

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Accomplishments Report for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Habitat Restoration Division
Pacific Southwest Region**

Fiscal Years 2012-2016





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mission Statement

“The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”

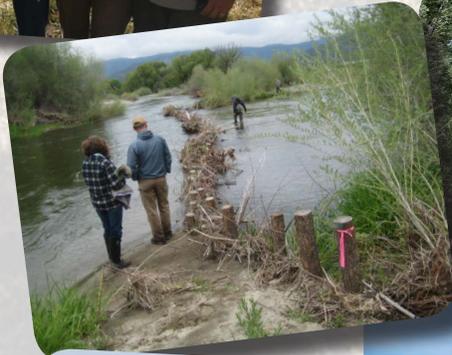


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Prepared by:

Matt Barry

Mike Edwards

Samantha Marcum

Matt Hamman

Carolyn Kolstad

Damion Ciotti

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Pacific Southwest Region

Habitat Restoration Division

11641 Blocker Drive, Suite 110

Auburn, CA 95603

(530) 889-2317

Special thanks to:

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Joe Milmoie for background photographs



Introduction

This report summarizes restoration accomplishments for the Habitat Restoration Division (Division) in the Pacific Southwest Region (Region 8) for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for years 2012-2016.

The Division is situated under the National Wildlife Refuge System in Region 8, and with others, works to restore, protect, and

enhance fish and wildlife habitat in support of the Service's federal trust responsibilities. There are biologists and hydrologists across 17 locations in California, Nevada, and the Klamath Basin of Oregon implementing these programs.

These project managers are dedicated to assisting with or leading conservation project implementation under the Partners

for Fish and Wildlife Program (Partners Program), the Coastal Program, and Tribal Wildlife Grants.

These programs are guided by strategic plans that were scoped nationally in 2007, with revisions occurring on five-year cycles.

The accomplishments herein were completed during the years 2012-2016, with reference to the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plans for the respective programs in those years.



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Regional Office

Division Chief
Matt Barry

Partners Program
Mike Edwards, Klamath
Matt Hamman, California

Coastal Program
Samantha Marcum

Tribal Program
Damion Ciotti

Schoolyard Habitat
Carolyn Kolstad

Priority projects are:

- Aimed at critical conservation concerns
- Important and valuable to the landowner
- Relevant at the local, regional, and landscape-scale
- Efficiently implemented to produce lasting and sustainable conservation results

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Mission

... to restore, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat cooperatively through voluntary partnerships with private landowners, Tribes, and other entities.

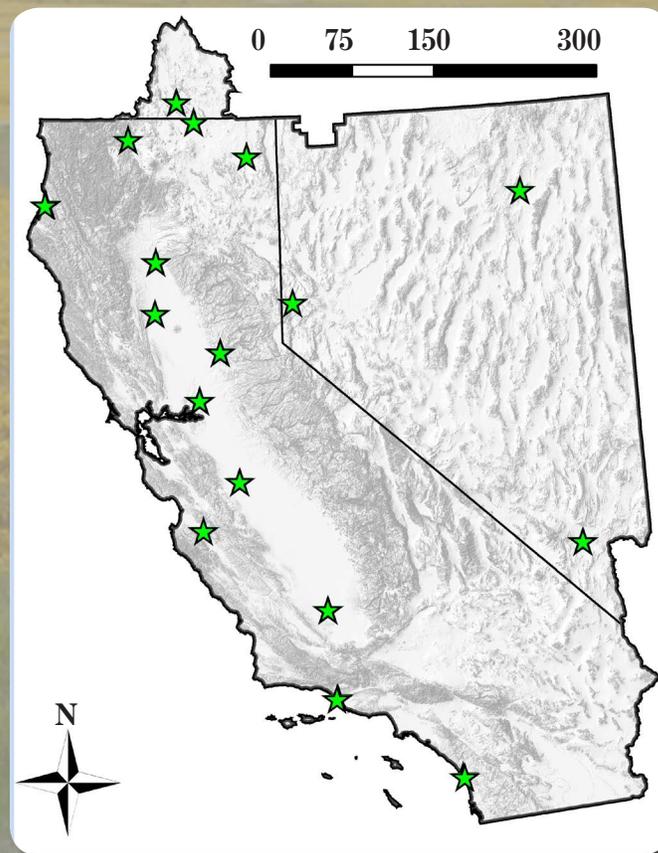
Purpose

Through its mission, the Partners Program strives to implement voluntary science-based, sustainable, and economically viable habitat restoration projects that are implemented with private landowners. In general, these are “natural-based solutions” to conservation challenges providing direct, timely, measurable, and lasting benefits to the Service’s trust resources while concurrently meeting the resource needs of private landowners and improving ecological conditions across the Region.

Conservation threats, issues, and concerns in Region 8 are diverse, considerable, and widespread. Solutions implemented by the Partners Program require careful thought, coordination, planning, follow-up, and analysis.

Restoration ecology and habitat restoration project implementation are the primary practices used by the Partners Program to achieve conservation results.

The need for these restoration practices in Region 8 is far greater than can be implemented with available funding and resources in any given year. Therefore, careful project prioritization, continued effectiveness evaluations, and adaptive management are critical to ensuring that the Service’s projects are ultimately meaningful and successful.



Field Stations

- Arcata, CA
- Auburn, CA
- Carlsbad, CA
- Elko, NV
- Kern NWR
Delano, CA
- Klamath Falls, OR
- Klamath NWR
Tulelake, CA
- Las Vegas, NV
- Red Bluff, CA
- Reno, NV
- Sacramento, NWR
Willows, CA
- Salinas, CA
- San Luis NWR
Los Banos, CA
- Stone Lakes NWR
Elk Grove, CA
- Ventura, CA
- Yreka, CA

Coastal Program

The Coastal Program is one of the Service's most effective resources for restoring and protecting fish and wildlife habitat on public and private lands along the U.S. coasts. Nationally, there are 24 priority coastal areas, with four in Region 8 along the Pacific Coast of California. The Coastal Program in Region 8 partners with federal, state, and non-profit

organizations. The program focuses on restoring and protecting coastal habitats, providing technical and cost-sharing assistance, supporting community-based restoration projects, collecting and developing information on the status of and threats to federal trust species, and using outreach to promote stewardship of coastal resources.

Field Stations

Arcata, CA
Carlsbad, CA
Half Moon Bay, CA
Pacific Grove, CA
Santa Cruz, CA
Ventura, CA

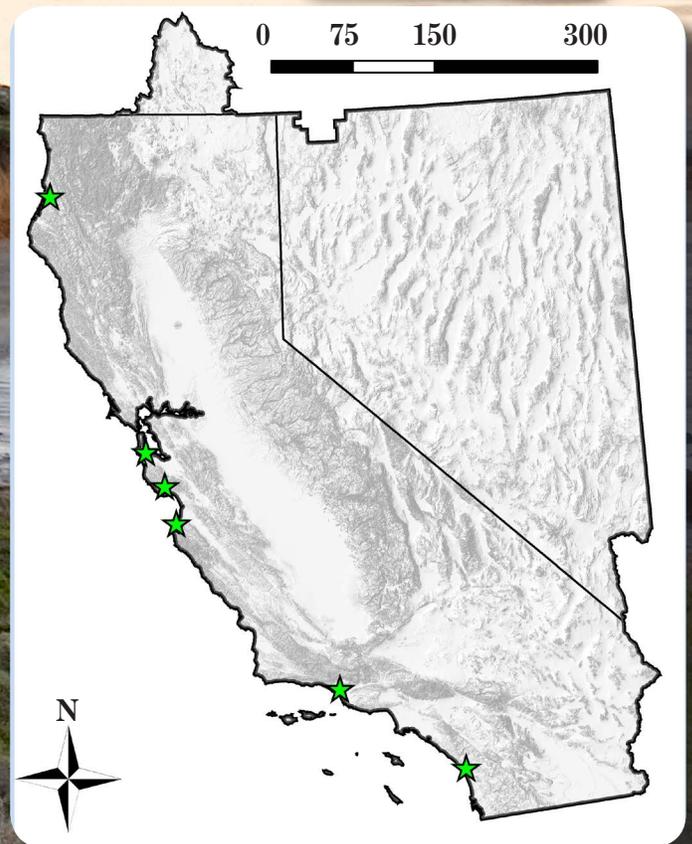


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Coastal Program

There are ten full and part-time staff members at six locations in Region 8 that facilitate partnerships and provide scientific leadership to:

- Restore and protect coastal habitats for trust species;
- Improve resiliency and diversity of coastal habitats, processes and species;
- Support education and outreach opportunities;
- Integrate species recovery and climate science with land management; and
- Implement the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program with the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Division.



Manila Dunes/Emily Walter

Tribal Programs

The Tribal Wildlife Grants program (TWG) is a competitive grant that is available to federally recognized Indian tribes to conserve fish and wildlife. TWG is important for developing and maintaining strong conservation partnerships with Tribes throughout Region 8. Funded activities may include

planning, management, research, and public education for wildlife and habitat conservation. Most TWG projects address critical Service priorities including: (1) conservation for sensitive species such as sage grouse, California condor, Lahontan cutthroat trout, Pacific lamprey, willow flycatcher, shortnose

sucker, Lost River sucker, and Owens pupfish; (2) Tribal youth engagement in conservation and nature; climate change adaptation and landscape connectivity.

Contact:
Damion Ciotti
Auburn, CA



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Schoolyard Habitat

Mission

... to enhance student understanding of the importance of the Service's trust resources and instill knowledge and appreciation of native landscapes in students by ...

- ❑ Implementing "hands-on" restoration projects targeting native habitats at schools;
- ❑ Providing related education, outreach, and interpretation; and
- ❑ Supporting educators by offering conservation related teaching resources and programs.

Schoolyard Habitat efforts are committed to Connecting People with Nature, while addressing conservation priorities that align with Service, Department of the Interior, and Department of Education priorities.

Contacts:

Carolyn Kolstad
Auburn, CA

Akimi King
Klamath Falls, OR

Jennifer Jones
Yreka, CA

Karleen Volherbst
Elk Grove, CA

Michael Glenn
Ventura, CA

Michelle Hunt
Reno, NV

Pescadero Beach, CA/Joe Milmo/USFWS

Focus Areas and Priorities

There are five goals described in the 2012-2016 strategic plans for the Partners Program and Coastal Program. The primary goal is: to Conserve Habitat. The accomplishments under this goal are paramount to illustrate how the Partners Program and Coastal Program advanced the Service's

habitat conservation goals for the last five years. Reporting these accomplishments is the main purpose for this report. The other four goals in the strategic plans provide program support for advancing this first goal but are generally ancillary to the programs' conservation objectives.

Strategic Goals:

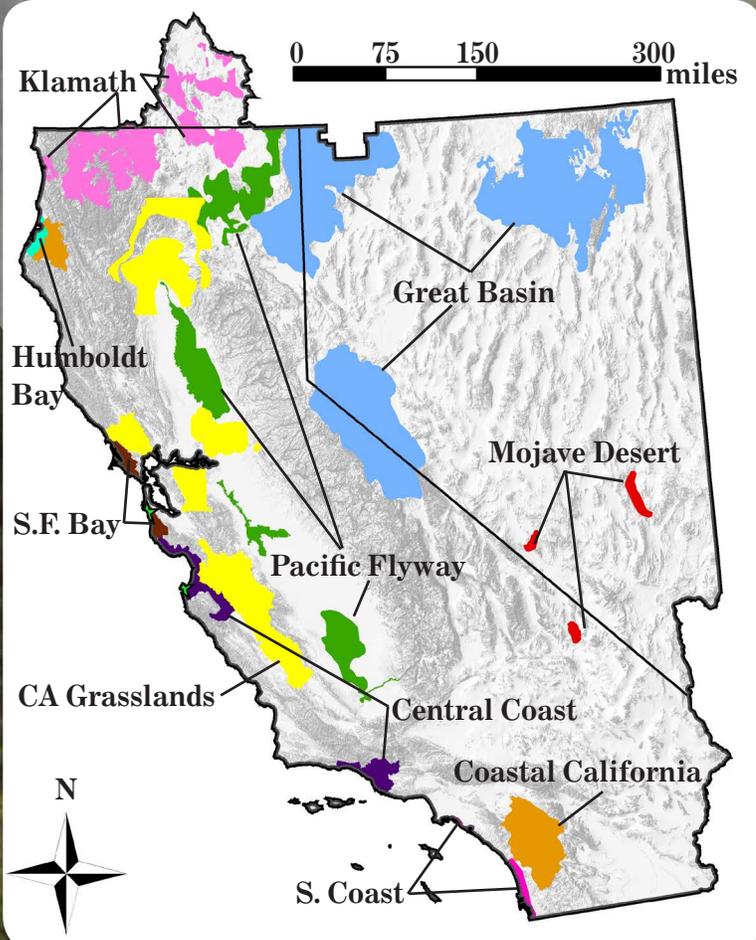
1. Conserve Habitat
2. Broaden and Strengthen Partnerships
3. Improve Information Sharing and Communication
4. Enhance Our Workforce
5. Increase Accountability

Focus Areas

Priorities for Partners Program and Coastal Program projects were set at two scales: regional and local. At the Regional level, priorities were set by establishing Focus Areas, and individual scientists and offices selected projects on an annual basis that met their priorities locally.

The Partners Program and Coastal Program strategic plans describe Focus Areas as the geographies where priority restoration needs and opportunities were anticipated, and project development efforts were concentrated. The Focus Areas delineate geographies where

the majority of restoration projects were projected to occur in Region 8 for the five-year period. These Focus Areas were generated to illustrate that concerted efforts would address habitat restoration priorities, opportunities, threats, and challenges across the Region. Six Focus Areas were established for the Partners Program and five for the Coastal Program for the 2012-2016 period. The Focus Areas were based upon specific local priorities and project selection decisions that are made at the local office level. These Focus Areas were chosen because they consist of networks of terrestrial and aquatic habitats important to significant species assemblages.



Focus Areas:

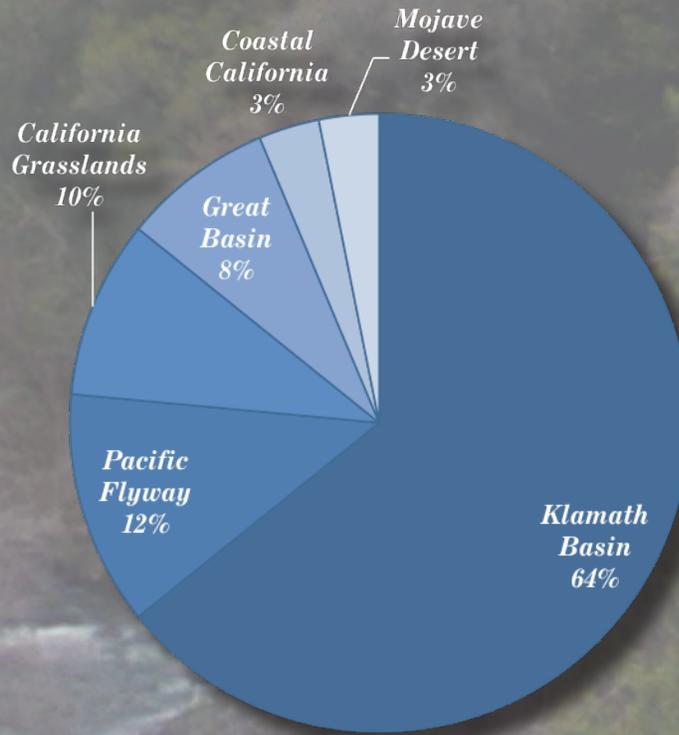
- Geographic Program priorities
- Important to Service trust resources
- Provide habitat connectivity
- Offer strong partnership opportunities
- Support recovery plan actions
- High restoration potential

Regional Priorities

Regional priorities were set and funding amounts were allocated to each Focus Area within the Region to reflect priorities.

Partners Program

For the Partners Program, the Klamath Basin was the Region's top priority for this period with 64% of the Region's funding directed to the Klamath totaling \$18.2 million for the five-year period. Pacific Flyway, California Grasslands, and Great Basin received approximately 10% of the Region's funding amounting to: \$3.52M, \$2.67M, and \$2.26M each. California Grasslands and Mojave Desert both received \$900,000 each for the five-year period.



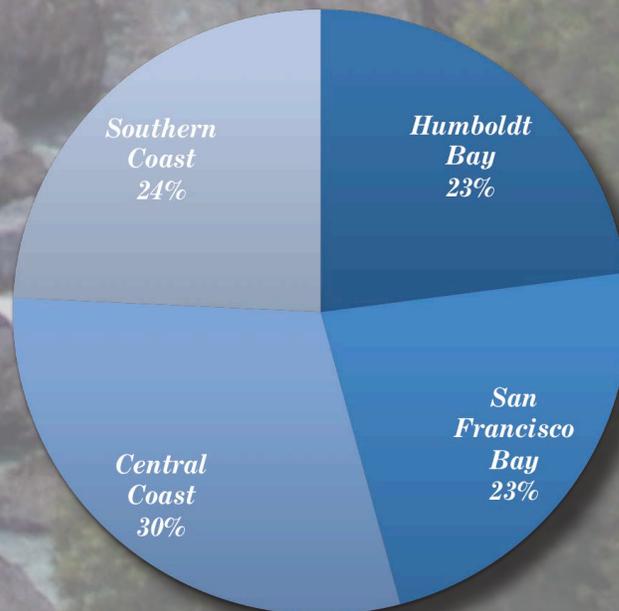
Partners Program Focus Area funding levels demonstrate Regional priorities by amount. Funding in the Klamath Basin was originally set by Congress.

Coastal Program

Coastal Program funds were allocated across four Congressionally-approved program locations in California: Humboldt Bay, San Francisco Bay, Central Coast, and Southern California.

Funding program locations varied due to staffing changes. Priority focus areas were: Southern CA Estuaries, Monterey Bay Dunes, South Central Coast Watersheds, San Francisco Outer Coast, and Humboldt Bay Estuaries.

The total 2012-2016 funding amounts for the local programs were: Humboldt Bay-\$1,252,569; San Francisco Bay-\$1,251,235; Central Coast-\$1,473,564; and Southern California-\$1,282,791.



Coastal Program Focus Area funding levels are nearly equal across the Region. They were set by Congress when the programs were established.

Accomplishments Summary

2012-2016: Pacific Southwest Region

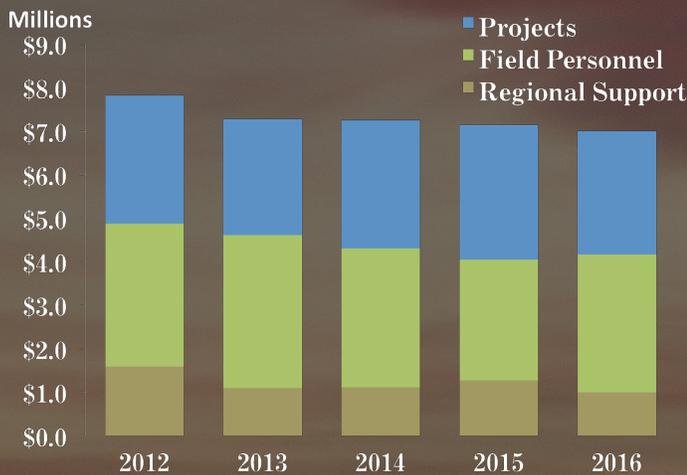
Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Local priorities and accomplishments were driven by the field stations and varied by Focus Area based on conservation priorities and opportunities in those specific areas. A planning

process was implemented in 2011, to delineate Focus Area boundaries and to determine conservation priorities for the years 2012-2016. Biologists and planners developed local strategic plans that

directed project development and implementation decisions. Habitat restoration targets were set on an annual basis within each Focus Area, and accomplishments were targeted and tracked as riparian

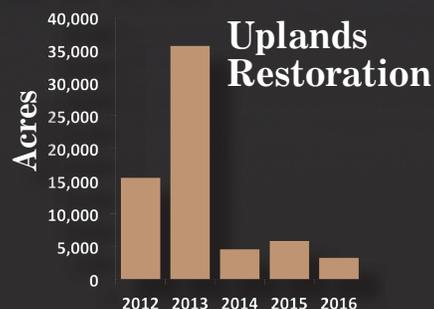
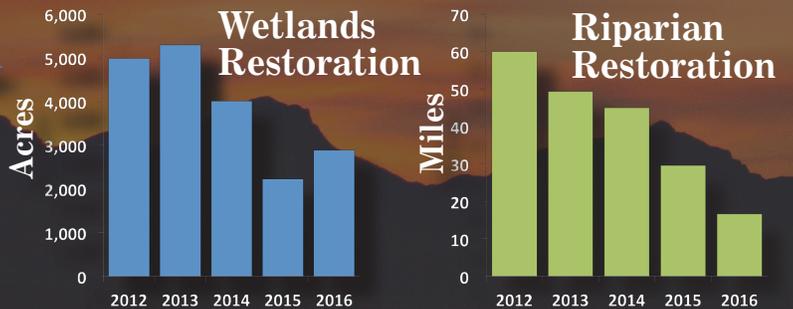
Program Funding



Targets and Accomplishments



Total completed projects = 896



miles, wetland acres, and upland acres.

Program Funding

Congress allocated about \$65 million annually to the Partners Program nationally with the Pacific Southwest Region receiving between \$7 and \$8 million per year for the 2012-2016 period. The Region’s annual funding declined by nearly \$1 million dollars during that time ranging from a high of \$7.8M in 2012. While the decreased funding amounted to about a 10% cut to the total budget, there were notable impacts on project delivery during the five-year period. Every effort was made to ensure that funds to the field stations were maximized despite these cuts to the Region.

Roughly ninety-percent of the Regional funding is directed at project implementation either through direct funding for projects or technical assistance from personnel in field stations. The remaining funds provide for Regional Support, which includes overhead costs for compliance and program management. Typically, project implementation costs far exceed Program funds, and matching funds are provided by landowners and other partners that often exceed the Service’s contributions. Minimally, projects require a 1:1 match, but 3:1 and higher is far more common.

Targets and Accomplishments

Partners Program projects were tracked two ways within the Pacific Southwest Region: (1) using the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) established metrics; and (2) pursuant to the Service’s priorities as stated

in the Partners for Fish and Wildlife policy. For this report, we also tallied the number of projects that contributed to other Service Program priorities: Listed and candidate species, interjurisdictional fish, and

migratory birds. Partners Projects also support Refuge purposes across the Region, and those priorities frequently overlap with one or more of the other Service priorities.

GPRA accomplishments for habitat restoration projects were reported to Congress as acres and miles of habitat created or restored. Those accomplishments for the Pacific Southwest Region are shown in the bar graphs to the left. In total, 896 habitat restoration projects were completed for the five-year period. That amounted to more than 84,000 acres and 203 miles of habitat restored and/or enhanced. Of that, about 65,000 acres were uplands and almost 20,000 acres were wetlands. Riparian accomplishments include: riverine, shoreline, and stream channel projects as well.

Targets for each of these three GPRA metrics were established for the five-year period in the 2012-2016 Partners Program Strategic Plan. The following table compares those targets to the accomplishments for the Region overall.

For wetlands and uplands,

accomplishments exceeded five-year targets despite funding reductions and a downward trend over the period. Riparian targets fell short by 60 miles, but these projects are more complex and expensive than the other project types.

Partners Program: Habitat Restoration

	Target	Accomplishment
Wetland (acres)	18,366	19,388
Upland (acres)	27,969	64,915
Riparian (miles)	261	201

Informing the Future

The recently completed 2017-2021 strategic plan for the Partners Program provides a framework for the future. Anticipating reduced funding levels was certainly a consideration in developing that plan. The analysis completed for this report provides useful insights that will guide future program decisions as well. These results inform our strategy by highlighting the need to focus on projects that are the highest priority for the Service and its partners. They also indicate that the Partners Program needs to make decisions that maximize efficiency ensuring that program (GPRA) targets are accomplished sufficiently despite reduced funding. Many program adjustments have been implemented already and others are being considered.

The 2017-2021 Strategic Plan also sets forth a framework for embedding a more scientific approach to project implementation that will function at the landscape-scale. Once completed, this will add capacity to the program’s ability to be more successful in achieving its conservation objectives.

Coastal Program

Program Funding

The Coastal Program benefitted from annually allocated funding from Congress that amounted to a total of \$7.0 million to the Region for the five-year period, which amounted to an annual average of \$1.4 million per year for that same period. That funding was divided among the five Focus Areas within the Coastal Program proportional to the original Congressional

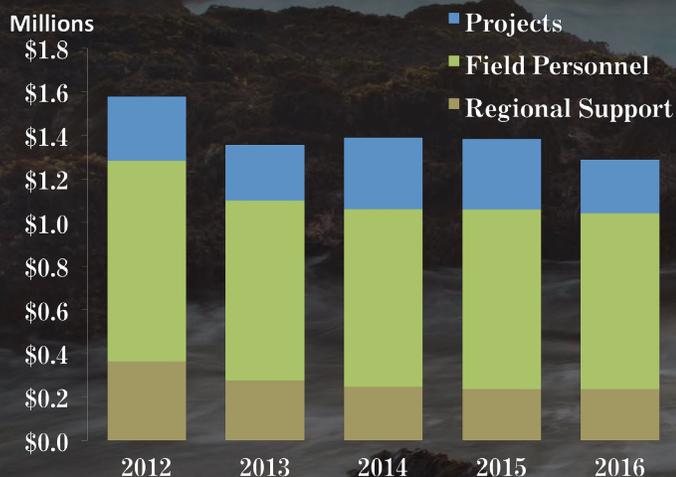
allocations. The five Focus Areas were: Humboldt Bay; San Francisco Bay; Monterey Bay; Ventura; and Southern California.

Coastal Program funds fell sharply in 2013, then increased slightly for 2014 and 2015, and fell slightly again in 2016. These fluctuations had the potential to affect program delivery, but every effort was made to avoid such impacts.

Targets and Accomplishments

For restoration project accomplishments, the Coastal Program showed general increases for the five-year period for riparian and uplands projects. Wetlands restoration projects showed an increasing trend for years 2012-2015 but decreased in 2016. This was offset by the increased effort placed on riparian and uplands restoration projects that year. Wetlands restoration accomplishments were highest in 2015, and riparian and uplands restoration accomplishments both peaked in 2014.

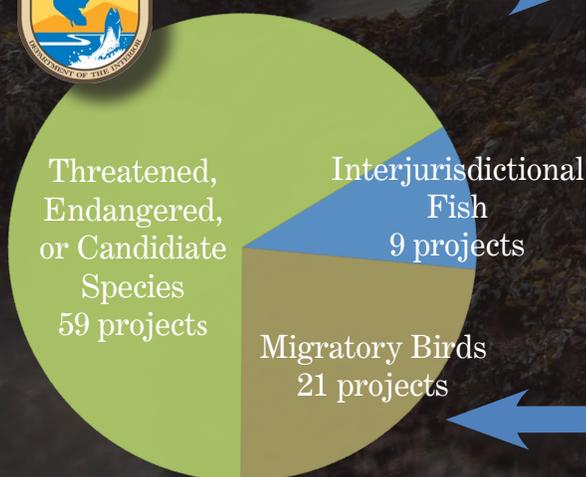
Restoration Funding



Restoration Targets and Accomplishments



Priorities



Total completed projects = 145

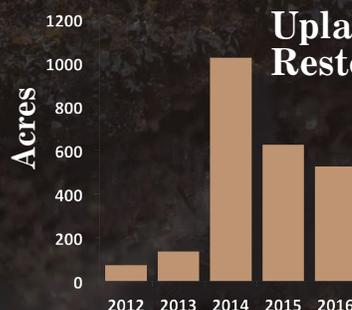
Wetlands Restoration



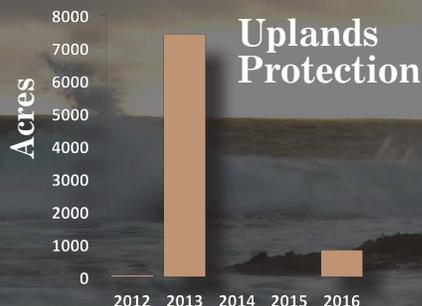
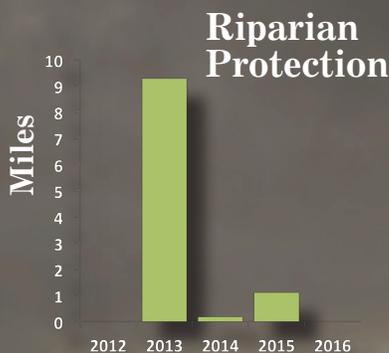
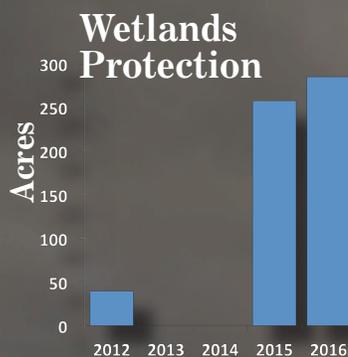
Riparian Restoration



Uplands Restoration



Protection Targets and Accomplishments



The Coastal Program also tracked accomplishments for protection projects. These were projects where lands are protected either through acquisitions or easements. These projects were typically funded by the National Coastal Wetlands Grants Program, where Coastal Program biologists were key to developing and implementing those projects and the grant applications. Acres of wetlands protected were high in 2015 and 2016 exceeding 250 acres in each of those years. Uplands acres protected were highest in 2013 with more than 7,000 acres protected, and riparian protection peaked that same year with nine miles protected.

The 2012-2016 Coastal Program Strategic Plan set forth five-year targets for restoration and protection targets. Those targets were compared to the five-year accomplishments in the tables below. Accomplishments were nearly twice the targets for wetlands and uplands for habitat

restoration efforts although riparian miles fell short of the targets. For protection efforts, targets were dramatically exceeded with uplands accomplishments

a project monitoring framework was developed. This framework was enabled a shift in resources that will increase accountability and projects utility. Anticipating reduced funding levels was certainly a consideration in developing the framework and strategic plan. The analysis completed for this report provides useful insights that will guide future program decisions as well. These results inform our strategy by highlighting the need to focus on projects that are the highest priority for the Service and its partners. They also indicate that the Coastal Program needs to make decisions that maximize efficiency ensuring that program (GPRA) targets are accomplished sufficiently despite reduced funding.

The 2017-2021 Strategic Plan also sets forth a framework for

Coastal Program: Habitat Restoration

	Target	Accomplishment
Wetland (acres)	2,206	4,384
Upland (acres)	1,127	2,387
Riparian (miles)	162	35

Coastal Program: Protection

	Target	Accomplishment
Wetland (acres)	336	581
Upland (acres)	249	8,277
Riparian (miles)	2.4	11

exceeding targets by an order of magnitude. Overall, the Coastal Program accomplishments exceeded expectations dramatically for the five-year period.

Informing the Future

Under the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan,

embedding a more scientific approach to project implementation that will function at the landscape-scale. Once completed, this will add capacity to the program's ability to be more successful in achieving its conservation objectives.

Tribal Wildlife Grants

The Tribal Wildlife Grants Program provides funding to Federally-recognized Indian tribes for projects that conserve fish and wildlife resources. Grant awards are based on annual proposals submitted to the Service by tribes. Program proposals are scored based on criteria including resource benefit and capacity building.

Service employees from across the Pacific Southwest Region provide their technical expertise to score and rank grant proposals according to a nationally established ranking criteria. Proposals that demonstrate clear benefits to wildlife and wildlife habitat are typically the most competitive.

National program funding is allocated through an appropriation from the Land and Water Conservation Fund nationally and portioned by Region according to the number of proposals received in each Region. On average, the Pacific Southwest Region receives 20 proposals and is able to fund four projects per year.

Most Tribal Wildlife Grant projects are in close partnership with

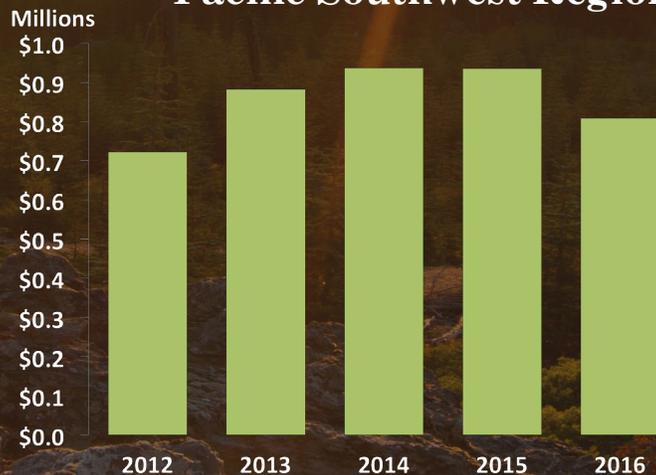
various Service programs including Ecological Services, Refuges, and Fisheries.

From 2012 to 2016, there were 24 projects funded in the Pacific Southwest Region totaling \$4,286,148. These projects leveraged \$2,818,517 in nonfederal match funding to achieve more than \$7 million in conservation benefits.

Tribal Wildlife Grant projects completed by the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe are an excellent example of conservation success in this Region. The Tribe received three grant awards since 2012 for their Lahontan cutthroat and sage grouse conservation

work on the 11,000 acre Summit Lake Paiute Reservation. With the Service's support, the Tribe gathered population and seasonal movement data for sage grouse and trout populations. These data are now integral to guiding management actions on the Paiute Reservation including native grass and stream restoration, protection of springs and migratory corridors, and identifying species recovery objectives. The Summit Lake Paiute Tribe coordinates these efforts with nearby partners including the Great Basin LCC and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge to address habitat connectivity challenges across the greater sage steppe landscape.

Tribal Wildlife Grant Funding Pacific Southwest Region



Damion Citootti/USFWS

Tribal Wildlife Grant Projects

2012-2016	No. of Projects
Habitat Restoration	17
Research and monitoring	17
Outreach and education	6

Joe Milne/USFWS

Schoolyard Habitat

There are more than 10,000 public schools in the Pacific Southwest Region ranging from highly urban districts like Los Angeles to very rural districts in Nevada and southern Oregon. Schoolyard Habitat projects and activities took conservation tools directly to schools to align the Service's mission and priorities with school curricula. Projects were developed and implemented following the Schoolyard Habitat Project Guide in close coordination with schools and districts. Successful projects provided refugia and microhabitats for native species and educational opportunities for students.

Schoolyard Habitat activities

and projects utilized a hands-on approach that engaged students by involving them in the conservation process, while striving to create the next wave of conservation professionals. Projects were typically in the form of habitat restoration on school-owned property or curriculum-based engagement activities with students.

Service personnel worked closely with school teachers and administrators on developing and delivering these activities. The focus on Schoolyard Habitat activities in the Region was initiated by the Assistant Regional Director for Conservation Partnerships in 2008. Throughout the 2012-

2016 period, there were up to six field office coordinators focused on collaborating with schools to implement these projects and activities.

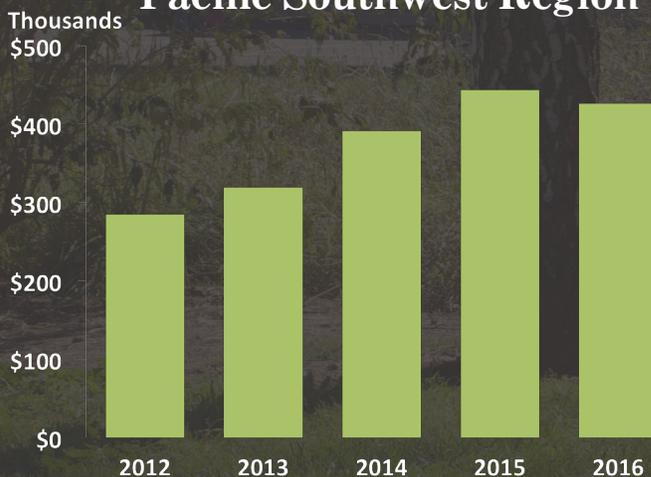
Funding

Funding for Schoolyard Habitat activities was sourced primarily in Partners for Fish and Wildlife funds (67%) with contributions from the Coastal Program (21%), Refuges (6%), and Ecological Services (6%). Total annual funding for Schoolyard Habitats for the five year period was nearly \$1.9 million. That includes costs for staff time and project funding. Project funds were approximately \$60,000 per year, and funds were managed in collaboration with either the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (2008-2016) or the Green Schools National Network (2016-present). Those funds were matched with non-Service funds to at least 1:1, but typically higher.

Targets and Accomplishments

Schoolyard Habitat relied on voluntary participation by schools for projects. The Schoolyard Habitat accomplishments and targets included metrics such as: completing habitat restoration projects accessible to students; reaching students with conservation messages; establishing strong partnerships; and better connecting the Service to students.

Schoolyard Habitat Funding Pacific Southwest Region



Schoolyard Habitat Accomplishments 2012-2016

- 33 habitat acres restored at 60 schools
- 48% Title I schools
- 85,345 students reached
- \$360,266 allocated to schools for projects

Restoration in Action



Upper Left: Klamath Basin Focus Area. Large woody debris placement provides fishhabitat.



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USFWS

Upper Right: Great Basin Focus Area stream restoration.

Center: Wetlands restoration project under construction in the Pacific Flyway Focus Area.



USFWS

Lower Left: Restoration at Ash Springs in the Mojave Aquatic Focus Area.

Lower Right: Amphibians depend on pond restoration projects in the California Grasslands Focus Area.



USFWS



Jonathan Shapp-Cook, USFWS



Emily Walter

*Upper Left:
Partners Pro-
gram restoration
on a ranch in the
Southern Califor-
nia Coast Focus
Area.*



Mary Root, USFWS

*Upper Right:
Coastal Program
at the Manila
Dunes Resto-
ration project in
the Humboldt
Bay Focus Area.*



Kenneth and Gabriele Adelman



Carolyn Heberman, USFWS

*Center: Gaviota
Creek restoration
in the Central
Coast Focus
Area.*

*Lower Left:
Marsh resto-
ration at Los
Cerritos in the
Southern Califor-
nia Focus Area.*

*Lower Right:
Restoration in
the Pescadero
watershed has
been important
in the San Fran-
cisco Bay Focus
Area.*

Kathleen Pollett, USFWS

Division Summary

The Habitat Restoration Division in the Pacific Southwest Region is committed to implementing habitat restoration projects in cooperation with others to help meet the Service's conservation objectives across California, Nevada, and the Klamath Basin. The Partners Program, Coastal Program, and Tribal Wildlife Grants make tremendous contributions toward advancing the Service's mission.

These programs rely heavily on strategic plans that are established nationally, developed regionally, and delivered locally with five key goals. Within this Region, the Partners Program is allocated about \$7M annually, and the Coastal Program about \$1.2M.

The Service is held accountable by Congress for project accomplishments, which are tracked based on the number of acres and miles of wetlands, uplands, and riparian habitat created, restored, or enhanced. Over the course of the five-years reported, a total of almost 100,000 acres (99,964 acres) and 250 miles (247) of habitat was restored or protected (Coastal Program only) with these Programs in Region 8.

For the period 2012-2016, both the Partners and Coastal Programs exceeded most of the targets set in 2012 despite fluctuations in funding and staffing during that period. There were about fifteen Partners

Program project managers in California, fourteen in the Klamath Basin, and three in Nevada. The Coastal Program supports about five others. Project managers in these programs are scientists, typically trained in biology, ecology, hydrology, or engineering. They are stationed in about eighteen different locations across the Region and are committed to developing and implementing high priority habitat restoration projects

“Over the course of the five-years reported, a total of almost 100,000 acres and 250 miles of habitat was restored or protected with these Programs.”

in support of the Service's mission.

The scientists that develop and implement these projects are highly skilled project managers with a unique capacity to bring together a variety of project partners and

funding sources that complex projects require, but continual efforts are made toward broadening and strengthening partnerships, which why that is an ongoing key strategic goal for these programs.

Focus Areas served as a guide for selecting projects and were established with input from other Service programs (e.g., Ecological Services, Refuges, and Migratory Birds) as well as other partners with similar goals, such as private landowners, tribes, other agencies, and non-profit groups.

This report represents an effort to advance two other strategic goals to set forth for these programs in their strategic plans: improving information sharing and communication; and increasing accountability. The results from five-years of progress for these

programs are presented, and while this report does not do those efforts toward justice, our intent is to help expand and initiate conversations that will facilitate increased transparency and collaboration across the Service's programs and with other partners. It is also our intent that increased collaboration leads to better projects and program improvements in the future.

The results described in this report were utilized to develop a strategic plan for the Partners and Coastal Programs for the period 2017-2021 (March 2017). That strategy provides a revised look at the Programs' regional priorities that was developed in conjunction with input from a wide-array of partners. That strategy also sets forth a framework for increasing program effectiveness by designing an improved adaptive management

strategy. There are big challenges associated with that framework including implementing an improved monitoring structure that can better inform project decisions and embed a more scientific approach overall. The Partners and Coastal Program strategic plans are considered living documents under constant revision as new information is gathered.

Habitat restoration is often looked to as a potential solution for many of the Service's challenges whether on or around National Wildlife Refuges or related to assisting with improving habitat for recovering listed species. The Partners and Coastal Programs strive to make significant contributions to those and many other conservation issues within this diverse and ecologically rich landscape that is the Pacific Southwest Region.



**U.S. Department of Interior
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

<http://www.fws.gov>

**Federal Relay
1 800/877 8339 Voice and TTY**

April 2018

