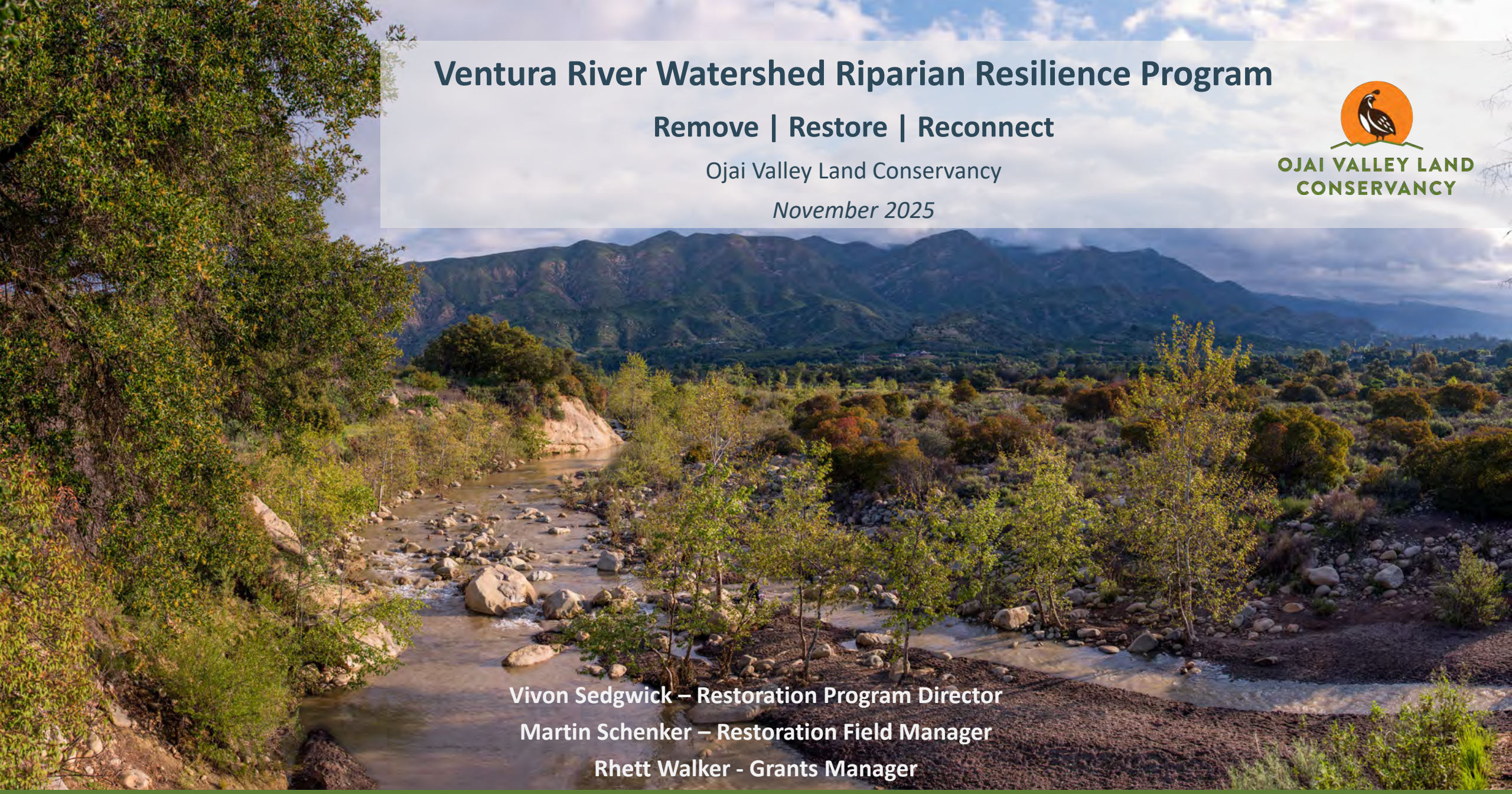
Ventura River Watershed Riparian Resilience Program

Remove | Restore | Reconnect

Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

November 2025



Vivon Sedgwick – Restoration Program Director

Martin Schenker – Restoration Field Manager

Rhett Walker - Grants Manager

OVLC Overview

OVLC Overview

Mission

Protect and restore the natural landscapes of the Ojai Valley forever.

By the Numbers

2,600+ acres conserved open space

1/3 of Ventura River riparian lands

7,100 volunteer hours (in FY24)

27 miles of trails

45 community events/year

20 employees

VRW Riparian Resilience Program

Program Scope

2,500+ acres riparian habitat

30+ river miles

200+ parcels

300+ acres Arundo (in red)

30+ target invasive species

This program is spearheaded by the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy, with the Ventura County Resource Conservation District as Lead Agency. Funding support is provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (California Climate Investments) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY

CAL FIRE SINCE 1885

California Climate Investments — Cap and Trade Dollars at Work

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Why Remove Arundo?

OUTCOMPETES NATIVE VEGETATION

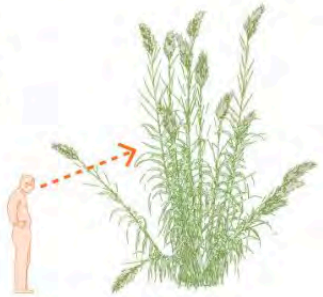
Arundo forms dense stands that displace native vegetation. These monoculture stands provide less habitat and food for native wildlife, and outcompete native plants.

INCREASES EROSION

Arundo's root masses, known as rhizomes, are bulky and shallow-rooted. These large masses alter the path of water in our creeks. Also, as opposed to our deep-rooted native plants, the shallow roots are pulled from the stream banks during storms causing erosion and destabilizing surrounding land.

OBSTRUCTS VIEWSHEDS & ACCESS

Arundo is an aggressive invasive grass that can grow in dense stands up to 30 feet tall. Its towering height obstructs views and dense stands cut off access to our creeks and waterways.



CREATES FLOOD HAZARDS

Shallow-rooted Arundo dislodges and flows downstream during storms. Dense mats of vegetation can dam up and increase the risk and severity of flooding.

DEPLETES WATER SUPPLIES

Arundo consumes large amounts of surface and groundwater—four times as much as native riparian plants! Estimates are as high as 20 acre-feet per acre annually. Removing one acre of arundo can provide enough to supply water to 40 homes a year!

EXACERBATES FIRE RISK

While healthy riparian corridors typically function as natural fire breaks, Arundo's tall, dense stands are extremely flammable, which dramatically worsen the spread of wildland fires. Stands of Arundo are also known to cause spotting and can throw embers up to a mile away.

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Program Strategy

VRW Riparian Resilience Program

Programmatic Approach

Map segment reaches & identify overlying landowners. Start at the top of each waterway, work downstream systematically to target rhizomatous spread.

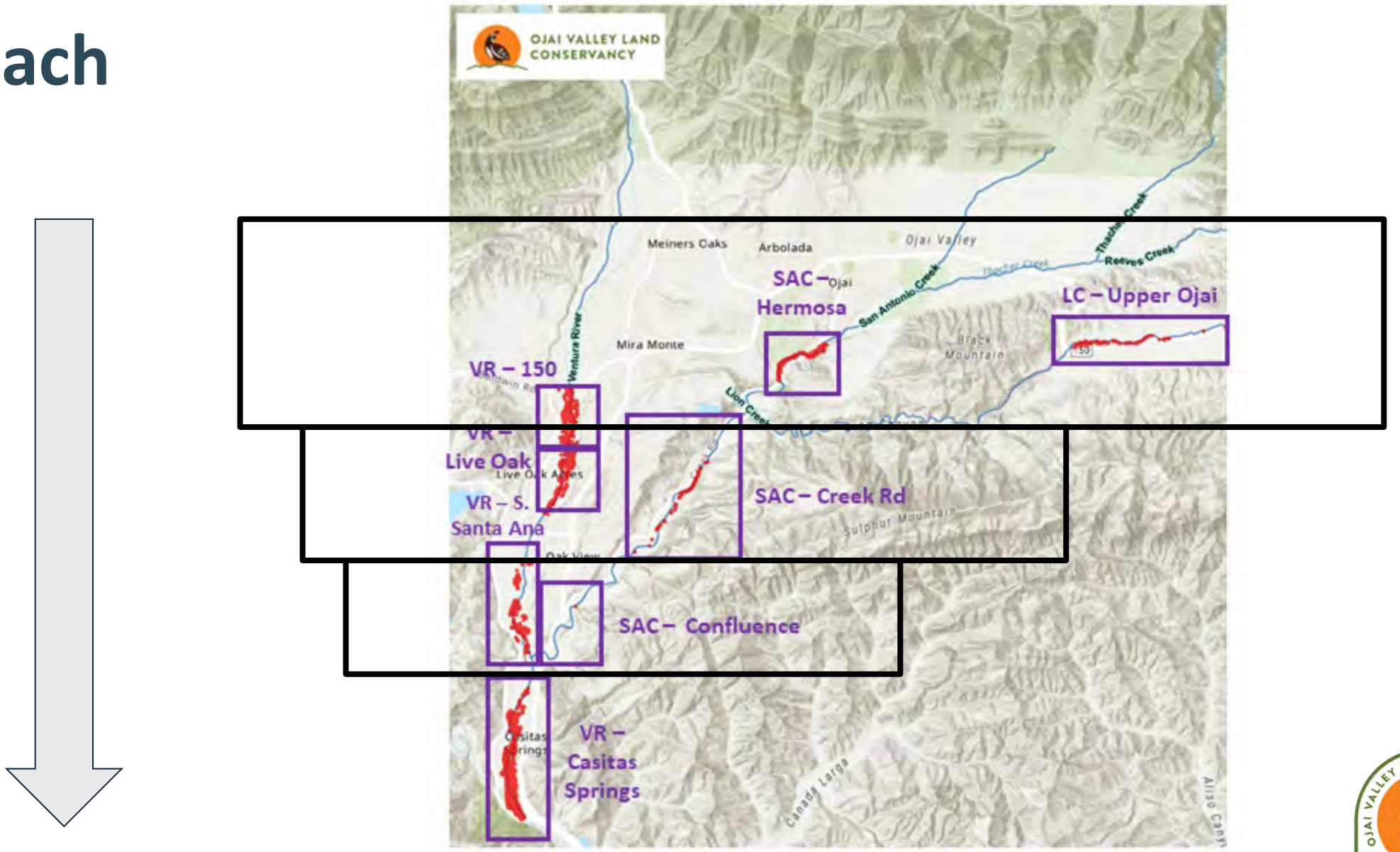
Comprehensive Restoration Plan

Targets Arundo, includes other non-native species, deploys watershed-wide early detection-rapid response & pairs removal with active restoration efforts.

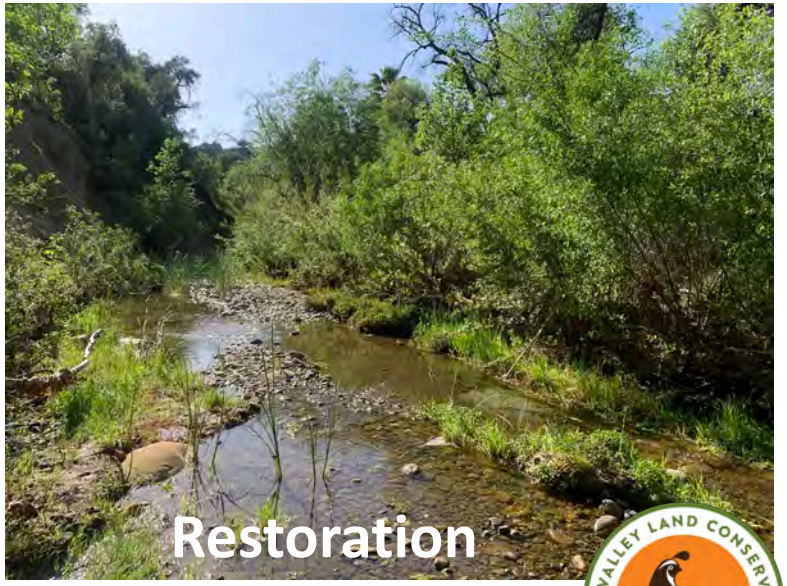
Prescriptive Methods

Treatment and removal methods are assessed and prescribed based on localized conditions of each reach.

Approach


OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY
Meiners Oaks
Arbolada
Ojai Valley
Mira Monte
Black Mountain
Sulphur Mountain
Ventura River
San Antonio Creek
Thacher Creek
Reeves Creek
Lion Creek
SAC – Ojai Hermosa
LC – Upper Ojai
VR – 150
VR – Live Oak
VR – S. Santa Ana
SAC – Creek Rd
SAC – Confluence
VR – Casitas Springs

Comprehensive Plan



Arundo+ Target Species

Sample of target invasive, non-native species list.
Does not include all potential target species.

Arundo
Arundo donax

Salt cedar
Tamarix spp.

Eucalyptus
Eucalyptus spp.

Tree tobacco
Nicotiana glauca

Pepper tree
Schinus molle

Spanish broom
Spartium junceum

Tree of heaven
Ailanthus altissima

Castor bean
Ricinus communis

Riparian Restoration: Sample Plant Palette

Western sycamore
Platanus racemosa

Elderberry
Sambucus mexicana

Black walnut
Juglans californica

California wildrose
Rosa californica

Arroyo willow
Salix lasiolepsis

Mulefat
Baccharis salicifolia

Coast live oak
Quercus agrifolia

White Hedgenettle
Stachys albens

Giant wildrye
Elymus condensatus

Scale broom
Lepidospartum squamatum

Prescriptive Methods: Treatment & Removal






Wide range of approved methods for treatment & removal of Arundo and other invasive/non-native species.

Progress To-Date

Completed Projects

85 acres Arundo removed 2012 – 2020

25 acres Arundo treated ‘24-’25 season

20 acres Arundo treated in Sep-Oct 2025

Funding

$10.7M raised 2022 – 2031

Outreach

Landowners, Tribal, Community

Permitting

- CEQA – SERP – *complete*
- Sec. 401 – RGP41 – *complete*
- LSA & CESA – AB 1581 RMP – *Nov. 2025*
- Sec 404 – RGP41 – *in progress, Dec. 2025*
- USFWS: ESA – HCP – *in progress, Dec. 2025*

VRW Arundo Removal & Riparian Forest Health

CALFIRE Forest Health Grant

In June, OVLC received a $7M grant for a landscape-scale riparian forest restoration:

- across 802 contiguous acres on Lion Creek, San Antonio Creek, and the Ventura River,
- invasive species removal (Arundo donax and other noxious species),
- reforestation with native hardwood trees and herbaceous understory plants
- maintenance & monitoring (including early-detection, rapid-response protocol).

2025 – 2026 Season

CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant:
Programmatic Permits for Arundo Removal to Reduce Fuel Load in UVRW

- 10 acres of Arundo+ removal

CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant:
Upper Ventura River Watershed-Wide Arundo Donax Treatment

- 17.16 acres of Arundo+ removal

CAL FIRE Forest Health Grant:
Arundo Removal & Restoration for Riparian Forest Health

- 25 acres of Arundo+ removal

CDFW Fisheries Restoration Grant Program:
Ventura River Arundo Removal & Riparian Restoration

- 3.5 acres of Arundo+ removal

55 acres of Arundo removal planned this season!

Active Restoration

Vegetation communities in the upper watershed
Arroyo willow thickets and western sycamore – coast live oak riparian woodlands. Black cottonwood forest and woodland. Black walnut groves. Scale broom scrub.

Succession and autogenic restoration:
Establishing native cover quickly via live-staking to facilitate recruitment of herbaceous species. Control of non-native perennials. Seeding.

Monitoring for success, adaptive management:
Drone orthomosaics, vegetation transects, point count surveys, cover board surveys, habitat suitability analysis for species found in riparian zones (red-legged frog)

*Live staking and seeding is a cost-efficient way to restore habitat.

Outreach!

Three-pronged strategy focuses on:

Riparian Landowners

Community

Tribal

Contact Us!
Rhett@ovlc.org or 805-633-4680

Visit www.ovlc.org/arundo to learn more!

Thanks for attending our talk!

Questions?

Vivon Sedgwick
Restoration Program Director
vivon@ovlc.org

Martin Schenker
Restoration Field Manager
martin@ovlc.org

Rhett Walker
Grants Manager
rhett@ovlc.org