

Trust turns 25

(Continued from page 1)

shaping a shared vision for the Watershed through our three program areas.



NRCS

By restoring the Lower Tuolumne floodplain, we can create a healthy river for fish.

On the upper River, our goal is to protect untouched tributaries and provide ample flows to preserve water quality for healthy fish and recreation. Through the Trust's Sierra Nevada Program, we are building broad-based support for the Clavey River, the Tuolumne's most pristine tributary, by playing a leading role in a collaborative process that will create a blueprint for sound management of the entire Watershed for years to come (see Clavey article on page 4). One of only three remaining fully free-flowing rivers in the Sierra, the Trust is also working for permanent protection of the Clavey through federal designation as a Wild and Scenic River.

The Central Valley Program is focused on the Lower Tuolumne where we are working with private landowners to restore the floodplain to create a healthier river for wild salmon and other wildlife while enhancing recreational opportunities at the same time. The Trust helped bring together local agencies, elected officials and other organizations to form the Tuolumne River Coalition. Through the Trust's leadership, the Coalition developed *A Framework for the Future* that serves as the guiding document for the collaborative as it works to create a Tuolumne River Regional Parkway. The Parkway is a collection of private and public projects to enhance habitat and provide public use opportunities along the River.

To build greater public support for protecting and restoring the Tuolumne, the Trust is also bringing people closer to the River. As part of this expanding effort, we have already connected hundreds of people to the River through activities such as canoe trips, volunteer tree planting days, programs for school kids and community events. At our Big Bend Restoration Project, as part of the Tuolumne River Parkway, we are restoring 250-acres on both sides of the River and a portion of the site has been set aside as the Maxfield Tuolumne Outdoor Classroom, a place where school children learn about the River and its ecology (see Central Valley article on page 3).

Through our Bay Area Water Stewardship Program, the Trust convinced the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to drop plans to build a damaging new 47-mile pipeline across the San Joaquin Valley last year. With this momentum, we are now working to stop the Commission's plan to drain more water from the Tuolumne, endangering the health of the River and its fish and wildlife. The Commission's proposal would divert an additional 25 million gallons to serve dozens of Bay Area wholesale customers in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Alameda Counties. To ensure plenty of water stays in the River for environmental and recreational purposes, the Trust is promoting a sustainable water plan that emphasizes water conservation and responsible stewardship of the Watershed (see Bay Area article on page 3).

As a result of the work of the many people who led us through the last 25 years, the Trust is launching into the next 25 years with a clear sense of purpose and direction. For more about the Trust's current work, check out our 2005 Annual Report online at www.tuolumne.org or call (415) 292-3531.

New faces at TRT

As the Trust continues to protect the Tuolumne River Watershed, we are doing so with some new faces:

Elizabeth Holtz, Central Valley Program Associate, grew up in Modesto. A recent graduate of Colorado State University, Elizabeth gained her M.S. in Watershed Science with a focus on water law, resource management, and the social aspects of watershed protection. Elizabeth is passionate about managing resources on the landscape scale, and including all stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Cynthia King, Sierra Nevada Program Director, feels an intimate connection with the Tuolumne from years of camping along the River. She received her Masters' and Bachelor's degrees from Stanford University in the Earth Systems Program, with a concentration in ecology and sustainable agriculture. Since graduating, she has worked to promote landowner incentive programs in the Puget Sound salmon recovery process, and to educate teens about food justice in Oregon.

Lily Morrill, the Trust's Administrative Assistant, graduated from Bates College with a degree in Environmental Studies. Her past experiences include environmental education and researching resource use in East Africa. Having grown up near rivers Lily is excited to work with the Trust to help protect the Tuolumne River.

Galen Weston, Sierra Nevada Program Assistant, grew up in Tuolumne County and spent many days escaping the summer heat swimming in the Tuolumne and Clavey Rivers. Galen received a Bachelor's degree from Stanford University in the Earth Systems Program with an emphasis on ecology. After graduating, he spent several years working on farms in California and Oregon and currently runs a small market garden in Sonora.

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Christina Newell

Celebrate our 25th Year — Dedicate a Tree

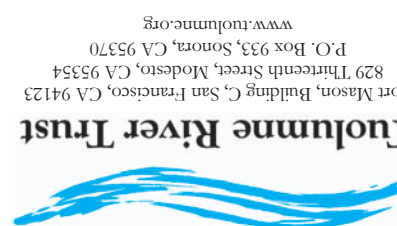
As the Tuolumne River Trust turns 25, show your support by dedicating a tree (or a grove of trees) to the Big Bend Restoration Site in the Central Valley. You can also dedicate a tree to mark a special occasion or remember someone special. The selected oak, willow or cottonwood tree will become a part of the Big Bend habitat, just west of Modesto, where the Trust is restoring the River back to its natural floodplain.

For a minimum donation of \$50.00 the Trust will send a certificate in your name to the person who you are honoring or to the family if you are making a memorial gift. And for a \$100.00 donation the Trust will send a certificate informing the recipient that a grove of three trees will be planted.

To dedicate a tree, please contact Christina at (415) 292-3531 or christina@tuolumne.org. You may also go to our website at www.tuolumne.org and click on the *Dedicate a Tree* link under the *What's New* section.

And look inside for more about our 25th anniversary.

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The Tuolumne Cascade

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News of the Tuolumne
and Clavey Rivers

Vol. XXIII — Summer 2006

The Tuolumne River
Trust's mission is to
promote the stewardship
of the Tuolumne River
and its tributaries to
ensure a healthy
watershed.

The Tuolumne River Trust Turns 25

From securing Wild and Scenic status for 83 miles of the Tuolumne River in 1984 to convincing the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to drop plans to build a 47-mile pipeline across the San Joaquin Valley in 2005, the Trust has made great headway toward ensuring a healthy Tuolumne River Watershed. In 2004 we paused to celebrate the anniversary of our first great victory that saved the Tuolumne from the Clavey-Wards Ferry Project in 1984. This year we recognize the 25th anniversary of the Trust and the thousands of people that helped make victories like that possible.



Ron Pickup

Since 1981 the Trust has made great headway in protecting the Tuolumne.

Long before the Trust came on the scene in 1981, John Muir led the battle to save Hetch Hetchy Valley as part of his work to protect a great many special places. Muir's tragic loss to save this section of the Tuolumne nearly 100 years ago resulted in the flooding of the twin to Yosemite Valley along with two other valleys on pristine tributaries. Other dams were built, like New Don Pedro near La Grange where the River flows out of the Sierra foothills and down through Modesto. The Tuolumne became a hard-working river providing irrigation, drinking water and power to farms, businesses and millions of people.

But water developers still wanted more and put forth the billion-dollar Clavey-Wards Ferry Project. Proposing three new dams on the Tuolumne, the Project would devastate miles of unparalleled trout habitat, the last remaining whitewater stretch of the Tuolumne, the community of Hardin Flat and the three family camps that have thrived in the area for generations. This time things were different. A growing chorus of fishermen, family campers, environmentalists, whitewater boaters, businesses and thousands of individuals voiced opposition to the project and called for permanent protection of the Tuolumne as a Wild and Scenic River.

In 1981 the Trust was born when a group of long-time advocates for the River decided to galvanize this diverse group of interests and launch a determined, organized and passionate effort to save the Tuolumne. The Trust would promote a balanced approach to protect the River's environmental, recreational and economic benefits.

After three years of intense campaigning the Clavey-Wards Ferry Project was defeated when President Ronald Reagan signed the bill designating 83 miles of the Tuolumne as a Wild and Scenic River. This landmark victory helped bring an end to an 80-year span of damming and destruction and helped usher in a new era of river protection, restoration and stewardship. Building on this success, the Trust went on to win a number of major victories for this California jewel and our work continues (learn more about the Trust's highlights in the timeline on page 2).

The Trust today and the road ahead

With this rich history and strong record of success, the Trust is now a constant force with a presence throughout the Watershed. As we work to stave off new threats to the River, the Trust is

(Continued on page 5)

A Founder's Perspective

By Jerry Meral, Board Member

The Tuolumne River Trust has sustained its effectiveness for 25 years by maintaining a strong and unifying vision as a watershed organization.



ARTA River Trips

The success of the Trust is due in part to the long-term commitment of its board members.

Threats to the River and its tributaries often demanded immediate action. San Francisco's desire to dam the River for hydroelectric power in the 1970's required a four-year campaign to give the Tuolumne River National Wild and Scenic status. A proposal to dam the Clavey, the largest tributary, called for a vigorous campaign to stop the dams. Federal re-licensing of Don Pedro Dam provided an opportunity to gain much needed higher salmon flows in the lower River. San Francisco's attempt to divert more of the River to the Bay Area was answered by an already partially successful campaign to defeat the new diversion. The current National Park Service development of a management plan for the Wild and Scenic River portions provides opportunities for additional restoration and improved recreation along the upper River.

While responding to these threats and opportunities, the Trust continues our efforts to restore salmon on the lower River by improving and acquiring riparian habitat. We work to improve the health of the upper River through better watershed management. We recognize the need to involve the Modesto community, and provide opportunities for the highly diverse population to plant trees, canoe the River, and learn about the values the River provides to the local area.

One of the reasons why the Trust stays on track is the long board service of some of the 1981 founding members: Bob Hackmack, Marty McDonnell and myself. By continually adding new board members throughout the Tuolumne Watershed and elsewhere, we bring fresh perspectives and new energy to the board.

I personally find it compelling to remain involved in the Tuolumne River Trust because of the opportunity to help protect an entire watershed of nearly 1 million acres, including much of Yosemite National Park. I make it a point to raft, canoe or kayak the Tuolumne each year, to remind myself of the spectacular resource we are helping to protect.

Tuolumne in Brief

The Trust welcomes new advisor: **Noah Hughes**. Noah, a resident of Sonora, teaches earth science and geology at Modesto Junior College. As an avid kayaker, Noah brings an intimate knowledge of the Upper and Lower Tuolumne River and is excited about using his expertise as an educator to further the mission of the Trust.

The Central Valley staff invites you to visit our **new Modesto office**. The Trust has moved, and now has a beautiful storefront location in downtown Modesto at 829 Thirteenth Street. Stop by anytime!

Sign up for the **eCascade** to receive monthly emails that keep you informed of the Trust's current happenings. The **eCascade** provides a fast and convenient way to stay involved. Subscribe by visiting www.tuolumne.org and clicking on *eupdates*.

The Tuolumne River Trust thanks **Ellen Ammerman** for her commitment to the Tuolumne and for serving on the Advisory and Finance Committees for the past three years.

The Trust acknowledges the following **rafting outfitters** for their generous support and encourages you to contact them for your upcoming rafting trip: All-Outdoors California Whitewater Rafting, ARTA River Trips, Echo: The Wilderness Company, OARS, Sierra Mac River Rafting Trips, Whitewater Voyages, and Zephyr Whitewater Expeditions.

Creating Connections in the Central Valley

The Trust's efforts to restore the Lower Tuolumne River continues to receive support from local and state agencies.

Our Central Valley Program was recently awarded just over \$200,000 from the CALFED Bay-Delta Program for an elementary environmental education project. This grant expands our Tuolumne River Outdoor Classroom which to date has involved more than 80 students.



Heather Demsey

The Big Bend Site allows students to learn about riparian habitats and restoration.

Over the next three years, the Tuolumne River Outdoor Classroom will bring 8,000 fourth-graders to Big Bend and other sites to learn about riparian forests, native flora and fauna, and restoration.

Using the *Trekking the Tuolumne River* curriculum the project provides an opportunity to educate young people about the many wonders of this important resource in their community.

In addition to enhancing environmental education, the Trust is also working to create the Tuolumne River Regional Parkway as a place for families to enjoy the River.

The Parkway will restore riparian habitat along the River and is a positive step in connecting more people to the Tuolumne.

The Tuolumne River Trust, as a member of the Tuolumne River Coalition, is playing a key role in the development of the Parkway. The City of Modesto, also a member of the Coalition, was recently awarded more than \$1.5 million for a restoration project at the confluence of the Tuolumne River and Dry Creek in downtown Modesto.

Establishing the Parkway will restore riparian habitat along the River and is a positive step in connecting more people to the Tuolumne.

Bay Area Program Having Impact

By convincing San Francisco to scrap their plans to build a damaging new pipeline across the San Joaquin Valley, the Trust and its many supporters successfully removed a major threat to the Tuolumne River. However, San Francisco still plans to significantly increase their "take" from the Tuolumne in order to meet a projected growth in water demand.

To address this threat, we are advocating that San Francisco and their Bay Area customers pursue water conservation and more sustainable supplies. The Trust also works to improve watershed stewardship and freshwater flows in the Tuolumne.

A major highlight of 2006 so far was the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's (SFPUC) recent adoption of a stewardship policy which establishes environmental stewardship as a fundamental part of their mission. Surprisingly, the agency, which has relied on water diverted from the Wild and Scenic Tuolumne River for over 80 years,

did not have a policy regarding the stewardship of this incredible resource.

The new SFPUC stewardship policy incorporates many of the Trust's recommendations and formalizes the SFPUC's commitment to protect and restore native fish and wildlife populations downstream of their dams in the Tuolumne and Bay Area watersheds. The policy also creates a foundation for the new \$50 million watershed and environmental improvement program.

Another highlight occurred in April when the Trust and our coalition partners extracted a commitment from SFPUC officials to conduct a two-day briefing to engage outside experts on their alternative water supply planning. The briefing, to take place in September, is an exciting opportunity to develop a set of recommendations for San Francisco and their customers to become leaders in water conservation.

Input Needed for Clavey River

Since 1999, the Tuolumne River Trust has worked with the Clavey River Ecosystem Project to create a shared vision for the Clavey River. This fall, the hard work and dedication of the group will bear fruit, with the release of a draft report on the desired future conditions of the 100,000-acre Clavey Watershed.



Ron Pickup

The watershed assessment will create a shared vision for the Clavey River.

As the first part of a comprehensive watershed assessment, the Desired Conditions Report will spell out a collective vision for the Clavey River, including a description of wildlife, recreation, socio-economic, vegetation, fire, and hydrology conditions. The report will also define indicators and measures which will be used to gauge progress towards the community's goals for resource management of the Clavey Watershed.

The watershed assessment will also evaluate existing conditions in the Clavey River Watershed, and will recommend steps to move towards desired conditions. Through this process, the Trust has an opportunity to secure the long-term protection of the Clavey River's outstanding values, and build partnerships to improve stewardship of the Clavey River Watershed.

Get involved!

Public participation is encouraged — get involved by reviewing draft reports, volunteering, and attending public meetings. To participate, please check out www.claveyriver.net or contact Cynthia at (209) 588-8636 or cynthia@tuolumne.org.

Clavey River Watershed Assessment timeline

Draft Desired Conditions Report — Fall 2006
Draft Recommended Actions Report — Spring 2007
Draft Clavey Watershed Analysis — Winter 2007
Final Clavey Watershed Analysis — Spring 2008

Explore the Tuolumne

Day at the River — Learn about Central Valley habitats at this educational event on August 26. The event will include: hiking, crafts, talks about river safety, lunch and music. This event is free and fun for the whole family. Contact Elizabeth: elizabeth@tuolumne.org, (209) 236-0330.

Wild, Scenic Clavey Hike — Hike the Clavey River Watershed and learn about the benefits of designating this pristine Tuolumne tributary as wild and scenic on September 9. This event begins in Modesto. Contact Elizabeth: (209) 236-0330, elizabeth@tuolumne.org.

Clavey River Recreational Use Survey — Help conduct a survey in the Clavey Watershed on September 16. The survey will gather information about existing conditions and the results will be included in the CREP Watershed Analysis. Contact Cynthia: cynthia@tuolumne.org, (209) 588-8636.

Bell Meadow Autumn Color Walk — Walk through Bell Meadow's aspen groves to witness brilliant fall color. Join us on October 14 at 9:00 am. Contact Galen: galen@tuolumne.org, (209) 588-8636.

Mend the Bend Tree Planting — Help restore the Tuolumne River habitat by planting native cottonwoods and willows at Big Bend Restoration Site near Modesto. Join the Trust for tree plantings on October 21 and December 2 beginning at 9:30 am. Contact: Elizabeth: elizabeth@tuolumne.org, (209) 236-0330.

Ninth Annual Canoe Trip — Paddle the Lower Tuolumne River on November 4, 5 or 11. The canoe trip begins in La Grange where we will float through salmon spawning grounds. Reservations are required. Contact Elizabeth: elizabeth@tuolumne.org, (209) 236-0330.

