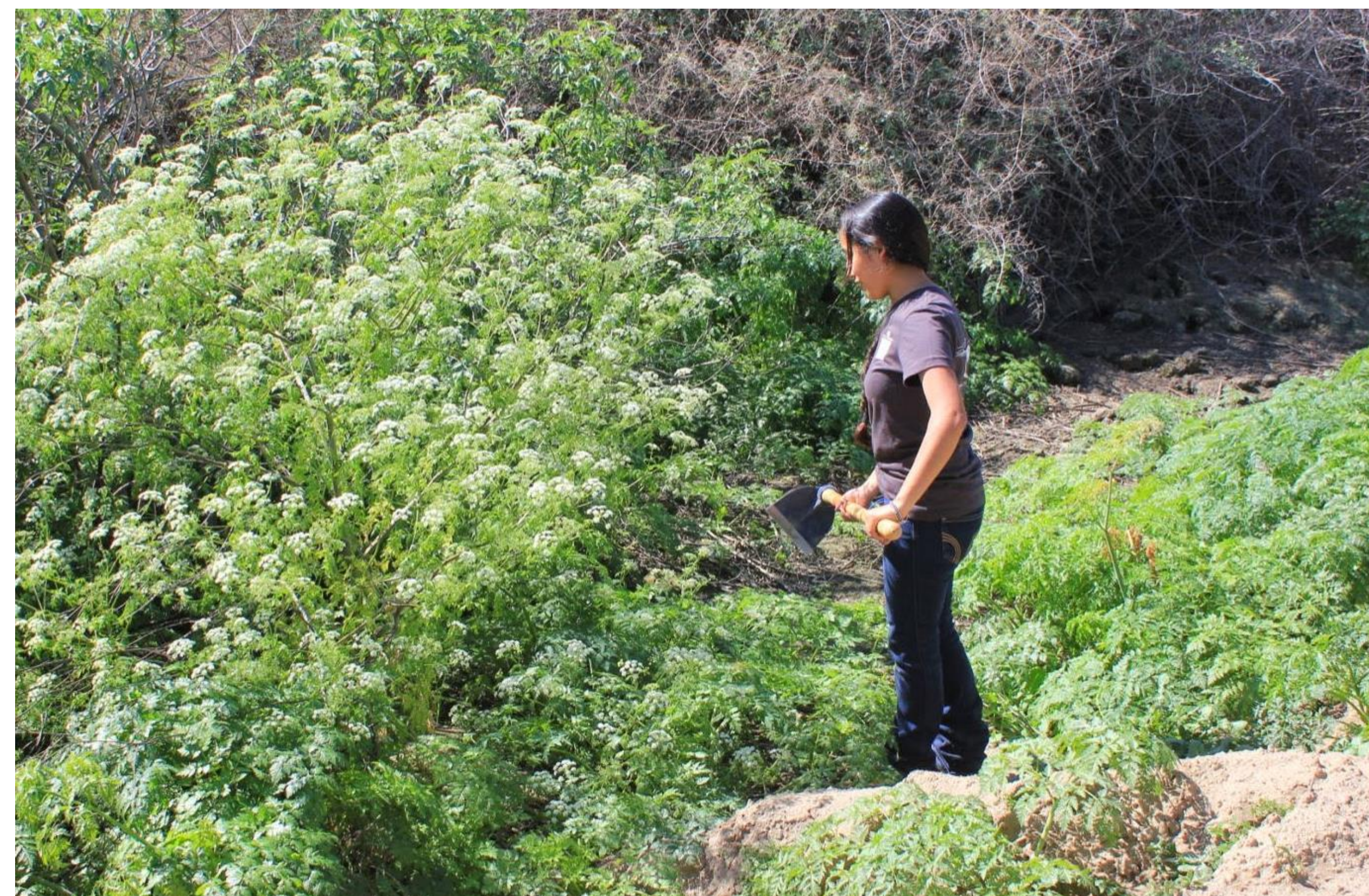


Enhancing the wildlife value of farms in the Central Valley: a team effort

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We bring together farmers, government agencies, other NGOs, students, and other volunteers to establish woody vegetation on farms by controlling invasive plants and installing natives, thereby simulating riparian forest to benefit migrating riparian songbirds and other wildlife. Most farms have a small percentage of unused or marginal land that could be put to use as wildlife habitat, which could partially ameliorate the effects of the decline of riparian habitat in California's Central Valley, including the impact on listed species. These restoration projects also provide opportunities to engage the community in conservation. We typically work with five to ten different organizations, which each lend a particular expertise to the overall effort. This cross-fertilization has led not only to successful restoration projects, but also to strategic collaboration beyond the scope of the projects.



Pacheco High School student plans her attack on *Conium maculatum* at Bowles Farm near Los Banos. Ten organizations are partnering on this project, initiated by USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, and they are the restoration planners. Bowles Farming staff have spent many hours installing and maintaining most of the 120 acre restoration project. Audubon California received a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board to manage the partnership and contribute technical assistance. USDA-NRCS provides EQIP funding and technical assistance. Center for Land-Based Learning managed the education program, while East Merced RCD coordinated the program on the ground, USFWS, CDFW, and Grasslands Water District environmental education staff have improved the curriculum and worked tirelessly on logistics, and Pacheco High School has re-arranged schedules to get the students out to the restoration site.



Colusa High School students help control *Silybum marianum* and other weeds at Davis Ranches near Colusa. Eight different agencies are partnering on this restoration project, initiated by the farm and Audubon California, the restoration planner. Sycamore Family Trust, the farm owners, contribute project management and farm labor. Audubon California received a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board to implement the project, manages the partnership, and contributes technical assistance. USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program contributes funding and technical assistance. USDA-NRCS provides technical assistance and provides volunteer mentors to the students. Center for Land-Based Learning managed the education program. Colusa County RCD helps with all aspects of the project. Colusa High School Environmental Sciences Academy has long supported this and other projects on Davis Ranches.