

5a. Woodlake and River Bend Grassland Restoration **Restoration – Implementation**

WCB Request: \$770,500

Fund Sources: California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80100(a)(3); Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Fund (Proposition 4), Public Resources Code Section 91032(g)

Grantee: Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks

Landowner: Same as Grantee

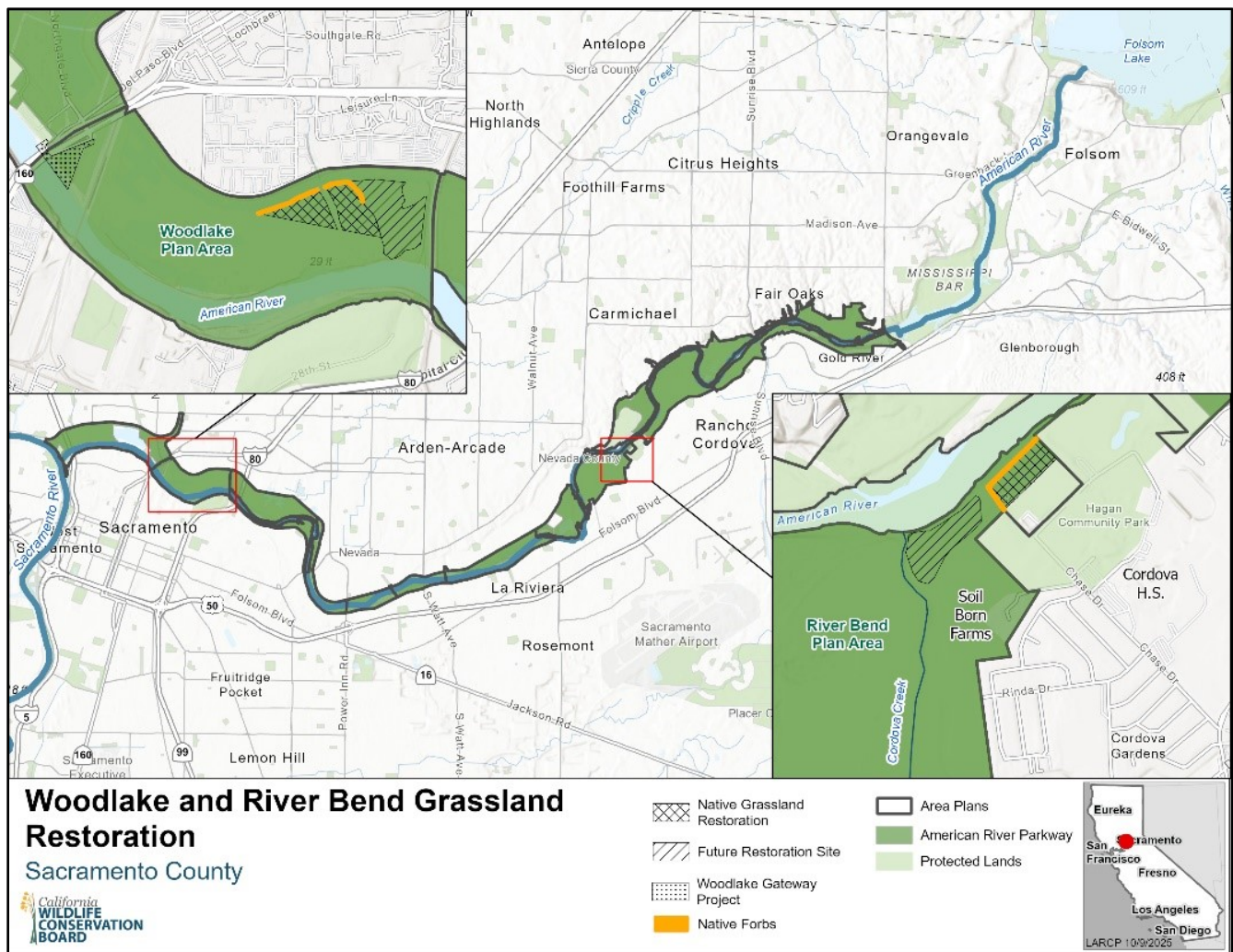
Location: City of Sacramento, Woodlake Area and City of Rancho Cordova, River Bend Area

Project Highlights

- Located in two disturbed areas dominated by non-native grasses and forbs.
- Habitats to be restored: 30 acres of native grassland and one acre of native forb habitat.
- Key species: pollinators and grassland bird species.
- Interpretive signs will educate Parkway users about the importance of native grasslands.

Priority Metrics

- Lower American River Conservancy Program Goals: habitat and education
- Lower American River Natural Resource Management Plan Objectives: 1.3b, 1.4b, 1.7b
- Benefits a Justice Community: Yes, both restoration sites are within or immediately adjacent to a disadvantaged community in the DWR DAC Mapping Tool and the Woodlake site is in the top 25th percentile on CalEnviroScreen. Restored native grasslands will reduce wildfire risk and increase long-term carbon sequestration.
- Tribal Partnerships: Yes
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship; Pathway 8, Align Investments to Maximize Conservation Benefits
- WCB Strategic Plan Goals and Targets B2.3, C1.2, C1.3, C2.1



Project Description

The *Woodlake and River Bend Grassland Restoration* (Project) sites have dense fuel loads of nonnative plants including wild oat, medusahead, barbed goatgrass, Italian thistle, yellow starthistle, wild radish, and perennial pepper weed driven by agriculture practices in the mid-20th century. Under current conditions, these sites do not function as high-quality habitat for foraging raptors, small mammals, and grassland birds, and increase the risk of wildfire because the non-native plants generate large amounts of dense standing fuel that dries early in the season. The Project will restore native grassland and forb habitat types, increase biodiversity and climate resiliency, and educate the community by:

- Reducing the non-native seed bank with integrated pest management strategies including mowing, grazing, light disking, and chemical treatments over two years.
- Seeding 30 acres with a native grass seed mix.
- Seeding one acre of native forb species along the edge of established grassland areas to increase habitat for pollinators.
- Collecting baseline and annual monitoring data for species composition and cover and soil compaction.

- Conducting quarterly wildlife observation surveys for bird richness, abundance, and habitat usage.
- Completing maintenance activities for two years including hand weeding, timed mowing, light grazing, and overseeding sparse areas.
- Implementing contingency measures as needed to ensure successful seed germination and establishment of native grasslands.
- Designing and installing up to six multi-lingual interpretive signs about the importance of native grasslands and the wildlife that use them.

Long-Term Management

Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks (Regional Parks) has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of the restored grasslands and forb plots. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Regional Parks does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Totals
Project Management and Interpretive Signs	\$500	\$36,000	\$36,500
Environmental Monitoring	40,000	\$36,000	\$76,000
Site Preparation and Native Grass Seeding	\$325,048	\$55,598	\$380,646
Forb Seeding and Maintenance	\$223,921	\$21,493	\$245,414
General Expenses: Equipment	\$3,600	---	\$3,600
Contingency	\$177,431	---	\$177,431
Total	\$770,500	\$149,091	\$919,591

Non-WCB funders include:

- Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks - \$149,091

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Marina LaForgia, PhD, Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences, Sacramento State University

Opposition:

- None received

Consistency with American River Parkway Plan

In accordance with Public Resources Code section 5845.5, the American River Parkway Plan Compliance Analysis will be completed for the project at the October 2025 Recreation and Parks Commission meeting.

CEQA

Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks, as lead agency, prepared a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) that supplements the American River Parkway Plan Update FEIR for the project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff will consider the SEIR and prepare proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

State Government

- Senate: Senator Angelique Ashby, District 8; Senator Roger Niello, District 6
- Assembly: Assemblymember Maggy Krell, District 6; Assemblymember Josh Hoover, District 7

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Advisory Committee of the Lower American River Conservancy Program recommend this project as proposed and recommend WCB staff present this project to the Wildlife Conservation Board for approval at a future board meeting.