Imagine you’re a landowner or land manager in Santa Barbara or San Luis Obispo counties interested in removing invasive plants from your property. Perhaps you would like to stabilize an eroding streambank, improve water quality, or restore habitat for fish and wildlife. You’re looking for cost share opportunities, or you have the money and you’re ready to go, but what about the permits and fees?

These are the permits you may need:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife: Section 1602 agreement and fees
- Regional Water Quality Control Board: Section 401 water quality certification and NPDES permit and fees
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service: Authorizations under the Endangered Species Act
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Section 404 permit
- County: grading permit, encroachment permit, other permits and fees

Don’t worry – there’s help! The Resource Conservation Districts (RCD) and our environmental non-profit partner, Sustainable Conservation, with the technical assistance of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have developed a new Partners in Restoration (PIR) permit coordination program for environmentally beneficial projects on private and public lands in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. Under this program, landowners and land managers interested in completing voluntary conservation projects can work with the local RCD or NRCS to determine if their projects qualify for inclusion under the program. If your project does qualify, then the NRCS and RCD will assist you in designing a project that meets the requirements of the program and regulatory agencies at a reduced cost – much simpler than going out and getting the permits on your own, and paying all the individual project fees.
Types of Projects Covered by the Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County PIR Permit Coordination Program

The following are brief descriptions of the types of projects that may qualify for coverage under the program. Note that in some cases, these types of projects may not require permits.

Access Road Improvements
Road drainage or location improvements to reduce erosion and runoff.

Channel Stabilization
Stabilizes the bed of a creek or stream channel.

Debris Removal and Vegetation Management
Removes unwanted material to minimize flow and fish blockages in streams or other waterways.

Diversion
Slope structures to slow and redirect excessive surface flows.

Filter Strip
Vegetated strip between cropland, grazing land or other disturbed land and environmentally sensitive areas.

Grade Stabilization Structure
Structure to control erosion and prevent headcutting in creek or stream channels.

Grassed Waterway
Vegetated channel for conveying surface water flow.

Irrigation System, Tailwater Recovery
Collects surface and subsurface irrigation water for re-use or sediment capture.

Planting
Planted vegetation (trees, shrubs, grasses) on eroding or exposed areas.

Pipeline
Water systems in sensitive areas to improve livestock water management.

Ponds
Off-channel water impoundments for alternative water sources for livestock, away from sensitive riparian areas.

Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats
Restores stream or upland habitats which support rare natural areas.

Sediment Basins
Installed basin for capture of debris, sediment or high flows.

Stream Crossing
Improves existing crossings to prevent soil erosion, reduce pollution from entering wateryway and allow fish passage.

Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
Restores streambank and stream channel habitat and function.

Streambank Protection
Planted vegetation or natural structures to stabilize and protect streambanks.

Structure for Water Control
Water control structure or system, usually a culvert or pipe, to improve drainage or flow.

Underground Outlets
Subsurface drainage pipeline and outlet to collect surface flow and prevent erosion.

Coordinating the Permitting Process
The regulatory agencies that have provided support and authorization for this program covering Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo counties include: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County. Development of this innovative program was funded primarily by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation via the State Water Resource Control Board, California State Coastal Conservancy and Sustainable Conservation. The Bower Foundation contributed to the production of this brochure.

How to Participate in the Program
Contact your local RCD or local NRCS Field office to find out if your project might be covered by the program. We can ensure your project meets the programs’ environmental protection measures and all permit requirements. In addition to simplifying the permit process, the RCD and NRCS can provide technical assistance for project design and planning, and information about cost-sharing programs.

How the Permit Coordination Program Works for Landowners
Landowner requests assistance from their local RCD and/or NRCS.

RCD and NRCS develop a plan to meet landowner needs, enhance natural resources and comply with program requirements.

Landowner signs Cooperation Agreement to implement the plan.

Project is covered by programs’ regulatory approvals and agreements.

No individual permit applications needed!

Contact Information:

Santa Barbara County:
PIR Permit Coordination Coordinator
Coastal RCD
920 East Stowell Road
Santa Maria, CA 93454
805.928.9269

District Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Santa Barbara County
Santa Maria, CA 93454
805.928.9269

San Luis Obispo County:
PIR Permit Coordination Coordinator
Coastal San Luis RCD
645 Main Street, Suite F
Morro Bay, CA 93442
805.772.4391

PIR Permit Coordination Coordinator
Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD
65 Main Street, Suite 107
Templeton, CA 93436
805.434.0396 ext. 5

District Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
65 Main Street, Suite 128
Templeton, CA 93436
805.434.0396

Environmental non-profit partner:
Rehabilitation on Private Lands Program
Sustainable Conservation
98 Battery Street, Suite 302
San Francisco, CA 94111
415.977.0380
www.sacson.org

Photography courtesy of John R Thompson Photography © 2013
johnrthompsonphotography.com