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# Friends of the Kern River Preserve

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Vol. 1, No. 1

A Newsletter of the Friends of the Kern River Preserve

September/October 1997

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## AUDUBON~CALIFORNIA'S NEWEST PROJECT - THE KERN RIVER PRESERVE

After fifteen years of ownership of the Kern River Preserve, The Nature Conservancy recognized that they had given all they could uniquely give - it was time for them to pass their child on to a new parent who could bring a new dimension to the project.

Of eight different agencies and non-profit conservation organizations, they found Audubon~California to be the strongest candidate to continue conservation on the Kern.

On February 15, 1997 Audubon~California took over management of the Kern River Preserve under a lease from The Nature Conservancy. The lease gives Audubon and The Nature Conservancy the opportunity to evaluate Audubon's ability to manage the Kern River Preserve. Part of the agreement requires Audubon~California to fund the Preserve beginning July 1, 1997.

Our immediate challenge is to raise \$80,000 for basic preserve operations this year. We must also develop an endowment that will generate at least half of that revenue on an annual basis.

As those of you who are Audubon~California members know, this adds a significant burden to the existing challenge of decentralizing National Audubon Society. Under the new direction of the national organization, state programs have been given greater autonomy and are responsible for all their own fund raising. California is the first state to put the new Audubon into practice.

I believe that Audubon~California members and staff are ready for the challenge of funding the state program and the Kern River Preserve.

Audubon members originally introduced The Nature Conservancy to the South Fork Kern River Valley. Audubon members have been steady supporters of the Kern River Preserve and its activities. *It is only fitting that Audubon will now manage and own the Kern River Preserve.*

The Friends of the Kern River Preserve is not for Audubon members alone, anyone with an interest in the Kern River Preserve is welcome to be a Friend. You have visited the preserve with Tree People, or the Aguabonita Flyfishers or the Oasis Garden Club or independently. Many of you have requested a membership organization for the Kern River Preserve for years. Well, now we have one!

We want the Friends of the Kern River Preserve to meet your needs as well as the Preserve's. We recognize that your labor is as important as your dollars, so we have provided a way that you can become a member through accumulation of your volunteer hours. Within a given year, if you work 15 hours you become a Friend, for 30 hours you become a supporter, for 50 hours you become a Pacific Flyway Patrol member and for 100 hours you become a Raptor Circle member.

We would like to invite non-profit organizations, businesses and school classes to become members at the Pacific Flyway Patrol level or higher. These members will have the opportunity to use the Preserve headquarters for a field trip and receive a two-hour guided tour along the Nature Trail.

We plan to have quarterly workdays with potluck dinners for Friends of the Kern River Preserve. We will be having a T-shirt made for the Friends which you get at the Supporter level and above. And we have this quarterly newsletter.

Lynn Overtree and I want you to know that the Kern River Preserve and its many supporters are very important and special to us. For this reason we have both chosen to stay here in the Kern Valley. I have been working on the Kern since 1987 and, although I will miss working for The Nature Conservancy, I am proud to continue to work as the Preserve Manager for Audubon~California. Lynn will continue to work for The Nature Conservancy to help with the transfer of the Preserve to Audubon~California, and she has signed a contract with Audubon to direct the Friends of the Kern River Preserve.

We have many dreams for the Kern River Preserve under Audubon~California's management. We have more revegetation work to do on the property. We will continue to work closely with our ranching neighbors to conserve the open space and healthy riparian habitat within the valley. We will *increase our involvement in ecotourism and environmental education within the Kern Valley.*

As you can see, we are very excited about Audubon~California's management of the Kern River Preserve and the opportunity to have a Friends organization. We hope you are just as excited and will join us in this new adventure. We look forward to hearing from our many old friends and in making many more new ones.

Thanks! Reed

## FRIENDS OF THE KERN RIVER PRESERVE

P.O. Box 833  
Weldon, CA 93283  
(760) 378-2531  
krpfriends@kernvalley.com

The Kern River Preserve is managed by Audubon-California for the preservation of California's largest contiguous cottonwood-willow riparian forest and the wildlife it supports. The Friends of the Kern River Preserve is a membership organization that provides financial support for the Preserve. Your support is critical to the success of the Kern River Preserve, please consider making a donation by filling out the attached form and mailing it to the Friends.

Preserve Manager: Reed Tollefson  
Director of the Friends: Lynn Overtree

Fund raising goal - \$80,000

### THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEER HELP

We would like to thank the following people for their volunteer efforts on the Preserve:

- **Ben Roofener** for all your work at the Kern River Preserve this summer.
- **Alex Day, Amy Day, Sandra Wieser, Chris McDonald, and Tom Cormack's and Tom Evan's Kern Valley High School Classes** for helping junior high students plant riparian trees for the Adopt-A-Watershed Program. We thank **MaryAnn Morgan's South Fork School Classes and Debbie Wingerden's and Kevin Branston's Woodrow Wallace Junior High Classes** for planting the riparian trees for the program. The Adopt-A-Watershed Program consisted of junior high students taking cuttings, growing them in the classroom, and planting them in the field. They will now monitor the growth of the trees.
- **Bob Barnes** gets a big thank you for his work at the Kern River Preserve headquarters greeting guests, improving the Visitor's Center, maintaining the Birder's Board, setting up the Hummingbird Observation Centers, and all-around general maintenance and support.
- Thank you **Jeff King and Sandra Wieser** for all your work around the preserve headquarters, including layout of irrigation systems to support the Hummingbird Observation Centers.
- Thank you **Tree People, Woodrow Wallace Junior High, Sandra Wieser, Jeff King, Dave Kurdeka, Clint Stallings, Tom & Cathy Stevens, Patty & Zach Jacobson and Breck McAlexander** for helping to plant the Hafenfeld Conservation Easement Revegetation Site.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Kern River Research Center needs volunteers from 9am to 3pm daily through October 31st to count the migrating Turkey Vultures and hawks as they pass through Kelso Valley. Half day or many days. Call Sean at (760) 378-3345.

### THANK YOU FOR DONATIONS

We would like to thank the following people for their gifts:

- **Bob Powers** for a copy of his book, *North Fork Country*.
- **Kern County California Native Plant Society** for plants for the Hummingbird Observation Centers.
- **Oasis Garden Club** for plants for the Hummingbird Observation Centers.

### WISH LIST

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation of any of the following items contact the Preserve Manager:

- Dependable 35- to 50-hp farm tractor
- 3-point tractor auger
- Hip waders
- Furniture for the Visitors Center
- Riding lawnmower

### PRESERVE EVENTS

- **October 18, November 15, & December 13. General Preserve Maintenance.** Work parties meet at the preserve headquarters. Volunteers are welcome to camp at the headquarters and spend time exploring the preserve and revegetation sites. Camping facilities are rustic. Outhouses and water are available; otherwise, campers should be self-contained. **For additional details, or if you would like to make arrangements for a group work party, contact the preserve manager.**
- **November 22. Friends' Thanksgiving and Fall Colors on the Kern.** Friends of the Kern River Preserve are invited to join us for a day of fun at the Preserve. Go for a walk in the forest's fall colors followed by a potluck lunch in the courtyard. **Please RSVP to the preserve manager.**

### CONSERVATION LINK

Please support these other organizations and their activities in the Kern Valley region. If your organization would like to post events here, please send us your newsletter.

- **October 12, 19, & 27; November 2, 16, & 23; December 7, 14, & 21. Kern River Research Center Bird Banding Demonstrations.** KRRC biologists band birds on the Kern River Preserve as part of a research program on bird use of riparian revegetation sites. **Please call (760) 378-3345 to confirm.**
- **October 20, November 17, & December 15. Kern River Research Center Garden Work Days.** Assist in the construction of the 2 acre wildlife garden. Learn tips you can use in your own garden. **For more information call (760) 378-3345.**
- **November 8. Kern River Research Center Fundraiser at the Pine Cone Inn.** Support local biological research by attending this evening of live music and an art auction. **Call (760) 378-3345 for details.**
- **November 15. Kerncrest Audubon Society Kern River Preserve trip.** Join one of the local Audubon chapters as they bird watch the preserve. **Call Bob Meade at (760) 377-4451.**

## HISTORY OF THE KERN RIVER PRESERVE

The Kern River Preserve was purchased in 1981 by The Nature Conservancy. Prior to becoming a preserve, the land was locally known as the A. Brown Ranch. The land had been operated as a cattle ranch since the mid-1800s.

Rick Hewett, the first preserve manager, was loved by the Kern Valley Community. He had a membership organization to support the preserve and published the Riparian Rag newsletter. John Ridenour had Rick on his radio station, KVLI, weekly for Nature Notes, a 5 minute nature program for children. Under Rick's management the preserve opened up to the community and everyone pitched in to build fences and plant trees. Soon the forest became thicker and the populations of native animals grew.

In 1986, Dr. Bert Anderson was hired to begin large scale revegetation of native tree species on cleared agricultural fields. The first site was the 25 acre Dump Site. The nature trail encircles this site which now blends in to the old forest.

Reed Tollefson arrived for the second year of planting trees with Dr. Anderson. Reed has either assisted or led the planting of 7 revegetation sites on the preserve.

In 1988, Rick Hewett and his family moved to Bakersfield to run The Nature Conservancy's San Joaquin office. Ron Tiller was hired as the new preserve manager. Ron came to the Kern with a history in habitat restoration. He worked with Dr. Anderson in 1989 to plant the Prince Site and in 1990 he directed The Nature Conservancy's first in-house restoration effort on the Kern River Preserve.

Reed now had 3 year's experience of restoration on the Kern River Preserve and The Nature Conservancy hired him as assistant manager to Ron. A month after Reed moved in, he hired Lynn Overtree as one of the 3 interns to help plant the Palmer Site.

In 1992, The Nature Conservancy stole Ron away from the Kern River Preserve to take over the management and restoration of the challenging Stony Creek Preserve. Reed became preserve manager of the Kern River Preserve and Lynn was hired as the assistant manager.

The last site available to plant was the Colt Site, behind the headquarters. It was planted in 1993. After the growing season of 1994, there were no more large-scale revegetation projects on the Kern River Preserve. The assistant manager position was ended at the end of that fiscal year and Lynn was rehired as the transition coordinator. Her job was to find an organization that could manage the Kern River Preserve as well or better than The Nature Conservancy.

Eight organizations and agencies were interviewed and Audubon-California was the strongest candidate. Negotiations were finalized at the end of 1996 and in February 1997, Audubon-California began managing the Kern River Preserve.

Meanwhile, Reed had continued his outstanding job managing the preserve as an active part of the Kern Valley community. In March 1997, he transferred to Audubon-California - a loss to The Nature Conservancy, but a gain for the Kern River Preserve.

Audubon-California is now fully funding and managing the Kern River Preserve with Reed Tollefson as their manager. If both parties agree, the Kern River Preserve will be transferred to Audubon-California from The Nature Conservancy in September 1998.

The success we have enjoyed is a result of The Nature Conservancy's generous members. Our continued support will depend on the Friends of the Kern River Preserve's ability to attract a similar level of support from people like you. Please consider becoming part of our history by joining the Friends of the Kern River Preserve. Thank you.

### FRIENDS OF THE KERN RIVER PRESERVE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$1000 Raptor Circle  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$100 Pacific Flyway Patrol (Please circle: Individual, Corporate, School Class or Non-Profit Organization)  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Supporter (newsletter and T-shirt)  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$20 Friend (newsletter)  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$Other

- \_\_\_\_\_ Please send me information on planned giving  
\_\_\_\_\_ Please send me information on volunteer opportunities

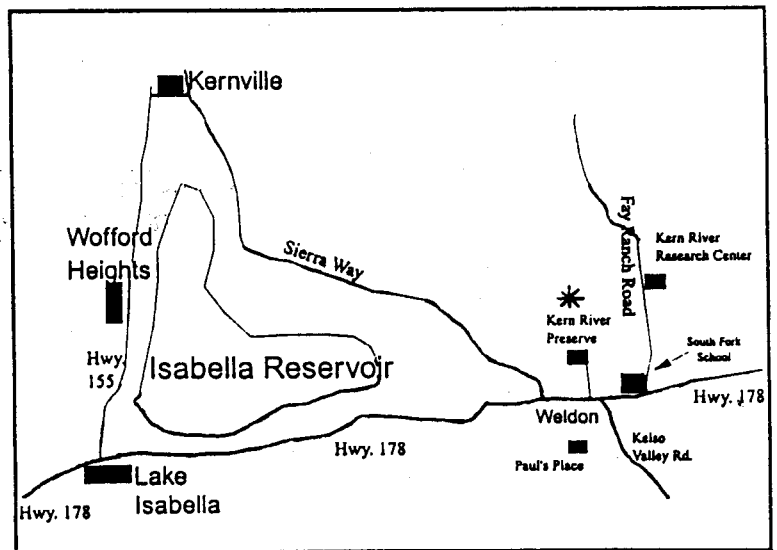
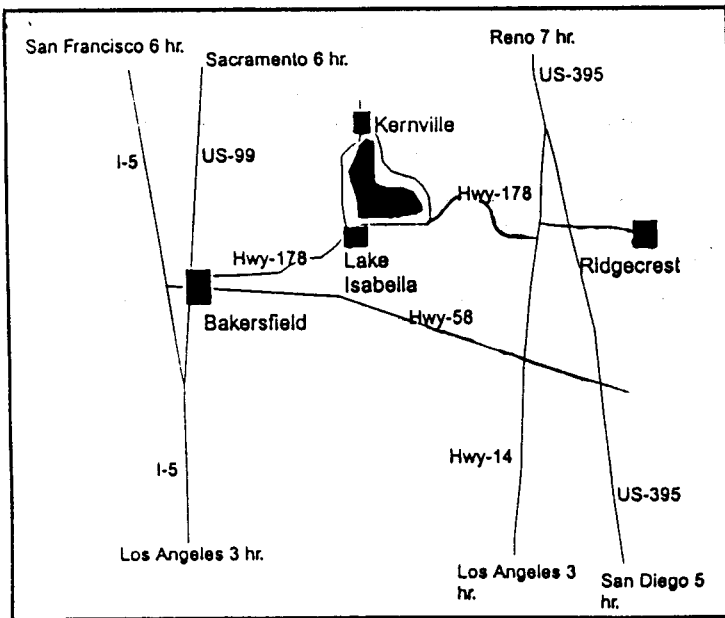
Please Make Checks Payable to:  
Friends of the Kern River Preserve

Mail to: Friends of the Kern River Preserve  
P.O. Box 833, Weldon, CA 93283

National Audubon Society  
Friends of the Kern River Preserve  
P.O. Box 833  
Weldon, CA 93283

Address Service Requested

For further information about the Friends of the Kern River Preserve, call (760) 378-2531 or email [krpfriends@kernvalley.com](mailto:krpfriends@kernvalley.com).



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