



Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office Safe Harbor Agreement Program

Fact Sheet for Private Landowners

More than 70 percent of the nation’s landscape is in private ownership and nearly two-thirds of endangered and threatened species are found on private lands. Working in partnership with private landowners* to promote the conservation and recovery of listed species assists the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) in accomplishing its mission.

* Private landowner – includes any non-Federal landowner

We at the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office envision that our work, through the voluntary efforts of safe harbor agreements, will incentivize proactive conservation and enable private landowners to implement actions that provide a conservation benefit to listed fish and wildlife species and contribute to their recovery on private lands without additional regulatory burdens.

Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office Safe Harbor Agreement Program Goals

- Conserve and recover listed species.
- Incentivize recovery of listed species on private lands.
- Build and maintain partnerships.
- Improve and increase information sharing and communication.



Stream and Riparian Habitat

Credit: USFWS

How does a safe harbor agreement benefit a private landowner?

Participating landowners receive formal assurances from the Service (i.e., safe harbor agreement assurances) that include incidental take coverage and a guarantee of no additional regulatory burdens. These assurances provide the landowner with certainty in land use planning for the duration of the safe harbor agreement. Additionally, the landowner can return the property to the baseline conditions at the end of the safe harbor agreement period.

How do we help private landowners?

We at the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office work with the landowner, or their representative, in the development of a safe harbor agreement to build a partnership that provides conservation benefits to listed species and/or their habitats. By working directly with the landowner, we identify shared goals and conservation activities that are feasible for the landowner to implement. We can provide assistance to the landowner by writing the document, conducting surveys and baseline assessments, and developing maps.

Additionally, once completed, we may be able to provide the landowner with assistance in implementing the activities in the safe harbor agreement and work to find funding for those activities. Maintaining a positive relationship and partnership with private landowners who voluntarily provide conservation benefits to federally listed species is an essential part of achieving our mission and contributing to the conservation and recovery of listed species on private lands.

What is a safe harbor agreement?

A safe harbor agreement is a voluntary agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a private landowner whose actions contribute to the recovery of threatened or endangered species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Safe Harbor Agreement Assurances provide the landowner:

- The ability to return to baseline.
- Incidental take coverage.
- A guarantee that management activities will not change.
- A guarantee there will be no additional future property-use restrictions.

Safe Harbor Agreements

What are examples of private landowners that have enrolled in safe harbor agreements with our office?

Ranchers

Swallow Creek Ranch, San Luis Obispo County

Agricultural lands

Mondavi Winery, San Luis Obispo County

Local Government

Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District at Palo Corona Regional Park, Monterey County

Conservation Organizations

Ojai Valley Land Conservancy, Ventura County

Water Districts

Metropolitan Water District, Ventura County



Pond and Grasslands

Credit: USFWS

landowners to maintain, enhance, and restore these habitats is essential to the conservation of listed species. Under these circumstances, ranching, farming, and listed species conservation has the potential to work hand in hand.

Under a safe harbor agreement, what types of activities can private landowners do to benefit listed species?

Develop and implement pond management activities.

Develop and implement water management activities for ongoing land use.

Install fencing and off-site water troughs to manage cattle in sensitive habitats.

Install native plants to restore habitat for listed species.

Remove non-native plants to enhance habitats.

What are our priority partnerships with private landowners?

We envision working with a diverse range of landowners. Of the many private landowners, partnering with those conducting ranching and agricultural activities is a priority for us. Ranchers and farmers are known for being excellent stewards of their lands and as a result often provide habitats for listed species. Working with private

The Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office is working in partnership with private landowners to promote the voluntary conservation and recovery of listed fish and wildlife species on private lands. This effort assists the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in accomplishing its mission.

How to get started?

Contact our office for more information, to discuss safe harbor agreement opportunities, or to initiate the development of one. Contact information below.

We would work with the landowner to identify the baseline conditions and management activities. We may also be able to assist the landowner in developing maps and other technical items associated with the development of a safe harbor agreement.

Want to learn more?

Visit the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office's website, safe harbor agreement page. Website address is below.



Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office Area of Responsibility

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