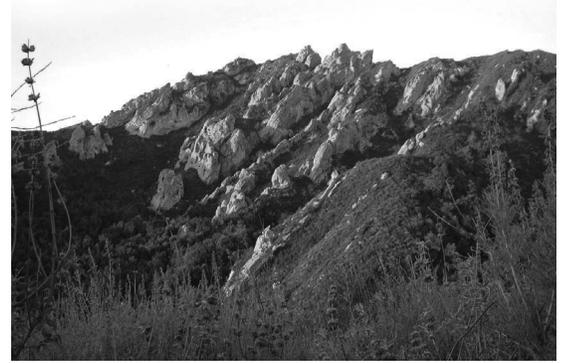
*San Joaquin kit fox. Photo: USFWS*

### 1997 Interim Goals for Bitter Creek NWR

- Assist in the recovery of the endangered California condor.
- Provide safe, quality habitat for other native plant and animal species, including those listed as threatened or endangered.
- Gather baseline biological data on plant and animal communities through inventory efforts to provide input for management decisions.
- Provide information and education (I&E).

In addition, draft goals were prepared as a part of the Bitter Creek NWR Grassland Habitat Management and Restoration Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) and Compatibility Determination that is ongoing. To assist the EA process, an Independent Range Review (IRR) is currently underway. More information about the IRR may be found at [www.fws.gov/hoppermountain/](http://www.fws.gov/hoppermountain/). The 2008 draft planning goals are as follows:

- Protect and restore refuge grasslands to historic conditions to support pre-settlement abundance and diversity of grassland-dependent special status species.
- Provide optimal feeding habitat for the endangered California condor as required by the refuge purpose.
- Further the goals of recovery of California condors.
- Contribute to the restoration of natural species diversity of upland species in grassland habitats of the San Joaquin Valley, California.
- Restore the integrity and environmental health of the Bitter Creek watersheds to improve water quality for wildlife.



*Hopper Mountain NWR. Photo: L.Borges*



*Bitter Creek NWR. Photo: USFWS*



*Blue Ridge NWR. Photo: USFWS*

## BLUE RIDGE NWR

### Draft Refuge Vision Statement for Blue Ridge NWR

The Blue Ridge National Wildlife Refuge provides important foraging and roosting habitat in the foothills of the southern Sierra Nevada Mountain range for the endangered California condor. The refuge is a pristine example of the Sierra foothill communities including coniferous forests, woodland savannahs, and chaparral. Refuge management efforts maintain healthy habitat for rare wildlife including native fur-bearers.

As the keystone refuge in the southern Sierra Nevada region, Blue Ridge National Wildlife Refuge models land stewardship by protecting wildlife corridors, ecological processes, and mixed habitats. Working with adjacent land agencies and owners, local communities, and conservation organizations to accomplish mutual goals for the region, the refuge inspires Americans' appreciation for diverse, rugged, and remote natural areas.

### 1997 Interim Goals for Blue Ridge NWR

- Provide essential foraging and roosting habitat for the California condor to achieve the goals of the recovery plan.
- Provide native diversity of habitat for other plant and animal species, including those listed as threatened or endangered.

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## Please feel free to contact us!

Please contact us if you have any questions or need additional information. Direct all inquiries to:

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 Ventura, California 93005  
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You can also find information and a copy of Planning Update #1 at:  
[www.fws.gov/hoppermountain](http://www.fws.gov/hoppermountain)

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### What is an Approved Acquisition Boundary and What Lands does the CCP Cover?

Sometimes government jargon is hard to understand. Therefore, we would like to better define an "approved refuge/acquisition boundary." The "approved acquisition boundary" includes those lands that we have authority to acquire for a refuge. This boundary often encompasses both public and private land, but does not imply that all private parcels within the boundary are targeted for our acquisition. Depending on the preference of each landowner and according to FWS policy, we may protect lands by acquiring the least amount of "interest" in property necessary to accomplish refuge goals. If an owner wishes to sell an interest in his or her property (i.e., easement or fee title), the FWS is required to pay fair market value for the property as determined by an appraisal. Because the FWS's land acquisition program is based on willing sellers, not all lands within the approved boundary may become part of the refuge. The CCP only applies to lands within the approved acquisition boundary that the FWS owns in fee title.

*California condor. Photo: G.Kramer*

