

Going down the right digital advertising road?



It's time you stop and ask for directions.

CLICK HERE for direction



San Jose Mercury News
(http://www.mercurynews.com)

OPINION (/OPINION)

NOT TOPICS Live: Failures to honor recovery efforts (/news/ci_24495025?source=inthenews)

SAN JOSE, CA | Now: 61°F (http://weather.mercurynews.com) | High: 65°F (http://weather.mercurynews.com/) | Low: 47°F (http://weather.mercurynews.com/) | 5-Day Forecast (http://weather.mercurynews.com/)

Weather: (http://weather.mercurynews.com/)

Home > Opinion > Story

13

Tweet

7

Like

Send

0

g+1

1

Share

[Print](#) [Email](#)

Environmental impacts: 'Landscape-scale' mitigation is a breakthrough

By David J. Hayes

Special to the Mercury News

POSTED: 11/08/2013 02:00:00 PMPST

An important development in the conservation world has gone largely unnoticed. It shouldn't have. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell issued a directive that embraced a "landscape-scale" approach to mitigating the environmental impacts of major highway, water, energy and other infrastructure development projects. This is a big idea that deserves notice, and the support of developers and the environmental community alike.

The idea is simple but powerful. Currently, developers and regulators take a small-frame view of how to compensate for environmental injuries caused by new highway or energy projects. They slice and dice, responding to environmental injuries by generating small, fragmented mitigation projects that shortchange the environment.

Under the approach being developed by Jewell, and backed by the White House, the first priority is to avoid or limit environmental damage from new projects. For those environmental harms that cannot be avoided, however, developers' mitigation dollars would flow into larger, threatened landscapes, where they can have a big impact.

The first step is to work with communities and environmental experts and identify regional, landscape-scale conservation needs that can benefit from conservation funding. In some areas, prime open space and wildlife habitat will be the focus. Other communities may prioritize protecting vulnerable watersheds that supply clean drinking water.

Once significant environmental needs have been identified, the permitting of infrastructure projects can proceed more efficiently -- and with much better environmental results. Agencies will simply determine the level of mitigation required for a specific project and then issue a permit that directs mitigation dollars into an already-identified and environmentally significant regional conservation opportunity.

A similar concept has generated great results when applied to housing and real estate development projects in San Diego County and in several other California jurisdictions. In the 1990s, when an expanding real estate market was bumping up against important endangered species habitat, private developers and state and federal officials worked together to identify strongholds for the species. A landscape-level plan was developed and put in place, focused around the goal of creating a large, interconnected preserve for key species. Dollars were then directed toward filling out the landscape-level plan, allowing previously-stymied development projects to move forward.

The challenge now is to get the many federal and state agencies that are permitting major infrastructure projects working together to develop broad-based advanced mitigation plans that will cut across the myriad federal and state regulatory schemes. They will need to pull in scientific expertise from all corners, consult with local communities, and identify significant landscapes that will benefit from mitigation investments.

California is well-positioned to partner with the federal government on this initiative. The state already has a "Regional Advanced Mitigation Program" on its books. California's RAMP program articulates the same vision of thinking big and applying compensatory mitigation on a regional, large-scale basis, where it can bolster important, but threatened, landscapes. There will be no shortage of opportunities, with huge new infrastructure investments looming for high-speed rail and water conveyance, together with the continued growth expected in renewable energy projects and related transmission facilities.

The trick now is to make it work. Secretary Jewell and the White House will be putting meat on the bones of this approach in the coming months. California will be the test lab. On threatened

Happening Around the Bay Area

[DanvilleExpress.com \(http://danvilleexpre...](#)

Blackhawk couple sue HOA, say kids can't play outside

by Glenn WohlmannA Blackhawk couple have filed a federal lawsuit against their homeowners association, claiming their children aren't allow...

[Monday Midday Weather Forecast \(http://...](#)



Crowdnews

VIDEO NEWS FEED

0 new Touts - Watch now



16m

[Christopher Skinner](#)

Walnut Creek Concert Band plays at the city's Veterans Day observance.

This comment is BLOCKED from showing in the widget.

This comment is APPROVED from showing in the widget.

Tout by @skinnerphotos

Walnut Creek Concert Band plays at

Get Daily Deals (http://www.getdailydeals.com/dealsouth-baysan-jose/?source=jBarDD)

Roadshow: Driving on the shoulder to avoid a traffic t

landscapes and watersheds await.

David J. Hayes, former Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, teaches at Stanford Law School and is a Senior Fellow at the Hewlett Foundation. He wrote this for this newspaper.

Print Email Return to Top

MOST POPULAR (/POPULAR)

DAY (/POPULAR) HOUR (/POPULAR) NEWS (/POPULAR) SPORTS (/POPULAR) BIZ (/POPULAR) A&E (/POPULAR) EMAIL (/POPULAR) LIFE (/POPULAR)

1. [Wolverton: Kit Kat a tasty treat for Android users, if you can get it](http://www.mercurynews.com/troy-wolverton/ci_24485536/wolverton-kit-kat-tasty-treat-android-users-if?source=most_viewed) (http://www.mercurynews.com/troy-wolverton/ci_24485536/wolverton-kit-kat-tasty-treat-android-users-if?source=most_viewed)
2. ['The Walking Dead' recap: Oh no, look who's back](http://www.mercurynews.com/entertainment/ci_24497793/walking-dead-recap-oh-no-look-whos-back?source=most_viewed) (http://www.mercurynews.com/entertainment/ci_24497793/walking-dead-recap-oh-no-look-whos-back?source=most_viewed)
3. [Purdy: 49ers' 'unacceptable' loss difficult to explain](http://www.mercurynews.com/49ers/ci_24495956/purdy-ups-and-downs-from-49ers-loss-panthers?source=most_viewed) (http://www.mercurynews.com/49ers/ci_24495956/purdy-ups-and-downs-from-49ers-loss-panthers?source=most_viewed)

[See the full most-popular-of-the-day list \(/popular#pop-day\)](#)

1

Share

TAKE ACTION

[Have a breaking news tip?](mailto:crime@mercurynews.com?subject=) (<mailto:crime@mercurynews.com?subject=>

[Get the latest news by email](https://digioh.com/BANG/general?source=TakeAction) (<https://digioh.com/BANG/general?source=TakeAction>)

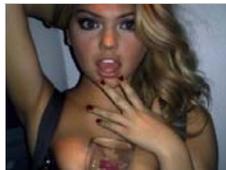
[Download our free mobile apps](http://www.mercurynews.com/mobile) (<http://www.mercurynews.com/mobile>)

[Have a correction?](mailto:corrections@mercurynews.com?subject=) (<mailto:corrections@mercurynews.com?subject=>
[/opinion/ci_24477866/environmental-impacts-landscape-scale-mitigation-is-breakthrough](http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_24477866/environmental-impacts-landscape-scale-mitigation-is-breakthrough))



Offers and articles from around the Web

ADVERTISEMENT



[Kate Upton like you've never seen her before!](#)



[New Rule in California: If you pay for car insurance you better read this...](#)



[Stanford arrest records. Who do you know?](#)



[If you don't speak Spanish, watch this video now](#)

AdChoices

Recommended for You

- ▶ [Blue Shield forced to delay canceling 80,000...](#)
- ▶ [Los Gatos: Free self-exam shower cards: it's...](#)
- ▶ [Column: Health, safety mustn't suffocate soccer](#)
- ▶ [Health care law's ground game: Armies of paid...](#)
- ▶ [Miami Dolphins harassment scandal exposes NFL's...](#)
- ▶ [California prepares for Common Core standards](#)

-- SPONSORED LINK --

[My Kingdom for an English Course!](#)
(From DailyMe.com)

Powered by **newstogram**

This article is the:

6th most-clicked among opinion articles today (/popular#pop-opinion)

[Back to the top](#)

- [Article commenting rules of the road \(/opinion/ci_24039589/article-commenting-rules-road\)](#)

2 comments



Leave a message...

Newest Community

Share

Avatar [clsgis](#) • 3 hours ago
 They're about to discover how much political power the agencies that don't want to do this stuff have. Caltrans and Army Corps of Engineers do what they want.

[Reply](#) • [Share](#) ›

Avatar [Dark Hawk 98](#) • 2 days ago
 THE challenge is getting developers to honor that system. Sacramento County LAFCO just turned down Elk Grove wanting to expand their sphere of influence by 8000 acres. Some of those 8000 acres just happen to be a part of primary wintering habitat for Greater Sandhill Cranes, a key species.

[Reply](#) • [Share](#) ›

ALSO ON MERCURYNEWS

49ers lose 10-9 to Carolina Panthers

20 comments

Capitola widow discovers late husband was a war hero 1 comment

Families migrate to Colorado for marijuana miracle 1 comment

What exactly is an 'atheist mega-church?' 7 comments

AROUND THE WEB

Cas 1 Credit Cards: The Best Ones for 1 Spending [Next Advisor](#)

Middle Class To Be Crushed By Obamacare Taxes [Money Morning](#)

Billionaire Tells Americans to Prepare For "Financial Ruin" [Moneynews](#)

The Unbelievable Thing Firefox Is Doing Now [OPEN Forum](#)

WHAT'S THIS?

San Jose Local Guide (http://mylocal.mercurynews.c

Featured Businesses

- Urban Home Design**
(http://mylocal.mercurynews.com/san-jose-CA/construction/residential-contractors/Urban-Home-Design-408-573-1880)
Quality Paving
(http://mylocal.mercurynews.com/morgan-hill-CA/construction/concrete/Quality-Paving-408-607-3133)
- Regional Medical Center of San Jose**
(http://mylocal.mercurynews.com/san-jose-CA/medical/hospital/Regional-Medical-Center-of-San-Jose-408-259-5000)
- Erin Burke, Realtor**
(http://mylocal.mercurynews.com/los-gatos-CA/real-estate/real-estate-agents/Erin-Burke-Realtor-408-316-8369)

Find San Jose Attractions

Search for a business

Search by keyword or Zip

Add your business here + (http://mylocal.mercurynews.com/#add_business)

[Subscribe](#) [Add Disqus to your site](#)

THE BOTTOM LINE



Does this map explain gay marriage in the US?
(http://www.mercurynews.com/bay-area-living/ci_24498599/does-this-map-explain-gay-marriage-u-s)



(http://www.mercurynews.com/entertainment/ci_24497793/walking-dead-recap-oh-no-look-whos-back)



Hicks: George Clooney slams Russell Crowe and Leonardo DiCaprio
(http://www.mercurynews.com/celebrities/ci_24500005/hicks-george-clooney-slams-russell-crowe-and-leonardo)

Knish factory fire leads to nationwide shortage
(http://www.mercurynews.com/bay-area-living/ci_24499157/knish-factory-fire-leads-nationwide-shortage)

Travel top 10: Most manly hotels in the world
(http://www.mercurynews.com/travel/ci_24467178/travel-top-10-most-manly-hotels-world)



The worst way ever to fight inflation — at gunpoint
(http://www.mercurynews.com/bay-area-living/ci_24498576/worst-way-ever-fight-inflation-mdash-at-gunpoint)

Review: Oakland East Bay Symphony sparkles in season opener
(http://www.mercurynews.com/entertainment/ci_24490311/review-oakland-east-bay-symphony-sparkles-celebratory-season)

Amid a bumper crop, growers try to make apples 'sleep'
(http://www.mercurynews.com/bay-area-living/ci_24498395/amid-bumper-crop-growers-try-make-apples-sleep)

Selena Gomez shoots for the 'Stars'
(http://www.mercurynews.com/music/ci_24460775/selena-gomez-shoots-stars)

Miley Cyrus smokes joint on stage at Europe MTV awards
(http://www.mercurynews.com/celebrities/ci_24500568/miley-cyrus-smokes-joint-stage-at-europe-mtv)

'30 Rock' actor Maulik Pancholy comes out as gay
(http://www.mercurynews.com/celebrities/ci_24500327/30-rock-actor-maulik-pancholy-comes-out-gay)

Miley Cyrus smokes a joint at MTV EMAs
(http://www.mercurynews.com/celebrities/ci_24498171/miley-cyrus-smokes-joint-at-mtv-emas)

San Jose Mercury News

<http://www.mercurynews.com>

Copyright © 2013 San Jose Mercury News [Copyright \(http://www.mercurynews.com/copyright\)](http://www.mercurynews.com/copyright)

[Privacy Policy \(http://www.mercurynews.com/portlet/layout/html/privacypolicy/privacypolicy.jsp?siteId=568\)](http://www.mercurynews.com/portlet/layout/html/privacypolicy/privacypolicy.jsp?siteId=568)

[Site Map \(http://www.mercurynews.com/site-map\)](http://www.mercurynews.com/site-map)

[MNG Corporate Site Map \(http://www.medianewsgroup.com/consumers/Pages/OurBrands.aspx\)](http://www.medianewsgroup.com/consumers/Pages/OurBrands.aspx)

