



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

# Working Lands for Wildlife

Conservation Beyond Boundaries

## A Proven Model for Species Conservation

**Tom Moore**

NRCS State Biologist,  
Davis, CA



# USDA-NRCS

## Different than most federal agencies

- Farm Bill funding to address farmers/ranchers resource concerns through incentive programs and easements.
- Voluntary participation in all Programs
- Free planning
- Competitive funding for eligible producers when reimbursable contracts are completed to specifications
- All interactions, plans, and contracts with clients are private as stated in policy and FB statutes
- Focus on private lands with some public lands eligible, except for easements

# Farmers & Ranchers Resource Concerns

---

- Water Quantity
- Erosion Control and Drainage Control
- Water Quality
- Vegetation Management
- Wildlife Habitat Improvements
  - NRCS CA has always had multiple fund pools for targeted at-risk wildlife species

# Planning

---

- Landowner Conservation Plan
- Works best with goals that address client's resource concerns and target species resource concerns
- Steps:
  - Assess existing Resource Concerns
  - Proposed alternatives to address Resource Concerns
  - Alternatives developed that benefit target species habitat without adverse effects.

# NRCS Farm Bill Programs

## Technical Assistance Conservation planning

### Financial Assistance

Financial assistance for practice implementation

Typically 3-5 year contracts

EQIP

### Easements

Permanent easements

Long-term rental agreements

ACEP

### Science

Tied to implementation

Very limited

CEAP, CIG, SWAT

## WLFW – SWFL Coordination with FWS

---

- Selection of SWFL as one of the original seven WLFW Species
- Developed a SWFL Habitat Evaluation Guide in coordination with USFWS
- Consultation Process with USFW in 2012 and 2015

# WLFW Approach for SWFL & LBVI

- Targeted approach near historic or extant territories
- Using habitat suitability models and science provided by USGS to prioritize areas
- Enhancing riparian habitat with partners
- Increase nesting habitat and connectivity through invasive species management

# Potential opportunities to work on Habitat for SWFL and LBVI

---

- Expand NRCS technical assistance in Southern CA with Partner Biologist positions with ABC, FWS, DOD, and others
- Increase the joint funding for riparian habitat enhancement occurring with the FWS Partners Program
- Secure matching funding for riparian restoration projects or agreements through REPI
- Coordinate with interested federal, state and local partners



# Producer Disincentives for contracting riparian restoration

---

- No benefit to farm or ranch sustainability
- Potential for permits or consultations
- Reduced funding for eligible applicants with maximum payment limitations in Farm Bill
- State law fee requirements
  - Lake/streambed 1600 permit minimum \$6,000
  - Incidental Take permit fee minimum \$6,000



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

# Working Lands for Wildlife

Conservation Beyond Boundaries

# Thank You

# QUESTIONS?

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.