

RECOMMENDED ACQUISITIONS

Acquisition of real estate through easements, purchases, and fee entitlement primarily involves protection and restoration of land for environmental purposes.

Table 3 shows the four acquisitions discussed in this chapter.

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RECOMMENDED ACQUISITIONS	
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Protection of Existing Wetlands	168
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Migratory sandhill cranes.

Protection of Existing Wetlands

Wetlands provide multiple benefits, including fish and wildlife habitat, flood protection, ground water recharge, and improved water quality. As of 1989, more than 90 percent of the historical wetlands had been lost, mainly to reclamation and flood control activities. Most of the remaining wetlands are managed, but not all are assured protection. Acquisition of remaining wetlands is necessary to reduce wetland decline.

Background

In 1993, the President of the United States and the Governor of California adopted wetland protection policies that stressed the importance of protecting remaining wetlands. A primary objective of the policy in California is to ensure no overall net loss of wetlands and to achieve a net gain in the quantity, quality, and permanence of wetlands acreage and values. Major threats to remaining non-riparian wetlands in the basin include:

- Drainage and conversion to agricultural, residential, or industrial use.
- Poor quality of water available to wetland areas.
- Inadequate quantity of water available to wetland areas.
- High operational costs, including water and electric power costs.
- Poor management of wetlands, including over-grazing and siltation.

Action

The Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture Implementation Plan focuses on reversing the decline of California wetlands. The plan has several objectives, including protection, restoration, and enhancement of wetlands, enhancement of waterfowl habitat on agricultural lands, and securing water for State, Federal, and private wetlands.

The habitat protection objective is to protect 80,000 additional acres of privately-owned wetlands through acquisition of fee-title or perpetual conservation easements. All acquisition would be contingent on a firm supply of good quality water. This acquisition objective represents 67% of unprotected wetlands in the Central Valley.

The habitat acquisition goal for the San Joaquin Basin is 52,500 acres¹ of the total 67,000 acres of unprotected wetlands² in the basin. Target date for completion of the Joint Venture is year 2000.

1 Perpetual conservation easement = 37,500 acres; fee-title acquisition = 15,000 acres.

2 Unprotected wetland is any privately-owned wetland not covered by a perpetual conservation easement.

Protection of Existing Wetlands

Benefits

Benefits will be:

- Protection of wetland habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds and other water-related birds and mammals, including threatened and endangered species.
- Possibility of improved flood protection, ground water recharge, and surface water quality.

Costs and Funding Sources

Total cost for the San Joaquin Basin objective is estimated at \$50.5 million.

Conflicts and Resolutions

No conflicts have been identified.

Related Activities

San Joaquin River Management Plan Recommendation	Page in This Report
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Dual-Purpose Floodway Proposal	36
Geographic Information System	48
Multi-Species Recovery Plan	60
Restoration of Converted Wetlands	68
San Joaquin River Overflow onto Riparian and Wetland Areas	102
Other Aquatic Species — Status and Needs	146

Implementation

Implement this plan in conjunction with the Multi-Species Recovery Plan, San Joaquin Valley Interagency Team, or San Joaquin Valley Regional Consortium's regional strategy as implemented by governments and organizations.

Riparian Habitat

Sufficient quantity, diversity, and continuity of riparian habitat is needed to stem and reverse the decline of riparian-dependent wildlife species in the San Joaquin Valley.

Background

Fragmentation and insufficient quantity and diversity of remaining riparian habitats has severely impacted fish and wildlife populations and overall species diversity. Some areas are essentially isolated patches or islands of habitat surrounded by agricultural and urban development. The future trend for these ecosystems is toward continued loss of native species and natural wildlife communities and an increase in numbers of non-native species, especially those adapted to degraded areas and human disturbance.

Action

Identify and acquire existing riparian areas in the San Joaquin Basin currently lacking long-term protection, starting with those that can most readily be protected or where active planning is underway to establish corridors or natural parkways. Acquire by fee title or by an economic incentive program (such as easement and tax incentives).

Benefits

Acquisition of existing riparian lands will minimize loss of habitat while a comprehensive management plan is being developed.

Costs and Funding Sources

Costs and funding sources have not been identified.

Riparian Habitat

Conflicts and Resolutions

The Flood Control subcommittee stated that maintenance removal of riparian habitat that reduces the flow capacity may be necessary in association with this recommendation. That is in obvious conflict with the goals of the proposal and will not be considered. The Flood Protection subcommittee suggested that a management plan be associated with acquired land to ensure protection of existing value and use of adjacent land.

Implementation

This will be a new, long-term project and will be managed via a "buffer" zone and management plan to ensure that management of acquired land does not jeopardize land use of adjacent properties (weeds, fire, etc) and that factors such as pesticide use on neighboring land does not pose a threat to resources on land acquired by the San Joaquin River Management Program.



Riparian habitat along the Merced River.

Sensitive Species Habitat

Most of California's unique species live in restricted habitat, under specific conditions to which they have been adapting for hundreds or thousands of years. As people change or destroy this habitat, its inhabitants die or fail to reproduce.

Background

Major threats to remaining habitat in the San Joaquin Basin include conversion of undeveloped land to agricultural, residential, or recreational use. Agricultural and urban expansion has been extensive in the San Joaquin Basin. As of 1990, about 14 species were federally-listed as endangered. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had identified about 20 species as "candidate species", indicating information is available that may warrant listing as endangered or threatened.

Action

Establish a regional consortium of local, state, federal, and private parties to develop habitat conservation plans. Acquire by easement or fee title or protect through some economic incentive, core and "buffer" areas for special-status species as developed in the regional plan and strategy. Where possible, improve other habitat for these species through a regional strategy. Acquire land suitable for restoration as special-status species habitat.

Benefits

The benefit will be long-term protection of contiguous blocks of important habitat for special-status species.

Costs and Funding Sources

Costs and funding sources have not yet been identified.

Related Activities

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Education Program — Recreation, Wildlife, Fisheries	38
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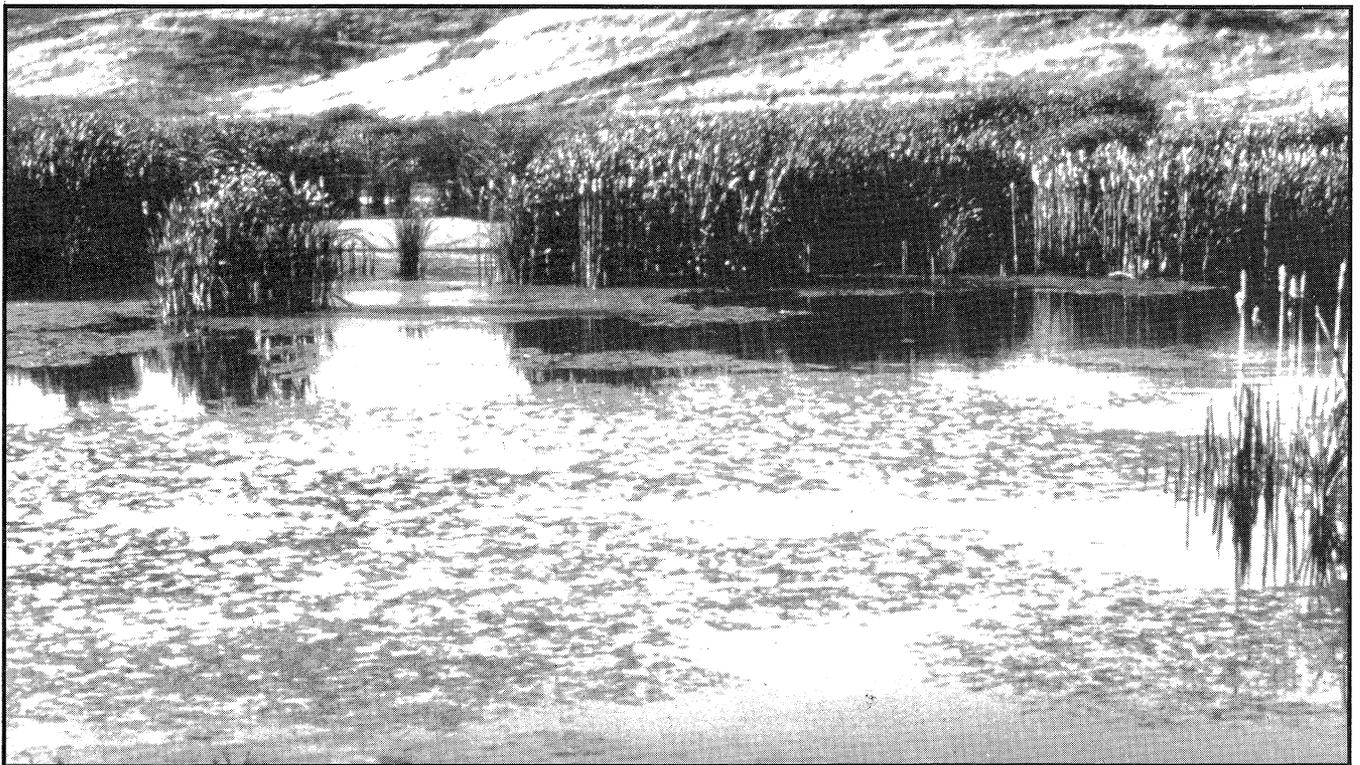
Sensitive Species Habitat

Conflicts and Resolutions

The Flood Control subcommittee suggested that a management plan be associated with acquired land to protect the value and use of adjacent land. This will be managed via a "buffer" zone and management plan to ensure that management of acquired land does not jeopardize uses of adjacent property (weeds, fire, etc) and that factors such as pesticide use on neighboring land does not threaten resources of land acquired by the San Joaquin River Management Program.

Implementation

Encourage the San Joaquin Valley Interagency Resource Conservation Consortium to develop habitat conservation plans.



A large percentage of San Joaquin Valley wetlands has been converted to other uses.