



Summer Edition

# REFLECTIONS

## BEETECNIOVS

Upon a Delicate Treasure!

June 2005

Providing Stewardship for Kings River Lands

## Property Owner's Rights

By Kent Kinney

Property owners occasionally express concern about the intentions of conservation organizations regarding legal rights and trespass issues. It is thought by some that conservation organizations expect property owners to allow the public free access across their land. This is especially prominent where a navigable river runs through private property.

The el Rio Reyes Conservation Trust has, from its inception, respected the rights of property owners to guard against trespass. When considering conservation easements the objective of the Trust is to maintain a sustainable ecosystem while the land remains privately owned. It is recognized that the landowner may need to protect the economic viability of the land and its value for privacy. This is especially true for the agricultural and residential land along the Kings River. The security of livestock and crops, and personal privacy, should always be a goal of a conservation easement agreement. Private property owners should not be burdened with greater liability or crime because they choose to provide greater protection to the environment.

The el Rio Reyes Conservation Trust does promote opportunities for the public to have access to the Kings River for the purpose of education and recreation. However it seeks those opportunities where existing public access may be improved, or by assisting in the acquisition of land from willing sellers. One example of improvement on publicly owned land is the Wahtoke Creek crossing that was recently completed on the Reedley College campus.

In a proactive effort to encourage recreational users to practice proper river etiquette, the Trust is sponsoring the installation of signs at access points along the river. These signs, to be placed in areas of heavy use, will remind people to avoid littering and trespassing. This work is currently being initiated as a cooperative effort with the County of Fresno.

As population grows, and the need for resource conservation becomes more apparent, the el Rio Reyes Conservation Trust will continue to promote sustainable environmental solutions to manage the Kings River riparian corridor. It will be with the best interest of the environment and the people who are the current and future residents. It will also be with respect for the rights and wishes of the people who own the land.

El Río Reyes Conservation Trust encourages all river users to respect the rights of property owners along the river and only put in and take out at public access points.

## Kings River Discovery Bicentennial Celebration

By Ted Tartaglia

In a re-enactment of the discovery of the Kings River on January 5, 1805 by Lt. Gabriel Moraga and his troop of soldiers and Franciscan, a group of local residents played out a scene depicting how the discovery may have happened.

"We do not know what the party of explorers said but we know why they were here and there is no dispute of the name they gave the river" said Randy McFarland, a local history buff. It is not known exactly where Moraga's party arrived along the river. It could have been downstream, it could have been upstream or it could have been right here at Reedley Beach. What is known it that the party encountered the river on January 5 and



Gary Schmidt, left, portrays Lt. Gabriel Moraga and Armando Rodriguez plays Father Pedro Munoz during a re-enactment of the discovery of the Kings River.

camped along its banks remaining there the following day January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany. Owing to the religious nature of some of the group, it is likely the river was named *el Rio de los Santos Reyes*, or River of the Holy Kings, in

honor of the occasion. Before too long, the name of the river was shortened to Kings River

No records were kept of the expedition that discovered the river, but Moraga's diarist, Father Pedro Muñoz, accompanying Moraga in a later expedition in October 1906, noted the party's arrival at el Río de los Santos Reyes which had been discovered the year before, 1805.

According to McFarland, "some accounts say Moraga explored the river downstream to old Tulare Lake and up into the Sierra Nevada as well. National Park Service researchers contend Moraga was the first European to view and explore scenic Kings Canyon, through which the river's South Fork flows."

Moraga also named many other rivers and places in Califor-

nia. He is credited with naming the San Joaquin Valley, the San Joaquin, Sacramento, Merced, Stanislaus, and Calaveras rivers, just to name a few. Moraga was the principal explorer of the central valley.

Since its discovery by Moraga and following the development of its vast irrigation systems, the Kings River provides the life-giving water for one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.

As events go, this one turned out pretty well. Aside from a few small glitches, everything went as planned. When it was over, Randy McFarland remarked, “when we do this again in 200 years, we’ll get it perfect.”

The Kings River Discovery Bicentennial event was sponsored by the Kings River Conservation District, Kings River Water Association, Central Valley Water Awareness Committee, el Río Reyes Conservation Trust, City of Reedley, Kings Canyon Unified School District, Reedley Historical Society, Kings River Arts Council, the Reedley Exponent, Univision and the Fresno County office of Education.

## Wahtoke Creek Crossing

By Connie Krahn



El Río Reyes Conservation Trust achieved its goal of creating an environmentally sound low water crossing at Wahtoke Creek. The completed project will provide an expanded Kings River Trail experience to trail users and visitors to the monument. This unique experience could not have been completed without the generous funding and support from the National Park Foundation and Tom’s of Maine. Thirty (30) community volunteers were utilized in the projects construction.

The Trust’s supportive partners include the Reedley College Forestry Program, California State Department of Fish and Game, and Alta Irrigation District.

A dedication ceremony was held at the new Wahtoke Creek Crossing on April 8, 2005.



## The Kings River Trail

By Connie Krahn

Hike the Kings River Trail on the Reedley College campus for a Kings River experience.

**Getting There:** From highway 99 take the Manning Avenue exit and drive to Reedley (12 miles). After crossing over the Kings River you will come to a stop signal where Manning Avenue turns. You will see a park and ride lot on the northeast corner of the intersection. Turn left on Manning Avenue and then turn right into the lot.

**Finding the trail:** After parking in the Park and Ride lot, cross Manning Avenue at the cross walk at the end of Reedley’s Rail to Trail Parkway. As you walk across Manning Avenue you will see



a dirt trail beside the railroad tracks, follow this trail to the river bluff. There is a chain link fence on your right; at the back end of the fence the trail continues a short distance to the Kings River. Trailhead sign. Take the trail

down the bluff through the tree covered canopied forest. When you come to a dirt road veer to the left and take the dirt road/trail to the end of livestock corrals, at this point you will be leaving the dirt road/trail. To your left is a trailhead sign; this trail will take you to the Wahtoke Creek Crossing and Monument.

## Living Along the Kings River

By a Newcomer to the River

I grew up in Wisconsin where rivers, lakes, creeks, marshes, and ponds are everywhere.

We were in the flyway for the migration of Canadian geese. Hundreds would fly over in the “V” formation for weeks at a time. Their honking automatically drew your face to the sky to watch them pass.

Five years ago when my husband said he wanted to find a place to live on the Kings River I responded, “Ok, whatever.” We ate dinner that night without discussing it any further.

Now, five years later, I am like a mother bear defending her cubs when it comes to anyone or anything threatening preservation of this precious, beautiful gift to the San Joaquin Valley.

The river is used as a delivery system for irrigation water making the water flow levels seasonal. From September to May the amount flowing is less than during June through August. When there is less water it is the season when we find the many different paw prints in the soft mud along the banks.

Raccoon, beaver, fox, lizards, frogs, birds, coyotes, and a few domestic animals all depend on the river and its microenvironments. Different species of fish can be seen swimming together. And the ducks, along with numerous wintering birds provide visual and audio soothing to my soul.

This year, with the help of the Boy Scouts, Wood Duck nesting boxes are awaiting their first tenants. A mother duck

guiding her little babies along is mesmerizing as time stops just for them.

I often sit at the river among hundred year old Oak trees in complete bliss. From the thousands of gallons of water moving by each minute I am reminded of how important the flow of life is. Each moment is so unique and so full of new opportunity, ever changing. I receive many lessons while at the river's edge. Nothing there cares what I have to say, it is my classroom to listen and learn.

During the summer months the river continues on its way but with more volume. The personality of the area changes from a quiet solitude to a wild party time. Some people come to respect and enjoy, while others come to take and destroy. The wildlife disappears in refuge coming out only under the protection of night when the campers and boaters are asleep.

This is not to say there shouldn't be use of the river. It is my hope to help educate those who will be educated about how we can preserve this incredible resource for generations to come.

My husband and I enjoy watching the activity during the summer. We've had to save a life or two now and again when people get beyond their capabilities with the watercraft they are on, or ignore the fact that too much alcohol and water sports are incompatible.

People need to have time in nature; a time to observe instead of think; a time to experience the fullness of a nothing moment. I am not a Bible scholar, but I am convinced that the animals were added to the world to give humans balance to their nervous system. I can't imagine a world without them.

I wouldn't consider myself a "wacko environmentalist" as extremes toward any side take things out of balance. If titles must be handed out I will accept "obnoxiously optimistic caretaker" of the Kings River. Living with her every day is not only a blessing, but a privilege not to be squandered. If it is only a moment's view while passing over her on a bridge, or a greater time spent near or on the water, you will be different for it. My vision it that generations to come will forever have many opportunities to do so.

## Bob Frisch Memorial Ride

By Connie Krahn



El Río Reyes Trust will host its seventh annual poker ride on Saturday, September 10, 2005. This fundraising event was developed by Bob Frisch and it is fitting the ride be named for Bob. The ride will originate at the Reedley College Horse Unit. Registration will start at 9:00 a.m. and at 10:00 a.m. the riders will begin a scenic four-mile guided tour on Reedley College's Kings River Trail. This year a new section of trail was completed in March, leading to the newly constructed Wahtoke

Creek Crossing. A tri-tip barbecue lunch with all the trimmings will be served when the riders return.

Pre-registration by September 8<sup>th</sup> — \$25.00

Registration on the day of the ride — \$30.00

Please make checks payable to el Río Reyes Trust -  
P.O. Box 1339 – Reedley, CA 93654

## China Creek Nature Walk

By Connie Krahn

The threat of rain passed us by on Sunday April 24<sup>th</sup> for our China Creek Interpretive Nature Trail walk, the inaugural walk along a trail completed just a couple of weeks ago. Warren Shaw, President, California Native Society, guided our group walk and explained about the different plants, trees, grasses, and whether they were native or non-native. As we walked, we viewed deer, birds, and a beaver dam, but no beavers. Warren talked about one of the Lone Valley Oak Trees in the park that is estimated to be 150-250 years old.

It was a very enjoyable Sunday afternoon in the China Creek Park. Thank You Warren!!

For more information on China Creek Park, go to [www.elrioreyestrust.org](http://www.elrioreyestrust.org) and click on the trails page.



Nature Walk, Benjamin Kirk

## Sequoia Riverlands Trust

The Sequoia Riverlands Trust, established in November 2000, is a non-profit, community-based conservation organization comprised of residents and partners conserving the natural and agricultural legacy of the southern Sierra Nevada and San Joaquin Valley. With over 6,000 acres protected under ownership or through voluntary agreements with landowners, our projects focus on the land and water in the Kings, Kern, Kaweah and Tule river areas of Tulare, Kings and Kern counties.

Our region features rare beauty, including stands of majestic giant sequoia trees, clear-flowing rivers, unique stretches of oak woodlands, vernal pools, spectacular fields of wildflowers and a rural culture that has helped to maintain the landscape. Tulare County is also one of the largest agricultural producing counties in the United States. We believe that achieving balance between the community, the economy and natural habitats allows all systems to flourish.

For more information about Sequoia Riverlands Trust, visit our website at: <http://www.sequoiariverlands.org/>