



RIVER PARTNERS

# JOURNAL

Summer 2007

Volume 3, Issue 3

River Partners Canoe Tour 2007.  
Photo by Julie Pokrandt.

## River Partners Staff Receive James Irvine Leadership Award

*John Carlon and Tom Griggs are honored for habitat restoration and flood control projects.*

River Partners proudly announces that its president, John Carlon, and its senior restoration ecologist, Tom Griggs, have won the 2007 James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award. Carlon and four other award winners were personally congratulated by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and Irvine Foundation President, James Canales, during a ceremony on July 16.

Out of the six leadership winners, Carlon and Griggs are the only recipients from the Central Valley. They have been honored by the James Irvine Foundation for successfully advancing the use of ecological restoration for conserving wildlife and enhancing flood control along the major rivers of California. Together they and River Partners have restored

**Continued on Page 5**

## In This Issue



Pelican on the Sacramento River. Photo by Geoff Fricker.

## Plein Air Painters Celebrate New State Park Land

See article on Page 3



Co-owners of the Avenue 9 Gallery, Dolores Mitchell (seated) and Maria Phillips at the California State Park expansion ceremony, hosted by River Partners at the Irvine Finch Sacramento River access area.  
Photo by Geoff Fricker.

<b>A Flight Over the River: Bald Eagles Along the Sacramento</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>River Partners Staff Receive James Irvine Leadership Award</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>River Partners Project Updates: Bidwell Ranch and Turtle Bay</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Special Matching Grant Opportunity: Annie B's</b>	<b>7</b>

580 Vallombrosa Ave.

Chico, CA 95926

Ph: 530.894.5401

Fx: 530.894.2970

Modesto, CA 95354

Ph: 209.521.1700

Fx: 209.521.7327

info@riverpartners.org • www.riverpartners.org

The Journal is published quarterly by River Partners, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public benefit corporation. Our mission is to create wildlife habitat for the benefit of people and the environment.

## Board of Directors

Kathy Barrett, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Butte Co.  
John Carlon, Sierra Cascade Blueberry Farm  
Bernard Flynn, Shasta View Farms  
Ron Ginochio, BTMU Capital Corporation  
Ken Grossman, Sierra Nevada Brewing Company  
Allen Hackett, Hackett Farming  
Mark Kimmelschue, Legacy Associates  
Suellen Rowilson, R.N.  
Irving Schiffman, CSUC, Political Science  
Monroe Sprague, M.D.

## Staff

### Chico Staff:

John Carlon, President  
Dan Efseaff, Restoration Ecologist  
Tad Alexander, Chief Operations Officer  
Julie Pokrandt, Development Director  
Mona Cross, Executive Assistant  
Deborah McLaughlin, Controller  
Jessica Bourne, Financial Specialist  
Tom Griggs, Ph.D., Senior Restoration Ecologist  
Helen Swagerty, Senior Restoration Ecologist  
Christiana Conser, Restoration Biologist  
Michael Rogner, Restoration Biologist  
Nicholas Pacini, Restoration Biologist  
Colleen Martin, Restoration Biologist  
Jessica Gibbs, Restoration Resource Specialist  
Rod Steinhauer, Restoration Field Manager  
Joe Green, Operations & Logistics Manager  
Daniel Zepeda, Assistant Field Manager  
Isaac Fairbanks, Field Technician  
Eligio Hernandez, Senior Field Technician  
Gerardo Sandoval, Field Technician  
Anthony Gardiner, Field Technician  
Francisco Jaurgui, Field Technician  
Jose Granados, Field Technician  
Sreng Ung, Field Technician  
Rafael Granado, Field Technician  
Matthew Morgan, Field Technician  
Dennis Baugher, Field Technician

### Modesto Staff:

David Neubert, San Joaquin Regional Director  
Stacy Small, Ph.D., Restoration Ecologist  
Lauren Singleton, Restoration Biologist  
Stephen Sheppard, Restoration Field Manager  
Chris Robbins, Assistant Field Manager  
Salvador Barragan, Field Technician  
Abelino Valdovinos-Rubio, Field Technician  
Feliciano Degante, Field Technician

Newsletter design & layout: Temptra Board

# Message from the Board Chair



Board Chair *Irving Schiffman*

The mission of River Partners is to create wildlife habitat for the benefit of people and the environment. The creation of such habitat requires that we make use of a variety of plantings, including trees, bushes, vines and native grasses. Typically, we use a seed mixture of four native grasses - purple needlegrass (our California state grass), blue wild rye, meadow barley, creeping wild rye - and basket sedge, which is planted by plugs.

The planting of native grasses assists us in fulfilling our restoration mission in a number of ways. They provide extremely valuable habitat for ground-nesting birds and for the mammals

that prefer open grassland to woody cover. They are perennial and long-lived with some native grasses known to survive for hundreds of years. They have a low roughness coefficient which allows flood waters to move through the floodplain with very little resistance. They are low maintenance, requiring only simple mowing or grazing and, like most of our plantings, contribute to the sequestration of atmospheric carbon. Native grasses also make excellent filter strips, reducing the amounts of sediment and non-source point pollutants entering the waterway.

Perhaps the most important reason for planting native grasses is the fact that they out-compete noxious and exotic weeds for dominance in the restoration area. The exotic weeds not only crowd out indigenous species but serve as an important food source for the mice and voles which, after the annuals die off, start nibbling on our newly planted trees and bushes; the native grasses are far less attractive to their tastes.

The native grasses start growing in November and continue their growth through the spring at which time their taller height gives them an advantage over the annual weeds in the competition for the sun. Moreover, their deep roots suck up water from deep in the soil which helps to keep them alive during the dry and hot summer while the annuals expire. The deep-rooted yellow star-thistle, however, is also able to tap late season soil water and is a strong weedy competitor to the native grasses.

A final reason to prefer native grasses over annuals: not only are they beautiful, but you can walk through most of them without having their seeds cling to your socks.



INVASIVE WEEDS: (clockwise from top) Queen Anne's lace, Star thistle, and Milk thistle. Photos by Matthew Morgan.

*Irving Schiffman*

# River Partners and CA State Parks Celebrate Irvine Finch Site Expansion



(above) View of Highway 32 bridge from Irvine Finch access area. Photo by Matthew Morgan. (left) Director of California State Parks Ruth Coleman speaks at the ceremony. (below) Supporters and partners gather to view the work of plein air painters, enjoy refreshments, and listen to speakers. Photos by Geoff Fricker.

On Wednesday, June 27, River Partners officially donated 20 acres of land to California State Parks. Approximately 76 community members, plein air artists, and local officials attended the Expansion Ceremony held at the Irvine Finch River Access Site, where Ruth Coleman, Director of State Parks, accepted the land deed from John Carlon, River Partners' President.

Part of the Bidwell-Sacramento State Park, the access area at Irvine Finch is crucial for safety officers and popular with river guides, boaters, anglers, and tubers. "With 900 feet of new river frontage property, this expansion at Irvine Finch improves public access to the Sacramento River," stated Carlon during the ceremony. He recalled that, from the beginning, River Partners' goal was to make this property an asset for Glenn County.

In 2002 River Partners initiated the acquisition of a 20 acre parcel, also known as "Gianella Landing," with the support from the Glenn County Board of Supervisors. It purchased Gianella Landing with a grant from the Wildlife

Conservation Board in 2003. By June 2007, it fully transferred the land to State Parks.

"It fits in so beautifully to the vision we have of the valley," said Ruth Coleman. According to Coleman, State Parks is committed to meeting the needs of the Valley's growing population and the desire for public land around rivers. It recognizes that communities are asking for family-friendly facilities, so that various age groups may also enjoy the outdoors.

In addition to talks from Coleman, Carlon, and Dave Means of the Wildlife Conservation Board, attendees previewed the art exhibit, "A Picture Safari: In Chico's Backyard," which featured images of the Sacramento River. Avenue 9 Gallery and the plein air artists from its picture safari graciously set-up their work to help celebrate the river as a community treasure. This river-inspired exhibit

officially opened at Avenue 9 Gallery, 180 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Ave in Chico, on Friday, June 29<sup>th</sup>.

River Partners would like to thank everyone who supported this land transfer and the expansion ceremony: Avenue 9 Gallery artists and Maria Phillips, State Park's Northern Buttes District, Geoff Fricker, photographer, the Glenn County Sheriff's and Fire Departments, Hamilton City Community Services Department, Staff of the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park, Dan Efseaff and North Rim Adventure Sports, representatives from the Glenn County Board of Supervisors, and River Partners' members and Board of Directors.



# A Flight Over the River

By Dan Efsseff,  
Restoration  
Ecologist and  
Professional  
Kayaker



Bald eagle over the Sacramento River. Photo by Bill Adams.

Paddling down the Sacramento River, downstream of Red Bluff our group of 10 paddlers spontaneously drop our paddles and gaze upward at a large majestic bird swooping past us.

Finally, someone sputters, “Bald eagle!” and then looks around somewhat embarrassed for speaking the obvious—it is most certainly a bald eagle. There’s no mistaking it for anything else.

The large size (second only to the California condor), the hooked beak, and yes, the white head and tail framing its proud black-brown body make it clear that it’s a bald eagle—even if your previous sightings of bald eagles have only been on currency.

in California and hunted under a 50-cent bounty in Alaska. One hundred thousand eagles were killed in Alaska alone between 1917 and 1950.

The Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940 somewhat lessened the impacts, but eagle populations continued to decline as eagle habitat continued to be cleared and converted to agriculture and housing. The small remaining populations suffered catastrophic reproductive failure due to eggshell thinning by the pesticide DDT.

DDT’s insecticidal properties were discovered prior to World War II, and its use rapidly expanded. DDT controlled anything

For most of the group, they are quite surprised to find out that several nesting pairs of eagles are found along the Sacramento River.

The local trend parallels the amazing rebound of our National Symbol and provides a compelling conservation success story.

In June 2007, the federal government removed the bald eagle from the Endangered Species list.

## Biology and life history

As top of the food chain, bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), have several adaptations that equip these predators well. Their excellent eyesight and the frontal setting of their eyes gives them excellent binocular vision as well as peripheral vision. Their eyes are nearly the same size as humans but they can see 4-7 times better, which allows them to spy even tiny prey from lofty perches. The eagle has a strong, hooked beak to tear food, and powerful talons to capture prey.

Bald eagles prefer fish and can swoop down and snatch them from the water’s surface. Another successful technique is to wade in the shallow water catching fish with the bill. Bald eagles also have no problem scavenging, and along the Sacramento River post-spawning salmon carcasses provide many good eagle meals.

## The long flight from the edge of extinction

The Bald eagle was officially declared the National Emblem of the United States in 1782, even before the constitution was adopted. Estimates put the bald eagle population in the continental US at the time at around half a million nesting pairs.

As the country expanded, populations declined as people cleared land and displaced the eagles. Bald eagles were often intentionally killed due to the mistaken belief that it was a dangerous predator, depriving people of fish, game, and livestock. This persisted even into modern times with eagles shot from airplanes

from malaria-infected mosquitoes to potato bugs. But even well after use, DDT persisted in the environment. Although levels could be extremely low in the water or soil, every time DDT came in contact with living things, it would accumulate in tissue (bioaccumulation). For example, algae would have higher DDT levels than water, invertebrates would have higher levels than the algae that they feed on, fish would have higher levels than the invertebrates, and so on.

Sitting on top of the food chain, even above the top aquatic predators, bald eagles bioaccumulated massive concentrations of DDT. While not enough to cause mortality to adult birds, the concentrations would cause eagles egg shells to become thin and brittle, cracking under the weight of the adult birds. The collapse of eagle populations from habitat destruction and decreasing prospects for offspring due to pesticide exposure, meant quite clearly that bald eagles could very well disappear from the lower 48 states.

**Continued on next page.**

# River Partners Staff Receive James Irvine Leadership Award

*John Carlon's and Tom Griggs' work along rivers is seen as a solution to major challenges in California.*

Continued from page 1.

over 6,000 acres in the Central Valley and designed innovative projects which improve flood control while bringing back critical wildlife habitat.

"It is incredibly rewarding that John Carlon and Tom Griggs – two pioneers in the field of scientific ecological restoration – have been honored for their contributions to the Central Valley and the State of California," said Irv Schiffman, River Partners Board Chair. "This award motivates all of us at River Partners to continue



River Partners President John Carlon and Senior Restoration Ecologist Tom Griggs.

with our mission to restore California's riparian areas to benefit wildlife and our growing population."

According to the James Irvine Foundation, "The goal of the awards program, now in its second year, is to recognize and celebrate individuals who have demonstrated ingenuity, dedication, and

collaboration — and to encourage other leaders to adopt similar approaches and solutions."

Carlon and Griggs have made riparian restoration relevant to addressing the failing levee crisis in California. They have involved River Partners in projects where levee breaches and removals are used in combination with riparian restoration as

**"The James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award recipients are model citizens for their exceptional work to improve their communities and California."**

**- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger**

mechanisms for flood control and flood water attenuation.

Shown by River Partners' success, bringing back river side forests presents a cost-effective and environmentally valuable alternative to traditional civil engineering approaches to flood control in the Central Valley.

For their work demonstrating a new and beneficial approach to promote land restoration and achieve flood protection, John Carlon and Tom Griggs are recipients of a 2007 James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award.



River Partners President John Carlon accepts the award from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and James Irvine Foundation President James Canales. Photos courtesy of James Irvine Foundation.

## A Flight Over the River

Continued from previous page.

In 1963, a nesting survey revealed only 417 nesting pairs in the lower 48 states. A 1973 indicated only 18 nesting pair in the entire state of California. Our national symbol was well on the way to extinction.

In 1967, the fortunes of the bald eagle changed, when it was placed on the first national endangered species list in 1967. In 1972, Congress banned most outdoor uses of DDT. Since the listing under the Endangered Species Act, the bald eagle has steadily increased in numbers.

Eagle populations have rebounded in response to the banning of DDT, protection from killing, habitat protection and restoration, artificial incubation of eggs, fostering of chicks, and

reintroduction of eaglets. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service changed the bald eagle's status from endangered to threatened in 1995 and removed it from the threatened list on June 29, 2007.

In addition to our national symbol, the bald eagle has become a world symbol of conservation success. Today, the bald eagle population in the lower 48 states is 11,040 pairs and eagles are found in every state.

Although considerable threats remain to bald eagles from the conversion of riparian forests to agricultural and urban uses, local restoration efforts will help ensure that bald eagles will continue to fly over the Central Valley and dazzle those that venture out to the river.

# River Partners Project Updates

## Bidwell Ranch Mitigation Bank

The draft wetland delineation report for the Bidwell Ranch project, conducted by Tehama Environmental Services, is completed and has been made available for review to Citizen Work Group members and other involved parties. When finalized, it will be submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for approval. In the preliminary findings for the 750-acre site, the report identified more than 60 acres of wetland features, including ephemeral creeks, vernal swales and pools, clay flats, and complexes of mounds and pools.

River Partners is currently working on a Site Inventory for Bidwell Ranch, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of summer 2007. The Site Inventory will include:

- The purpose of the project
- Land-use history
- Existing conditions on the site, including physical characteristics and biological resources
- Examination of the potential for occurrence of special-status species on or in the vicinity of the site

California State University Chico's Archaeological Research Program has been hired to conduct a cultural resources re-inventory of the project site. The inventory will update a 1994 cultural inventory. Onsite work is anticipated to be completed by August.

The re-inventory will include:

- A historical records search
- Native American consultation
- Field survey results
- Management recommendations

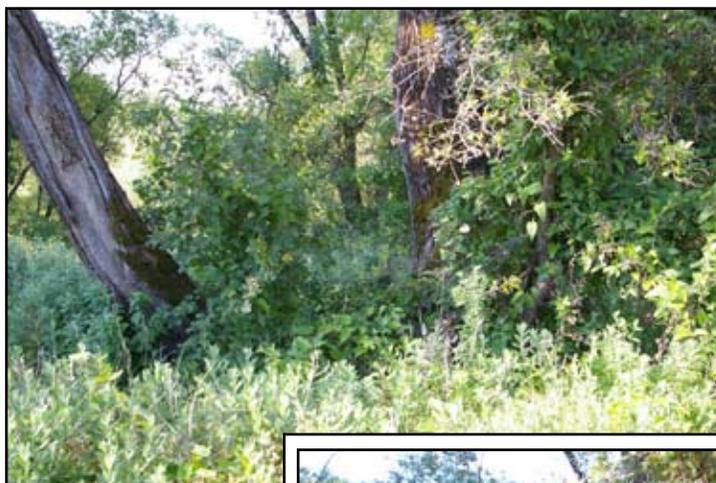
River Partners conducted two site tours on the Bidwell Ranch Mitigation Bank Project Site on Wednesday, April 18, 2007. The site tours allowed members of the Citizen Work Group to become acquainted with the project site and

potential issues. A summary of the Site Tour for the Citizen Work Group meeting is now available online.

For more information, please visit: [www.riverpartners.org/where-we-work/bidwell/bidwell.html](http://www.riverpartners.org/where-we-work/bidwell/bidwell.html)

## Goats at Turtle Bay Exploration Park

River Partners is working with Turtle Bay Exploration Park to replant the dense, weedy understory within the 80-foot tall cottonwood forest, east of the museum. To tackle this weedy infestation in an environmentally friendly way, River Partners contracted a professional herder to bring in 800 goats to



*(above) Happy goats at work clearing invasive plants at Turtle Bay Exploration Park. (left and below) Before and after clearing by goats shows the effectiveness of this biological method of controlling weeds.*

clear the Himalayan blackberry and other invasive plants from the area. It has taken six weeks, but the goats have done a good job clearing the dense underbrush and exposing any potential tractor hazards.



# Your Membership Makes a Difference for our Environment

**I remember when...** How many times have you said this to your children, family or friends? As the natural landscape continues to change we find ourselves saying *I remember when...* more often.

We are fortunate to live in one of the most beautiful places on earth. The Central Valley's Great Rivers – the Sacramento, San Joaquin, Feather, Stanislaus, Merced, Tuolumne – and adjoining forests are the setting for many of our family activities: biking, fishing, hunting, birding, hiking, boating, picnicking and camping.

Demands on our natural landscape and rivers are multiplying. We have already lost at least 90% of California's river side forests and grasslands.

That is why we are now asking citizens like you to help us carry out our mission. **Your membership contribution will support our work to restore and preserve those special places that contribute so much to the quality of life in our communities.**

**With your gift, River Partners will...**

- Plant filter strips of vegetation that keep our rivers clean
- Provide valuable habitat for wildlife
- Improve flood control by stabilizing river banks
- Plant THOUSANDS of trees, shrubs, and grasses, all of which sequester carbon dioxide, reducing the impacts of greenhouse gases

**Between August 15 and October 11, your membership gift will earn bonus funds for River Partners.**

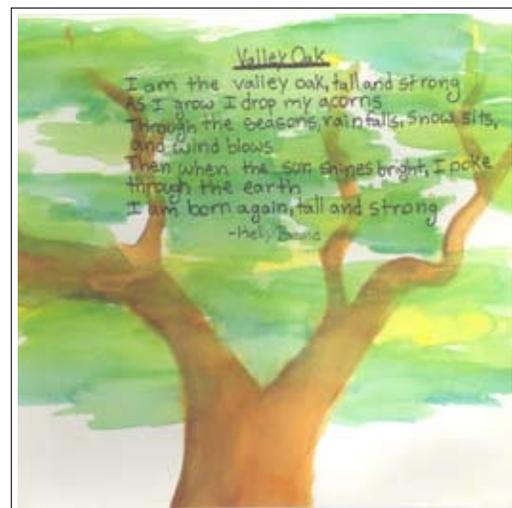
Become a River Partners Member from August 15 through October 11 and your contribution will earn us challenge grant funds from the North Valley Community Foundation (NVCF) through its Annie B's Community Drive.

North Valley Community Foundation has committed to granting \$100,000 to local nonprofits. In order to receive a portion of these funds RIVER PARTNERS needs to raise money from our friends from August 15 through October 11.

**These donations must be sent to NVCF earmarked for RIVER PARTNERS. Checks must be written to "Annie B's/ RIVER PARTNERS."**



Tree planting. By Kelsey (3rd grade)



Valley Oak. By Kelly (6th Grade)

## Become a River Partner or Make a Special Gift

**Annie B's Community Drive: Donate from August 15 through October 11, 2007 ONLY:**

- Online at: [www.nvcf.org](http://www.nvcf.org) through the Annie B's link., or,
- Send checks made out to: "Annie B's/ River Partners" c/o NVCF, 3120 Cohasset Rd. Suite 8, Chico, CA 95973

**Other ways to support River Partners, especially After October 11, 2007:**

- Adopt-a-Tree • Make a Tribute or Memorial Donation • Donate on-line: visit [www.RiverPartners.org](http://www.RiverPartners.org), click on "support us." Or send checks, made out to River Partners, to: River Partners, attn: Development, 580 Vallombrosa Ave. Chico, CA 95926

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Business Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 VISA/MC # \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_



*Return Service Requested*

## Feather River Canoe Float!

**August 25, 2007** – River Partners' Feather River Canoe Float! Due to the overwhelming response to our last two tours on the Sacramento, we're branching out to explore the Feather River.

The public is invited to join River Partners for a 5-mile float through Sutter County, along the lower part of the 170-mile long Feather River. Guided by River Partners' ecologists, we'll enjoy bird watching during the start of the Fall migration and see the results of our reforestation work during the tour. This is a free community event, but reservations are required.

**What to bring:** your own boat and paddles, life vests, and relevant equipment, snacks, water, binoculars, sunscreen, and good shoes.

**Where to meet:** Boyd's Pump boat launch, south of Yuba City, at 8 am. Directions will be posted at our website, [www.RiverPartners.org](http://www.RiverPartners.org).

**For reservations,** call (530) 894-5401 ext. 22.



*Dr. Tom Griggs discusses the natural river process of erosion and deposition during a stop at a sand bar along the Sacramento River. Photo by Matthew Morgan.*



## Sacramento Canoers and Kayakers Treated to Bird Show

On Saturday, June 23, 2007, River Partners and 40 community members launched their canoes and kayaks at Butte City and toured the Sacramento River. The group saw numerous species of birds, including cliff and bank swallows, ospreys, killdeer (including a live nest), great blue herons, and various egrets.

*Kayakers and canoers leaving prime bank swallow habitat after viewing bank swallows flying to and from their nests. Photo by Matthew Morgan.*