



Programmatic Environmental Compliance and Permitting for Invasive Weed Control and Habitat Restoration Projects

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EDAW

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Benefits of Programmatic Compliance



- **Enables new projects with little or no delay**
- **More efficient for resource agencies**
- **More efficient for project proponent**
- **More money spent on-the-ground**

Potential Project Activities

- Invasive weed abatement
- Riparian habitat restoration
- Fish habitat enhancement
- Bank stabilization
- Erosion control
- Others?





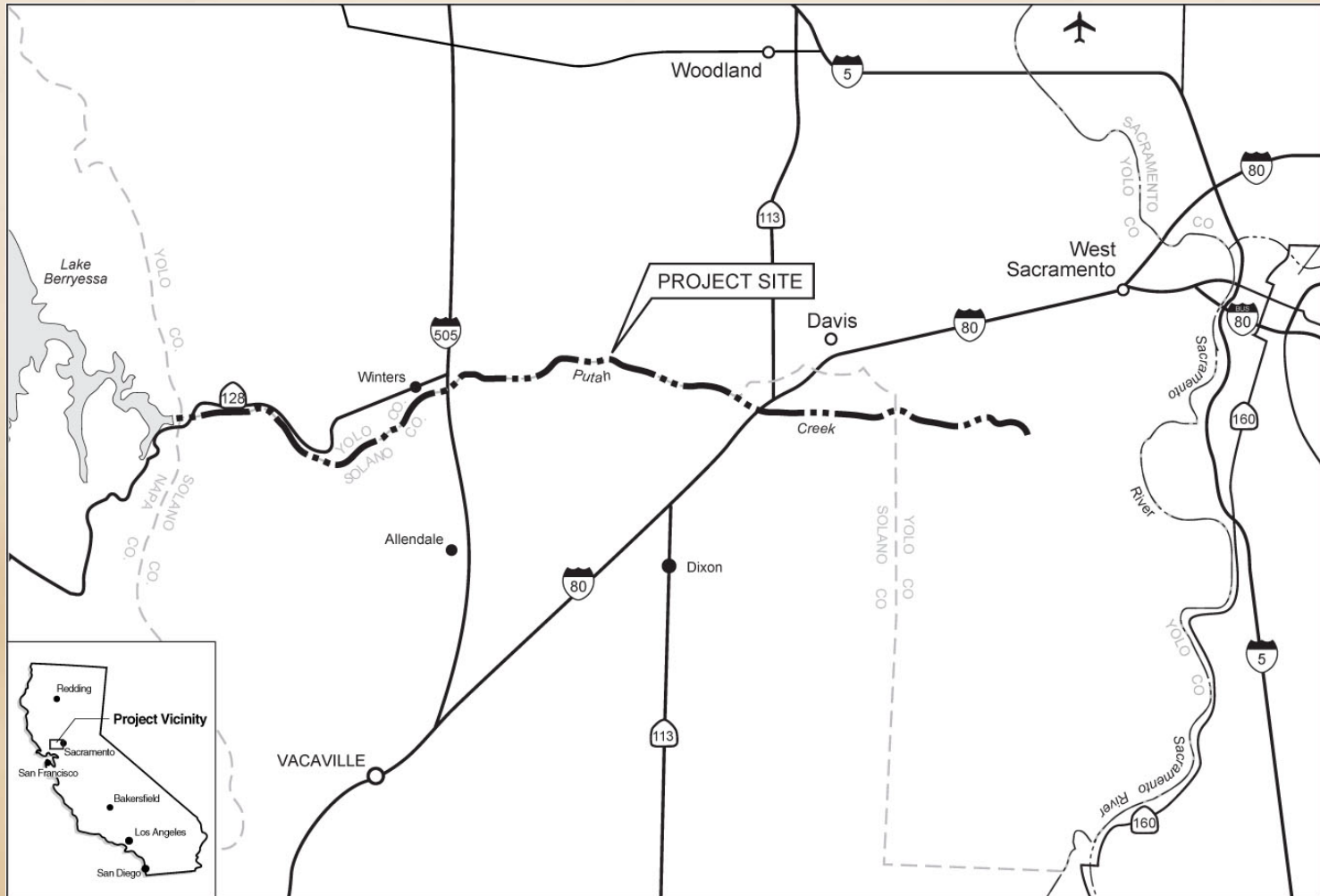
LOWER PUTAH CREEK WATERSHED PROGRAM

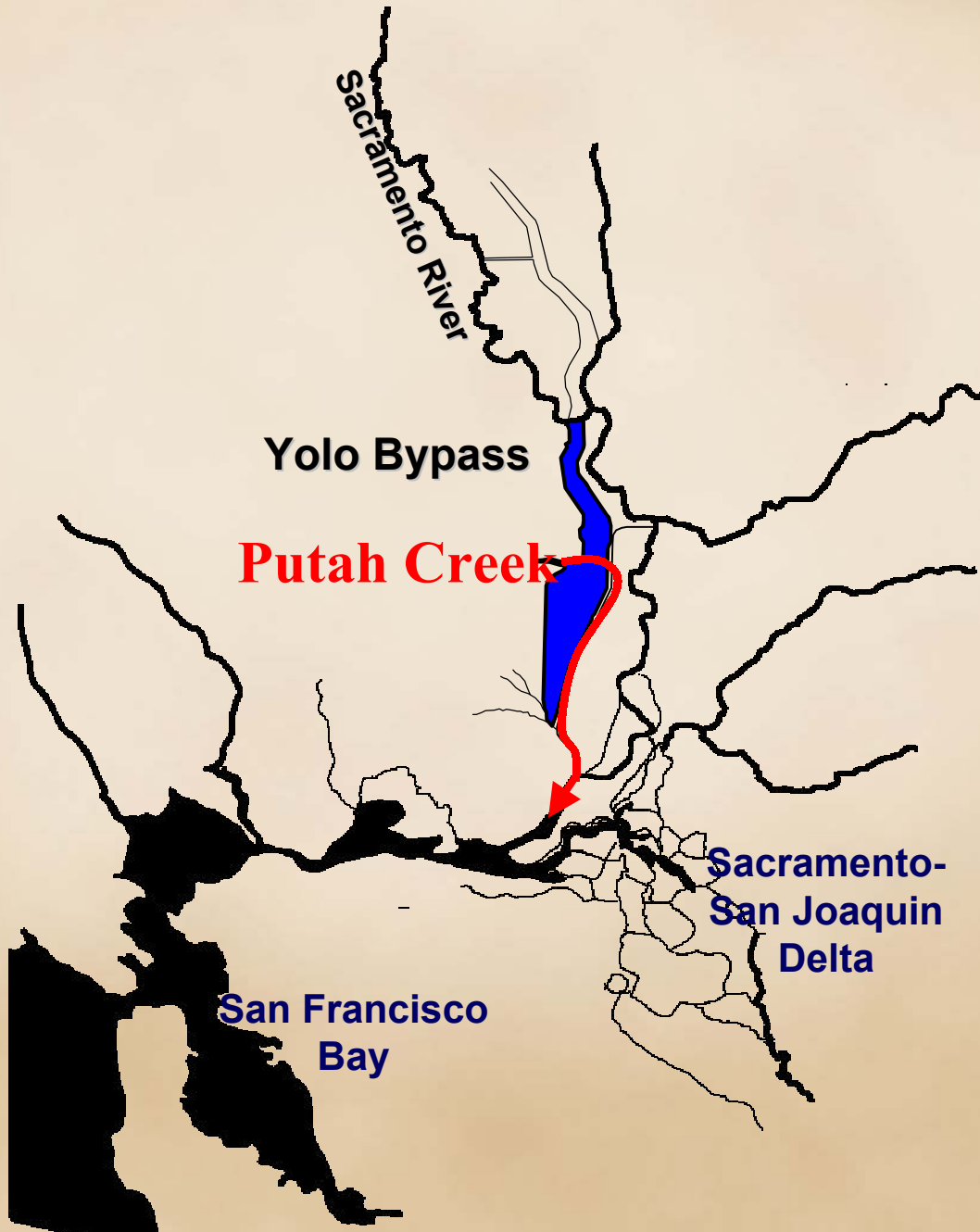
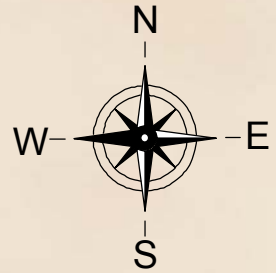


LOWER PUTAH CREEK COORDINATING COMMITTEE

EDAW

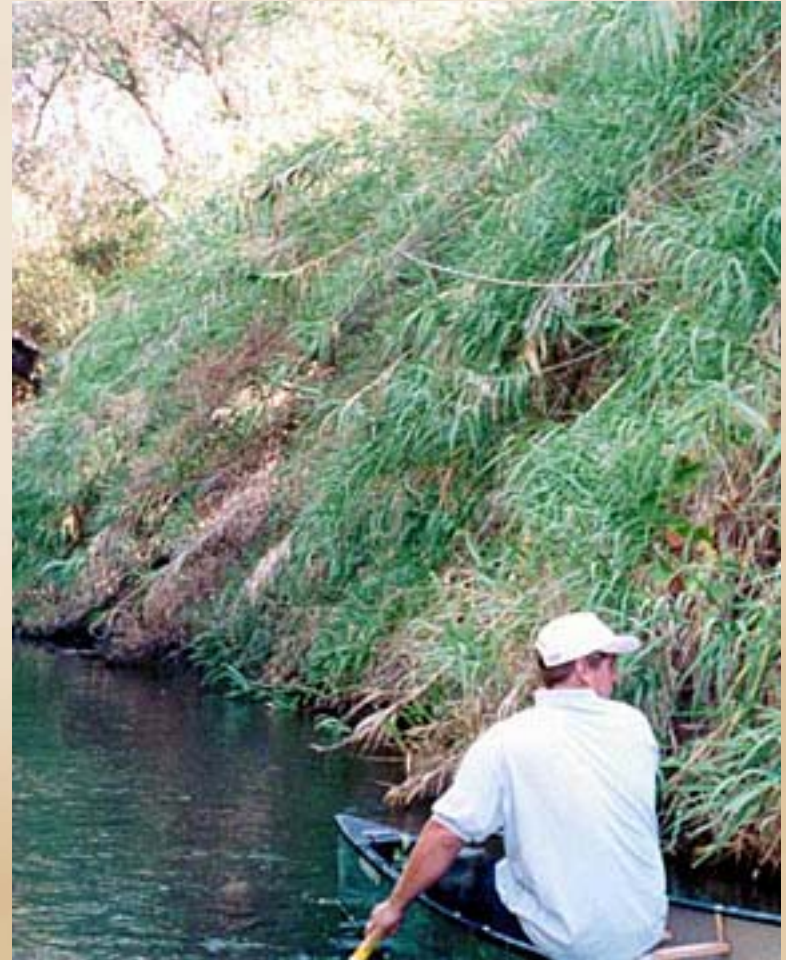
Regional Location





Overview of Lower Putah Creek Resource Assessment

- 40-mile riparian corridor
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Plant communities
- Invasive weeds
- Erosion
- Trash



Invasive Weeds Assessment



Invasive Weeds - Overview



- **22 invasive weeds**
- **Over 1800 infestations distributed in 40 miles of riparian habitat**
- **6.2 % of riparian corridor infested**
- **6.6 % (5.7 acres) of shaded riverine aquatic (SRA) overhead cover infested**

Invasive Weeds - Threats

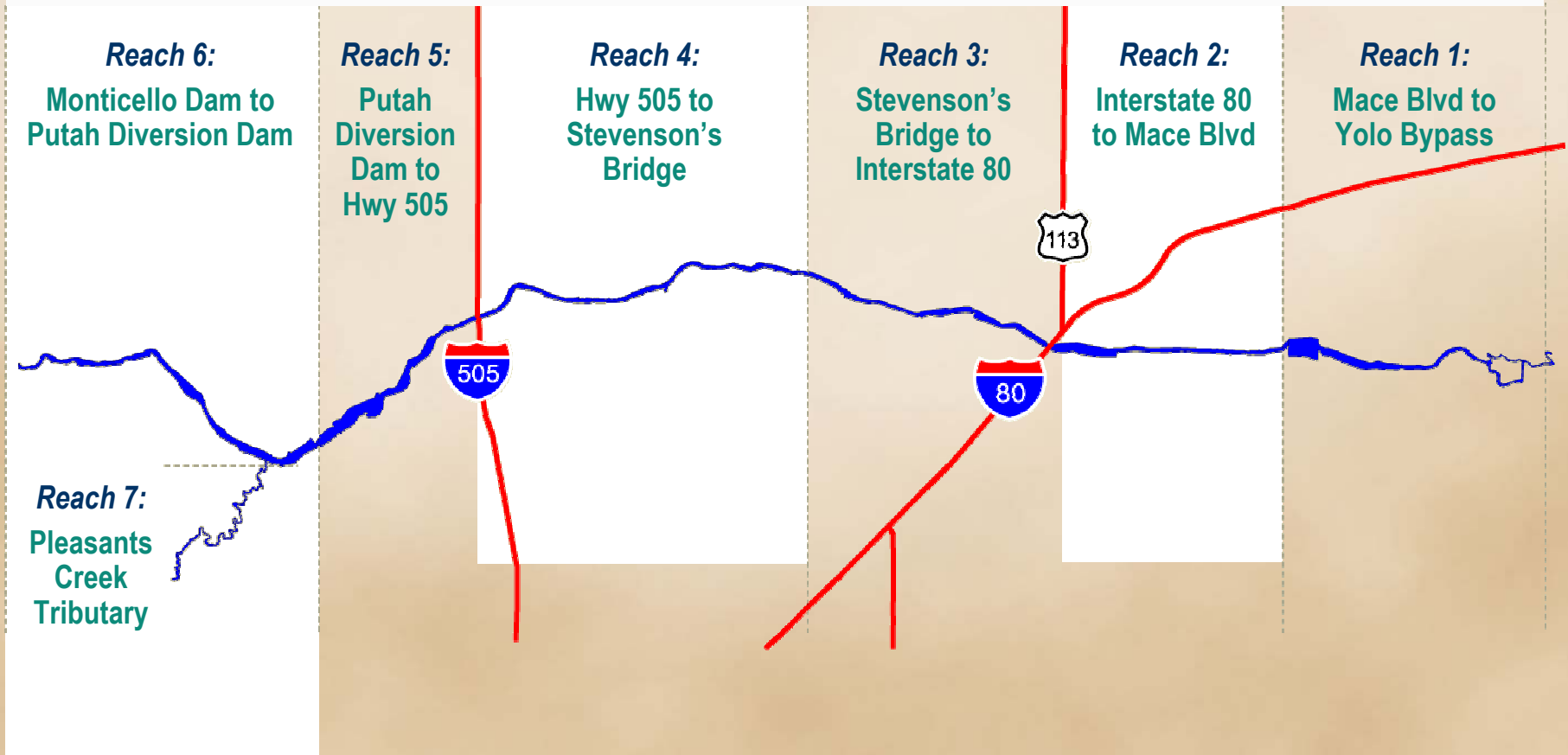
- **Habitat Degradation**
- **Competition with Native Species**
- **Erosion**
- **Bank Destabilization**
- **Fire**
- **Channel Avulsion**



Invasive Weeds – Study Area Reaches



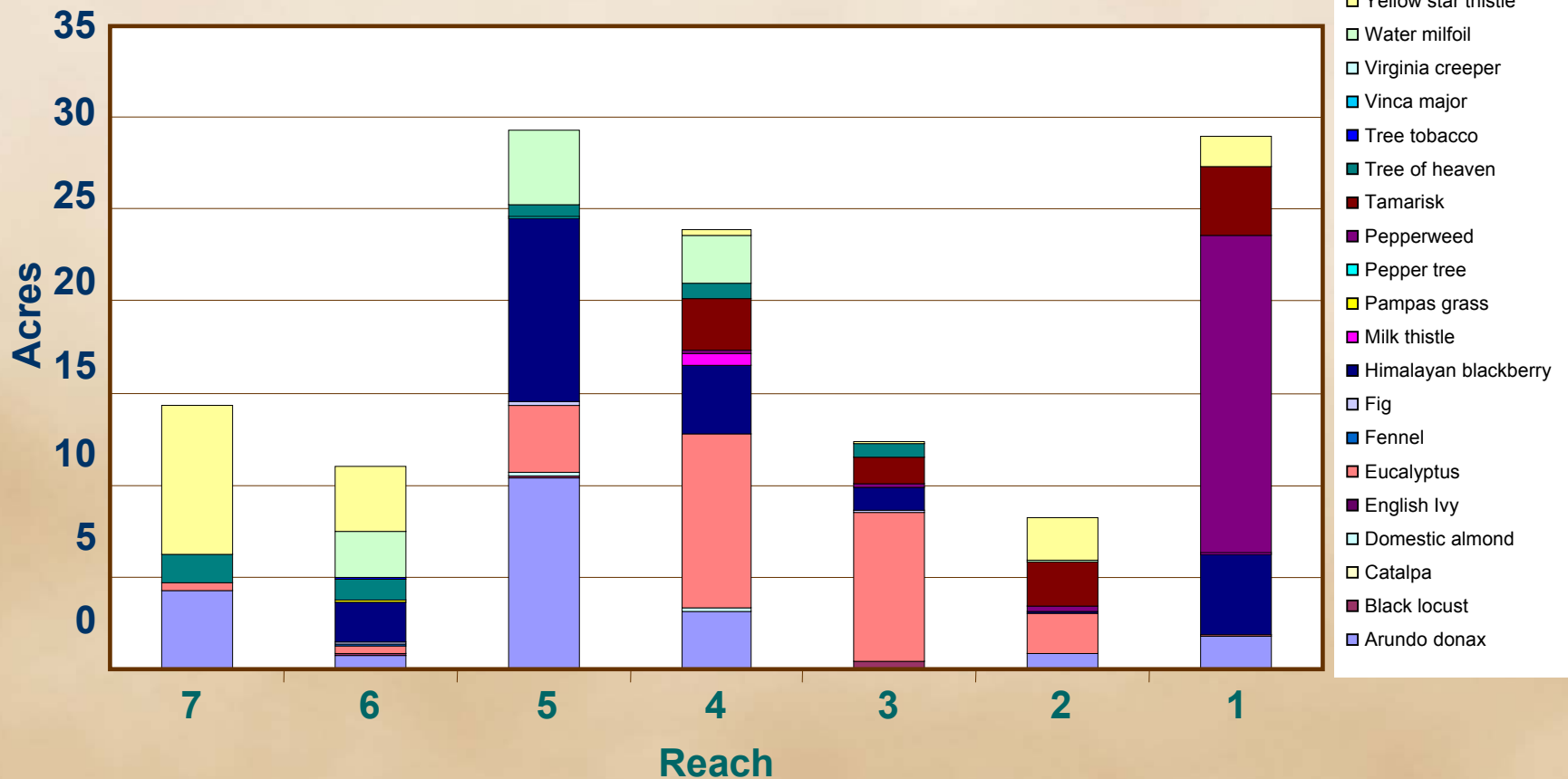
Reaches of Mainstem Putah Creek and Pleasants Creek Tributary



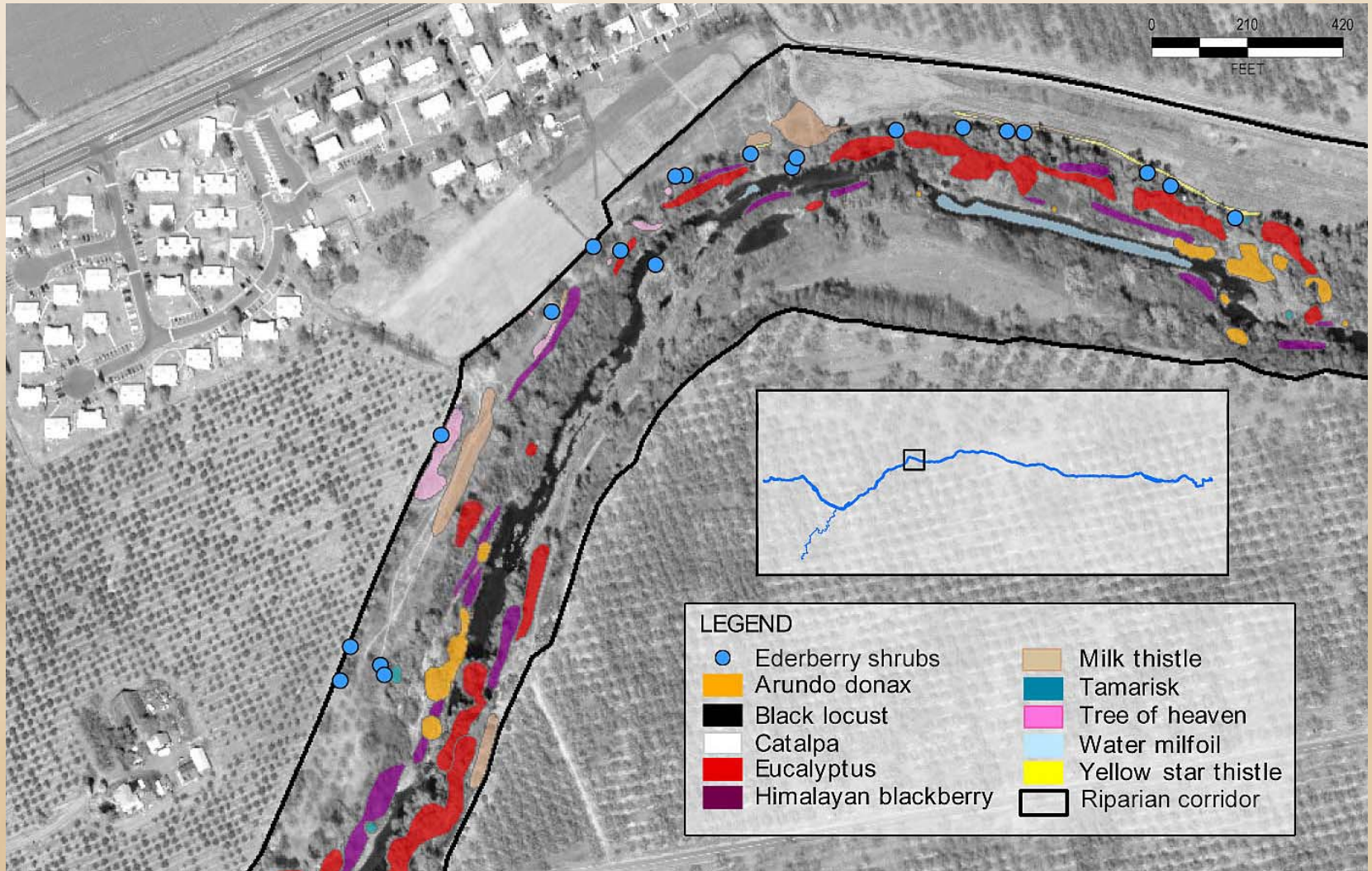
Invasive Weeds - Distribution



Total Infested Area – All Weeds – by Reach



Invasive Weeds and Sensitive Resources – Mapping Example



Programmatic Environmental Compliance and Permitting



Programmatic Environmental Compliance and Permitting



- **Known sites**
- **Sites yet undetermined**
- **Activities:**
 - **Invasive Weed Control**
 - **Bank Stabilization**
 - **Fish Habitat Enhancement**
 - **Trash Removal**
 - **Planting of Native Riparian Vegetation**
 - **Nestbox Installation**



Sensitive Resources Along The Creek:



- Anadromous fish including Pacific Lamprey (FSC), Central Valley Steelhead (FT), and Central Valley Fall/Late Fall Run Chinook Salmon (CSC, FC)
- Extensive stands of Blue Elderberry – habitat for the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (VELB) (FT)
- Nesting raptors and migratory birds
- Northwestern Pond Turtle (CSC, FSC)
- Wetlands and Riparian Habitat
- Cultural Resources



Required Permits/Documents



- **CEQA compliance document**
- **Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFG**
- **CWA Section 404 Permit from USACE**
- **CWA Section 401 Clean Water Cert from RWQCB**
- **Informal consultation with NOAA Fisheries (NMFS) and USFWS**



Goals:

- Streamline environmental compliance and permitting process
- Maximize available funding for on-the-ground accomplishments
- Obtain programmatic permits for next 5 to 10 years



The Strategy:

- Document sensitive resources
- Incorporate avoidance measures in project description
- Early agency consultation and buy-in
- Take agency members in field and consult on avoidance measures



Summary of Resource Protection Measures



- **No heavy equipment during raptor and migratory bird breeding season (or conduct surveys to confirm absence)**
- **In-stream work only during low-flow periods outside of salmonid spawning season**
- **No fueling and parking near sensitive resources**
- **Establish buffers around nests, elderberries (20 ft), known cultural resources**
- **Flag resources to be protected**
- **Replant with native riparian vegetation**

The CEQA Document



- **Categorical Exemption 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land**
- **Lead Agency – Solano County Water Agency (SCWA), a member of the LPCCC, fiscal agent, permit applicant**



The Streambed Alteration Agreement



- Covers “bed and bank” work:
 - bank stabilization
 - invasive weed removal by heavy equipment
- Covers all of lower Putah Creek (30 miles) and tributaries (10 miles)
- 3 years, renewable



The Section 404 Permit



- Permit: Nationwide Permit 27 – Stream and Wetland Restoration Activities
- For work below “Ordinary High Water Mark”:
 - installation of spawning gravels
 - Invasive weed (e.g., Arundo, tamarisk) removal from gravel bars
 - bank stabilization
- 2 years, renewable



FESA Compliance



- “Not likely to adversely effect” letter from USFWS (VELB) and NOAA Fisheries (formerly NMFS) (anadromous fish)
- Incorporation of “avoidance measures” into project descriptions
- Informal meetings with agency representative on and off the site



The Section 401 Certification



- **Clean Water Certification from Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board – based on NWP 27 application**
- **2 years, renewable**



Projects Facilitated by Permits

- Over 20 acres *Arundo* removed since October 2002
- Streambank stabilization projects
- Riparian habitat restoration projects
- Erosion control projects
- Fish Spawning Habitat Restoration



Funding provided by:

- **CALFED Bay-Delta Authority**
- **Team Arundo del Norte**
- **CalEPA Integrated Waste Management Board**
- **Putah Creek Council**
- **Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee (LPCCC)**
- **California Coastal Commission**
- **Future grants**



Conclusions



- Programmatic compliance and permits possible for watersheds
- Choose project activities unlikely to cause adverse effects
- Include resource protection measures
- Resource assessments essential
- Establish regulatory and permit process early
- Develop project descriptions through close coordination with agencies
- Enables regional approaches to regional-scale problems
- Enables more on-the-ground accomplishments

