



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

Shea O’Keefe  
Biologist  
Area 4 Southern California

# **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

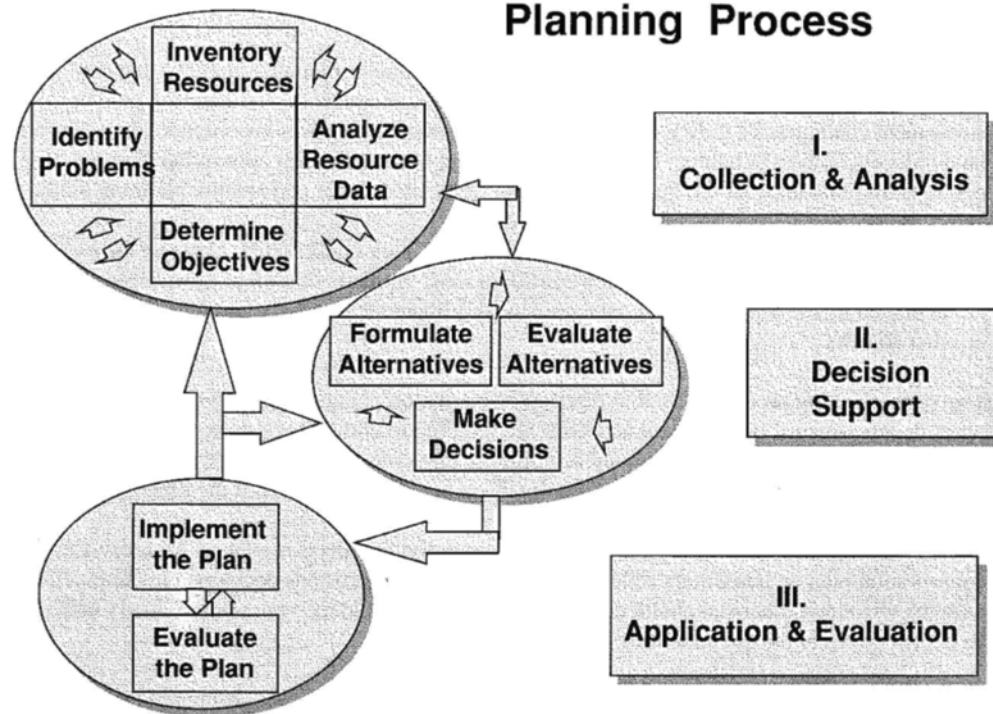
## ➤ Financial

- 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

# NRCS Planning Process



An illustration of the dynamic nature of the planning process.

**2019**



- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**
  - **Declining Species Initiative**
  - **Southwestern Willowflycatcher Initiative**
- **Wetlands Reserve Easements**

# Declining Species Initiative

- Develop upland and wetland wildlife, threatened and endangered species, fish, and other types of wildlife habitat
- Recommend this for upland (non-riparian projects)





# Pollinators

## 422A Hedgerow Planting, Pollinators: *Central Valley, Central Coast, Southern California*

### Conservation Practice Specification



Photo: Jessica Kay Clark, The Xerces Society

### Specifications

These instructions provide in-depth guidance on how to install hedgerows for pollinators. To plan a specific project, use these Specifications to fill out the *Implementation Requirements* form. These requirements and considerations are in addition to those in the *Hedgerow Planting (422) Specification* written for all purposes.

#### Definition and Purpose

Establishment of dense vegetation in a linear design to enhance pollen, nectar, and nesting habitat for pollinators.

#### Client Conservation Objectives

Depending on landowner objectives and project design, pollinator hedgerow habitat may also provide food, cover, and corridors for other wildlife, provide habitat for predaceous and beneficial invertebrates as a component of an integrated pest management plan, provide food, cover or shade for aquatic organisms in adjacent streams, serve as living fences, delineate boundaries, serve as screens to dust or noise, or increase carbon storage.



THE XERCES SOCIETY  
FOR INVERTEBRATE CONSERVATION



California

## Pollinator Habitat

Assessment Form and Guide  
ORCHARD and FIELD CROPS



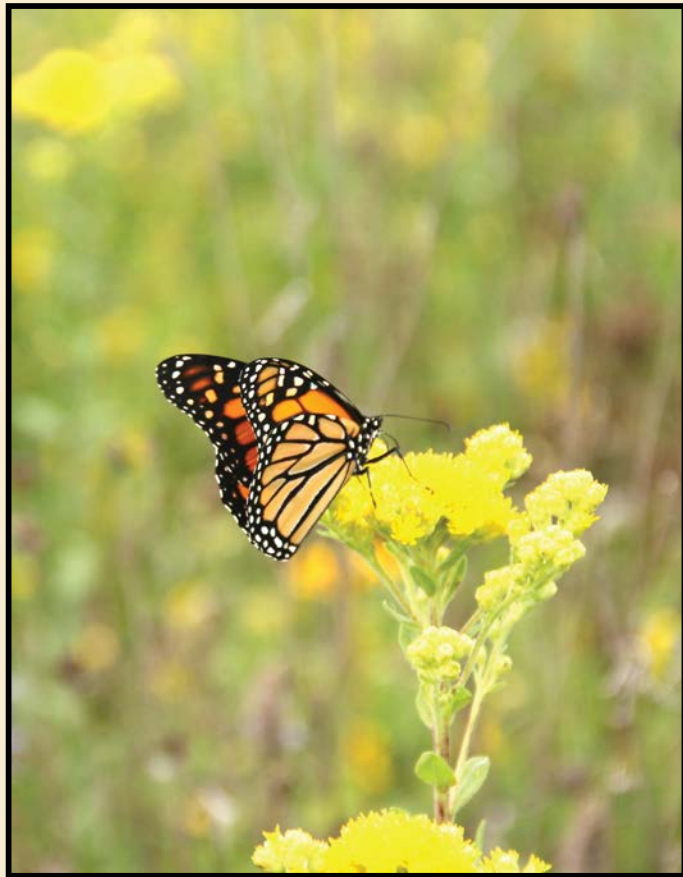
August 2018

The Xerces Society for  
Invertebrate Conservation

[www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org)



# Monarch Initiative



# Southwestern willow flycatcher Initiative

- Develop riparian habitat for southwestern willow flycatcher and other riparian birds
- Recommend this for riparian projects





# Wetland Reserves Easement (WRE)

- Seasonal, semi-permanent, permanent, riparian wetlands and associated uplands
- Perpetual and 30-year Easements
- Not restricted to cost list



# 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	_____	_____

Attach 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)
590	Access Road (Ft)
575	Animal Trails and Walkways (Ft)
314	Brush Management (Ac)
322	Channel Bank Vegetation (Ac)
564	Channel Stabilization (Ft)
327	Conservation Cover (Ac)
340	Cover Crop (Ac)
342	Critical Area Planting (Ac)
558	Dike (Ft)
352	Fence (Ft)
358	Field Border (Ft)
393	Filter Strip (Ac)
394	Firebreak (Ft)
383	Fuel Break (Ft)
356	Fish Passage (No)
490	Forest Site Preparation (Ac)
656	Forest Stand Improvement (Ac)
655	Forest Trails and Landings (Ac)
418	Grass Stabilization Structure (No)
412	Gripped Waterway (Ac)
422	Hedgerow Planting (Ft)
441	Irrigation System, Microirrigation (Ac)
442	Irrigation System, Sprinkler (Ac)
458	Lined Waterway or Outlet (Ft)
454	Mulching (Ac)
500	Obstruction Removal (Ac)
533	Pumping Plant (No)
518	Pipeline (Ft)
373	Pond (No)
521C	Pond Sealing or Lining, Bentonite Sealant (SqF)
521D	Pond Sealing or Lining, Compast Clay Sealant (SqF)
550	Range Planting (Ac)
643	Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats (Ac)
391	Riparian Forest Buffer (Ac)
390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover (Ac)
654	Road/Landing Removal
374	Spring Development (No)
571	Stream Crossing (No)
395	Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (Ac)
580	Streambank and Shoreline Protection (Ft)
587	Structure for Water Control (Ac)
812	Tree/Shrub Establishment (Ac)
629	Underground Outlet (Ft)
614	Watering Facility (No)
659	Wetland Enhancement (Ac)
657	Wetland Restoration (Ac)
386	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (Ft)
650	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation (Ft)

# Flat Rates

## Materials and Labor

- Limited Resource Farmer
  - 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
  - Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994
- Beginning Farmer
  - Has not operated a farm or ranch
  - Or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than consecutive 10 years.
- *Opportunities for agency collaboration and fund leveraging*

# 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...





# Batching Periods and Timelines

Fiscal Year 2020-2021

- Applications taken year-round
- Time to develop “Conservation Plan”
- Fund at “batching periods”
  - November/December = 1<sup>st</sup> batching period
  - March/April = 2<sup>nd</sup> batching period
  - June/July = 3<sup>rd</sup> batching period
- Obligation of funds (“okay to start project”) approximately 2 months after batching

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 9875  
[shea.okeefe@usda.gov](mailto:shea.okeefe@usda.gov)



# Wildlife

## Case Study = San Dieguito Watershed





# Current Projects



- Boden to Sutherland Trail
- Watershed Council
- Lagoon Trail
- Volcan Mountain

# 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
- Greatly impacted by recent wildfires

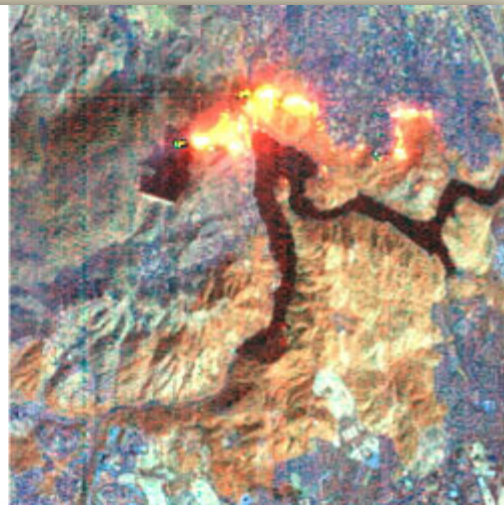


# Major Offenders





# 2007 Wildfires



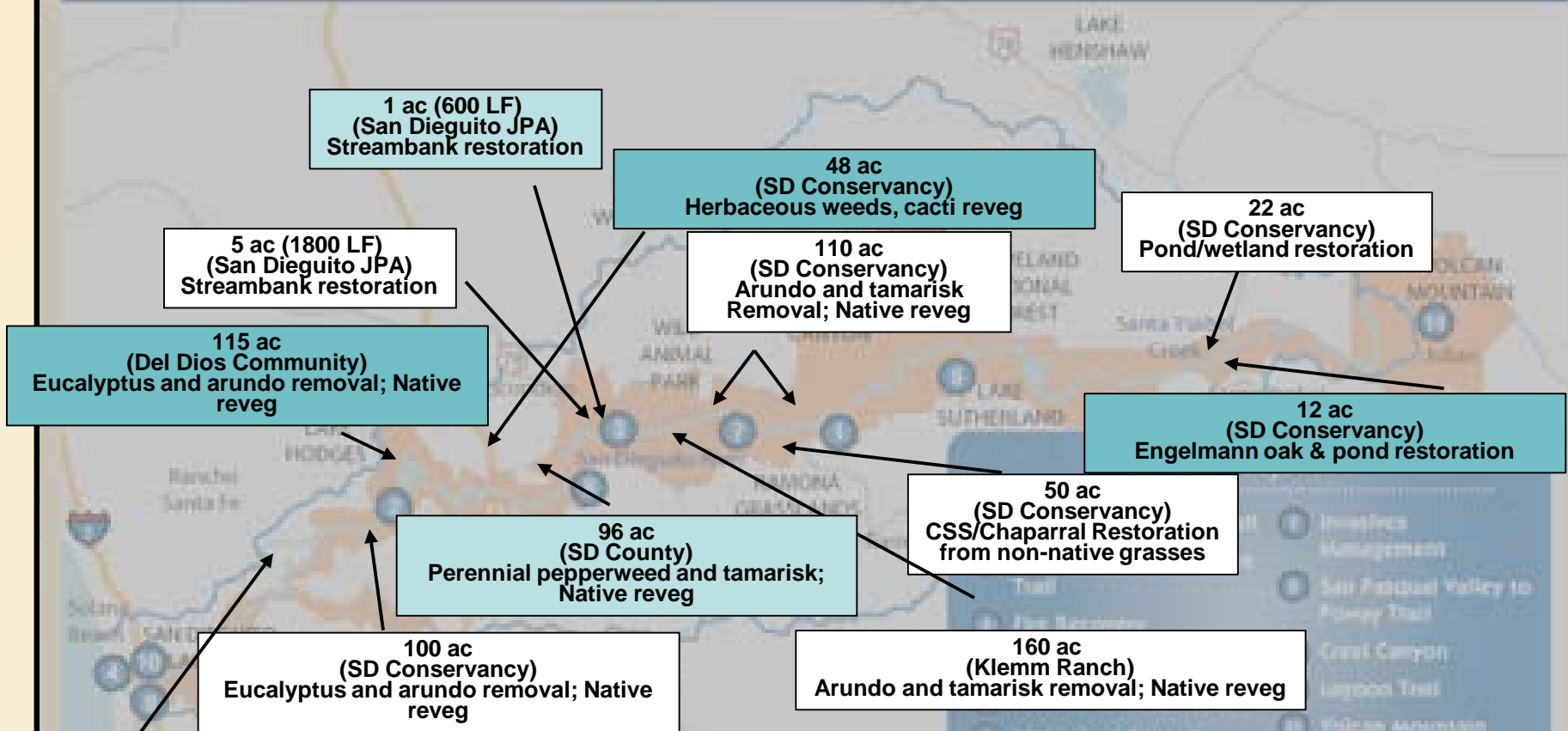
# Now was the time...

- Instant biomass reduction!
  - Cost (\$9000 → \$1000 an acre)
  - Time
  - Permits
- Landowner and agency coordination
  - City of SD
  - County of SD
  - San Dieguito Conservancy
  - San Dieguito Joint Powers Authority
  - Private landowners



# Current Projects

760 acres/1.2 million



2006=\$180,000



2008=\$485,000

2013=\$85,000

2014=\$440,000



# Restoration Pictures





















# 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)