

2022 Impact



662

Acres of protected habitat restored for endangered and threatened species. 18,766 since 1998



3.75

River miles restored. **210.75** since 1998



85,654

Native trees & vegetation planted. **4,068,534** since 1998



25,439

Metric tons of greenhouse gases captured. **1,101,650 tons** since 1998



237,089,188

gallons of freshwater conserved. 10,265,818,605 gallons since 1998



\$13,303,620

channeled directly to the communities where we work. \$163,403,620 million since 1998

Common Ground, Common Water

Dear Friends,

Mega drought, mega flood, deadly heat waves, land retirement, groundwater overdraft, water curtailment, extinction. We have a lot to be worried about. The scale of these challenges means we have a lot of work to do, and this work must be done together.

Rivers are the arteries of our civilization – they make our entire world possible, from commerce and industry to towns and farms. Rivers are also the lightening rod around which we can leverage really big water and wildlife outcomes, or really thorny arguments.

River Partners has specialized for nearly a quarter century in powerful project work – doing the coalition-building, scoping, fundraising, permitting, and construction logistics on hundreds of large-scale restoration projects across more than 20 watersheds in California. And it strikes me in this time of turmoil that one of the most powerful tools in our toolbox is love.

To paraphrase Martin Luther King, Jr., "Power is the ability to affect change. The problem has been that all too many people have seen power and love as polar opposites...What we must understand is that power without love is reckless. And love without power is sentimental. In other words, power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice."

From seeds in the ground, to revitalized ecosystems, change happens because love finds power through the actions of individuals, communities, and collaboratives. Respectful discourse and focus on the work, not grandstanding or outvoting, attracts the things needed to revitalize our arteries: ideas, perspectives, public partnerships, endorsements, large-scale funding, and long-term stewardship

commitments. River Partners' work demonstrates a future we can all embrace: parks, forests, groundwater, wildlife, farms, pollinators, clean air and water, flood safety. These are reasons to be hopeful in a time when it is easy to lose hope. And they demonstrate power in love.

The projects we have showcased in this year's report show how shared love for our riverways and the power of our restoration experience are building common ground and shared water solutions across California for people and wildlife. Not surprisingly, we've found the most power where the needs are greatest, and we are deploying our tools at never-before seen scales, in landscapes that seem to have been forgotten.

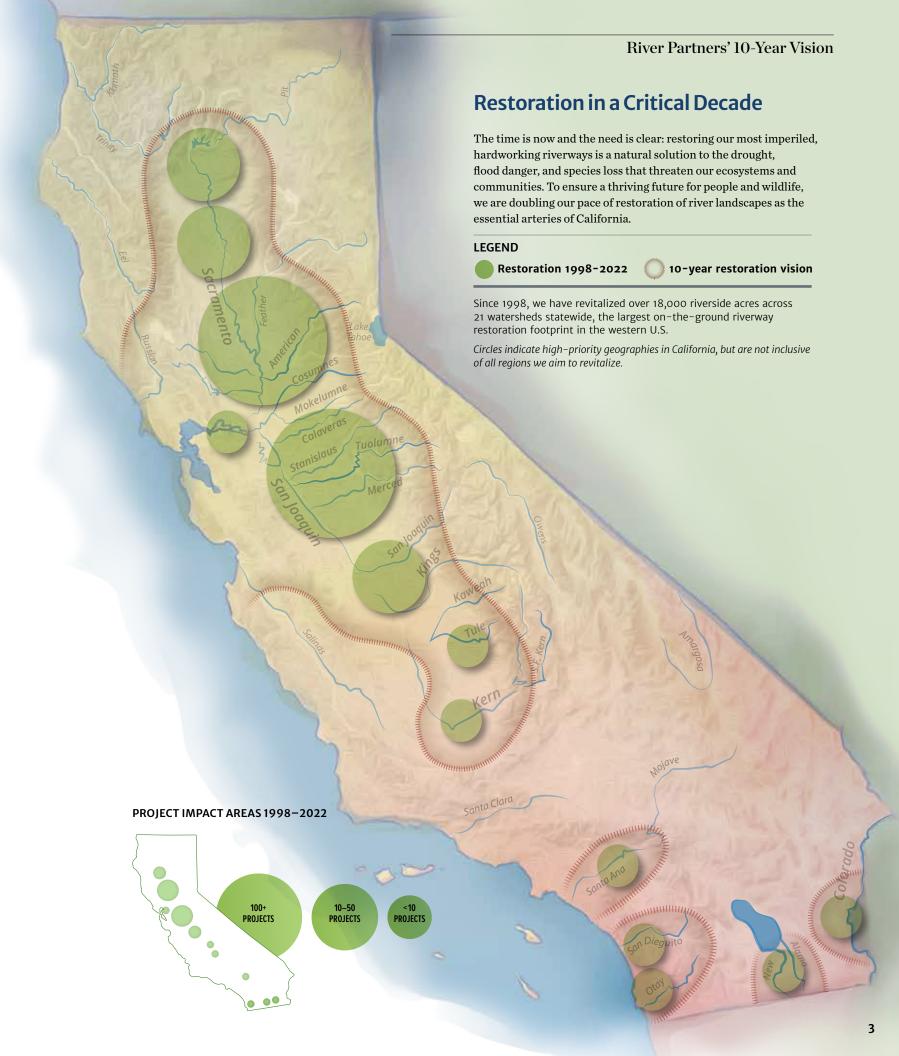
We're literally growing seeds for the future, securing funds to reconnect our floodplains, moving dirt, planting trees, and protecting land forever. The time is now to channel historic public investments in climate resilience and infrastructure to our beloved communities and ecosystems where it is needed most.

Thank you for spending your precious time with us and helping us find the common water and common ground that brings power to love for our rivers.

With gratitude,



Julie Rentner President



Closing the Nature Gap Green space, equity, and community climate resilience "River Partners' Dos Rios Ranch is a multilayered win for the Golden State: It expands conservation of vital land and water, combats climate change, and creates greater opportunity for all Californians—especially those in the San Joaquin Valley—to enjoy the health benefits of being in nature." - Wade Crowfoot, California Secretary of Natural Resources

Dos Rios Ranch and Grayson Riverbend Preserve





"Restored riverways offer a path forward for communities and landscapes in need of renewal. We are combining efforts with River Partners to improve the quality of life for our residents and our area."

-Lilia Lomeli-Gil, Co-founder, Grayson United Community Foundation in Stanislaus County

A community planting day at Grayson Riverbend Preserve.

This year, California State Parks chose Dos Rios Ranch Preserve to become California's newest state park, the first in 13 years.

Here, open space and cool, shaded riverway access is almost entirely out of reach for local communities with the fewest parks of any region in the state. Lack of public greenways affects quality of life, economic prosperity and health outcomes for residents throughout the Central Valley, which produces food for the entire country.

River parkways also deliver flood safety, water conservation, carbon storage, and protected corridors for wildlife that benefit all Californians. Over a decade, restoration of Dos Rios Ranch has also grown jobs and supported the local economy by channeling \$40 million in competitive grants and revenue back into local

communities and creating hundreds of good-paying green jobs.

After restoring 1,600 acres at Dos Rios Ranch, this year we completed the restoration and permanent conservation of 285 acres of riverside forests at the neighboring Grayson Riverbend Preserve. Bordering the farming community of Grayson in Stanislaus County, these formerly flood-prone fields will become the newest addition to the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge, one of the largest contiguous restored habitat areas in the San Joaquin Valley.

"River Partners multi-benefit conservation model can be used to introduce dozens more river parks throughout the Central Valley, transforming the landscape of outdoor accessibility and building a connected corridor of habitat sanctuary for wildlife," says California State Parks

Director Armando Quintero.

Revitalized riverways are especially important for California indigenous communities whose cultures revolve around native plants and ecosystems.

At Dos Rios Ranch this year, we joined with California Native partners to plant a Native Use Garden with sedge, deergrass, dogbane and other native plants for basketmaking and other cultural uses. We obtained federal use authorization for permanent Native use of the Garden, shaping a new model for expanding indigenous access to restored landscapes that are essential for cultural survival.

READ MORE ▶

about how we're reconnecting communities to riverways

Left: A new state park at Dos Rios Ranch

could offer camping, kayaking, birdwatching, and tree-lined trails with views to the Coast Range and Sierra.

Right: Restored Floodplains in Stanislaus County provide flood safety, water conservation, carbon storage, wildlife habitat, and open space—climate solutions that benefit all Californians.



Reconnecting Salmon to Floodplains Collaborative solutions for fish, farms, and communities "There are many properties throughout California" that function exactly as Willow Bend. What we will learn here can open many more opportunities in the Central Valley to restore prime rearing habitat for salmon whose genetic history is found

nowhere else on earth."

- Michael Rogner, Senior Restoration Ecologist, River Partners

Willow Bend: A Model for Salmon Recovery





"We are proud to be an early supporter of the Willow Bend project, a new model for salmon conservation that has the added benefit of building habitat lifelines for other fragile species up and down the Central Valley." -The Volgenau Foundation

Salmon Rest Stops: Construction

of the first floodplain access gate in California to provide habitat for migrating salmon.

Restoration of floodprone Sacramento Valley farmland may offer a new solution to resuscitate what was once one of the most prolific salmon runs in the world.

When River Partners first acquired Willow Bend on the Sacramento River for native habitat reforestation, we made a surprising discovery. Tiny Chinook salmon on their journey to the ocean were becoming trapped on the property after following the river's flow to a rich buffet of nutrients on the flooded fields.

Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon face extinction as the most endangered Chinook in the U.S., and the only winter-run Chinook on the planet.

Willow Bend turns out to be a perfect place for salmon to rest and forage. Studies conducted at the 40-acre

seasonal pond here found that one gallon of floodplain water holds 160 times more salmon food than is in the river. In perspective, the Willow Bend pond holds as much food as ten miles of river.

But there was a problem: while the low berms on Willow Bend fields retained nutrient-rich floodwaters, these barriers prevented drainage back to the river. The fish got trapped and were unable to continue their migration journey. The missing piece was an exit to allow fattened, healthy fish to swim back into the river after gorging on the floodplain.

Teaming up with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Restoration Center and other fish and water engineering experts, we designed a first-of-its-kind fish gate that adjusts with flood waters to ensure a continuous flow of water. Fish can exit the floodplain of their own volition, but the gate retains water, fish, and food on

the floodplain for as long as possible.

With permitting and construction of the gate completed this year, fisheries experts will closely monitor the site to learn how this solution can be scaled to open the door-or rather, gate-to revive salmon populations up and down the Central Valley.

"No one had ever done this before with these conditions," said Dr. Dan Howes. Project Manager at the Irrigation Training and Research Center, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Ruth Goodfield of NOAA explained, "We must nurture the fish and do anything we can to help them. We can't control the weather but we can use this gate to make sure they are fat and happy as they continue their journey to the sea."

READ MORE ▶

about our innovative solution to salmon recovery.

Left: Willow Bend Preserve on the Sacramento River, Colusa County,

Right: A "floodplain fatty." Fish that feast on floodplains grow larger, stronger and have better chances of surviving the journey through the Sacramento San-Joaquin River Delta to the Pacific Ocean and back.



Breaking the Native Seed Bottleneck

Accelerating large-scale restoration from the ground up



Heritage Growers: Statewide Restoration Solutions





Rare Western monarch on narrow leaf milkweed. Heritage Growers is cultivating multiple ecotypes of milkweed and other native wildflower seed to increase breeding habitat and help monarchs survive their long migration.

There's no way around it: to restore native habitat and adapt to a changing climate, we're going to need native seeds. A whole lot of them.

River Partners is doubling our pace of restoration statewide this decade. Our new native seed venture Heritage Growers aims to ensure we won't run out of materials to plant.

From milkweed to California poppies to bunchgrasses, restoration-quality native seeds and plants are not widely available, especially those that are regionally-sourced and offered in large landscape-scale quantities.

"Native seeds and plants are needed if we are to restore California landscapes and reach the state's goal of conserving 30% of land and coastal waters by 2030," said California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot. "Expanding native seed diversity and availability through innovative ventures like this is a critical step

toward restoring native vegetation in the Central Valley and throughout California."

We aim to quickly expand the supply of native seeds and plants available and improve the success of restoration projects by making a greater variety of source-specific seeds and plugs available. From the ground up, we want each project to become self-sustaining in its region, which requires seeds of "known genetic origin," those collected from a specific location where they evolved and are best suited to thrive.

Heritage Growers' plants and seeds are adapted to local climates and soils, boosting their resistance to diseases and their availability as a food source for local wildlife. Expanding native seed diversity benefits the insects and pollinators that rely on specific plants, and in turn supports entire ecosystems that depend on them.

We are partnering with farmers experienced in large-scale agricultural

production to bring Heritage Growers' production to scale. "We are excited to share our expertise as farmers to help Heritage Growers succeed," shared Jim and Joe Wallace of Colusa, CA. "This venture isn't just great for restoration, it's great for farms and everyone in California that relies on healthy ecosystems to survive," added Jennifer Wallace Sanders, Director of Sustainability and Stewardship at Wallace Brothers.

All profits generated by Heritage Growers will be used to support River Partners' statewide efforts to restore a vibrant California.

READ MORE ▶

about our launch of Heritage Growers.





IN BRENNAN



Alamo River: Restoring Hope for Wildlife and People





Counting on Us: Alamo River restoration can revive a critical stop for migratory birds on the Pacific Flyway such as the Vermillion Flycatcher.

At the Imperial Wildlife area along the Alamo River near the Salton Sea, the baking wind whips up soil that resembles powdered ash. Dense stands of invasive tamarisk infest the riverbanks, breaking up the laser-straight rows of fields that put vegetables on our winter dinner tables.

At first glance, this far-south region of California might appear to have been abandoned by conservation, but this year, River Partners secured a \$1.8 million grant from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to revive cottonwood, mesquite, and willow forests along the Alamo River, complimenting current wetland restoration led by public agencies at the edge of the Salton Sea.

The region faces one of the state's most dire environmental catastrophes, as increasing salinity from the shrinking

sea causes fish kills and bird die-offs, as well as exposes Riverside and Imperial County residents to toxic dust storms from the dry lakebed.

With proven restoration techniques we used to transform fire-prone tamarisk forests on the Lower Colorado River into a cool, shaded refuge of native mesquite forests, River Partners aims to expand our work in the inland desert region of California where critical species are struggling to survive.

"When we put together the restoration plan, we included the longest list of focal species we've ever written," said River Partners Restoration Ecologist Emma Havstad. "It's a prized wildlife area we can't let go of."

Perfectly positioned on the Pacific Flyway, the Alamo River and Salton Sea provide a desert oasis critical for migratory and local birds including vermillion flycatchers, yellow-billed woodpeckers, and elf owls. "It's a birder's dream, or it once was," said Havstad.

Celeste Cantu, Chair of the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, shared, "This has been a tough year for water managers in the west, and the coming year does not look easier. Habitat restoration along the Alamo River offers a glimmer of hope for our riverways and for communities."

Alongside our partners, we hope this is just the beginning of our work to revive rivers on the brink in the deserts of California to make a difference for critical and often forgotten ecosystems and communities.

Funders and supporters of this project include the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Environmental Protection Agency, Imperial Irrigation District, and Farmworkers Institute for Education and Leadership Development.

READ MORE ▶

about our work in desert landscapes





Thank you

To all of our partners and supporters

COLLABORATIVES

Bank Swallow Working Group California Invasive Plant Council California Native Plant Society California Native Grasslands Association Central Valley Flood Protection Plan-Conservation Strategy Advisory Committee Central Valley Joint Venture

Central Valley Salmon Partnership East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition Floodplains Forward Coalition Greater Battle Creek Working Group 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 Diego Pollinator Alliance San Joaquin River Partnership San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program

Society for Ecological Restoration California Chapter Sonoran Joint Venture

Water Solutions Network Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo Working Group

Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition

RESEARCHERS

California State University, Chico California State University, Bakersfield California State University, Stanislaus Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Cramer Fish Sciences



Lawrence Livermore National Lab Public Policy Institute of California San Francisco Estuary Institute Santa Clara University Stanford University **UC Davis** UC Merced Washington State University

NON-GOVERNMENTAL

American Rivers Altacal Audubon Society Audubon California Butte Environmental Council California Indian Basketweavers' Association CalTrout California Waterfowl Association Colusa County Farm Bureau Coro Northern California David and Lucile Packard Foundation Downey Brand **Ducks Unlimited** Earth Discovery Institute Environmental Defense Fund **ESA Associates** FlowWest Grayson Community Center/United Community Foundation **Great Valley Seed** Hicks Law Kern County Farm Bureau Kern River Corridor Endowment Kern River Parkway Foundation **MBK Engineers** National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

"River Partners continues to be masterful at harnessing partnerships and finding the most important missing links for river restoration along the San Joaquin River. This is a massive undertaking, and River Partners has the amazing capacity to take it on. There is no other entity both doing this essential work and inspiring others to join them."

Natural Heritage Institute

- Kim Forrest, Refuge Manager, San Luis National Wildlife Refuge

Pacific Gas & Electric Point Blue Conservation Science Resources Law Group Sacramento County Farm Bureau Sacramento River Forum Sacramento State University Sacramento Valley Conservancy San Diego Audubon San Diego Natural History Museum San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust Sequoia Riverlands Trust SIG-NAL Sonoma Mountain Reserve Stanislaus Community Foundation Stanislaus County Farm Bureau The Nature Conservancy Talone Lake Conservancy **Trout Unlimited** Tuolumne River Trust Watershed Nursery Western Water Strategies

Northern California Water Association

INDIGENOUS TRIBES

Xerces Society

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

Youth Leadership Institute

FEDERAL AGENCIES

National Park Service NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service US Army Corps of Engineers US Bureau of Land Management US Bureau of Reclamation US Environmental Protection Agency US Fish & Wildlife Service **US Forest Service US Geological Survey USDA Natural Resources Conservation** Service

STATE AGENCIES

California Association of Resource Conservation Districts California Conservation Corps California Coastal Conservancy California Department of Fish and Wildlife · Restoration Leaders Committee · Fisheries Restoration Program

Peer Review Committee California Department of Parks and Recreation

California Department of Pesticide Regulation

California Department of Transportation California Department of Water Resources

California Environmental Protection Agency

California Natural Resources Agency California Wildlife Conservation Board Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

San Joaquin River Conservancy Water Resources Control Board

LOCAL AGENCIES

Lynn Chiapella Butte County RCD Cache Creek Conservancy City of Bakersfield Molson Coors City of Chula Vista City of Firebaugh City of Fresno City of Holtville City of Oakley Barbara Boyle City of San Diego

Colusa County Contra Costa RCD

Contra Costa Water District East Merced RCD

East Stanislaus RCD FIELD Institute Glenn County RCD

Grasslands Water District Greater Valley Conservation Corps Imperial Irrigation District

Lower San Joaquin Levee District

Madera County

Modesto Irrigation District Oakdale Irrigation District

Reclamation Districts: 108, 784, 2011, 2028, 2037, 2092, 2110, 2137, 2140

San Diego County Solano County RCD

Sweetwater Authority

Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency

Stanislaus County Sierra RCD

Sutter Buttes Flood Control Agency Tehama County RCD

Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority

Turlock Irrigation District Urban Corps of San Diego

West Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency

Yolo County RCD Yuba Water Agency

IMPACT INVESTORS

Bill Bartlett and Mary McNally Ken Grossman and Katie Gonser David and Lucile Packard Foundation

SUPPORTERS*

\$100,000+

The Joseph and Vera Long Foundation The Water Foundation

\$25,000-\$50,000

Anonymous (2) The Lyons Family The Volgenau Foundation

\$10,000 - \$24,999

Mary A. Crocker Trust Liz Hume and Jay Jacobs Elizabeth Schwerer and Kingston Duffie

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Allen Hackett

\$2,500-\$4,999

Justine Burt, The Climate Ride Carol and Monroe Sprague Tom and Anastacia Lando

\$1,000-\$2,499

Butte Creek Foundation Juan Cardenas Richard Edminster Charles and Nancy Goldman The Hacket Family in memory of Allen Hackett Joanne Karlton Dave and Sharon Koehler Julie Rentner and Chris Harrison Rebecca Westerfield

\$500-\$999

Jeff and Wendy Brown Dixie and John Hulley Alex Karolvi Dan and Dori Marshall Suellen Rowlison Irv and Nitsa Schiffman Robert Schisling Jeff Thomas and Tessa Van Der Meijden

\$250-\$499

Anonymous Germain Boivin Kathleen Fujimoto Terrel Hutton and Tom Hicks



The Forrest **Legacy Award**

Presented to Kim Forrest, San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex Manager

Guiding principles for River Partners are collaboration and partnership: the practice of open dialogue, and perseverance in the face of complexity and setbacks. The trust that we forge together with our partners enables us to take bold action and deliver lasting repair of our riverways.

San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex Manager Kim Forrest embodies that spirit of partnership. "Kim Forrest is a do-er," explains River Partners President Julie Rentner. "Kim's decades of conservation accomplishments in the San Joaquin Valley are the result of her deep commitment to getting the work done despite tremendous odds: lack of resources, lack of political alignment, drought, flood. Her approach has always been simultaneously visionary and grounded: listen, create a plan that feels relevant and reaches far, execute, and monitor so you can do it better next time. It is the approach that leads to action."

We are honored to create a new conservation leadership award that speaks to the unique and important approach Kim Forrest has modeled for the rest of us - taking big action despite the odds, trusting in partnerships, and learning from experience. The Forrest Legacy Award recognizes Kim's work and her leadership in ecological restoration which will echo for generations across the Central Valley.

Kim Forrest's leadership has helped restore wildlife habitat for critically threatened species such as the riparian brush rabbit, above, one of California's most endangered mammals.

\$100-\$249

Carol Anderson Mark Borges Margaret Burka Alison Berry Robert Croeni Bonnie Chapman Joe Countryman Kerry Clifford Larry Dacus Ramona Flynn George Folsom Rebecca Herring Reiner Daphne Hackett Andrea Joyce Angela Moskow Maryann McCrary Doug Maner Vicki Newlin Barry Nelson

Patricia and Zeb Puterbaugh

Anne Petit-Christ

The Spieker Family

Elaine and Eric Simmons Walt Schafer

Shelley Rink

Mike Roberts

Up to \$100

Pauli Ayres Paul Bucher Larry Best Margaret Crawford Dennis Cabrera Lydia Conley Joseph Cech Joyce England Maureen Fredrickson Kaylee Griffith Jeanne Hobar Angdrew Honig

Kurt Harvey Fe Howard and Monita Garcia Janet Kamian Jill Levy

Obie Leff Sharon Larson

Suzanne Markey Richard Paselk Judith Perlin

Doris Riggle

Claire Sallee Carl Sundquist

Connie Schmaljohann Steven Thompson

Lee Whitmer

Jennifer Welch

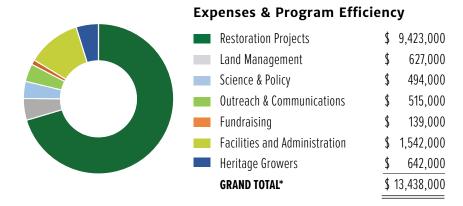
Charles Woods

In Kind Gifts

Mona and Charles Dagy Alan and Liz Jones

2022 Financials *July* 1, 2021 - *June* 30, 2022 (Unaudited)





*99% of our budget was directed to the local communities where we work

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL POSITION		Dollars in thousands		
ASSETS	FY2022	FY2021		
Cash and investments	\$	1,404	\$	2,755
Accounts receivable	\$	4,831	\$	3,471
Prepaid expenses	\$	594	\$	295
Inventory	\$	250	\$	330
Notes receivable	\$	129	\$	54
Fixed assets, net	\$	23,256	\$	16,656
Total Assets	\$	30,464	\$	23,561
LIABILITIES				
Accounts payable	\$	1,623	\$	526
Accrued liabilities	\$	539	\$	454
Unearned revenue	\$	1,207	\$	1,365
Notes payable, net	\$	7,846	\$	1,228
Total Liabilities	\$	11,215	\$	3,573
NET ASSETS				
Undesignated operating funds	\$	2,493	\$	3,792
Heritage Growers investment	\$	581	\$	-
Fixed operating assets	\$	1,428	\$	1,318
Board designated endowment	\$	169	\$	181
Property due to agencies	\$	14,578	\$	14,697
Total Net Assets	\$	19,249	\$	19,988
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$	30,464	\$	23,561

Funding Impact

Our growing network of philanthropic partners are helping scale up tangible climate, water, and habitat solutions that benefit communities across California.



"River Partners stands out to us because they empower local communities and catalyze the partnerships required to deliver restoration work on the ground. Their projects shape big-picture water and climate solutions that are being brought to scale across California. We are impressed with their results-driven approach."

- Jay Jacobs and Liz Hume



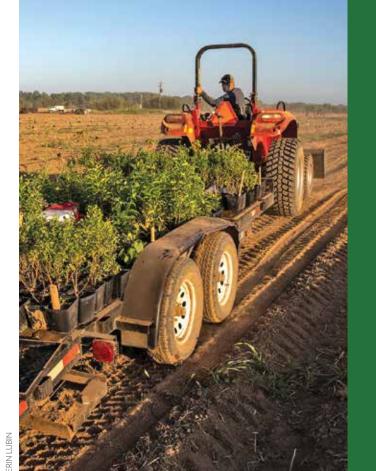
"We initially approached River Partners about making an estate gift, and then realized we could make a low-interest loan right now. We loaned money from a self-directed IRA. That way, our retirement account gets replenished, plus interest, and if we choose to, we can use the same funds to support this important work — over and over again."

- Bill Bartlett and Mary McNally



"We came to the conclusion that one of the most impactful carbon sequestration grants we can make, offering the most climate benefit per dollar invested, are investments in riparian forest restoration."

- Milton Long, Joseph and Vera Long Foundation



Join Us

We invite you to invest in some of the most innovative and game-changing conservation efforts in the West. Your support goes directly to doubling our pace of restoration to permanently protect our freshwater ecosystems for future generations.

MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION

We match every private dollar with \$10 in public investment in on-the-ground restoration and support for local communities. Every gift builds our capacity to continue our 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 imperiled wildlife, expand freshwater supplies, support productive farmland, and build strong, resilient

FINANCE OUR IMPACT

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







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^{*}July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022



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Creating wildlife habitat for the benefit of people and the environment.