



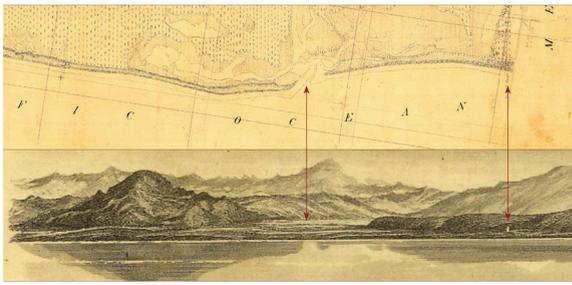
# REGIONAL STRATEGY UPDATE

## *WETLAND HABITAT GOALS FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA*

### **WORKING WITH NATURE AND COMMUNITIES TO RESTORE WETLAND HABITAT ACROSS THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION**

The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) is an alliance of federal, state, and local officials dedicated to acquiring, restoring, and expanding coastal wetlands and watersheds throughout Southern California. The WRP is undergoing an effort to update its guidance document, the Regional Strategy, to include quantifiable and spatially-explicit wetland habitat goals that can ultimately be used by WRP member agencies and partners for reference in designing projects, reviewing project proposals, and making funding decisions. The WRP's vision is to achieve a coastal Southern California with restored, protected and resilient wetland ecosystems functioning at a landscape scale that support important ecosystem processes, functions and services.

This science-based effort, recognized as a priority for Southern California by the WRP's 18 federal and state partners and funded by the Landscape Conservation Cooperative and the US EPA, will be completed in early 2017. There are four major elements that will feed into the WRP's goals.



## ECOLOGY OF THE PAST INFORMS THE FUTURE

The WRP will synthesize data from various historical ecology studies to assess ecological functions of Southern California's wetlands prior to human influence. A comparison of historical and contemporary habitat structures and ecosystem functions will demonstrate if, how, and why those functions have shifted over time. This knowledge will inform restoration design and prioritization to ensure functional and resilient systems across the landscape.

## ECOSYSTEMS FUNCTIONS & SERVICES

Wetland habitats provide numerous ecosystem functions, some of which directly support human well-being and are thus called "ecosystem services". The WRP is collaborating with the Tijuana River Estuary National Estuarine Research Reserve to identify ecosystem services in the Tijuana River Estuary and investigate how those services have changed over time. Starting at the estuary-specific level with the Temporal Investigations of Marsh Ecosystems Project (TIME), we will develop a decision-making framework for restoring and preserving ecosystem services. The WRP will then expand this effort to support the entire Southern California region for the Regional Strategy Update.

## CLIMATE-SMART ADAPTATION

The WRP will develop a method for managers to assess climate change-associated vulnerabilities by using the most appropriate, science-based tools and models. With an understanding of the vulnerabilities of wetland ecosystems, the WRP will develop adaptation strategies and a decision-support tool to guide restoration project prioritization and design.

## ASSESSING PROGRESS ON OUR GOALS

The WRP is a regional node in the California statewide wetland monitoring program, the Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Program (WRAMP). The WRAMP framework will be integrated into the Regional Strategy, providing the landscape-scale ecological knowledge needed to facilitate better regional planning and offering a standardized approach for assessing the WRP's progress in implementing the updated Regional Strategy.

