
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Date: Thursday, March 29, 2007

Subject: Development of the Bidwell Ranch Conservation and Mitigation Bank

What is the role of River Partners on Bidwell Ranch?

River Partners is working with the City of Chico to develop a mitigation and conservation bank on the Bidwell Ranch property. River Partners will complete the tasks necessary to develop the site as a conservation and mitigation bank. Once completed, the City will make a decision on whether the benefits of converting the property to a conservation and mitigation bank outweigh other uses of the property. Federal and State agencies must certify and approve the documentation before the site can operate as a conservation or mitigation bank. Chico-based, River Partners is a nonprofit, public benefit organization and has extensive experience in natural resource management and working with agencies and the public to provide solutions to complex environmental questions.

What is a conservation or mitigation bank?

A conservation or mitigation bank is land managed for its natural resource values. Habitat credits are sold to entities that need to remedy environmental impacts. A conservation bank protects habitat for threatened and endangered species. Mitigation banks specifically compensate for unavoidable wetland losses. These different goals account for differences in the policies guiding operations of the two banks.

Why create a conservation or mitigation bank?

A conservation or mitigation bank is privately or publicly owned land managed for its natural resource values. In exchange for permanent environmental protection, the bank operator may sell habitat credits to developers who need to satisfy legal requirements for the environmental impacts of development. A conservation or mitigation bank is a free-market enterprise that:

- Offer landowners economic incentives to protect natural resources;
- Save developers time and money by providing them with the certainty of pre-approved compensation lands; and
- Consolidate small, fragmented wetland mitigation projects into large contiguous sites which will have much higher wildlife habitat values.
- Provide for long-term protection and management of habitat.

Documents prepared for this project

Site Inventory – a brief summary of biological resources (from existing reports and studies) on the property.

Preliminary Mitigation Proposal – a working document that provides bank details.

Management Plan – provides details on the practices needed to improve habitat on the property.

Mitigation Bank Enabling Instrument (MBEI) – the legal instrument that establishes the bank.

Conservation agreement – an easement on the property that protects the site from future development.

Endowment Account – the fund required for long-term maintenance of the property.