



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WETLANDS RECOVERY PROJECT REGIONAL MONITORING PROGRAM

PROGRAM NEED

While there are over a hundred coastal wetlands of varying sizes in coastal Southern California, there is currently no monitoring program that tracks the collective health and resiliency of wetlands in the region and how they are responding to stressors brought on by climate change and anthropogenic impacts. A major challenge in coordinated wetland restoration is that the responsibility for assessing wetland extent, abundance, and condition and managing data currently resides with multiple agencies. Amongst these agencies, there are a number of wetland monitoring sites, approaches, and protocols, for both voluntary restoration and mitigation projects in the southern California region. Furthermore, southern California's coastal wetlands are extremely vulnerable to sea-level rise (SLR). Having the ability to assess how existing and newly restored wetlands are adapting to SLR is crucial for agencies responsible for achieving "no net loss" of wetlands.



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) Regional Monitoring Program aims to develop comparable approaches for coastal wetland monitoring and assist interested agencies in incorporating these into permit- and funding-required monitoring programs. Comparable monitoring information is critical to evaluate whether the goals and objectives of the WRP Regional Strategy are being achieved, inform future funding decisions, and protect past investments in wetland restoration from the rapidly advancing impacts of sea level rise. Program goals include:

- Track the collective condition of coastal wetlands in the region and how they are responding to stressors such as shifting hydrologic regimes, encroaching development and impacts of sea-level rise
- Provide regulatory and funding agencies with a means to monitor in a comparable way, reduce duplication of effort, improve access to data, and better leverage efforts across programs to improve regional wetland inventories and condition assessment
- Inform state and federal regulatory programs to help effectively manage, preserve, and restore highly impacted wetlands in southern California by improving information on wetland condition and performance, which will further State and Federal wetland goals (e.g., "no net loss")
- Help agencies assess coastal wetland resilience to address climate change effects and develop adaptation strategies
- Assess the quantitative objectives for coastal wetland restoration under Goal 1 of the WRP Regional Strategy

PHASE 1 PROJECT OUTPUTS

Phase 1 of the Regional Monitoring Program is funded through an EPA Wetland Program Development Grant. A Scientific Advisory Panel has been assembled to provide guidance as wetland health and resiliency indicators are refined to fit the Regional Monitoring Program. A multi-agency implementation strategy for the Program will be drafted by the project Core Team, with integration of the Program varying on an agency to agency basis.

