

ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM



The Foundation envisions a California that manages, stewards, and conserves its water and land to support a resilient environment and economy.

Enhancing conservation on private lands

The S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation invests in aligning incentives and removing barriers to increase conservation on private and unprotected lands throughout California.

Goal

California has a strong field of conservation organizations that use innovative tools and approaches, especially to expand and enhance California's migratory bird habitat and maximize benefits from habitat mitigation funds.

Approach

- A** Support the development of innovative conservation tools, especially bird-friendly land management approaches.
- B** Identify and demonstrate promising models for aligning incentives and removing barriers to conservation.
- C** Build the capacity of the California conservation field through investments in leadership development, organizational resiliency, and strategic partnerships and collaborations.

Intended outcomes

- ✓ California successfully uses Regional Conservation Investment Strategies to improve large scale conservation results by identifying regional conservation priorities, implementing advance habitat mitigation, and guiding infrastructure agencies to avoid impacts.
- ✓ New and improved tools and approaches support private landowner engagement in conservation.
- ✓ California's conservation leaders, institutions, and partnerships are strong, resilient, and well-funded, enabling them to lead the field to long-term conservation success.
- ✓ Expanded and enhanced habitat is available to migratory birds in California through a combination of innovative private and public efforts.

Progress to date

- The Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership – comprised of Audubon California, The Nature Conservancy, and Point Blue Conservation Science – has harnessed public Farm Bill funding and developed innovative new programs to ensure that more than 100,000 acres of habitat are annually available for migratory birds in California.
- Sustainable Conservation sponsored the Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Act (AB 2193), which was signed into law in 2014 and simplifies the permitting process for small-scale, voluntary projects that improve habitats, watersheds, and water quality.

Field building and learning

- The Foundation is supporting California's network of Resource Conservation Districts to be relevant, effective, and visible hubs for conservation in their communities across the state.
- Conservation organizations, private landowners, and public agencies are forming unique partnerships to innovate and scale approaches to protect and enhance habitats. The Foundation is documenting lessons learned from this work to share with the field.