



Conservation Agreement Will Protect East Bay Burrowing Owl Habitat

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Dublin, CA – A conservation agreement signed by the Alameda Creek Alliance, City of Dublin and Dublin Crossing Venture will protect 313 acres of habitat in the East Bay for the declining western burrowing owl population. The agreement resolves a lawsuit filed over the Dublin Crossing Project, a 189-acre residential and commercial development on land just north of the East Dublin BART station. Over the course of the next several years the project area will be transferred from the U.S. Army's Parks Reserve Forces Training Area to the developer for it to proceed with the implementation of the Dublin Crossing Specific Plan.

"Burrowing owl colonies are increasingly scarce in the Livermore-Amador Valley, so this agreement will be important for helping to maintain the large breeding owl colony at Camp Parks or to protect additional burrowing owl habitat in the East Bay," said Jeff Miller, director of the Alameda Creek Alliance. "We believe this is suitable mitigation for the impacts of the Dublin Crossing Project on burrowing owls."

"Dublin Crossing Venture is excited to be proceeding with its mixed-use, master planned community and we are pleased to be conserving habitat for the Western burrowing owl," said Joe Guerra, project manager for the Dublin Crossing Project.

Under the agreement, Dublin Crossing Venture will purchase, secure conservation easement or provide conservation protection for 313 acres of suitable habitat for burrowing owls on or as close as practical to the Dublin Crossing Project site. The owl conservation lands will have management and monitoring plans to ensure they are habitable and more suitable for breeding and wintering burrowing owls.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife will have approval over the location of owl conservation lands and owl management and monitoring programs. The Alameda Creek Alliance has dismissed a lawsuit challenging the Environmental Impact Report for the Dublin Crossing Project.

Background

The western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) is a small, ground-nesting bird of prairie and grassland habitats, which nests primarily in abandoned ground-squirrel burrows. California supports the largest remaining breeding and wintering populations of western burrowing owls. California lists the burrowing owl as a "species of concern" and prevents disturbance of nesting owls, but provides no protection for burrowing owl habitat.

Burrowing owl populations are declining dramatically in the Bay Area and statewide. Breeding colonies of burrowing owls have disappeared from more than half of their former locations in the Bay Area in the past few decades. Burrowing owls in the Bay Area are threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation from urban development, elimination of burrowing rodents and destruction of burrows, pesticides, predation by pets and nonnative species, vehicle strikes and collisions with wind turbines.