

### **2015 First Half Update**

Supplemental Water - The drought continues. Through a partnership with the Lake Isabella Community Services District, we obtained use of a well not suitable for their needs, to provide supplemental water. Funding for the pump, associated items and piping to deliver the water came from an Audubon California 2014 Tricolored Blackbird Partnership Program grant. Bruce Vegter and Steve Spradlin tested the system this spring to understand its limitations and how best to operate it. Its purpose is to insure water through the nesting season. It has achieved this goal, as you can see from the photos above & below.



Tricolored Blackbirds - While foraging on the Preserve, none nested there this year. In 2012 they nested in our stinging nettle. Last year the visiting cattle trampled that nettle. Bruce brought irrigation lines to our patch and it has responded vigorously, as the photo below shows. In May Lowell Young, an expert on Tricolored Blackbird conservation; Meghan Hertel, an executive with Audubon California; Reed Tollefson, Audubon's Kern River Preserve Manager; Brenda Burnett, President Kerncrest Audubon Chapter; and others, visited the Preserve to see first hand our work to improve Tricolored Blackbird habitat.



Alkali Mariposa Lily - We had a large population of lilies this year. Dan Portway's quick walk by indicated as much, and Bruce reported seeing lilies in places he had never seen them before. Therefore, it was important that we do a survey. All of the volunteers that usually do the surveys were unavailable. We needed experienced people since the drought washed out the lily's purple color and reduced their height making them harder to locate. Also, they were blooming earlier, so there was timing pressure. McCormack Biological was contacted, had people available to start and agreed to donate a portion of their normal fee. They performed the survey on May 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>.

1255 plants were counted, plus four small areas were identified that contained an estimated 125 additional plants. We've had 14 previous counts. Most of these ranged from 100 to 500 plants. The previous high count, in 2009, was 974.



Figure 4. Photo of an alkali mariposa lily on the preserve – McCormick Biological

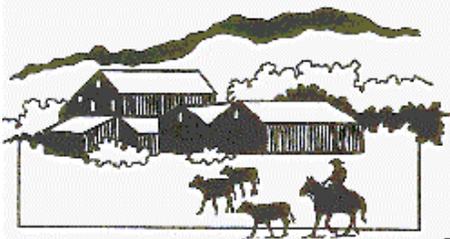
California Native Plant Society - The CNPS has been contracted by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife to conduct vegetation pattern surveys of various Sierra Nevada foothill habitats, including BPGP. Their work ran from March through June, with some possibility of more in Spring 2016. They were at the Preserve in April. The BPGP portion of their report will be provided to us.

Upstream Berm - Our application for the California State Duck Stamp Grant Program was not successful. You'll recall however, we also submitted an application for the State Wildlife Grant Program, which is doing better. We've made the 1st cut. What this means is that the State has approved our proposal and submitted it to the USFWS for final approval. Our project ranked #6 out of 13 approved by the State. We should know for sure in July, and if approved will go forward with construction in September or October.

In addition, through the Kern Community Foundation, we received a grant to help with the match needed for the State Wildlife Grant. The grant came from The Kern 178 Corridor Fund, a donor-advised fund at the Community Foundation, in the amount of \$1,179.50.

Visitor Center - You'll recall, as part of the Isabella Dam Safety Modification Project, the Corps of Engineers is requiring that the Forest Service move its visitor information services center, currently located at the dam. A small community committee was formed, through the efforts of Marsha Smith, to push the BPGP as the logical site for this re-location. The Corps is preparing a Draft Environmental Assessment for Recreation, which will include the BPGP visitor center as one of the options. To that end the Corps has done a vegetation survey and other studies of the Preserve. The Draft EA should be released in August with public meetings in September. Support the BPGP visitor center by responding to the Draft EA.

Outreach - In April Bob Barnes made a classroom presentation, "Careful Observation in the Field," to teacher Kathy Dwyer's Kern River Environmental Magnet Program. This was followed two days later by a field trip to the Preserve for some of that careful observation. Below are some of the students in action.



**KERN RIVER VALLEY  
HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

*Protecting the natural, scenic, agricultural & historic lands of the Kern River Valley  
through stewardship, restoration and education*

---

P.O. Box 1249 • Lake Isabella, California 93240 • (760) 379-3379