



The Santa Clara River Trustee Council was created in the aftermath of two oil spills: the ExxonMobil pipeline break in 1991 and the ARCO pipeline break in 1994. Both spills impacted over 15 miles of river. The natural resource Trustees settled the cases, with a total of \$9.8 million (\$2.7 from ExxonMobil and \$7.1 million from ARCO) allocated to implement restoration projects that would offset the impacts of the spills. Since then, the Trustees have developed restoration plans and implemented a variety of projects.

Restoration Project Highlights

Land Protection

The Trustee Council has funded or contributed to the acquisition of five parcels within the floodplain. Four are shown on the map; a fifth parcel (286 acres) is upstream in Soledad Canyon. These are currently managed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). In addition, the Trustee Council is partnering with TNC and the California Department of Water Resources to acquire flood easements designed to prevent urban development, maintaining the property in agriculture or natural habitat. To date, one has been purchased near Fillmore.

Total acquisitions and easements: 1,011 acres



Habitat Restoration



Habitat restoration has focused on vegetation, birds, and fish. Projects have included:

- Arundo removal at Hanson, Hedrick, Taylor/Underwood, and Fillmore.
- Cowbird trapping since 2012, from the estuary upstream beyond Piru.
- Fish barrier removal at Lion Creek, off Sespe Creek (north of map).
- Santa Clara River Rally, public trash clean-up days.
- Planning and permitting for improvements to the Harvey Dam fish ladder on Santa Paula Creek.

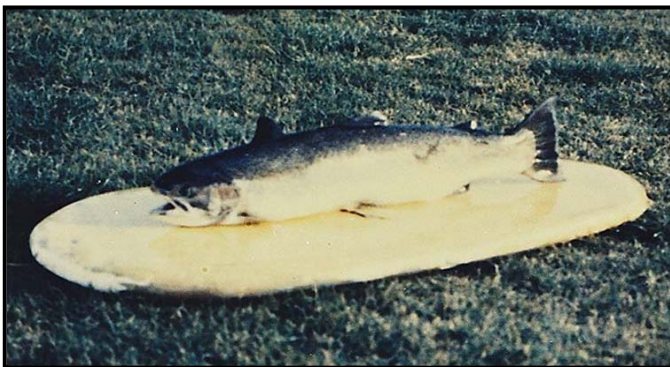
Above: Arundo removal in action. These areas are monitored and re-planted with native willows and other species.

Greater than 200 pairs of endangered Least Bell's Vireos now call the Santa Clara River their home, a dramatic increase from the past. Many of them have benefitted from Trustee Council projects, including cowbird management and habitat restoration. A recent study found that vireo nest success was 64% in areas with cowbird trapping, compared to 10% in areas without.



Photo by Don DesJardin.

Research, Planning, and Permitting



The Trustee Council has researched restoration methods and strategies for riparian birds (especially least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher), fish (steelhead, stickleback, and goby), amphibians, and native vegetation, as well as promoted permitting and partnerships with various public and private organizations.

Left: Historic photo of a steelhead on a surfboard from the steelhead recovery report, which led to the Harvey Dam fish ladder project.

Education

Education focused on both adults and youth, to get the local communities involved in habitat restoration and build a conservation constituency excited about the long-term health of the watershed. Projects included:

- Hedrick Ranch stewardship program & visitor kiosk
- 5th grade outdoor education curriculum development
- Santa Clara River Field Days (Fillmore School District)
- Santa Clara River natural resources traveling exhibit
- Watershed University program
- Public education book and pamphlet

Right: Students in Fillmore look for birds in the river floodplain.



