

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 22, 2026

CALIFORNIA CELEBRATES EARTH DAY ON THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER AS GOVERNOR NEWSOM ANNOUNCES MAJOR EXPANSION OF THE STATE PARK SYSTEM

California State Parks, together with the San Joaquin River Conservancy and regional partners, celebrated Earth Day today at Sycamore Island, where Governor Gavin Newsom and First Partner, Jennifer Siebel Newsom announced **State Parks Forward**—a landmark initiative that will add three new state parks in the Central Valley and expand existing parks by 30,000 acres by the end of the decade. This represents the largest expansion of the California State Park System in decades, increasing the total number of state parks to 283.

Governor Gavin Newsom unveiled the initiative along the banks of the San Joaquin River near Fresno, in Madera County, across the river from the River West property, where construction is expected to begin later this year. The announcement took place at the site of one of the planned new state parks, marking his final Earth Day in office and occurring exactly two years after the dedication of Dos Rios State Park, the first new state park established in a decade.

State Parks Forward builds on the Administration's Outdoors for All and 30x30 priorities and is supported by Senate Bill 630 (2025, Allen) and Assembly Bill 679 (2025, Pellerin). These measures streamline acquisition and planning to accelerate the creation and expansion of parks—especially in underserved communities such as those in the Central Valley.

“We are witnessing an unprecedented investment in public access and open space in the Central Valley,” said Kari Kyler Daniska, Chief Executive Officer of the San Joaquin River Conservancy. “State Parks Forward will be instrumental in creating a contiguous San Joaquin River Parkway — a true central park for the Central Valley.”



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
**SAN JOAQUIN RIVER
CONSERVANCY**

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As part of today's celebration, the Conservancy recognized the Tribal communities whose ancestral lands include the San Joaquin River and thanked them for their enduring stewardship. The Conservancy participated in the event as a local partner supporting State Parks' mission to expand access to nature and the San Joaquin River Parkway.

The San Joaquin River Conservancy manages nearly 3,000 acres of riparian forests, grasslands, ponds, trails, and river habitats, and works to expand access through the planned 5,900-acre San Joaquin River Parkway. Six Conservancy properties, totaling 874 acres, will expand existing state parks and form part of a new state park, contributing to regional efforts to protect open space and increase opportunities for low-impact recreation.

"Properties like Sycamore Island demonstrate the importance of open space for both people and wildlife," said Daniska. "We look forward to continuing our partnership with California State Parks as the State Park System grows and as access to the river expands for communities throughout the Central Valley."

Kari Kyler Daniska
Chief Executive Officer

