



RIVER
PARTNERS

PLANTING HOPE: A RECORD YEAR

2020 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



2020: A Record Year

THIS YEAR RIVER PARTNERS SET NEW RECORDS FOR HIGH-IMPACT ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION AND COMMUNITY-LED CONSERVATION



WE ARE **SCALING UP** AND **EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO GIVE NEW LIFE TO RIVERS**

GROWTH

This year **we doubled our pace and scale of on-the-ground ecosystem restoration**, accelerating species protection, freshwater conservation and climate resilience throughout California.

Learn more:

[Good News for Our Rivers](#)

INCLUSION

All people deserve the benefits that healthy rivers provide. Our **multi-cultural team and partners** are advancing equity, diversity, inclusion and justice within the conservation movement right now.

Learn more:

[Looking Forward](#)

STIMULUS

We doubled our budget, expanded our staff, and **invested our growth in local economies**, to secure a resilient future for people, wildlife, and our planet.

Learn more:

[Planting a Resilient Future](#)

2,164
Acres
restored

31
River miles
restored

290,000
Trees
planted

920 million
Gallons new
freshwater conserved

\$15.7 million
Funds directed to California communities
through river restoration (94% of annual budget)

From Our President: Planting Hope

Dear Friends:

Through all of the turbulence of the past year, **River Partners has achieved a quiet triumph: our largest restoration year ever.** Our field staff, scientists, policy experts, every member of our organization and our many partners have rallied to make this milestone possible, while maintaining physical distance, taking every safety precaution, and expanding our capacities to respond to dynamic conditions.

Our approach is working: At the largest scale in the Western US, our team is focused on an audaciously simple goal – give new life to our river landscapes by farming native habitat. Of course, it isn't really that simple. As we put millions of trees in the ground, we engage in every level of resource management to build real-life scalable and durable solutions. We recover endangered wildlife, improve flood safety, store carbon, recharge groundwater and enhance streamflow, support economic growth, and deliver community open space and health benefits. And we need to do so much more.

Our Charge: For over two decades, River Partners has shown that revitalizing our river corridors creates sustainable, living-wage careers in the growing green infrastructure sector, building community and ecological resilience. In 2020 – an unprecedented year – we have tested our capacity and doubled annual revenues and impact. As this economic recession requires us to think differently about virus-safe economic stimulus and workforce expansion, River Partners is ready to grow.

You are invited: Our ability to rebound and turn toward a stronger, hopeful future will be determined by how decisively we join together to revitalize our communities and empower people with proven solutions for a rapidly changing physical and social climate. I hope this report will inspire you to learn more and join us in delivering some of the most innovative and game-changing ecosystem recovery in the West. We thank the hundreds of partners already lifting with us, and welcome your partnership to help shape and support this vision of a resilient future.

Together, let's give new life to our rivers.

Stay safe,



Julie Rentner
President

Through 2020's powerful lens, we see clearly that our vision of reconnected rivers holds hope for the survival of fragile species, and also for all of us.

Thank You

TO OUR PARTNERS AND DONORS

COLLABORATIVES

Bank Swallow Working Group
CDFW Restoration Leaders Committee
California Invasive Plant Council
California Native Plant Society
Central Valley Flood Protection Plan–
Conservation Strategy Advisory Committee
Central Valley Joint Venture
Central Valley Salmon Partnership
Fisheries Restoration Peer Review Committee
Lower Tuolumne River TAC
Monarch Joint Venture
Regional Flood Management Plan–
San Joaquin Sacramento, Feather and Delta
Riparian Mammals Technical Group
San Diego Mitigation and Monitoring Program
San Joaquin River Partnership
Society for Ecological Restoration in California
Sonoran Joint Venture
Water Solutions Network

RESEARCHERS

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Chico State University
Lawrence Livermore National Lab
Public Policy Institute of California
San Diego Natural History Museum
San Francisco Estuary Institute
Santa Clara University
Stanislaus State University
UC Davis
UC Merced
University of the Pacific
US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
US Geological Survey (USGS)
Washington State University

NON-GOVERNMENTAL

American Rivers
Audubon California
CalTrout
California Waterfowl Association
Downey Brand
Coro Northern California
Ducks Unlimited
ESA Associates
Great Valley Seed
Hicks Law
Jeff Jacobs, Relish Brand Works

Kern River Corridor Endowment
Kern River Parkway Foundation
MBK Engineers
Melinda Maniscalco Design
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Pacific Gas & Electric
Point Blue Conservation Science
Sacramento River Forum
Sacramento Valley Conservancy
San Diego Natural History Museum
San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust
Sequoia Riverlands Trust
The Nature Conservancy
Talone Lake Conservancy
Trout Unlimited
Tuolumne River Trust
Western Water Strategies
Xerxes Society

INDIGENOUS TRIBES

Cachil Dehe Wintun
Pala Tribe
Jamul Indian Village
Yurok Tribe
Tuolumne Band of Miwuk

FEDERAL AGENCIES

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Bureau of Reclamation
US Fish & Wildlife Service
US Geological Survey (USGS)
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

STATE AGENCIES

California Conservation Corps
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Department of Parks and
Recreation
California Department of Pesticide Regulation
California Department of Water Resources
California Natural Resources Agency
California Wildlife Conservation Board
San Joaquin River Conservancy
Water Resources Control Board

LOCAL AGENCIES

Butte County RCD
City of Bakersfield

City of Chula Vista
City of Fresno
City of San Diego
Colusa County
Contra Costa RCD
East Stanislaus RCD
FIELD Institute
Greater Valley Conservation Corps
Lower San Joaquin Levee District
Modesto Irrigation District
Reclamation Districts: 108, 784, 2011, 2028,
2037, 2092, 2110, 2137
Sweetwater Authority
Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency
Stanislaus County
Sutter Buttes Flood Control Agency
Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority
Turlock Irrigation District
Urban Corps of San Diego
West Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency
Yuba Water Agency

FOUNDATIONS

SD Bechtel Jr Foundation
Disney Conservation Foundation
The Joseph and Vera Long Foundation
Resources Legacy Fund
The Volgenau Foundation
The Water Foundation

INDIVIDUALS*

Barbara Burkett
John and Armen Carlon
Lynn Chiapella
Larry Dacus
Jerry Fowler
Gayle Hutchinson
Terrel Hutton and Tom Hicks
Joanne Karlton
Sharon and Dave Koehler
Tom Lando
Kenneth and Karen Lechter
Network for Good
Susan and Thomas Newmeyer
Rebecca Reiner
Suellen Rowilson
Irv and Nitsa Schiffman
Elizabeth Schwerer and Kingston Duffie
Carol and Monroe Sprague

*GIFTS OF \$200+, JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020

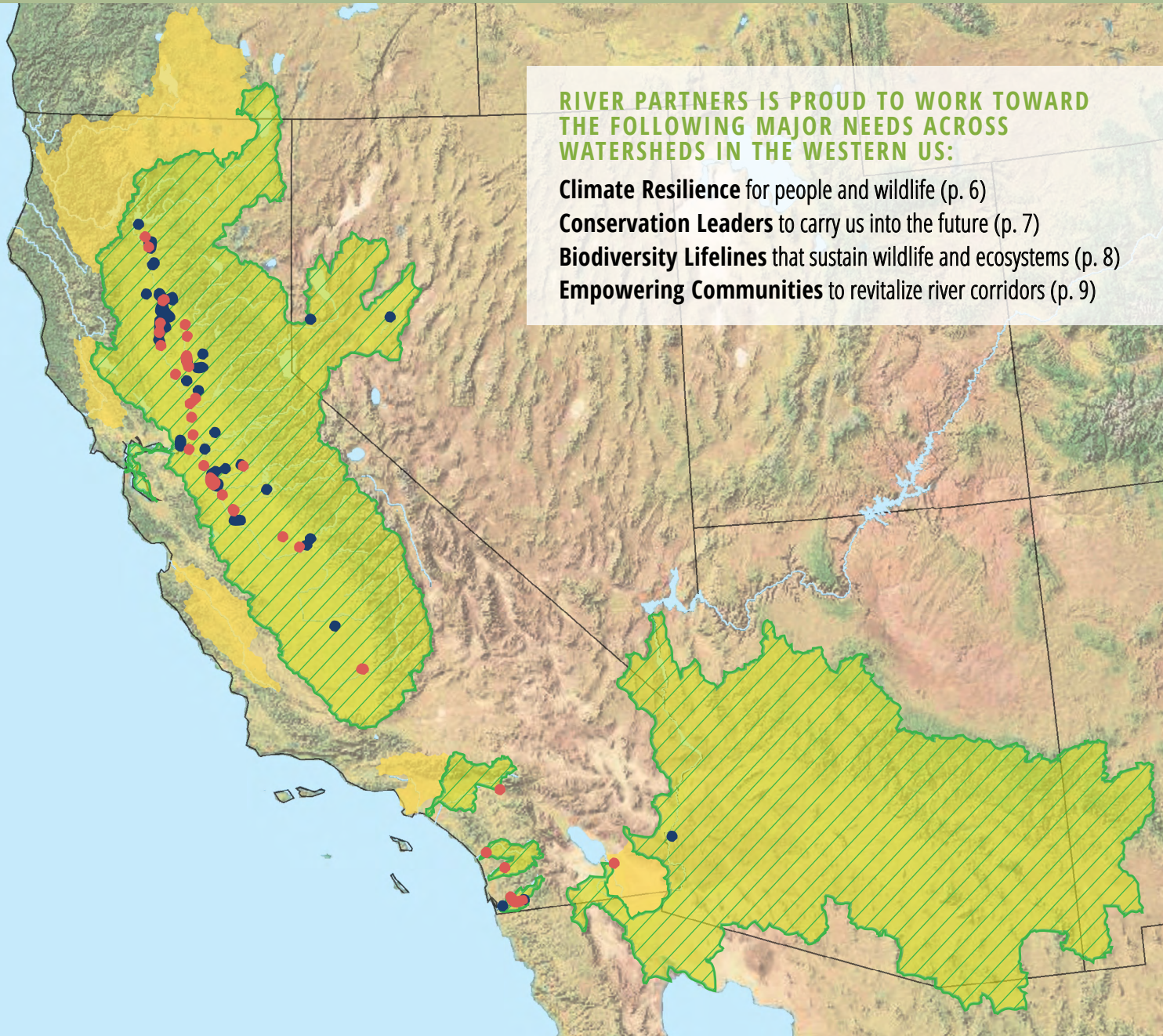
Giving New Life to River Landscapes



Bear River site just before planting.



A fully functioning ecosystem, six years later.



RIVER PARTNERS IS PROUD TO WORK TOWARD THE FOLLOWING MAJOR NEEDS ACROSS WATERSHEDS IN THE WESTERN US:

- Climate Resilience** for people and wildlife (p. 6)
- Conservation Leaders** to carry us into the future (p. 7)
- Biodiversity Lifelines** that sustain wildlife and ecosystems (p. 8)
- Empowering Communities** to revitalize river corridors (p. 9)

- ACTIVE PROJECTS
- COMPLETED PROJECTS
- PROJECT WATERSHEDS
- CRITICAL INTEREST WATERSHEDS

WATERSHEDS WHERE WE WORK

Sacramento River
Stony Creek
Feather River

San Joaquin River
Stanislaus River
Tuolumne River
Kern River

Marsh Creek
San Luis Rey River
San Dieguito River

Sweetwater River
Otay River
Jamul Creek

Building Climate Resilience

RIVER PARTNERS DELIVERS **PROVEN SOLUTIONS** FOR COMMUNITIES AND WILDLIFE AT RISK OF EXTREME DROUGHT AND FLOOD



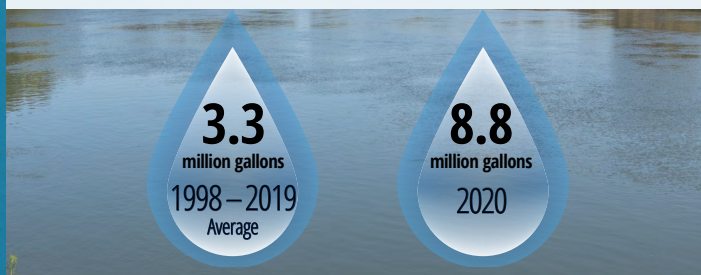
WILDLIFE MIGRATION

Wet and shady riverways support **population resilience** for birds, fish, insects, and mammals.



FLOOD AND DROUGHT RESILIENCE

Connected floodplains allow floodwater to spread out and sink in. River Partners is advancing California's climate resilience with **the state's largest footprint of floodplain reconnection projects.**



FRESHWATER CONSERVATION

River Partners retires irrigation diversions and **dedicates freshwater to our rivers.** 2020 was our largest dedication to date.



GENETIC DIVERSITY

River Partners collects and propagates native seeds for all of our restoration work, often pioneering the cultivation of native plants that have **never been cultivated before.**

In 2020, **we propagated 27 different species**, including the state's largest production of milkweed – the host plant for the Monarch butterfly.



CARBON SEQUESTRATION

A new five-year partnership with the Joseph and Vera Long Foundation and California Waterfowl Association is **expanding the science of carbon sequestration in river forests across California.**

Cultivating Conservation Leaders

RIVER PARTNERS IS PROUD TO TRAIN AND INSPIRE THE **NEXT GENERATION** OF RESTORATION SCIENTISTS, MANAGERS AND SKILLED TECHNICIANS

“The lessons learned from working on River Partners’ restoration projects benefit Corpsmembers when they look for jobs after their year of paid service in the California Conservation Corps. Corpsmembers who worked on these projects have gone on to jobs with California State Parks, the National Park Service, and other conservancies and state agencies.”

Dana Howard, CCC

PARTNERS IN RESTORATION

River Partners was honored in 2020 to work with the following Regional Conservation Corps and dozens of Corpsmembers on projects that included removing over 400 acres of invasive weeds and planting more than 200,000 native trees and shrubs.

Learn more about our partnership with the [California Conservation Corps](#).

California Conservation Corps:

\$330,165 and 11,000 hours

Farmworker Institute of Education and Leadership Development (FIELD):

\$92,288 and over 3,000 hours

Urban Corps of San Diego:

\$5,816 and 200 hours

SCIENCE INTERNS

Our paid summer science internship program provides undergraduates with an opportunity to gain real-world experience and inform restoration practices today. This summer our brilliant 2020 interns studied:

Aquatic species diversity;

Predation of endangered riparian brush rabbit in restored habitat;

River channel migration and mapping;

Soil improvement outcomes of large-scale restoration;

Insect diversity and butterfly populations on our restored riparian ecosystem projects throughout California.

Biodiversity Lifelines

RIVER PARTNERS **RE-CONNECTS CRUCIAL HABITAT ARTERIES**
TO BENEFIT WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE



HABITAT CORRIDORS

Reconnected habitat across
31 river miles this year.



LAND AND WATER RESTORATION

Over **2,000 acres of reforestation** dedicated in
perpetuity for future generations this year.



WILDLIFE RECOVERY

River Partners contributed to the
**recovery of over 20 endangered
species** this year through:

- Habitat restoration and land acquisition;
- Population studies and surveys;
- Living laboratories for research.



NATURAL RESOURCE POLICY

Our projects **provided proof of concept that
wildlife habitat restoration is a meaningful
solution** for our toughest resource challenges
and informed these programs:

- California Water Resilience Portfolio;
- Central Valley Flood Protection Plan;
- CV Joint Venture Implementation Plan;
- Fisheries Restoration Grant Program;
- ... and many others.



SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE

Through **15 conservation collaboratives
and 12 research partnerships**, River Partners
leveraged our experience to empower others to
deliver **smarter, more efficient,
and more durable conservation
outcomes** across California.

Healthy River Parkways

RIVER PARTNERS IS HONORED TO CONTRIBUTE TO **COMMUNITY EXPANSION AND ENRICHMENT OF RIVERWAYS**

“California’s rivers are its bloodstream: jobs, freeways, agriculture, entertainment, technology, housing and finance are all driven by them. What better way to care for our communities than to bring life back to rivers so that nature, our children, our seniors – all of us – can cherish and enjoy them? Just as in our bodies, ‘circulation’ is not a ‘luxury.’ Rivers are essential to California’s vitality.”

Dr. Richard Jackson, Professor Emeritus

Fielding School of Public Health, University of California, Los Angeles

RIVER PARKWAYS

In FY20, River Partners was humbled to join with community members, leaders, and partners to build and enhance the following river parkways:

American River Parkway

Cosumnes River Parkway

Feather River Parkway (under development)

Kern River Parkway

Lower Calaveras River

Lower Tuolumne River Parkway

Otay Regional Park

Sacramento River – Turtle Bay

Sacramento River – Red Bluff to Verona

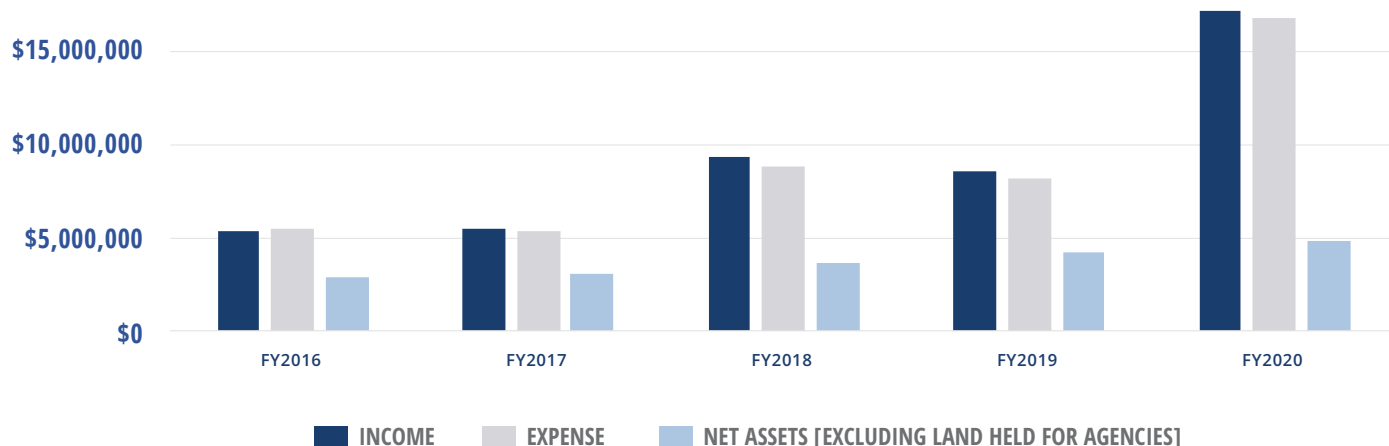
San Dieguito River Parkway

San Joaquin River Parkway

[Learn more](#)

Financials

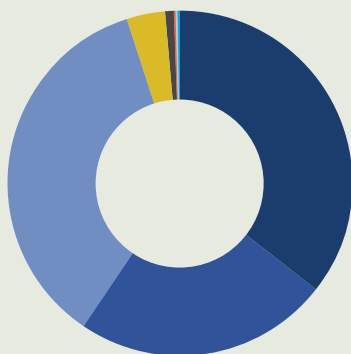
FIVE YEAR FINANCIALS



2020 REVENUE AND EXPENSES*

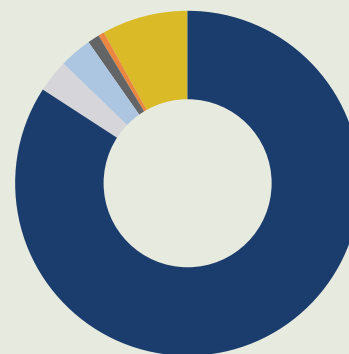
JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020 (UNAUDITED)

REVENUE



Federal Grants and Contracts	\$ 6,133,565
State Grants and Contracts	\$ 4,106,400
Local Grants and Contracts	\$ 6,120,909
Property Management Income	\$ 624,726
Other Income	\$ 27,281
Foundation Grants	\$ 157,067
Corporate Contributions	\$ 18,957
Individual Contributions	\$ 18,784
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 17,207,689

EXPENSES



Restoration Projects	\$ 14,099,269*
Land Management	\$ 509,102
Science & Policy	\$ 506,573
Outreach & Communications	\$ 174,007
Fundraising	\$ 105,448
Facilities and Administration	\$ 1,322,429
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 16,716,828

*100% of these restoration funds were directed to the local communities where we work.

Grow With Us



WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US IN DELIVERING SOME OF THE MOST **INNOVATIVE AND GAME-CHANGING CONSERVATION EFFORTS** IN THE WEST.

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION

For every dollar donated, we secure \$10 in public support to accelerate restoration of new riverlands and build our capacity to continue this pace of growth over the next critical decade.

ENDOW REVITALIZED RIVERS

Gifts of retirement funds, securities, estate bequests, real estate or other assets can permanently protect and sustain fragile wildlife, expand freshwater supply, support productive farmland, and build stronger, resilient communities.

FINANCE OUR IMPACT

River Partners finances its own work – millions of dollars worth. A low-interest, short-term investment in River Partners operations can increase our pace and scale today, and improve our ecosystems and economies forever.

VISIT one of our inspiring restoration projects. Tours are scheduled throughout the year.

LIKE us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter or Instagram [@riverpartners](#) for our latest news.

For more ways to get involved, email us at info@riverpartners.org or call (530) 894-5401



RIVER
PARTNERS

**BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**

Michael Davies
Ken Grossman
Allen Hackett
Mark Kimmelshue
Dave Koehler
Tom Lando
Julie Rentner
Suellen Rowison
Monroe Sprague
Elaine Trevino
Dawit Zeleke

River Partners envisions thriving rivers and floodplains that enrich surrounding communities, sustain abundant wildlife, support productive farmland, preserve freshwater resources and serve as the first line of ecological defense in a changing climate.

riverpartners.org

HEADQUARTERS

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CREATING WILDLIFE HABITAT FOR THE BENEFIT OF PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT