



## **2015 Year End Update**

Drought - The drought continued until late in the year when the snow pack in the Sierra began to build. Here at the Bob Powers Gateway Preserve it was not until the final two weeks of the year that the pond began to fill. As you can see by the photo above, taken January 9<sup>th</sup>, it had filled. Maybe our seasonal wetland will be back to normal in 2016.

Upstream Berm - Our application to the State Wildlife Grant Program was approved for construction of the Upstream Berm. We had hoped to be underway in September or October, however this was not to be. Preparation of the grant agreement and documentation took longer than anticipated, so we were not able to get started while the Preserve was still dry. Now it'll be July or August before construction begins. This also means the grant will require an extension, which has been requested.

California Native Plant Society - You'll recall that the CNPS was under contract with the California Department of Fish & Wildlife to conduct vegetation pattern surveys of various Sierra Nevada foothill habitats, including BPGP. Visiting the Preserve on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> they sampled vegetation at six locations. 28 plant species were identified, with 8 being non-native. Additionally, six species were collected for further identification and have been deposited at UC Davis Center for Plant Diversity. They noted that the vegetation types sampled at the Preserve were unique in their study area.

Visitor Center – 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. Through the efforts of Marsha Smith a small community committee was formed to push the BPGP as the logical site for this re-location. In November the Corps issued its Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment for Recreation (SEA). Regarding the visitor center at BPGP, it identified a number of issues that require further investigation, so it was excluded from the SEA and will be subject to its own NEPA assessment. Because of the time factor for another assessment the SEA provided for the temporary location of the FS visitor information services center at the proposed FS fire Station in Lake Isabella. The County, Forest Service and Corps are in discussions to address the issues.

Supplemental Water - You'll recall that under a partnership with the Lake Isabella Community Services District we have use of a well to provide supplemental water, through the waterfowl nesting season. The photos below were taken in mid-October with the well supplying water to the deeper east end of the pond. Bruce Vegter and Steve Spradlin are investigating alternatives to increase the well's output and supply water for the entire pond.



West end



East end

Preserve Expansion – In October, in partnership with The Trust for Public Land, we secured a contract to acquire the **189-acre Hot Springs Valley Wetlands**. Our efforts have started well, but it's a big task! Grant applications have been submitted for the River Parkways Program, DOD's NAVFAC SW program and the California State Duck Stamp program. Applications with two additional programs are in preparation and we expect more to follow. Support letters have been received from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Central Region; as well as from Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners. Board member Bob Barnes' "Grass Roots Campaign" by year-end had received over 300 responses and raised \$35,000, with significant support from local and regional Audubon chapters.

Bob Barnes and friend Dan Cooper spent about two hours on the property during the first week of the new year and recorded 23 bird species, including: *Gladwall* (1), *Mallard* (1), *Great Egret* (1), *Northern Harrier* (1), *Wilson's Snipe* (4), *Rock Pigeon* (1), *Nuttall's Woodpecker* (1), *Downy Woodpecker* (1), *American Kestrel* (1), *Merlin* (1), *Say's Phoebe* (4), *Western Scrub-Jay* (3), *American Crow* (1), *Common Raven* (8), *Oak Titmouse* (1), *Bushtit* (16), *White-breasted Nuthatch* (1), *Marsh Wren* (2), *Mountain Bluebird* (8), *American Robin* (1), *Dark-eyed Junco* (22), *Brewer's Blackbird* (10), and a *Great-tailed Grackle* (1).

**Help us acquire the Hot Springs Valley Wetlands property!**

- ~ If you haven't already, make a donation
- ~ Ask your friends to support this effort

Make checks out to KRVHF and mail to KRVHF, P.O. Box 1249, Lake Isabella, CA 93240



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