



Summer Edition 2009

# REFLECTIONS

Upon a Delicate Treasure!

Safeguarding the Kings River for future generations.

## Landowners Should Consider Conservation Easements

By Kent Kinney

If you own land near the Kings River you should consider the advantages of a conservation easement. Why... because you could enhance the economic and ecological benefits on your property.

A conservation easement is a voluntary, legally recorded agreement between the landowner and El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust that restricts the land to agricultural or riparian

**Conservation easements preserve agriculture and the river environment for the future by protecting land from future development, and permanently protecting resource values.**

habitat uses. Conservation easements preserve agriculture and the river environment for the future by protecting land from future development, and permanently protecting resource values. A conservation easement keeps the remaining property rights with the landowner and his family and encourages the good stewardship of the property owner. All terms of the voluntary agreement are approved by the landowner to protect his concerns, be it agricultural or habitat.

The Kings River is under great pressure to be developed for non-agricultural and open space uses. By

2050, according to the estimate of the California Department of Finance, the population of Fresno County will grow to over 1.9 million people. This is an increase of 389 percent from the current population. Farmland and oak groves that were once home to scattered farm families and wildlife will become subdivisions, shopping malls, freeways and gravel mines. This conversion is already accelerating and more land is being purchased by speculators annually.

An easement may be a source of financial income to allow for agricultural expansion or other immediate needs. It may provide reductions in specific property tax and estate tax valuations. The Land Trust Alliance is a recommended source of information to find out more about conservation easements.

The website address is: [www.landtrustalliance.org](http://www.landtrustalliance.org).

We are the generation that will decide whether our children's progeny will live in an environment that is desirable or

an environment that has been degraded by our exploitation of the land. The riparian and agricultural resources of the Kings River can be protected in perpetuity if today's landowners engage in conservation opportunities that easements provide.

El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust will work as a partner with landowners to protect the environment and encourage sustainable agriculture in the Kings River area.

## Committed to Conservation

By El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust

Board of Directors

Supporters of El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust's opposition to development along the Kings River should know that this organization will remain a vocal force in that effort. The Trust has a clear focus on conserving natural resources by encouraging wise land-use planning, and discouraging those activities that produce permanent degradation of environmental quality. The Trust will continue to encourage elected officials to consider biological values, as well as economic and social demands, when deciding whether to allow land conversion to occur.

**El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust respects the ability of landowners and family farmers to be good stewards of the land, as they practice sustainable agriculture.**

El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust respects the ability of landowners and family farmers to be good stewards of the land, as they practice sustainable agriculture. It recognizes that human and environmental interests are served best when the land is

managed for permanent productivity of its many resources, rather than eliminating all future use in order to obtain just one component.

The Trust wishes to thank all of its supporters for their financial donations, guidance and encouragement in recent months. The accomplishments described in this newsletter are due to a collective effort of you and other people who are tak-

Visit our website at:  
[www.elrioreyestrust.org](http://www.elrioreyestrust.org)

**PRESS RELEASE**

**AGRICULTURAL AND RIPARIAN CONSERVATION EASEMENTS  
ON THE KINGS RIVER TO GET A BOOST**

The El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust is embarking on newly-enhanced efforts to promote agricultural and riparian easements on the Kings River. Flowing out of the Sierra Nevada foothills of eastern Fresno County past the communities of Sanger and Reedley and down into Tulare and Kings Counties, the Kings River corridor encompasses 80 miles of some of the finest riparian and agricultural lands to be found anywhere in California or the world.

Formed in 1999, the El Rio Reyes Trust is a 501(c) (3) non-profit public benefit corporation dedicated to working with individuals, businesses and other non-profit organizations and agencies to provide support and stewardship in preserving, conserving and restoring ecological life and scenic and historical places and preservation of farm land on the Kings River.

El Rio Reyes Board President Kent Kinney announced that the Trust would be working with the Vulcan Materials Company to obtain and maintain conservation easements along the river corridor. Kinney stated that "the Vulcan Company, which operates the Sanger-Centerville aggregate facility and other aggregate operations throughout the United States, is working cooperatively with El Rio Reyes in this effort. Recognizing the benefits of preserving agricultural and riparian lands, Vulcan is committed to financially supporting this conservation activity by the community-based El Rio Reyes Trust. Their support will significantly enhance the Trust's on-going efforts to pursue preservation opportunities on this jewel of a river."

Kinney reported that the Trust is presently working with landowners on a number of potential conservation easements along the Kings, and, with Vulcan's support, is looking to finalize them in the coming months. Other landowners in the corridor who are interested in learning more about the benefits of conservation easements are invited to contact El Rio Reyes.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT**

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**El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust**

**P.O. Box 1339**

**Reedley, CA 93654**

# Funding Sought for Kings River Trails Project

By Mike Weinberg

Currently, an unimproved and under-utilized trail system exists along the Kings River on Reedley College property. This riparian corridor is rich in native plant species that need protection. Because of its primitive nature the current trail is unsafe. It has the potential to become an important "outdoor classroom" experience that could provide a safe and enjoyable educational experience for youth and adults alike.

Now, three non-profit river conservation trusts are collaborating in an effort to obtain

***El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust, the Kings River Conservancy, and the Sequoia Riverlands Trust (known collectively as the Kings River Collaborative) have submitted a joint application for this project...***

grant funding from the Stewardship Council, a private non-profit foundation, to develop a comprehensive trail system and ancillary facilities that will connect to the existing Rails to Trails walkway owned by the City of Reedley.

El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust, the Kings River Conservancy, and the Sequoia Riverlands Trust (known collectively as the Kings River Collaborative) have submitted a joint application for this project, with support from the Kings Canyon Unified School District, Reedley College, and the City of Reedley.

KCUSD will utilize the new facilities to provide to outdoor agricultural and environmental educational experiences to its students.

Reedley College, through students in its Agriculture & Natural Resources Department, will provide in-kind services including constructing picnic tables, improving the trail, and building an area with simple log seating to present educational programs. Reedley College students will use the trail as an outdoor classroom for biological, botanical, forestry and physical education studies.

The link to the City of Reedley Rails to Trails community walkway would enhance usage by residents of the greater Reedley area.

The project's goals are to foster community involvement in protecting and promoting environmental values, and to enhance public access to the river for educational and recreational purposes and to encourage sound public conservation practices along the Kings River corridor.

## Water Safety on the Kings River

By Ted Tartaglia

A water safety program for school children originated because of Mike Kelly's concern that too many drownings

occur in the river and perhaps lives could be saved by such a program. On May 25, 2004, Kelly's Beach, Kings Canyon Unified School District and el Río Reyes Trust sponsored A Day With The Kings River. The program exceeded all expectations and has become an ever expanding annual event. This year's event involved over 800 sixth grade students from the Kings Canyon Unified School District and St. LaSalle School. Students from as far away as Dunlap participated in the event.

Mike Kelly, El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Fresno Fly Fishers, Reedley Police Dept., Reedley Fire Dept., the Kings River Conservation District, and others provided information on water safety, river history, rescue efforts and demonstrations on

***El If just one life is saved by our efforts, the program is a spectacular success!***

fly tying and fly casting. The school district and staff provide the students and logistic support. KCUSD printed a booklet this year that contained information provided by the different groups. The booklet was provided to each student so they and their parents could absorb information that could not be presented at the event because of time constraints.

Students started arriving about 8:45 a.m. and were divided into three groups and directed to one of the three presentation stations. After each presentation, the students rotated to another station so each student could participate



in all the presentations. The students seemed more interested in the fly tying demonstrations and the Fire Dept. presentations but were receptive to all the other presentations as well. Each presentation was approximately 40 minutes long. As the morning session concluded, students for the afternoon session arrived. Mike Kelly and his crew provided a hot dog lunch to all the students. A rescue drama was staged by the Reedley Fire Dept. reinforce the safety lessons taught and illustrate water dangers. The morning students then departed and the afternoon session began using the format described previously. The program finished up about 2 p.m.

El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust is proud to be a sponsor of a Day With the Kings River. If just one life is saved by our efforts, the program is a spectacular success!



# El Río Reyes Conservation Trust

Safeguarding the Kings River for future generations



**Bob Frisch**  
1937-2002

Bob was an Animal Science instructor at Reedley College, a horseman, mule judge, packing enthusiast and active in the Kings River preservation.

Sponsored by the El Río Reyes Trust Partnering with the Reedley College Forestry Club.

For more info - contact:  
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# 11th Annual

## Bob Frisch Memorial Ride

**September 12, 2009 10:00 am**

9:00 am Registration at Reedley College Horse Unit  
Riders and Non-Riders - \$35.00

Pre Registration by September 5th - \$30.00

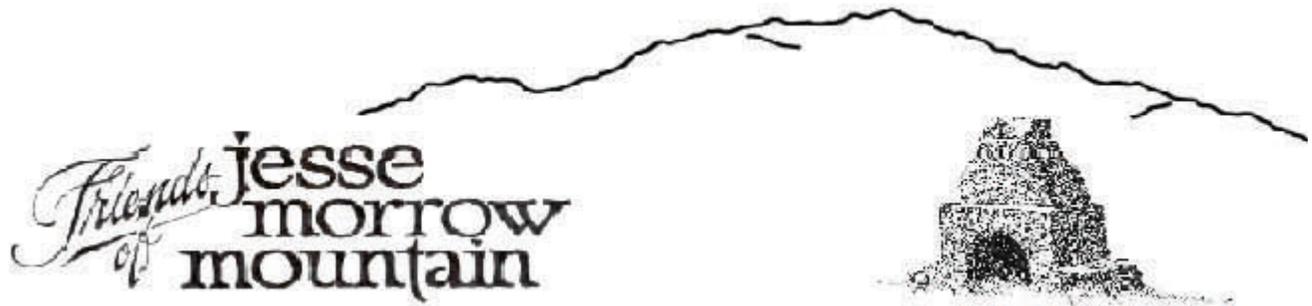
Payable to: El Río Reyes Trust  
PO Box 1339  
Reedley CA 93654

Fund Raiser to Benefit KINGS RIVER ENVIRONS

## Poker Ride & BBQ Tri-Tip Lunch

The four mile scenic ride will be along the Reedley College's Kings River Trail - starting at 10:00 am

After lunch - Non riders will enjoy a guided walking tour of the Reedley Campus and Kings River trail.



## FRIENDS OF JESSE MORROW NEWSLETTER

Vol.1# 4 Summer 2009 Newsletter

The Friends of Jesse Morrow Mountain are gearing up for action. We have recently learned through a representative of the Fresno County Planning Commission that Cemex has awakened from its slumber and has completed its filings with the County toward the release of the draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed mining operation on Jesse Morrow Mountain. The draft EIR may be out for public review and comment as early as July or August!

Until recently, Cemex seemed to have slowed down its activities with respect to Jesse Morrow. Some speculated that the economic downturn and the bust following the housing boom might have weakened Cemex's desire to move forward with its local mining plans. This is certainly not the case! This beautiful gateway mountain is still in dire jeopardy. Your help is needed to defend it.

During the slow-down, the Friends of Jesse Morrow Mountain were still busy: We completed an organizational reorganization that saw some of our members leaving to form a new group, which also works to oppose development of Jesse Morrow Mountain, but from a different perspective. We wish Marla and Gloria and Patsy the best in their new venture.

We incorporated and established the Friends of Jesse Morrow Mountain, Inc., as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization. Among the benefits of this designation is that your future contributions to FOJMM to save Jesse Morrow Mountain will be deductible on your taxes.

We continued to gather information about the local water shortage and about the County's poor air quality and related health issues, all of which we expect to deteriorate further by any mining development on Jesse Morrow Mountain. We continued to raise awareness about the plans to destroy this mountain and the scenery at Fresno County's gateway to the high Sierra and the beautiful and majestic King's Canyon and Sequoia National parks.

We continued to monitor the traffic from gravel trucks on and around the King's Canyon Highway (HWY 180) and its potential hazards to tourists and commuters. (As you may know, the County has already approved the expansion of the Vulcan gravel mine on this route and plans are underway to initiate or expand mining at other sites, all within a 3-mile radius.)

Now we are asking you to get busy too. *We still need:*

**Subject experts** in the fields of **biology, botany, hydrology, air quality, health** and **law** who are willing to review the draft EIR and make comments to the Planning Commission and/or testify at the public hearing.

**Volunteers** to help us with events, activities, research, website management and media interface

**Contributions** for advertisement costs, supplies, attorney fees, consultants, etc.

If you think you can help, please contact us by calling 488-2157 or by sending an e-mail to [info@jessemorrowmountain.org](mailto:info@jessemorrowmountain.org) Someone will get back to you.