

2025-2026

PARKWAY NEWSLETTER: YEAR IN REVIEW

Official Newsletter of the San Joaquin River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS MESSAGE

This past year has been a defining chapter for the Conservancy – one marked by growth, collaboration, and meaningful progress toward meeting our mission. As we look back on our accomplishments, one theme stands out above all: building. We have been building our team, building our future, and building the San Joaquin River Parkway that will serve our communities for generations.

Together, we strengthened our organizational foundation by welcoming new expertise, investing in staff development, and expanding the collaborative spirit that fuels our mission. Our growing team – now including six permanent staff, four seasonal staff, four Fresno State Fellows, and one Fresno State Intern – has energized our work and enhanced our capacity to deliver on the long-term vision of a thriving, connected, and accessible San Joaquin River Parkway.

HIGHLIGHTS

\$2M in Federal Funding for Parkway Projects in City of Fresno, Congressmen Costa

State Parks Forward initiative from Governor Newsom to create new San Joaquin River Parkway State Park

Partnership with City of Fresno

River West Core Project
Jensen River Ranch and
Camp Pashayan
Improvements and
Operations

Fresno State College Corps increasing from 2 fellows to 4 for 2026 School Year

Social Media engagement up across all platforms

K'uik'ui Ranch and Ledger Island operation returns to SJRC, seasonal staff hiring in process



EXECUTIVE OFFICERS MESSAGE CONT'

We also made significant strides in shaping the future of the Conservancy's projects and programs. Through careful planning, partnerships, and a little elbow grease, we advanced and supported key initiatives, such as the State Parks Forward Initiative, that will serve as a foundation and guide the next several years of restoration, public access, and community engagement. Each step has brought us closer to a future where the Parkway is not only protected, but actively enriching the lives of the people and wildlife who depend on it.

Most importantly, we continued building the Parkway itself – identifying and expanding habitat restoration opportunities, opening and enhancing recreational areas, deepening community involvement, and moving priority projects, such as the Fresno River West Core Project, forward. The work completed this year reflects the dedication of our team, the strength of our partnerships, and the enduring support of the community we serve.

As we enter the next fiscal year, we do so with optimism and confidence. and are positioned to build even stronger connections, have a greater impact, and develop a river parkway that symbolizes a legacy of shared goals and purpose. Thank you for being part of this journey and for believing in the work that provides spaces where people and nature can thrive – together.



SUMMER 2025

July

- The Conservancy completed its first Workforce and Succession Management Plan, strengthening long-term staffing and organizational resilience.
- Conservancy staff collaborated with the Department of General Services (DGS) and CalVets to evaluate and improve small business and Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise (DVBE) participation.
- Major cleanup event at River Vista removed over 900 pounds of trash, with 70+ volunteers and support from multiple partner organizations.

August

- Conservancy staff collaborated with City of Fresno Public Works to align project needs with Measure P resources.
- Thanked high school volunteer Xiena, who contributed 45 hours of support over the summer, developed her own outdoor education program, and led two youth nature walks at Wildwood Native Park highlighting the history and natural resources of the San Joaquin River.
- Conservancy Board approved and funded the Circle V Demolition Project.

September

- Conservancy staff met with Secretary Crowfoot and City of Fresno partners during a site visit to River West Fresno to review project progress and discuss next steps.
- Launched the Conservancy's strategic planning process, including weekly open office hours to encourage public participation and input.
- Welcomed two Fresno State College Corps fellows for the academic year.



FALL 2025



October

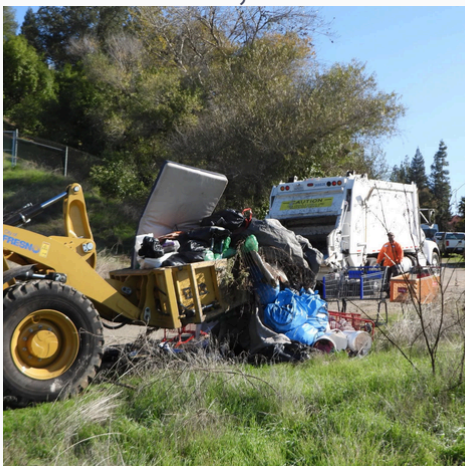
- CEO, Kari Kyler Daniska, attended the 3rd Annual CA State Leadership Summit, focusing on innovation, smart risk-taking, and adaptive management—key themes aligned with the Conservancy’s strategic planning efforts.
- Ashley promoted to Associate Governmental Program Analyst, enabling expanded responsibilities and supporting stronger administrative capacity.
- Regulations were submitted and accepted by the Office of Administrative Law.

November

- In partnership with Sierra Resource Conservation District (SRCDD), completed installation of more than 600 native plants, reflecting progress in restoration efforts.
- Participated in the Statewide Quarterly Advocate Meeting, receiving recognition for achieving 77 percent Small Business/DVBE participation in FY 24/25 and staying on track to exceed that in FY 25/26.
- Partnered with the City of Fresno and Fresno Canoe and Kayak Club for a Beautify Fresno event where 80 volunteers removed 1,330 pounds of trash from River West.

December

- Featured on FM88.1 KFCF with Parkway to discuss Conservancy projects, the strategic plan, River West Fresno, and the importance of public involvement.
- Submitted Proposition 4 Guidelines to the Office of Administrative Law, receiving approval on December 24—becoming the first Conservancy to achieve this milestone.
- Celebrated Cheryl’s retirement after nearly 25 years of state service, honoring her role in developing segments of the Parkway Trail, property management work—including the egret maze at K’uik’ui Ranch—and her lasting legacy of stewardship, education, and community connection.



WINTER 2026

January

- Conservancy staff collaborated with Parkway, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife on the Running River Ranch Restoration Plan, Operations and Maintenance Plan, and SERP program pathways to support efficient CEQA and permitting processes.
- CEO, Kari Kyler Daniska, attended the first-ever Nature-Based Solutions Summit, gaining insights into innovative climate-resilient restoration strategies.
- Welcomed three Fresno State Social Media Interns for the Spring Semester

February

- Announced the receipt of a \$2 million federal grant, alongside City leadership and Congressman Jim Costa, to support San Joaquin River Parkway improvements and expanded public access.
- CEO, Kari Kyler Daniska, participated in the statewide Outdoors for All convening, speaking on equitable access and regional collaboration to expand access for all.
- Co-hosted a community volunteer day at the Conservancy's native pollinator garden with SRCD and RiverTree Volunteers, focusing on planting, mulching, and habitat enhancement.

March

- Partnered with Beautify Fresno and the Fresno Canoe and Kayak Club for a River West cleanup where volunteers removed 3,280 pounds of trash.
- Completed fuel reduction and vegetation management at Wildwood with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) and RiverTree Volunteers.
- Attended the Caltrans SB/DVBE Summit, supporting contractor diversity and small business engagement.
- In partnership with SRCD, two Conservancy staff earned Wilderness CPR certifications.





April

- Co-hosted a special event with California State Parks and regional partners where Governor Gavin Newsom and First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom announced the State Parks Forward Initiative, adding three new Central Valley state parks and expanding the State Parks system by 30,000 acres by 2030.
- Welcomed Alexander Rodriguez as the Conservancy's new Environmental Scientist, bringing expertise in field ecology, restoration, and natural resource management.
- CEO, Kari Kyler Daniska, represented the Conservancy at the California Tribal Nations Summit, strengthening government-to-government relationships and collaborative stewardship efforts.

May

- Celebrated College Corps fellows at Fresno State's Spirit of Service Awards.
- The California Conservation Corps (CCCs) conducted fuel management and invasive species removal at Wildwood Native Park and K'uik'ui Ranch, while the Central California Off Road Cyclists maintained trails and managed vegetation at Sycamore Island - Van Buren Unit.
- Finalized the Camp Pashayan transfer of jurisdiction, effective June 1, enabling the next phase of improvements with the City of Fresno.
- Governing Board approved the City of Fresno's funding request for the River West - Core Project, now fully funded and scheduled for construction in Winter 2026/Spring 2027.
- Installation of information kiosk at Jensen River Ranch Extension and official opening of the property for public access and low-impact recreation.
- The WCB funded the Conservancy's River Vista Bridge Removal and Restoration Planning and Implementation Project.

June

- Draft Strategic Plan published for public comment, finalization in process for August Governing Board Meeting.
- In partnership with volunteer John Halpin, completed minor repairs on Wildwood footbridge for improved safety and visitor experience and developed a nature walk program on Conservancy owned and operated properties.

