



Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Overview

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is a **voluntary** program that provides **financial and technical assistance** to **private landowners** interested in improving wildlife **habitat** on their property. While participating in this program, landowners continue to own and manage their land.

Partners Program in the Sierra-Cascades

The Partners Program in the Sierras is coordinated by three dispersed Partners Program Biologists within the Sierras. Their vision is to, “...*work collaboratively with landowners and stakeholders to restore hydrologic function and sediment processes in degraded meadow complexes and stream habitats within the Sierra-Cascades Ecoregion for the benefit of habitat diversity and resiliency; water quality and quantity; and wildlife refugia during and after wildfires.*”

The Partners Program in the Sierras currently prioritizes projects that restore meadows, riparian areas, and streams.

Eligibility

- **Lands:** Any land not under state or federal ownership is eligible for Partners Program assistance. Examples of eligible lands are lands owned by individuals, tribes, land trusts, local governments, businesses, or schools.
- **Applicants:** The landowner or an entity working on behalf of the landowner may apply for Partners Program funding. Examples of eligible applicants are individual landowners, local governments, land trusts, associations, businesses, and non-profit or for-profit organizations.
- **Projects:** The Partners Program supports on-the-ground wildlife habitat improvement projects, and the types of projects can vary widely. Funds cannot be used to lease or purchase interests in real property, make rental or other land use incentive payments to landowners, or satisfy mitigation requirements. Each

project is designed to benefit federal trust species, such as migratory birds, threatened or endangered species or inter-jurisdictional fish. Because funding is limited, the projects most likely to be approved are those that provide the greatest benefit to wildlife.

Project Examples:

- **Meadows:** re-establishing connectivity with floodplain or channels, prescribe fire preparation (e.g thinning encroaching trees for use in meadow restoration), post fire restoration.
 - **Riparian:** livestock-exclusion fencing and off-stream watering systems, riparian vegetation planting, channel and/or streambank erosion stabilization.
 - **Instream:** instream habitat enhancement, flood plain reconnection.
- **Cost-sharing:** The Partners Program generally pays for 50% of each project's cost, up to \$25,000. The landowner's cost-share may be in-kind services (e.g., skilled labor, materials, or equipment) or monetary. Additional project funding sources can be counted towards the cooperator's cost share). The loss of future income (e.g., the reduction in grazing acreage from livestock exclusion fencing) as a result of the project cannot be used as landowner cost-share.
 - **Time Commitment:** Approved projects must be funded and completed within a five-year period. Under each agreement the landowner must also commit to retain the improved habitat for a minimum of ten years.

Application Process

1. **Contact your local Partners Program biologist:** They can provide informal advice on potential habitat improvement projects or wildlife-friendly management practices. They will work with you to discuss project ideas and whether the Partners Program fits your needs. No project is too small or large to be considered.
2. **Conduct a site visit:** The landowner, applicant, and Partners Program biologist meet on the property to evaluate the potential for improving wildlife habitat and discuss the landowner's goals. The Partners Program biologist can provide technical advice on project feasibility, design, techniques, and budget.
3. **Develop an agreement:** If the landowner, applicant, and Partners Program biologist agree that the potential project is feasible, they work together to develop a work plan, budget, and application package. Projects can be developed year-round, but applications typically need to be finalized and submitted by May/June each year. If the project is approved, the Partners Program biologist will work closely with the landowner and applicant to coordinate and implement the project.

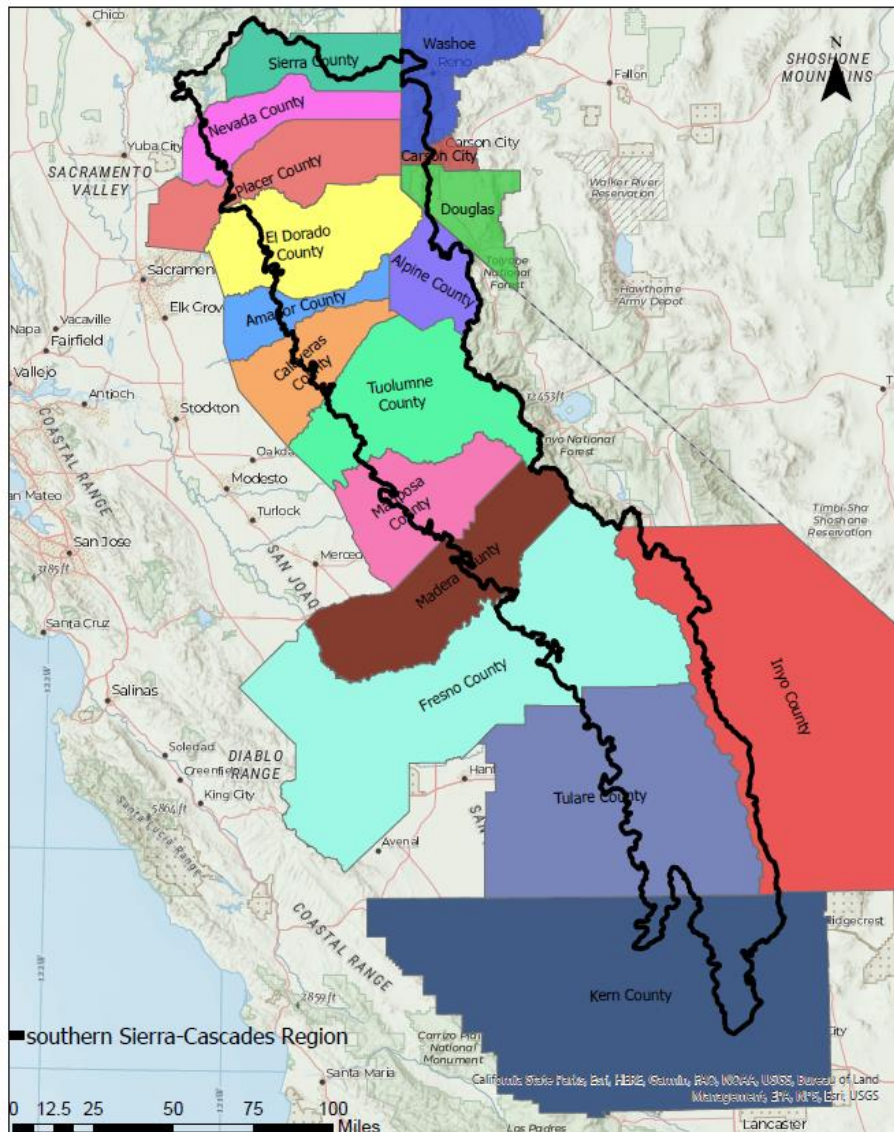
Program Contact for southern Sierra-Cascades Region

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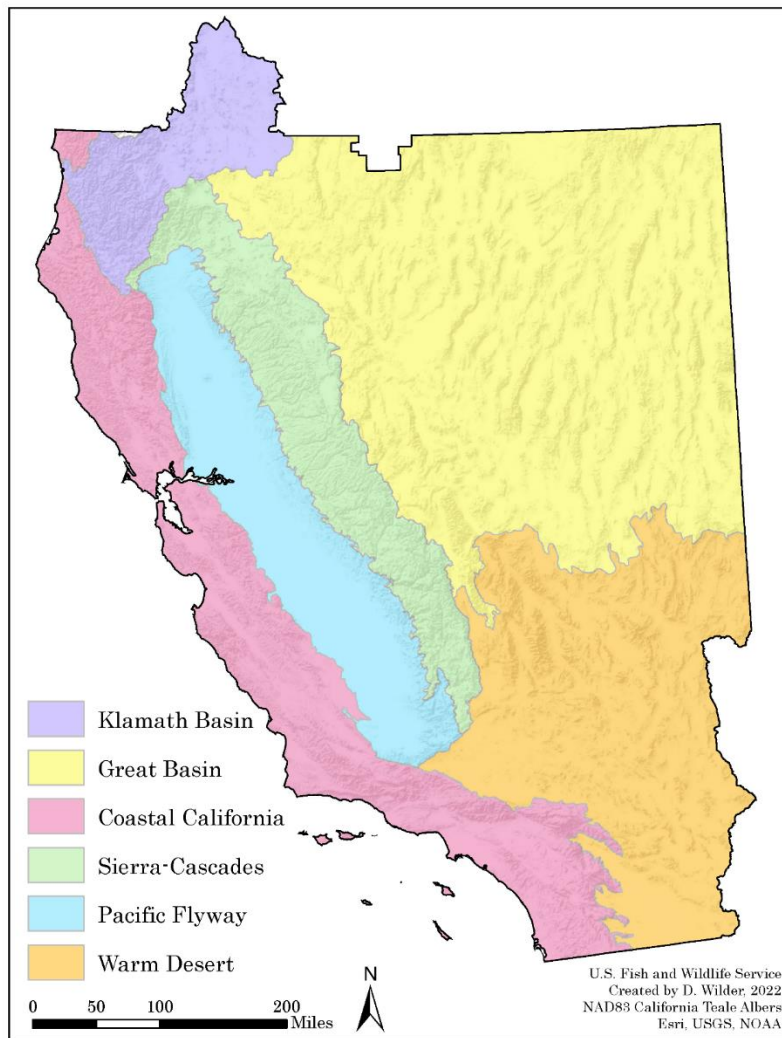
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southern Sierra-Cascades region outlined in black



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Partners Program Ecoregions within the Pacific Southwest Region



Contact for the northern part of the Sierra Cascades Ecoregion:

Sheli Wingo: sheli_wingo@fws.gov

Great Basin Ecoregion: Susan Abele: susan_abele@fws.gov

Check out the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program website for additional information:

<https://www.fws.gov/program/partners-fish-and-wildlife>