

REFLECTIONS

EL RIO REYES CONSERVATION TRUST NEWSLETTER

Conservation Updates

FALL ISSUE 2014

What's Happening with El Rio Reyes?

Throughout the year El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust works diligently to move our mission forward by forging relationships with funding agencies, both state and federal, seeking grants to fund our pending easements projects, sponsoring events that bring awareness to the local community about conservation and our agricultural resources, and partnering with like-minded entities who bring value and support to our river bottom community.

Here are some of the activities that keep us working towards permanent conservation of our local agricultural & riparian resources:

- Actively working with local ag-land owners who want to keep their property in agricultural forever – today we are looking to help landowners who represent 150+ acres in the riverbottom
- Collaborating with state and federal agencies that support ag-land conservation – representatives are visiting the area and are taking tours of our pending project lands in hopes to fund easements locally.
- Participated in the Reedley College Green Summit where we spoke with attendees about our work and how they can help protect our natural and ag-land resources.
- Recipient of Pacific Gas and Electric's Employee Leadership Grant Award for \$5,000 via Matt Brown, Registered Professional Forester and Land Consultant with PG&E, (see side bar for details).
- Co-sponsored the World Heritage Animal Genetics Repository and Veterinary Institute's recent event to announce their initiative to move their headquarters to the Sanger river-bottom. This relocation effort would bring land and animal conservation, tourism, jobs and notoriety to the local community, (see coverage of associated event on page 3).
- We continue to expand the information on our website. Please visit us regularly to get involved and learn more about how we can work together to conserve local farm and ag land for future generations.
- A Reedley College Natural Resources Program co-sponsored event with El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust was held earlier this year on the History of the Kings River. This presentation included readings by Eileen Apperson from her book *Patterns of the Land*, and a presentation by Christopher Beaver who produced a film named, *Tulare: The Phantom Lake*.
- Worked with California Natural Resources Conservation Service to seek funding for 50 acres of prime and important farmland resources through their Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, now part of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program via the 2014 Farm Bill.



PG&E \$5,000 Grant

For professional forester Matt Brown's leadership in the epic restoration of the quarry site and adjacent forest land impacted during the retrofit of Crane Valley Dam he and his team earned PG&E's Environmental Leadership Award. With this award, the team was given the opportunity to gift a \$5,000 grant to the non-profit of their choice. They chose to give this grant to El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust.

"I believe in what El Rio Reyes is doing to protect the Kings River..."

"As we lose private landowners on forest or riverlands we lose the intrinsic values of their land stewardship," said Matt Brown. "PG&E is an environmental leader in the utility industry and a pioneer in corporate environmental justice – going above and beyond to return land we impact to its natural state – and I believe that is what we are doing at Crane Valley. Similarly, I believe in what El Rio Reyes is doing to protect the Kings River private agricultural & riparian lands – that is why I wanted them to receive this grant."

Welcome Anne Cehrs, El Rio Reyes Board Treasurer

Anne is a retired math and science teacher with a Masters Degree in Education. She helps her family farm 140 acres of citrus and almonds on their property near Centerville. She has taught in both Wisconsin and Sanger, CA for a combined total of 30 years. Please welcome her!



Farewell to a Friend

Ted Tartaglia was a founding board member of the El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust in 1998. He worked tirelessly in the organization's early years to ensure its success and continued sustainability. The organization was formed at a time when the communities surrounding the Kings River needed a voice and representation to conserve the natural resources of this river community. Ted embodied the board's integrity and tenacity to meet the needs of the Sanger River bottom residents.

“Ted embodied the board’s integrity and tenacity to meet the needs of the Sanger River...”

In recent years, Ted fulfilled the role of board Treasurer and did so with great attention to our financial stewardship and the board looked forward to his continued work in this regard. When Ted was diagnosed with lung cancer just over a year ago we were shocked and dismayed, but his death on August 5, 2014 left us overwhelmed with his loss and bereft of one of our original visionaries.

We are grateful for the many years of service and dedication Ted gave this community and El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust. He was a staunch believer in the critical need to conserve the Kings River and its agricultural resources, and we will feel the loss of his ambition and force of presence far into the future. Thanks to Ted, our organization is thriving and our community is a better place.

A fond farewell to our friend,
El Rio Reyes Trust Board of Directors

David Cehrs, President
Michael Weinberg, Vice President
Kent Kinney, Secretary
Anne Cehrs, Treasurer
Kathy Omachi, Director
Doug Cornelius, Director
Heidi Ann Isner, Director



LEARN MORE!

Please visit El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust's website at www.elryoreystrust.org, where you can read more about our work, the critical need to support our mission today, and how you can become part of this cause. Under our "Conservation" section you can get specific details on conservation easements and the steps involved in a transaction.

For anything else please call us at (559) 355-7983 or email us at info@elryoreystrust.org.

Newly Announced Global Initiative Launch Event Sponsored by El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust Gains Support in Riverbottom

World Heritage Animal Genetic Repository Seeks to Relocate Headquarters to Sanger Riverbottom

On September 29, 2014 an esteemed delegation of veterinarians, geneticists, conservationists and economic experts from across the United States came together for a community presentation at Reedley College's Forum Hall to present the concept and relocation efforts of the World Heritage Animal Genetic Repository and Veterinary Institute (WHAGR VI) in the Sanger riverbottom.

Community members, city officials, industry professionals, farmers, ranchers, educators and students attended the Monday evening presentation to learn about project proponent's efforts to create a repository for heritage livestock animal genetics, research facility and veterinary institute somewhere in the Sanger riverbottom to address the concern over the loss of animal genetic resources derived from heritage livestock breeds critical to the sustainability the global food security.

Once the right property in the Kings River area is located and funding is procured, the WHAGR VI initiative, developed by Birchwood Conservancy, plans to work with El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust to place an agricultural conservation easement on the property. This conservation easement will forever maintain the property as a natural and agricultural resource.

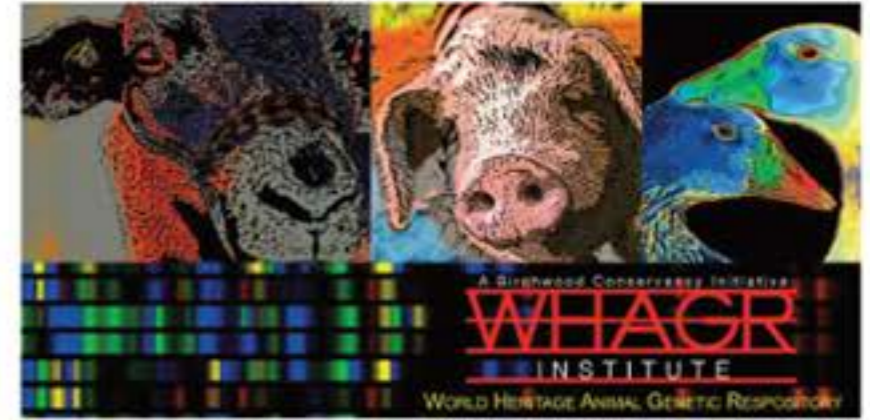
"We are glad to welcome the possibility of such a unique and agriculturally focused entity to the region that seeks to bring jobs, tourism, and conservation with them," said David Cehrs, board president of El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust. "Birchwood Conservancy shares our mission of conservation of our natural and agricultural resources and we look forward to their further success in relocating here."

"The local welcome and hospitality during our visit was outstanding," said Lucinda Christian member of the visiting delegation and Executive Director of Birchwood Conservancy. "After meeting with local stakeholders and community leaders, we believe now more than ever that the Sanger riverbottom is the best fit for headquartering this global initiative."

On Tuesday evening after the delegation met with donors and community leaders throughout the day, Steve and Michelle McDonald, owner of Rancho del Rio, and advisor to El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust and WHAGR VI, hosted a special BBQ event to thank all the various groups involved, including Reedley College Agricultural and Natural Resources Department and land owners representing the riverbottom, for all their positive efforts and interest associated with this initiative.

"There are a variety of groups supporting this initiative, including Reedley College and Fresno Economic Development Corporation, and while we come from different perspectives, all share the same passion and common goal of preserving the rich agricultural and natural resources on the lands of the Kings River," said Kent Kinney, instructor and department chair of Reedley College Agricultural and Natural Resources Department and board secretary of El Rio Reyes. "We all welcome the potential addition of the WHAGR VI moving facilities to the area and the community has showed them support."

The impressive delegation represented at this event included: Jerry Taylor, PhD: Acclaimed Geneticist from Missouri University; Lucinda Christian: Founder of the WHAGR VI Global Biodiversity Conservation Initiative and Executive Director of Birchwood Conservancy; Dirk Vanderwall, DVM, PhD: World renowned Veterinarian and expert on cloning and Dean, Utah State University; and Mike Reed, PhD: International Agricultural Economist from University of Kentucky and Rebecca Bellone, PhD from UC Davis: geneticist with focus on equine.





EL RIO REYES CONSERVATION TRUST

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Bob Frisch Memorial Ride: November 22 – Come Ride with Us!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Join us Saturday, November 22 at 9:00am for the Bob Frisch Memorial Ride. We will tour the beautiful Kings River riparian area, along Reedley College's campus, among the oak trees on three miles of shaded trails. Bob Frisch, a founding member of El Rio Reyes, coached the Reedley College Equestrian Team for many years as he contributed tirelessly to the development of young people through his volunteer work.

This memorial ride will benefit El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust and Reedley College Equestrian Team. Come enjoy the lunch, refreshments and our raffle with the chance to win cash!

Event Information -

Please purchase your tickets, \$50 per rider, by November 14 at www.elrioreyestrust.org.

If you plan to pay onsite the day of the ride you must still RSVP by November 14 to kent.kinney@reedleycollege.edu.

Please visit our website, www.elrioreyestrust.org for more details, email kent.kinney@reedleycollege.edu.



OUR MISSION IS TO
SAFEGUARD THE KINGS RIVER
AND ITS LAND
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS