Endemic Environmental Services

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Check out footage of sea otter activity at Moss Landing Harbor here.

Successful Protection Of Marine Mammals at Moss Landing Dredging Project

DEAN NERHUS
Senior Biologist/Manager

Endemic biologists ensured the safety of marine mammals while dredging took place at the Moss Landing Harbor. The Moss Landing Harbor District is the agency that owns the project and dredging efforts funded by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), San Francisco District. The purpose was to dredge and recontour the harbor channel from the Sandholdt Road Bridge, at the mouth of the Old Salinas River to the entrance of the harbor inlet.

The dredging maintenance work done by prime (Pacific Dredging Inc.) included the excavating of sediment from the harbor channel using an excavator with a "clam" dredge, barges, and tugboats. The project was conducted in compliance with State and Federal harbor standards.

Challenges

Moss Landing Harbor area consists of estuarine and intertidal harbor habitat, with sea otters and other marine mammals being abundant throughout the site.

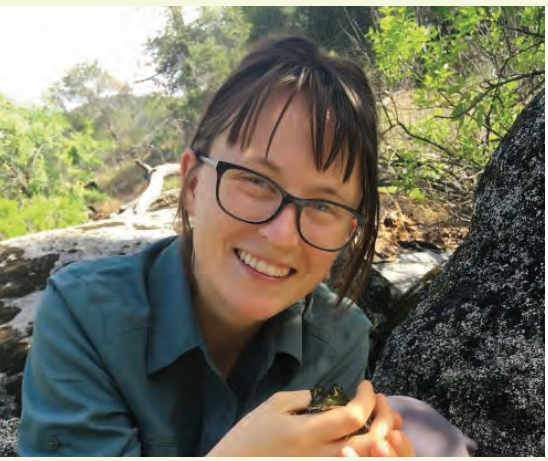
Southern sea otters (*Enhydra lutris nereis*) and other marine mammals such as California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*) were frequently detected within the action and dig areas of dredging activities.

Solutions

The Endemic biology team developed and implemented a marine mammal monitoring program at the start of project in December 2020. Together with the Army QA/QC inspector, we were present daily on the dredge barge to monitor and protect marine wildlife. The dredging activities were halted whenever sea otters were observed within 50 meters of dredging activities. Dredging was only resumed when they were safely away from the action area.

Read the full press release here.

Invasive Species Training



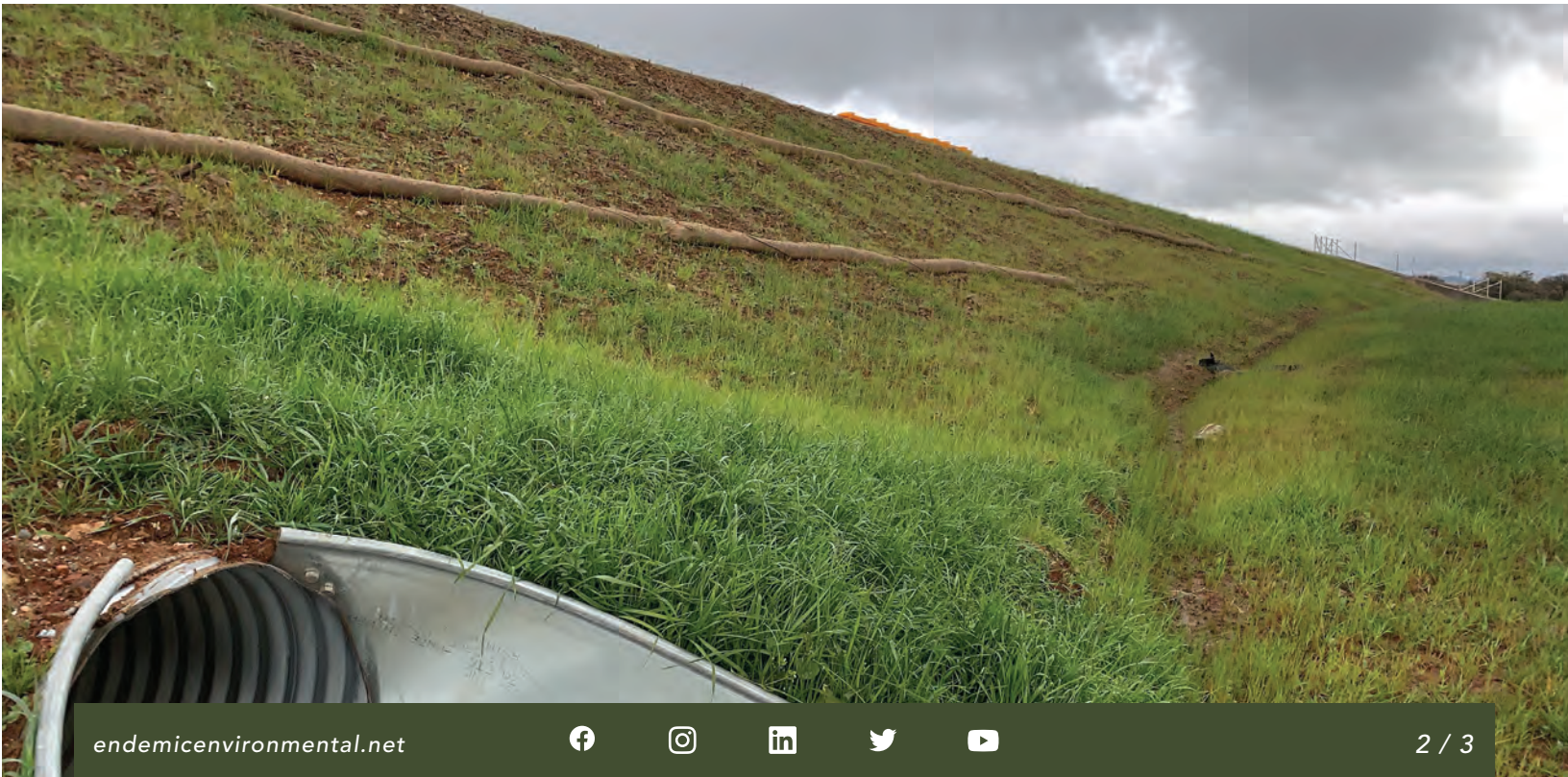
MEGAN DUNCANSON
Biologist

At Endemic, members of our staff often participate in supplemental trainings and courses to further our collective knowledge as well as our understanding of current ecological issues. In February, Endemic biologists attended an Invasive Species Webinar Series presented by US Forest Service researchers. Topics addressed throughout the week included white-nose syndrome, chytrid fungus, and barred owl range expansion. These topics are highly relevant to wildlife and ecosystems we often encounter at job sites. As a team, actively growing our expertise in a variety of areas allows us to provide high-quality, comprehensive solutions to complex environmental concerns.

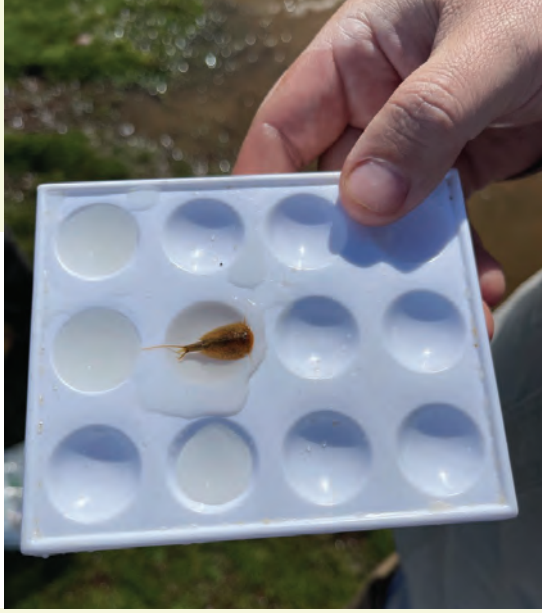
Soil Stabilization at Browns Valley Shoulder Widening Project

ANDREW PHAN
Water Resources Manager

Established vegetation is the Best Management Practices (BMP) for soil stabilization of disturbed soil especially on slopes. The root system of vegetation binds the disturbed soil particles and improves the soils' ability to let water infiltrate to lessen the amount of stormwater sheet flow on the surface. With less stormwater sheet flow on disturbed soil slopes, the possibility of rills and erosion lessens. Hydroseeding was done to this site in late fall. With winter rain and late winter sun, vegetation is sprouting and stabilizing the slopes. This site is heading toward acceptable final stabilization needed when conducting an Notice of Termination on a Storm Water Pollution Protection Plan (SWPPP).

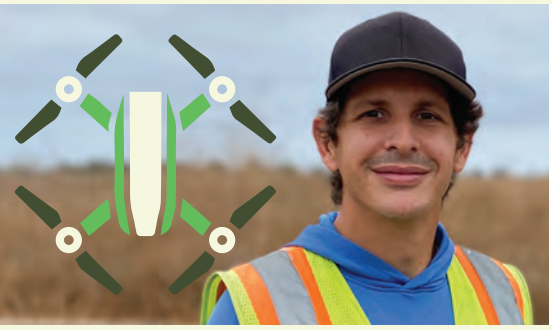


Vernal Pool Surveys



Scott Whitman is our resident vernal pool ecologist. This spring, he has been leading fellow Endemic biologists on vernal pool surveys in northern California. On these surveys, we have been collecting data on special-status species, including the endangered vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardi*) and threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*). We have also encountered western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*) and Sierran treefrog (*Pseudacris sierra*) in the vernal pools. As the season progresses, the species composition of the pools will continue to change drastically before the ponds dry up in late spring.

Endemic Environmental's Drone Zone



Our Director of Drone Operations, Kent Nerhus, is happy to announce that he has just been hired on at Santa Ana College to teach an online Part 107 test prep course Spring 2021. In this course, Kent will teach students how to pass the FAA's Part 107 exam. Once students pass the exam, they will receive a license which will allow them to use drones for commercial purposes. Kent is looking forward to assisting his students in their future endeavors in the drone industry.

President's Corner

BARRY NERHUS
President

As we march into Spring, the natural world is going through a change. Birds are singing, nesting, and laying eggs. Migrating birds, like orioles and flycatchers, are heading our way from the tropics to breed. This busy time for birds also is a busy time for biologists. Biologists are already out daily surveying and consulting to protect bird nests. Birds will nest everywhere and anywhere. I have seen a hummingbird nesting on a dangling chain! Native birds are protected under the California Fish and Game Code and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. These two laws (State and Federal) are the foundational regulations for bird protection.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) is currently under review as the MBTA was scheduled to be changed to allow for the take of birds. This change would inherently provide less bird protection. However, the current standing is that there is no take of birds. Here are some tips to make sure projects are within the law and birds are protected: If a project involves trimming, mowing, or removing habitat at this time, the area should be surveyed to ensure no birds or nests are harmed. Check sitting vehicles and equipment as a due diligence practice, birds will nest in sitting equipment (or trailer hitches!). The general rule is that it takes about 3 days for a bird to build a nest. Lastly, get some binoculars and learn about these birds. Understanding all the differences in size, color, sound, and behavior can be enjoyable and also productive!