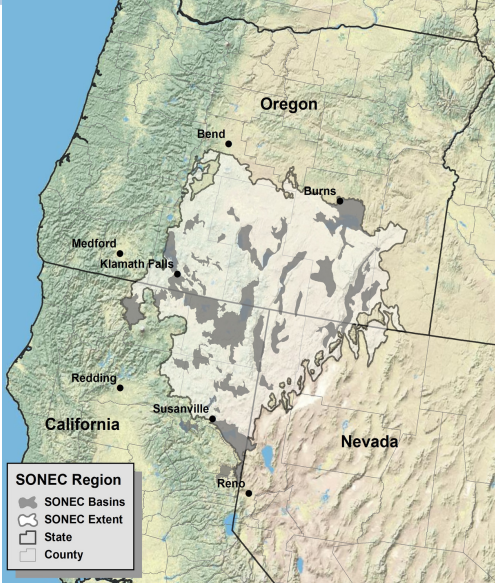


# WORKING WET MEADOWS INITIATIVE

SOUTHERN OREGON - NORTHEASTERN CALIFORNIA

The Intermountain West Joint Venture established the **Working Wet Meadows Initiative** to help ranchers continue traditional irrigation management practices that have been used for generations to produce forage, provide wildlife habitat, and sustain ranching communities.



Working ranchlands provide important ecosystem services including clean water, groundwater recharge, and habitat for fish and wildlife. In turn, local communities benefit from the agricultural productivity and recreational opportunities supported by these lands.

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**74%** of key wet meadows in the SONEC region are on privately-owned working ranchlands, making private landowners essential to maintaining these ecological services.

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Flood irrigation on historic floodplains and wetlands in the **Southern Oregon and Northeastern California (SONEC) region is critically important for sustaining waterbird populations** throughout western North America.

## A LANDSCAPE FOR BIRDS, LIVESTOCK AND PEOPLE

- **Private and public wetlands in the SONEC region serve as a crucial migration hub** between wintering and breeding areas across the hemisphere, and regionally important breeding habitat for many priority bird species.
- Flood irrigation enhances hay and pasture production in wet meadows to meet ranching objectives and **provides shallow, seasonally flooded bird habitat**.
- **Flood-irrigated wet meadows can mimic historic hydrologic patterns** and functions, providing valuable ecological services such as groundwater recharge and habitat diversity.



More than **6 million wetland-dependent migratory birds** rely on these working wet meadows in the SONEC region for successful migration and reproduction each year.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Seeds and invertebrates found in flood-irrigated hayland and pasture provide important food resources for waterfowl.

Peak waterfowl and waterbird migration in Northeast California occurs between mid-March and April.





## WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE?

Voluntary conservation programs are available for landowners who flood irrigate and wish to improve their flood-irrigation systems and enhance waterfowl habitat.

### Potential projects include:

- Flood Irrigation Infrastructure Repair/Replacement
- Field Ditch and Levee Improvements
- Pasture and Hayland Management
- Invasive Weed Management
- Riparian Habitat Restoration and Enhancement
- Fish Passage
- Wetland Restoration and Enhancement



## CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Landowners interested in protecting their working wet meadows and ranching legacy for future generations may want to explore conservation easements.

- Contact the SONEC Working Wetlands Conservation Delivery Coordinator and/or your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office to **learn more about conservation easements for working lands.**
- Partner with a land trust or similar easement-holding entity. **A land trust can assist with securing funding** and applying for the NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program for the purchase of your conservation easement.

To learn more about working wet meadow conservation, contact the Intermountain West Joint Venture's SONEC Working Wetlands Conservation Delivery Coordinator:

Ed Contreras  
[ed.contreras@iwjv.org](mailto:ed.contreras@iwjv.org)  
208.631.9212

## PARTNERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Assistance for conservation projects is available from several non-governmental organizations, and state and federal agencies including:

Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Partners for Fish and Wildlife), California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Waterfowl Association, Ducks Unlimited, California Rangeland Trust, Lassen Land and Trails Trust, and others

Expanded partnerships and partner contributions help to enhance habitat conservation delivery. **Consider supporting local efforts in your area that improve wildlife habitat and sustain rural agricultural communities.**

