



Wildlife Habitat on East Bay Rangelands - Why Some Endangered Species Need Ranchers

Jackie Charbonneau, Ecologist
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



Remaining Rangeland



- Increased development = Less available space for wildlife
- Private and public rangelands provide habitat for wildlife species
- Wildlife need Bay Area Rangelands

Habitat Types & Listed Species found on East Bay Ranches

Grassland







Oak Woodland





Oak Savannah





Chaparral (Scrub, Brush)





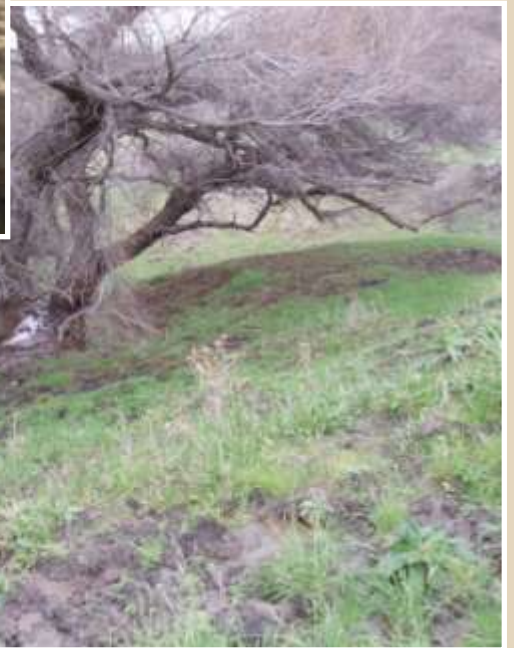
Rock Outcrops





Springs/Seeps



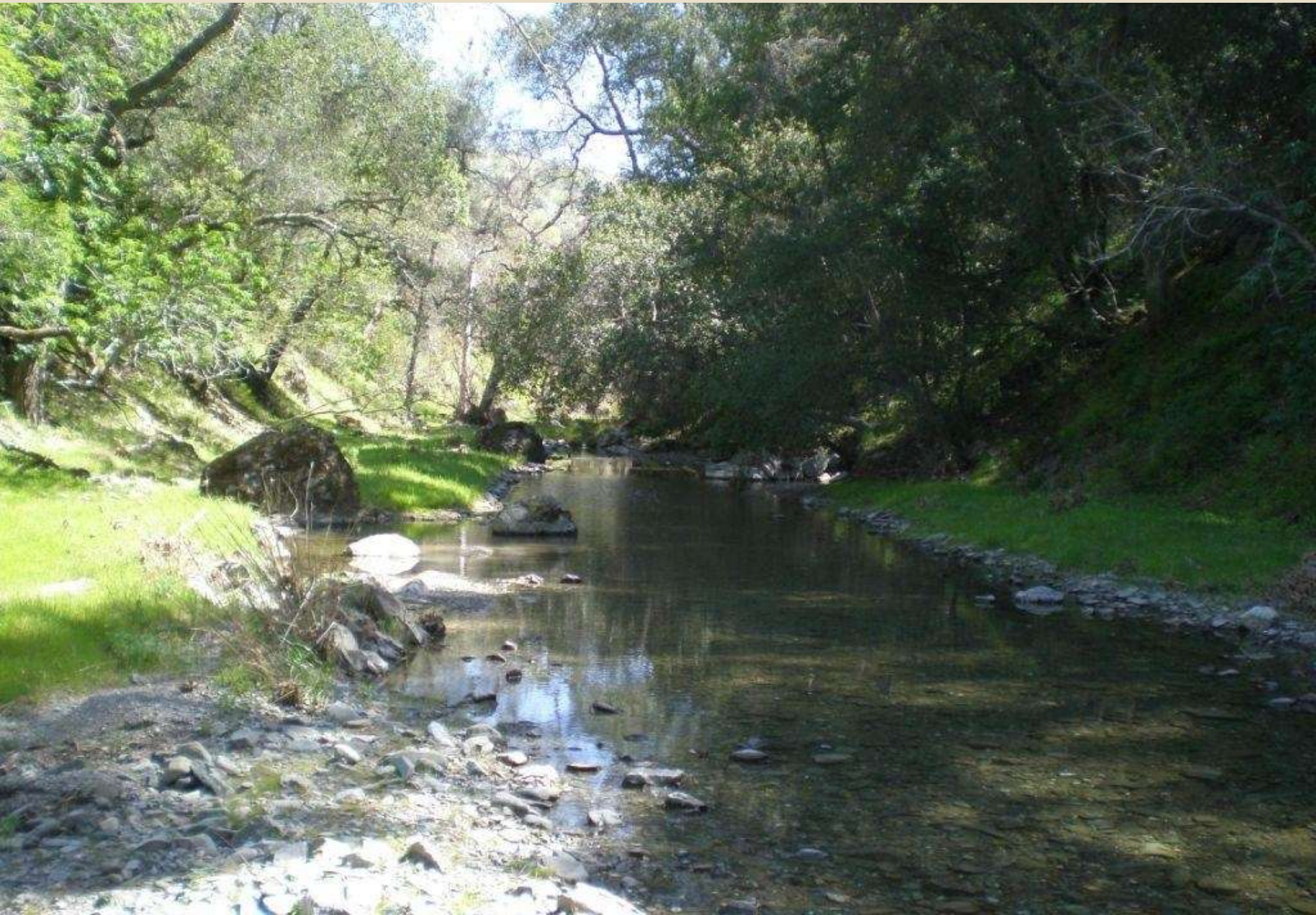


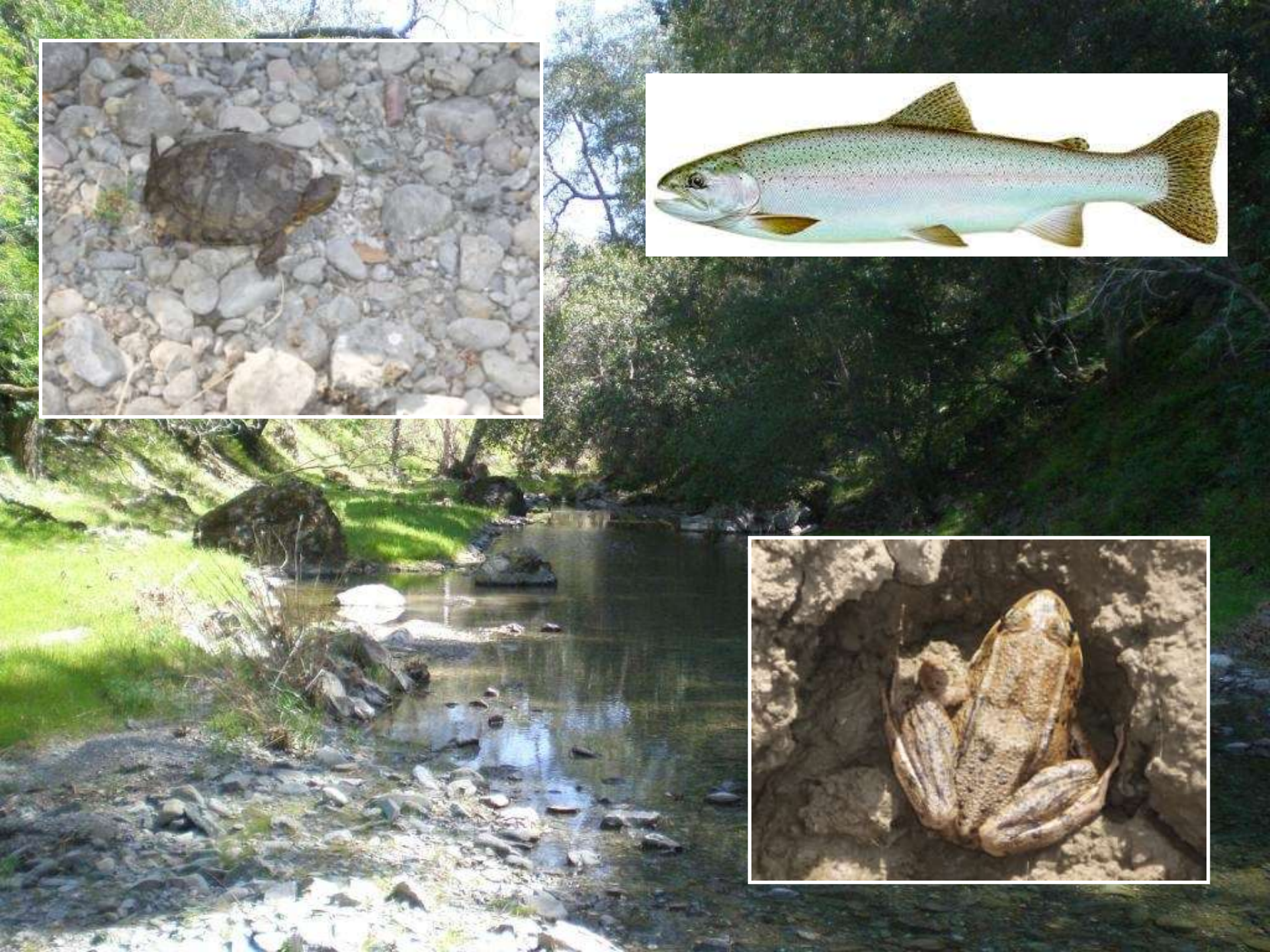
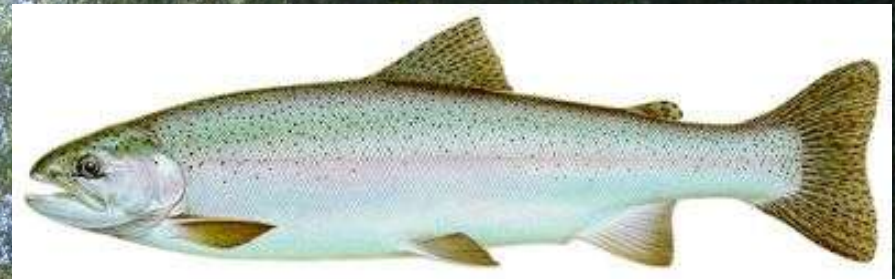
Perennial Wet Areas





Creeks





Seasonal Wet Areas/Vernal Pools





Vernal Pools





Livestock Ponds





Habitat Focus: Livestock Ponds

California red-legged frog (CRLF)

Rana draytonii



California tiger salamander (CTS)

Ambystoma californiense

Type of Habitat

- Breeding
- Larval Development
- Year-Round for Frogs



Upland

- Don't forget about the importance of the uplands surrounding the ponds



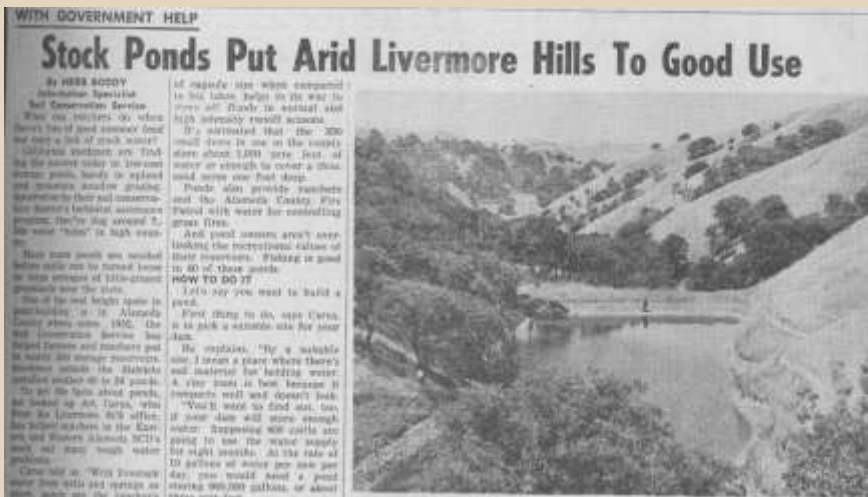
CRLF & CTS Depend on Ranching

- Remaining habitat is mostly private ranches and grazed public lands where ranchers are lessees
- Livestock ponds on public and private rangeland have become crucial aquatic habitat for CRLF & CTS



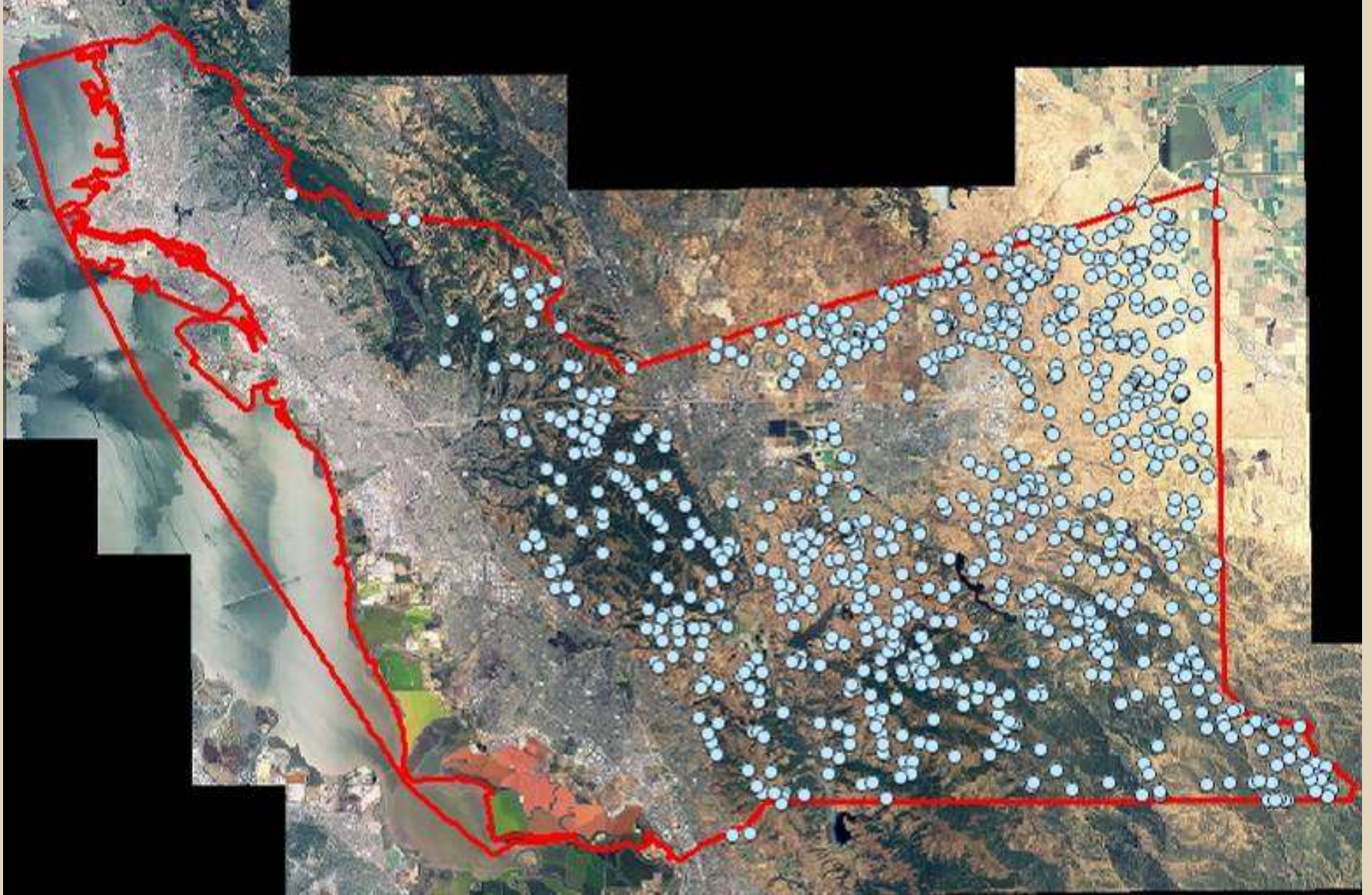
Livestock Ponds as Habitat

- Approximately **800** ponds built in Alameda County between 1950s-1970s for livestock water
- Most were built with assistance from NRCS (formerly SCS)



- Substitute for lost natural breeding habitat

Ponds in Alameda County



Ponds Today

- Built to last 20 years, now 30-60 yrs old
- Many won't be around much longer unless repaired



Spillway Erosion



Pond Sedimentation

Ponds Today

- Historically, many ponds have been stocked with non-native, invasive species
 - Bullfrogs
 - Bass, Sunfish
 - Mosquito Fish
 - Crayfish
- Continued Presence



Ponds Today

- Pond habitat is starting to diminish because of sedimentation and spillway failure and the presence of invasive species



CRLF & CTS Need Ranchers

- Ponds need to be repaired and maintained for the species
- CRLF and CTS need the ponds more than ranchers and cows do
 - Ranchers often don't need to fix these ponds – they have alternative sources of livestock water (springs, wells, tanks, and troughs)



Challenges of Pond Repair for the Rancher

- Cost of pond repair (\$10,000 - \$50,000+)
- The Regulatory Process - Permits
- Fear of new land use restrictions
- Lack of technical guidance
 - NRCS standards and specs for pond repair, but not specifically for frog and salamander habitat
 - Lack of guidance for grazing to benefit the species

Challenges of Pond Repair for Agency Staff



Pond Repair (actually getting it done)

- We have worked with 9 Ranchers to implement 19 pond restoration projects since 2005



- Variety of tools used to address challenges
 - Funding Assistance
 - Permitting Assistance
 - Working closely with regulators
 - Safe Harbor Agreement
 - Pond Guidelines, Grazing Guidelines

Pond Repair - Before and After



More Common Wildlife



Ranchers and Rangelands are Important to Species Recovery

- Studies on rangelands throughout CA are continuing to document the positive impact of managed grazing on wildlife habitat
- Public and Private rangelands in Alameda County provide essential habitat for our local wildlife populations
- Collaboration between Ranchers and Agencies can help all parties involved (ranchers, agencies, & wildlife)



Questions?

