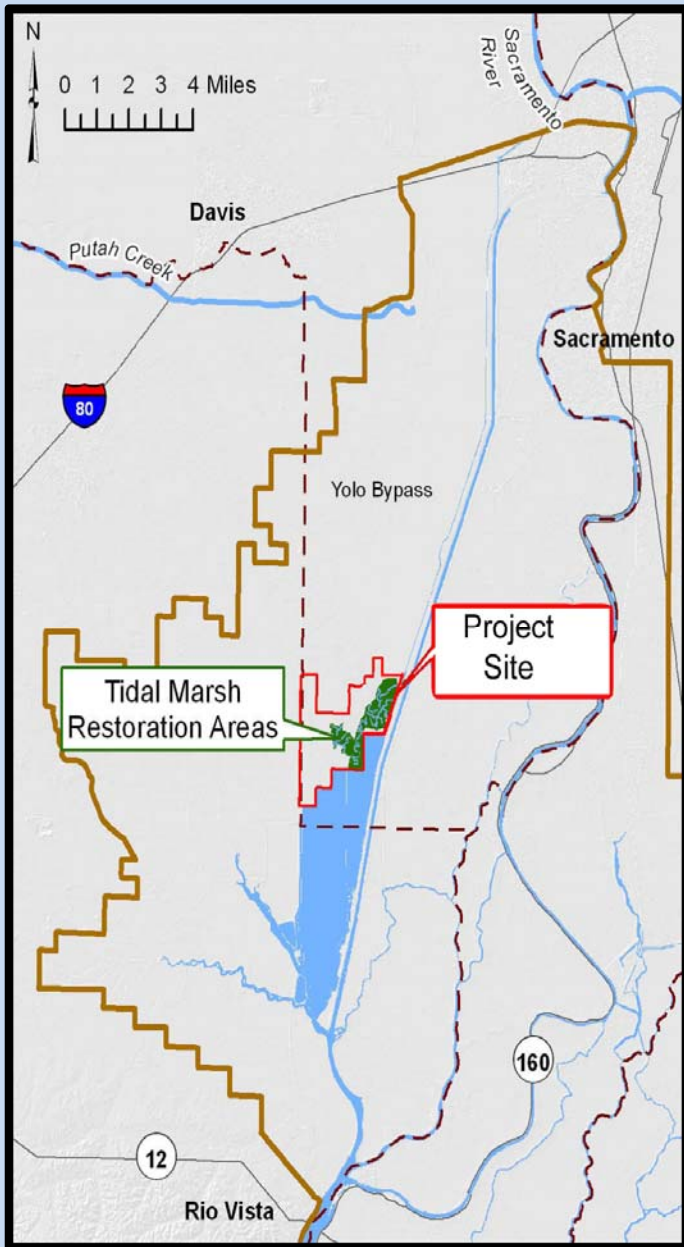


Lower Yolo Restoration Project

The Lower Yolo Restoration Project represents an ideal location to restore tidal wetlands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The project is an early action consistent with the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and will meet a portion of the state and federal requirement to restore 8,000 acres of wetland habitat in the Delta.



Goal: Diverse Habitat

Creating new, self-sustaining wetlands will require excavating new channels at various depths, sizes and configurations. This 1,100-acre project will apply various designs and monitor their effectiveness in relation to tidal and storm pulses and the establishment of plants in the created wetlands. Ecologically, the goal is to provide important new sources of food and shelter for a variety of native fish species at the appropriate scale in strategic locations. Locally, the goal is a process with stakeholder input and ensuring continued or enhanced flood protection.



Project Site

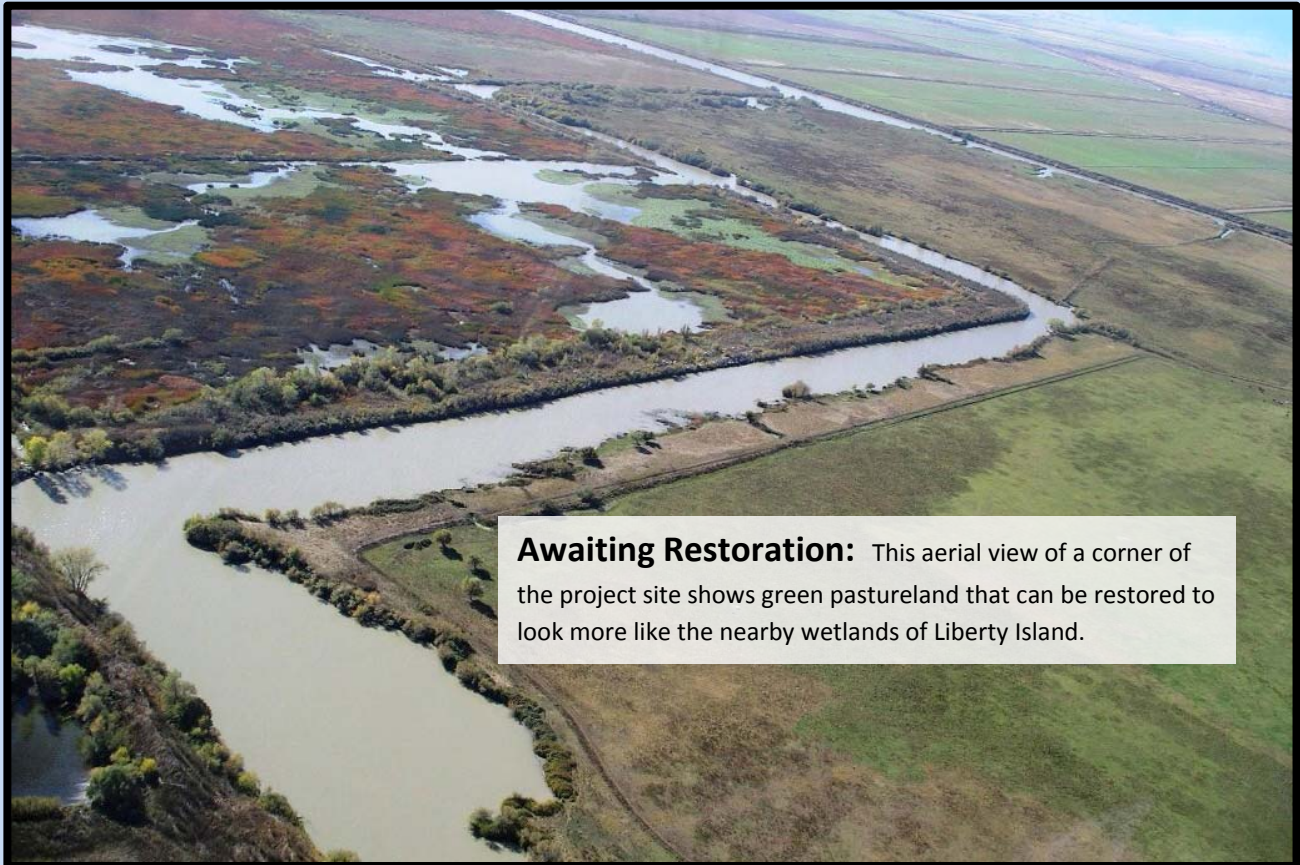
The project site includes the Yolo Ranch, also known as McCormack Ranch, which was purchased in 2007 by the Westlands Water District (WWD). The 3,400-acre ranch has historically been used for cattle grazing.

Smelt: A special need

The two-inch delta smelt are an endangered species that live year-round in the estuary. A resident population has taken hold in the adjacent Liberty Island region, making the project site an ideal place to expand habitat as part of a broader smelt restoration strategy.

Needed: A more natural tidal landscape

The Bay-Delta region, prior to levees, was a vast area of tidal marshland spanning about 700 square-miles. The construction of more than 1,100 miles of levees has eliminated an estimated 95 percent of the region's original wetlands. Restoring wetlands in strategic locations, to provide important new sources of food and shelter for a variety of fish species, is part of a comprehensive approach to reversing the ecological decline of the Delta. The Lower Yolo wetlands restoration project is part of an adaptive management approach in the Delta to learn the relative benefits of different fish habitats, quantify the production and transport of food and understand how fish species take advantage of new habitat.



Awaiting Restoration: This aerial view of a corner of the project site shows green pastureland that can be restored to look more like the nearby wetlands of Liberty Island.

Bay Delta Conservation Plan

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) is an effort by state and federal agencies, water districts, non-profit organizations and other stakeholder groups to promote the recovery of Delta fish species in ways that protect and restore water supplies consistent with endangered species laws. A draft plan is scheduled for release in late 2010. While BDCP is envisioned to be a 50-year plan of water system and ecosystem improvements, it is already taking into account existing mandates by state and federal wildlife agencies to restore 8,000 acres of tidal wetlands in order to maintain the operations of Delta water projects. BDCP has identified as a priority to maximize restoration on existing public lands including the Lower Yolo Restoration Project.

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Project Participants

The Lower Yolo Restoration Project is a cooperative effort with water districts receiving supplies via the Delta's State Water Project (SWP), Central Valley Project (CVP) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR). The WWD owns a portion of the project site. Additional financial support is provided by the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency, (SFCWA) a joint powers authority representing members of the SWP and CVP. This agency will be the lead in developing the restoration project.

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