

Proposal: Primrose Removal and Habitat Restoration at William B. Pond

Lead Organization: Waterbird Habitat Project in collaboration with Sacramento County Parks

Funding Source: Proposition 4 – Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024

Target Funding Pools: \$1.5 billion (fish and wildlife habitats) and \$400 million (flood and watershed protection)

Estimated Cost: \$150,000–\$250,000 (initial equipment and project launch)

Objective

Clear invasive water primrose (*Ludwigia sp.*) from William B. Pond Recreation Area’s 150-acre pond to restore fish and waterbird habitat, improve fishing access, and enhance water flow, leveraging volunteer efforts with county-owned equipment.

Background

Water primrose has overrun William B. Pond, a vital Parkway fishery and birdwatching site east of the Watt Avenue bridge and an essential roosting site of hundreds of local and wintering waterbirds. This summer, the Waterbird Habitat Project removed over 9,000 tons of primrose around the Wm Pond fishing dock, but manual efforts cannot keep pace with its spread across the entire pond. The weed’s dense mats snag fishing gear, trap waterbirds and choke out native aquatic life, while slowing water movement and raising flood risks.

Sacramento County’s small-scale herbicide trials and volunteer pulls show the problem’s scale outstrips current resources: 9,000 tons manually removed in 2024 by the Waterbird Habitat Project just around the fishing deck while the remaining 145 acre pond is brimming throughout its perimeter. The Parkway Foundation does not address aquatic invasive species.

Plan

Equipment Purchase (\$100,000–\$150,000)

Aquatic Weed Harvester: Acquire a mid-sized aquatic mower (e.g., Aquarius Systems HM-420, ~\$120,000) to cut and collect primrose across the pond’s 150 acres. These machines can clear 1–2 acres per day, far outpacing hand-pulling.

Support Gear: Add a trailer (\$10,000) and disposal bins (\$5,000) for hauling cut primrose off-site.

Why County Ownership? Equipment stays with Sacramento County Parks for ongoing Parkway use, ensuring long-term primrose control beyond this project.

Initial Clearing (\$30,000–\$50,000)

Deploy the harvester for a 2-month intensive sweep of William B. Pond, starting at the fishing dock and working outward.

Pair with targeted herbicide (e.g., glyphosate, per county protocols) on regrowth hotspots, applied by trained county staff.

Volunteers from Waterbird Habitat Project Wm Pond hand-pull shallow edges and assist with disposal, cutting labor costs.

Restoration and Maintenance (\$20,000–\$50,000)

Plant native aquatic species (e.g., tule, sedges) along cleared edges to suppress primrose regrowth and boost fish/bird habitat.

Install signage at the dock about the project, crediting Prop 4 and volunteers.

Set up a county maintenance schedule (e.g., quarterly harvester runs) to keep primrose in check.

Expected Outcomes

Wildlife: Free waterbirds from entanglement risks and restore fish spawning areas (e.g., for bass and steelhead).

Recreation: Clear fishing dock and pond for anglers—50,000+ annual visitors—who've lost gear to primrose mats.

Ecosystem: Improve water flow and oxygen levels, reducing flood risk and algae blooms.

Community: Showcase volunteer-county collaboration with Waterbird Habitat Project leading the charge.