

NORTH AMERICAN

WETLANDS

CONSERVATION ACT

project flash

California Partnership Receives \$1,000,000 for Wetlands Project

On September 8, 2004, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, as authorized under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, approved **\$1,000,000** in funding for the **Suisun Marsh Managed Wetlands Enhancement Project in California's Solano County in Congressional Districts 7 and 10**. The Act is nonregulatory and calls for voluntary partnerships to develop and implement wetlands and associated uplands projects to benefit wildlife. Projects must meet certain biological criteria to be considered for funding, and partners must be able to match the grant request 1:1 with nonfederal funds. This project's partnership exceeded the match requirement with **\$2,199,634**.

Located within the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's **Central Valley Joint Venture** area, the 115,000-acre Suisun Marsh—representing about 12 percent of California's remaining wetlands—is of major importance to migrating and breeding birds of the **Pacific Flyway**. Sadly, species diversity has declined in the marsh over the past 25 years due to modifications in fresh and brackish water exchange—making marsh's waters more saline. Water diversions from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, which feed the marsh, for use elsewhere are part of the problem. In addition, the water-control infrastructure on private lands within the marsh needs improvement to enhance the owners' ability to help maintain habitat.

To improve brackish-water and freshwater exchange, and thus the marsh's overall water quality and biodiversity, partners will alter the topography by deleveling fields and contouring pond bottoms, create new circulation and drainage ditches, install additional water-control structures, construct islands, redirect the flow of tidal and surface waters, and manage water levels.

This work will result in the enhancement of **24,665 acres** of migration and breeding habitat used by species such as tule greater white-fronted goose, cackling Canada goose, northern pintail, mallard, greater and lesser scaups, cinnamon teal, black-necked stilt, American avocet, and black-bellied plover. State and federally listed threatened or endangered species also will benefit, for example, bald eagle and salt marsh harvest mouse.

Partners making all this possible include Suisun Resource Conservation District, California Wildlife Conservation Board, California Coastal Conservancy, California Waterfowl Association, Dean Witter Foundation, Harvey L. and Maud C. Sorenson Foundation, California Department of Fish and Game, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., and many private landowners.

For more information about this project, contact Steven Chappell, Executive Director, Suisun Resource Conservation District, (707) 425-9302, SRCD@castles.com, or David Buie, Standard Grants Program Proposal Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (301) 497-5870, david_buie@fws.gov.

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