



2024

Habitat Project at River Bend Fact Sheet



Overview

Each year, the Water Forum works to create and enhance habitat for native fall-run Chinook salmon and steelhead trout. Both species migrate to the Lower American River as adults to spawn. Fall-run Chinook salmon generally spawn from October through December, while steelhead trout spawning occurs from January through March. In the egg-laying process, females create a “nest” (called a redd) in loose gravel in flowing water, deposit their eggs, and then cover them with more gravel. Once hatched, young fish move to the river’s slower-moving floodplain and side channel areas to find protection from predators and grow before swimming to the Pacific Ocean.



About the Project

The Water Forum’s 2024 Habitat Project will enhance crucial habitat for native fall-run Chinook salmon and steelhead trout at River Bend (in the river near River Bend Park in Rancho Cordova and William B. Pond Recreation Area in Carmichael).

QUICK FACTS



Nearly 5 acres of spawning habitat for adult salmon and steelhead to create redds (underwater depressions or ‘nests’), constructed by placing 6,800 cubic yards of clean gravel into the flowing river.



Over 3 acres of rearing habitat for young fish to hide from predators, find food and grow, created by deepening and reconnecting the existing 1,600-foot side channel with the main river and shaping 1 acre of seasonal floodplain.



Hiding and resting places for young fish by placing about 35 large woody tree structures into the side channel.



Over 2 acres of enhanced riparian landscape by planting or seeding the project area with willows and native flowers and grasses after construction.

Construction is scheduled to take place in the August-to-October 2024 timeframe. The project could take up to eight weeks to complete and in-river work will finish no later than October 31, 2024, before anadromous Chinook salmon return in high numbers from the Pacific Ocean to the Lower American River.

Crews may be on site Monday through Saturday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. (noise starting at 7 a.m.) with in-river work occurring only on weekdays (and not on Labor Day). Haul truck traffic for the project will be limited to weekdays.

LEARN MORE

Including additional project details and Frequently Asked Questions at waterforum.org/habitat2024.



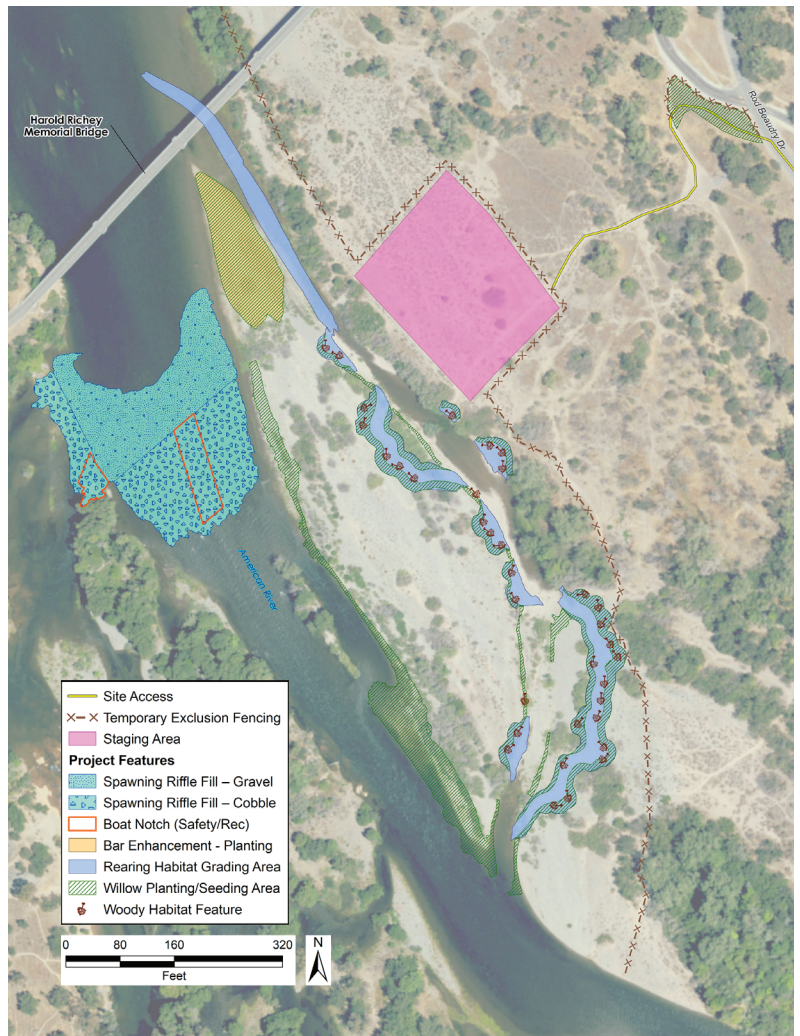
Why River Bend?

Habitat is limited: Each year, thousands of native salmon and steelhead adults use the Delta and Sacramento River like a highway to reach their native spawning areas in the Lower American River. Historically, they used over 100 miles of mainstem and upper watershed habitat before Folsom and Nimbus dams blocked their passage. Dams also trap vital sediment needed to replenish spawning areas that naturally erode over time in our dynamic river. The Water Forum identifies suitable areas like River Bend to replenish gravel to help stay ahead of these processes and support the wild fishery. In spring, newly hatched young fish use the same corridor to migrate out.

River Bend plays a crucial role as the first enhanced site salmon encounter as they return to the Lower American River.

Habitat enhancement works: In 2013, River Bend underwent enhancement efforts, yielding tangible results. Before the 2013 Habitat Project, no salmon were seen at the site. However, after the project, both Chinook Salmon and steelhead fish began using the River Bend spawning riffle and side channel. Even two years later, up to 159 Chinook nests and up to 21 steelhead nests were observed there, accounting for 25 percent of all steelhead nests seen that season.

The river is dynamic: Following the 2013 habitat project, juvenile salmon also began rearing in the River Bend site's side channel. However, after a high-flow event in 2017 caused sediment buildup, there was an increase in juvenile stranding. With the side channel now blocked at lower flows, hundreds of young fish have been rescued from isolated pools following reductions in water flow. Moreover, although adult fish of both species still spawn at River Bend each year, overall usage has declined over time. This decrease highlights the importance of maintaining the site to ensure viable habitat areas in multiple sites along the river.



Thank You, Partners!

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