

2026 to 2030

San Joaquin River Conservancy

Strategic Plan



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Executive Summary

The San Joaquin River Conservancy proudly presents its first Strategic Plan—a milestone in our commitment to conservation, education, recreation, and community engagement.

California's Central Valley is one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world, offering opportunities for habitat restoration, low-impact recreation, education, and long-term stewardship. Building on the San Joaquin River Parkway Master Plan and its 2018 Update, this Strategic Plan will guide our work for the next four years.

For nearly 35 years, the Conservancy has focused on acquiring and enhancing land to restore riparian, floodplain, and other habitats, while conserving both natural and cultural resources. Our work has also supported the development and management of public lands for low-impact recreation and environmental education, in ways that are compatible with long-term resource protection. In recent years, our scope has expanded to include property operations and maintenance, habitat restoration projects, and efforts to improve public access—such as opening new areas to visitors, adding visitor amenities, and planning trail extensions and connections to the Lewis S. Eaton Trail.

This Strategic Plan provides a clear outline to help the Conservancy pursue its mission with focus and adaptability—especially as we enter an era of limited resources. It sets strategic goals and implementation strategies to meet current needs and seize emerging opportunities.

Developed through extensive workshops and open discussions, this plan reflects shared values and a collective vision for equitably stewarding the San Joaquin River Parkway. We extend our deepest gratitude to the Conservancy Governing Board, Conservancy staff, California Native American Tribes, and a broad range of partners and community members who contributed their time, insights, and expertise to this process. Your participation has been essential in shaping a plan that will benefit nature, enrich communities, and guide our work.

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read 'Kari Kyler Daniska', written in a cursive style.

Kari Kyler Daniska – Chief Executive Officer

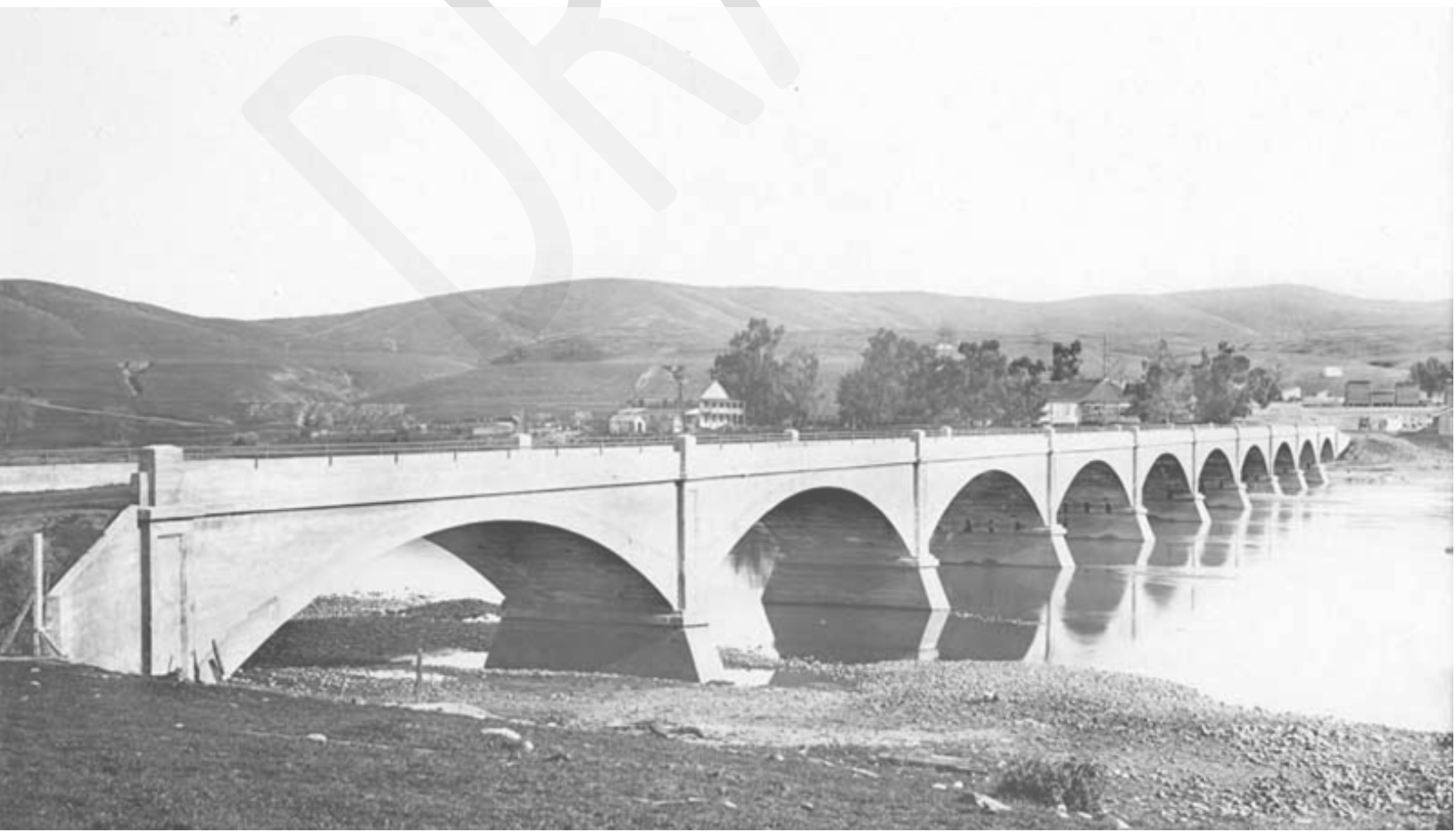
History of the Conservancy

The vision for the San Joaquin River Parkway began in 1985, when local residents voiced concerns about rapid urban growth in the Fresno-Madera region and proposed development in the San Joaquin River bottomlands. In response, the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust (Parkway) was incorporated in 1988 and launched a formal planning process that led to the creation of the San Joaquin River Parkway and Environs Conceptual Plan in 1989.

Building on the momentum of this foundational work, then-State Assemblymember Jim Costa (now Congressman) secured approval for Assembly Bill 3121, which established the San Joaquin River Parkway Task Force. This collaborative group of 25 agencies and organizations held numerous community workshops and developed the Parkway Task Force Plan, published in 1992. Among its key recommendations was the formation of a dedicated state agency – the San Joaquin River Conservancy (Conservancy).

The Conservancy was officially established later that year through Assembly Bill 2452 (Costa). Following environmental review, the Parkway Task Force Plan was adopted by the Conservancy in December 1997 as the Interim San Joaquin River Parkway Master Plan. This plan became the guiding document for the Conservancy's work in land acquisition, habitat restoration, and public access for low-impact recreation.

In 2012, the Conservancy initiated a comprehensive update to the Master Plan, which was completed in 2018. This updated plan continues to serve as the primary planning document for the San Joaquin River Parkway, reflecting the Conservancy's evolving role in conservation, education, recreation, and community engagement.



Conservancy Mission, Goals, and Jurisdiction

The Conservancy is an agency of the State of California, created to acquire and manage public lands within the San Joaquin River Parkway (Figure 1). Its mission encompasses the management, operation, administration, and maintenance of the San Joaquin River Parkway and its facilities. The Conservancy also acquires land and water areas along the river corridor—from the river bottomlands to the surrounding bluffs—to support conservation, environmental education, low-impact recreation, and community engagement.

Goals of the Conservancy

- **Land Acquisition**
Acquire approximately 5,900 acres from willing sellers for San Joaquin River Parkway purposes, including:
 - ~4,000 acres in Fresno County
 - ~1,250 acres in Madera County
- **Habitat Preservation and Restoration**
Protect and restore the riparian corridor along the San Joaquin River, extending from Friant Dam to Highway 99.
- **Conservation, Education, and Recreation**
Promote conservation and environmental education while providing low-impact recreational opportunities—particularly by developing a continuous 22-mile trail—through collaboration with community partners.
- **Resource Protection**
Protect natural and cultural resources in ways that support and enhance low-impact recreation.
- **Preservation of Open Space**
Protect underdeveloped areas of the river bottom, maintaining them as natural open space for ecological and public benefit.
- **Land Use and Management**
Establish land use and management policies that improve the ecological health of the river corridor and contribute to the quality of life in the Fresno-Madera metropolitan area.

The jurisdiction of the Conservancy consists of land and water areas acquired for use within the San Joaquin River Parkway whether by purchase or lease; other public lands operated by the Conservancy on behalf of another public agency; and private lands which are in a land mitigation bank or which are adjacent to the San Joaquin River Parkway and downstream from the Highway 99 crossing and for which the owner desires the Conservancy's management and protection services or which are subject to a voluntary resource management agreement entered into with the Conservancy.

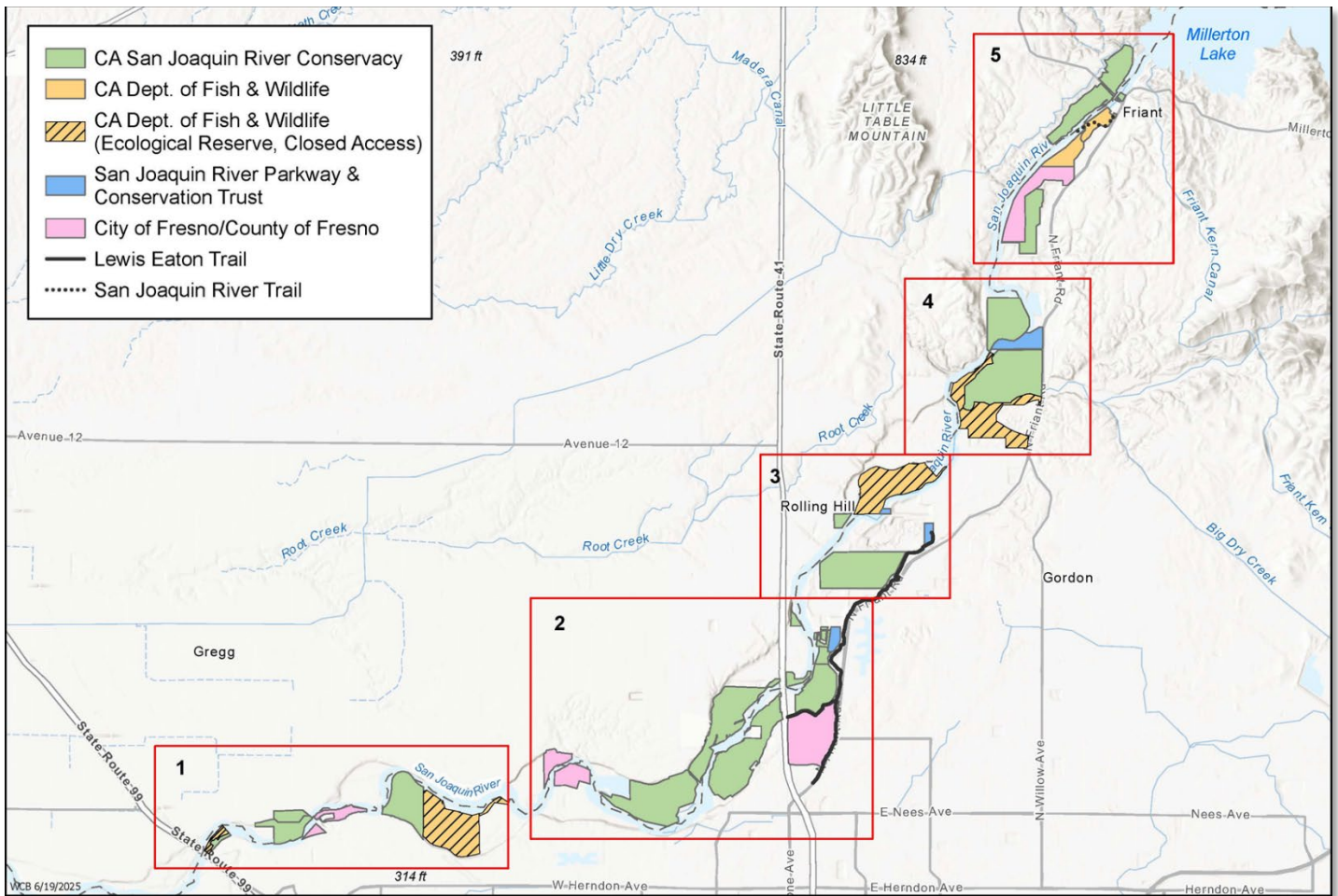


Figure 1: San Joaquin River Parkway Lands in Public Ownership and Existing Trail Systems

Conservancy Funding and Resources

The Conservancy administers a variety of funding sources to support its mission of conservation, education, recreation, and community engagement along the San Joaquin River Parkway. These funds are allocated for land acquisition, capital improvements, local assistance, habitat restoration and stewardship, and operations and maintenance.

The Conservancy receives state bond appropriations, revenue contributed by member agencies for San Joaquin River Parkway related purposes, and grants or donations from the federal government, public agencies, private entities, and individuals. In accordance with Section 11005 of the California Government Code, the Conservancy is authorized to accept and expend these contributions to advance its work.

Eligible projects funded through state bond appropriation programs administered by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) require approval from both the Conservancy and the WCB. In contrast, projects funded solely through the Conservancy require approval only from the Conservancy Governing Board.

Since the creation of the Conservancy in 1992, the Conservancy has received the following State bonds:

- **Proposition 12** – Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000
- **Proposition 13** – Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection Act of 2000
- **Proposition 40** – California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002
- **Proposition 84** – Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006
- **Proposition 1** – Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014
- **Proposition 68** – California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act for 2018
- **Proposition 4** – Safe Drinking Water, Wildlife Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024

The Conservancy's bond program supports land acquisition, habitat restoration, and capital improvements that enhance the ecological and recreational value of protected lands; however, these bond funds cannot be used for operations and maintenance. With currently authorized bond funds nearing depletion and general fund allocations for operations and maintenance approaching expiration, the Conservancy is entering a period of constrained financial resources.

This Strategic Plan provides a focused framework to help the Conservancy prioritize its efforts and ensure that limited funding is directed toward high-impact, mission-aligned projects. The Conservancy remains firmly committed to advancing goals and strategies that support its mission to protect and restore the San Joaquin River Parkway.

Preparing the Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan was developed through a collaborative and inclusive process led by the Conservancy's Chief Executive Officer. It incorporates extensive input from the Conservancy Governing Board, Conservancy staff, California Native American Tribes, and a broad range of partners and community members. Engagement efforts included meetings with a Strategic Plan Advisory Committee, three public workshops, formal Tribal consultations, numerous roundtable discussions with community partners, and a 30-day public comment period. Together, these activities ensured that the Strategic Plan reflects community values, regional priorities, and diverse perspectives.

From the outset, the Conservancy initiated formal government-to-government consultations with California Native American Tribes. These consultations are not only a legal and ethical responsibility but also an opportunity to build lasting partnerships and incorporate meaningful feedback. The Conservancy will continue this consultation process throughout implementation

of the Strategic Plan. By strengthening relationships with Tribes, the Conservancy aims to deepen understanding of shared interests, explore opportunities for collaboration, exchange knowledge, and respectfully integrate Tribal expertise and traditional ecological knowledge into the Conservancy's work.

The Strategic Plan also aligns with the San Joaquin River Parkway Master Plan, its 2018 Update, the Conservancy's State Leadership Accountability Act (SLAA) Annual Plan and Report, and the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Statement. Together, these guiding documents help ensure that the Conservancy's work remains consistent with its mission while advancing equitable, inclusive, and sustainable outcomes for the San Joaquin River Parkway.



Goals, Strategies, and Actionable Timeline

Over the next four years, these goals and strategies will serve as guiding principles and will be executed through clearly defined actions identified in the implementation timeline.

Goal 1: Strengthen Tribal Partnerships and Advance Equity in Land Stewardship

Native American Tribes have stewarded the lands and waters now known as California since time immemorial. However, colonization, forced removal, and attempted genocide severed many tribes' access to their ancestral lands. Centuries of historical wrongs and Western conservation practices excluded tribal expertise and traditional ecological knowledge. Governor Newsom's formal apology to California Native American tribes (Executive Order N-15-19) acknowledges this history and sets California on the path to healing. The Governor also released a Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands to further advance tribal access, co-management, and ancestral land return.

In addition, during the past year, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) departments (e.g., California State Parks) have increased access and co-management opportunities, and state agencies (e.g., California Department of Fish and Wildlife, WCB, Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and Coastal Conservancy) have completed projects focusing on ancestral land return and co-management of ancestral lands.

Building on this statewide direction, the Conservancy is committed to strengthening meaningful partnerships with Tribes that are culturally connected to the San Joaquin River Parkway. This includes working proactively to increase opportunities for co-management of Conservancy-owned or Conservancy-managed lands and resources, where Tribal leadership, traditional ecological knowledge, and collaborative decision-making can guide restoration, stewardship, and cultural access efforts.

To further support Tribal engagement, the Conservancy will also initiate a Tribal Access Invitation Program to encourage Tribes to reconnect with their ancestral lands along the San Joaquin River Parkway. This program will provide invitations for culturally appropriate access, gathering, ceremonies, and stewardship activities, developed in consultation with Tribal governments and consistent with site conditions and resource protection.

Through these commitments — expanded co-management opportunities and the establishment of a Tribal Access Invitation Program—the Conservancy seeks to honor Tribal sovereignty, support cultural revitalization, and advance a more inclusive, collaborative model of land stewardship that reflects the enduring relationships between Tribes and the San Joaquin River.

Implementation Strategies

To implement this strategic goal, the Conservancy can pursue a range of targeted strategies that honor tribal sovereignty, incorporate traditional ecological knowledge, and support co-management and ancestral land return, when possible, by implementing the following strategies:

Strategy 1. Strengthen Government-to-Government Relationships

- Maintain formal consultation protocols with California Native American tribes.
- Schedule regular meetings with tribal representatives to discuss shared priorities, project planning, and long-term stewardship goals.
- Ensure tribal representation on the Conservancy's Governing Board and in Conservancy planning processes, advisory committees, and decision-making forums.

Strategy 2. Support Tribal Access and Co-Management

- Identify Conservancy-owned lands with cultural, ecological, or historical significance to California Native American tribes (e.g., Circle V) and explore opportunities for increased access, safe spaces for uninterrupted cultural gathering and practices, and/ or co-management agreements.
- Collaborate with California Native American tribes to develop stewardship plans that integrate traditional ecological knowledge and reflect tribal values and practices.
- Provide space or land, technical, and financial support for tribal-led education, restoration, conservation, and cultural resource protection projects.
- Develop the Conservancy Tribal Access Invitation Program to ensure that Native Americans can access and gather materials on Conservancy properties.

Strategy 3. Advance Ancestral Land Return and Protection

- Work with tribal governments to identify opportunities for the return of ancestral lands, consistent with the Governor's Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands.
- Facilitate land transfers, conservation easements, or joint ownership/ co-management models that support tribal land reclamation and long-term stewardship.
- Prioritize acquisitions that align with tribal conservation goals and cultural preservation.

Strategy 4. Integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into habitat restoration, fire management, and resource monitoring practices.
- Partner with tribal experts to co-develop ecological assessments and adaptive management strategies.
- Provide training and capacity-building opportunities for Conservancy staff to understand and respectfully apply traditional ecological knowledge.

Strategy 5. Promote Cultural Awareness and Education

- In consultation with Tribal leadership, develop interpretive materials and programs that highlight Native American history, stewardship, and cultural connections to the land.
- Support tribal youth engagement through internships, educational programs, and cultural events on Conservancy lands.

- Collaborate with California Native American tribes to ensure that cultural sites are protected and appropriately interpreted for the public.

Strategy 6. Leverage Funding and Partnerships

- Pursue joint funding opportunities with California Native American tribes through state and federal grant programs that support tribal conservation, restoration, and ancestral land return.
- Coordinate with CNRA departments and other state Conservancies to align efforts and share best practices.
- Advocate for sustained funding to support tribal partnerships and long-term stewardship initiatives.

Implementation Timeline (2026–2030)

Year 1: Relationship Building & Strategic Planning (2026-2027)

Strengthen Government-to-Government Relationships

- Maintain formal consultation protocols.
- Schedule initial meetings with tribal representatives.
- Build relationships and attend community events.
- Promote Tribal Representative position on Conservancy Governing Board.

Support Tribal Access and Co-Management

- Identify Conservancy-owned lands of tribal significance and desired space for tribal members to perform traditional cultural practices.
- Initiate discussions on co-management, access for cultural practices, or stewardship opportunities.
- Begin drafting stewardship plan templates with tribal input.
- Implement Conservancy Tribal Access Invitation Program.

Advance Ancestral Land Return and Protection

- Begin internal review of land holdings for potential ancestral land return or joint stewardship/ co-management.
- Initiate dialogue with tribal governments on land priorities.

Integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Identify tribal experts and begin collaborative planning that integrates traditional ecological knowledge.
- Attend Annual Tribal Representative trainings and/or refreshers and plan staff training sessions on traditional ecological principles.

Promote Cultural Awareness and Education

- Begin development of interpretive materials in collaboration with tribal partners.

Leverage Funding and Partnerships

- Identify and apply for initial joint funding opportunities.
- Coordinate with CNRA and other state conservancies.

Year 2: Pilot Projects & Capacity Building (2027-2028)

Strengthen Government-to-Government Relationships

- Hold monthly Native American Community Partnership meetings.
- Hold quarterly meetings with tribal representatives.
- Expand tribal participation in decision-making forums.
- Explore opportunities for reimbursement programs for tribal participation.

Support Tribal Access and Co-Management

- Finalize and begin implementation of initial co-management, access, and/or stewardship agreements.
- Provide technical assistance for tribal-led stewardship projects.

Advance Ancestral Land Return and Protection

- Initiate first land transfer or conservation easement discussions.
- Prioritize acquisitions aligned with tribal goals.

Integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Launch pilot restoration, cultural restoration, or fire management projects incorporating traditional ecological knowledge.
- Host or conduct training workshops for Conservancy staff and partner organizations.

Promote Cultural Awareness and Education

- Implement or support interpretive programs at open Conservancy properties.

Leverage Funding and Partnerships

- Secure multi-year funding for tribal partnerships.
- Formalize interagency working group to support tribal initiatives.

Year 3: Expansion & Institutionalization (2028-2029)

Strengthen Government-to-Government Relationships

- Institutionalize tribal consultation protocols across all Conservancy programs.
- Evaluate effectiveness of engagement and adjust as needed.

Support Tribal Access and Co-Management

- Expand co-management, access, and stewardship agreements to additional sites.
- Support implementation of tribal stewardship plans.

Advance Ancestral Land Return and Protection

- Complete first ancestral land return or joint ownership agreement.
- Continue prioritizing acquisitions with tribal input.

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Integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Expand traditional ecological knowledge integration into monitoring and adaptive management.

Promote Cultural Awareness and Education

- Implement or support interpretive programs at open Conservancy properties.

Leverage Funding and Partnerships

- Expand joint grant applications and shared funding models.
- Host meetings on tribal partnerships and conservation.

Year 4: Evaluation & Long-Term Sustainability (2029-2030)

Strengthen Government-to-Government Relationships

- Conduct formal evaluation of internal tribal engagement practices.
- Update protocols and planning processes based on feedback.

Support Tribal Access and Co-Management

- Review and renew co-management, access, and stewardship agreements.
- Collaborate with Tribal leadership and members to identify successes and opportunities for improvement.
- Document and adjust implementation based on outcomes and lessons learned.

Advance Land Return and Protection

- Finalize additional ancestral land return or protection agreements.
- Document best practices.

Integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Institutionalize traditional ecological knowledge in all restoration and management projects.
- Continue staff development and tribal collaboration.

Promote Cultural Awareness and Education

- Implement or support interpretive programs at open Conservancy properties.
- Evaluate educational programs and expand successful models.

Leverage Funding and Partnerships

- Advocate for sustained funding at the state and federal level.
- Maintain and grow strategic partnerships.

Goal 2: Advance Land Acquisition to Protect Habitat, Expand Public Access, and Support Regional Conservation Priorities

The Conservancy is committed to protecting and restoring the San Joaquin River by creating a contiguous network of open space and natural habitat within its area of influence. To date, more than 3,500 acres have been conserved through direct acquisitions and strategic partnerships. This progress supports the long-term vision of maintaining the river corridor as an undeveloped, ecologically rich landscape for generations to come.

To fully realize this vision, the Conservancy aims to acquire approximately 5,900 acres for the San Joaquin River Parkway. With over 2,000 acres still needed to meet conservation and public access objectives, continued acquisition efforts are essential. These efforts align with broader statewide initiatives – such as the State Parks Forward Initiative, the 30x30 Initiative, and Outdoors for All – which collectively seek to expand protected lands, enhance climate resilience, strengthen biodiversity, and provide equitable access to nature, particularly for underserved communities. The inclusion of the State Parks Forward initiative reinforces the Conservancy’s role in advancing California’s goal of creating more parks in more places and expanding natural landscapes by the end of the decade.

The Conservancy works collaboratively with willing sellers to acquire land at fair market value or under mutually agreeable terms. Acquisitions may be completed directly by the Conservancy, through the WCB, or in coordination with member agencies and other public entities with appropriate authority and resources. In cases where full acquisition is not immediately feasible, the Conservancy may offer flexible options such as conservation easements, remainder interests, or technical assistance to help landowners align their land use with San Joaquin River Parkway goals.

In addition to traditional acquisitions, the Conservancy partners with state and federal agencies to identify and pursue mitigation opportunities within the San Joaquin River Parkway. These mitigation transactions serve dual purposes: meeting regulatory requirements while advancing the Conservancy’s objectives for habitat restoration and public access. When carefully coordinated with regulatory agencies, mitigation acquisitions can be designed to support ecological resilience and accommodate low-impact recreational use. This integrated approach enhances the environmental value of the San Joaquin River Parkway and ensures that conservation efforts deliver meaningful public benefits and long-term stewardship outcomes.

As part of its strategic growth, the Conservancy is also exploring the expansion of its geographic scope and grant-making capacity. These enhancements aim to increase flexibility, support a broader range of conservation opportunities, and strengthen the Conservancy’s ability to respond to emerging needs. Strategic transactions and programmatic improvements are designed to be mutually beneficial – providing value to landowners while advancing the Conservancy’s mission to protect habitat, foster community connectivity, and ensure sustainable stewardship.

The overarching goal is to facilitate land transactions that are beneficial to both landowners and the Parkway – enhancing the ecological integrity of the region while promoting public access and long-term conservation. In support of this vision, the Conservancy is evaluating opportunities to expand its boundaries to include additional areas that support ecological connectivity, community access, and regional conservation priorities (e.g., R2P2 Initiative, etc.). Through

strategic acquisitions, boundary expansion, and collaborative planning, the Conservancy will continue to protect natural resources and promote the ecological and recreational health of the San Joaquin River and the communities it serves.

Implementation Strategies

To implement this strategic goal, the Conservancy can pursue a range of targeted strategies that support conservation, public access, and long-term stewardship including:

Strategy 1. Prioritize High-Value Conservation Areas

- Use ecological data, habitat connectivity models, and regional conservation plans to identify priority parcels for acquisition.
- Focus on lands that support endangered species, riparian habitat restoration, floodplain resilience, and recreational potential.
- Prioritize acquisitions that fill gaps in the San Joaquin River Parkway, support the State Parks Forward Initiative, and enhance trail continuity and public access.
- Evaluate opportunities to expand the Conservancy boundary to include additional areas downstream to Modesto, encompassing the three major tributaries to the San Joaquin River (e.g., Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus) that support ecological connectivity, community access, and regional conservation priorities.

Strategy 2. Engage Willing Sellers and Build Relationships

- Conduct outreach to landowners within the San Joaquin River Parkway boundary to share information about the Conservancy's mission, acquisition process, and benefits.
- Offer flexible acquisition options, including whole or partial property purchases, conservation easements, and remainder interests for those wishing to retain life estates.
- Provide technical assistance to landowners to align private land use with San Joaquin River Parkway goals, even when acquisition is not immediately feasible.

Strategy 3. Leverage Funding and Partnerships

- Coordinate with the WCB, local governments, non-profit partners, and other public agencies to pool resources and align acquisition priorities.
- Pursue state and federal grants, philanthropic support, and mitigation funding to expand acquisition capacity.
- Explore land exchanges and the establishment of mitigation land banks to facilitate conservation outcomes.

Strategy 4. Advance Equity and Community Benefits

- Ensure acquisitions support equitable access to nature, especially in underserved areas of the San Joaquin River Parkway.
- Engage community members, tribal governments, and local organizations in identifying acquisition priorities that reflect cultural, recreational, and ecological values.

- Incorporate community input into acquisition planning to ensure that new public lands meet local needs and promote inclusive use.

Strategy 5. Integrate Acquisitions with Long-Term Stewardship

- Ensure that newly acquired lands are incorporated into San Joaquin River Parkway operations and management plans and prepared for public access or habitat restoration.
- Plan for operations, maintenance, and restoration needs early in the acquisition process to ensure sustainability.
- Collaborate with partners to manage and steward acquired lands in alignment with San Joaquin River Parkway goals.

Implementation Timeline (2026–2030)

Year 1: Foundation & Planning (2026-2027)

Prioritize High-Value Conservation Areas

- Identify priority parcels using ecological data, habitat connectivity models, and regional conservation plans.
- Explore Conservancy boundary expansion for granting authority.

Engage Willing Sellers and Build Relationships

- Initiate outreach to landowners within the San Joaquin River Parkway area of influence.
- Share information about acquisition options and benefits.
- Offer flexible acquisition models (e.g., whole or partial property purchases, easements, life estates).

Leverage Funding and Partnerships

- Coordinate with the WCB, local governments, and public agencies.
- Identify potential funding sources and begin grant applications.

Advance Equity and Community Benefits

- Engage community members, tribal governments, and local organizations to identify acquisition priorities.
- Prioritize acquisitions that are culturally significant or have culturally significant features that increase access for underserved and disadvantaged, severely disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities.

Integrate Acquisitions with Long-Term Stewardship

- Begin planning for operations, maintenance, and restoration needs of potential acquisitions.
- Align stewardship goals with San Joaquin River Parkway management plans.

Year 2: Early Implementation (2027-2028)

Prioritize High-Value Conservation Areas

- Focus on acquiring parcels that support endangered species, riparian restoration, and trail or continuity.
- Work with legislators on proposed Conservancy boundary expansion for granting authority.

Engage Willing Sellers and Build Relationships

- Expand outreach efforts and deepen relationships with landowners.
- Provide technical assistance to align private land use with San Joaquin River Parkway goals.

Leverage Funding and Partnerships

- Apply for state and federal grants.
- Explore land exchanges and mitigation opportunities.

Advance Equity and Community Benefits

- Incorporate community input into acquisition planning.
- Ensure new acquisitions reflect cultural, recreational, and ecological values.

Integrate Acquisitions with Long-Term Stewardship

- Begin integrating newly acquired lands into San Joaquin River Parkway operations and management plans.
- Develop preliminary restoration and public access strategies.

Year 3: Expansion & Execution (2028-2029)

Prioritize High-Value Conservation Areas

- Acquire high-priority parcels that enhance public access and ecological resilience.
- Submit proposed Conservancy boundary expansion for granting authority.

Engage Willing Sellers and Build Relationships

- Finalize acquisition agreements with willing sellers.
- Continue supporting landowners in aligning land use with San Joaquin River Parkway goals.

Leverage Funding and Partnerships

- Secure philanthropic and mitigation funding.
- Strengthen partnerships to expand acquisition capacity.

Advance Equity and Community Benefits

- Ensure acquisitions promote inclusive use and equitable access.
- Launch community-informed programming on newly acquired lands.

Integrate Acquisitions with Long-Term Stewardship

- Initiate habitat restoration and infrastructure improvements.
- Collaborate with partners for ongoing stewardship.

Year 4: Evaluation & Sustainability (2029-2030)

Prioritize High-Value Conservation Areas

- Evaluate the impact of acquisitions and refine future priorities.
- Evaluate next steps of Conservancy boundary expansion proposal based on election results.

Engage Willing Sellers and Build Relationships

- Maintain relationships with landowners and explore future opportunities.

Leverage Funding and Partnerships

- Advocate for sustained funding and expand collaborative efforts.

Advance Equity and Community Benefits

- Evaluate community benefits of acquisitions.
- Adjust strategies based on feedback and outcomes.

Integrate Acquisitions with Long-Term Stewardship

- Ensure long-term management plans are in place.
- Monitor restoration outcomes and adapt stewardship practices.



Goal 3: Accelerate and Expand Habitat Restoration to Protect Biodiversity and Build Climate Resilience

To effectively protect California's rich biodiversity and strengthen the state's resilience to climate change, the pace and footprint of habitat restoration must increase rapidly, strategically, and cost-effectively. The impacts of climate change — such as prolonged drought, extreme weather, and shifting ecosystems — require urgent and coordinated action to restore degraded habitats, reconnect ecological corridors, and enhance the long-term health of natural systems and processes. To guide this work, the Conservancy will adopt a net positive biodiversity target, ensure no net loss of functional floodplain, design restoration projects to achieve water neutrality, and apply measurable invasive species containment standards.

Achieving this goal will require a collaborative, landscape-scale approach that leverages the strengths of public agencies, Tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and community members. Restoration strategies will be guided by best available science, informed by traditional ecological knowledge, and aligned with regional conservation priorities to ensure durable ecological benefits. Integrating new standards — such as water-neutral project design, monitoring-based invasive species thresholds, and floodplain protection benchmarks — will provide consistent metrics for evaluating ecological outcomes across the San Joaquin River Parkway.

In alignment with Executive Order N-1-24, the Conservancy will also implement humane and safety-focused encampment management practices when restoration activities intersect with locations where individuals are residing. These practices include assessing public health and safety risks, providing advance notice of non-exigent clearances, coordinating with service providers, and protecting personal property, ensuring that ecological restoration proceeds in a way that respects the dignity and safety of affected community members.

To further expand the region's capacity for high-quality, climate-resilient restoration, the Conservancy will work in partnership with local partners to develop plans for a native plant nursery that will supply locally adapted plant materials for San Joaquin River Parkway restoration projects. This collaboration will support long-term habitat recovery, improve genetic integrity of native species, and reduce project costs by creating a reliable, local source of restoration-grade plant material.

A key driver of success will be the availability and coordination of funding. Collaborative funding models — such as pooled resources, public-private partnerships, and multi-agency grant programs — can maximize impact by aligning investments across jurisdictions and partners. The Conservancy will pursue and support funding opportunities that prioritize ecological restoration and climate resilience, including programs that incorporate biodiversity recovery, water conservation, habitat connectivity, and safe encampment transitions in accordance with state policy.

By accelerating and expanding restoration efforts, implementing clear ecological and community-focused standards, and fostering strong partnerships, the Conservancy aims to restore ecological integrity, support the recovery of sensitive species, and create resilient landscapes that benefit both wildlife and surrounding communities.

Implementation Strategies

To implement this strategic goal, the Conservancy can pursue a range of targeted strategies that emphasize collaboration, science-based planning, and efficient use of resources including:

Strategy 1. Identify and Prioritize Restoration Opportunities

- Develop standardized ecological assessment protocols to measure baseline habitat quality, species richness, and invasive species presence.
- Use standardized ecological assessments, climate vulnerability data, and regional conservation plans to pinpoint high-priority areas for restoration or floodplain reconnection opportunities.
- Focus on degraded habitats that offer the greatest potential for biodiversity recovery, climate adaptation, and ecosystem services (e.g., restoration of burn scars, restoring floodplain, etc.).

Strategy 2. Integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Best Available Science

- Collaborate with tribal partners to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into restoration planning and implementation.
- Use adaptive management frameworks that combine scientific monitoring with traditional ecological knowledge to ensure long-term restoration success.
- Support research and data collection to inform restoration techniques and evaluate outcomes.

Strategy 3. Build and Strengthen Collaborative Partnerships

- Engage public agencies, tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and community groups in co-designing and implementing restoration projects.
- Establish or join regional restoration groups to coordinate efforts, share resources, and align goals across jurisdictions.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity-building among partners to improve restoration practices and outcomes.

Strategy 4. Leverage and Coordinate Funding

- Prioritize shovel-ready projects in areas that provide the greatest ecological uplift, floodplain reconnections, and climate resilience benefits.
- Pursue diverse funding sources, including state and federal grants, philanthropic contributions, and private investments.
- Develop collaborative funding models such as pooled funds, multi-agency grant applications, and public-private partnerships to maximize impact.
- Align restoration investments with climate adaptation, water conservation, and species recovery priorities to attract multi-sector support.

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Strategy 5. Promote Nature-Based Solutions

- Implement restoration projects that use nature-based approaches to address climate impacts, such as restoring wetlands for flood control or planting native vegetation for carbon sequestration.
- Expand riparian, wetland, and floodplain restoration projects that contribute to the net positive biodiversity target.
- Implement vegetation management practices to enhance native plant health, ensure adequate water availability during drought conditions, and support long-term climate resilience.
- Design projects that provide co-benefits for wildlife, water quality, and underserved and disadvantaged, severely disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities that require minimal maintenance.
- Incorporate groundwater recharge features to support water-neutral implementation.

Strategy 6. Monitor, Evaluate, and Adapt

- Adopt a no-net loss floodplain policy for projects and require all projects demonstrate net gains for biodiversity.
- Establish long-term monitoring programs to track ecological outcomes, species recovery, and climate resilience.
- Use performance metrics to evaluate project success and inform adaptive management decisions.
- Share results and lessons learned with partners and the public to build transparency and improve future efforts.

Strategy 7. Engage Communities and Foster Stewardship

- Involve local communities in restoration activities through volunteer programs, citizen science, and educational initiatives.
- Ensure that restoration projects reflect community values and provide opportunities for public access, low-impact recreation, and environmental education.
- Highlight the benefits of restoration for public health, climate resilience, and economic development to build broader support.
- Partner with state and local agencies to design restoration projects that contribute to no-net loss of floodplains, net gains for biodiversity, water neutrality, and/or groundwater recharge.

Implementation Timeline

Year 1: Planning & Foundation (2026-2027)

Identify and Prioritize Restoration Opportunities

- Conduct ecological assessments and climate vulnerability analyses.

- Review regional conservation plans to identify high-priority restoration sites.
- Map degraded habitats (e.g., burn scars, floodplains, etc.) for potential restoration.

Integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Initiate partnerships with tribal communities.
- Host listening sessions and workshops to understand traditional ecological knowledge.
- Begin integrating traditional ecological knowledge into restoration planning and implementation documents.

Build Collaborative Partnerships

- Convene initial partnership meetings with public agencies, nonprofits, academic institutions, and community groups.
- Attend regional workshops for knowledge exchange and training.

Leverage and Coordinate Funding

- Identify and apply for foundational grants (state/federal).
- Begin developing collaborative funding models and public-private partnerships.

Promote Nature-Based Solutions

- Develop design templates for nature-based restoration projects.
- Identify pilot sites for implementation in Year 2.

Monitor, Evaluate, and Adapt

- Design baseline monitoring protocols and performance metrics.
- Establish data management systems.

Engage Communities

- Launch outreach campaigns to raise awareness.
- Develop additional volunteer and citizen science programs.
- Support existing volunteer and citizen science programs.

Year 2: Pilot Projects & Capacity Building (2027-2028)

Restoration Implementation

- Begin restoration on selected pilot sites.
- Apply best practices for biodiversity recovery and climate adaptation.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge & Science Integration

- Implement adaptive management frameworks combining traditional ecological knowledge and scientific monitoring.
- Support tribal-led restoration initiatives.

Partnership Strengthening

- Adopt formal roles and responsibilities.
- Host or participate in regional workshops for knowledge exchange and training.

Funding Expansion

- Submit multi-agency grant applications.
- Launch pooled funding initiatives.

Nature-Based Solutions

- Implement nature-based projects (e.g., wetland restoration, native planting, etc.).
- Document co-benefits for climate resilience and community health.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Begin collecting data on pilot project outcomes.
- Adjust restoration techniques based on early findings.

Community Engagement

- Host, co-host, or participate in volunteer restoration days on the San Joaquin River Parkway.
- Integrate environmental education into local schools and programs.

Year 3: Scaling & Expansion (2028-2029)

Restoration Expansion

- Expand successful pilot projects to additional high-priority sites.
- Continue restoration of floodplains, riparian zones, and degraded habitats.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge & Science

- Evaluate outcomes of traditional ecological knowledge integrated into projects.
- Publish findings and share with broader conservation community.

Partnership Growth

- Expand partnership groups to include new partners.
- Strengthen interagency coordination.

Funding Coordination

- Secure multi-year funding commitments.
- Attract philanthropic and private sector investments.

Nature-Based Solutions

- Integrate nature-based approaches into regional planning efforts.
- Promote projects as models for climate adaptation.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Refine metrics and expand monitoring to new sites.
- Begin mid-term evaluation of strategy effectiveness.

Community Stewardship

- Launch and support community-led restoration initiatives (e.g, adopt a restoration project).
- Recognize and celebrate local stewardship efforts.

Year 4: Evaluation & Long-Term Sustainability (2029-2030)

Comprehensive Review

- Conduct full evaluation of restoration outcomes and strategic goals.
- Identify lessons learned and areas for improvement.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge & Science

- Institutionalize traditional ecological knowledge integration in all restoration planning.
- Continue supporting research and adaptive management.

Partnership Sustainability

- Develop long-term governance and funding structures for the coalition.
- Formalize MOUs, grant agreements, and/or license agreements for restoration projects.

Funding Strategy

- Launch long-term funding strategy aligned with climate and conservation priorities.
- Explore legislative and policy opportunities for sustained support.

Nature-Based Solutions

- Document and publish case studies.
- Advocate for broader adoption in regional and state planning.

Monitoring & Reporting

- Share results with partners and the public.
- Update strategic plan based on evaluation findings.

Community Legacy

- Expand public access, low-impact recreation, and education opportunities.

Goal 4: Expand Equitable Public Access While Protecting Natural and Cultural Resources

The Conservancy is dedicated to expanding equitable public access to the San Joaquin River Parkway, ensuring that its lands are available for low-impact recreational activities such as, but not limited to, hiking, wildlife viewing, and nature exploration. Many Conservancy properties are open to the public, except where access could harm sensitive habitats or cultural resources or where minimum standards for safe and responsible use cannot be reasonably met. As outdoor recreation continues to grow, the Conservancy must manage access in ways that balance public enjoyment with the protection of natural and cultural resources. A key component of this approach will be to optimize existing access points and improve management of open properties before considering new sites, ensuring that current facilities are safe, sustainable, and aligned with conservation goals.

Despite progress, significant gaps in access remain — particularly for underserved, disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities. Many residents, especially those in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, face obstacles to enjoying nearby natural spaces, including limited transportation options, a lack of nearby trailheads and facilities, and insufficient outreach or culturally relevant programming. As a result, opportunities for outdoor recreation, environmental education, and the health benefits associated with nature are not equitably distributed. Addressing these disparities is essential to fulfilling the Conservancy’s mission. The Conservancy will work with local partners, Tribal governments, and community organizations to identify and remove barriers to access, develop inclusive programming, and invest in infrastructure that serves all people equitably.

Rising visitation to Conservancy lands has also led to the proliferation of informal “social” trails — unauthorized paths created through repeated foot traffic. These trails can fragment sensitive habitats, disturb wildlife, damage cultural sites, and create unsafe conditions. Population growth in surrounding areas has intensified these pressures, contributing to unpermitted and harmful activities such as off-highway vehicle use, illegal target shooting, and other behaviors that threaten native plant and animal communities. Compounding these challenges is the absence of dedicated law enforcement personnel, such as Peace Officers, Park Rangers, or Wildlife Officers. Without consistent oversight, vandalism, illegal dumping, unauthorized camping, and off-road vehicle use have increased, degrading ecological integrity and undermining public safety.

To address these challenges, the Conservancy will prioritize strategic investments in trail planning, signage, and visitor education to promote responsible low-impact recreation and minimize ecological impacts. Management efforts will focus on bringing existing open properties up to high standards of stewardship and safety before opening additional sites, ensuring that growth in access does not outpace the Conservancy’s capacity to manage it effectively. The Conservancy will also restore degraded areas ahead of any expansion of public access, reinforcing a “restore first, expand second” approach that protects ecological integrity while improving visitor experience.

The Conservancy will continue implementing the Governing Board’s priority project — Fresno River West — and will partner with Tribes and local communities to identify additional projects for the Conservancy’s Governing Boards consideration. As funding becomes available, the

Governing Board will determine additional priorities to ensure that new investments align with conservation goals, community needs, and long-term stewardship capacity. These efforts will be guided by regional conservation strategies, community engagement, and a commitment to serving historically underserved populations.

Finally, the Conservancy recognizes the importance of raising public awareness about the wide-ranging benefits of open space and habitat conservation. These benefits include improved public health—especially for youth and underserved communities—hands-on science education opportunities, and economic gains through tourism and increased property values. By effectively communicating these advantages, the Conservancy aims to build broader public and policymaker support for expanding recreational access and investing in the long-term stewardship of the San Joaquin River Parkway.

Implementation Strategies

To implement this strategic goal, the Conservancy can pursue a range of targeted strategies that address access disparities, manage recreational impacts, and promote public awareness including:

Strategy 1. Enhance Existing Access and Identify and Prioritize Access Gaps

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of all existing access points to evaluate safety, accessibility, environmental impacts, and infrastructure needs.
- Implement standardized wayfinding and interpretive signage across all open properties to ensure consistency with the Conservancy's branding guidelines and improve visitor navigation.
- Conduct an access equity assessment to identify underserved and disadvantaged, severely disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities with limited connectivity to San Joaquin River Parkway entry points.
- Use demographic and geographic data to prioritize areas for new trailheads, transit connections, and recreational infrastructure.

Strategy 2. Develop Inclusive and Accessible Infrastructure

- Prioritize upgrades such as improved parking, ADA-compliant trails, restrooms, signage, and shade structures at existing sites.
- Design and construct new access points, trails, and amenities that meet universal design standards and serve a wide range of users, including people with disabilities, families, and people with limited mobility.
- Ensure facilities are safe, welcoming, and culturally relevant, incorporating Tribal and community input into planning and design.

Strategy 3. Expand Transportation and Connectivity

- Partner with local transit agencies to improve public transportation routes and stops near Parkway access points for underserved communities.

- Explore shuttle services, bike-share programs, and safe walking/biking paths to reduce transportation barriers.

Strategy 4. Engage Communities in Planning and Stewardship

- Collaborate with local organizations, schools, and tribal governments to co-create programs that reflect community values and needs.
- Support community-led initiatives such as volunteer trail maintenance, cultural events, and youth engagement programs.
- Provide multilingual outreach and culturally responsive materials to ensure broad participation.

Strategy 5. Promote Responsible Recreation and Visitor Education

- Develop and implement signage, wayfinding, and interpretive materials that educate visitors about habitat sensitivity, cultural resources, and appropriate trail use.
- Use natural barriers, signage, and visitor education campaigns to deter creation of new, unauthorized “social” trails.
- Launch public awareness campaigns to discourage harmful activities such as off-highway vehicle use, creation of unauthorized trails, dumping, and illegal shooting/hunting.
- Offer or support guided nature walks, stewardship days, and educational workshops to foster a culture of respect and care for the San Joaquin River Parkway.
- Update public use apps and websites, such as All Trails and Google Maps, to ensure accurate San Joaquin River Parkway information is being communicated to the public.

Strategy 6. Restore and Protect Sensitive Areas

- Conduct regular patrols and implement rapid response restoration for new, unauthorized “social” trails.
- Monitor and manage informal “social” trails for public safety and to prevent habitat degradation and protect cultural sites.
- Implement restoration projects in areas impacted by unauthorized use, including revegetation, erosion control, and habitat enhancement.
- Use fencing, natural barriers, signage, maps, vertical mulching, and strategic design to guide visitor movement and protect vulnerable areas.

Strategy 7. Strengthen Enforcement and Safety

- Collaborate with local law enforcement and park rangers to enhance enforcement of existing laws and regulations to ensure visitor safety, reduce vandalism, reduce illegal activities, such as dumping and camping, all while protecting natural and cultural resources.
- Develop a Visitor Safety and Compliance program that includes volunteer trail stewards, community rangers, and/or seasonal staff/interns/fellows.

- Install security features such as cameras, fencing, and controlled access points (e.g. fencing, gates, etc.), where appropriate

Strategy 8. Communicate the Benefits of Open Space

- Promote responsible recreation principles, such as “Don’t Move a Muscle” and “Leave No Trace”, through outreach, signage, and partner programming.
- Develop outreach materials that highlight the health, educational, and economic benefits of access to nature.
- Share success stories and data on how access to the San Joaquin River Parkway improves quality of life, supports youth development, and contributes to local economies.
- Engage local media, schools, and community organizations to elevate awareness of Conservancy owned properties, projects, activities and programs, and restoration efforts.
- Engage policymakers and funders with compelling narratives and evidence to build support for continued investment in access and stewardship.

Implementation Timeline

Year 1: Assessment, Planning & Engagement (2026-2027)

Identify and Prioritize Access Gaps

- Conduct a comprehensive access equity assessment.
- Map underserved and disadvantaged, severely disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities near the San Joaquin River Parkway.
- Analyze demographic and geographic data to identify priority areas.

Develop Inclusive and Accessible Infrastructure

- Begin community consultations to gather input on infrastructure needs.
- Initiate design concepts for new access points and amenities using universal design principles.

Expand Transportation and Connectivity

- Begin discussions with local transit agencies.
- Assess feasibility of shuttle services, bike-share programs, and pedestrian/bike path improvements.

Engage Communities in Planning and Stewardship

- Build relationships with local organizations, schools, and tribal governments.
- Collaborate with community leaders to recognize and work towards addressing barriers to access.
- Launch multilingual outreach and listening sessions.

Promote Responsible Recreation and Visitor Education

- Develop initial signage and interpretive material concepts.
- Plan public awareness campaign strategies.

Restore and Protect Sensitive Areas

- Identify and map informal trails and impacted areas.
- Prioritize sites for restoration and protection.

Strengthen Enforcement and Safety

- Coordinate with law enforcement and park rangers to assess current enforcement gaps.
- Explore community-based stewardship models.

Communicate the Benefits of Open Space

- Begin collecting baseline data on health, education, and economic impacts.
- Develop messaging for outreach materials.

Year 2: Pilot Projects & Infrastructure Development (2027-2028)

Access Gaps

- Finalize priority list of access gap areas.
- Begin environmental review and permitting for new access points and infrastructure.

Inclusive Infrastructure

- Construct pilot access points and trails with universal design.
- Integrate community feedback into final designs.

Transportation Connectivity

- Launch pilot shuttle service or bike-share program.
- Improve signage and wayfinding to transit-accessible trailheads.

Community Engagement

- Co-create programs with community partners (e.g., youth engagement, cultural events, etc.).
- Train volunteers for trail maintenance and stewardship roles.

Visitor Education

- Install pilot signage and interpretive materials.
- Launch first phase of public awareness campaign.

Sensitive Area Restoration

- Begin restoration of priority degraded areas.
- Install fencing and natural barriers to guide visitor movement.

Enforcement & Safety

- Increase Peace Officer, Park Ranger, Wildlife Officer presence at high-use areas.
- Pilot community ambassador program.

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Open Space Benefits

- Publish initial success stories and data.
- Begin outreach to policymakers and funders.

Year 3: Scaling & Integration (2028-2029)

Access Gaps

- Construct additional access points in prioritized communities.
- Integrate access planning into broader regional development efforts.

Inclusive Infrastructure

- Expand trail networks and amenities.
- Ensure cultural relevance and accessibility in all new designs.

Transportation Connectivity

- Strengthen partnerships with transit agencies.
- Expand alternative transportation options and infrastructure.

Community Engagement

- Expand community-led programs.
- Host or participate in regional events to celebrate community contributions.

Visitor Education

- Expand signage and interpretive materials on the San Joaquin River Parkway.
- Launch or support guided nature walks and educational workshops.

Sensitive Area Restoration

- Continue restoration and habitat enhancement projects.
- Monitor effectiveness of visitor management strategies.

Enforcement & Safety

- Formalize community stewardship roles.
- Evaluate enforcement strategies and adjust as needed.

Open Space Benefits

- Conduct mid-term evaluation of access and stewardship impacts.
- Share findings with partners and the public.

Year 4: Evaluation & Sustainability (2029-2030)

Access Gaps

- Evaluate effectiveness of new access points.
- Update access equity assessment with new data.

Inclusive Infrastructure

- Conduct user satisfaction surveys.
- Plan for ongoing maintenance and upgrades.

Transportation Connectivity

- Assess usage and impact of transit and mobility programs.
- Integrate transportation planning into long-term San Joaquin River Parkway access strategy.

Community Engagement

- Institutionalize community partnerships and programs.
- Secure funding for continued community-led stewardship.

Visitor Education

- Evaluate public awareness campaign outcomes.
- Refresh educational materials based on feedback.

Sensitive Area Restoration

- Complete restoration of targeted areas.
- Publish restoration outcomes and lessons learned.

Enforcement & Safety

- Finalize enforcement and safety protocols.
- Expand ambassador program and community monitoring.

Open Space Benefits

- Publish comprehensive report on access, health, and economic impacts.
- Use findings to advocate for continued investment and policy support.

Goal 5: Align Investments to Accelerate Parkway Development and Expand Equitable Public Access in Response to Evolving Recreation Trends

The Conservancy will strategically align its investments, partnerships, and planning efforts to accelerate the development of the San Joaquin River Parkway and expand equitable public access, particularly in response to changing trends in outdoor recreation. Over time, recreation preferences have evolved due to demographic shifts, economic factors, and growing environmental awareness. While traditional activities such as fishing, water sports, and camping remain important and will continue to be supported, today's recreation demands are broader and more diverse — encompassing hiking, biking, birding/wildlife viewing, nature exploration, photography, research, and environmental education.

Ensuring widespread access to nature at little or no cost is essential for fostering a deeper public appreciation of wildlife and habitat stewardship. It is also critical for promoting public health, enhancing community livability, and supporting youth engagement — especially in California's urban, underserved and disadvantaged, severely disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities, where access to natural spaces is often limited.

To meet these needs, the Conservancy will prioritize investments in high-impact projects that improve trail connectivity, develop inclusive access points, enhance visitor amenities, restore habitat areas, and evaluate opportunities for new river crossings to improve access and connectivity across the San Joaquin River Parkway. These efforts will be guided by regional conservation strategies and community input, with a focus on serving historically underserved populations.

As part of this work, the Conservancy will partner with California State Parks to implement the State Parks Forward initiative — a statewide effort to establish and expand state parks. Through this initiative, the Conservancy and State Parks will coordinate capital improvements, strengthen operations and maintenance partnerships, advance inclusive and culturally relevant programming, and integrate universal design, habitat-friendly features, and resilience measures into properties and projects within the San Joaquin River Parkway. To support this effort, the Conservancy will work with State Parks to establish a working group or Technical Advisory Committee composed of Tribal representatives, local agencies, community organizations, subject-matter experts, and partners. This committee will provide ongoing input and guidance throughout the State Parks development process to ensure that projects reflect community needs, incorporate best practices in recreation and conservation planning, and align with long-term stewardship goals. Embedding the State Parks Forward initiative into San Joaquin River Parkway planning and development will ensure that improvements reflect evolving recreation needs, meet high-quality visitor experience standards, and support ecological and cultural resource stewardship.

The Conservancy will explore avenues to create or designate an official nonprofit partner to expand philanthropic capacity, support community engagement, and enhance long-term stewardship of the San Joaquin River Parkway. This dedicated nonprofit entity will strengthen the Conservancy's ability to secure private funding, cultivate volunteerism, advance educational

and recreational programming, and build broader public and partner support for the development of the San Joaquin River Parkway.

Through thoughtful investment and inclusive planning, the Conservancy aims to create a vibrant, accessible, and resilient San Joaquin River Parkway that reflects the evolving needs of California's communities while protecting the natural and cultural resources that make the region unique.

Strategies for Implementation

To implement this strategic goal, the Conservancy can pursue a range of targeted strategies that accelerate the development of the San Joaquin River Parkway and expand equitable public access, aligned with evolving recreation trends and community needs, including:

Strategy 1. Improve Trail Connectivity and Wayfinding

- Identify properties and develop segments of the San Joaquin River Parkway Trail or Lewis S. Eaton Trail for immediate use and future connectivity.
- Develop and enhance multi-use trails that connect key access points and recreational areas.
- Install consistent and culturally relevant wayfinding signage to improve navigation and visitor experience.
- Prioritize trail segments that close gaps in the San Joaquin River Parkway Trail or Lewis S. Eaton Trail and link underserved neighborhoods to natural areas.
- Collaborate with California State Parks to modernize trailheads, improve signage standards, and ensure trail improvements meet statewide accessibility and quality guidelines.
- Collaborate with the Conservancy's designated nonprofit partner to support community outreach, philanthropic fundraising, and volunteer engagement for trail development and maintenance projects.

Strategy 2. Develop Inclusive and ADA-Accessible Access Points

- Design and construct access points and parking areas that meet ADA standards and accommodate a wide range of mobility needs.
- Incorporate universal design principles to ensure facilities are welcoming to all visitors of all ages and mobility.
- Engage Tribes and community members in the design process to reflect local needs and preferences.
- Coordinate with California State Parks to implement consistent accessibility features, improve safety, and integrate modernization standards across shared access points.
- Collaborate with the Conservancy's designated nonprofit partner to gather community feedback, secure supplemental funding, and assist with accessibility-focused programming and outreach.

Strategy 3. Enhance Visitor Amenities

- Provide essential amenities such as restrooms, shaded seating areas, picnic facilities, and drinking water stations, where feasible.
- Integrate interpretive signage and educational displays that highlight cultural, ecological, and historical features of the San Joaquin River Parkway.
- Use QR codes or other digital referencing, where applicable, so information can be easily updated and shared.
- Explore opportunities for low-impact infrastructure such as bike racks, EV charging stations, and solar lighting.
- Implement modernization priorities from California State Parks, including improved facility design, durable materials, energy-efficient systems, and enhanced public safety features.
- Collaborate with the designated non-profit to raise private funds, steward donors, and coordinate volunteers for amenity improvements and visitor engagement efforts.

Strategy 4. Restore Habitat Areas

- Implement habitat restoration projects that improve biodiversity, water quality, and climate resilience.
- Use best available science and traditional ecological knowledge for native plantings to support pollinators, wildlife corridors, and riparian health.
- Partner with conservation organizations and volunteers to maintain and monitor restored areas.
- Collaborate with California State Parks on restoration areas or activities by integrating nature-based solutions, climate resilience practices, and coordinated habitat stewardship across shared properties.
- Collaborate with the designated non-profit partner to expand or support restoration-focused volunteer programs, secure philanthropic support, and deliver community-based stewardship.

Strategy 5. Evaluate and Advance New River Crossings

- Conduct feasibility studies to identify strategic locations for new pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular river crossings.
- Prioritize crossings that improve access between communities and key San Joaquin River Parkway destinations.
- Coordinate with transportation agencies and local jurisdictions to align crossing projects with broader mobility plans.
- Work with California State Parks to ensure that new or improved crossings align state design standards, access goals, and safety considerations.

- Collaborate with the designated non-profit partner to support public outreach and the pursuit of supplementary funding for crossing projects.

Strategy 6. Engage Communities Through Environmental Education and Stewardship

- Expand programming that connects youth and families to nature through guided hikes, outdoor classrooms, and citizen science.
- Support community-led stewardship initiatives such as clean-up days, habitat restoration, and trail maintenance.
- Partner with schools, nonprofits, and cultural organizations to co-create inclusive educational experiences.
- Coordinate with California State Parks to develop shared educational and interpretive programs, incorporating cultural stories, traditional ecological knowledge, and natural resource stewardship.
- Collaborate with the dedicated non-profit partner to deliver expanded environmental education programs, coordinate volunteers, and build deeper connections with local communities.

Strategy 7. Prioritize Projects Serving Historically Underserved Populations

- Use equity mapping and demographic data to identify areas with limited access to natural spaces.
- Direct resources toward projects that reduce barriers to entry, such as transportation, language access, and safety.
- Build trust through sustained outreach, listening sessions, and representation in decision-making processes.
- Collaborate with the designated non-profit partner to expand bilingual outreach, culturally relevant programs, and community partnerships.

Strategy 8. Coordinate with Regional Partners to Align Investments and Leverage Funding

- Collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies to align development of the San Joaquin River Parkway with regional conservation and low-impact recreation goals.
- Pursue joint funding opportunities through grants, philanthropic partnerships, and public-private collaborations.
- Share data, best practices, and technical expertise to strengthen collective impact.
- Coordinate capital planning and investment prioritization with California State Parks to align modernization goals, boundary expansion, and maximize access.
- Collaborate with the designated non-profit partner to expand private fundraising capacity, cultivate donor relationships, and support collaborative funding efforts.

Strategy 9. Streamline Project Delivery Through Collaborative Planning and Permitting

- Establish interagency working groups to expedite permitting and regulatory approvals.

- Develop standardized templates and checklists to reduce administrative burden and improve project readiness.
- Monitor and evaluate project outcomes to inform adaptive management and continuous improvement.
- Include California State Parks in coordinated planning, shared permitting processes, and streamlined capital delivery across Conservancy projects.
- Collaborate with the designated non-profit partner to assist with outreach, project communications, and supplemental project management support where appropriate.

Strategic Implementation Timeline (2026–2030)

Year 1: Planning, Assessment & Partnership Building (2026-2027)

Improve Trail Connectivity and Wayfinding

- Conduct trail gap analysis and connectivity mapping.
- Begin design of culturally relevant wayfinding signage.
- Identify priority trail segments linking underserved neighborhoods.

Inclusive & ADA-Accessible Access Points

- Engage communities in design workshops.
- Assess existing access points for ADA compliance.
- Begin planning for new universally designed facilities.

Enhance Visitor Amenities

- Inventory current amenities and identify gaps.
- Design pilot amenities (e.g., restrooms, shaded seating, etc.).
- Plan interpretive signage and educational displays.

Restore Habitat Areas

- Identify degraded zones for restoration.
- Develop ecological restoration plans with partners.
- Begin or partner with organizations for native plant propagation and site preparation.

Evaluate New River Crossings

- Launch feasibility studies for strategic crossing locations.
- Coordinate with transportation agencies and jurisdictions.

Community Engagement & Education

- Expand partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and tribal governments.
- Launch pilot environmental education programs.

- Plan or support stewardship events and citizen science initiatives.

Prioritize Underserved Populations

- Conduct equity mapping and demographic analysis.
- Host or attend public comment and listening sessions in priority communities.

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Coordinate Regional Investments

- Convene interagency planning meetings.
- Identify shared goals and funding opportunities.

Streamline Project Delivery

- Form or participate in interagency working groups.
- Develop permitting templates and checklists.

Year 2: Pilot Projects & Infrastructure Development (2027-2028)

Trail Connectivity

- Construct priority trail segments to close access gaps.
- Install pilot wayfinding signage.

ADA-Accessible Access Points

- Begin construction of new access points with universal design.
- Retrofit existing facilities for ADA compliance.

Visitor Amenities

- Install pilot amenities at high-use areas.
- Launch interpretive signage and educational displays.

Habitat Restoration

- Implement restoration projects with community volunteers.
- Monitor initial ecological outcomes.

River Crossings

- Finalize designs for feasible crossings.
- Begin environmental review and permitting.

Community Engagement

- Host or support guided hikes, outdoor classrooms, and stewardship days.
- Expand multilingual outreach and materials.

Underserved Populations

- Launch access improvement projects in priority areas.
- Provide recommendations for transportation support and safety enhancements.

Regional Coordination

- Submit joint grant applications.
- Share technical expertise and data across agencies.

Project Delivery

- Pilot streamlined permitting process.
- Begin tracking project timelines and outcomes.

Year 3: Scaling & Integration (2028-2029)

Trail Connectivity

- Expand trail network and link additional access points.
- Update signage based on user feedback.

ADA-Accessible Access Points

- Complete additional access points in underserved areas.
- Evaluate user satisfaction and accessibility.

Visitor Amenities

- Increase installation of amenities across the San Joaquin River Parkway.
- Introduce low-impact infrastructure (e.g., EV stations, solar lighting, low-cost rentals, etc.).

Habitat Restoration

- Continue restoration and expand to new sites.
- Strengthen partnerships for long-term stewardship.

River Crossings

- Begin construction of approved crossings.
- Coordinate with mobility plans for integration.

Community Engagement

- Institutionalize education and stewardship programs.
- Celebrate community contributions through events and media.

Underserved Populations

- Evaluate impact of access improvements.
- Adjust strategies based on community feedback.

Regional Coordination

- Align investments with regional conservation and recreation plans.
- Expand collaborative funding models.

Project Delivery

- Refine permitting tools and processes.
- Share best practices and lessons learned.

Year 4: Evaluation, Sustainability & Advocacy (2029-2030)

Trail Connectivity

- Evaluate trail usage and connectivity improvements.
- Plan for future expansion and maintenance.

ADA-Accessible Access Points

- Conduct accessibility audits.
- Plan upgrades and long-term maintenance.

Visitor Amenities

- Assess visitor satisfaction and usage.
- Update infrastructure plans based on feedback.

Habitat Restoration

- Publish restoration outcomes and ecological data.
- Plan for continued monitoring and adaptive management.

River Crossings

- Complete construction and open crossings.
- Monitor usage and connectivity impacts.

Community Engagement

- Evaluate program outcomes and participation.
- Secure funding for sustained programming.

Underserved Populations

- Publish equity impact report.
- Advocate for continued investment in access equity.

Regional Coordination

- Formalize long-term collaboration agreements.
- Launch regional data-sharing platform.

Project Delivery

- Institutionalize streamlined permitting processes.
- Update strategic plan based on evaluation findings.



Goal 6: Advance Adaptive Management Through Science, Monitoring, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Effectively stewarding the lands and waters of the San Joaquin River Parkway requires a dynamic and responsive approach to conservation — one that embraces adaptive management and integrates both the best available science and traditional ecological knowledge. In an era of rapid environmental change, particularly under the growing impacts of climate change, it is essential to regularly evaluate and refine core assumptions, planning principles, and management strategies.

Adaptive management is a continuous learning process that relies on consistent, long-term monitoring to assess the effectiveness of conservation actions and guide future decisions. By establishing clear performance metrics and monitoring protocols, the Conservancy can evaluate progress toward strategic goals, identify emerging challenges, and adjust its strategies to ensure lasting ecological and community benefits.

Monitoring is also critical for demonstrating the value of public investments in conservation. It enables the Conservancy and its partners to measure outcomes, communicate successes, and share lessons learned across projects and regions. This transparency builds trust with partners, the public, and strengthens support for future initiatives.

The Conservancy will actively collaborate with state agencies, tribal governments, academic institutions, and nonprofit organizations to enhance monitoring and adaptive management efforts. These partnerships will help ensure that restoration and stewardship activities are informed by best available science and enriched by traditional ecological knowledge that reflects generations of ecological understanding and respect.

By embedding adaptive management into all aspects of its work, the Conservancy will ensure that its investments lead to sustainable conservation outcomes, resilient ecosystems, and informed decision-making that can respond effectively to changing conditions.

Implementation Strategies

To implement this strategic goal, the Conservancy can pursue a range of targeted strategies that support responsive, science-informed stewardship of the San Joaquin River Parkway, including:

Strategy 1. Establish a Formal Adaptive Management Framework

- Develop a written Adaptive Management Plan that outlines goals, decision-making processes, feedback loops, and roles for staff and partners.
- Define clear performance metrics for ecological health, habitat restoration, public access, and community engagement.
- Create a decision-support system that uses monitoring data to inform project adjustments and future planning.

Strategy 2. Build a Robust Monitoring Program

- Develop standardized monitoring protocols for habitat conditions, species presence, water quality, visitor impacts, and restoration outcomes.

- Establish baseline ecological data for Conservancy-owned properties.
- Use GIS and remote sensing tools to track changes over time.

Strategy 3. Integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Collaborate with tribal governments and cultural bearers to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into restoration planning and land management.
- Support tribal-led stewardship initiatives, such as native plant propagation, cultural burns, and habitat monitoring.
- Ensure traditional ecological knowledge is respected and protected through appropriate data-sharing agreements and consultation protocols.

Strategy 4. Strengthen Partnerships for Science-Based Stewardship

- Formalize partnerships with universities, research institutions, and environmental nonprofits to co-develop and implement monitoring and adaptive management projects.
- Participate in regional conservation collaboratives to share data, tools, and best practices.
- Leverage partner expertise to evaluate restoration techniques, climate resilience strategies, and ecological outcomes.

Strategy 5. Communicate Results and Foster Transparency

- Publish annual monitoring and adaptive management reports summarizing findings, lessons learned, and changes in strategy.
- Create interactive dashboards or story maps to share data with partners and the public.
- Use results to inform public engagement, policy advocacy, and funding proposals.

Strategy 6. Plan for Climate Resilience and Environmental Change

- Integrate climate adaptation goals into restoration and land management plans.
- Monitor climate-sensitive indicators (e.g., species migration, water temperature, invasive species, etc.).
- Prioritize projects that enhance ecosystem connectivity, floodplain function, and biodiversity.

Strategic Implementation Timeline (2026–2030)

Year 1: Foundation & Framework Development (2026-2027)

Establish Adaptive Management Framework

- Draft and finalize the Adaptive Management Plan, including goals, roles, decision-making processes, and feedback loops.
- Define performance metrics for ecological health, restoration success, public access, and community engagement.

- Begin development of a decision-support system to integrate monitoring data into planning.

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Build Monitoring Program

- Develop standardized protocols for habitat, species, water quality, and visitor impact monitoring.
- Conduct baseline ecological assessments on Conservancy-owned lands.
- Begin setup of GIS and remote sensing systems for long-term tracking.

Integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Initiate consultations with tribal governments and cultural bearers.
- Develop data-sharing agreements and protocols to protect traditional ecological knowledge.
- Identify opportunities for tribal-led stewardship projects.

Strengthen Partnerships

- Formalize collaborations with universities, research institutions, and nonprofits.
- Join regional conservation collaboratives.
- Begin joint planning for monitoring and adaptive management projects.

Communicate & Plan for Climate Resilience

- Begin drafting climate adaptation goals for restoration and land management.
- Identify climate-sensitive indicators for monitoring.
- Develop initial outreach materials to communicate the importance of adaptive management and climate resilience.

Year 2: Pilot Implementation & Capacity Building (2027-2028)

Adaptive Management

- Implement the Adaptive Management Plan in pilot restoration and access projects.
- Use monitoring data to inform initial adaptive decisions.

Monitoring Program

- Launch field-based monitoring using standardized protocols.
- Begin data collection on habitat, species, and visitor impacts.
- Train staff and partners in GIS and remote sensing tools.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Support tribal-led stewardship initiatives (e.g., cultural burns, native plant propagation, etc.).
- Integrate traditional ecological knowledge into restoration planning and monitoring.

Partnerships

- Co-develop research projects with academic and nonprofit partners.
- Host regional workshops to share data and best practices.

Communication & Climate Planning

- Publish first annual monitoring and adaptive management report.
- Launch interactive dashboards or story maps for public engagement.
- Begin implementation of climate-resilient restoration projects.

Year 3: Scaling & Integration (2028-2029)

Adaptive Management

- Apply adaptive management across all major projects.
- Refine decision-support tools based on pilot feedback.

Monitoring Program

- Expand monitoring to additional Conservancy properties and partner sites.
- Analyze trends and adjust restoration and access strategies accordingly.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Institutionalize traditional ecological knowledge integration in planning and management.
- Continue supporting tribal stewardship and monitoring efforts.

Partnerships

- Expand collaborative research and monitoring efforts.
- Share data and findings with regional conservation networks.

Communication & Climate Resilience

- Publish second annual report with comparative data and lessons learned.
- Highlight climate adaptation successes and challenges.
- Engage partners and the public in planning for future climate scenarios.

Year 4: Evaluation, Sustainability & Continuous Improvement (2029-2030)

Adaptive Management

- Conduct comprehensive evaluation of the Adaptive Management Framework.
- Update the plan based on lessons learned and feedback.

Monitoring Program

- Finalize long-term monitoring strategy and funding plan.

- Publish comprehensive ecological health and restoration outcomes report.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Evaluate traditional ecological knowledge integration outcomes and refine protocols.
- Continue supporting and expanding tribal-led initiatives.

Partnerships

- Formalize long-term agreements with research and conservation partners.
- Launch joint publications and data-sharing platforms.

Communication & Climate Resilience

- Develop policy briefs and funding proposals based on monitoring results.
- Advocate for climate-resilient investments using evidence from the program.
- Update restoration and land management plans with climate adaptation strategies.



Goal 7: Find Opportunities for Long-Term, Stable Funding

The Conservancy is reliant on a limited set of funding sources, including voter-approved propositions and bonds, the Environmental License Plate Fund, and revenue generated through lease agreements. Currently, all available funding from these sources has been fully allocated to staffing and projects that directly support the Conservancy's mission, with the exception of Prop 4 funding.

In addition, the Conservancy received a one-time General Fund allocation of \$15 million in the FY 21/22 State Budget to support operations and maintenance. This funding has been instrumental in supporting three permanent staff positions and maintaining existing facilities and properties. However, this allocation is temporary and will revert at the end of June 2027, unless reappropriated. Without a replacement funding source, the Conservancy may be forced to lay off permanent staff or close properties that are currently open to the public, significantly impacting its ability to accomplish goals described in this Strategic Plan.

The lack of a stable, long-term funding stream makes it extremely difficult to plan and implement programs and projects that deliver lasting environmental and community benefits. As a result, programs may need to be scaled back or discontinued, staff turnover may increase, recruitment may become more challenging, and long-term goals in both the Master Plan and Strategic Plan may remain unfulfilled.

This instability is further compounded by the Conservancy's responsibility for the ongoing operations and maintenance of 20 public-access properties, supported by only six approved staff positions. Current funding levels are insufficient to maintain these properties, let alone support the acquisition and stewardship of additional lands needed to fulfill the Conservancy's mission. Without adequate and sustained funding, public health and safety may be compromised, ecological resources may degrade without proper care, and staff morale and safety may suffer.

Given the current economic climate and growing demands on the Conservancy, it is critical to identify and secure new, diversified, and sustainable funding sources. To meet this need, the Conservancy is implementing a comprehensive and forward-looking strategy designed to ensure long-term operational stability, protect staff positions, and support its mission. This strategy includes the following key components:

- **Pursuit of New Funding Streams:** The Conservancy will actively seek new funding opportunities beyond traditional sources such as propositions, bonds, and lease revenues. This includes applying for competitive state and federal grants, exploring philanthropic partnerships, expanding public-private collaborations, and advocating for the redirection of State Lands Commission lease revenues — currently deposited into the General Fund — to the Conservancy to support operations within the Parkway.
- **Creation of a Long-Term Stewardship Endowment:** To ensure stable and predictable funding for operations, maintenance, ecological restoration, and land stewardship, the Conservancy will pursue the establishment of a dedicated endowment. This endowment would be developed in partnership with philanthropic institutions, community foundations, and private donors, with long-term goals of generating consistent annual returns to support staffing, site management, facility upkeep, and habitat protection. Building this

endowment will reduce long-term vulnerability to economic fluctuations and short-lived funding cycles.

- **Leadership Engagement and Advocacy:** The Chief Executive Officer will continue to advocate for the Conservancy's mission and funding needs across partner agencies and state leadership. This includes elevating the urgent need for stable funding for core staffing, operations, land management, and public access infrastructure and aligning Conservancy programs with state and federal climate, conservation, and equity priorities to strengthen competitiveness for funding.
- **Revenue-Generating Opportunities:** Where consistent with its mission and ecological values, the Conservancy will explore revenue-generating activities such as expanded lease agreements, special use permits, day-use parking and boat launch fees, and limited fee-based programs to supplement operational funding and support reinvestment into stewardship.
- **Strategic Staffing and Resource Allocation:** The Conservancy will continue prioritizing efficient use of existing resources, ensuring that staffing and funding align with the highest-priority needs. This includes evaluating staffing models, workload distribution, and the use of flexible staffing mechanisms such as retired annuitants, seasonal staff, and limited-term appointments to avoid layoffs during funding gaps.

Implementation Strategies

To implement this strategic goal, the Conservancy can pursue a range of targeted strategies that will help secure long-term stable funding and ensure financial sustainability and operational resilience, including:

Strategy 1: Pursue New and Diversified Funding Streams

- Conduct a feasibility assessment to determine endowment size, investment policies, and long-term earnings targets needed to support operations, maintenance, and stewardship.
- Explore philanthropic partnerships with foundations, nonprofits, and individual donors to seed initial endowment fund.
- Identify and apply for competitive state and federal grants aligned with conservation, recreation, climate resilience, and equity.
- Develop a grant calendar and tracking system to monitor deadlines, eligibility, and reporting requirements.
- Advocate for redirection of State Lands Commission lease revenues to support San Joaquin River Parkway development and/or maintenance and operations.

Strategy 2: Strengthen Leadership Engagement and Advocacy

- Develop and deliver briefings and impact reports to legislators, control agencies, and key decision-makers.

- Align Conservancy initiatives with statewide priorities, such as climate resilience, outdoor equity, and youth engagement.
- Participate in state budget hearings and policy forums to advocate for reappropriation of General Fund support beyond FY 2026–27.

Strategy 3: Explore Revenue-Generating Opportunities

- Review existing lease agreements and identify opportunities for expansion or renegotiation.
- Evaluate feasibility of day use parking and boat launch fees, special use permits, event rentals, or fee-based programs that align with the Conservancy’s mission.
- Ensure all revenue-generating activities are environmentally sustainable and publicly beneficial.

Strategy 4: Optimize Staffing and Resource Allocation

- Conduct a staffing needs assessment to identify gaps and opportunities for reallocation.
- Use flexible staffing models, including blanket positions, limited-term appointments, seasonal staff, and retired annuitants, to maintain capacity during funding fluctuations.
- Prioritize high-impact projects and essential operations when allocating limited resources.
- Improve internal financial tracking tools to monitor revenue sources, project costs, and long-term obligations.

Strategy 5: Enhance Transparency and Public Support

- Provide regular public updates on stewardship accomplishments, restoration successes, and community benefits made possible by funding Conservancy projects and programs.
- Publish annual financial and impact reports detailing how funds are used and what outcomes are achieved.
- Create public-facing dashboards to show progress on access, restoration, and stewardship goals.
- Engage the public in funding advocacy through community events, newsletters, and social media.

Implementation Timeline

Year 1: Strategic Planning & Foundation Building (2026-2027)

Pursue New and Diversified Funding Streams

- Identify and prioritize state and federal grant opportunities aligned with conservation, recreation, climate resilience, and equity.
- Develop a grant calendar and tracking system for deadlines, eligibility, and reporting.
- Begin outreach to philanthropic foundations and donors.
- Initiate discussions with the State Lands Commission regarding lease revenue redirection.

Strengthen Leadership Engagement and Advocacy

- Prepare and deliver briefings and impact reports to legislators and control agencies.
- Align Conservancy goals with statewide initiatives (e.g., climate resilience, outdoor equity).
- Participate in state budget hearings and policy forums to advocate for continued General Fund support.

Explore Revenue-Generating Opportunities

- Review existing lease agreements for potential updates or expansions.
- Review draft fee collection policy for day use and parking and boat launch fees, special use permits, event rentals, and fee-based programs.

Optimize Staffing and Resource Allocation

- Conduct a staffing needs assessment.
- Identify opportunities for flexible staffing models to address funding variability.

Enhance Transparency and Public Support

- Design templates for annual financial and impact reports.
- Launch initial community engagement and funding awareness campaign.

Year 2: Pilot Programs & Advocacy Expansion (2027-2028)

Funding Streams

- Submit applications for priority grants.
- Formalize philanthropic partnerships and donor engagement strategies.
- Continue advocacy for lease revenue redirection.

Leadership Engagement

- Expand outreach to new legislative and agency partners.
- Showcase alignment with FY 2026–27 statewide priorities.
- Present initial impact data at policy forums and budget hearings.

Revenue Generation

- Pilot event rentals or fee-based programs at select sites.
- Begin renegotiation of lease agreements where feasible.
- Implement fee collection policy for day use and parking and boat launch fees, special use permits, event rentals, and fee-based programs.

Staffing Optimization

- Implement flexible staffing models (e.g., limited-term positions).

- Reallocate resources to support high-impact projects.

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Transparency & Public Support

- Publish first annual financial and impact report.
- Host or participate in community events focused on funding and stewardship.

Year 3: Expanding & Institutionalizing Success (2028-2029)

Funding Streams

- Expand grant applications to include multi-agency and regional proposals.
- Launch donor engagement campaigns and fundraising events.
- Secure commitments for lease revenue redirection.

Leadership Engagement

- Develop policy briefs highlighting Conservancy impact.
- Deepen relationships with key decision-makers.
- Advocate for multi-year General Fund support.

Revenue Generation

- Expand successful fee-based and rental programs/ fee collection.
- Evaluate environmental and public benefits of revenue-generating activities.

Staffing Optimization

- Adjust staffing based on project priorities and funding availability.
- Provide professional development to build internal capacity.

Transparency & Public Support

- Share success stories through newsletters, social media, and public forums.
- Engage community in budget and funding advocacy.

Year 4: Evaluation, Sustainability & Long-Term Planning (2029-2030)

Funding Streams

- Report annual endowment performance and growth to the Conservancy Governing Board for transparency and accountability.
- Evaluate grant success rates and refine strategy.
- Strengthen long-term philanthropic and donor relationships.
- Finalize agreements for ongoing revenue support.

Leadership Engagement

- Present comprehensive impact and financial reports to policymakers.
- Advocate for permanent funding mechanisms.
- Align future initiatives with emerging state and federal priorities.

Revenue Generation

- Conduct full evaluation of revenue-generating programs.
- Institutionalize sustainable models and policies.

Staffing Optimization

- Finalize long-term staffing plan.
- Secure funding for critical positions and operational stability.

Transparency & Public Support

- Publish comprehensive 4-year impact and financial report.
- Host or participate in public forums to share outcomes and gather feedback.
- Launch campaign to build ongoing public and legislative support.



Conclusion

The Conservancy's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan outlines a bold and inclusive vision for the future of the San Joaquin River Parkway — one that protects vital ecosystems, expands equitable public access, and fosters a deep connection between communities and nature. Through focused land acquisitions, habitat restoration, adaptive management, and innovative funding strategies, the Conservancy is laying the foundation for a resilient and accessible San Joaquin River Parkway.

Achieving this vision will require continued collaboration, investment, and public engagement. We invite community members, partners, policymakers, and supporters to join us in advancing this transformative work. Whether through advocacy, stewardship, funding, or participation in public programs, your involvement is essential to the success of the San Joaquin River Parkway. Together, we can protect the San Joaquin River Parkway and ensure that its benefits are explored, experienced, and enjoyed across all communities.

Performance Monitoring and Strategic Plan Updates

The Conservancy Board, recognizing that goals, strategies, and implementation schedules are most meaningful when they are consistently monitored and evaluated. Staff will undertake an annual public workshop each August to assess the Conservancy's progress with this Strategic Plan and recommend modifications. Local partners and the public are invited to submit comments or ideas at any time to the Conservancy at the address below, or by speaking at any Conservancy Board meeting.

San Joaquin River Conservancy

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