

BOARD MEETING REMINDER

The **June 3, 2020** Board meeting will begin at **10:00 a.m.**



SAN JOAQUIN RIVER CONSERVANCY

The San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board
will hold a regular meeting on
Wednesday, June 3, 2020,
commencing at 10:00 a.m.

Consistent with Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20, the public and Board members will participate in the meeting via Zoom or teleconference. Public comment will be accepted per the agenda.

This Board meeting will be available via Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ca-water-gov.zoom.us/j/95191115860?pwd=NXIZTUg4NjB3VDA5Sjh5dVRmTkNNUT09>

Password: 992683

You can also join by phone though you will not be able to see the PowerPoint.

Join by Telephone

Dial:

USA (216)706-7075

USA (866)390-1828 (US Toll Free)

Conference code: 234796



5469 E. Olive Avenue
Fresno, California 93727
Telephone (559) 253-7324
Fax (559) 456-3194
www.sjrc.ca.gov

GOVERNING BOARD

Mike Karbassi, *Chairperson*
Councilmember, City of Fresno

Steve Brandau, *Vice-Chairperson*
Supervisor
Fresno County Board of Supervisors

Brett Frazier,
Supervisor
Madera County Board of Supervisors

Santos Garcia
Councilmember, City of Madera

Kacey Auston, *Director*
Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control
District

Carl Janzen, *Director*
Madera Irrigation District

Julie Vance, *Regional Manager*
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Kent Gresham, *Sector Superintendent*
Department of Parks and Recreation

John Donnelly, *Executive Director*
Wildlife Conservation Board

Bryan Cash, *Assistant Secretary*
Natural Resources Agency

Jennifer Lucchesi, *Executive Officer*
State Lands Commission

Matt Almy, *Program Budget Manager*
Department of Finance

Bryn Forhan
Paul Gibson
Vacant
Citizen Representatives

John M. Shelton, *Executive Officer*

MEETING AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A. ROLL CALL

B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Items identified after preparation of the agenda for which there is a need to take immediate action. Two-thirds vote required for consideration. (Gov. Code §54954.2(b)(2))

C. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Any Board member who has a potential conflict of interest may identify the item and recuse themselves from discussion and voting on the matter. (FPPC §97105)

D. PUBLIC COMMENT & BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Ten minutes of the meeting are reserved for members of the public who wish to address the Conservancy Board on items of interest that are not on the agenda and are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Conservancy. Speakers shall be limited to three minutes. The Board is prohibited by law from taking any action on matters discussed that are not on the agenda; no adverse conclusions should be drawn if the Board does not respond to the public comment at this time.

E. CONSENT CALENDAR

All items listed below will be approved in one motion unless removed from the Consent Calendar for discussion:

E-1 ACTION ITEM: Approve Minutes of May 6, 2020

F. REGULAR SESSION ITEMS

F-1 ACTION ITEM: Create Ad Hoc Board Committee to Develop Recommendations Regarding Land Acquisitions

G. ADMINISTRATIVE AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Information Items. No action of the Board is recommended.

G-1 Organizations' Reports: If time allows, the following oral reports will be provided for informational purposes only, and may be accompanied by written reports in the Board packet.

G-1a. San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust

G-1b. RiverTree Volunteers

G-1c. Other Organizations (please contact the Conservancy if you wish to Report on your Organization – info@sjrc.ca.gov)

G-2 Deputy Attorney General Report

G-3 Executive Officer Report

G-4 Board Members' Reports and Comments

H. CLOSED SESSION

Before convening in closed session, members of the public will be provided the opportunity to comment on Executive Session agenda items.

H-1 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL— EXISTING LITIGATION

Subdivision (a) of Government Code Section 54956.9.

San Joaquin River Access Corporation v. San Joaquin River Conservancy and specified Board members, Superior Court of California, County of Fresno Case #19CECG01138

H-2 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL— ANTICIPATED LITIGATION

Initiation of litigation pursuant to subdivision (c) of Government Code Section 54956.9:

One potential case

I. NOTICE OF ADVISORY AND BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS, OTHER PUBLIC MEETINGS RELATED TO CONSERVANCY MATTERS

None.

J. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATE

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, August 5, 2020, location to be determined.

K. ADJOURN

Board meeting notices, agendas, staff reports, and approved minutes are posted on the Conservancy's website, www.sjrc.ca.gov. For further information or if you need reasonable accommodation due to a disability, please contact the Conservancy at (559) 253-7324.



250.20

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Gavin Newsom, Governor

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2020
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER CONSERVANCY

5469 E. Olive Avenue
Fresno, California 93727
Telephone (559) 253-7324
Fax (559) 456-3194
www.sjrc.ca.gov

GOVERNING BOARD

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State Lands Commission

Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager
Department of Finance

Bryn Forhan
Paul Gibson
Vacant
Citizen Representatives

John M. Shelton
Executive Officer

Board Meeting Location:

Consistent with Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20, the public and Board members participated in a meeting via Zoom and teleconference. Public comment was accepted per the agenda.

MEETING AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Karbassi called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.

A. ROLL CALL

Name	Present	Telecon- ference	Absent	Late
Mr. Karbassi	X			
Mr. Brandau	X			
Mr. Frazier	X			
Mr. Garcia	X			
Ms. Auston	X			
Mr. Janzen	X			
Ms. Vance	X			
Mr. Gresham	X			
Mr. Donnelly	X			
Mr. Cash	X			
Ms. Lucchesi	X			
Mr. Almy			X	
Ms. Forhan	X			
Mr. Gibson	x			

Ms. Gavina confirmed a quorum was present.

Legal Counsel Present: David Pai, Deputy Attorney General
Deborah Halberstadt, Deputy Attorney General

Staff Present: John Shelton, Executive Officer
Rebecca Raus, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Vanessa Gavina, Staff Services Analyst
Heidi West, Program Manager, San Joaquin River Conservancy
Projects, Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)

B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Items identified after preparation of the agenda for which there is a need to take immediate action. Two-thirds vote required for consideration. (Gov. Code §54954.2(b)(2))

There were no additions to the Agenda.

C. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Any Board member who has a potential conflict of interest may identify the item and recuse themselves from discussion and voting on the matter. (FPPC §97105)

There were no potential conflicts of interest.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT & BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Ten minutes of the meeting are reserved for members of the public who wish to address the Conservancy Board on items of interest that are not on the agenda and are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Conservancy. Speakers shall be limited to three minutes. The Board is prohibited by law from taking any action on matters discussed that are not on the agenda; no adverse conclusions should be drawn if the Board does not respond to the public comment at this time.

There were no public comments.

E. CONSENT CALENDAR

All items listed below will be approved in one motion unless removed from the Consent Calendar for discussion:

E-1 ACTION ITEM: Approve Minutes of March 4, 2020

Mr. Frazier moved to approve the Consent Calendar; the motion was seconded by Ms. Forhan. The motion passed as follows:

Roll Call Vote:

Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Karbassi	X		
Mr. Brandau	X		
Mr. Frazier	X		
Mr. Garcia	X		
Ms. Auston	X		
Mr. Janzen	X		
Ms. Vance	X		
Mr. Gresham	X		
Mr. Donnelly	X		
Mr. Cash	X		
Ms. Lucchesi	X		
Ms. Forhan	X		
Mr. Gibson	X		

F. REGULAR SESSION ITEMS

F-1 ACTION ITEM: Authorize Bond Funds to Augment the Sycamore Island Fishing Pond Enhancement Project Construction Budget, Department of Water Resources

Staff Recommendation: It is recommended the Board approve an augmentation of \$200,000 in Prop 12 and Prop 40 bond funds for an existing project to implement the Sycamore Island Fishing Pond Enhancement Project. The augmentation would bring the total project grant to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to \$2,217,058.79 to complete construction. Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) authorization would be requested at their May 20, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Shelton stated the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has been working on several phases of a fishing pond enhancement project. Mainly, this will consist of constructing a fishing pier that is ADA compliant and a restroom facility. They have completed the process of getting permits and doing final designs. During their bid process, bids came in higher than they expected. Between the Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), and DWR, we were able to limit the funding augmentation requests to \$200,000. DWR is able to cover some of the additional costs. Mr. Shelton also mentioned that there was a typo in the board item, as the total project grant was indicated at \$2,217,058.79; however, the actual cost is \$1,606,627 total ground amount. They are requesting \$200,000 more to carry the project out. DWR has delivered well in the past, and Mr. Shelton feels that once Sycamore Island is reopened, the enhancement will be a very good asset to the Parkway. The Conservancy is recommending approval of the extra \$200,000. WCB will have to approve this, as well and it will be on their agenda for their Board Meeting later this month. Mr. Shelton mentioned that if the Board does not feel it is a worthwhile project, it can be pulled from WCB's agenda. However, we would like to move forward with this project in order to take advantage of all the permitting and final design that has been accomplished.

Mr. Donnelly asked to clarify the total grant.

Upon inquiry from Mr. Donnelly, Ms. Raus report that the \$ 2.2 million was the total amount of the entire project and was a typo, and the actual amount of the grant if approved by the Board would be \$1,806, 627.

Mr. Janzen moved to approve the action item; the motion was seconded by Ms. Forhan. The motion passed as follows:

Roll Call Vote:

Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Karbassi	X		
Mr. Brandau	X		
Mr. Frazier	X		
Mr. Garcia	X		
Ms. Auston	X		
Mr. Janzen	X		
Ms. Vance	X		
Mr. Gresham	X		
Mr. Donnelly	X		
Mr. Cash	X		
Ms. Lucchesi	X		
Ms. Forhan	X		
Mr. Gibson	X		

G. ADMINISTRATIVE AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Information Items. No action of the Board is recommended.

G-1 Organizations' Reports: If time allows, the following oral reports will be provided for informational purposes only and may be accompanied by written reports in the Board packet.

G-1a. San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust

Ms. Sharon Weaver, Executive Director of the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust (Parkway Trust), shared a video they put together for their annual report that featured some of their highlights this year. The video showcased projects like the Spano Habitat Enhancement Projects; education programs, such as the outdoor enrichment program for preschool aged youth; and recreation through nature hikes and river tours. Ms. Weaver gave an update stating that they are actively underway on their River Center improvements project, and a solar power system is currently being installed. They will be working on the picnic shelter soon. Part of the picnic shelter components have been delivered, and they are still working on construction aspects before it can be put in place. Also, during one of their staff meetings the previous week, the project team was out in the field at Spano River Ranch to analyze the soil for the next phase of habitat

enhancement on that property. She said they have been able to hold onto their staff in the midst of the shelter in place order, and they are hoping to continue forward without losing any of their people.

G-1b. RiverTree Volunteers.

Mr. Shelton spoke on behalf of Mr. Richard Sloan, who was not present at the meeting. Mr. Shelton mentioned that one the core issues for RiverTree is cleaning up homeless encampments. They have had several cleanups and have been careful to limit the amount of people they have had out by putting them in small groups in which they are able to socially distance. Volunteers did work at River Vista, the Liddell property, and Riverbottom Park. They had a big cleanup around the River West properties near Highway 41 and on into Wildwood Native Park. Mr. Sloan found hazardous materials on two different occasions. The material was dumped onto the County of Madera's Cobb Ranch area. Boardmember Frazier's Chief of Staff was able to get a hold of the Madera County Hazardous Materials Specialist to get it cleaned up. RiverTree was also involved in the removal of used oil that was dumped in small containers on the Fresno County side. Additionally, on a separate cleanup, RiverTree Volunteers removed all the fish/bird netting over at the Liddell property. They have been able to donate some of the netting to the Perez's at Bluff Pointe Golf Course. Caglia Waste Facility offered to take the recyclable waste.

G-1c. San Joaquin River Socials

Ms. Jessica Vaughn, founder of the group, spoke a briefly about the mission of the group. She founded this group in response to the recent Milburn shooting that resulted in a murder. Many community members came together to discuss solutions to help monitor the Milburn overlook area and deter any questionable activity. She mentioned their first meeting was a success and was attended by Mr. Karbassi, along with other members of the community. The second meeting was postponed due to COVID-19, but another meeting might take place as soon as the Governor lifts restrictions.

G-2 Deputy Attorney General Report

Ms. Deborah Halberstadt stated that she has no updates from the Department of Justice at this time.

G-3 Executive Officer Report

Mr. Shelton mentioned he would like to report on 1 to 2 project complexes at each meeting going forward. As most of our projects have multiple parts to them, covering a project complex will put individual projects into context. For this report, he focused on Ball Ranch, Ledger Island, and the Willow Unit. He spoke about work with Tesoro Viejo. The McCaffrey and Lyle's Diversified have been working on a large community development in Madera County. They own property that is adjacent to Ledger Island and have a corridor of land that goes along Peck's Winery. This corridor of property connects Friant Avenue in Fresno County over to the River, and since they also own property on the Madera side, allows for a connection between Fresno and Madera Counties by using our bridge between Ball Ranch and Ledger Island. This connection would use the Conservancy's

planned trail system. In order to do this, they are going to go across State land's Commission (SLC) owned land. We are working with them while they are applying for a lease with SLC for the use of these lands. SLC will be the CEQA lead and Tesoro Viejo has hired a consultants to complete the work. We hope to achieve a CEQA document to be able to replace or repair the bridge. The CEQA document will facilitate the Conservancy's efforts to extend the Eaton trail through Ball Ranch to Ledger Island. We should be able to work with the Tesoro Viejo Conservancy to help us operate the area so that it can be officially opened for public use. In addition, we have had discussions with the Parkway Trust regarding opening it up as an unimproved area in the meantime, but it got hindered by COVID-19 response. The hope is to formally open it soon to the general public.

There is also an ongoing project with River Partners. The Conservancy approved funding for CEQA analysis and a restoration plan for Ball Ranch. We requested that this CEQA coverage also allows for the control and removal of invasive weeds, such as Tree of Heaven.

CEMEX put in an application requesting an extension of the Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) to extend the life of their existing permit for another thirty years at their operation plant and for a 100 years at their quarry site. The quarry site is located across the river from Ledger Island and is contiguous with Lost Lake and the Conservancy's Beck Ranch property. Mr. Shelton indicated that they are not increasing their footprint, but rather plan to quarry the bedrock materials. There have been discussions with CEMEX about the ability to extend the Eaton trail through their properties. According to their reclamation plans, they need to keep a buffer between the plant and Friant Road and between the quarry site and the San Joaquin River. We are proposing to put a multipurpose trail between the plant site and Friant Road. To connect this trail to East Birkhead Avenue, we would still have to get through the DFW's Willow Unit of the San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve, but the Conservancy has spoken to Ms. DFW's staff about the possibilities of an easement. The Master Plan illustrates the trail going between the Plant and the River; however, Mr. Shelton noted it would be better for the Willow Unit if it was positioned next to Friant Road so it would not bisect the Ecological Reserve. This potential trail would go through Ball Ranch using the existing gravel road alignment and cross the bridge to Ledger Island. Sometime in the future, there is the possibly of constructing a bridge that will get us across from Ledger Island to the quarry site area. In the meantime, CEMEX has offered to include a multipurpose trail that will go from Friant Road at the South end of the quarry site to the River and then along the River up to Lost Lake Park. Once this trail is connected to Lost Lake Park it will join onto the trail that goes to the San Joaquin River Fish Hatchery and comes out of the FINS parking lot.

The Sierra Resource Conservation District (SRCD) is working on a project in the Sierras to reduce fuel loading. Many trees have been taken down by Fresno County/utility companies and sometimes stacked in log decks on private property. The SRCD has a grant to remove these log decks to reduce wildfire fuels, but they would like to put them to beneficial use. Mr. Shelton spoke to Steve Hayes, District

Manager of the SRCD, regarding storing the logs on Conservancy property and utilizing them as vehicle barriers by putting them along our roads and using them as natural fences. Additionally, they could be used in our restoration activities. By “planting” them in the ground at our restoration areas, they will decompose and add organics and carbon to the soils. Although this may take thirty years or more for the decomposition, the additional soil carbon will be beneficial for restoration process. They discussed storing the logs in an area at Ball Ranch, next to the “Large Pond” on the gravel road that ends at Little Dry Creek. Staff from the SRCD mowed grass in the surrounding area and have begun placing logs. They also unloaded logs at our Wildwood property around the parking lot to act as a fence since the existing fence is starting to deteriorate.

Mr. Shelton gave an update on the Van Buran/Valley Children’s Hospital/ HWY 41 Bridge. There is a proposal by the City of Fresno to look at an alternatives analysis for a bicycle/pedestrian bridge across the River near Highway 41. In the past, we have also had discussions with Valley Children’s Hospital about connecting to a multiuse trail that connects to the Eaton Trail. Supervisor Frazier will aid the Conservancy in working with Madera County to move forward with River West Madera plan for the Van Buran property. This plan includes a parking lot, entrance road, and restroom facilities.

On the western end of the Parkway, the Conservancy is planning to extend the multiuse trail from Highway 99 to the Milburn Overlook. There is a trail out at Riverside Golf Course, but it currently dead ends at Riverbottom Park. There was a plan continue the trail through Riverbottom Park by the City of Fresno, but because of some extenuating circumstances, that has been put on hold. We believe that eventually we can build that trail through Riverbottom Park and connect it to Liddell and the Milburn Overlook. Parts of this trail will be more challenging. There is small footpath that goes from Riverbottom Park to Liddell that possibly is on SLC’s fee title land or on their public access land, but the Bluff is right next to the River at that point. He suspects that if they do anything in that area, they will have to have significant support from the adjoining neighborhood. It might only be a footpath for hiking and potentially mountain biking, but not for multipurpose trail. From Riverside down to Camp Pashayan and Highway 99, there is one unknown issue: there is a residential development that is believed to be happening near the Fresno County Horse Park. If it gets built, there may be the opportunity to obtain an easement through there to extend what the Riverside Trail. If this development does not happen, then the Conservancy may be able to work with the land owner to purchase an easement for a trail. We also have talked to the operator of the Fresno County Horse Park to see what his thoughts are regarding the multiuse trail. He is both supportive of the trail and interested in helping where he can on the Horse Park area. The Horse Park land owned by PG&E so any planning will need to involve the utility.

Mr. Shelton discussed progress with the River Vista bridge-remnant removal. The Conservancy is working with both Counties on this project. Fresno County is the lead on building a new bridge at Friant, and we are attempting to get them to

include in their project the removal of the bridge remnants and construction of a parking area. We believe removing the bridge and developing a gravel lined parking area would fit in with the project that they are already working on. However, there is the issue of a bicycle/pedestrian crossing with the new bridge. We will be meeting with County Supervisor Brandau and other County staff regarding this project. We understand that there is some pushback from Caltrans about putting a bicycle/pedestrian crossing along the bridge; yet at their executive level, he believes there is actually a push to include bicycle crossings. It is just a matter of following up on this and getting everybody to look at it the same way. Supervisor Brandau and his staff have all said that they are all very much in favor of making this an efficient project.

Concerning the Circle V property, Mr. Shelton has had several discussions with Native American groups and others about the potential of making it into a Native American Cultural and Environmental Resources Center. This is a preliminary idea at this point, but we are attempting to utilize the two houses on this property. It is an attractive piece of property with a breathtaking viewshed, and has great access to Highway 41. Since it will be slightly challenging to join with the rest of the parkway trails because there is a large gap between that property and other properties we own, using it for an extension to the multiuse trail is not likely at this point. On a related note, the CCC's are almost under contract to do fire abatement at this property, which they have done the past few years.

Regarding the Lost Lake Park Facilities Master Plan, we are currently waiting on the County to put together their grant application for that project. They have lost some staff and have had major turnover, so it has been difficult for them to complete. In spite of this, they would still like to move forward with it.

The last project Mr. Shelton discussed is the potential for an office in the Parkway. There is the possibility to move the Conservancy offices to the Circle V property. If they are remodeled or rebuilt to some degree and brought up to code, one of the houses could make a nice office space. There are a couple of other places we have been were looking at, but currently, it is just an idea that we are brainstorming on. Most likely, this will take a while for anything to happen, but it would be constructive to be in the Parkway at some point.

Mr. Karbassi asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Sharon Weaver thanked Mr. Shelton for the comprehensive report. She stated that the CEMEX project that Mr. Shelton had discussed is a very significant expansion plan for the CEMEX quarry, and the company is currently processing an application requesting a 100-year extension for their operations on Friant Road. She revealed the expansion on the quarry site is to a 600 foot deep gravel pit, which would make it the second largest strip mine in California. She believes it will have major environmental impact to the River, if approved. She urged the Board to direct staff to participate in the environmental review process and comment on the environmental review documents as they are received, with an eye toward

protecting the River system. She mentioned she was concerned that because CEMEX is willing to build a trail, environmental issues related to their project will be overlooked.

Mr. Shelton responded that we will be heavily involved in the environmental review process, and we will discuss any interests or concerns that the Parkway Trust and other partners have about it. He does agree that this is a significant project, and it is something we have to pay very close attention to. Although Fresno County will be leading the decisions, we can raise concerns. We will be working with CEMEX where we can to make sure it fits in with the Parkway as well as possible. We are hoping to go beyond mitigation and ask for some enhancements to the River and Parkway.

Ms. Vance added that she agrees it is a big project, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is watching it closely, not only as a trustee agency, but also as an adjacent landowner. With the proposed depth of the mine, there is the possibility that the underlying hydrology of the river could lose some of its subsurface water as a result of having a lower point of gravity due to having a low pit in the adjacent properties that are owned by the Conservancy and DFW. There are some significant issues that we should be watching as a landowner, in addition to trying to work cooperatively as a neighbor.

G-4 Board Members' Reports and Comments

Mr. Gibson thanked Mr. Shelton for the detailed report, and stated that the way it was compiled with all the maps was incredible and very helpful, particularly during a difficult time when we do not have the ability to meet directly in the boardroom.

H. CLOSED SESSION

Before convening in closed session, members of the public will be provided the opportunity to comment on Executive Session agenda items.

There were no public comments.

H-1 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL—EXISTING LITIGATION

Subdivision (a) of Government Code Section 54956.9.

San Joaquin River Access Corporation v. San Joaquin River Conservancy and specified Board members, Superior Court of California, County of Fresno Case #19CECG01138

H-2 Government Code Section 54957.0 (b) (1)

Public Employee Performance Evaluation
Title: Executive Officer

H-3 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL—ANTICIPATED LITIGATION

Initiation of litigation pursuant to subdivision (c) of Government Code Section 54956.9
Subdivision (a) of Government Code Section 54956.9.
One potential case

REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION

There was nothing to report on item H-1; and we will update the public with regard to item H-2, at a later time. Concerning item H-3, Ms. Halberstadt reported that the Board agreed to have her draft an agreement waiving rent for Bluff Pointe Golf Course for the number of days it has been closed due to the shelter in place. This is contingent upon Executive Officer confirming the days of the shelter in place, source of income, and whether it is based on per-user income.

I. NOTICE OF ADVISORY AND BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS, OTHER PUBLIC MEETINGS RELATED TO CONSERVANCY MATTERS

None.

J. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATE

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, June 3, 2020, location to be determined.

K. ADJOURN

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Ms. Forhan adjourned the meeting at 11:43 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

DocuSigned by:

BD85257A1B334F2
John M. Shelton
Executive Officer- San Joaquin River Conservancy



250.20

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER CONSERVANCY

Agenda Item

Item: F-1

June 3, 2020

TO: San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board

FROM: John M. Shelton, Executive Officer 

SUBJECT: **ACTION ITEM: Create Ad Hoc Board Committee to Develop Recommendations Regarding Land Acquisitions**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended the Board identify at least three and no more than five Board members to serve on an ad hoc committee to advise and recommend acquisition projects and discuss opportunities and provide a priority on moving acquisitions forward to the full Board.

SUMMARY:

The San Joaquin River Conservancy Act provides the Conservancy the authority to acquire and hold management responsibility for Parkway lands on behalf of the state, acquire lands to be managed under the jurisdiction of other state agencies, and to grant funds to local agencies and non-profit organizations that will hold title to the acquired lands. The Act includes explicit requirements for granting funds for land purchases to non-profit entities.

The Conservancy's statutory goal is to develop a Parkway encompassing 5,900 acres to provide low-impact recreational and educational uses and wildlife protection. Approximately 1,900 acres were anticipated to be in Madera County, and approximately 4,000 acres were expected to be in Fresno County, of which 1,250 acres were already in public ownership before the Conservancy was formed according to the Conservancy Act. Currently, the Conservancy owns approximately 1,150 acres in Madera County and approximately 1,445 acres in Fresno County.

It is recommended the Board nominate and approve members to serve on an ad hoc committee. The committee would meet as needed to review and recommend acquisition projects. It is expected the first meeting would be in the middle of June or at the beginning of July. Depending on the committee members' interests and needs, the ad hoc committee may evolve to become a standing Board committee.

DocuSigned by:

Rebecca Raus

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Rebecca Raus

Associate Governmental Program Analyst



SAN JOAQUIN RIVER CONSERVANCY

Agenda Item

Item: G-3

June 3, 2020

TO: San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board

FROM: John M. Shelton, Executive Officer 

SUBJECT: INFORMANTION ITEM: Executive Officer's Report

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is provided for informational purposes. No Board action is recommended.

SUMMARY:

Update on Current Activities of the Conservancy, with a more detailed update on a highlighted Project.

In order to keep the Board apprised of current activities, plus remind you of all the progress that has been made in the past, I will be reporting on current projects and other activities. The San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) is depicted in Figure 1: SJR Parkway Existing features, from the SJRC Master Plan Update 2018. If you have not read through the Conservancy's Master Plan Update, it is available at <http://sjrc.ca.gov/Parkway-Master-Plan-Update/>, and is a great reference. The Conservancy has acquired over 2,600 acres of land along the San Joaquin River (**Error! Reference source not found.8**). Table 2 lists the other public lands within the San Joaquin River Parkway. Each report will highlight a project complex with additional background information so that activities can be put into the context of the multipurpose aspects of not only the San Joaquin River Parkway, but with individual components. This month, I will be highlighting the Conservancy's Liddell, the City of Fresno's Milburn and Polk Overlooks, and Riverbottom Park, in addition to the Riverside Trail, and finally, the Conservancy's Schneider property. This focus is on the possibilities for connecting these areas, developing or enhancing recreational value, and an overview of some of the recent discussions that are happening in regards to this region of the Parkway.

COVID 19 and the Conservancy: The **Conservancy's office** is closed to the public until further notice due to COVID-19 related directives and orders from state and local agencies to prevent the spread of the virus. However, to provide the public with a continuity of service while protecting both the public and our employees, the Conservancy remains open for business by phone, email, and regular mail. Because our office has transitioned to maximize telework for the duration of this emergency event, there may be some delay as we work to respond to all requests in a timely manner. We have all our emails and phone calls forwarded, so our regular contact information remains valid.. Still, due to the way our system works, we are also using work focused Gmail accounts to make our electronic correspondence more direct. The public can still reach us at our general email: info@sjrc.ca.gov and office telephone (559) 253-7324.

State Parks closed the **Friant Cove Parking lot** on Sunday evening, March 29, and has left it closed until they reopened some of their own facilities as part of the effort to maintain social distancing. Friant Cove Parking was reopened for Memorial Day weekend. State Parks will monitor the usage of their facilities at Millerton State Park to determine future responses to the pandemic, and has been in close communication with the Conservancy to determine the status of this parking area. (see: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=587 for the latest information).

San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust (Parkway Trust) closed **Sycamore Island** on March 16, out of concern about the health and safety of their employees and volunteers who interact with the public at this site. As of May 15, 2020, the River Parkway Trust reopened public access at Sycamore Island. The Parkway Trust is working on plans for a modified River Camp program to deliver this great opportunity for learning and fun. (see <https://www.riverparkway.org/> for the latest information) Access to Sycamore Island, by foot or bike is through the Van Buren property, has been consistently increasing throughout the pandemic as more regional residents learn of this area. In the Conservancy's monitoring of Wildwood Native Park, staff have noticed steady use, with the public mostly practicing physical distancing, at least between family groups. **Wildwood Native Park** is opened on Friday, Saturdays, and Sundays. As mentioned above, the Conservancy staff has monitored use to make sure that social distancing is being practiced.

When the Governor of California issued a statewide shelter-in-place order (Executive Order N-33-20), the City of Fresno issued its own shelter-in-place order, Emergency Order 2020-13. The operators of **Bluff Pointe Golf Course & Learning Center**, Jim and Marci Perez, quickly followed these orders for the mandatory shut down of non-essential businesses by closing the entrance gate to the general public on March 19. On May 11, 2020, the Governor and the City of Fresno lifted certain restrictions and allowed specific industries, including golf courses, to reopen. Accordingly, Bluff Pointe Golf Course reopened to the public. (see <https://www.bluffpointegolf.com/> for the latest information)

Focused Project Complex Update:

1. Conservancy's Liddell property, the City of Fresno's Milburn and Polk Overlooks, and Riverbottom Park connecting to the Riverside Trail and later to Schneider

Background: Liddell is a 360-acre property that is adjacent to the Milburn Unit of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve (see Figure 2). Riverbottom Park is a City of Fresno property where River Partners has just completed a nearly \$900,000 restoration project that was awarded in the Spring of 2013 (the total project included both the Schneider and Riverbottom Park restoration efforts) (see Figure 3).

There is now an active Facebook group, San Joaquin River Socials (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/176551070452209>), which formed in response to crime and nuisance issues at the Millburn and Polk Ave overlooks. The initial social gathering happened just before the pandemic came to California and was well attended (see Figure 4). Members of this group have participated, along with staff, on RiverTree Volunteers organized a cleanup at the Liddell property. This activity has resulted in all the old bird netting being removed, along with posts and fences that blocked the connection between the old fishponds and the wetland/ponds next to Bluff Pointe golf course (see Figures 5 and 6). In discussions with Chairperson Karbassi and several of the neighbors, we are devising a strategy to connect the Millburn Overlook to Riverbottom Park and then to the Riverside trail next to Riverside Golf Course. The Liddell property is ideal for a small recreational program anchored by this trail that will provide access to the River and the mid-sized pond on the property. Chairperson Karbassi and the neighbors are interested in modifying both the Millburn Overlook, and the Polk Avenue Overlook parking lots to

make them more resistant to nuisance activities and more inviting to families. Conservancy staff believe that a comprehensive proposal to accomplish this, plus to open a hiking and mountain bike path between Millburn Overlook and Riverbottom Park, could be devised in cooperation between the City, State Lands Commission (SLC), and Conservancy staff. I have had some preliminary discussions with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) staff about being part of this effort. At this point, the Conservancy is considering managing our own grant and subcontracting with the City for engineering, CDFW for facilitating the stakeholder process to generate potential alternatives, and an environmental consultant to prepare the CEQA report.

In the early 2000s, the City of Fresno received a grant from the Conservancy to complete the planning, develop a CEQA document, and then to construct a multiuse trail through Riverbottom Park that would connect to the Riverside Trail (about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of paved trail exists with a parking lot next to Riverside Golf Course). Several issues made the completion of this project difficult, such as getting across the railroad-controlled portion, but the main reason this work was not completed was due to the bond freeze that California was forced to enact in 2009. Fresno did complete the design for the trail, parking, and restroom facilities (see Figure 9). Since Riverbottom connects to the multiuse trail at Riverside, this additional trail segment and facilities would serve West Fresno well and make River access much easier. If the City of Fresno is ready to proceed with this effort, the Conservancy would likely be able to fund an update to their permits and then move forward with the construction of these facilities.

There is a “fisherman” trail that is between the Liddell and Riverbottom properties. This trail is about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile long and will likely remain as a dirt hiking/mountain-bike trail. The trail is on a steep bluff, and designing and building a trail would be difficult (see Figure 7). In addition, without the cooperation of the adjoining landowners, gaining an access easement to this area would be difficult. The SLC may also be able to help out if some of this area is covered under the public rights to access and use California’s Navigable Waters (see <https://www.slc.ca.gov/public-engagement/> for a great write-up of this important set of laws). In discussions with a member of Central California Off Road Cyclists (CCORC) – (<https://www.facebook.com/ccorc/>), who has training and expertise in trail construction and maintenance, we believe a usable dirt hiking and biking trail is possible. During this hike, I did note that some of the neighbors recognize the value of this segment of the River for walking (see Figure 8)

Other Current Projects Updates:

2. Van Buren – Valley Children’s Hospital – Hwy 41 Bike/Pedestrian Bridge

Staff met with Board member Frazier and Madera County on May 20 to discuss Madera County priorities in relationship to the Parkway. We discussed three different projects: 1) River West Madera (with a tie in trial to Valley Children’s); 2) River Vista Bridge Remnant Removal and recreation facilities; and 3) potential development of a General Plan element on the San Joaquin River Parkway. Madera County is interested in all three projects, but we all agreed that the River West Madera Project would be the most impactful and relatively simple project for which to proceed (see Figure 10) since the CEQA permitting has been done (see <https://www.maderacounty.com/Home/ShowDocument?id=686> for the Negative Declaration).

Members of the CCORC have been maintaining the dirt trails within the Van Buren properties under and agreement with the Conservancy this Winter and Spring. Under this agreement, they are maintaining trails that were in evidence from aerial photos at the time

of the agreement. Some of these trails were already being used by hikers and probably by some bikers, but they were not mapped. In developing the agreement, staff also referred to the Madera River West Plan (see Figure 10) so that duplication would be avoided. Much of the trails that will be maintained serve as maintenance roads currently, so CCORC will mostly be keeping herbaceous vegetation in check so that riders can easily navigate the terrain. Some of the trails will require monitoring to avoid "Pirate Trails" development into areas where we do not want biking to occur. CCORC has training seminars on how to build barriers and structures to discourage pirate trail development.

The City of Fresno is thinking about putting together a grant application to the Conservancy for an Alternative Analysis to construct a bicycle/pedestrian bridge across the River near Highway 41. Conservancy staff met with staff from the City of Fresno's Development and Resource Management Department and one of their regular consulting firms a few months ago. We believe that this bridge, when constructed, could be a major bike commuting route between North Fresno and this rapidly developing area of Madera County. At this point, we need to set up a meeting with Chairperson Karbassi, Fresno City staff, and the Mayor of Fresno on a number of potential projects.

3. Ball Ranch & Ledger Island – Willow Unit, Tesoro Viejo and Cemex

Tesoro Viejo's CEQA work is on hold, while the developers for Tesoro Viejo get a better read on the economic picture and how to adjust to current conditions. In the meantime, their consultants are still working through initial designs and analysis. Staff did have a virtual meeting with SLC staff to update each other on current conditions. SLC staff was going to contact Tesoro Viejo to see if the environmental consultants are going to be able to do their biological fieldwork this Spring in order to meet survey requirements for nesting birds and other species that require Spring surveys.

River Partners had its initial kickoff meeting electronically on Tuesday, April 21. One of their first issues to undertake is to secure a CEQA consultant. We also discussed how to set up stakeholder meetings electronically, but will have further discussions once they have their sub-consultants hired.

In December of 2019, CEMEX filed the Rockfield Modification Project application with Fresno County proposing to modify and continue its operations with a new operational plan (CUP Application No. 3666 - Plant Site and CUP Application No. 3667 for the Quarry Site). CEMEX's status is similar to Tesoro Viejo, in that the County of Fresno is working on their processes to hold CEQA scoping meetings virtually. CEMEX and their consultants said that they would keep the Conservancy informed as this process continues. In addition, several individuals and organizational representatives have reached out to discuss this project.

The Sierra RCD (see <https://sierrarcd.com/>) is moving forward with their work to transfer pine-beetle killed logs to Ball Ranch as part of the Eastern Fresno County Fuels Reduction project. At last check-in, log decks from three different properties have been moved to Ball Ranch and stacked near the Northern border of the big pond and between the main gravel road and Little Dry Creek. The Sierra RCD mowed the main gravel road and the area where the logs are being stored. (see Figure 11)

On Saturday, May 16, a small group collected tules from Ball Ranch to repair the Native American house at the Madera County Fossil Discovery Center (see Figures 12 and 13). We collected for about two hours, and the lead, Carley Tex, believes we collected enough tules to do the work. Ms. Tex volunteered to help the Fossil Discovery Center, when they

put out the word that they needed some volunteer work to help recondition the Native American house. Ms. Tex went on a fieldtrip earlier this year to discuss the resources that the SJR Parkway has and how to reconnect local Native Americans with this area. She is the Executive Director of the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival (see <http://aicls.org/>), but she let me know that this project was just to do something good. She pulled in several family members, and we all worked for a couple of hours cutting and bundling tules. Ms. Tex said that the tules would need to dry for a little bit before they can be used at the Discovery Center (see <http://www.maderamammoths.org/>).

On May 7, staff met with River Partners to discuss the potential for a groundwater project at Ball Ranch and other locations. I had been discussing this potential with others in the past, including a discussion last year with the California Department of Water Resources' Flood-Managed Aquifer Recharge (Flood-MAR) staff (see: <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/All-Programs/Flood-MAR>). River Partners has worked extensively with DWR's flood management programs in the past, and, in discussions with some of their leadership, was told that the Conservancy has areas that have the potential to be a great demonstration project location for the Central San Joaquin Valley. River Partners is going to set up a meeting with DWR and the Conservancy to further investigate this possibility. Due to other networking, I had already invited Matt Hurley, the General Manager of McMullin Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (<https://www.mcmullinarea.org/>), to Ball Ranch, to discuss this potential. McMullin Area GSA, although only one of quite a few Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the area, is coordinating with many of the local Fresno County GSAs. Mr. Hurley is interested in collaborating further on this concept and will work with River Partners if they put together a proposal with DWR.

4. Camp Pashayan

RiverTree reported a fire at Camp Pashayan on Sunday, May 10, the same day as the small fire at the Milburn ER. Rebecca Raus met with Fresno Fire afterward to install a firelock on the gate and replace the Conservancy lock. Although there was some damage to vegetation, most of the area was not impacted.

5. River Vista Bridge Remnants, Parking, and Gravel Path

The River Vista project is ready to move into implementation. Prior discussions have mostly focused on Madera County applying for a grant to undertake final design, permitting, and construction. With the two counties working together to build a new vehicular bridge at Friant (Road 206 or North Fork Road), we are now in discussions with the County of Fresno, who is the lead on this replacement, to see if they can add to the new bridge construction project, the removal of the old bridge remnants. We are also going to work with them to assist the effort to add onto the new bridge project a bicycle/pedestrian passage. It is our understanding that under state guidelines that including bicycle crossings of Rivers into existing or replacement infrastructure is a priority (see Fresno COG's SB743 Local Assistance Program and Regional Guidelines: <https://www.fresnocog.org/sb743-regional-guidelines-development/>). In discussions with Board member Brandau, he believes that both the bridge remnant removal and bicycle crossing should be part of the new bridgework, if practical. We should have a meeting with Fresno County, hosted by Board member Brandau in the next few weeks.

6. Vinnard/Circle V – Potential Native American Cultural and Environmental Resources Center

I am still having multiple discussions with several organizational representatives and some tribal members about the idea of using the property at Vinnard for a Cultural and

Environmental Center. I have had a discussion with Carly Tex, the Executive Director of the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival and with Michael Youngblood Konkle, Chief Officer of Emergency Management of the California Tribal Emergency Response & Relief Agency (CalTERRA: <https://calterra.org/>) regarding the potential of this property and houses for Native American cultural activities. Both are interested in what we can do at this location.

Just recently, I met with Laura Gromis, the Executive Director of U.S. Green Build Council, Central California (<https://www.usgbccc.org/>). USGBC-CC is interested in the ideas I have developed with others for this location and is considering working on a stakeholder-driven process to develop and design a fully certified “Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design” (LEED) center on this property as a demonstration project for the region.

7. Lost Lake Park Master Plan and Facilities Improvements

The County of Fresno is still working on getting a grant to the Conservancy to finish the Lost Lake Master Plan update and to upgrade a couple of their playground areas for American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. Although these projects are important for the County, due to staffing turnover and other priorities, they have not been able to provide any grant applications yet. Wildlife Conservation Board staff, along with Conservancy staff, have offered assistance.

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John M. Shelton
Executive Officer

San Joaquin River Parkway Master Plan Update

Figure 5-1 EXISTING FEATURES

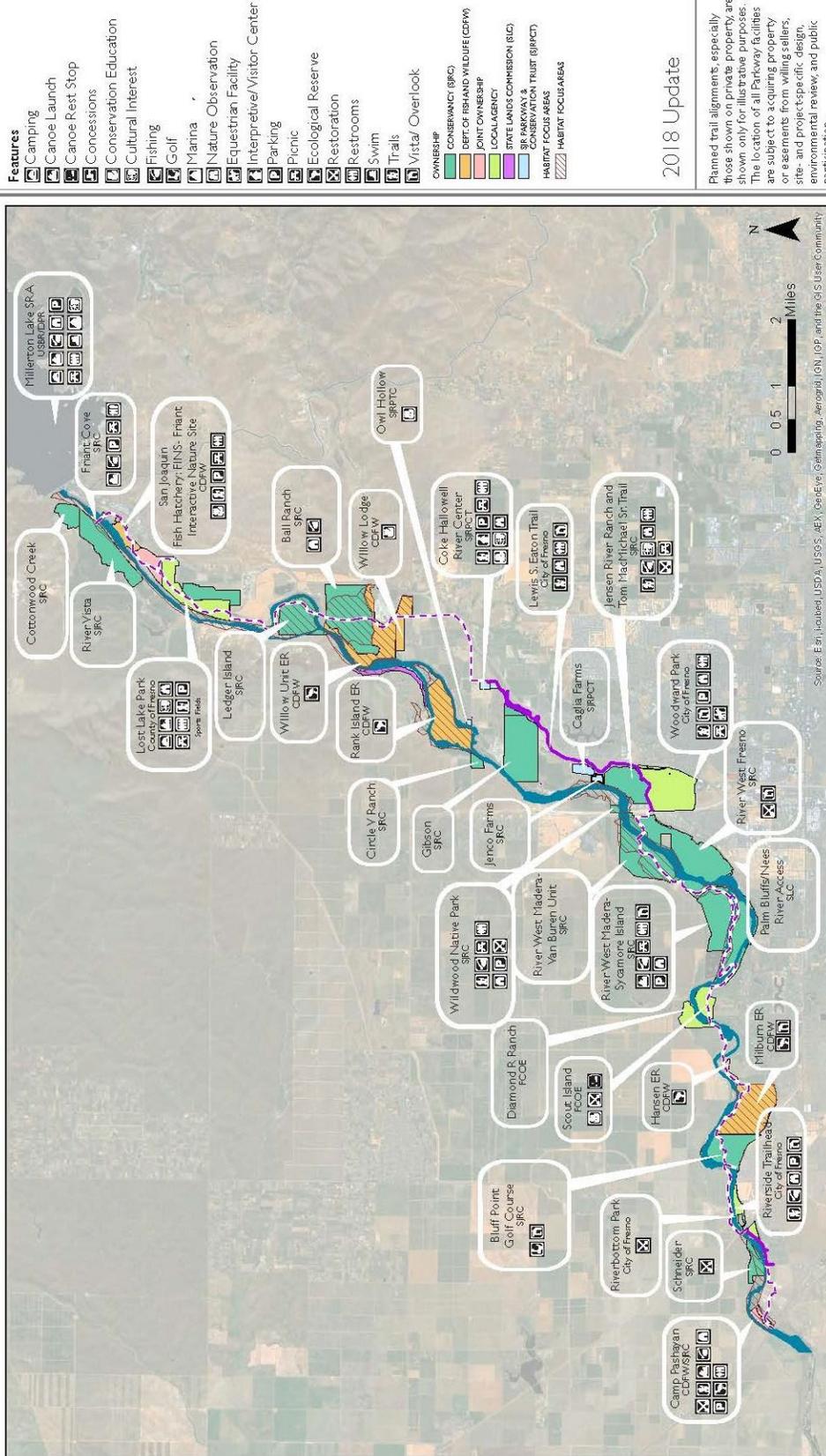


Figure 1: SJR Parkway Existing features, from the SJRC Master Plan Update 2018

Table 1: SJRC Properties, updated from the SJRC Master Plan Update 2018

San Joaquin River Conservancy Properties

Land Acquisitions	Year	Fresno (Acres)	Madera (Acres)
Wildwood Native Park	1996	0.00	22.00
Jensen River Ranch	1997	156.10	0.00
Beck	1998	105.92	0.00
Friant Cove	1998	2.64	0.00
Ball Ranch	2000	358.40	0.00
Schneider	2000	0.00	47.10
Wagner (aka Cottonwood Creek)	2001	0.00	64.32
Ledger Island	2001	0.00	161.17
River Vista	2001	0.00	176.66
Van Buren (aka Proctor, Broadwell, Cobb, part of River West Madera)	2001	0.00	261.54
Willow Lodge (Finch, Glaspey)*	2002	40.00	0.00
River West Fresno (Spano)	2003	290.84	50.00
Sycamore Island	2005	0.00	347.00
Transfer of lands between DFG and SJRC including River Vista, Van Buren, Ledger Is, and Moen	2006-08		974.54
Liddell/Bluff Pointe Golfing Center	2005	134.00	0.00
Gibson	2008	320.96	0.00
SJ Fish Hatchery (Friant Station)*	2008	2.00	0.00
SJ Fish Hatchery (Hovannisian)*	2011	0.17	0.00
Camp Pashayan**	2012	11.43	0.00
Jenco Farms	2015	23.16	0.00
Circle V Ranch (Vinnard)	2016	0.00	20.82
Cobb/Madera Co	2020	0.00	11.52
Total 2,607.75		1445.6 2	1162.1 3
<p>*These lands were acquired by the Conservancy to be managed under the jurisdiction of CDFW. **Camp Pashayan was originally acquired by the River Parkway Trust in 1995 and later sold to the Conservancy.</p>			

Table 2: San Joaquin River Parkway – Public Lands other than SJRC Properties

OTHER PARKWAY PUBLIC LANDS

California Department Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	Year	Fee		Cons. Easement
		Fresno (Acres)	Madera (Acres)	
Hansen Unit San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve (ER)		34.00	0.00	
Lost Lake Park (see also County of Fresno)		76.00	0.00	
Rank Island Unit SJR ER		270.00	0.00	
SJ Fish Hatchery		35.35		
Milburn Unit SJR ER	1989	286.00	0.00	
Willow Unit SJR ER (1)	1990	149.67	0.00	
Willow Unit SJR ER (2)	1992	88.23	0.00	
Camp Pashayan Unit SJR ER**	1995/2012	20.00		
Total	959.25	959.25	0.00	0.00

**Camp Pashayan was originally acquired by the River Parkway Trust in 1995 and later sold to the Conservancy.

San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust	Year	Fee		Cons. Easement
		Fresno (Acres)	Madera (Acres)	
Coke Hallowell River Center		20.00	0.00	
Spano Remnants 2003 6.00 0.00 0.00	2003	6.00	0.00	
Owl Hollow 2005 5.00 0.00 0.00	2005	5.00	0.00	
Caglia Farms 2006 28.20 0.00 0.00	2006	28.20	0.00	
Total	59.2	59.20	0.00	0.00

American Farmland Trust	Year	Fee		Cons. Easement
		Fresno (Acres)	Madera (Acres)	
Hansen Conservation Easements		0.00	0.00	95
Total	.	0.00	0.00	95.00

Fresno County	Year	Fee		Cons. Easement
		Fresno (Acres)	Madera (Acres)	
Lost Lake Park (see also CDFW)		191.66	0.00	
Friant Road Scenic Lands (Eaton Trail)		141.00	0.00	

Total		332.66	332.66	0.00	0.00
Fresno County Office of Education	Year	Fee		Cons. Easement	
		Fresno (Acres)	Madera (Acres)		
Scout Island	2000	84.66	0.00		
Diamond R Ranch	2000	0.00	68.00		
Total		152.66	84.66	68.00	0.00

City of Fresno	Year	Fee		Cons. Easement	
		Fresno (Acres)	Madera (Acres)		
Riverbottom Park	1999	35.00	0.00		
Total		35.	35.00	0.00	0.00

US Bureau of Reclamation	Year	Fee		Cons. Easement	
		Fresno (Acres)	Madera (Acres)		
Friant Dam Access Areas		137.50	137.50		
Total		275.	137.50	137.50	0.00

Partner Total		Fee		Cons. Easement (Acres)	
		Fresno (Acres)	Madera (Acres)		
Total		854.52	649.02	205.50	95.00

	Subtot	Fee		Cons. Easement (Acres)	
		Fresno (Acres)	Madera (Acres)		
San Joaquin River Conservancy Properties	2607.75	1445.62	1162.13		
Other Public Lands	854.52	649.02	205.50	95.00	
Total Public Lands in SJR Parkway		3462.27	2094.64	1367.63	95.00

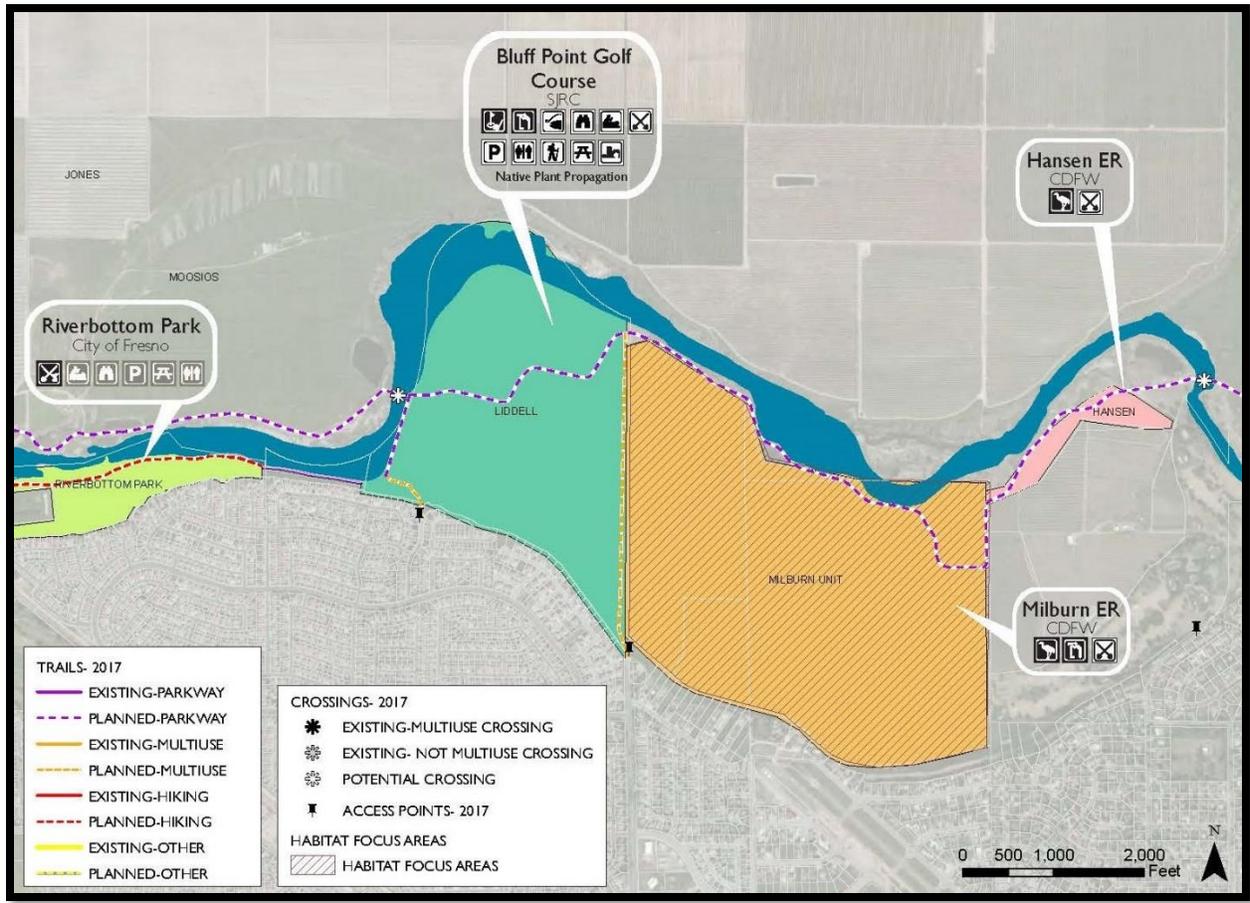


Figure 2: Existing Facilities - Hansen Ecological Reserve to Riverbottom Park

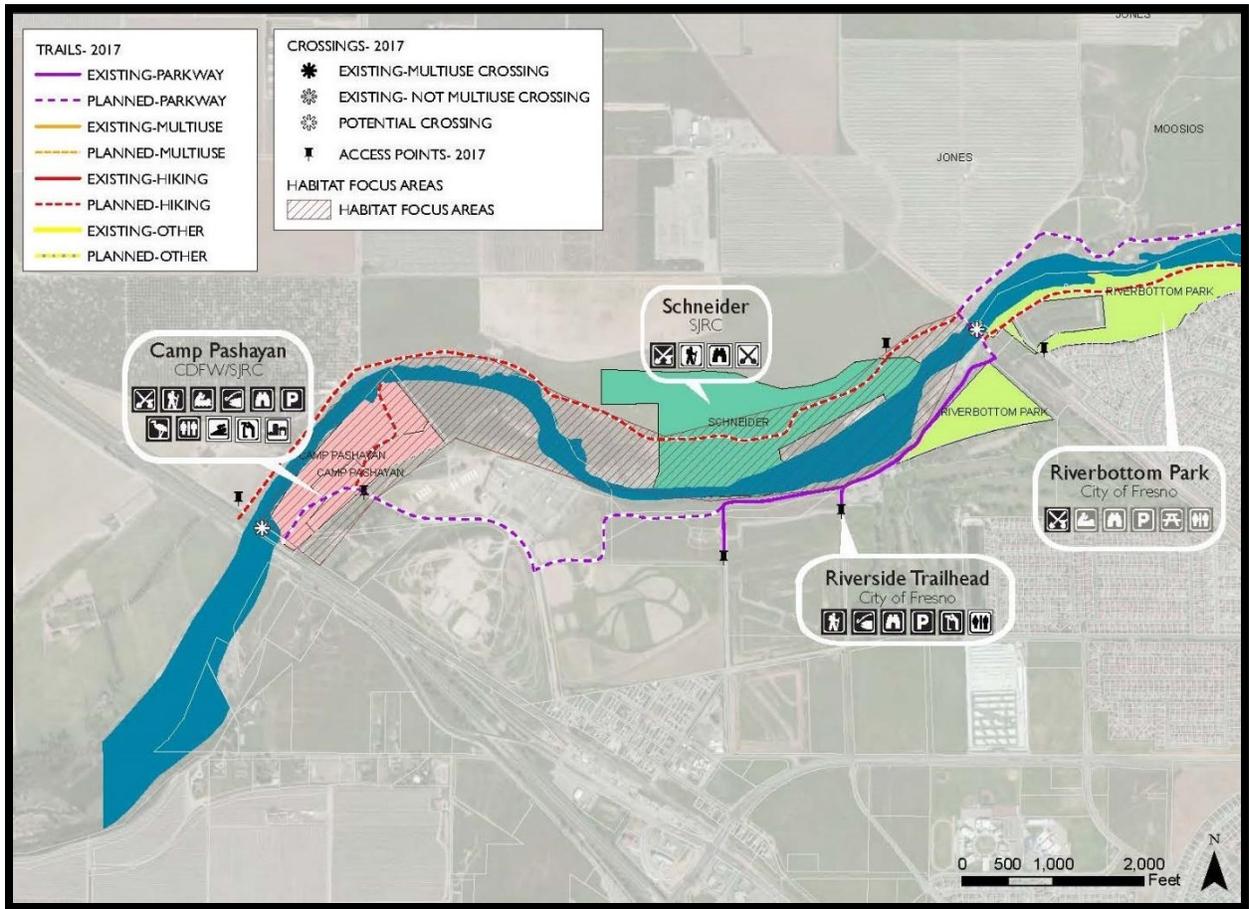


Figure 3: Existing Facilities - Riverbottom Park to Camp Pashayan



Figure 4: San Joaquin River Socials first meeting at Milburn Pond Overlook



Figure 5: Liddell Properties with Fish Farm Netting before Removal

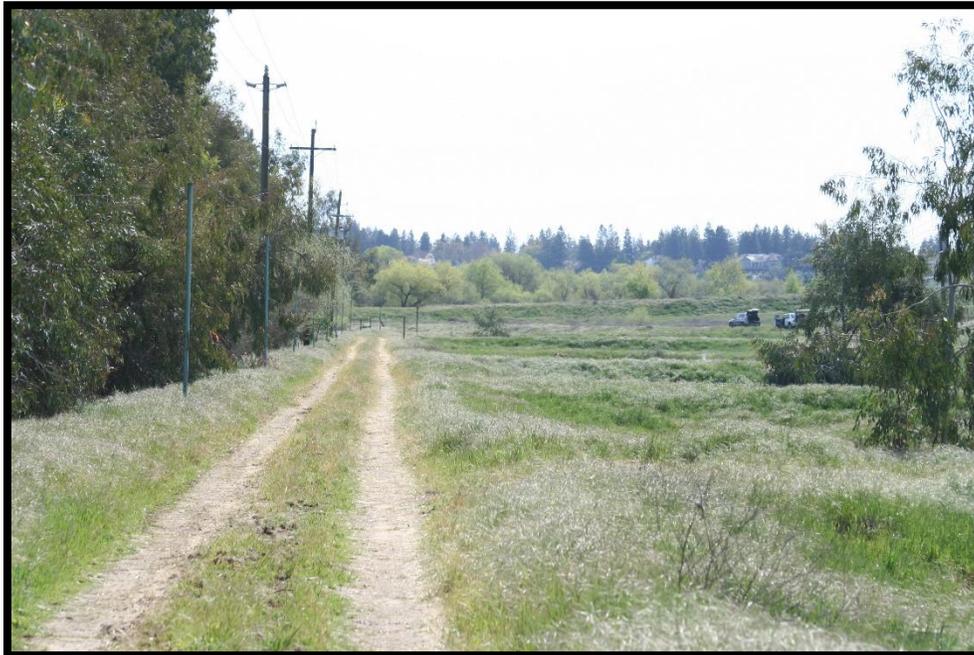


Figure 6: Liddell Property with Bird Netting on the Fishpond Area Removed



Figure 7: San Joaquin River Downstream of Liddell

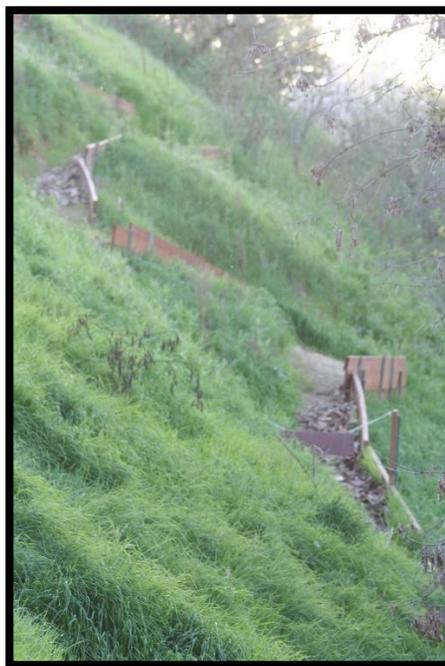


Figure 8: Path from a home to the fisherman's trail between Riverbottom and the Liddell properties



Vehicular and non-vehicular access routes are conceptual and subject to change. Such routes do not represent a concurrence or commitment on the part of the property owner. Scale and final location would be determined in coordination with the property owner.

FIGURE 14: MASTER PLAN

Figure 10: River West Madera Proposed Project



Figure 11: Log Deck of Bark Beetle killed Trees Removed from Eastern Fresno County by the Sierra Resources Conservation District as part of their Fuels Reduction Project



Figure 12: Collecting Tules for rebuilding a Native American house at the Madera Fossil Discovery Center



Figure 13: Madera Fossil Discovery Center's Native America house (from <http://www.maderamammoths.org/about.html>)