

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Wetlands Restoration



The Yolo Basin Wildlife Area (YBWA) near Davis, CA is managed by the Department of Fish and Game. Restoration activities on the Glide Ranch section of YBWA are restoring 750 acres of leveled irrigated pasture to a diversified emergent marsh with an associated upland buffer. The acreage historically was part of a large freshwater marsh that was both seasonally inundated and tidally influenced. The restoration efforts are converting a significant portion of this historic marsh back to both seasonally inundated and tidally influenced habitats within the wildlife area's management boundary. The completion of this project and the restored emergent and associated upland habitats will contribute directly to the objectives of the California Department of Fish and Game's Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area's Management Plan which details goals and objectives for the department specific to the wildlife area and its habitats and management of those habitats. Riparian habitat is part of the wildlife complex along the southern border of the Glide Ranch.

The California Waterfowl Association is undertaking the restoration effort. Restoration activities include excavating swales, potholes, and small basins to mimic natural wetland topography. Water control structures, perimeter levees, water delivery ditches, islands and linear loafing bars will also be installed to aid in management and develop diversity. Roundstem bulrush transplants are planted to help the establishment of emergent cover. The project was designed to allow tidal flows to once again influence some of the freshwater marsh habitat that is restored. Separation and removal of the tidal influence of freshwater occurred decades ago when the pasture was initially developed and the tidal flows were prevented. On-going restoration efforts and the reestablishment of the tidal waters is restoring a long lost habitat component to the wildlife area.

The part of the project funded in by OSPR's small spills NRDA funds restored a significant block of palustrine emergent and tidal wetland habitat that benefits a host of migratory and resident waterfowl and shorebird species. In addition, there is the potential for hundreds of wetland dependent species that are found within the basin to also benefit. The project also benefits anadromous fish such as salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and striped bass, by creating potential rearing and foraging areas.