



Public Information

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division
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LCA Program Open Space/ Wildlife Habitat Contracts

The California Land Conservation Act (also known as the Williamson Act) provides property owners of qualifying land with tax incentives to protect agricultural and open space land from being rezoned and subdivided for higher density development.

In July 2006, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors adopted a revised set of LCA Guidelines that created the opportunity for property owners to enter into Open Space/Wildlife Habitat contracts, thereby expanding the County's existing agricultural LCA program.

Contract Duration

Open Space/Wildlife Habitat contracts are either 10 or 20 years in duration, beginning on January 1st the year after the contract is recorded. Contracts self-renew each year unless the property owner or the County chooses to file a Notice of Non-Renewal, which begins a 9 or 19 year wind-down period before the contract expires.

Uses and Limitations

The primary use of the contract area must be for the preservation of natural habitats, such as wetlands, native grasslands or woodlands, individual species, and wildlife corridors.

Compatible activities may include restoration of the land to its natural state, re-introduction of native species, and passive recreational uses such as hiking. Prohibited uses include introduction of non-native species, and operation of motorized vehicles or equipment.

Eligibility

To be eligible for an Open Space/Wildlife Habitat LCA contract, your property must have a General Plan designation of "Open Space" or "Agricultural," and must contain or be capable of being restored to have significant biological resources including, but not limited to:

- ☞ *Habitats of endangered, threatened or rare species,*
- ☞ *Wetland habitats,*
- ☞ *Coastal habitats,*
- ☞ *Migration corridors for fish or wildlife, and/or*
- ☞ *Locally important species/communities.*



If your property is designated, at least in part, as “Open Space” or “Agricultural” by the General Plan, and you believe it is likely to contain biological resources that would make it eligible for an Open Space/Wildlife Habitat LCA contract, please contact the Planning Division’s LCA Planner about enrolling your property in the LCA Program.



Photo credit: Northridge University

Filing Deadline

In order for your contract to be effective the following calendar year, your application must be submitted by the first Friday in June of the current year. If you wish to have your contract take effect next January 1st, then your application must be submitted by June of this year.

Tax Benefit

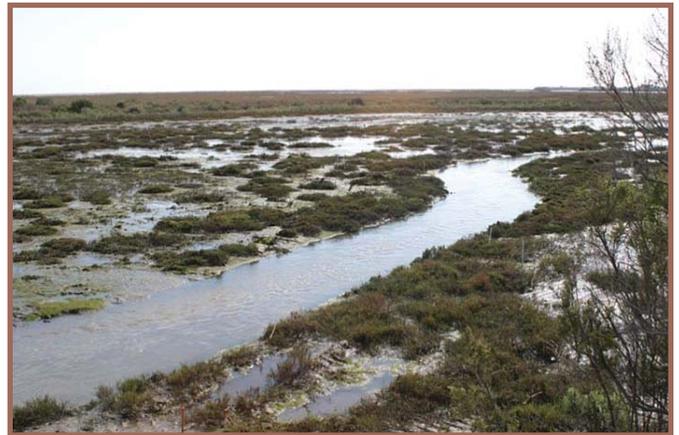
The specific benefit you receive will depend on many factors. If you would like to find out more about how the reduction in assessed value is calculated, please visit the

County Assessor’s LCA website page at <http://assessor.countyofventura.org>, select “Tax Savings Programs” and then select “LCA – Land Conservation Act/Williamson Act.”

More about the LCA Program

To learn more about how the LCA program works and how you may benefit from having an LCA contract, please visit the Planning Division’s website at www.vcrma.org/divisions/planning, select “Programs” from the side menu, and then select “Land Conservation Act(LCA).” Among the information on this page is a link to the LCA Guidelines; you can read a discussion of Open Space/Wildlife Habitat contracts on Pages 11 through 14 of the Guidelines.

For additional information on Open Space/Wildlife Habitat contracts, please contact the LCA Planner noted on the Planning Division website.



We look forward to hearing from you!