



From Computer Database To Nesting Bell's Vireo

Restoration Design Goes High-Tech

In the mid 1990s, a cutting-edge approach to habitat restoration involved designing plant clusters based on wildlife and structural needs, hydrology and soil types. Unfortunately, such designs were extremely complicated to implement for large scale projects, even though they produced more ecologically valuable habitat.

Barney Flynn, farmer and River Partners co-founder, helped solve the implementation problem for this more complex plant-mosaic approach in 1998. Using his experience in computer programming, he developed a database capable of translating intricate restoration designs into a labeling system. The labels allowed any trained lay person to plant a field according to the design. Many biologists were excited about the new opportunities this program would offer for project development. Yet Barney saw this database as a communication tool. "Finally," he said, "landowners could see the restoration process and understand what was about to happen to their land."



Established riparian growth along the Sacramento River, near the Ord Bend Unit of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Dan Eiseff.

This database technology gave River Partners the unique ability to execute the most ecologically-sound restoration plans. Furthermore, in combination with the

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