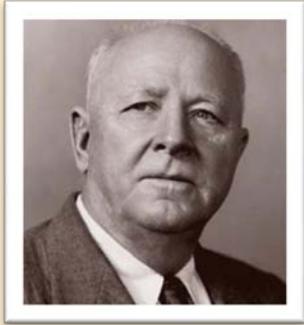




**Federal Partnership Opportunities**  
Natural Resources Conservation Service – USDA

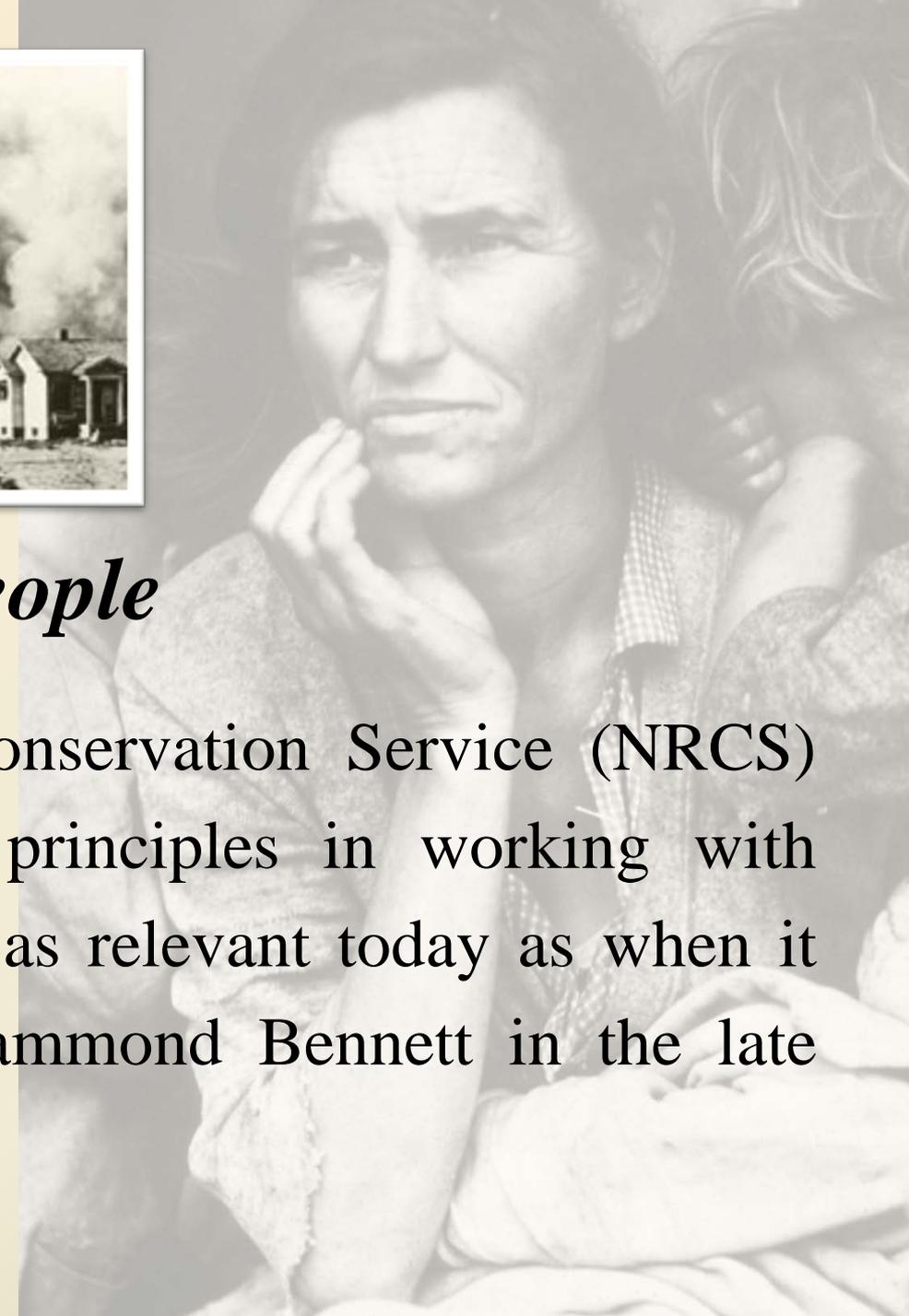
Shea O'Keefe  
Biologist  
Area 4 Southern California



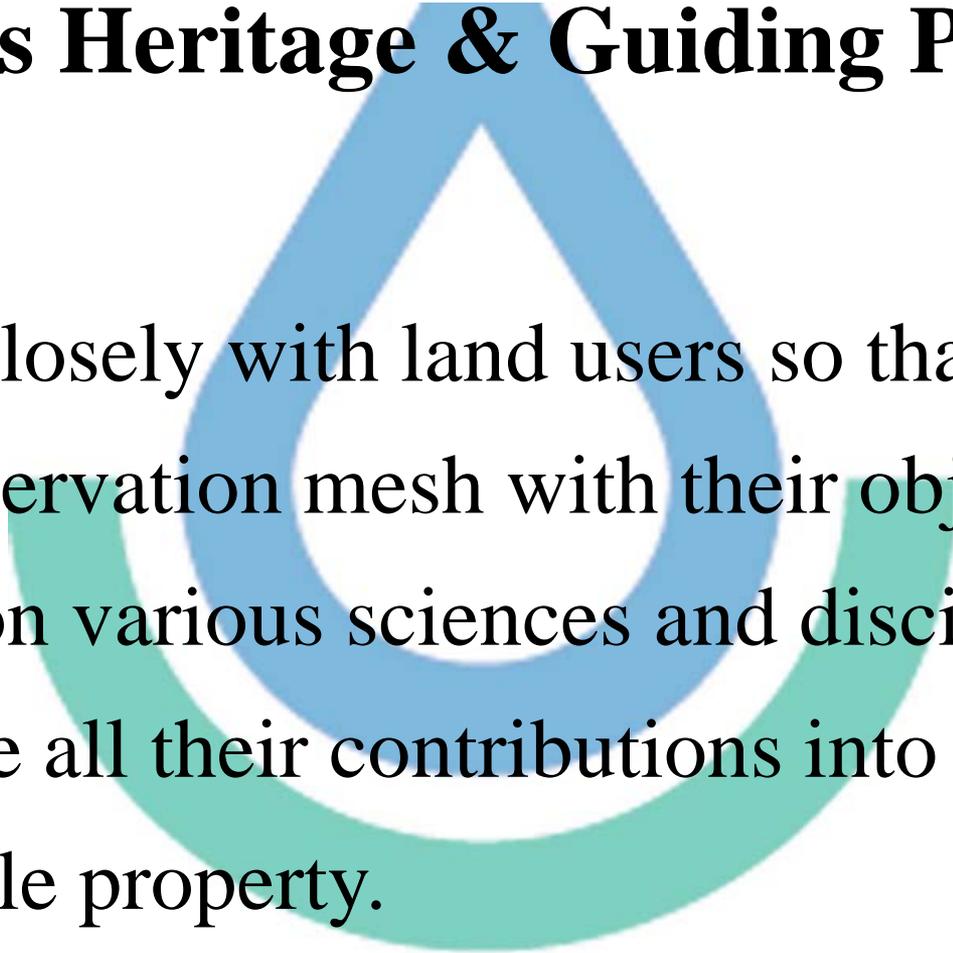
***NRCS:***

## ***A Story of Land & People***

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) draws on a tradition of principles in working with private landowners that is as relevant today as when it was a dream to Hugh Hammond Bennett in the late 1920s and early 1930s.



# **NRCS's Heritage & Guiding Principles**



- Work closely with land users so that the plans for conservation mesh with their objectives.
- Draw on various sciences and disciplines and integrate all their contributions into a plan for the whole property.



# All NRCS Programs

- ✓ Voluntary participation
- ✓ Focus on private lands
  - ✓ Non-regulatory
  - ✓ Privacy Act
- ✓ Local partners-conservation districts, Federal, State, tribal, local governments and community groups

# Assistance

## ➤ Technical

- Free technical assistance from NRCS planning, design, and implementation of practices

## ➤ Financial

- NRCS - Farm Bill funding

## ➤ Permitting

- NEPA (CPA-52) – may trigger Section 7 (USFWS), 404 (ACOE), 401 (RWQCB), 1600 (CaDF&G), +++
  - Individually acquired with agency assistance
  - Partners in Restoration - Permit Coordination program

# Resource Concerns

## SWAPA+H

Soil



Water



Air



Plants



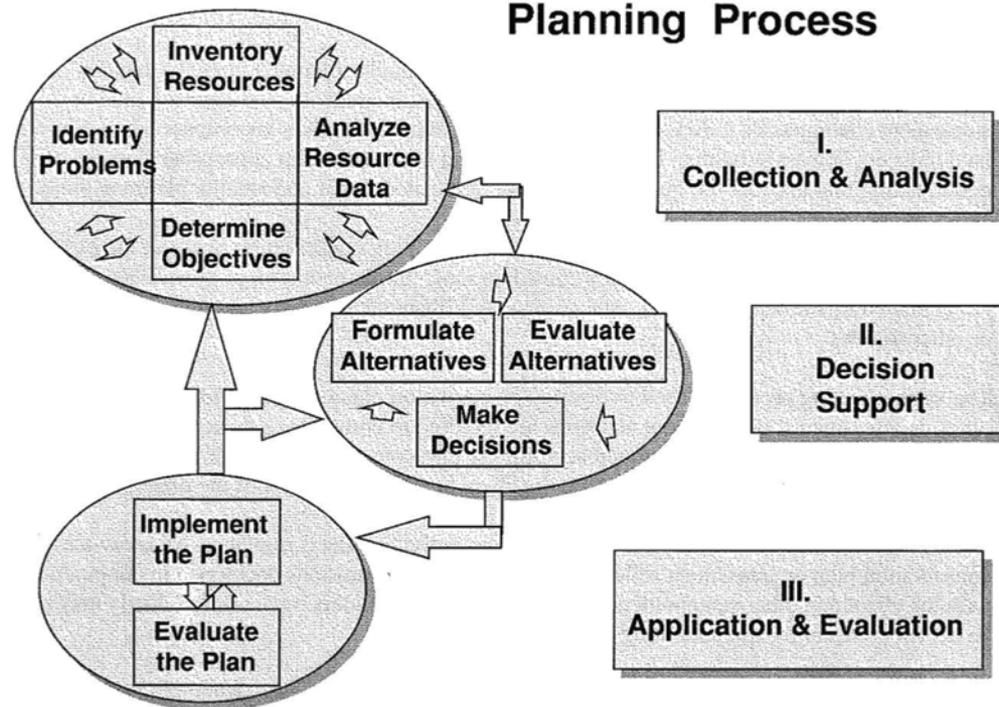
Animals



Humans



# NRCS Planning Process



An illustration of the dynamic nature of the planning process.



**2008**

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
- **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**
- **Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG)**
- **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)**
- **Emergency Watershed Program (EWP)**
- **Conservation Security Program (CSP)**
- **Farmland Protection Program (FPP)**

# Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

- Develop upland and wetland wildlife, threatened and endangered species, fish, and other types of wildlife habitat
- Only Farm Bill program that does not require the participant to be an agricultural producer
- Up to 75% cost share



# Example Project (riparian restoration): Santa Ysabel Creek



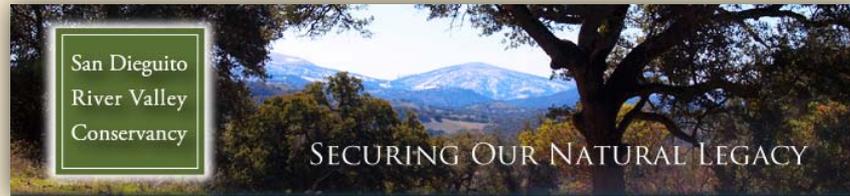
- Removal of eucalyptus, arundo and a great deal of trash
- Beneficial to numerous sensitive species, bank stabilization and water quality improvements



# Current Projects



# Partnerships



# Biological Sensitivities

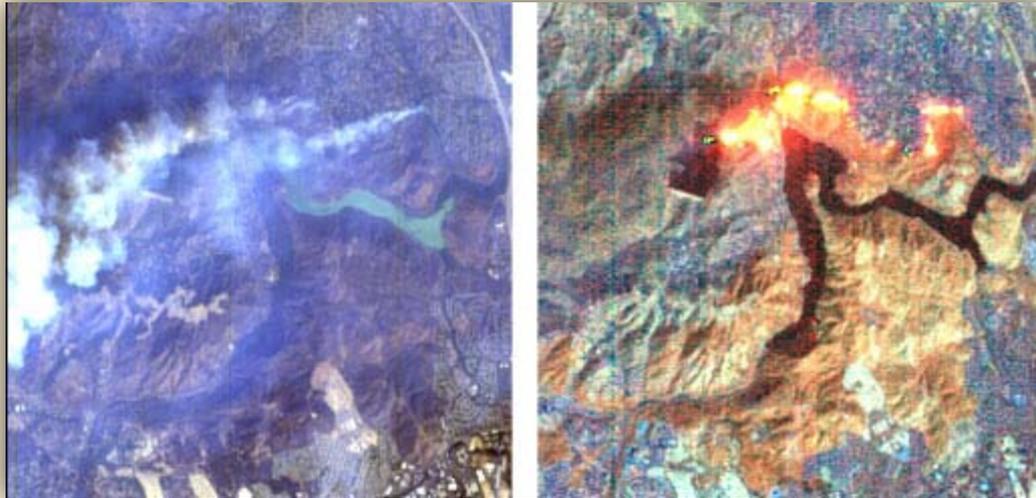


- Least bell's vireo
  - Federally and state endangered
- Southwestern willow flycatcher
  - Federally and state endangered
- Arroyo toad
  - Federally endangered
- California gnatcatcher
  - Federally threatened
- Coastal cactus wren\*
  - State sensitive

# Major Offenders



# 2007 Wildfires



# WHIP's within the San Dieguito River

## Current Projects

**Over 600 acres of native plant restoration  
for listed species**

**5 ac (1800 LF)  
(San Dieguito JPA)  
Streambank restoration**

**160 ac  
Arundo and tamarisk  
Removal; Native reveg**

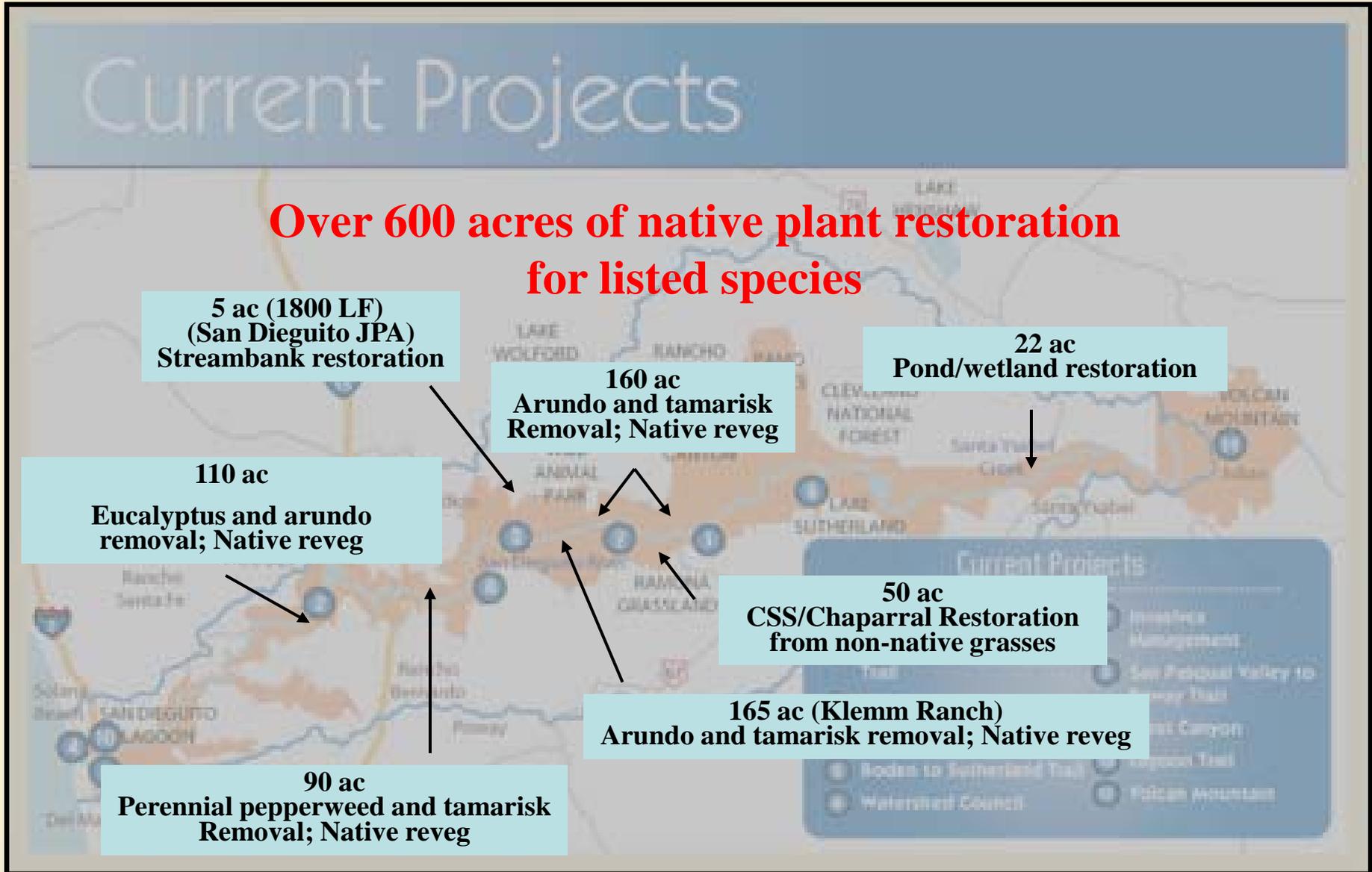
**22 ac  
Pond/wetland restoration**

**110 ac  
Eucalyptus and arundo  
removal; Native reveg**

**50 ac  
CSS/Chaparral Restoration  
from non-native grasses**

**165 ac (Klemm Ranch)  
Arundo and tamarisk removal; Native reveg**

**90 ac  
Perennial pepperweed and tamarisk  
Removal; Native reveg**



# Fallbrook Land Conservancy



-Protecting the natural beauty and rural character  
of northern San Diego County-



2006.03.14



**May 2011**

# Species Benefitted

- Direct Benefits
  - Ca gnatcatcher (Fed. threat.)
  - Orange-throated whiptail (State spp of Special Concern)
  - Coastal cactus wren (State spp of Special Concern)



# Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Must be an agricultural producer (food, feed or fiber)
- Financial and technical assistance – 50-90% cost share
- 1 – 10 Year Contract
- Ranking and selection process
- Beginning Farmer and Limited Resource Farmer Opportunities
- AGI Limitations



**Continuous grazing 1959-1985**



- Previously grazed 8-10 months/year
- Objective: improve forage but also water quality and wildlife habitat
- Changed to dormant season use (Oct-Jan)
- Noxious weed control but passive revegetation - *management*

# Project Example (prescribed grazing): Long Valley Creek, CA

**October - January grazing 1985-2000**



# Conservation Innovation Grant

- *“stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection in conjunction with agriculture production”*

<b>Energy conservation (RCD)</b>	<b>Forest health management and cavity-nesting birds in Ponderosa pine forests (American Bird Conservancy)</b>	<b>Innovative approaches to invasive plant management (University)</b>
<b>Carbon sequestration (Environmental Defense Fund)</b>	<b>Seed availability of less common species for pollinators (Xerces)</b>	<b>Sustainable forest biomass harvesting (The Forest Guild)</b>

# Wetland Reserves Program (WRP)

- Seasonal, semi-permanent, permanent, riparian wetlands and associated uplands
- Perpetual and 30-year Easements
- 10-Year Restoration Agreements



# Example Project (wetland restoration): Colusa Basin Drain

- Land formerly farmed to rice but continued to be frequently flooded
- Two stage restoration: most recent phase on right side (notice the bare ground)
- Deleveled surface sculpted to create micro-topography for varying water depths
- Water control structure, conservation cover, tree and shrub establishment



# Ranking Criteria & Procedures

## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE NRCS Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE RANKING CRITERIA WORKSHEET - Fiscal Year 2009

This Worksheet is required to be completed for each eligible WHIP Application by May 8, 2009.

Client Name:	Date:
Address:	Application No.:
City, State, ZIP:	County:
Phone No.:	Farm No.:
Evaluator(s):	Tract No.:
Service Office:	Acres:

Screening Priority (From Screening Worksheet)		
	High Priority	
	Medium Priority	
	Low Priority	

Enter the estimated land use type by acres to be restored/enhanced.			
	Restoration	Enhancement	
Upland _____ acres to be treated	_____	_____	
Wetland _____ acres to be treated	_____	_____	
Riparian _____ acres to be treated	_____	_____	
Aquatic _____ acres to be treated	_____	_____	

All with a brief explanation of the applicant's objectives and expected outcomes if the program application is approved. Include details regarding the proposed type of restoration or enhancement (e.g. restoration of riparian gallery forest, enhancement of native grasslands, etc).

Summary of Rating Factor Scores		
	Maximum	Earned
FACTOR 1. FOCAL SPECIES	50	
FACTOR 2. RESTORATION OF RARE AND DECLINING HABITATS	20	
FACTOR 3. RESTORATION OF NATIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES	30	
FACTOR 4. CONNECTIVITY TO BENEFICIAL HABITAT ADJACENT TO PROJECT	15	
FACTOR 5. CONNECTIVITY TO FULLY PROTECTED AREAS	15	
FACTOR 6. PROVIDE CORRIDORS TO BENEFICIAL HABITAT	15	
FACTOR 7. EXTENT TO WHICH PROJECT BENEFITS WILDLIFE	40	
FACTOR 8. CONTRACT LENGTH	25	
FACTOR 9. PROJECT SIZE	15	
FACTOR 10. ADDRESSES PRIORITY IN LANDSCAPE-SCALE PLAN	20	
FACTOR 11. PERMIT ISSUES	20	
FACTOR 12. PARTNERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS	30	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>295</b>	

Use this worksheet to select appropriate questions and final score from ProTracts Ranking Tool.

Signature: State or Federal Wildlife Agency Representative	Date:
Signature: NRCS Technical Team Leader	Date:
Signature: District Conservationist	Date:
Landowner Review	Date:

# Eligible Cost Share Practices

## California NRCS Regular WHIP Program - Fiscal Year 2009 Approved Practice List - Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The local regular WHIP program list of conservation practices approved for payment. The approved practice list with approved payments and components is located elsewhere on the NRCS California programs website.

Practices approved for payment in California - WHIP:

Practice Code	Practice Name (Units)
560	Access Road (Ft)
575	Animal Trails and Walkways (Ft)
314	Brush Management (Ac)
322	Channel Bank Vegetation (Ac)
544	Channel Stabilization (Ft)
327	Conservation Cover (Ac)
340	Cover Crop (Ac)
342	Critical Area Planting (Ac)
356	Dike (Ft)
352	Fence (Ft)
358	Field Border (Ft)
393	Filter Strip (Ac)
394	Firebreak (Ft)
383	Foot Break (Ft)
358	Fish Passage (Nos)
490	Forest Site Preparation (Ac)
866	Forest Stand Improvement (Ac)
855	Forest Trails and Landings (Ac)
410	Grove Stabilization Structure (No)
412	Grossed Waterway (Ac)
422	Hedgerow Planting (Ft)
441	Irrigation System, Microirrigation (Ac)
442	Irrigation System, Sprinkler (Ac)
488	Lined Waterway or Outlet (Ft)
484	Mulching (Ac)
500	Obstruction Removal (Ac)
533	Pumping Plant (No)
516	Pipeline (Ft)
375	Pond (No)
521C	Pond Sealing or Lining, Bentonite Sealant (SqFt)
521D	Pond Sealing or Lining, Compact Clay Sealant (SqFt)
550	Range Planting (Ac)
843	Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats (Ac)
391	Riparian Forest Buffer (Ac)
390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover (Ac)
854	Road/Landing Removal
574	Spring Development (No)
578	Stream Channeling (No)
355	Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (Ac)
550	Streambank and Shoreline Protection (Ft)
587	Structure for Water Control (Ac)
812	Tree/Shrub Establishment (Ac)
920	Underground Outlet (Ft)
614	Watering Facility (No)
859	Wetland Enhancement (Ac)
857	Wetland Restoration (Ac)
380	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (Ft)
850	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation (Ft)



# Cost Share Rates

## Materials and Labor

- Limited Resource Farmer: 90%
  - Direct or indirect gross farm sales of not more than \$100,000 in each of the previous 2 years AND
  - Total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of 4, OR less than 50% of county median household income in each of the previous 2 years
- Tribal Governments: 75-90%
  - Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994
- Beginning Farmer: 75%
  - Has not operated a farm or ranch
  - Or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than consecutive 10 years.
- All Others: 50%
- *Opportunities for agency collaboration and fund leveraging*

# Practices for Agriculture

- **Critical Area Planting**
- **Filter Strip**
- **Obstruction Removal**
- **Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats**
- **Sediment Basin**
- **Stream Bank Protection**
- **Hedgerows/Windbreaks**
- **Tail Water Recovery System**
- **Underground Outlets**

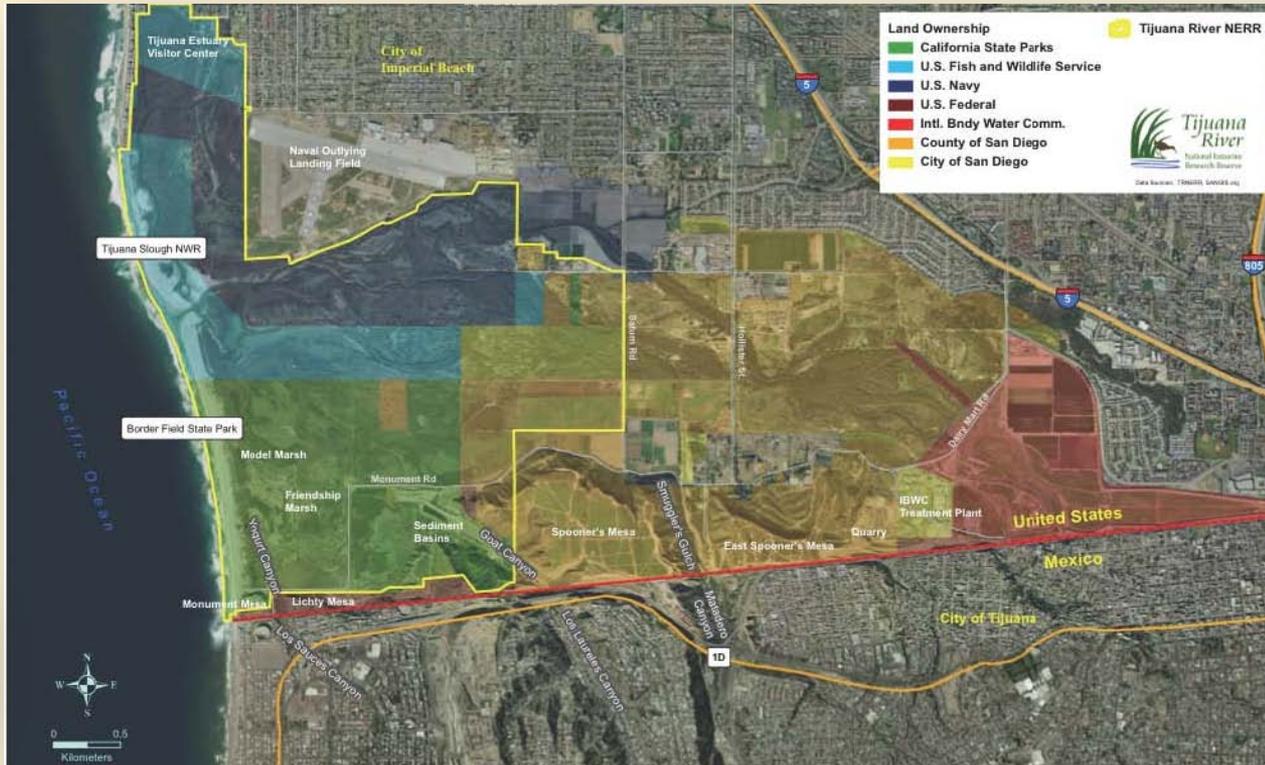


# Practices for Wildlife

- NRCS recommends conservation practices that solve resource issues while they improve or increase habitat for sensitive species
- Types of practices that benefit wildlife:
  - Streambank Stabilization, Wetland Restoration, Critical Area Planting, Riparian Forest Buffer, Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats, Tree and Shrub Establishment, *Hedgerow Planting*, and many more...



# Future of Agency Collaboration in San Diego



# Future of Agency Collaboration in San Diego



# Summary

- Large, watershed-scale projects
- Leverage funds (understand who can pay for what)
- NRCS's ability to assist private landowners
  - Address resource concerns within agriculture community with a proactive approach (permits, regulations, compliance)

# Local NRCS Office

- Usually covers one county
- Often is co-located with a RCD
- Maybe also be with FSA
- Staff
  - In charge: District Conservationist (DC)
  - Soil Conservationist
  - Engineer
  - Not usually a biologist, usually at the Area level



# Above the Local Office

- Area 4 Office (Riverside)
  - ASCFO, Resource Conservationist, Soil Scientist, Range Conservationist
- State Office (Davis)
  - Specialists: Geologists, Wetlands Biologists, Hydrologists, etc.
- National Office (Washington DC)



Source of Data:  
 USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service



Map prepared using ArcView 3.2a  
 by Terry Kocik, NRCS, Davis, CA  
 Map ID: office\_cluster 02/25/03



Visit our Web site: [WWW.CA.NRCS.USDA.GOV](http://WWW.CA.NRCS.USDA.GOV)

# THANK YOU!!

Shea O'Keefe

NRCS Biologist

760-745-2061 ext 104

[shea.okeefe@ca.usda.gov](mailto:shea.okeefe@ca.usda.gov)



Tim Viel – Nevada State Biologist

775-857-8500