

Bidwell Ranch Conservation/Mitigation Bank Project Summary

Date March 28, 2007

Project Overview

In fall 2006, River Partners began working with the City of Chico to develop a conservation and mitigation bank on the Bidwell Ranch property. River Partners will review and compile the technical information and produce the documents necessary to establish the Bank. Ultimately, the City of Chico will decide whether to move forward with the mitigation bank. River Partners and the City will work with the regulatory agencies to gain approval of the bank. A Conservation and Mitigation Bank on Bidwell Ranch may provide a mechanism to protect natural resources on site, ease regulatory burdens on infrastructure and private development projects, and pay for the long-term management of the site. Public participation is an important part of the project and citizens may join the email list for the project or join the Citizen Work Group to provide input. As part of the project, public access and recreational activities will be identified that are consistent with the site as a Conservation and Mitigation Bank.

Conservation and Mitigation Banks

A conservation or mitigation bank is land managed for its natural resource values. In exchange for permanently protecting the land, the bank operator may sell habitat credits to developers who need to satisfy legal requirements for compensating environmental impacts of development projects. Conservation banks must be approved by the wildlife agencies, such as the Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mitigation banks are generally approved by the wildlife agencies and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Products and Outcomes of the Project

River Partners goal is to provide the City with information about the site's potential as a mitigation bank and complete the necessary mitigation documents. Ultimately, the City will determine whether creating the mitigation and conservation bank makes sense for the community and if to move forward with the agreements. If the City decides to move forward, the project will develop the necessary documentation, regulatory approvals, and management guidelines to establish the bank.

Potential Species of Interest

The preliminary list of species that may be protected under the bank:

- Adobe Lily (*Fritillaria pluriflora*)
- Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)
- Butte County Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea robusta*)
- Butte County Meadowfoam (*Limnanthes floccosa* ssp. *californica*)
- Conservancy Fairy Shrimp (*Branchinecta conservatio*)
- Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
- Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*)
- Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*)
- Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*)
- Western Spadefoot Toad (*Spea hammondi*)

Public Participation

Cooperation is an important component of the project. The public may participate in the project in two main ways:

- **Join the email list**- the email list will provide announcements and updates. We always welcome public input or questions.
- **Serve on the Citizen Work Group** –The Citizen Group serves an advisory role on the development of the Bidwell Ranch Site as a mitigation and conservation bank.

We hope to engage a diverse representation of the community and so no previous expertise is required. Please contact River Partners to receive more information about the workgroup. To learn more about the project please visit our webpage at www.riverpartners.org.

Project Description

Project duration: Fall 2006 to Fall 2008

Key Milestones

1. Review existing documents (surveys, title, previous biological assessments, maps and photographs, cultural resources, Environmental Assessments, and potential prescriptive rights and easements).
2. Establish Citizen Work Group to provide input on the project approach and review key documents.
3. Complete and distribute a Project Prospectus to the appropriate regulatory agencies.
4. Complete and submit a Site Inventory and Preliminary Mitigation Proposal
5. Develop a Management Plan and Mitigation Bank Enabling Instrument (MBEI).
6. Prepare and record a conservation agreement.
7. Establish the mechanism for the endowment account with the appropriate entity.

Type of Activity Establish a mitigation and conservation bank on the Bidwell Ranch Property. Potential species of interest include: Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp Butte County Checker bloom, Western spadefoot toad, Butte County Meadow foam, Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp, Adobe lily, and Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle.

Contacts

Dan Effeaff, Restoration Ecologist
River Partners
580 Vallombrosa Ave
Chico, California 95926
(530)894-5401, ext 21
deffeaff@riverpartners.org
www.riverpartners.org

