



RIVER PARTNERS

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JOURNAL

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River Partners V.P. Named Finalist for National Purpose Prize



Civic Ventures Recognizes Barney Flynn's Innovations at River Partners

River Partners founder and vice president, Barney Flynn, along the Sacramento River near Chico, California. Photo by Matthew Morgan

The Purpose Prize

In 2006, River Partners' founder and Board Member, Barney Flynn, was one of 15 finalists to receive the first ever Purpose Prize, by Civic Ventures, funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies and The John Templeton Foundation—a major initiative to honor “outstanding individuals 60 or older who are producing significant social innovation and accomplishing work of great importance.” Barney was awarded a Purpose Prize for his “inventive way

to help California farmers transform unprofitable land, save endangered wildlife, boost the local economy, and provide flood control.”

In addition to the \$10,000 award, being named a “Purpose Prize Finalist” has garnered media attention for Barney and River Partners. Journalists from the *Sacramento Bee* and *KGO-TV San Francisco* have visited River Partners' restoration sites. Further, Barney has been interviewed by the *Wall Street Journal*, the

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Wood ducks. Photo by USFWS Digital Library.

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Message from the Board Chair



Board Chair Irv Schiffman

The efforts of River Partners to restore habitat along California's rivers contributes to the quality of the environment in many ways. One such benefit of riparian restoration is a reduction in the amount of non-point source pollution reaching open water that emanates from agricultural lands.

Non-point source pollution, unlike pollution from industrial and sewage treatment plants, comes from many diffuse sources. In California valleys it is caused primarily by rainfall moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, finally depositing them in rivers, lakes, wetlands areas and underground water sources. Runoff from orchard and row crop agricultural lands includes excess fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides and sediment.

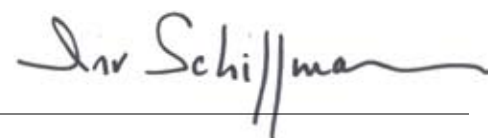
According to the 2005 California Water Plan Update, non-point source pollution, including urban and agricultural runoff, is the largest contributor of human-induced contamination of surface water and groundwater in the state. The document goes on to state that about 13 percent of the total miles of California's rivers and streams and about 15 percent of its lake acreage are listed as impaired.

Agricultural runoff is exceptionally difficult to manage and causes diverse problems to aquatic ecosystems such as toxic algal blooms, loss of oxygen, fish kills, loss of biodiversity, loss of aquatic plant beds, and other problems that impair the use of water for drinking, agriculture or recreation.

In recent years a number of scientific studies have shown that riparian buffers can be a very effective approach for reducing non-point source pollutants from adjacent agricultural fields. Riparian zone grasses, trees and bushes filter runoff and retain nutrients and sediment in the riparian zone. For example, according to one study, a filter strip of native grass as narrow as ten meters placed between row crops and a stream can reduce sediment delivery more than 70 percent. Creeping wild rye, blue wild rye, meadow barley, and purple needle grass are among the native grasses planted by River Partners, all of which have both wildlife benefits and efficient pollution control properties.

Another study concludes that a riparian buffer zone of 20 to 30 meters can remove up to 100 percent of incoming nitrate.

We can expect that further research will likewise demonstrate the role of riparian landscapes in controlling non-point source pollution. Meanwhile, the staff of River Partners continues to design and restore riparian habitats that fully utilize their capabilities to protect the quality of the water in California's rivers.



River Partners Project Updates

Hagemann Unit of the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge

The Hagemann Unit, a 173-acre site, will be River Partners' newest addition to its extraordinary 1,400+ acre restoration effort on the San Joaquin Refuge. Supported by a coalition of agencies—the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Army Corp of Engineers, the Resources Agency, the US Fish and Wildlife Service—the restoration of the Hagemann Unit will add to the rich mosaic of wildlife habitat existing within the Refuge. This restoration will also provide water quality benefits by filtering agricultural runoff from upslope farmers before it enters the San Joaquin River and will provide air quality benefits by filtering air pollutants and reducing carbon through sequestration.

Drumheller Slough Unit, Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge

River Partners has just finished planting this 200-acre site in northern Glenn County for the USFWS. Containing 2,000 linear feet of river front on the Sacramento River, the restored Drumheller Slough Unit will benefit a multitude of species, such as: Bald Eagle; Bank Swallow; Chinook Salmon; Giant Garter Snake; Steelhead; Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle; Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo; and Willow Flycatcher.



Planting at the Drumheller Slough Unit, Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge.

The Least Bell's Vireo Pair Returns!

In July and August this pair of endangered songbirds returned to the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge. Once again, the mating pair built their nest and raised three hatchlings in a tree planted by River Partners... within a location restored by River Partners. Last year was the Vireo's first sighting in the Central Valley in



This grayish green songbird is a federally listed endangered species, so it was exciting news when this brave pair nested and fledged offspring in a tree that River Partners planted on the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by S. Maslowski.

60 years—an unprecedented endorsement of the quality of River Partners' work. For more information on the least Bell's vireo and the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge, visit: http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/ea/news_releases/2006%20News%20Releases/LBV_return_SJNWR_NR.htm

San Joaquin River Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle Monitoring

For the last four months Sara Taylor, River Partners biological technician, has been on a quest: searching for the elusive Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (VELB) or at least the pencil-sized holes they leave in the elderberry shrubs where they live and breed. Trekking along the San Joaquin and Stanislaus rivers, Sara and her team have surveyed more than 500 elderberry shrubs, taking elderberry measurements and checking each shrub for VELB holes. "VELB activity is a key indicator of habitat complexity," Sara said. "Once we analyze our data, hopefully we'll have some indication of what is going on in the riparian habitat fragments along the San Joaquin River. Also we may learn more about this threatened species and if it has any additional habitat requirements."

Department of Water Resources Emergency Levee Repair

River Partners assisted the Department of Water Resources (DWR) with ten elderberries they were required to transplant as part of their emergency levee repairs. We provided a home for these elderberries at our Del Rio Wildlife Preserve property thanks to an amended encroachment permit from the State Reclamation Board and our Safe Harbor Agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

River Partners Founder and Vice President Named Finalist for National Purpose Prize

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Associated Press, and The New York Times.

“It’s fulfilling to have national recognition for River Partners,” adds Flynn, “Both as a nonprofit innovator, and as a force in the ever-important environmental work of the California Central Valley.” John Carlon, River Partners’ President and long-time friend of Barney, nominated him for his efforts in creating River Partners. “As an almond grower in Gerber, California, Barney saw how agriculture and conservation could work together,” John said.

Here’s the story that impressed Civic Ventures.

“As an almond grower in Gerber, California, Barney saw how agriculture and conservation could work together.”

Growing a New NPO

In 1997, Bernard “Barney” Flynn, a prune and almond farmer in Gerber, California, wanted to do something different with his 50 acres of farmland along the Sacramento River. Rather than cultivate more crops, or build up his levee to keep back inevitable flood waters, he wanted to grow native vegetation. In other

words, he wanted to re-create the habitat of the native wildlife that historically occupied this flood-prone area.

This noble goal was a radical departure from a way of farming that relied on levees to protect farms from the raging Sacramento River. In fact Barney intended to tear down his levee and use native habitat as a buffer for flood protection.

He set out to prove that habitat conservation and restoration could ultimately benefit the multitude of family farms which relied on the rich sediment of the Central Valley’s river lands yet were forever vulnerable to flood disasters.

The first attempt at such a project resulted in a laundry list of species to be

planted, but no logical “crop” pattern nor system of species identification seemed evident in the field. How could you have a successful crop (even if it was native vegetation) if you didn’t know what was planted where nor have the ability to tend to the growth effectively? Looking at a restoration project like a farmer, Barney realized that the emerging field of habitat restoration in turn could benefit from the application of agricultural technology. So that agriculture and environmental restoration could effectively inform each other, Barney, at age 63, decided to establish a new organization, River Partners.

Organizational Achievements

In 1998 Barney Flynn co-founded River Partners. Its mission has been to create wildlife habitat for the benefit of people and the environment. By putting experienced agriculturalists in key positions and employing sound farm management practices in conjunction with ecological principles, River Partners has successfully

completed more than 25 on-the-ground restoration projects along the

By employing sound farm management practices in conjunction with ecological principles, River Partners has successfully completed more than 25 on-the-ground restoration projects along the Sacramento, Feather, San Joaquin, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus rivers.



An oak seedling, part of a River Partners’ planting. Photo by staff.



Barney Flynn (left) tours River Partners' restoration projects along the Sacramento River with KGO-TV San Francisco journalists Jennifer Olney and Cathy Cavey. The news story, part of KGO's "Drive to Discover" series, aired on September 4 and can be viewed at: http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=drive_to_discover&id=4527836. Photo by staff.

Sacramento, Feather, San Joaquin, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus rivers. It has restored more than 4,000 acres of riparian habitat and planted more than 510,000 native trees and shrubs.

Not only did Barney realize his vision of conserving and restoring California's vital river lands, through River Partners he made habitat restoration a valid economic enterprise. He developed an entrepreneurial business plan for River Partners to follow. This ensured the organization would deliver a well-designed product: restored land that protects family farms, ensures wildlife survival, and improves quality of life.

By following Barney's business plan, River Partners has achieved the reputation as a leader and innovator in riparian habitat restoration in California's Central Valley. Today the organization does business with a variety of clients, including state and federal agencies, irrigation districts, private landowners, and fellow nonprofits. Further, by training land owners and farmers and

working with local businesses, River Partners has become a significant supporter of the local economies of California's Central Valley. In 2004, the organization received the Governor's

Environmental and Economic Leadership Award for the State of California in recognition of its innovations in the field of watershed protection and promotion of "sustainable economic progress."



River Partners' riparian restoration projects help provide habitat for a host of waterfowl, such as these White pelicans. Photo by Geoff Fricker.

Amazing Oak Galls of the North Valley



Oak gall. Photo by Matthew Morgan.

Have you ever wondered what are those tiny seed-like objects underneath oak trees in the summer? They are called “jumping oak galls” and they are formed by a tiny, dark wasp in the *cynipid* family. This miniscule wasp, which is harmless to humans, lays its eggs at just the precise moment on the life cycle of a new leaf, causing the leaf cells to multiply rapidly, encasing the egg in a gall composed of oak leaf tissue. The galls fall to the ground, and as the developing larvae move around, the galls actually jump into the air. When the egg hatches, the gall provides food and a home until the insect fully develops.

Incredibly, more than 100 different kinds of insect-formed galls are found on oak trees. Rarely causing much damage to the oak, these galls can be as large as apples (such as those pictured above), and can form on leaves, buds, twigs, branches, roots, and even the acorns. Locals of the Sacramento Valley report using different sized galls rather creatively, from fishing bobbers to baseball practice. At River Partners, former Biological Technician and Educator, Paul Kirk, collected empty oak galls for use in our outdoor education program. Children at the Endangered Species Faire in Chico have made interesting and collectable “critters” from the empty oak galls.

(Adapted from a 1999 article by Ed Perry, Farm Advisor with University of California Cooperative Extension, UC Davis)

Season of Giving

As the holiday season approaches, consider a making a meaningful gift to someone by supporting River Partners. When you participate in our Adopt-A-Tree Program or make a tribute donation, you help create a greener future, which is a gift of true significance.

ADOPT-A-TREE Program

For a minimum donation of \$20 per tree, River Partners will plant one or more native trees in your name or in honor of a friend, family member or colleague.

When you adopt a tree, you or your honoree are given a special certificate. Adopt-A-Tree certificates are excellent choices for holidays, birthdays, graduations, or weddings.

“Adopted Trees” will be planted during our Spring Education Festival. Students will participate in the planting when they visit our restoration sites to learn about earth science and ecological restoration. After the Festival, we will send you a photo of the event and the restoration site.

By adopting a tree, you are helping to rebuild vital riparian areas. You are providing ducklings, fawns, and many other baby animals new habitat where they may grow and thrive.

Tribute and Memorial Donations

River Partners gratefully accepts gifts in tribute to or in memory of loved ones. Our restoration work sustains the life cycle of our rivers, forests, and migrating wildlife, like salmon, waterfowl, and songbirds. Supporting our work in someone’s name is a meaningful way to

- Celebrate birthdays, weddings, or other special occasions
- Express your sympathy to a family who has experienced a loss
- Show your appreciation to a friend or colleague

When you make a tribute gift, River Partners will follow your instructions and send a special card to the individual or family. We do not disclose the amount. However, we do need the honoree’s name, the occasion, and the name and address of whom to notify.

To participate in the Adopt-A-Tree program or to make a tribute gift, please **mail the form on the next page to River Partners**. If you would like to expedite this gift, please contact Julie Pokrandt, Development Director, at (530) 894-5401, extension 22.

Special Gifts Make a Greener Future

We invite you to support River Partners



Giving Choices

- I would like to participate in the Adopt-A-Tree Program.
I am adopting _____ tree(s) at \$20 per tree
- I would like to make a Tribute or Memorial Donation
- I would like to make a general donation to River Partners
- I would like to become a "River Partner"
 - Lifetime Partner \$2,500
 - River Steward \$1,000
 - Benefactor \$ 500
 - Investor \$ 100
 - Family \$ 50
 - Individual \$ 35



River otter. Photo by iStockPhoto.com

Payment Options

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____

- Enclosed is my check in the amount of: \$ _____
 - Please charge my credit card in the amount of: \$ _____
- Visa or MC Account No. _____ Exp. _____
Signature _____



Bald eagle chicks. Photo by USFWS Digital Library

Notification (for Adopt-A-Tree or Tribute Gifts)

My gift is made in the name of: _____
The occasion: _____

- Please send a Tribute/Memorial Card to:
- Please send an Adopt-A-Tree Certificate to:

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____

Please mail this form to:

River Partners, attn: Development Department
580 Vallombrosa Ave., Chico CA 95926

Thank you for your tax-deductible gift to River Partners!



Great egret. Photo by USFWS Digital Library



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Sacramento River Canoe Trip & Restoration Tour 2006

Twenty-six people joined River Partners on August 12 for a morning canoe float down the Sacramento River. Launching at Irvine Finch River Access, the tour stopped first at a large gravel bar on the east side of the river. River Partners' Senior Restoration Ecologist, Dr. Tom Griggs, guided a short walk to point out the various plant and tree communities that grow adjacent to the river. The group then pulled in at Pine Creek State Wildlife area where Dr. Griggs showed off River Partners' restoration project at the site. After paddling by other sites within the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park, canoers finished their adventure at the Big Chico Creek Day Use area.

We would like to thank State Parks for their help with parking and for managing such a beautiful area. Also thank you to the community members who were so enthusiastic about the tour. Since so many were interested in this event, in Spring 2007 we hope to offer more canoe tours. To stay updated on River Partners tours, talks, and events, keep visiting our website: www.RiverPartners.org



Throughout the trip, tour participants docked their canoes to explore some of River Partners restoration sites on foot. Restoration Ecologist Tom Griggs explains the benefits to wildlife of River Partners' restoration work.

Photos by Matthew Morgan.

