

## NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY REGIONAL CONSERVATION INVESTMENT STRATEGY

### Description of Proposed Regional Conservation Investment Strategy

In 2016, California State law AB2087 established a conservation planning tool called a Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) to promote the conservation of species, habitat, and other natural resources. In 2022, California State law AB2805 refined the program, including clarifying program requirements and the process for approving an RCIS. The RCIS Program is managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

Reclamation District (RD) 2092, on behalf of a steering committee including representatives from non-governmental organizations, local, state, and federal agencies, and other interested parties, is preparing an RCIS for the San Joaquin Valley. The RCIS extends into the jurisdictional boundaries of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, and Madera counties. Small portions of the RCIS extend into Tuolumne and Fresno counties (Figure 1).

The San Joaquin Valley RCIS is being prepared with input from the public and interested parties, including community-based and non-governmental organizations; tribal members; and federal, state, and local agencies. RD 2092 is developing the San Joaquin Valley RCIS to promote regional habitat conservation planning (see below). Funding for the development of the San Joaquin Valley RCIS was provided by the California Wildlife Conservation Board.

### What is the San Joaquin Valley RCIS?

The San Joaquin Valley RCIS:

- Provides a voluntary, non-binding, non-regulatory conservation assessment.
- Provides a regional conservation strategy for conservation elements through strategic, scientifically grounded actions and investments. Conservation elements include focal species, natural communities, and other elements such as habitat connectivity.
- Establishes conservation and enhancement goals, objectives, and priorities.
- Describes and promotes methods of conservation investment that will contribute to species and habitat conservation, including but not limited to:
  - Land acquisition and protection
  - Habitat and ecological function creation, restoration, and enhancement
  - Habitat corridor and transition zone establishment and enhancement.
- Enables development of Mitigation Credit Agreements (see below).
- Must undergo a public review process and be approved by CDFW.
- Is scheduled for public review in Spring 2024.

## Mitigation Credit Agreements

Once finalized, the RCIS may facilitate advance mitigation planning where required environmental mitigation can be implemented in advance of project impacts occurring. This can result in more strategic conservation projects that have greater benefit, while also expediting the delivery of development and restoration projects.

Mitigation Credit Agreements (MCAs) can only be developed under an RCIS that has been approved by CDFW. Anyone can enter into an MCA with CDFW. MCAs:

- Create mitigation credits by implementing conservation or habitat enhancement actions identified in the RCIS for focal or non-focal conservation elements
- Must be within the geographic boundary of an approved RCIS
- May be used as compensatory mitigation for impacts under
  - California Environmental Quality Act
  - California Endangered Species Act
  - Lake and Streambed Alteration Program
  - Other environmental regulations pending federal or local agency approval

Additional information about the San Joaquin Valley RCIS can be found at: [www.sjvrcis.org](http://www.sjvrcis.org).

More information about CDFW's RCIS Program can be found at:  
<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/Regional-Conservation>.

Please [contact us](#) to request more information about the San Joaquin Valley RCIS.

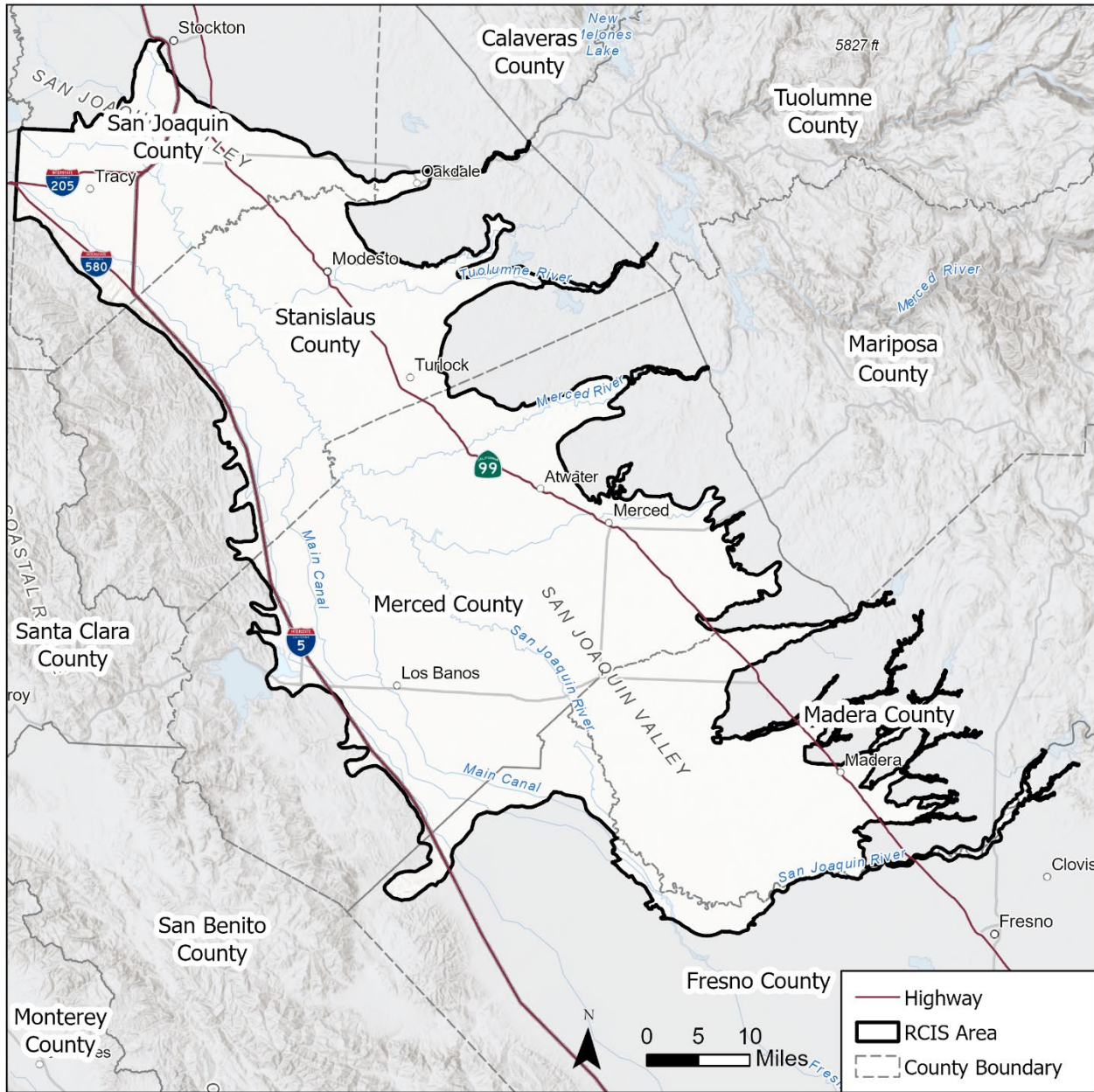


Figure 1. San Joaquin Valley Regional Conservation Investment Strategy Area