

Hazel Meadow Restoration Project



The Hazel Meadow Restoration project was designed to balance the ecological recovery of a degraded site with managed recreation access. The meadow is located within the Sly Park Recreation Area (SPRA), owned and operated by the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID). It is adjacent to Jenkinson Lake. The SPRA provides recreation opportunities that include camping, hiking, biking, swimming, fishing, horseback riding, boating and related water sports, and access to historical sites. Jenkinson Lake also serves as an important source of drinking water for El Dorado County residents.

The popularity and heavy use of the park over time has resulted in degradation of the very resources that attract recreationists, including trampling of vegetation, soil compaction, and erosion. These adverse impacts are problematic not only because they reduce the scenic quality of the park and ecosystem connectivity, but because they have the potential to threaten the high quality of water in Jenkinson Lake if left unmanaged. The Hazel Meadow restoration project is one of several components of the SPRA Master Plan that improve habitat and water quality.

Hazel Meadow's natural qualities were rejuvenated by the project, including its ability to filter out sediment and trap any pollutants that might otherwise flow from the nearby road and campground into Jenkinson Lake. Work included removing a large spoils pile and sediment dredged from the lake in the 1970s by the Bureau of Reclamation. Teams also reconfigured a culvert and inefficient drainage system to form a meandering swale, planted 4,155 native plants - with help from Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, and constructed a wooden bridge and pathway that comply with the American with Disabilities Act and accommodate equestrians and their horses. A boardwalk and viewing platform through the meadow to the edge of the lake was constructed and educational signage installed. EID was awarded the California Environmental Protection Award from the California Rural Water Association for the project. The project was funded by the California Department of Fish and Game and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and implemented with the support of community groups and EID's board and staff.