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Media Advisory

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Abbott Lake Restoration Approved

On Friday, February 26, 2010, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB) approved an encroachment permit to do habitat restoration work on the Abbott Lake Unit of the Feather River Wildlife Area. Various agencies and nonprofits attended the meeting to testify to the multiple benefits that will result from the restoration project. They included Ducks Unlimited and the Wildlife Conservation Board, both funders of the project. Additional proponents included the Department of Fish and Game (the land owner), the Department of Water Resources (Flood Maintenance Office), and MBK Engineers. River Partners, the project developer and implementer, assisted with the permit application process

“We’ve invested two years in the planning and permitting process,” says John Carlon, River Partners president. “And this time has certainly paid off in terms of bringing together partnerships and producing a well-designed project that will offer numerous benefits. Not only will restoring Abbott Lake contribute to a large block of wildlife habitat, our planting design will help prevent levee erosion and reduce maintenance costs.”

River Partners hired MBK Engineers to conduct the hydraulic analysis of the proposed plant design. “Thanks to MBK’s multiple evaluations and feedback, we’ve carefully adjusted the restoration design—including types of plants, their location, and densities—so that there specifically won’t be a ‘clogging’ effect if there is a flood,” says Helen Swagerty, Senior Restoration Biologist. “MBK’s modeling of the project’s impact in a flood event has shown that the restoration will not burden the levee system. Moreover, the models indicated that the project will protect the levee.”

The focus of the Abbott Lake restoration project is creating wildlife habitat, not re-vegetating the nearby levee. **No trees will be planted on the levee nor within 15 feet of the levee. No elderberry bushes will be planted within 100 feet of the tow of the levee.**

Located approximately seven miles south of Yuba City, the 439-acre Abbott Lake site has been fallow for 25 years. River Partners will actively restore 169 acres and help enhance the remnant habitat by controlling invasive plants. Since this unit belongs to the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the project will benefit public recreation and access to the Feather River.

The Abbott Lake restoration project is important because it will enhance a substantial portion of the wildlife habitat comprising the 2,522 acre Feather River Wildlife Area, the largest publicly-accessible DFG riparian wildlife area in northern California. The Abbott Lake project also will add to the more than 8,000 acres of wildlife habitat in the region that are held in public and private ownership.

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For more information about restoration in the floodway, visit these links at www.RiverPartners.org:

- “Vegetation in the Floodway: Native vegetation structure is quantifiable and its response to flows is predictable.” <http://www.riverpartners.org/riparian-ecology/veg-floodway/>
- “Recommendations for Floodway Vegetation Maintenance.” <http://www.riverpartners.org/riparian-ecology/veg-floodway/floodway-mgt.html>
- “Vegetation in the Floodway and the Flume Study” River Partners Journal, December 2009, p. 3. http://www.riverpartners.org/documents/RP_Journal_Winter_2010.pdf