

Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve

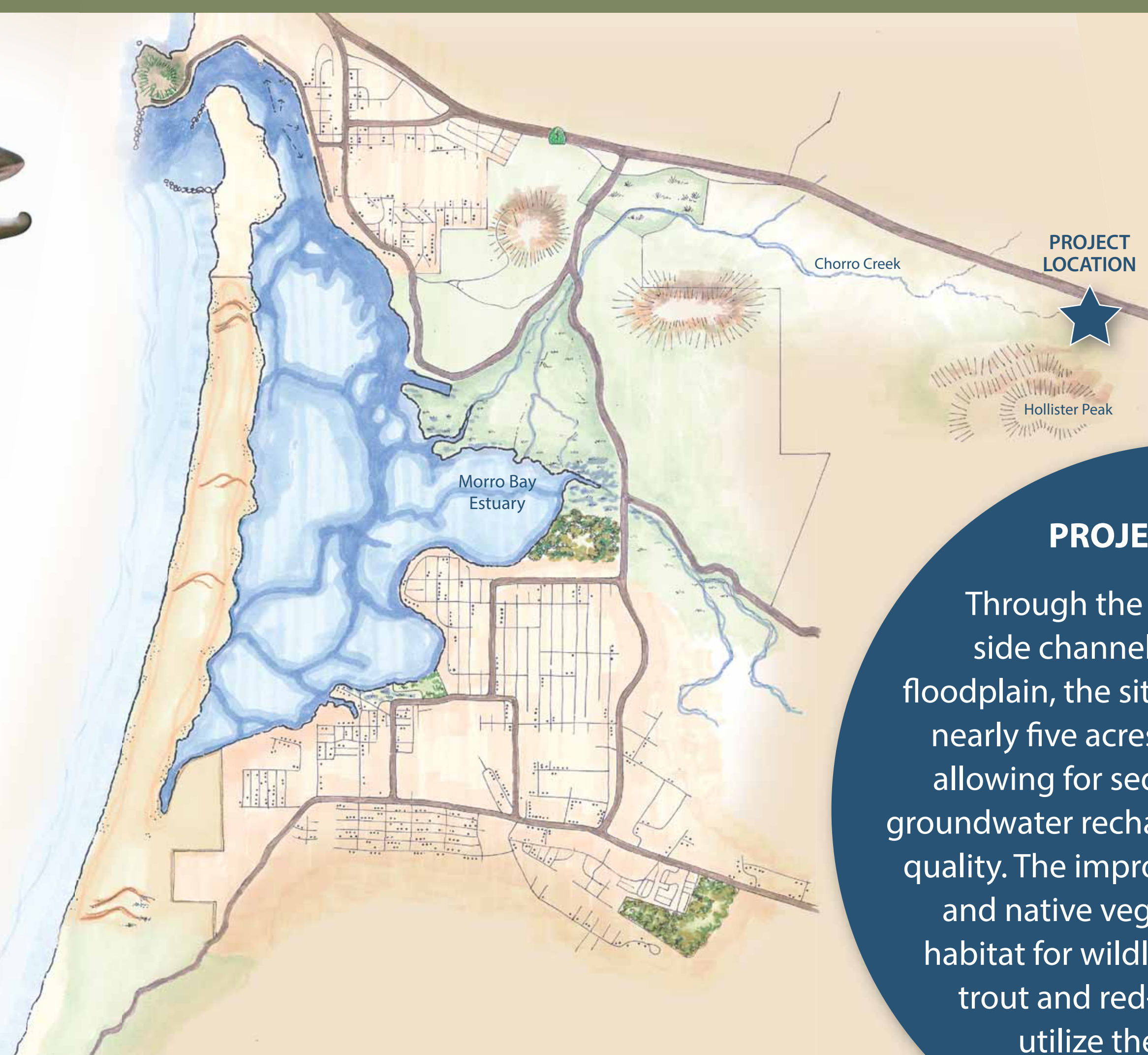
Floodplain Restoration Project Implementation

In 2003, the Estuary Program helped conserve a 580-acre property along Chorro Creek with the support of the State Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, among others. This part of Chorro Creek had been altered and lost much of its floodplain connection. A floodplain restoration project was completed in 2019 to provide improved habitat for sensitive aquatic species.



How floodplain restoration helps the watershed

- 1 Better sediment capture
- 2 Better groundwater recharge
- 3 Improved water quality
- 4 Provides vital habitat for wildlife



PROJECT BENEFITS

Through the construction of two side channels and an expanded floodplain, the site is now reconnected to nearly five acres of floodplain habitat, allowing for sediment capture, better groundwater recharge, and improved water quality. The improved channel conditions and native vegetation provides vital habitat for wildlife including steelhead trout and red-legged frogs, which utilize the floodplain side channels for refuge.

Project Implementation

GRADING SIDE CHANNELS AND EXPANDING THE FLOODPLAIN

Workers excavated a new channel and created additional floodplain space along two side channels (2,400ft). Sediment was removed from the area to a three-acre fill site at the base of Hollister Peak. Concrete riprap was also removed from the site and recycled.



CREATING HABITAT AND SLOWING THE FLOW OF THE CREEK

To create more suitable habitat for fish and aquatic species, pieces of large wood were then anchored through the channel. Large wood in creeks provides refuge for fish during high flow conditions, as well as adds complexity to the stream. Willow baffles were placed along the creek corridor for channel stabilization and to slow down flowing water for sediment to settle out. For sediment stabilization and erosion control, coir fabric and straw wattles were secured upslope of the channel. Native seed was then scattered using a hydro-seeder and drill-seeder throughout the project area.



BRINGING NATIVE PLANTS BACK TO CHORRO CREEK'S FLOODPLAIN

The final effort was establishing nearly 1,500 native plants throughout the site. These plants were grown locally by the California Conservation Corps, and the planting effort was largely possible through their support. Species included Coastal Live Oak, Coyote Brush, Box Elder, California Sycamore, Black Sage, Blue Elderberry, Mugwort, Coffeeberry, California Sagebrush, and California Rose.



Thank you, project partners!

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