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A Historic Moment for California and for Conservation
Dos Rios Ranch Acquisition at the Confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers

Dos Rios Ranch, Modesto, Calif. – Federal, state and local officials formally announced on Monday the historic acquisition of the Dos Rios Ranch property in Stanislaus County, creating the opportunity to preserve hundreds of acres of wildlife habitat and riverfront park in the heart of California. With the picturesque property at the confluence of California’s Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers as their backdrop, dignitaries and community members celebrated the milestone in a sweeping conservation effort that has been a decade in the making.

“Dos Rios Ranch is a model for conservation and restoration projects,” said U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein. “It brings together a host of federal, state, local and private partners to protect and rehabilitate vitally important lands in the Central Valley. We have a duty to protect and restore California’s most pristine and important lands, but we must do so in a fiscally responsible way. Dos Rios Ranch shows how that can be done.”

The project is the result of collaboration among two local non-profit organizations, the Tuolumne River Trust and River Partners, and federal, state, and local partners. It comprises 1,600 acres of biologically rich floodplain including three miles of riverfront on the San Joaquin River and three miles on the Tuolumne River. The restoration of this land promises to open new doors for San Joaquin Valley communities and families, wildlife, outdoor enthusiasts, and for the vital task of flood control in California’s Central Valley.

“Today signifies a proud moment for California and a significant victory for our Central Valley. I supported this effort by helping to build the local, state and federal partnership behind it, and I am pleased to see it become a reality,” said Congressman Dennis Cardoza. “The Dios Rios Ranch habitat will connect the Tuolumne River Parkway and San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge projects, creating a unique swath of conservation, flood control and recreation opportunities in the heart of California. It will be a treasure in the San Joaquin Valley for generations to come.”

Indeed, all of California will benefit from the purchase of this property, which the Lyons family chose to sell to be used for conservation purposes. The project will add capacity to the Central Valley’s flood management system and address some of the area's central water issues; it will provide new opportunities and places to learn for area youth; and it will create new recreation possibilities within 30 minutes of any community in Stanislaus County. The preserve also will increase important habitat for healthy fish populations, as wells as migratory birds and wildlife, and connect the Tuolumne River Parkway and San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge.

“When we can combine habitat protection with flood control, recreation and educational opportunities, we create something of value for everyone,” said Charlton H. Bonham, Department of Fish and Game Director. Meanwhile, the project will add a much-needed boost to Central Valley's economy. It will generate business for area suppliers and locally-based labor and contractor jobs for restoration and maintenance of the property. The recreation opportunities also will attract patrons to area businesses.

“The protection and restoration of Dos Rios Ranch will create jobs in the community, benefit wildlife in this 800-mile river system, and improve flood protection and public safety for California. It is a model project on many levels. It successfully leverages federal, state, and local funding. It brings the agriculture and conservation communities together; and it builds on ongoing conservation efforts in the valley,” said River Partners President John Carlon.

Over the next five to 10 years, property owner River Partners, a Central Valley-based nonprofit created to help the fields of habitat restoration and agriculture work together, and the Tuolumne River Trust will restore the property.

“This accomplishment will be recorded in history books as a victory for conservation, flood protection and outdoor recreation in the heart of California. We need to carefully steward our rivers, natural areas, and wildlife habitat for our children and grandchildren. This project is a legacy that will benefit future generations for many years to come,” said Patrick Koepele, Deputy Executive Director, Tuolumne River Trust.

The project, which uses no money from the state general fund, is paid for by voter-approved bond measures and grant programs dedicated for flood control projects, river parks, and wildlife restoration. This \$21.8 million project is being funded by several federal, state, local and private funding sources.

“The challenges facing our rivers and waterways are complicated and immense,” said Steve Ritchie, Assistant General Manager for Water for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. “It takes the combined efforts of many entities to achieve real progress towards restoration and preservation. Dos Rios is a true success story.”

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