

Rocks on the Merced River. Photo by Paige Falk.

River Partners Annual Dinner Celebrates Public Lands, Announces Gifts to State Parks



(left to right) River Partners' Board Member Ken Grossman, President John Carlon, Ruth Coleman of California State Parks, and Bob Foster of California State Parks at River Partners' Annual Dinner, March 23, 2007.

On Friday, March 23, at its Annual Dinner program, River Partners and 180 of its supporters enjoyed an inspiring keynote speech from Ruth Coleman, Director of California State Parks. Ms. Coleman spoke about her department's work in developing a vision for new parks in the Central Valley and the process of involving community members in this vision. Ms. Coleman also discussed State Park's commitment to addressing the region's changing demographics and population—how park facilities must meet various cultural and inter-generational needs.

Also during the Annual Dinner, John Carlon, River Partners' President,

announced that the organization will be giving two properties along the Sacramento River to the California State Parks system: the Gaines and Gianella Landing properties

By accepting these property donations, State Parks will increase public access to the Sacramento River in two critical areas: the bridge at Hwy 162, near Butte City, and the bridge at Hwy 32, near Hamilton City. As a result of River Partners' gift, there will be approximately 58 more acres of State Parks land in Glenn County.

For a history of the Gaines and Gianella Landing properties, see page four. For Annual Dinner highlights, visit our website at www.riverpartners.org.

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Killdeer nest on a River Partners restoration site. Photo by Matthew Morgan.

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Message from the Board Chair



Board Chair Irv Schiffman

In California flooding can occur in the winter or spring. As a result, River Partners' planting in restoration areas always takes place under the prospect that a flood can come along at almost any time during the growing cycle. Such floods are particularly harmful when they arrive during the first growing season, before the new cuttings and seedlings have time to establish themselves. With the onset of the floods, restoration parcels can have as much as four to ten feet of water on them and the water can remain for as few as three days or as long as ten weeks. Accordingly, flood

anticipation is a key feature of restoration planning.

The first step in preparing for the expected is to understand how the floodwaters will flow across the floodplain property. This can be determined by modeling the consequences of a flood event. Based on this knowledge the rows of vegetation are planted in the direction of the flood flow so that the water moves down the row as opposed to across it. Our concern is more with the velocity of the moving water rather than its depth, since fast moving water can tear out the young plants and seedlings.

As an additional precaution to protect the new growth, when we plant sequentially, we plant the first stage at the point of entry of the floodwaters. In so doing, this first tier creates a buffer that traps the floating debris brought in by the floodwaters and serves to reduce the damage to the second tier plantings. You will be surprised at the variety of things that float onto the restoration site during a flood, everything from tires to propane tanks.

Another problem caused by flooding during the first growth season is the escape of rodents to the higher areas of the restoration site where they feast on the newly planted vegetation. On the other hand, many rodents, including gophers and voles, are drowned in the floodwaters, thus helping to ensure the growth of surviving and future plantings.

Is it safer to plant in the spring or in the fall? Fall plantings are more likely to be subject to flooding but are also more conducive to plant establishment. Spring plantings are less likely to be affected by flooding, but are more subject to weed competition and the adverse effects of summer heat waves and a desiccating north wind.

After the floodwaters have dissipated, the cleanup begins. Trash is removed from the restoration site, the gullies created by the rushing waters are filled in, and the plants excavated by the waters are replanted. The milk containers that serve as protectors for the baby trees and are now filled with silt, are removed, cleaned out, and replaced. The damaged irrigation systems are also repaired.

While flooding creates problems during the first growing season, it also provides long-term benefits to the restoration area. Besides reducing the number of harmful rodents, the floodwaters drown weeds and non-native grasses. These same floodwaters also serve to recharge the soil profile, enabling plants to extract sufficient water from the soil to meet their needs during the dry months. Juvenile salmon use the floodplain for feeding and refuge prior to their trip to the ocean, while birds feast on the increased supply of insects, fish and invertebrates brought about by the flooding.

Welcome David Neubert, San Joaquin Valley Regional Director

Former agribusiness consultant, David Neubert, has joined River Partners as its San Joaquin Regional Director. David will be spearheading River Partners' work throughout the San Joaquin Valley, focusing on project development and land acquisitions.

David has had a life-long interest in environmental conservation but his work in this area began in earnest with pro-bono work for River Partners on riparian habitat restoration projects in 2002. He brings to River Partners a wealth of international and agricultural experience.

"River Partners is extremely fortunate to have David Neubert leading our efforts in the San Joaquin Valley," says John Carlon, River Partners' President. "Through his work in international development, he has the skills to build and manage the large-scale projects that River Partners typically implements. Before joining River Partners staff, David worked with us as a Yuba City community member. He helped us secure several key projects along the Feather River."

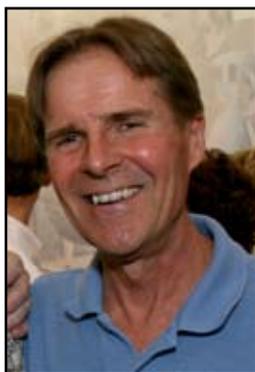
David received his B.S. in international agriculture resources from the University of California Davis, followed by a M.S. in agricultural science from California State University at San Luis Obispo. While completing his graduate degree, he worked in Washington D.C. as an intern for Congressman Leon Panetta, focusing on agricultural regulatory and constituent issues.

In the early 1980's David worked in East Africa for Save the Children (US) and the United States Agency for International Development. After two years in East Africa he returned to California where he worked in processing tomato and nut crop production for five years.

Following his work in production agriculture, David joined the firm of Western Agri-Management where he worked with clients throughout Latin America and East Asia in agribusiness analysis and project development. In 1990 he started his agribusiness consulting firm (DCN Associates), which led him to work in more than fifty countries on a variety of projects involving fruit and vegetable production, processing and export market development, dairy business development, ag-commodities, and agricultural education.

Welcome New Staff Members:

River Partners also enthusiastically welcomes new staff members who have joined our field and science teams: Rod Steinhauer, Restoration Field Manager; Joe Green, Assistant Field Manager; Lauren Singleton, Restoration Biologist; Michael Rogner, Restoration Biologist; Nick Pacini, Restoration Biologist; Colleen Martin, Restoration Biologist; Sreng Ung, Field Technician; Jose Granados, Field Technician; Rafael Granados, Field Technician; Dennis Baugher, Field Technician; Matt Morgan, Field Technician; and Daniel Zepada, Field Management Intern.



David Neubert

River Partners Project Updates

www.RiverPartners.org

- A new look

River Partners' has a fresh look at www.RiverPartners.org. Working with InfoTap, a non-profit dedicated to helping other NPOs with technology issues, River Partners revamped its entire website. The updated site has more images and content about our history, project locations, and services. New features include a "Job Openings" page and a "News & Events" section with press release postings and event information. An in-depth "Support Us" section allows interested donors to give on-line, join our monthly giving program, or make a contribution in tribute to a friend or loved one. Further, on the home page, anyone interested in receiving news alerts can sign-up by submitting their email address.

River Partners & the CA Climate Action Registry

River Partners has joined the California Climate Action Registry, "a non-profit public/private partnership that serves as a voluntary greenhouse gas (GHG) emission registry to protect, encourage, and promote early actions to reduce GHG emissions." By joining, River Partners is committing itself to assess and report its GHG emissions and to reduce this impact on the environment.

Bradford Island in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

In January, River Partners completed planting its first Delta-based project: Bradford Island. Our team of field technicians, enduring the wet winter conditions of the Delta, installed grass plugs, shrubs, plants, and trees on 50 acres of weed-infested land, 20 acres of which were in standing water.

Our partners on this mitigation project included Stillwater Sciences, authors of the restoration plan, the Department of Fish and Game, and Reclamation District 2059.

Turtle Bay Exploration Park & the McConnell Arboretum

Once again, River Partners is teaming up with the City of Redding and Turtle Bay Exploration Park to restore a portion of the McConnell Arboretum. The

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Increasing Access and Recreation on the Sacramento River

River Partners and the California Department of Parks and Recreation are near completion of the title transfer for two critically-located properties along the Sacramento River. This step will finalize River Partners' land donation to State Parks.

As a result of River Partners' donation of its Gaines and Gianella Landing properties to the California State Parks system, Glenn County community members and other Central Valley residents stand to benefit tremendously. These sites will potentially provide a new boat access point by the Hwy 162 bridge and 900-feet of river frontage access by the Hwy 32 bridge, thereby enhancing public safety and access along the river. Furthermore, these land gifts will add more than 58 acres of new state park lands along the Sacramento River corridor, which was identified as a priority for State Parks in its Central Valley Vision project.

Advancing State Park's Plans for the Central Valley

As State Parks learned in an extensive planning process, access to rivers and public lands around river corridors are important to Central Valley residents.

According to the Central Valley Vision Summary Report (November 2006), State Parks perceived a "serious lack of

available recreational opportunities in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys." In 2003 it embarked on a long range planning process for the Central Valley to address the impacts of a growing population and changing demographics. After many public meetings and planning surveys, the project team concluded that the region's park and recreation service providers indeed were under-funded in relation to other California regions. Furthermore, based on public input, the planning team devised these priorities for the State Parks system in the Central Valley:

- Expand recreational facilities (i.e. fishing, camping, day-us facilities, etc), especially around *river corridors* and the Delta.
- Expand State Parks' presence and holdings, especially along *river corridors*
- Preserve and protect natural lands, specially threatened areas (such as native grass lands and Blue Oak and Sycamore woodlands).
- Provide educational and interpretive opportunities on California's diverse cultural history.

River Partners' gifts of the Gaines and Gianella landing properties effectively advance State Park's long term plan and priorities for the Central Valley. In addition to more park land, they offer additional holdings along the Sacramento River corridor.

About Gianella Landing

The Gianella Landing property is located in Glenn County, where Hwy 32 crosses the Sacramento River. With 20 acres of land and 900 feet of river frontage, it is adjacent to the Bidwell-

A view from Gianella Landing of the Irvine Finch boat ramp and Hwy 32 bridge. Photo by Matthew Morgan.



Sacramento River State Park's Irvine Finch River Access, one of the busiest access points in the area. This flood-prone walnut orchard, once owned by the Beard family, was slated to become a residential trailer court. When the residential project went before the Glenn County Board of Supervisors, River Partners was alerted that it had conservation potential.

River Partners initiated the acquisition process in 2002, with the support from the Glenn County Board of Supervisors. It purchased the land with a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board in 2003.

River Partners plans to restore the area. Once restored, it will increase the Irvine Finch River Access area from five to 25 acres. This area is extremely popular with salmon fishermen, boaters, canoers, kayakers, and students from CSU Chico. This new public acquisition helps solve a major land use issue in the region – lack of adequate public access to the Sacramento River. Also, considering this flood-prone land could have become a residential area, Gianella Landing's conversion to park land seems the more appropriate alternative for public safety.

About the Gaines Property

The Gaines property sits in the middle of 1,000 acres of U.S. Fish and Wildlife property, on the west side of the Sacramento River, under the Butte City Hwy 162 bridge. It contains 28 acres of walnut orchard and eight acres of habitat. The Sul Norte Unit of the SRNWR lies on its northern border, and the Packer and Codora Units lie on its southern border.

Due to its location at another major river crossing, River Partners felt the Gaines property offered another public lands opportunity, especially for boating



River frontage of the Gaines property. River Partners will convert the walnut orchard into riparian habitat. Photo by staff.

access. In addition to the Glenn County Board of Supervisors, the acquisition was supported by the Glenn County Sheriff because of its potential addition of a much needed access point to a 40 mile stretch of river. This stretch has no boat ramp when the Butte City launch area is out of service.

"River Partners wanted to use its land-deal knowledge, along with its restoration skills, to provide Glenn County with some public park land," recalls Barney Flynn, River Partners Board Member.

The Gaines Family Trust approved River Partners' proposal and vision for the property. River Partners completed the purchase in 2003, thanks to a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board

Once restored by River Partners, the Gaines property will add approximately 38 acres to the State Parks System. A ribbon cutting ceremony will take place soon.

Other resources:

To read "California State Park's Central Valley Vision: Summary Report, Findings and Recommendations" visit: www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23483

To learn more about the public access points within the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge (they now have a developed public access policy), visit: www.fws.gov/sacramentovalleyrefuges

To learn more about recreational opportunities along the Sacramento River, visit: www.sacramentoriver.org.

River Partners Project Updates

Continued from Page 3

project, "Turtle Bay II," involves 75 acres of the Arboretum on the south side of the Sacramento River and east of the museum. The site contains a perimeter trail which is known locally as the Wintu Audubon Trail. Formerly mined for gravel during the construction of Shasta Dam, the area now contains an 80-foot canopy of cottonwoods and oaks. River Partners will remove the invasive weed, Himalayan blackberry, and replant the understory with native shrubs such as California rose and California blackberry. This will enhance the existing riparian forest and provide higher quality habitat for the wildlife around the museum.

Bidwell Ranch Mitigation Bank

The Bidwell Ranch project's first community meeting was held on March 29 at the Chico City Chambers. Approximately 15 people participated in the meeting to discuss the management plan and the site's potential as a conservation and mitigation bank.

Dan Efsseff, Project Manager, welcomed the participants and provided an overview of the project and the mitigation bank development process. Brendan Vieg, Senior Planner City of Chico, provided a brief history of the project. Tom Griggs, River Partners Senior Restoration Ecologist, explained the importance and functions of vernal



Members of the Citizen Work Group tour the site.

pools, while Christiana Conser, River Partners Biologist, detailed opportunities for public input.

The meeting covered the importance of protecting this property by explaining general project overview, mitigation banking processes, and the economic and ecological benefits of a mitigation bank. Mr. Vieg and Mr. Efsseff explained that River Partners will review and compile the technical information and produce the documents necessary to establish a Conservation and Mitigation Bank approved by involved federal and state agencies.

During the meeting, several people joined the Citizen's Work Group—a team



Tehama Environmental Services, Inc., conducting a wetlands delineation survey on the Bidwell Ranch property.

of members of the public interested in helping to shape the Bidwell Ranch project, which will meet four times throughout the 18-month-long project.

The first Citizen Work Group meeting took place on the Bidwell Ranch Property on April 18. The six-member team and River Partners' staff toured the property to gain a better understanding of the site's resources and challenges, and to exchange information.

A wetlands delineation is being conducted by Tehama Environmental Services, and will be completed this spring. River Partners is also preparing an inventory of ecological resources, and will discuss the site's potential with state and federal agencies. The Site Inventory will be completed this summer.

For more information, please visit: www.riverpartners.org/where-we-work/bidwell/bidwell.html.

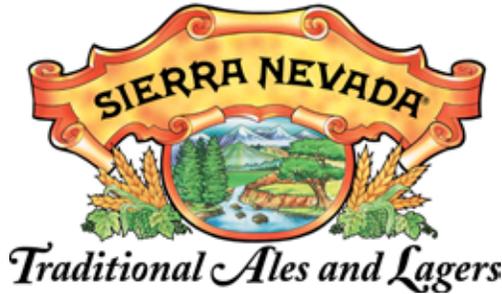
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Wood ducks. Photo by USFWS Digital Library.

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Bald eagle chicks. Photo by USFWS Digital Library.

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Upcoming River Partners Events!

May 5 - 28th Annual Endangered Species Faire, 10 AM to 4 PM. Bidwell Park's Cedar Grove, Chico. Stop by River Partners' booth, where we'll have wildlife arts & crafts for the family.

May 12 - International Migratory Bird Day Celebration, 9 AM to 1 PM Pine Creek Unit, Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. Come celebrate the spring return of songbirds, hawks, and water birds from Mexico and beyond on International Migratory Bird Day, Saturday, May 12th.

A guided bird walk by Altacal Audubon Society, a live bird show featuring a great-horned owl and an American kestrel, natural resource conservation displays, and a variety of children's activities will be hosted by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and River Partners. For details, call the Refuge office at (530) 934-2801 or visit: sacramentovalleyrefuges.fws.gov.

May 24 - Stony Creek Landowner Workshop

3 PM to 7 PM. Meet at the Carnegie Library, Orland. This public workshop is for Stony Creek landowners and community members interested in learning how to eradicate weeds and using native plants to control erosion. River Partners' staff will assist in running the workshop and provide a site demonstration. To register, contact Ajay Singh with the Glenn County RCD: (530) 934-4601 x 126 or ajay.singh@ca.nacdn.net.

June 2007 - River Partners' 2nd Canoe Float! Bring your own canoe or kayak and learn about the Sacramento River

Due to the success of our August 2006 trip, River Partners is putting together another trip around June 23. Our plan



Sacramento River. Photo by Matthew Morgan.

is to tour River Partners' restoration sites within the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge, south of Llano Seco Rancho. We'll also be searching for Bank Swallows, threatened songbirds that nest within sandy banks along the Sacramento River. Bring your binoculars so you can enjoy these acrobatic birds. Also bring your life jacket, walking shoes, and lunch. Most likely we'll meet and launch at Butte City and take out near Princeton. The trip should last about 2 ½ to 3 hours.

We're still in the planning stages, so stay tuned. We'll announce the final details of the trip on our website and in various media outlets.

Check back at www.RiverPartners.org for more information or call (530) 894-5401 x 22. If you'd like to receive alerts by email, sign up at our website's home page under eNewsletter.