



2014 First Half Update

7/11/14

Bob Powers Gateway Preserve – the drought continues - We had a 2” storm late in February, filling the pond, evidenced by the Mark Schmitt photo above. 21 Mallards were counted on the 5th, but by the middle of March it was dry again. As a result, there were no nesting of waterfowl or Tricolored Blackbirds. With a well, in the future this may not be problem.

Well Grant!! - The Heritage Foundation is part of a coalition that has received an \$18,000 grant under Audubon California’s 2014 Tricolored Blackbird Partnership Grant Program. The other partners are the Kerncrest and Kern Audubon Chapters, the Southern Sierra Research Station and Audubon’s Kern River Preserve (KRP). The funds will go for enhancement of three wetlands for Tricolored Blackbird nesting, one at Bob Powers Gateway Preserve (BPGP) and two at KRP. The bulk of the funds will be used to drill a well and install a solar powered submersible pump at BPGP, intended to keep water in the pond through the nesting season. Thereafter, for three years, volunteers will survey the enhanced sites to document the results.

Down-Stream Berm Habitat - you’ll recall in the spring of 2011 volunteers installed irrigation lines and set some 150+ stinging nettle and mugwort plants. This was intended to create nesting habitat for the Kern River Redwing Blackbird and the Tricolored Blackbird. Due to the high alkali content this transplanting was not successful. In February Bruce Vegter and his son Don spent a few hours removing the irrigation lines. Then just before the rains, Bruce mowed the area to create clippings as mulch to augment the soil. This may begin to modify the alkali content and make the soil usable to an increased number of native plants.



Alkali Mariposa Lily - At the end of March Dan Portway (who can spot them before they flower) did a quick snapshot AML survey. He found several clusters in historic locations. There was one large cluster of over 200 in an area that last year had about 75. In December Bruce had mowed this area to remove salt grass buildup in the hopes that it would lead to more AML bulbs sending up leaves. It appears this mowing program is working and Dan plans to expand it on a selective basis.

In May Dan with Bruce's help did another survey. There were more lilies than we had anticipated given the drought conditions. The lilies were small and pale, but were there. In fact a colony of over 200 was found in the southwest corner of the Preserve, an area where they had not previously been documented. Here is Bruce's photo of Dan with some of those lilies.



Access Easement - In mid April Bruce planted 8 Yellow Trumpet Vines with drip emitters along the south fence of the easement. This is part of the screening program contemplated in the Strategic Plan. Steve Spradlin provided the plants.



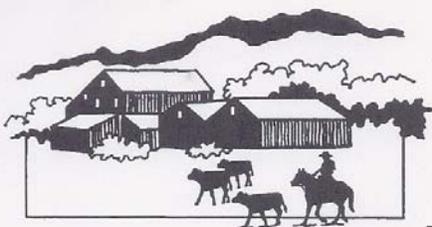
Stewardship - From the activities mention above you can see that Bruce has been kept busy. Further, there were the routine activities of watering the screening plants & trees and sampling monitoring wells. In addition he planted three more cottonwood trees for screening. He also got the opportunity to try out his cowboy skills. It seems a breach developed in our fence and some cattle came for a visit. Even without a horse he was able to herd them out.



Upstream Berm - Finding funding to construct the Upstream Berm continues to be difficult. We haven't had a break through so far this year. Here is where we are. The budget is \$96,000. We currently have \$31,000 in hand or committed leaving us in need of \$65,000. We have feelers out to several grant makers, but could use more prospects. **Your Help Needed** - If you know of a potential funding source we would like to hear about it, or please consider a donation.

Visitor Center - As a result of dam modifications the Corps of Engineers needs make at Isabella Reservoir, the Forest Service must move its visitor center. The BPGP and its proposed visitor center is one of the preferred re-location sites the Forest Service has submitted to the Corps of Engineers. This is a very complex situation with multiple parties involved, often with conflicting desires. As a consequence, at this time the Heritage Foundation Board feels there is a low likelihood that the Forest Service will relocate to the BPGP.

More detailed information about the Kern River Valley Heritage Foundation and the Preserve can be found on GuideStar at: <http://kernfoundation.guidestar.org/NonprofitProfile.aspx?OrgId=1066720>. In addition, the Strategic Plan is available there.



KERN RIVER VALLEY
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through stewardship, restoration and education*

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