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Secretary Nichols Announces Partnership to Restore the Tuolumne River

MODESTO -- The completion of the first phase of a Tuolumne River restoration project highlights the vast array of partnerships that are working to restore the Bay-Delta ecosystem and its Chinook salmon, California Resources Secretary Mary Nichols said Thursday.

“The Tuolumne is one of California’s best examples of forging partnerships among state, federal, local and non-governmental organizations,” Nichols said at a press conference on the banks of the river near Modesto. “As a result of this hard work, the Tuolumne has received \$20 million over the last five years, including \$5 million in Gov. Davis’ budget through the state’s River Parkways Program.”

Patrick Wright, director of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, echoed Secretary Nichols’ comments.

“This project is one of the strongest pillars of our Ecosystem Restoration Program, and a model for how the CALFED agencies are working with local communities to address their most pressing water needs,” Wright said.

Thursday’s ceremony marks the completion of a \$2.5 million effort to repair the Tuolumne River channel near Fox Grove Park. The river’s flow was diverted temporarily so workers could fill in a 1,200-foot-long pond in the middle of the channel. The pond, the remains of a gravel-mining operation, harbored predatory species that feasted on juvenile salmon.

The Modesto and Turlock irrigation districts spearheaded the work, one of numerous ventures outlined in the Tuolumne River Restoration Plan, which is designed to improve the river’s ecological health and revive salmon populations.

Elsewhere along the Tuolumne River, restoration work has been coordinated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service and the local East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District.

“The East Stanislaus RCD, working in partnership with NRCS, is in a position to be responsive to the landowners along the river and address the needs of the agricultural community and the river,” said Mike McElhiney, the NRCS District Conservationist.

Meanwhile, the Tuolumne River Preservation Trust is working with the cities of Modesto, Ceres and Waterford, Stanislaus County and other partners to attract state and federal funds for the reach of the river flowing through urban and rural areas.

“The Tuolumne and its wild salmon have a rich and long history in this area, and the Trust is helping bring together communities and interested people to improve habitat and recreation opportunities along the river,” said Jenna Olsen, executive director of the Trust.

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California

The Resources Agency
Department of Water Resources
Department of Fish and Game
The Reclamation Board
Delta Protection Commission
Department of Conservation
San Francisco Bay Conservation
and Development Commission

California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board
Department of Health Services
Department of Food and Agriculture

Federal

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Fish and Wildlife Service
Geological Survey
Bureau of Land Management
Environmental Protection Agency
Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Forest Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service
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