

California's New Experiment with Regional Conservation Investment Strategies and How Regulatory Structures can Create Incentives to Identify & Conserve Ecosystem Services

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Regional Conservation Investment Strategy

Program

Presentation Outline

- Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) Program overview
 - Regional Assessments
 - Regional Conservation Investment Strategies
 - Yolo County California RCIS pilot
 - Mid Sacramento Valley RCIS pilot

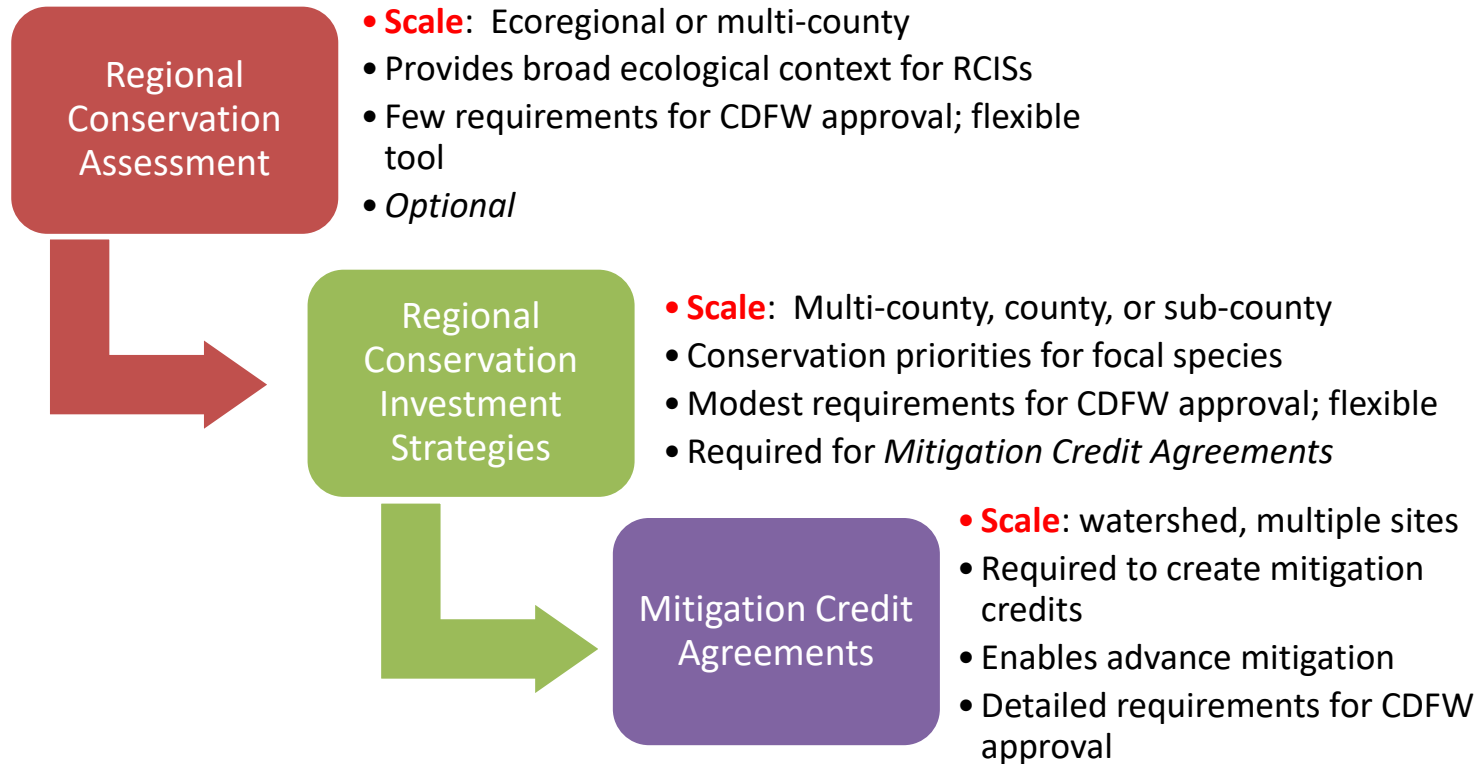
Regional Conservation Investment Strategy Program

AB 2087 Signed by Governor Brown on Sept. 22, 2016; effective Jan. 1, 2017, administered by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW)

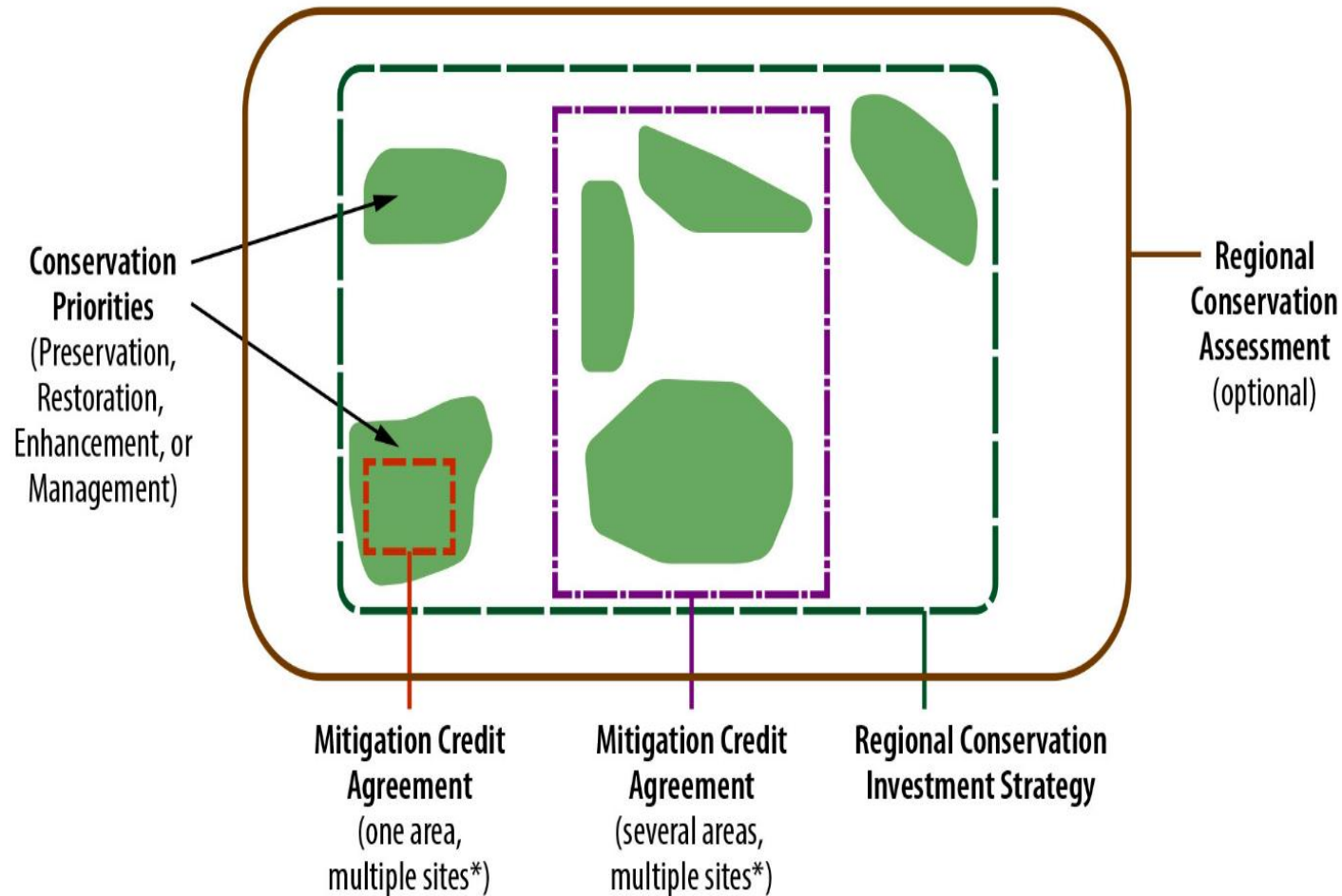
- Added to Sections 1850-1861 to the California Fish & Game Code
- Voluntary, non-regulatory program
- Designed to:
 - Improve conservation and public infrastructure planning and delivery
 - Streamline mitigation for public infrastructure projects
 - Goal of being faster and less expensive tool than others available now
 - Provide mechanism for **advance mitigation** for the first time
 - Provides a means to assign credits to **enhancement actions** for first time



Program Framework: Hierarchy



Program Framework: On the ground



* One or more MCAs can be developed within an RCIS for multiple sites or parcels on public or private lands.

Regional Conservation Investment Strategy Program

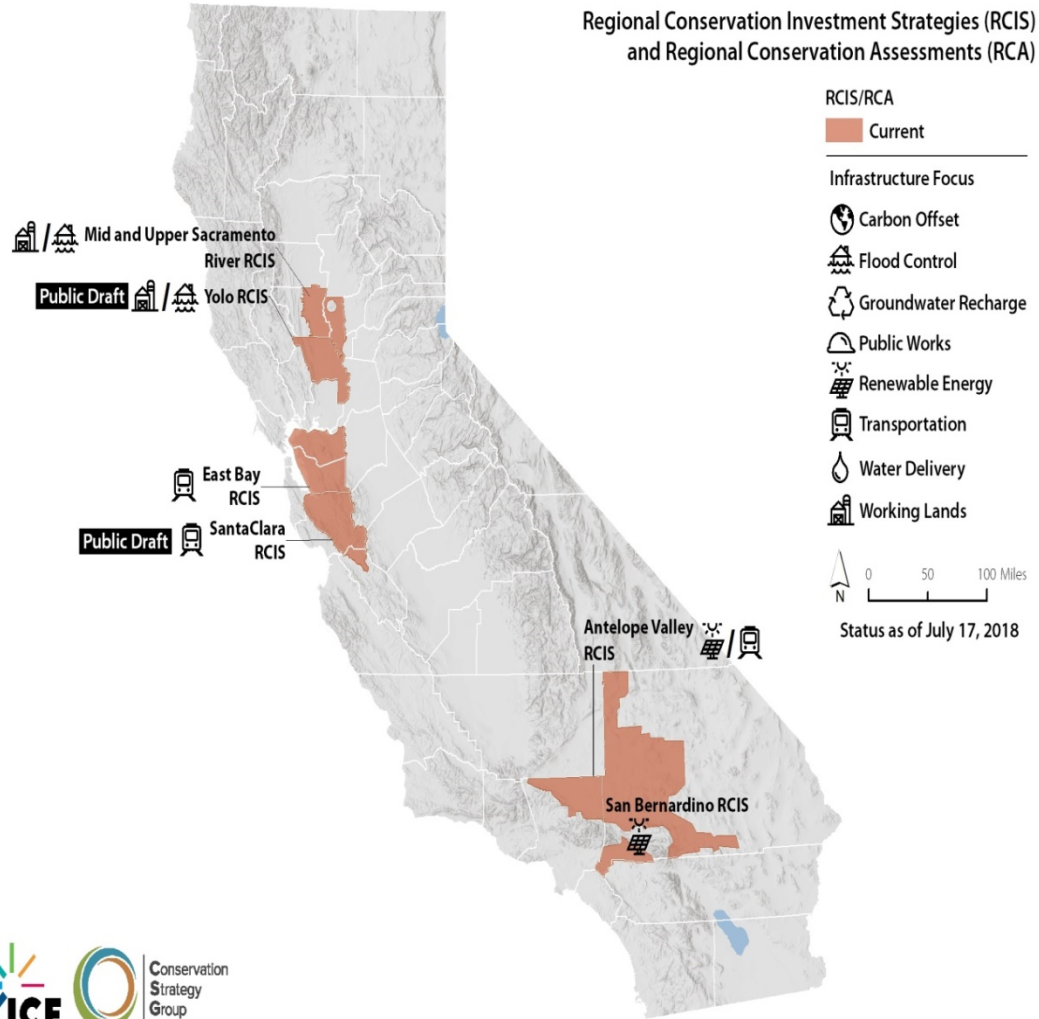
- Prepared by any public agency
- CDFW approves a RCIS for up to 10 years (with 10-year extension options)
- Once approved, **Mitigation Credit Agreements** can be authorized
- Focused on species needs and mitigation (focal species)
- Compatible with, not replacement of, Natural Community Conservation Plans under the California Endangered Species Act.
- State tool, but could serve other federal regulatory needs:

Federal ESA Federal Clean Water Act Carbon Credits GHG Mitigation

Water Quality Water Supply Groundwater Mitigation CEQA Mitigation



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RCIS Status – Other Potential Plans

- L.A. Metro RCIS
 - Completed feasibility study for advanced mitigation
 - May pursue RCIS in rest of Los Angeles County
- Orange County RCIS
 - Orange County Parks and Recreation Dept. interested in advanced mitigation strategy
 - May pursue RCIS
- Sonoma County RCIS
 - Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District interested in using RCIS to implement their Vital Lands Initiative
- Eastern San Diego County RCIS
 - Stakeholders interested in RCIS tool as a way to make use of work done for HCP/NCCP that now will not happen

Regional Conservation Investment Strategy Program

Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) Elements

- Focal species, conservation elements (e.g., working lands), and other natural resources
- Summary of stressors and pressures on focal species and conservation elements
- Conservation goals and measurable objectives
- Conservation actions, habitat enhancement actions
- Climate adaptation opportunities
- Best available science
- Existing and future infrastructure and development
- Adaptive management and monitoring framework
- Consistency with HCPs and NCCPs



Regional Conservation Investment Strategy Program

Initial Steps in RCIS Process

- Determine Strategy Area
- Select Focal Species
- Assemble data for conservation analysis
- Existing recovery plans, conservation plans, other important plans and strategies
 - Land cover
 - Relevant physical conditions
 - Species occurrence
 - Habitat distribution (models)
 - Other data as needed
- Assemble other data
 - Infrastructure and development (current and future)
 - Working lands

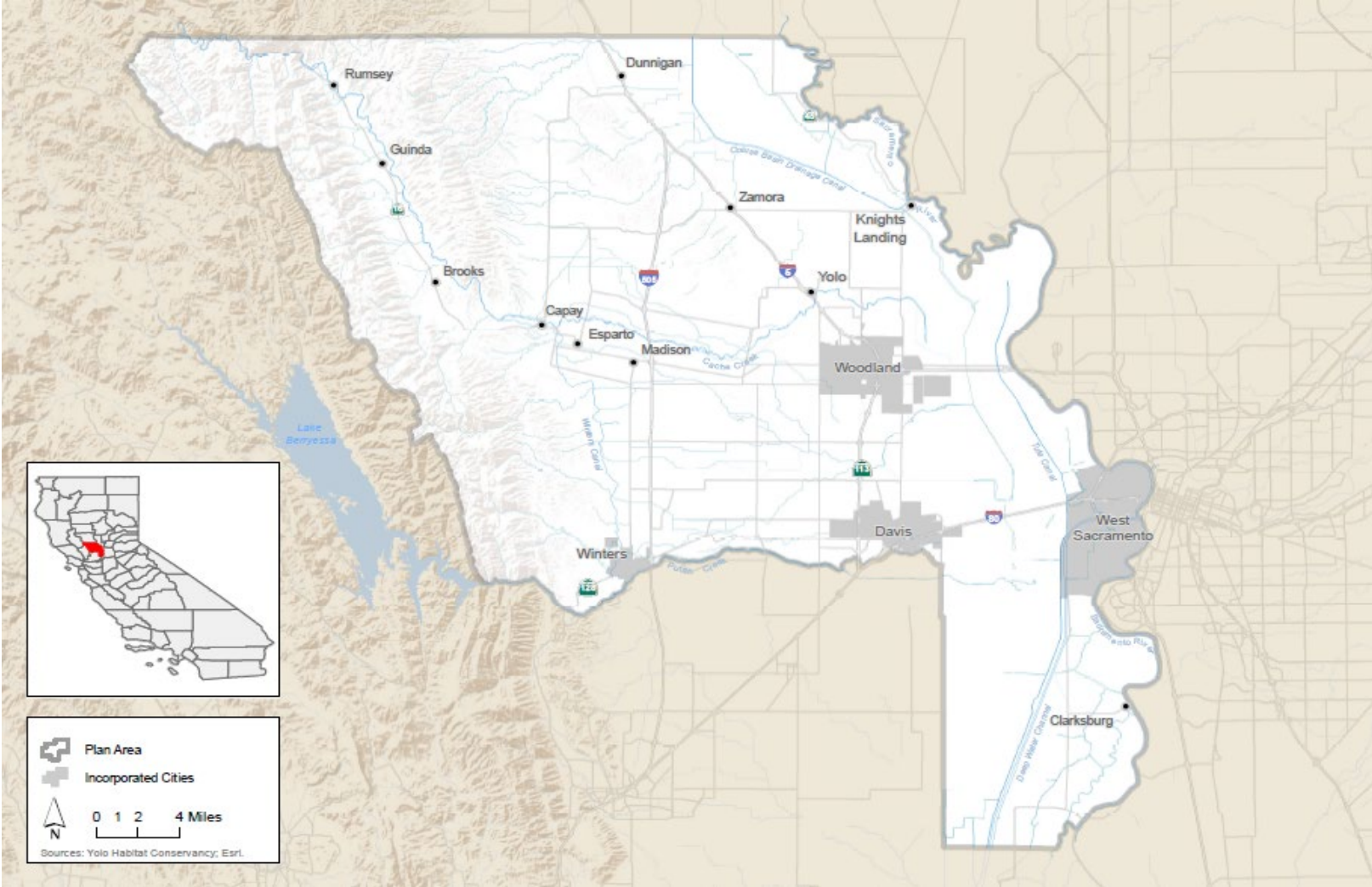


RCIS Document Outline

- Chapter 1: Introduction
 - Background and purpose
 - Strategy area and term
 - Relevant plans
- Chapter 2: Environmental and Land Use Setting
 - Natural communities and focal species
 - Existing and future infrastructure and development
 - Working lands
- Chapter 3: Conservation Strategy
 - Threats and stressors to focal species and other natural resources
 - Conservation gap analysis
 - Conservation goals and objectives
 - Conservation actions, habitat enhancement actions, and priorities
- Chapter 4: Implementation
 - RCIS updates and amendments
 - MCA development process
 - Mitigation banks
- Chapter 5: References
- Technical Appendices:
 - As needed



Yolo County RCIS Area



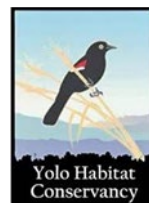
RCIS/LCP Project Team and Engagement: Steering Committee

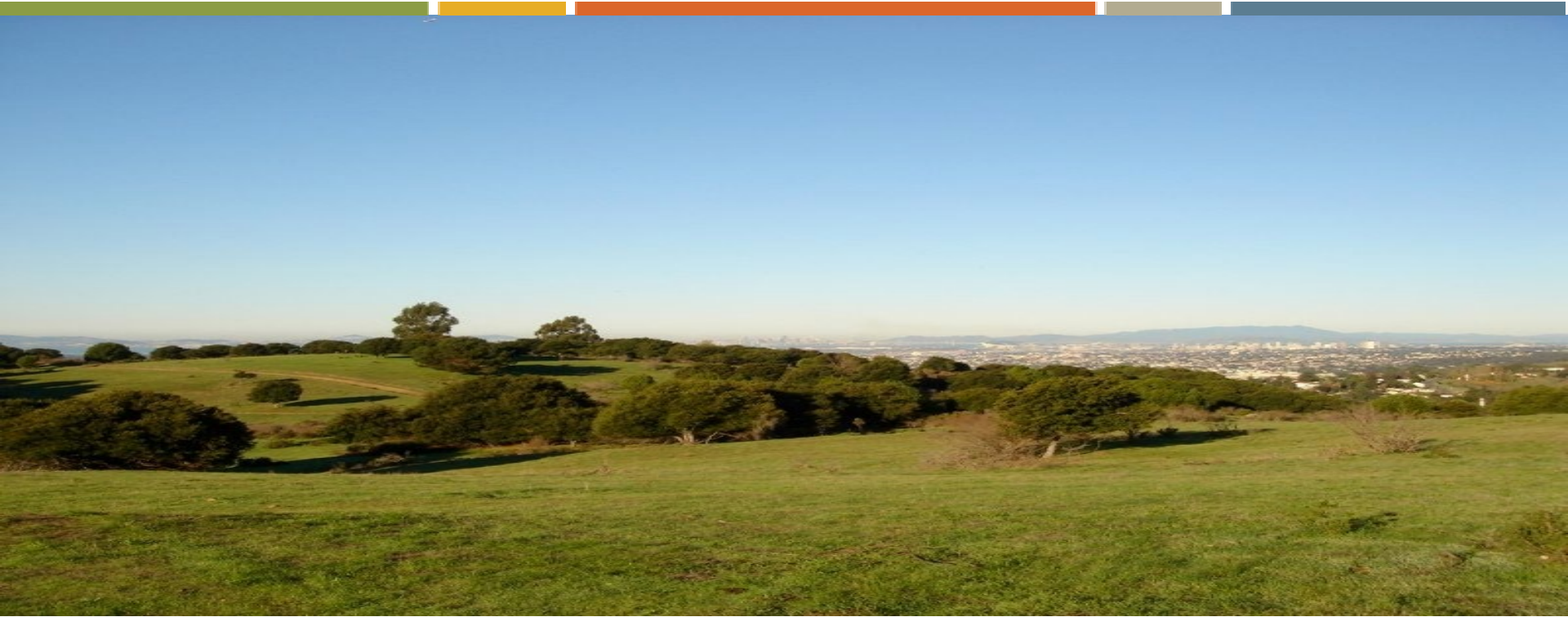
Core Team

- Yolo County
- Yolo Habitat Conservancy
- Department of Water Resources
- The California Natural Resources Agency
- ICF
- Conservation Strategy Group

Additional Members

- Representative from Advisory Committee (Yolo County LCP)
- American Rivers
- Environmental Defense Fund





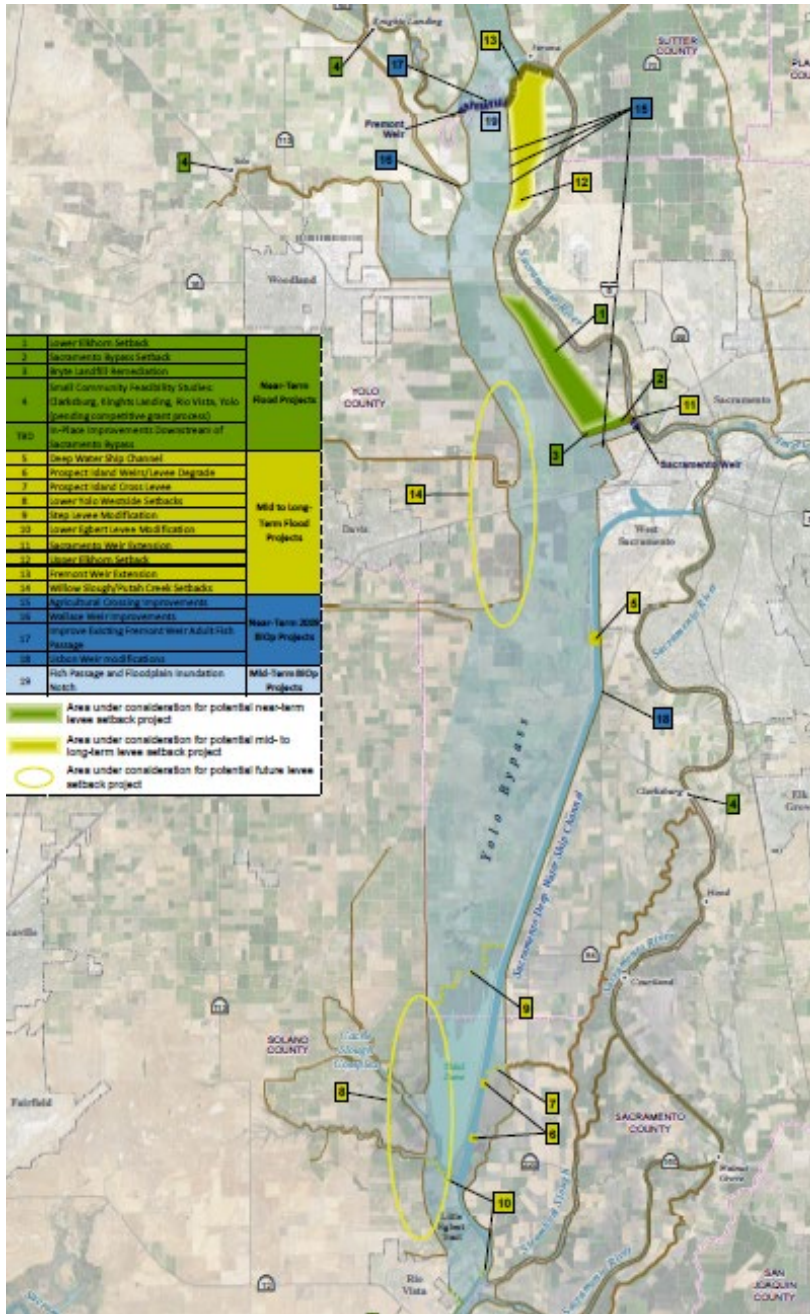
Yolo Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS)

Goal: Strategy to inform science-based conservation actions to advance conservation and infrastructure priorities

- Are consistent with draft and approved infrastructure plans, NCCPs and regional HCPs, approved recovery plans
- Voluntary, non-binding and led by public agencies

Potential Yolo Bypass/Cache Slough Flood and Ecosystem Improvements

Concepts reflect local, state, and federal planning infrastructure and conservation efforts.



Giant Garter Snake



Tri-Colored Blackbird





Focal Species Goals and Objectives

- Focal species: state or federally listed, or may be listed in the foreseeable future, and may require mitigation
- 40 focal species
- Some focal species will be grouped for goals and objectives



Conservation Species

- Other species of local conservation concern
- 97 conservation species
- No specific goals and objectives
- Presence of conservation species will be a factor in prioritizing conservation lands

Mid-Sacramento Valley Region RCIS Area

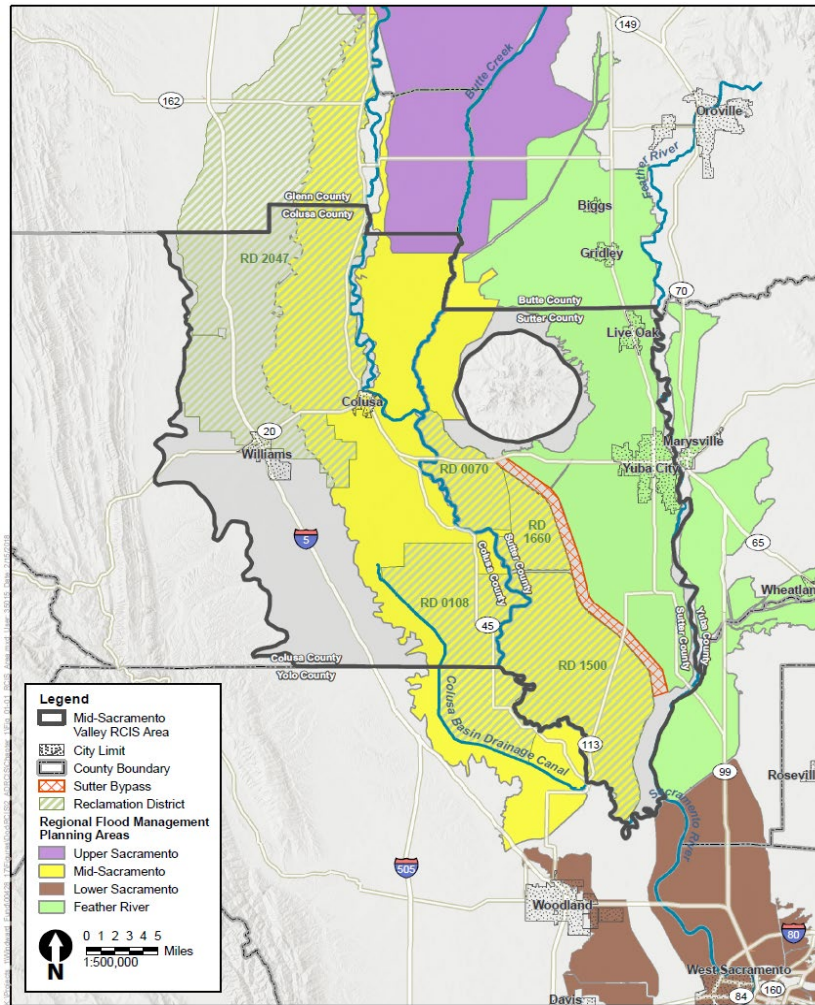


Figure 1-1
Mid-Sacramento Valley RCIS Area and Regional
Flood Management Planning Areas



Mid-Sacramento Valley Regional RCIS

- Sponsoring Agency: Reclamation District 108
 - In partnership with the State (Department of Water Resources) and local stakeholders
- Will include regional infrastructure and conservation goals and objectives
 - 2017 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, and Conservation Strategy.
- Focuses on 12 focal species
- Expected to be approved by early to mid 2019



Mitigation Credit Agreements

Dual Goals:

- Achieve meaningful conservation outcomes
- Add efficiencies to infrastructure project delivery through effective and efficient mitigation and regional conservation