



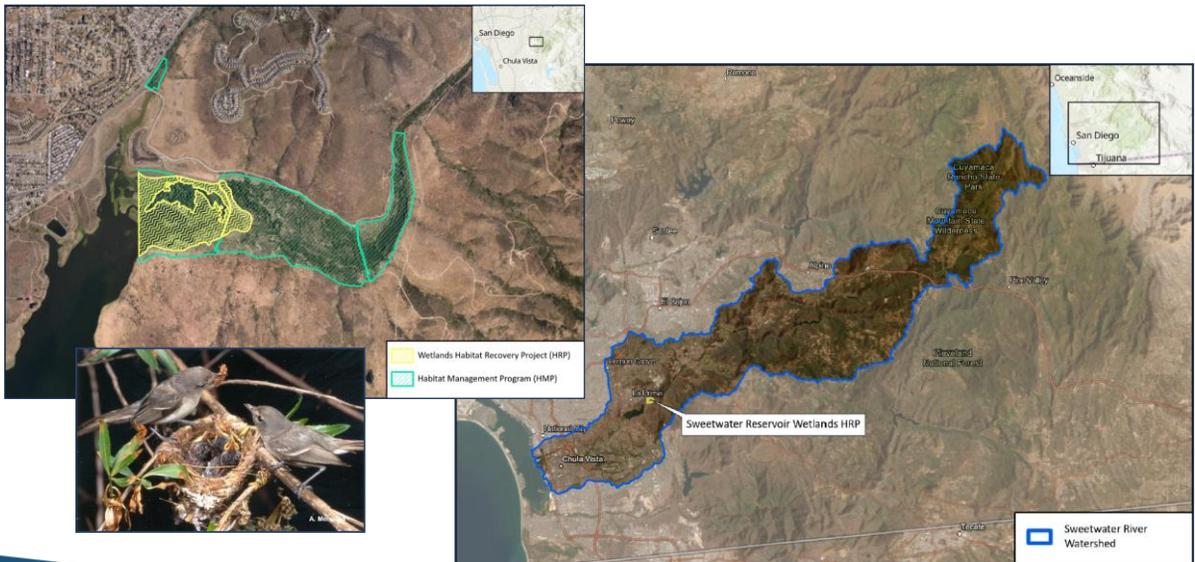
September 3, 2025

# Sweetwater Reservoir Wetlands Habitat Recovery Project

IRWM Prop 84, Round 4, Project 12-80050

Julia Varnergardner, Principal Environmental Specialist  
Sweetwater Authority

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# Project Timeline



# Benefits Achieved

**Primary – Habitat/Ecological Benefit:**

Restored willow woodland and wetland habitat within the 67-acre habitat recovery site and improved overall ecological conditions of the 250-acre HMP preserve for the least Bell’s vireo and other riparian habitat-associated wildlife.

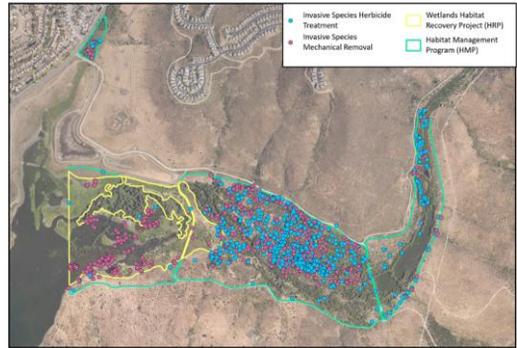
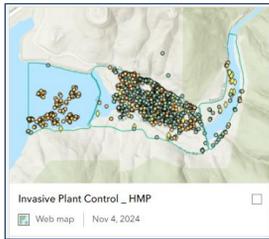
**Secondary – Water Supply Benefit:**

Increased water storage potential through removal of a long-standing restriction on receiving imported water. Increased imported water storage can be realized when regional imported water sources are plentiful and available.



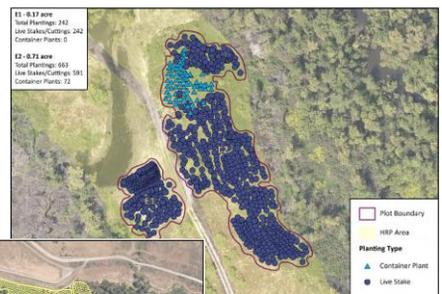
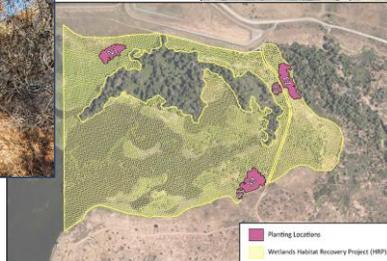
# Outcome – Invasive Plant Species Removal

- Scouted for and removed and/or treated invasive plant species within the 250-acre HMP area.



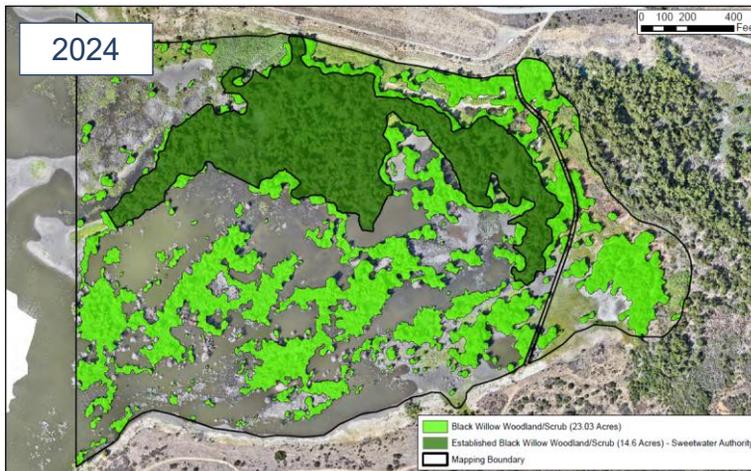
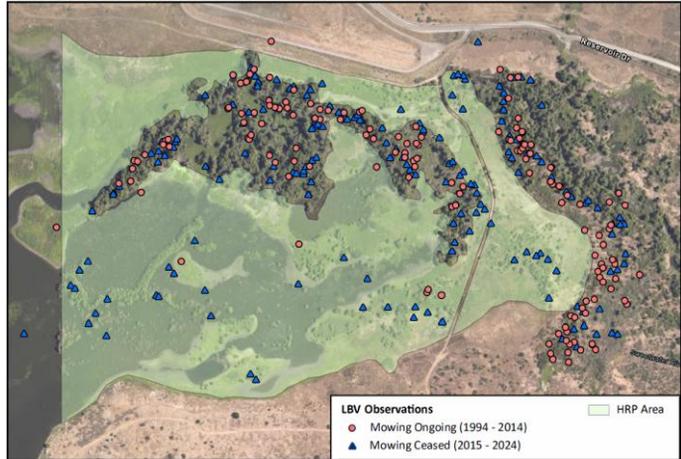
# Outcome – Black Willow Planting

- Planted over 3,300 willow cuttings within the project site.



# Outcome – Natural Recruitment

- Ceased reservoir bottom mowing in 2015.
- Least Bell’s vireo (LBV) and riparian habitat increased by 14.5 acres.
- LBV habitat use increased in new areas.



**Black Willow Woodland/Scrub Habitat within Project Area**

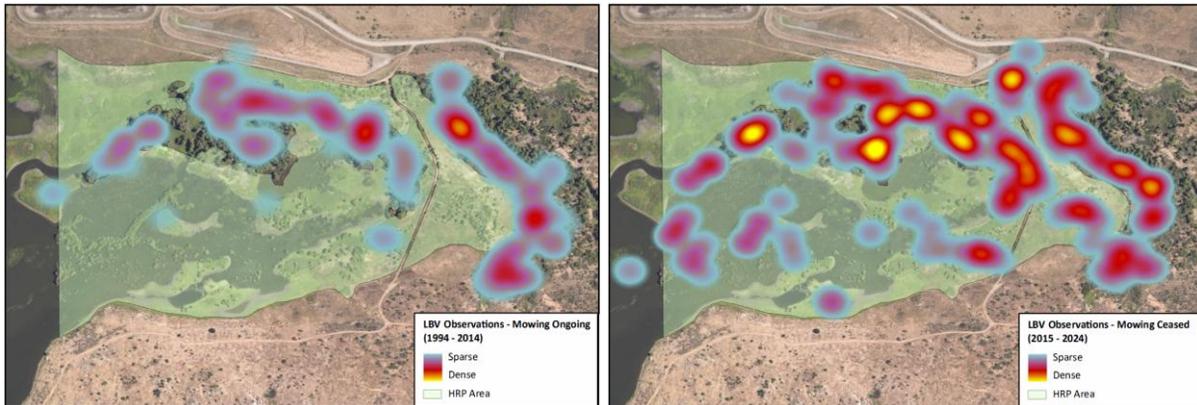
Year	Habitat (acres)
2015	8.5
2018	11.2
2019	13.7
2021	19.7
2022	21.4
2023	24.0
2024	23.0

**Black Willow Woodland/Scrub Canopy Growth**

Survey Period	Canopy Change (acres)
2018 – 2019	2.5
2019 – 2021 (no data in 2020)	6.0
2021 – 2022	1.7
2022 – 2023	2.6
2023 – 2024	-1.0
<b>Total Change</b>	<b>11.8</b>
<b>Average Growth</b>	<b>2.0</b>



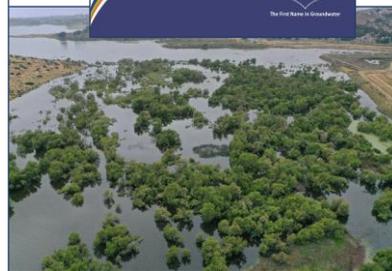
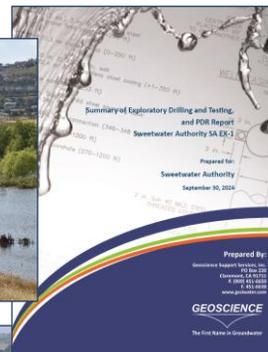
# Expanded LBV Habitat Use



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## Challenges

- Permitting timelines
- High waters
- Well siting study outcome



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## Budget vs. Expenditures

Budget Category	Task	Amended Budget	Total Actual Expenditures	Funding Match Expenditures	Grant Expenditures	Unspent Grant Funds
(a)	Direct Project Administration	\$113,376.00	\$104,421.52	\$26,040.00	\$78,381.52	\$8,954.48
(b)	Land Purchase/Easement	\$4,975.50	\$4,975.50	\$4,975.50	\$0.00	\$0.00
(c)	Planning/Design/Engineering and Environmental Documentation	\$1,327,508.00	\$891,911.80	\$414,659.00	\$477,252.80	\$435,596.20
(d)	Implementation	\$421,956.00	\$320,035.99	\$117,117.00	\$202,918.99	\$101,920.01
Excluding unallocated grant		<b>\$1,867,815.50</b>	<b>\$1,321,344.81</b>	<b>\$562,791.50</b>	<b>\$758,553.31</b>	<b>\$546,470.69</b>
(e)	Removed from Category (b) to remain unallocated	\$194,976.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$194,976.00
Including unallocated grant		<b>2,062,791.50</b>	<b>\$1,321,344.81</b>	<b>\$562,791.50</b>	<b>\$758,553.31</b>	<b>\$741,446.69</b>



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## Acknowledgements

- Thank you to our project partners, grant administrators, and grantors:
  - Department of Water Resources
  - San Diego County Water Authority
  - IRWM Regional Advisory Committee



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# Questions?

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