

# Santa Clara River Trustee Council



**News Update 2020**

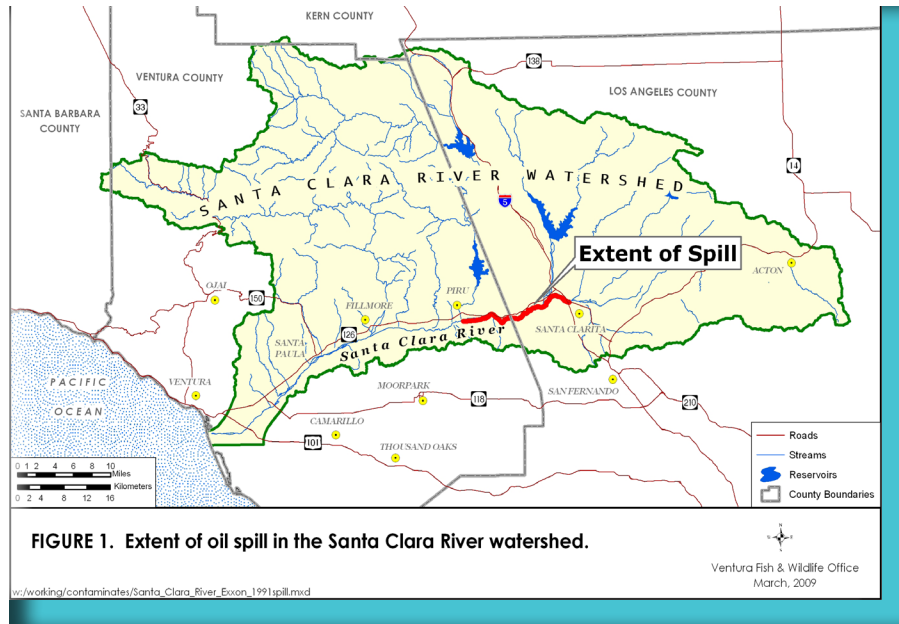


**Natural Resource Trustee Agencies**

United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
California Department of Fish and  
Wildlife







## 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 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.



ARCO pipeline break impacted 15 miles of the Santa Clara River in 1994.

## Restoration Project Highlights

### Least Bell's vireo

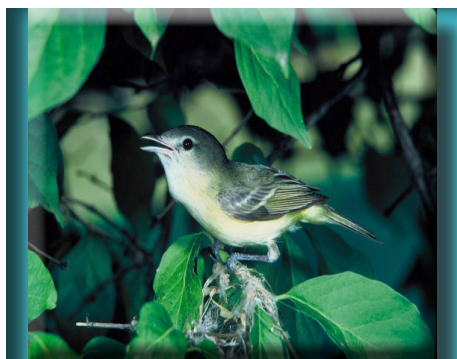
Least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*; LBVI) is a small, state and federally endangered bird native to riparian woodlands in California's Central Valley and low elevation riverine valleys of California and northern Baja. During the 1980's, the population of LBVI in the Santa Clara River was down to 8 breeding pairs. Thanks to the hard work of various partners, the Santa Clara River is now home to 400 breeding pairs of LBVI.

The Santa Clara River Trustee Council has contributed to LBVI recovery in the Santa Clara River through various projects including habitat restoration and cowbird management. The Santa Clara River Trustee Council has supported various habitat restoration projects that aim to restore native riparian habitat for least Bell's vireo. The habitat restoration projects have worked to remove the non-native, invasive giant reed (*Arundo donax*) and replanted with native riparian vegetation. Additionally,

the Santa Clara River Trustee Council has supported brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*, BHCO) trapping in the Santa Clara River since 2012.

Brown-headed cowbirds reproduce by laying their eggs in the nests of other birds, such as LBVI, often to the demise of the host eggs. As of 2018, there was no detection of LBVI nest parasitism from BHCO in nests that were monitored. The Santa Clara River Trustee Council is also a member of the Cowbird Working Group, a group dedicated to managing the threat of brown-headed cowbirds to least Bell's vireo in the Santa Clara River.

Thanks in part to these efforts, the population of least Bell's vireo has recovered from near extirpation in the Santa Clara River.



Least Bell's vireo. Photo by Steve Maslowski/USFWS

### Land Protection

The Trustee Council has funded or contributed to the acquisition of six parcels within the floodplain. Five are currently managed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), while the parcel near Fillmore is managed by CDFW. In addition, the Trustee Council partnered with TNC and the California Department of Water Resources to acquire over 550 acres of flood-plain easements designed to prevent urban development and maintain the property in agriculture or natural habitat.

The Trustee Council's partnership with TNC has helped them to conserve 3.5 miles of the Santa Clara River.

### 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 for the removal of the Harvey Dam fish ladder on Santa Paula Creek.

### Research Planning and Permitting

The Trustee Council has researched restoration methods and strategies for riparian birds such as least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher; fish including steelhead and unarmored threespine stickleback; amphibians; and native vegetation. The Trustee Council has also promoted permitting and partnerships with various public and private organizations.

### Education

The Santa Clara River Conservancy (SCRC) and the Santa Clara River Trustee Council (SCRTC) share the goal of building a local conservation constituency among communities along the Santa Clara River. The Santa Clara River

Trustee Council has supported two years of SCRC's environmental education program for Fillmore public schools.

The River Education and Outreach program consists of two parts: an in-class presentation in the fall and a field trip in the spring. During its first year, the program reached greater than 350 students over 19 sessions.

Other education projects have focused on getting the local communities involved in habitat restoration and build a conservation constituency excited about the long-term health of the watershed. Additional projects include:

- 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



California Steelhead. Photo courtesy of National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration



Unarmored threespine stickleback. Photo by Tom Hovey/CDFW



During a field trip to McGrath State Beach, Fillmore students learn about the Santa Clara River and its tributaries. Photo by Mike Glenn/USFWS



# Santa Clara River Trustee Council Budget

Settlement Received	\$9,854,582
Interest Earned	\$3,961,599
<b>Total Available</b>	<b>\$13,816,181</b>

## Allocations

<u>Land Protection</u>	<b>\$7,665,847</b>
Acquisitions	\$7,020,876
Flood easements	\$644,971

<u>Habitat Restoration</u>	<b>\$1,399,439</b>
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Hanson arundo removal	\$200,000
Hedrick Ranch habitat restoration	\$181,600
Public trash clean-up days	\$72,643
Taylor/Underwood arundo removal	\$418,000
Fillmore arundo removal	\$27,000
Cowbird trapping	\$146,890
Harvey Dam/Santa Paula Creek fish ladder	\$253,306
Cal Trout/Santa Paula Creek arundo removal	\$100,000

<u>Research, Planning, &amp; Permitting</u>	<b>\$1,427,590</b>
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Riparian revegetation handbook	\$24,734
Amphibian/macroinvertebrate habitat study	\$96,335
Stickleback/goby habitat study	\$58,010
Steelhead habitat study	\$109,094
Upper, Lower SCR land acquisition research	\$46,875
Bird habitat study	\$89,730
Vegetation mapping study	\$57,290
Bio control of arundo study	\$100,000
UC reserve research station (UCSB)	\$125,000
LiDAR photography of SCR (UCSB)	\$24,000
Removing zoning barriers	\$127,364
Programmatic permitting for arundo removal	\$67,100
Arundo/tamarisk removal program (SCIPR)	\$127,000
Stickleback barrier removal planning	\$10,000
USGS Barbara Kus LBVI study	\$5,000
Kisner LBVI nest monitoring	\$2,500
Pre-restoration Planning and Monitoring	\$357,558



<u>Education</u>	<b>\$200,938</b>
SCRC's River Education and Outreach Program	\$29,975
Traveling exhibit	\$48,750
Watershed U education program	\$63,224
Public education book and pamphlet	\$30,219
Stewardship program at Hedrick Ranch	\$26,120
5th grade education program	\$13,526
Ed project with Fillmore School District	\$19,099

<b>Sub-total on Projects</b>	<b>\$10,693,814</b>
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Administration and Overhead	\$1,578,676
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,272,490</b>

<b>Total Amount Remaining</b>	<b>\$1,543,692</b>
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Habitat Restoration	\$1,399,439
Research, Planning, & Permitting	\$1,427,590
Education	\$200,938
Administration and Overhead	\$1,578,676
Remaining	\$1,543,692

