



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
**SAN JOAQUIN RIVER
 CONSERVANCY**

GOVERNING BOARD

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 District

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Jennifer Norris, Executive Director,
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 for Access, Natural Resources Agency

Cheryl Hudson, Public Land Manager,
 State Lands Commission

Stephen Benson, Assistant Program
 Budget Manager, Department of
 Finance

Citizen Representatives

Bryn Forhan, City of Fresno

Daniel O'Connell, Fresno County

Stephanie Ruiz, Youth

Vacant, Madera County

Vacant, Tribal

Kari Kyler Daniska
 Chief Executive Officer

PO BOX 28338
 Fresno, California 93729
www.sjrc.ca.gov

**The San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board
 Will hold a regular meeting on
 May 13, 2026
 Call to order will begin at 9:00 a.m.**

**Board Meeting Location:
 San Joaquin River Conservancy Headquarters
 10637 N Lanes Rd, Fresno, CA 93730**

**and California Natural Resources Agency
 715 P. Street, Room: 20-103 (Serpentine Room)
 Sacramento, CA 95814**

**and online Via Teams
[Click here to join the meeting](#)**

MEETING AGENDA

A. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. ROLL CALL

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 AND 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 public comments at this time.

E. CLOSED SESSION

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

E-1. Government Code Section 11126(e)(1) The Act allows a state body to consult with its attorney about pending litigation in closed session when discussing the matter in open session would prejudice the state body's position.

- E-2. Government Code Section 11126(e)(1)** The Act allows a state body to consult with its attorney about pending litigation in closed session when discussing the matter in open session would prejudice the state body's position.

F. CONSENT ITEMS

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

- F-1. INFORMATION ITEM:** Conservancy Budget Update.
- F-2. INFORMATION ITEM:** State Lands Commission Lease for Wildwood Bridge and Trail Repair.
- F-3. INFORMATION ITEM:** Earth Day State Parks Forward Initiative Announcement.
- F-4. INFORMATION ITEM:** Nature Based Solutions Implementation with AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps.

G. REGULAR SESSION ITEMS

- G-1. INFORMATION ITEM:** Junior Parkway Steward Activity Book Presentation.
- G-2. INFORMATION ITEM:** Draft Strategic Plan Presentation.
- G-3. ACTION ITEM:** Approve License Agreement for John Halpin.
- G-4. ACTION ITEM:** Approve Prop 4 Funding Request for River West-Core Project.

H. ADMINISTRATIVE AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- H-1.** Deputy Attorney General Report
- H-2.** Chief Executive Officer Report
- H-3.** Board Members' Reports and Comments
- H-4.** Organizations' Reports: If time allows oral and/or written updates from partners are encouraged, covering current or upcoming events and project updates or other items of relevance to the Conservancy.

I. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATE

There will be no board meetings in June and July for the fiscal year end. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday August 5, 2026.

J. 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 info@sjrc.ca.gov.



AGENDA ITEM

May 13, 2026

Item: F-1

To: San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board
From: Kari Kyler Daniska, Chief Executive Officer 
Subject: **INFORMATION ITEM:** Conservancy Budget Update.

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is provided for informational purposes only. No action by the San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board is required.

PROPOSITION FUNDS:

Enc. 06/30/28, Revert. 06/30/30

SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 (Proposition 84) (6051)	\$36,000,000.00
Program Delivery	(1,800,000.00)
Expenses	(33,203,665.13)
Committed Funds (SJRC Board)*	(996,334.87)
Balance	\$00.00

Enc. 06/30/26, Revert. 06/30/28

WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND (Proposition 1) (6083)	\$10,000,000.00
Program Delivery	(500,000.00)
Expenses	(3,688,911.57)
Committed Funds (SJRC Board)*	(2,000,000.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$3,311,088.43

Enc. 06/30/28, Revert. 06/30/30

THE CALIFORNIA DROUGHT, WATER, PARKS, CLIMATE, COASTAL PROTECTION, AND OUTDOOR ACCESS FOR ALL ACT OF 2018 (Proposition 68) (6088)	\$6,000,000.00
Program Delivery	(450,000.00)
Expenses	(5,550,000.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$00.00

SAFE DRINKING WATER, WILDFIRE PREVENTION,
AND PROTECTING COMMUNITIES AND NATURAL
LANDS FROM CLIMATE RISKS OF 2024
(Proposition 4)

	\$11,000,000.00
Program Delivery	(770,000.00)
Expenses	-
Unallocated Balance	\$10,230,000.00

GENERAL FUND (July 2021- June 2027):

GENERAL FUND (0001)	\$15,000,000.00
Expenses	(7,692,098.46)
Unallocated Balance	\$7,307,901.54

FISCAL YEAR 2025 - 2026:

ENVIRONMENTAL LICENSE PLATE FUND (14000)	\$444,000.00
Expenses	(437,775.15)
Unallocated Balance	\$6,224.85

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER CONSERVANCY FUND (10002)	\$450,000.00
Expenses	(\$132,955.22)
Unallocated Balance	\$317,044.78

PROP 84 - PROGRAM DELIVERY (10006)	\$512,000.00
Expenses	(420,143.64)
Unallocated Balance	\$91,856.36

* The funds have been authorized by the SJRC Board and are currently pending approval by the WCB Board for encumbrance.

For additional information, you may direct inquiries to San Joaquin River Conservancy's Chief Executive Officer, Kari Kyler Daniska, at kari.daniska@sjrc.ca.gov.




AGENDA ITEM

May 13, 2026

Item: F-2

To: San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board

From: Kari Kyler Daniska, Chief Executive Officer 

Subject: **INFORMATION ITEM:** State Lands Commission Lease for Wildwood Bridge and Trail Repair.

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is provided for informational purposes only. No action by the San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board is required.

SUMMARY:

The San Joaquin River Conservancy is currently reviewing its active leases with the State Lands Commission and assessing whether additional leases are needed for existing infrastructure situated on State lands. Through this review, and in consultation with the State Lands Commission, staff determined that a lease is required for the portion of the Wildwood footbridge and trail located within State Lands jurisdiction.

Recent inspections of the Wildwood footbridge identified deterioration in several areas that require repair, including replacement or repair of segments of the decking, improvements to the railings, and maintenance of adjacent trail surfaces. These repairs are minor but necessary and are part of the Conservancy's ongoing efforts to maintain the safety of the site for the recreating public.

Staff have submitted a lease application to the State Lands Commission and is preparing the required environmental documentation in advance of the planned work. Temporary trail closures, approximately 5 days, will be necessary during construction and are tentatively planned for June 15-19, 2026. Public notifications will be issued prior to the closures and the Board will be informed if there are any changes to the schedule. Staff will continue to update the Board on the status of this lease and any additional State Lands Commission leases that may be required.


For additional information, you may direct inquiries to San Joaquin River Conservancy Chief Executive Officer, Kari Kyler Daniska, at kari.daniska@sjrc.ca.gov.



AGENDA ITEM

May 13, 2026

Item: F-3

To: San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board
From: Kari Kyler Daniska, Chief Executive Officer 
Subject: **INFORMATION ITEM:** Earth Day State Parks Forward Initiative Announcement.

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is provided for informational purposes only. No action by the San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board is required.

SUMMARY:

On April 22 — Earth Day — Governor Gavin Newsom and First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom announced *State Parks Forward*, a major initiative to expand California’s State Park System (Attachment 1). The announcement, held along the San Joaquin River at Sycamore Island, marks the largest planned expansion of the system in decades, including the creation of three new Central Valley state parks and up to 30,000 acres of additional parkland statewide.

Under this initiative, six Conservancy properties totaling approximately 874 acres will be incorporated into the new San Joaquin River Parkway State Park. This represents a significant milestone in advancing long-term public access, habitat conservation, and outdoor recreation along the San Joaquin River.

The Conservancy remains actively engaged in coordinating the management and transition of these properties to California State Parks and will continue to:

- Collaborate with California State Parks to finalize the transfer of the six Conservancy-owned properties.
- Participate in public engagement and planning for *State Parks Forward* and the San Joaquin River Parkway State Park.
- Update the Board as planning and development progress, including any additional park expansion or property transfer opportunities.
- Partner with Parks California to support *State Parks Forward*, the establishment of the San Joaquin River Parkway State Park, and the Conservancy’s mission.

For additional information, you may direct inquiries to San Joaquin River Conservancy Chief Executive Officer, Kari Kyler Daniska, at kari.daniska@sjrc.ca.gov.

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**

PRESS RELEASE

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






AGENDA ITEM

May 13, 2026

Item: F-4

To: San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board

From: Kari Kyler Daniska, Chief Executive Officer 

Subject: **INFORMATION ITEM:** Nature Based Solutions Implementation with AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps.

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is provided for informational purposes only. No action by the San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board is required.

SUMMARY:

Conservancy staff are coordinating with the Sierra Resource Conservation District (RCD) and the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) to support the implementation of nature-based solutions and habitat stewardship projects across Conservancy properties. The NCCC program provides teams of young adults who participate in service projects that advance environmental conservation, community resilience, and natural resource management. Partnership with NCCC will expand the Conservancy's capacity to implement priority on-the-ground projects while providing meaningful workforce development opportunities for emerging conservation leaders.

The Conservancy and Sierra RCD have identified several project areas appropriate for NCCC collaboration, including habitat restoration, invasive species removal, trail maintenance, river cleanup efforts, and small-scale nature-based resilience projects. These efforts directly support the Conservancy's mission to restore and enhance the San Joaquin River Parkway while promoting ecological health, public access, and community benefits.

Staff are working with Sierra RCD to finalize project scopes, schedules, and housing/logistical plans in coordination with NCCC leadership. Sierra RCD intends to apply to the NCCC program to secure a crew of 8-12 for an eight-week service term between September and December 2026.

For additional information, you may direct inquiries to San Joaquin River Conservancy Chief Executive Officer, Kari Kyler Daniska, at kari.daniska@sjrc.ca.gov.




AGENDA ITEM

May 13, 2026

Item: G-1

To: San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board

From: Kari Kyler Daniska, Chief Executive Officer 

Subject: **PRESENTATION:** Junior Parkway Steward Activity Book.

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is provided for informational purposes only. No action by the San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board is required.

SUMMARY:

Conservancy staff are pleased to announce the completion of a new *Junior Parkway Steward Activity Book*, created by one of our College Corps Fellows as part of their climate-action service hours with the Conservancy. The activity book is designed to engage children and families in learning about the San Joaquin River Parkway, the region's Native American history and cultures, and nature-based stewardship practices. Through interactive activities, conservation-themed games, and age-appropriate educational content, the book encourages youth to explore the San Joaquin River Parkway, understand its natural resources, and develop stewardship behaviors that support long-term ecological health.

The development of this activity book advances the Conservancy's goals to expand opportunities for environmental education, cultivate future stewards of the San Joaquin River Parkway, and strengthen community engagement. Staff will distribute the activity book at community events, volunteer days, and through partner organizations, with digital access offered to broaden availability and reach.

At this time, I would like to invite College Corps Fellows Emiliano Fajardo Pedraza and Manuel Iraheta Castro to share a brief presentation on the *Junior Parkway Steward Activity Book* and their service-learning experience with the San Joaquin River Conservancy.

For additional information, you may direct inquiries to San Joaquin River Conservancy Chief Executive Officer, Kari Kyler Daniska, at kari.daniska@sjrc.ca.gov.




AGENDA ITEM

May 13, 2026

Item: G-2

To: San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board

From: Kari Kyler Daniska, Chief Executive Officer 

Subject: **PRESENTATION:** Draft Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is provided for informational purposes only. No action by the San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board is required.

SUMMARY:

Conservancy staff have prepared the draft 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, and the Chief Executive Officer is presenting the draft to the Board and formally releasing it today for a 30-day public comment period. A timeline outlining the remaining steps and key milestones in the strategic planning process is provided in Attachment 1.

To support broad engagement, the Chief Executive Officer has held open office hours, met with stakeholder groups and community members, and convened an internal steering committee to guide development. The draft identifies several proposed areas of focus, including strengthening Tribal partnerships, advancing land acquisition, supporting habitat restoration, expanding equitable public access, aligning investments with Parkway development, enhancing adaptive management through science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and identifying long-term funding strategies. Three public workshops were held in Fresno and Madera counties, following regularly scheduled Board meetings, to gather additional input.

Following the public comment period and refinement of the draft, the final Strategic Plan is anticipated to be presented to the Governing Board in August 2026.


For additional information, you may direct inquiries to San Joaquin River Conservancy’s Chief Executive Officer, Kari Kyler Daniska, at kari.daniska@sjrc.ca.gov.



AGENDA ITEM

May 13, 2026

Item: G-3

To: San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board
From: Kari Kyler Daniska, Chief Executive Officer 
Subject: **ACTION ITEM:** Approve License Agreement for John Halpin.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board approve a license agreement with John Halpin for Stewardship Activities and Educational Programs.

SUMMARY:

License agreements may be issued by the San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board to an appropriate group, organization, business, or agency to allow their agents and participants to enter units, including those that are otherwise closed to the public, to conduct activities and programs for educational, recreational, tribal, resource management, and similar beneficial public service purposes.

John Halpin has requested a non-exclusive, revokable, License Agreement to enter Conservancy owned properties to conduct Stewardship Activities and Educational Programs. John has completed and passed a background check as part of the Conservancy's due-diligence process.

The new agreement, if approved by the Conservancy Governing Board, would commence upon signature and be in effect for three years. Conservancy Staff have prepared a proposed license agreement for the Conservancy Governing Boards consideration (Attachment 1). A copy of the proposed nature walk curriculum is provided as Attachment 2.

Prior to issuance, the Conservancy's Legal Counsel will review the proposed license agreement and make any necessary modifications and revisions.

For additional information, you may direct inquiries to San Joaquin River Conservancy Chief Executive Officer, Kari Kyler Daniska, at kari.daniska@sjrc.ca.gov.

Attachment 1: License Agreement with John Halpin for Stewardship Activities and Educational Programs

Attachment 2: Nature Walk Curriculum



THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
RESOURCES AGENCY
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER CONSERVANCY

LICENSE AGREEMENT
John Halpin
Stewardship and Education Programs

1. Identification of Parties.

This License Agreement is entered into upon signature by both parties between the San Joaquin River Conservancy (hereafter referred to as "Conservancy") and John Halpin (hereafter referred to as "Licensee").

2. Description of Property.

The State of California is the owner of certain real property, under the management jurisdiction of the Conservancy within the San Joaquin River Parkway, as defined in the San Joaquin River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code section 32510), situated in Fresno and Madera Counties, California (hereafter referred to as the "Property").

3. Consideration.

The consideration for this agreement is the public benefit, and the furtherance of the goals and policies of the San Joaquin River Conservancy Act to provide for conservation of and education about the natural, cultural, and recreational resources within the Parkway.

4. Grant of License.

Conservancy grants this Stewardship and Education Programs License (hereafter referred to as the "License") to enter and use the Property for the following purposes:

- a) Supervised stewardship activities, including but not limited to, litter and debris cleanup from the river and surrounding Conservancy-owned property, graffiti removal, gate security, invasive plant management, minor repairs and maintenance, reposting signs, species and aquatic monitoring, and special maintenance related to events and special activities conducted pursuant to the License; and
- b) Supervised free educational outreach, as well as recreational and field study activities, including events and programs for children, older students, and adults. Licensee shall at all times enforce the Volunteer Duty Statement and ensure that all volunteer activities are scheduled in advance with the Conservancy and posted on the Conservancy's Stewardship Calendar. Pre-activity, pre-event site reconnaissance by event coordinators shall also be scheduled in advance with the Conservancy and posted on the Stewardship Calendar. Volunteer activities shall conform to Exhibit A, Duty Statement.

Events held for the primary purpose of raising funds, including in particular events that may involve alcoholic beverages, are not covered under this License. Events held for the purpose of political campaigns and/or political fund-raising are prohibited.

Licensee may not use the Property for any other purpose or business without obtaining Conservancy's prior written consent.

5. Independent Entity.

In exercising the rights granted by, and requirements of, this License, Licensee is an independent entity, and its agents and employees are not contractors or agents of the Conservancy.

6. Term of License.

The term of this license will commence on the effective date (listed above) and remain in effect for three years from that date, unless revoked in accordance with Section 7.

7. Revocation.

Conservancy may revoke this License at will by having a written revocation notice delivered to Licensee at least 30 days prior to the termination date specified in the notice.

8. Exercise of Rights.

In exercising the rights granted under this agreement, Licensee must use reasonable care and may not unreasonably increase the burden on the Property.

9. Schedule of Use.

Licensee shall provide 72 hours' notice for special events, not to include activities listed in Exhibits B and C, to the Conservancy of the proposed date, time, and place of scheduled activities. Said notice shall be made by utilizing the Conservancy's online request form (if form becomes unavailable requests may be emailed to info@sjrc.ca.gov). Said notice shall not be deemed approved until Licensee receives written approval by Conservancy. Said advance notice shall allow the Conservancy Executive Officer to determine if the proposed use is safe and appropriate given then-known conditions at the location, and to notify any lessees, regulatory interests, or others of the date and time of use. The Executive Officer, at their sole and absolute discretion, may direct Licensee to select an alternate location or time for the event, or may withhold permission for the proposed access. Scheduled activities approved may be later barred by the Executive Officer, in their sole and absolute discretion, if site conditions change, new information about the conditions becomes available, or this License is revoked in accordance with Section 7. The Executive Officer, at their sole and absolute discretion, shall make reasonable effort to accommodate proposed authorized activities. Permission for proposed activities that are consistent with the intent and authorized purposes shall not be unreasonably withheld, nor shall previously approved scheduled uses be unreasonably barred, relocated or rescheduled.

A. K'uik'ui Ranch, Ledger Island, Sycamore Island and Van Buren Properties

Conservancy and the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust, Inc. (hereafter referred to as "Parkway Trust") have entered into an agreement obligating Parkway Trust to operate and manage K'uik'ui Ranch, Ledger, Sycamore Island and the Van Buren properties, including managing all stewardship activities performed under license to the Conservancy on the premises. The Licensee shall provide notice to Parkway Trust of the proposed date(s), time and place of any and all proposed stewardship activities on Sycamore Island and K'uik'ui Ranch. Said notice shall be made in writing via facsimile, hand delivery, mail, or email 30 days

in advance of any proposed activity. Said notice shall not be deemed approved until Licensee receives written approval by Parkway Trust. Said notice shall allow Parkway Trust to determine if the proposed use is safe and appropriate given conditions at the location, and to notify the Conservancy, any lessees, regulatory interests, or others of the date and time of use. Parkway Trust or the Conservancy, in either's sole and absolute discretion, may direct Licensee to select an alternate location or time for the activity, or may withhold permission for the proposed access. Scheduled activities approved may be later barred by Parkway Trust or the Conservancy, in either's sole and absolute discretion, if site conditions change, new information about the conditions becomes available, or this License is revoked in accordance with Section 7.

The Parkway Trust and the Conservancy shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate proposed authorized activities. Permission for proposed activities that are consistent with the intent and authorized purposes of this License shall not be unreasonably withheld, nor shall previously approved scheduled uses be unreasonably barred, relocated or rescheduled.

B. Lanes Property – Exhibit B

C. Wildwood Native Park – Exhibit C

10. Notices.

Any notices or statements herein requested or required to be given by one party to the other shall be in writing. Said notice shall not be deemed received until Licensee receives written confirmation of receipt of notice from the Conservancy. Mailed notices should be sent to the Conservancy at PO Box 28338 Fresno, CA 93729, and, if to John Halpin at 6312 N Cleo Ave, Fresno Ca 93722. Either party hereto may by written notice change the address to which such notices or statements may be sent.

11. Payment.

In lieu of payments for site access, Licensee shall provide the Conservancy with operations and maintenance services that are outlined in Exhibits B and C, Property Maintenance Plans.

12. Special Provisions.

Licensee shall provide adequate supervision of each event from setup throughout event until cleanup, by assigning an employee or officer as the event supervisor. The supervisor shall perform a reconnaissance of the site immediately prior to use and shall be responsible for ensuring that potential hazards are avoided to the extent possible, including but not limited to any associated with vehicle access, parking, roadways, trails, bridges, other improvements, river and pond banks, eroded slopes, debris, vectors, and venomous animals. The supervisor must maintain communications capability by ensuring there is a functional mobile phone in his or her possession during the event. The supervisor shall ensure the participants stay within agreed upon boundaries for the activity, and that they do not stray into other areas. The supervisor shall ensure the site is properly closed and locked after the event.

Minors participating as volunteers or as students must be enrolled in Licensee's programs and be supervised at all times by qualified staff. Adult volunteers must be enrolled as such with the Licensee.

Licensee shall ensure that all wastes generated by its activities under this License are properly removed from the Property and disposed at its expense.

Licensee shall make adequate provisions for employee and participant restrooms and sanitation.

At the Conservancy Executive Officer's sole discretion, portable restrooms, at the expense of Licensee, may be required for longer or larger events.

Licensee shall cooperate with the Conservancy to ensure that the burden of planning, expense, and coordination with lessees and other agencies, related to the activities authorized by this License is born by Licensee.

Licensee shall complete a Site Condition Report and provide it to the Conservancy after every site visit, event, and activity.

All fishing license requirements apply.

All boating and waterways regulations apply. For canoes and kayaks of any length one I, II, III, or V Coast Guard-approved Personal Flotation Device for each person must be on board the vessel. Further information regarding water safety can be found at <http://www.dbw.ca.gov/>.

13. Post-Activity Reports.

Licensee shall provide the Conservancy a Property Inspection Report after every activity. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the number of participants and volunteer hours, location and general condition of the Property, and brief activity description. The Conservancy will provide the reporting format.

14. Improvements.

Licensee shall place no improvements of any kind or nature on the Property without the written permission of the Conservancy first had and obtained. All approved improvements will become property of the Conservancy.

15. Property Damage.

Licensee shall be responsible for any and all damage to the Property, including but not limited to fences, gates, and facilities therein, caused by the use thereof by Licensee.

16. Indemnification and Insurance.

A. Conservancy.

The term "Conservancy," as used in this section, includes the San Joaquin River Conservancy, its members, officers, agents and/or employees, and the successors and assigns of any of them.

B. General.

Licensee agrees to release, hold harmless, indemnify, and defend (with counsel approved by Conservancy) Conservancy from and against all liability, cost, and expense (including, without limitation, attorney's fees, in addition to costs of suit and judgment) for loss of or damage to any property or loss of the use thereof or for injury to or death of any person when arising or resulting from:

- (1) The use of the Property by Licensee, their agents, employees, or any third party (other than an agent, employee or invitee of Conservancy), or
- (2) The Licensee material breach of any provision of this License, to the extent not caused or contributed to by the negligence, active or passive or otherwise, of Conservancy, its employees, agents, invitees or any other person.

C. Environmental Impairment.

Should any discharge, leakage, spillage, emission, or pollution of any type occur upon or from the Property due Licensee's use and occupancy thereof, Licensee at its expense, shall be obligated to clean all the property affected thereby, whether owned or controlled by Conservancy or any third person, to the satisfaction of Conservancy (insofar as the property owned or controlled by Conservancy is concerned) and any governmental body having jurisdiction over the subject matter.

Licensee shall indemnify, hold harmless, and defend Conservancy against all liability, cost, and expense (including, without limitation, any fines, penalties, judgments, litigation costs and attorney's fees) incurred by Conservancy as a result of Licensee's breach of this section, or as a result of any such discharge, leakage, spillage, emission or pollution, regardless of whether such liability, cost or expense arises during or after the License term, except to the extent the liability, cost or expense is caused by the Conservancy.

D. Insurance.

Throughout the term of this License, Licensee shall provide and maintain comprehensive general liability insurance, including but not limited to bodily injury and property damage insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 per occurrence (\$2,000,000 general aggregate, if used) and automobile liability insurance, for liability assumed by Licensee under this License. Licensee shall insure, or be a qualified self-insured, with respect to the applicable laws relating to workers' compensation coverage (California Labor Code Section 3700), for all of employees, students, and participants engaged in the authorized activities on or about the Conservancy's facilities.

Such insurance shall be obtained from a company or companies authorized to transact business in the State of California. Licensee shall provide the Conservancy with an endorsement or certificate with such policy or policies specifying that:

- (a) The State of California, the San Joaquin River Conservancy, and its members, officers, agents and employees, are included as additional insureds for any liability resulting from, growing out of, or in any way connected with or incident to this License; and
- (b) the insurance company or companies will provide the San Joaquin River Conservancy with a thirty-day written notice before canceling the insurance policy or policies acquired pursuant to this paragraph before reducing any liability coverage thereunder.

Prior to commencing work under this License, Licensee shall furnish Conservancy with a copy of said endorsements or certificates.

Nothing in this License is intended to create in the public or any member thereof rights as a third-party beneficiary hereunder.

17. License Non-assignable.

This License is personal to Licensee and shall not be assigned. Any attempt to assign the License shall automatically terminate it. No legal title or leasehold interest in the Property is created or vested in Licensee by the grant of this License.

18. Termination of Occupancy.

Not applicable.

19. Compliance with Laws.

Licensee, at their expense, shall comply with all applicable laws, regulations, rules and orders with respect to the use of the Property, regardless of when they become or became effective, including, without limitation, those relating to health, safety, noise, environmental protection, waste disposal, and water and air quality, and furnish satisfactory evidence of such compliance upon request of Conservancy.

Licensee shall obtain and comply with the terms and provisions of all licenses, permits, and approvals required by any local, regional, state, or federal organization with authority to regulate the activities of licensee under this License. The licensee shall comply with all regulations adopted by the Conservancy.

20. Media Contacts.

Licensee shall obtain Conservancy approval prior to contacting representatives from the media regarding events scheduled on Conservancy property.

21. Default.

Licensee shall be in default under this License if licensee fails or refuses to perform any covenant or condition.

If Licensee fails to cure a default within five (5) days after notice from Conservancy to do so, Conservancy shall have the right, without further notice and in addition to any other remedies Conservancy may have at law or equity, to revoke this License forthwith.

If either party takes any steps or brings an action to compel performance of or to recover for breach of any term of this License, the losing party shall pay reasonable attorney's fees of the prevailing party, in addition to the amount of judgment and costs.

22. Nonwaiver.

Conservancy's failure to enforce or exercise its rights under any term, condition, or covenant of this License shall not be construed as a waiver of such rights or such term, covenant, or condition.

23. Entire Agreement.

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between Conservancy and Licensee relating to the License. Any prior agreements, promises, negotiations, or representations not expressly set forth in this License are of no force and effect. Any amendment to this License shall be of no force and effect unless it is in writing and signed by the Conservancy and Licensee.

CONSERVANCY:

Date:

San Joaquin River Conservancy
Kari Kyler Daniska, Chief Executive Officer

Date:

John Halpin

The Role of Cycles in Nature

A Nature Walk Topic for People of All Ages

By: John Halpin

A Few Notes on Nature Walks

- Remind the group to raise quiet hands when asked questions.
- As is true in every group activity, there is no one person who is smarter than the group. Everyone knows something the others do not.
- Remember, incorrect answers give us information about what the answer is not, which can lead us to the correct answer. Guesses count, that's how we learn.
- If this is a family nature walk with children and adults, look to the children first for answers before calling on adults.

Introduction

By the end of this nature walk you will have a basic understanding of how natural cycles work, how they interact and how our daily lives are negatively impacting the survival of all life on earth.

Q. What is nature? (This may be discussed if you feel it's appropriate and time permits).

A. Some may think of nature as a place, but in fact, nature is everything! We think of it as a place only because we have become so far removed from it that we feel we must go somewhere to reach and experience it. Think about this, every breath we take is the same breath taken by every living thing on the planet, past and present. Every drop of water we drink is the same water that has quenched the thirst of countless plants and animals for nearly a billion years. Every bite of food that passes our lips has been part of the fabric of nature for eons. Nature is in us, and all around us and without it we simply would not exist! Nature is life, to be admired, celebrated and above all, respected.

Natural Cycles

Q. What is a cycle?

A. A cycle is described as a process with a series of steps that when all the steps are complete the process starts over again.

The water cycle is a prime example. On a clear day the sun's rays warm the surface of any body of water, the ocean, a lake, a pond even a puddle on the ground. As the water evaporates it mixes with the warm air and rises high in the sky where it cools and condenses into clouds. If it cools enough, condensation becomes so great the air can no longer support the water droplets and they fall to the ground as precipitation. The resultant runoff replenishes the original sources, and the process begins again. The actual cycle is much more complex, with countless variations for each step of the process.

Q. Can you think of any variations of the water cycle?

A. Discuss variations of all steps in the cycle, evaporation, transpiration, condensation, and precipitation. Also discuss where water may flow and be stored once it reaches the ground. You can reference our, Incredible Journey activity for examples.

Q. Can anyone tell me what fresh water is? *(This may be discussed if you feel it's appropriate and time permits).*

A. Fresh water refers to the water found on land that is free from the salt found in the oceans.

The water cycle is critical to all life on the planet. The process of evaporation provides water free from contamination such as salt, which sustains life in the ocean but is toxic to life on land. However, fresh water is only as clean as the path it travels to its destination. The ground beneath our feet can act as a filter to remove many contaminants from water, so long as the soil is uncontaminated. Plants can also remove contaminants so long as those contaminants are not toxic to the plants themselves or to the animals that consume them.

Note: Experience and feedback from participants has taught me to begin the walk at this point and inject the rest of the topics as they present themselves or at applicable points along the trail. Also, see, “**Nature Walk**”, topics beginning on page 3, for where to begin the walk and location specific topics to discuss along the trail.

Let’s discuss another example of a natural cycle.

Q. Pick up a leaf off the ground and ask, “Why isn’t this leaf on a tree?”

A. It’s the dead of winter and the leaves fell from the tree last autumn.

Q. Is the tree dead?

A. No, it’s simply dormant.

In winter, the low angle of the sun creates shorter days and longer nights, the process of photosynthesis becomes inefficient and deciduous trees, trees that drop their leaves in the fall, shut down to conserve energy. In colder climates going dormant also protects the tree from freezing and prevents damage from heavy wet snow.

Q. Is the leaf dead?

A. Yes, it is.

Q. Does it still serve a purpose?

A. Yes it does. It still contains energy, food for other living organisms.

Bacteria, worms, insects, fungi will all work to break down or decompose this leaf into basic nutrients, food for the tree in the spring. The long nights of winter will eventually give way to the warm days of spring and the tree will awaken. The roots of the tree begin to pull nutrients and moisture from the soil around it and deliver them to the branches above. Eventually, buds on the branches give way to leaves, then the tree is ready for another hot bright summer. And when autumn returns and the leaves fall, the cycle ends only to begin again.

Just like the water cycle this cycle has many variations.

Q. What variations can you think of?

Let’s explore a few. During the summer, when the leaves are green, they can come under attack. Insect larva, such as a caterpillar, rely on juicy green leaves for sustenance. Once they’ve had their fill, they build their cocoons in preparation for their transformation into butterflies. After their transformation they fly off to do whatever their species is designed to do. All through their lives their droppings are left behind to decompose and once again become nutrients for not only the tree but any life along the way. And when they die, their bodies will also decompose just like the leaf.

The caterpillar and the butterfly could, at any point in their lives, fall victim to passing predators. Such as, a bird, a lizard, a toad, or whatever creature may find them delicious, and in turn their droppings will be scattered wherever life takes them.

So, let’s return to our original leaf and the tree it came from. Think about the cycles we just discussed and imagine all the other living things in and around our tree.

Q. What other animals might you find in and around a tree?

Imagine ants scurrying around its branches searching for food. The grasshopper dining on whatever plant life may be growing under it. Maybe our tree flowers in the spring so think about all the bees and other insects gathering pollen. Imagine the countless birds that visit this tree every year. The squirrel burrowing beneath the tree’s roots and gathering nuts as they fall to the ground.

So now you begin to get a sense of the interaction of cycles on a single tree. All these living things and cycles working together unaware that each one benefits the other. If you multiply all those living things and cycles by the number of trees on the planet, you can begin to understand the incredibly complex fabric of nature.

Every living thing on the planet is dependent on the death of every other living thing on the planet, and the complex fabric of nature is like a crazy, beautiful conveyor belt running back on itself: Birth life death decomposition, birth life death decomposition, it goes on and on and on. The basis for all natural life cycles comes from those four steps, and the complexity of nature comes from the diversity of life itself.

So, I would like everyone to think about cycles in nature and those four steps as we walk along the trail. Look for other examples of how cycles interact with each other and all the possibilities and combinations of natural interactions we may encounter on this brief excursion today.

Nature Walk

River Center

At the River Center I like to begin the walk gathered around the Hidden Homes Trail welcome sign that shows a map of the pond and all the animals that live in and around it.

Q. Can anyone tell me what three cycles dominate all the other natural cycles on earth?

(Hint: One cycle takes exactly one day to complete, and another takes exactly one year to complete).

A. That's correct, the earth's rotation on its axis, and its orbit around the sun.

Q. What about the third cycle?

A. Yes, the cycle of the moon.

Question the children of the group on what mechanisms drive those cycles: The rotation of the earth on its axis, the tilt of the axis with respect to its orbit around the sun, and the orbit of the moon around the earth.

Q. How do you think those cycles will affect animals in and around this pond?

A. Pick out animals on the map and discuss their relationship to those two cycles, nocturnal and seasonal migratory animals.

Look for other examples of cycles while on the nature walk. Some examples include:

- The pond itself provides water and nutrients for plants in and around it.
- Aquatic plants work to filter water to keep the pond clean.
- Aquatic insects lay their eggs in the pond and the larvae, nymphs and adult insects provide food for other animals as well. Such as: Birds, frogs, fish, etc.
- The plants provide food for animals. Such as: rabbits, squirrels, mice, etc.
- Smaller animals provide food for larger, predatory animals. Such as: Hawks and other raptors, possums, raccoons, etc.
- Discuss how the phases of the moon affect wildlife. Predators and prey are easier to spot, visually, when the moon is full. Some animals prefer moonless nights to hunt or forage and rely on other senses to locate food.

Discuss how seasonal changes affect the health of the pond. The heat of summer dries out vegetation, and algae blooms in the water force animals to look elsewhere for food. Cooler temperatures and rain in winter work to revitalize the pond, allowing seasonal residents to return. All these cycles work in concert to keep this micro-eco system in balance so all life in and around our pond thrives.

Discuss how this pond was part of a reclamation project, that's why you see irrigation tubing that was used to establish immature vegetation. It's kind of a field of dreams, where humans planted most of the vegetation and as it grew and matured the animals came here on their own. When Vulcan

finally ceases operations at the plant next door this pond will experience more seasonal water level fluctuations, which is a more sustainable natural state. This pond is an example of what the Parkway is doing for this section of the San Joaquin River, attempting to restore the riparian lands to their original natural state. In other words, re-establishing natural cycles that were disrupted by building Friant Dam and by the gravel mining operation. I use the word attempting because we can't restore the river to its original state; that would require tearing down Friant Dam, which would be an unpopular and monumental task.

Lost Lake

At lost lake the walk begins at the trail entrance, located at the south end of the public road. If you walk through the picnic area on your way to the trail it's good to point out the cork trees and talk about the look and feel of the bark. Ask if they know what kind of tree it is and discuss the many uses of cork. Also point out the pine and sycamore trees, discuss the pods and cones and how seeds are dispersed and the differences between the two trees.

Here are a few topics for discussion on the trail:

- Point out the missile toe and discuss the difference between parasitic and symbiotic plants and animals. Missile toe berries feed birds that in turn disperse seeds in their droppings. This is a good example of how plants and animals contribute to natural cycles.
- Valley Oak Apple Galls are formed when a gall wasp lays her eggs under the bark of a tree branch. A chemical, released by the eggs, causes the tree to form the gall and the hatched larvae move in to feed on the interior. The galls can form in a matter of days, are typically green then turn red or brown as they harden. Other insects and fungi can penetrate the gall during and after the outer skin hardens and feed on the gall interior and, or its residents. Galls can have multiple insects and fungi feeding on it at the same time. The wasp larvae metamorphose into pupae and then wasps, where they bore a hole in the skin to escape.
- Grinding holes, also known as bedrock mortars, are scattered about the large boulders along the river. You can find them right along the river's edge and up on the bank to the east, which illustrates the seasonal water level fluctuations before Friant Dam was built. I like to take people up on the rocks and ask if they notice anything unusual. When the holes are spotted, I ask, does anyone know how these depressions were formed? Then discuss how the local Native American Indians used stones to first crack open, then crush acorns to make a soup and flour for cakes. But first they needed to be soaked in boiling water to release tannins that make them bitter. This was done by placing hot rocks in a basket of water, rinsing several times until the water was clear. I've been told that it takes 100 years to grind each inch of depth, so we can guess how old these holes may be. A drawback to the grinding of food in these holes is that sand ends up mixed with the acorn flour, which slowly grinds away the teeth of everyone who eats it, which results in shortening their life span.
- Mugwort grows along the river and was essential to Native American life and traditions. I usually pick one or two leaves and pass them around the group so they can smell its sweet, sage-like aroma. Mugwort has various medicinal purposes: Burning it drove off insects and inhaling the smoke helped ease the symptoms of a cold or flu. Drinking tea made from Mugwort was used to relieve stomachache, urinary problems, asthma, and rheumatism. Some tribes called it dream sage, claiming it promoted healthy, more vivid dreams and drove off evil spirits. The Mi-Wuk tribe used Mugwort to hide their scent when setting out on hunting parties. The men would spend several days in a large hut preparing for the hunt. They would share stories of past hunts, make or repair weapons, chant and pray to the hunting spirits to guide them to a successful kill. They would scrape the sweat from their skin using the rib bones of a previous kill and rub Mugwort leaves on their bodies to cover their scent. Once on the hunt, they would use

the hollowed-out skull and carcass of an animal from a previous kill as a disguise to fool animals into thinking an area was safe. When the unsuspecting animal approached, they would leap up and kill their prey with a spear or bow and arrow.

- Graffiti and litter abound at Lost Lake. It's a good idea to survey the trail before the hike to see what new horror has befallen the graffiti covered rocks, mainly obscenities. If there are children on the hike, I will try to avoid the most offensive areas. I take this opportunity to discuss the effects of such disrespect on natural cycles, beyond just the ugly. The act of spray painting carries harmful chemicals on the wind that negatively affect anything they come in contact with. Eventually the dried paint will be rubbed off or flake off and end up in the water, either the river or the ground water. This is water we drink and some of those chemicals cannot be removed at the treatment plant, so you're drinking it. I stopped using spray paint around the house years ago just for that reason. If I can't brush it on or roll it on, I don't use it. It's as simple as that!

Sycamore Island

Nature walks for sixth grade field trips in late winter and early spring begin at the pavilion at Old Muddy, a pond located about a quarter mile east of the bait shop. The nature walk trail begins at the service road that connects to the main road coming up to the pavilion and ends near the top of the bluff to the northwest of the pond.

- Lupine is very prolific around the pavilion parking area and blooms in late February through March. Get close and show everyone the progression of the flowers at the end of each branch to the seed pods at the base. You can pull open a flower to reveal the wolf's claw inside. Lupine is found all around the world. This variety is blue and is the most common, with Yellow Bush and California False Lupine found along the Pacific coastal ranges.
- Mugwort and Missile toe are found along the trail so you can use the Lost Lake notes above to discuss their natural cycles.
- The draw to the right of the trail is full of dead, dying and young cotton wood trees. I like to take this opportunity to discuss the leaf from a tree natural cycle described above and you can include the role of the fallen trees in providing cover and habitat for many animals in the area. I have seen Kites, Red tail and Cooper's hawks hunting in this draw. On many occasions deer have been scared out of the brush by nature walks just like this one, so be on the lookout!
- Lichen grows on the shrubs along the trail so take this opportunity to talk about the difference between parasitic and symbiotic relationships in nature.
- Sycamore trees to the left of the trail are always ripe with seed pods. I usually pick one off the ground or from the tree and talk about seed dispersal. Break it open and pass it around so everyone can see the seeds.

When you reach the top of the hill, just below the bluff you can talk about these topics:

- If you look to the east, you can see Table Mountain and if it's clear the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Looking west you may be able to see the coastal range. Together they comprise the San Joaquin River water shed. Approximately 15,600 square miles of mountain sides and central valley draining into one river. The second largest river and watershed in California, behind the Sacramento River.
- The effects of Friant Dam on natural cycles are far reaching. The dam was built in the 1940's to serve as flood control and a more dependable source of irrigation water for the valley. The most severe and far-reaching effect the dam has had is the total destruction of salmon

migration to and from the Pacific Ocean. Upwards of 70% of the holding and spawning waters for Chinook salmon, along the Sierra and Cascade Mountain ranges, have been lost to industrialized human activity. Nearly 100% has been lost along the San Joaquin River; I say nearly, because efforts are underway to reintroduce salmon to the river below Friant Dam. Prior to 1940, salmon runs were so immense they were described as waves, like ocean surf, traveling upstream. Tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of fish driving to spawn in the colder waters of the high Sierra. Providing food for wildlife on their way up and nutrients, from their rotting flesh, for the valley on the way down. Once hatched they again provided more sustenance along the river, the Sacramento River delta, and the Pacific Ocean. The survivors would return from the ocean, years later, to complete the cycle. Sure, the dam has provided water for farms in the central valley and food for the nation, but one has to wonder what the valley could produce if we would have left the river alone.

Owl Hollow

This walk is geared towards an older crowd, middle school and up. We will explore in depth how Industrialized Human Activity has had a cumulative impact on, not only the river and valley but, the entire planet. We are at the edge of destruction of the planet's ecosystem and it's not just about climate change. Having a fundamental understanding of natural cycles and how we are disrupting them every day, with nearly everything we do, is key to understanding the urgency for which we now must act.

- The effects of Friant Dam on natural cycles from the Sycamore Island topics above, can be used for discussion with the following additional information:
Estimates from the mid-1930s show between 200,000 to 500,000 salmon migrated up the San Joaquin River annually. Take the conservative number of 200,000, with an average salmon of 1 meter in length and 20lbs each, that's an estimated 4 million pounds of biomass transferred from the ocean to the river each year. There were four observed runs, winter, spring, fall and late fall. Beginning with the gold rush around 1850, followed by the diversion of water for agricultural and municipal use, and the increase in human activity along the river, salmon numbers dwindled and eventually went to zero following the completion of the Friant Dam Project in the early 1940's. It's important to note that biomass is a two-way street! The question is; how much biomass, created by natural cycles upstream of the dam has been trapped, behind the dam itself, underwater, that at present is unavailable to natural cycles in the central valley downstream? Before there were manmade obstructions on the river, biomass was free to flow in both directions providing important nutrients to all life within the 15,600 square mile San Joaquin River basin.
- Q. What animal is featured on the California state flag? A. The grizzly bear, which hasn't been seen in California in nearly a hundred years. Food for thought!
- If you walk down to the river camp swimming hole, just upstream from the grove, you will find willows growing along the bank, you can take this opportunity to talk about beavers. Beavers are prolific builders of habitat. Beaver dams provide calm water for nutrients and sediment to settle, which then become fertile ground for plants to grow. In fact, over time a narrow steep gorge can be transformed into wide meadow, dotted with ponds, providing habitat for a myriad of plant and animal species. Such places have been found to provide wildlife protection from wildfires, as the highly saturated plant life and ponds resist the ravages of fire. Beavers along this stretch of river don't build many dams because of human activity. However, we did spot an active dam about a mile downstream from here last year on a canoe trip. A small side channel was blocked off and there were signs they had been feeding on the willows along the bank.

- Birds are a vital part of natural cycles because their movements and habits spread seeds and organic materials over large areas, and they help to control insect and animal populations. Recently, numerous scientific publications have been reporting a 29% drop in bird populations in North America over the past 50 years. Sighting causes ranging from the reduction of insect populations, domestic and ferrule cats, solar and wind power generation even the collision of birds with glass covered buildings.
- If you take a walk along the road around the pond East of Owl Hollow, you can discuss the reclamation of that pond and compare it to the active gravel pit to the South. Vulcan has an agreement with the State of California to reclaim the land around the river after operations cease. They have been partnering with the parkway to ensure that process meets state standards and is preparing to reclaim the gravel pit to the south. We're not sure exactly what it will look like once complete but, if the East Pond is any indication, I'm sure it will be a welcome addition the riparian lands here along the river.

Humankind

So where do we humans fit into the fabric of nature? Well, to understand how we fit today, you have to go back about 200 years. Prior to the discovery of fossil fuels, humans relied on natural sunlight for all their energy needs. We burned wood to heat our homes, used animals for transportation and work, and our food was grown organically.

The Native Americans were acutely aware of their impact on nature. Some Indian tribes moved from place to place because they knew if they stayed in one place too long, they would affect too many natural cycles, which would make it difficult to find the things they needed to survive. They only took what they needed and when they left, they strived to return their temporary home to its natural state before they arrived.

The discovery of coal, around the turn of the 19th century, changed all that. Coal, crude oil and natural gas are made up of dead, decaying plant matter that has been buried underground for millions of years. Because that organic material has been stored, it has not been part of normal natural cycles and nature has evolved over time to compensate. Industrialized human activity has been re-introducing that material over a very short period, too short to allow the broken natural cycles to reestablish themselves. Also, burning of those materials completely changes and opens those once closed cycles. This is the basis for what the scientific community is calling Global Warming.

But it's not just about global warming, it's about all human activity for the past 200 years. Every day our activities contribute to the disruption of countless natural cycles. Everything we buy, every trip in our vehicles, every item we purchase made from single use materials and then discard, are adding to the disruption of natural cycles. Every road we build, every insect that hits the windshield of our car, every tree we cut down in the name of prosperity, contributes directly to the unraveling of nature's fabric. It's only a matter of time before the earth's entire ecological system collapses.

Here's a prime example. Pick up any piece of litter lying on the ground and think about where it came from. Think about what it's made from and what its purpose was. Raw materials were used to manufacture that trash. If it was a food wrapper think about what was in it and what resources were used to make that item. How much energy and effort were put into delivering that item and its packaging to the store where it was purchased. Think about the energy used to purchase the item, drive it home, consume the contents and then discard it without thinking about any of that. So now you have picked it up and put it in the trash, that's no guarantee that it will make it to its destination. If it's recyclable and you put it in the proper bin it could still end up in a landfill because our recycling system is incomplete, most items are put on barges and shipped to countries that have little or no oversight for proper disposal. If it ends up in a landfill think of the energy used to transport it there, bury it in the ground where it may take hundreds of years to break down into something that may or may not be

included into natural cycles. Now, think about all the trash generated in this country in a single day and how it has affected or will affect the environment. Multiply that by all the trash generated in the past 200 years and you begin to understand the rather large affect we have had on the planet. And that's just trash! Think about everything else we do every day that are not part of or are a disruption to natural cycles.

Chief Seattle of the Suquamish and Duwamish Indian tribes of the Pacific Northwest is reported to have said, "Humankind did not weave the web of life, we are but a single thread in it. What we do to the web we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect."

So where do we go from here?

The world we have created has become almost completely detached from the natural cycles that brought us here. We need to restore, as much as humanly possible, the fabric of nature back to the point it was 200 years ago. We need to reconnect with nature in the same way Native Americans were connected.

It's time to reestablish the difference between what we want, and what we truly need. We need clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, shelter and energy to move us through our daily lives. And we need to supply those things in a way that uses natural cycles sustainably.

We need to reconnect our children with the boundless beauty of nature and the natural processes that have driven evolution for eons. This is not just about our children's future or their children's future, it's about the future generations of every living thing on the planet.

Notes for nature walk guides:

The goal here is simple; enlighten the audience on how dependent we are on natural cycles and how disrupting one cycle can have far reaching effects on many others.


The material presented here is only for reference, you are welcome to use it, insert your insights and knowledge, or develop your own examples of natural cycles.



AGENDA ITEM

May 13, 2026

Item: G-4

To: San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board
From: Kari Kyler Daniska, Chief Executive Officer 
Subject: **ACTION ITEM:** Approve Prop 4 Funding Request for River West – Core Project.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended the Conservancy Governing Board approve up to \$5,115,000 in Prop 4 bond funds and authorize the Chief Executive Officer to execute a grant agreement with the City of Fresno for the River West Fresno, Eaton Trail Extension – Core Project.

BACKGROUND:

In September 2021, the Conservancy Governing Board authorized up to \$3,104,831.00 in bond funds to the City of Fresno for the purpose of completing final engineering designs and securing necessary permits for the River West Fresno Eaton Trail Extension Project – Core Project (Core Project).

The Wildlife Conservation Board approved the River West Project and awarded the grant funds on November 18, 2021, and issued the notice to proceed to the City of Fresno on January 7, 2022.

The proposed trail extension will extend the existing Lewis S. Eaton Trail by approximately 2.4 miles, beginning near the Perrin Avenue alignment at Highway 41 and extending to Spano Park, located within the City of Fresno. The trail will feature a 22-foot-wide corridor, including a 12-foot-wide paved path, a parallel eight-foot-wide hard natural surface for equestrian use, and a two-foot-wide shoulder.

In addition to the trail itself, the project includes three formal access points with public parking facilities located at Perrin Avenue (Core Project), Riverview Drive (Alternative 1), and North Palm Avenue (Alternative 5b).

On September 29, 2022, the Fresno City Council approved a contract with Provost and Pritchard Consulting Group to develop the final engineering design and assist with permitting for the project. Currently, the City of Fresno and Provost and Pritchard are in the final stages of completing the engineering designs and have initiated the permitting process required for project implementation.

SUMMARY:

The City of Fresno has completed 95% designs, and the revised construction cost estimate for the entire Fresno for the River West Fresno, Eaton Trail Extension is currently \$23,274,551. The revised construction cost estimate for the Core Project is approximately \$13,663,000. These estimated costs are anticipated to continually increase over time.

The Conservancy has previously approved \$172,000 in Prop 40 bond funds, and \$5,550,000 in Prop 68 bond funds for the Core Project. In Fiscal Year 2026–27, the City of Fresno intends to contribute \$2,000,000 million in Measure C funds and \$1,500,000 in Measure P funds towards Core Project.

During Fiscal Year 2025–26, the Conservancy received approval from the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for its Proposition 4 guidelines through the emergency regulation process. Following OAL approval, the Conservancy released a Letter of Intent solicitation for funding applications. The City of Fresno submitted a Letter of Intent and after review, was subsequently invited to submit a full application (Attachment 1).

Staff recommends that the Conservancy Board approve up to \$5,115,000 in Prop 4 bond funds and authorize the Chief Executive Officer to execute a grant agreement with the City of Fresno for the Core Project. This grant agreement will fully fund the construction and implementation of the Core Project.

The City of Fresno is committed to identifying value engineering opportunities with the Conservancy to reduce project construction costs. Staff will continue to update the San Joaquin River Conservancy Governing Board as design of the Fresno for the River West Fresno, Eaton Trail Extension is finalized and planning and construction progresses.

Staff will continue to work with the Department of Finance and Department of General Services to obtain delegation or project management services for the construction of West Fresno Eaton Trail Extension Project - Alternative 5b, Alternative 1, and the bus turnaround and explore other funding sources in coordination with the City of Fresno.

For additional information, you may direct inquiries to San Joaquin River Conservancy Chief Executive Officer, Kari Kyler Daniska, at kari.daniska@sjrc.ca.gov.