

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS  
ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY

DEPT: Chief Executive Office

BOARD AGENDA # \*B-12

Urgent

Routine

AGENDA DATE December 4, 2007

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES  NO   
(Information Attached)

4/5 Vote Required YES  NO

SUBJECT:

Approval of Letters of Support for the Dos Rios Ranch Land Protection and Habitat Restoration Project at the Confluence of the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway and the San Joaquin River and to Support the Expansion of the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge to Include the Dos Rios Ranch

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Authorize the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to sign letters of support to secure funding for the Dos Rios Land Protection and Habitat Restoration Project at the confluence of the lower Tuolumne River and the San Joaquin River, and to support the expansion of the San Joaquin River National Wildlife (SJRNW) Refuge to include the Dos Rios Ranch.

FISCAL IMPACT:

While the actual impacts cannot be determined at this time, the potential exists for property tax losses associated with the proposed inclusion of the Dos Rios Ranch property in the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge. To mitigate this fiscal impact, River Partners, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and the applicant for the funding needed to acquire the Dos Rios Ranch, has agreed pursuant to their letter dated November 1, 2007, to reimburse Stanislaus County for the current property tax revenue on the parcel from proceeds of lease and usage revenues as the project is developed.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2007-938

On motion of Supervisor Mayfield, Seconded by Supervisor Grover  
and approved by the following vote,

Ayes: Supervisors: Mayfield, Grover, Monteith, DeMartini, and Chairman O'Brien

Noes: Supervisors: None

Excused or Absent: Supervisors: None

Abstaining: Supervisor: None

1) X Approved as recommended

2) \_\_\_\_\_ Denied

3) \_\_\_\_\_ Approved as amended

4) \_\_\_\_\_ Other:

MOTION:



ATTEST: CHRISTINE FERRARO TALLMAN, Clerk

File No.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Dos Rios Ranch is located approximately 20 minutes West of Modesto. The Ranch lies between the Tuolumne River Regional Park and the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge along a stretch of river proposed for the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway. In 2005, the Tuolumne River Coalition, a collaborative of local agencies and organizations, developed a vision for the lower Tuolumne River. This document presented a blueprint for the development of the 52 miles stretching from La Grange to the San Joaquin River and encompassed the land proposed for acquisition.

The Dos Rios Ranch Acquisition and restoration project includes over 1,600 acres of strategically located land. The project would provide multiple benefits to improve outdoor recreational opportunities and restoration of a priority part of the San Joaquin valley's environment while improving the Valley's flood control infrastructure. It would build on the approximately 10,000 acres of existing habitat, and enhance parks and recreation projects along both the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers, including the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway and the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge.

As proposed, the Project would restore six miles of river frontage along the San Joaquin and Tuolumne Rivers, improve regional access to outdoor activities including fishing and hunting opportunities, create new educational opportunities to local and regional schools, enhance central valley flood control programs, and reduce land use conflicts by providing habitat for threatened and endangered species and other wildlife.

The proposed purchaser, River Partners is an experienced river habitat restoration nonprofit agency with extensive working relationships with federal and state agencies charged with river protection, recreation, flood control and restoration. In this project, River Partners has affiliated with the Tuolumne River Trust to help secure funds for the purchase of the property. River Partners has submitted bond applications for partial funding of the Dos Rios acquisition and is supporting federal designation of the Dos Rios parcel as part of the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge. This would be a willing seller, willing buyer agreement.

## **POLICY ISSUE:**

Support for the acquisition of Dos Rios Ranch by River Partners could benefit local programs supporting education, recreation, flood protection, environmental protection, habitat restoration, and the protection of threatened and endangered species. This proposal is consistent with the County's vision to extend the Tuolumne River parkway from LaGrange to the San Joaquin River. This

Approval of Letters of Support for the Dos Rios Ranch Land Protection and Habitat Restoration Project at the Confluence of the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway and the San Joaquin River and to Support the Expansion of the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge to include the Dos Rios Ranch  
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proposal has the bipartisan support of local, state and national elected representatives, non-profit organizations, environmental groups and educational interests. It supports multiple Board of Supervisors priorities.

**STAFFING IMPACT:**

There is no staffing impact associated with this item.



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**William O'Brien, 1<sup>st</sup> District**  
**Thomas W. Mayfield, 2<sup>nd</sup> District**  
**Jeff Grover, 3<sup>rd</sup> District**  
**Dick Monteith, 4<sup>th</sup> District**  
**Jim DeMartini, 5<sup>th</sup> District**

1010 10TH Street, Suite 6500, Modesto, CA 95354  
Phone: 209.525.4494 Fax: 209.525.4410

December 4, 2007

The Honorable Dennis Cardoza  
18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
1010 10th Street, Suite 5800  
Modesto, CA 95354

RE: Support for the Dos Rios Ranch Land Protection and Habitat Restoration Project, including the Expansion of the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge to Include the Dos Rios Ranch at the Confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers.

Dear Congressman Cardoza,

I am writing in support of your proposed legislation to expand the San Joaquin River National Wildlife (SJRNW) Refuge to include the Dos Rios Ranch at the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers. As strong advocates of the efforts of the Tuolumne River Park Commission, the Board of Supervisors is committed to the support of efforts to move this important project forward. We believe very strongly that this project will have a substantial benefit to our communities and to the entire Valley region.

The Dos Rios Ranch is a welcomed and needed addition to the Refuge due to its unique attributes that contribute even further to the success of the Refuge, including:

- its location at the confluence of the San Joaquin and Tuolumne Rivers;
- its size - 1,600 acres;
- its river frontage - 6 miles on the two rivers; and
- its topography - floodplain and upland habitat.

The Dos Rios Ranch will act as a cornerstone in the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway, a mosaic of public and private projects to restore habitat and improve recreational opportunities along the Tuolumne River.

Expansion of the Refuge is a key component in further implementing the "Lower Tuolumne River Parkway Framework for the Future" document adopted by the Tuolumne River governing jurisdictions in 2005. The proposed expansion will increase recreational and preservation opportunities on all sides of the confluence of the Tuolumne and the San Joaquin rivers and will serve as a valuable asset to the public.

The expansion will provide an opportunity for the additional acreage to be eligible for Land and Water Conservation programs and other associated federal funds. Additionally,

the designation elevates the priority of funding requests made to private, state and non-profit sources. Unfortunately, Stanislaus County and other Central Valley communities have not always been successful in capturing our fair share of recreational and preservation resources. We believe that it is time for Central Valley taxpayers and residents to benefit and leverage available public and private funding to enhance the wildlife, public recreational and educational opportunities.

The San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge has been a shining star in the National Wildlife Refuge system, both in terms of its contribution to the recovery of sensitive species and for the role it plays in the development of the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway. The recovery of the Aleutian Canada Goose could not have happened without the efforts of Refuge staff and participating landowners.

Additionally, the acquisition of the Dos Rios ranch property will improve our ability to manage floods and build upon existing nonstructural flood control and conservation efforts already underway at the adjacent refuge. It is also consistent with the long term vision of the residents and jurisdictions that make up the Tuolumne River Regional Park Commission.

The Board of Supervisors strongly supports the inclusion of the Dos Rios Ranch in the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William O'Brien". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William O'Brien, Chairman  
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors

cc: Patrick Koepele, Tuolumne River Trust



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**William O'Brien, 1<sup>st</sup> District**  
**Thomas W. Mayfield, 2<sup>nd</sup> District**  
**Jeff Grover, 3<sup>rd</sup> District**  
**Dick Monteith, 4<sup>th</sup> District**  
**Jim DeMartini, 5<sup>th</sup> District**

1010 10TH Street, Suite 6500, Modesto, CA 95354  
Phone: 209.525.4494 Fax: 209.525.4410

December 4, 2007

John Carlon, President  
River Partners  
806 14th Street  
Modesto CA 95354

RE: Support for the Dos Rios Ranch Land Protection and Habitat Restoration Project at the Confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers

Dear Mr. Carlon:

On behalf of the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors, I am writing in strong support of your efforts to secure funding for the Dos Rios Land Protection and Habitat Restoration Project in the Central Valley.

The Dos Rios Ranch is a 1,600 acre ranch located at the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers. We realize that the property is an important acquisition in the plan for the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway and the restoration of the San Joaquin River. With over 6 miles of river frontage and located adjacent to San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge, the property is ideally situated for acquisition and inclusion in the parkway. This project strongly complements larger restoration efforts underway along the San Joaquin River, the Tuolumne River, and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

We understand the benefits of this project also extend into flood damage reduction. Floodplain expansion along the lower Tuolumne River is an important issue for our community. The January 1997 floods demonstrated how crucial flood corridors are in reducing damages to life and property along our state's waterways. The efforts of River Partners and its collaborator, the Tuolumne River Trust, in working towards solutions to flood damage reduction will benefit our community by reducing flood risk as well as protect wildlife habitat and the environment.

As you are aware, Stanislaus County is one of the local collaborative participants of county and city agencies as well as other local organizations that have developed a shared vision for the lower Tuolumne River titled "*The Lower Tuolumne River Parkway: A Framework for the Future.*" The document presents a roadmap to improving recreation and habitat along the lower Tuolumne River. The Dos Rios project is one of the cornerstones of this vision and will greatly contribute to moving the *Framework efforts* forward.

I understand that River Partners and the Tuolumne River Trust will be seeking funds through various State and Federal programs including the voter-approved Proposition 50, 84 and 1E funds as well as from private funding venues. I wholeheartedly endorse your efforts and believe the Dos Rios project will be of great benefit to our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William O'Brien". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and a stylized "O'Brien".

William O'Brien, Chairman  
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Patrick Koepele, Tuolumne River Trust

# Dos Rios Ranch



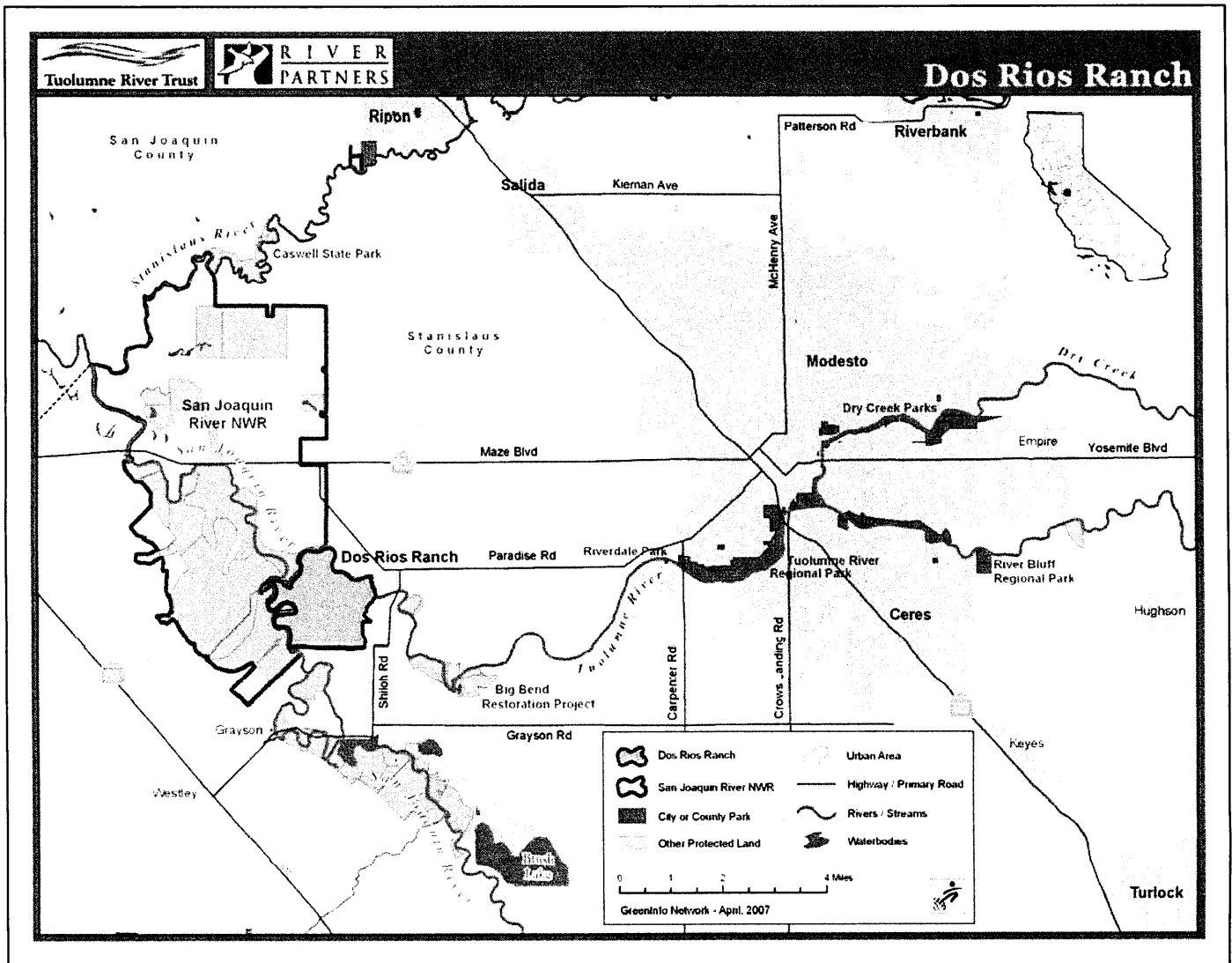
Douglas Steakley Photography

## The Lower Tuolumne River Parkway – Moving a Step Forward





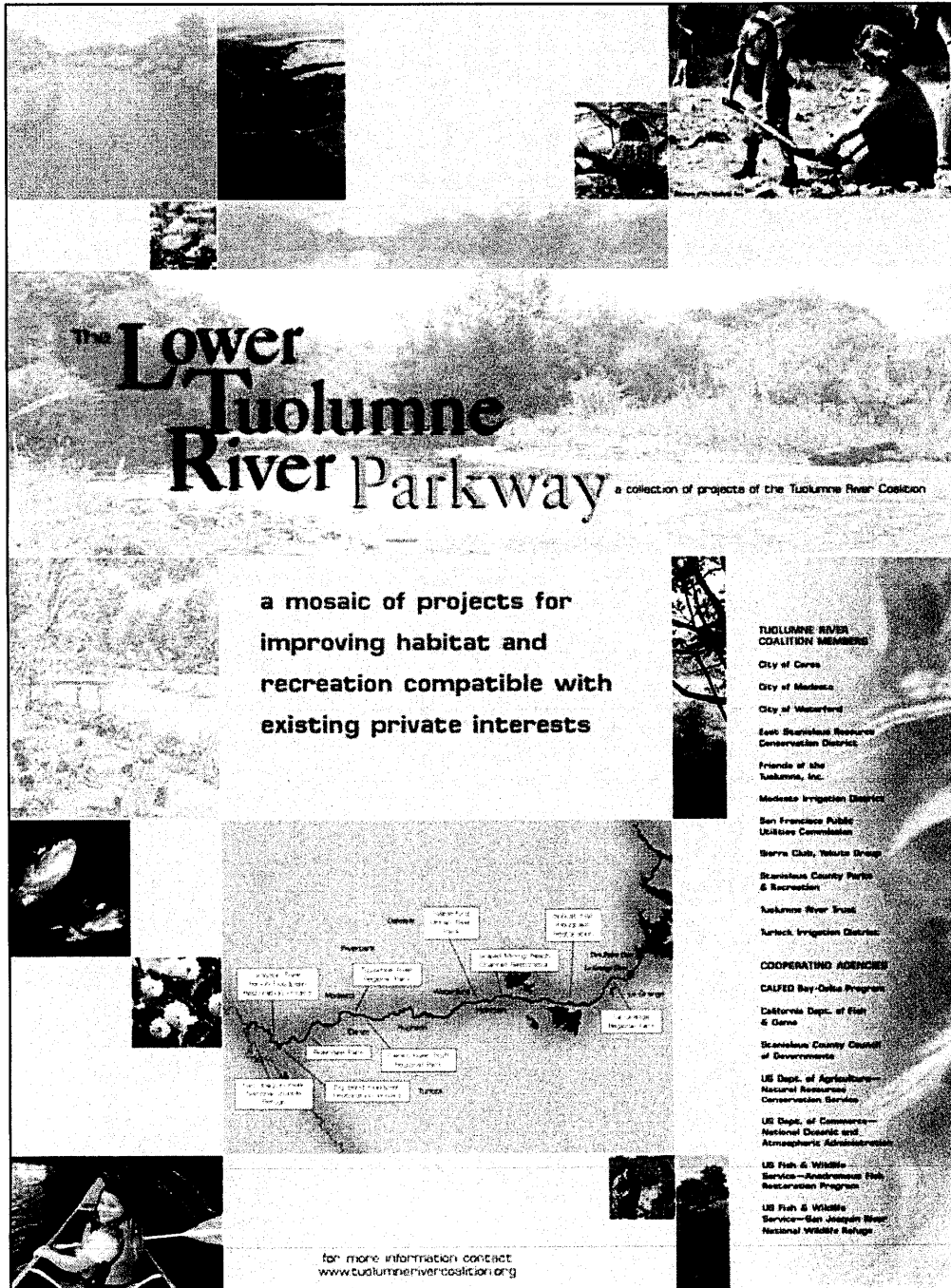
# Dos Rios Ranch



Located just 20 minutes from Modesto, the third largest city in the San Joaquin Valley, and 1 hour from the Bay Area and Sacramento, the Dos Rios Ranch lies at the heart of an ever expanding population that is demanding more and more from the State's natural resources.

The Ranch lies between the Tuolumne River Regional Park and the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge along a stretch of river proposed for the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway.

# Dos Rios Ranch



**The Lower Tuolumne River Parkway** a collection of projects of the Tuolumne River Coalition

a mosaic of projects for improving habitat and recreation compatible with existing private interests

**TUOLUMNE RIVER COALITION MEMBERS**

- City of Corvallis
- City of Medford
- City of Ukiah
- East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District
- Friends of the Tuolumne, Inc.
- Madroño Irrigation District
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
- Sierra Club, Yuba Chapter
- Stanislaus County Parks & Recreation
- Tuolumne River Trust
- Turlock Irrigation District

**COOPERATING AGENCIES**

**CALFED Bay-Delta Program**

California Dept. of Fish & Game

Stanislaus County Council of Governments

US Dept. of Agriculture—National Resources Conservation Service

US Dept. of Commerce—National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

US Fish & Wildlife Service—Anadromous Fish Restoration Program

US Fish & Wildlife Service—San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge

for more information contact  
[www.tuolumnerivercoalition.org](http://www.tuolumnerivercoalition.org)

## The Lower Tuolumne River Parkway

In 2005 the Tuolumne River Coalition, a collaborative of local agencies and organizations, developed a vision for the lower Tuolumne River titled, *The Lower Tuolumne River Parkway – A Framework for the Future*. This document presented a blueprint for a mosaic of public and private projects along the 52 miles of river from La Grange to the San Joaquin River.

With the Tuolumne River Regional Park and the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge as bookends, the Dos Rios Ranch will move this vision forward by providing a critical piece in the puzzle for the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway.

# Dos Rios Ranch

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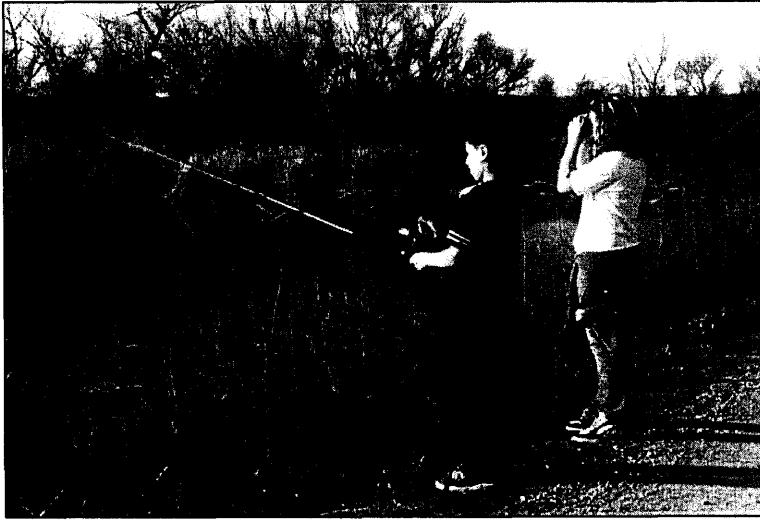
Douglas Steakley Photography

The Dos Rios Ranch Acquisition and restoration project includes over 1,600 acres of strategically located land where the San Joaquin and Tuolumne Rivers meet just west of Modesto. The project provides multiple benefits to improve outdoor recreational opportunities and restoring a priority part of the San Joaquin Valley's environment while improving California's flood control infrastructure.

- Builds on approximately 10,000 acres of existing habitat, parks, and recreation projects along both the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers, including the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway and the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge
- Restores 6 miles of river frontage along the San Joaquin and Tuolumne Rivers
- Provides Families with Access to the Outdoors just Twenty Minutes from Modesto, the San Joaquin Valley's Third Largest City
- Expands Public Fishing and Hunting Opportunities
- Enhances Central Valley Flood Control
- Reduces Land Use Conflicts by Providing Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species and other Wildlife
- Willing Seller

# Dos Rios Ranch

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Douglas Steakley Photography



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## Recreation for Families

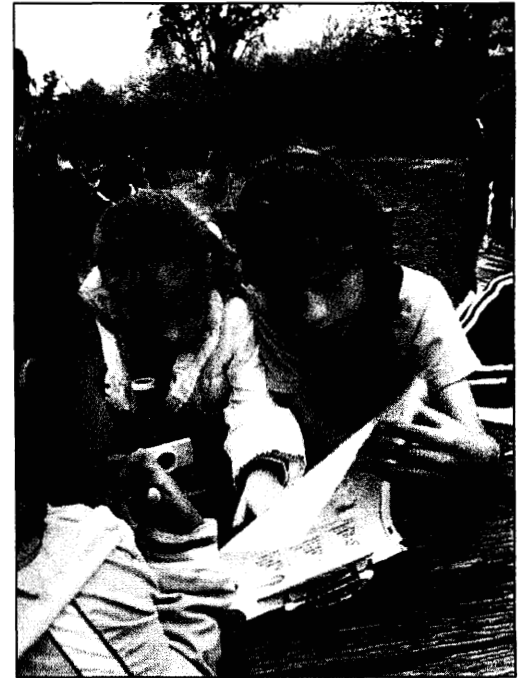
As Central Valley cities continue to grow, pressures for adequate natural areas grow too. According to the California Department of Finance, by 2040 the population of the Central Valley will grow to 11.5 million residents, from today's population of 5.5 million residents. However, the region is under-represented in park and recreational facilities relative to the rest of the State.

The Dos Rios ranch will provide a place for families to enjoy a beautiful natural environment without driving far. Only 20 minutes from Modesto, 30 minutes from Stockton, and 1 hour from Merced, Sacramento, and the Bay Area, the Ranch is easily accessible for day-long outings.

Families will be able to access both the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers for fishing, boating, bird watching, and hiking. The Ranch will also be an addition to many other wetland and riparian restoration projects throughout the Valley and will attract waterfowl in great diversity, providing future hunting opportunities.

# Dos Rios Ranch

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## A Place to Teach Kids About Nature

The award winning Trekking the Tuolumne River Program will involve 3,000 children from 30 schools in a California science standards-based environmental education program. The Dos Rios Ranch will provide additional opportunities for area-youth to learn about the importance of rivers to the San Joaquin Valley.

Through the Trekking the Tuolumne River Program, kids get hands-on experience in the outdoors where they learn about water quality, riparian habitat, river sedimentation processes, salmon and other native fish, and watershed stewardship. The capstone of the program is a year-end Service-Learning Project where each school designs and completes a project that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich their learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen their communities.

The Dos Rios Ranch will expand this successful program and create another place where kids can learn about nature.

# Dos Rios Ranch

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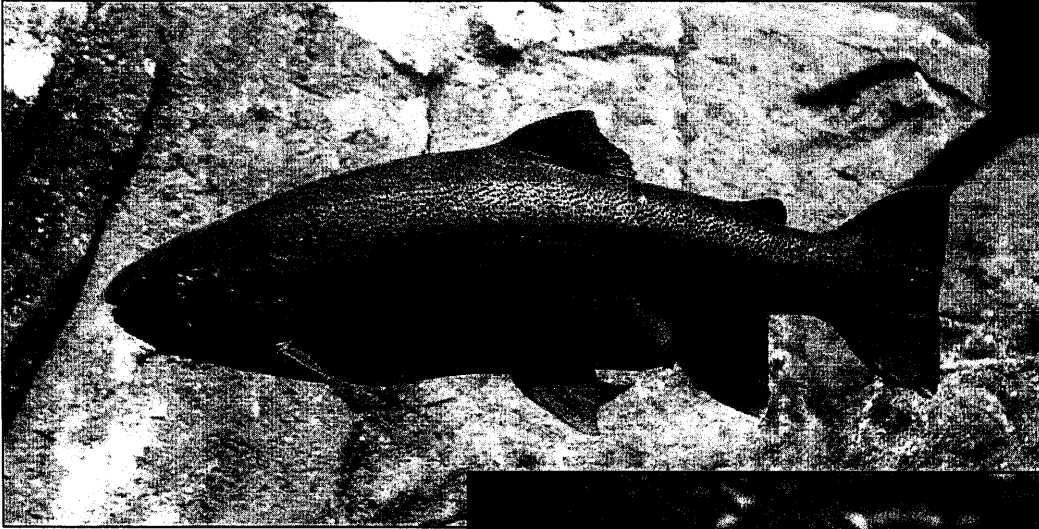
## Fishing and Hunting

Located at the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers, the Dos Rios Ranch will provide excellent access to the rivers for fishing. Native salmon and rainbow trout migrate past the ranch on their way to spawning gravels further upstream. Both rivers are also known to have strong stocks of bass and striped bass.

Located at the heart of the Pacific Flyway, the Dos Rios Ranch will also provide excellent waterfowl hunting opportunities. The Ranch's rivers, ponds, and wetlands will attract thousands of ducks and other waterfowl, while the nearby San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge will help maintain healthy populations of birds.

# Dos Rios Ranch

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## Salmon and Trout

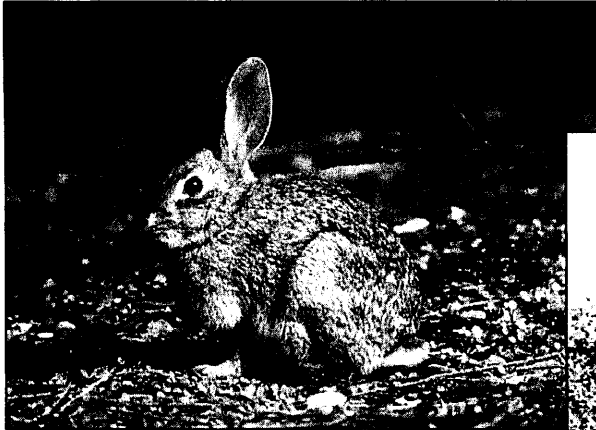
The acquisition of Dos Rios Ranch will provide greatly needed habitat for several sensitive species including Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Trout. Both migrate in the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers past the Ranch to and from their spawning grounds upstream.

The San Joaquin River and its tributaries are currently undergoing major restoration projects to improve spawning and migratory habitat for these fish. This project is complementary to the restoration programs and will enhance the chance of success in improving these imperiled fish. Restored floodplains at the Ranch will improve migratory habitat and thereby increase survival of outmigrating fry and smolts.

# Dos Rios Ranch

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Riparian Brush Rabbit



Migratory Waterfowl



Douglas Steakley Photography



Least Bell's Vireo

## Other Sensitive Fish and Wildlife

The Riparian Brush Rabbit has been making a comeback in the area thanks to the efforts of the Endangered Species Recover Program at CSU Stanislaus and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Rabbits have been reintroduced directly across the San Joaquin River from the Dos Rios Ranch. The Ranch would provide an opportunity to create another reintroduction site, which could ultimately lead to the delisting of the rabbit.

The Least Bell's Vireo, an endangered songbird that at one time was abundant throughout the Central Valley, was completely extirpated by the mid-1940's. A breeding pair of Least Bell's Vireo has returned to nest at the Refuge for the first time in 60 years. This pair has been observed during the summers of 2005 and 2006 directly across the San Joaquin River from the Dos Rios Ranch.

Migratory waterfowl rely on the wetlands and riparian corridor found on the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge. The Ranch will become an integral part of the Pacific Flyway, a major north-south route of travel for migratory waterfowl along the west coast of North America.



# Dos Rios Ranch

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Douglas Steakley Photography

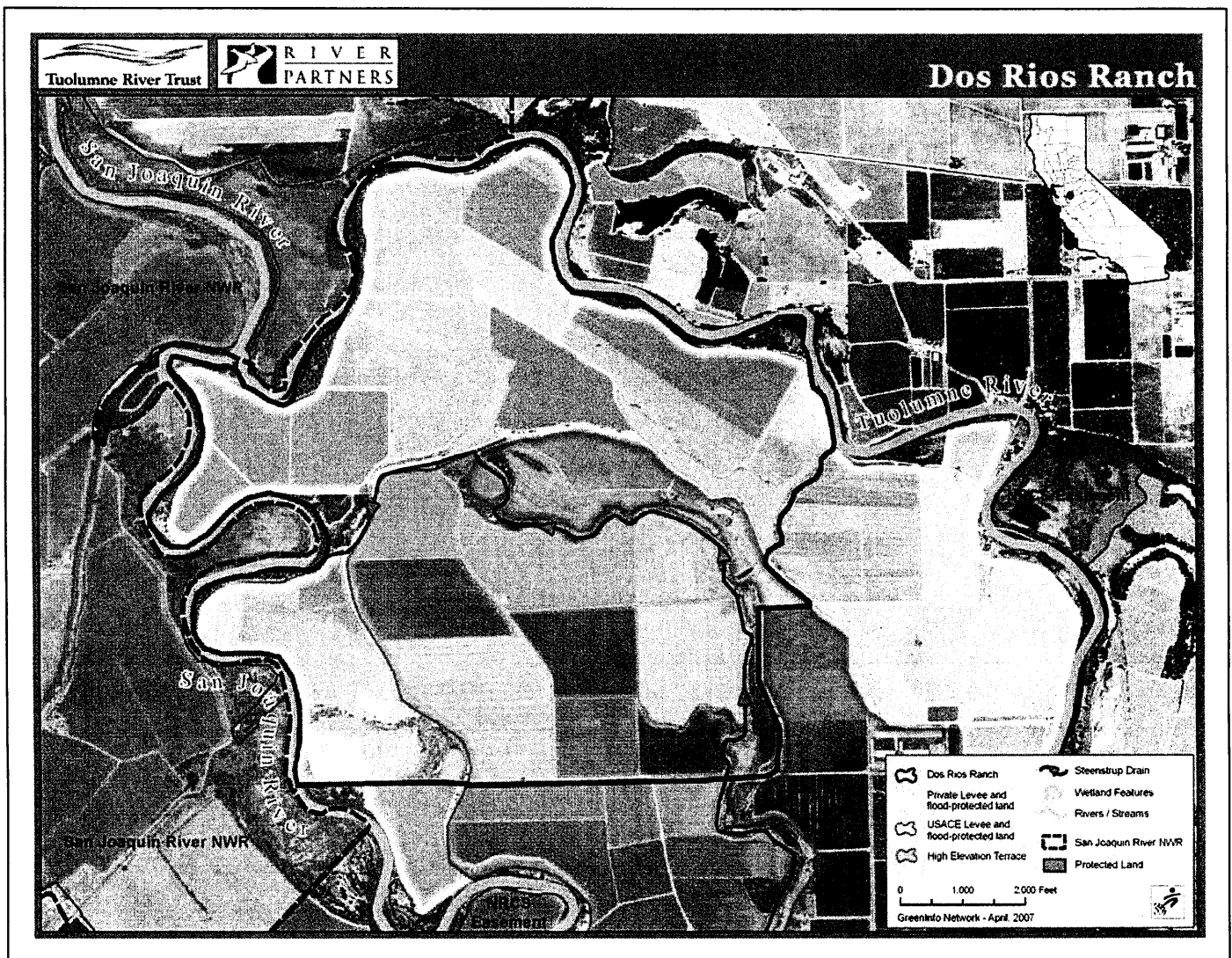
## San Joaquin River Restoration

An historic agreement to restore water flows for salmon in the San Joaquin River while undertaking one of the West's largest river restoration efforts has been announced by the U.S. Departments of Interior and Commerce, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Friant Water Users Authority.

Through this agreement, Chinook salmon will once again swim in the San Joaquin River upstream of the Merced River. Meanwhile, on the Tuolumne River, intensive river restoration has been ongoing for the past ten years, coupled with an improved dam release schedule, all with the objective of improving habitat for the Tuolumne's salmon population.

The Dos Rios Ranch Project is an excellent compliment to these major river restoration efforts by improving riparian forests and floodplains, which will enhance migratory and rearing habitat for Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and other native fish at a critical ecological zone – the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers.

# Dos Rios Ranch



## Flood Control

“While single-purpose flood management projects were acceptable in the past, they no longer are considered the preferable approach to floodplain management. Increasingly, floodplains are seen as valuable resources by our society. They provide opportunities for flood protection, agricultural production, open space, valuable native habitat, ecosystem protection, recreation, economic development, and housing.” -California Floodplain Management Task Force, 2002

Flood Corridors that give river room to flood in a non-damaging way are one of the best tools available for a sustainable flood management system. The project provides an excellent opportunity to expand the flood corridors of the San Joaquin and Tuolumne Rivers by 1,603 acres through the acquisition of the Dos Rios Ranch.

Of these 1,603 acres, 637 acres, shown in light orange in the map above, are protected by a Corps of Engineers levee thus presenting an opportunity for a levee setback.

Additionally, the project builds on approximately 1,500 acres of existing floodplain easements directly upstream of the project on both rivers and the 6,700 acres of floodplain currently held by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge.

# Contact

Patrick Koepele  
Central Valley Program Director  
Tuolumne River Trust  
829 Thirteenth Street  
Modesto, CA 95354  
(209) 236-0660  
patrick@tuolumne.org

John Carlon  
President  
River Partners  
580 Vallambrosa Avenue  
Chico, CA 95926  
(530) 894-5401  
jcarlon@riverpartners.org



Douglas Steakley Photography

**Tuolumne River Trust**

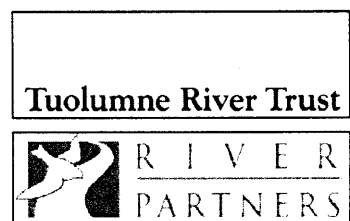




Douglas Steakley Photography

The mission of the Tuolumne River Trust is to promote the stewardship of the Tuolumne River and its tributaries to ensure a healthy watershed.

The mission of the River Partners is to create wildlife habitat for the benefit of people and the environment.





R I V E R  
P A R T N E R S

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Chico, California 95926  
[info@riverpartners.org](mailto:info@riverpartners.org)

Phone: (530) 894-5401  
Fax: (530) 894-2970  
[www.riverpartners.org](http://www.riverpartners.org)

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

November 1st, 2007  
2007 NOV -5 A 9:53

Mr. Rick Robinson  
Chief Executive Officer  
County of Stanislaus  
1010 10<sup>th</sup> St., Room 6333  
Modesto, California 95354

Dear Mr. Robinson,

On behalf of River Partners, I would like to request the formal support of Stanislaus County on two items: the acquisition of the Dos Rios Ranch by River Partners for inclusion into the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge; and federal legislation which will officially designate the Dos Rios Ranch as part of that refuge.

The Dos Rios Ranch is a 1,600-acre ranch located at the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers. The property is an important acquisition in the plan for the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway and the restoration of the San Joaquin River. With over 6 miles of river frontage and located adjacent to the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge, the property is ideally situated for acquisition and inclusion in the parkway. This project strongly complements larger restoration efforts underway along the San Joaquin River, the Tuolumne River, and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

River Partners is an experienced river habitat restoration nonprofit agency with extensive working relationships with federal and state agencies charged with river protection, recreation, flood control and restoration. In this project, River Partners has affiliated with the Tuolumne River Trust to help secure funds for the purchase of the property.

Several salient facts stand out regarding this effort:

--This is a willing seller, willing buyer agreement.

--Acquisition of the Dos Rios parcel will complete public ownership of the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers, enhancing public recreational and flood control options available to local, state and federal agencies (this parcel has flooded twice in last 15 years).

--The acquisition is consistent with the Tuolumne River Framework plan adopted by the governing jurisdictions of the Tuolumne River Regional Park Planning Commission (TRRP) in 2005 (Stanislaus County, Modesto, Ceres, and Waterford).

--River Partners agrees to reimburse Stanislaus County for the current property tax revenue on the parcel out of lease and usage revenues as the project is developed.

--This acquisition does not compete for funds with any other Stanislaus County project. In fact, the private nonprofit foundation funds and the various bond and federal funds being sought will likely be allocated to projects out of Stanislaus County if we do not secure them for this project.

--This acquisition and request for designation as part of the San Joaquin River National Refuge has engendered the support of many local groups and individuals, including the Tuolumne River Citizens Advisory Committee, Mayor Jim Ridenour, Chair of the TRRP, former Supervisor Ray Simon, Stanislaus County Superintendent of Schools Tom Changnon, Representative Dennis Cardoza, state legislators Tom Berryhill, Cathleen Galgiani, and Greg Aghazarian, Ducks Unlimited and dozens of youth, park, community, sporting and other representatives. (complete package of endorsements enclosed).

River Partners has submitted bond applications for partial funding of the Dos Rios acquisition (applications enclosed). In addition, we are supporting federal designation of the Dos Rios parcel as part of the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge. We believe such designation will elevate the stature of our project in the eyes of various funding resources. It also is a natural and long envisioned expansion of the refuge.

I have enclosed for your review a detailed analysis of the acquisition property, copies of grant applications, and support letters from many of the individuals and groups that have joined together in this effort.

River Partners requests Stanislaus County endorse our efforts to secure support for the Dos Rios acquisition and the designation of the property as part of the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge.

If I can supply you, your board or staff with any additional information I will be happy to do so.

Sincerely,



John Carlon  
River Partners