



# 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

## Mid-Year 2016 Progress Report

### Bob Powers Gateway Preserve

Erskine Fire – The Kern River Valley lost two lives and 285 homes to this 48,000-acre end of June wildfire. The Preserve was not impacted as the fire started about ½ mile east and then moved away from the Preserve. Our prayers go out to those suffering.

Visitor Center – The County has prepared a draft site plan for the visitor center and drafted a lease amendment, which would carve the visitor center site out of the existing lease between us. This would allow for a government-to-government visitor center lease between the County and the Forest Service, while accommodating other tenants including BLM, KRV Chamber of Commerce and the Heritage Foundation. We have provided the County with comments on both and expect to meet soon. This is all very preliminary with a lot of hurdles to be crossed. Not the least of which is the Alkali Mariposa Lily. The visitor center would displace some portion of the Lilies, necessitating remediation. We have taken the first step in that process with a seed-collection program.

Arrangements were made for Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden (RSABG) to provide a qualified Team Leader for the collection, do the necessary cleaning and to include the seeds in their long-term storage seed bank. The collection took place on June 22<sup>nd</sup> with the RSABG Team Leader and seven KRV volunteers. Team Leader Sarah De Groot was pleased and made two points. First, there are currently no AML seeds in the seed bank from Kern County, so our effort fills a void. Second, we collected seeds from 222 individual plants, a very representative sample.



RSABG Team Leader and KRV volunteers collecting Alkali Mariposa Lily seeds for seed bank. Bob Barnes photo



Lily count day. McCormick Bio. photo

Alkali Mariposa Lily – McCormick Biological, Inc. did the annual lily count on May 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>. You'll recall last year we had a record count of 1,255 plants. 2016 was even better with 2,909 plants counted within the grid system. Outside the grid system six small areas were found (2 more than 2015) with 133 plants. Thus, the total exceeded 3,000.

## **Hot Springs Valley Wetlands acquisition**

Site visits— Bob Barnes continues conducting site visits for partners, supporters and prospective donors, generating interest and enthusiasm for the project.



John Hodge & Gabe Garcia from BLM and Julie Finzel with UC Cooperative Extension Bob Barnes photo

Grassroots Campaign - Some five hundred grassroots donors from the Kern River Valley, California, the U.S., and three other world countries have now contributed over \$40,000.

Audubon California - Has committed a \$100,000 grant from its Wimberly Wildlife Fund.

River Parkways Grant Program – The River Parkways grant team of four, from the California Natural Resources Agency, made a site visit on June 21<sup>st</sup>. They had asked that we have representatives from certain support constituencies in attendance. Our strong support team included: Alex Size, The Trust for Public Land; Deanne Boublis, land owners’ Broker; John Hodge & Maria Soto, Bureau of Land Management; John Meriwether, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program; Bob Robinson, Kern Valley Indian Community; Marsha Smith, Kern River Valley Chamber of Commerce & Kern Valley Sun; Reed Tollefson, Kern River Preserve, Audubon California and Kern & Kerncrest Audubon Chapters; Don Woodard, Kern County Parks & Recreation Department; and Tom Anderson, Bob Barnes, Steve Spradlin & Bruce Vegter representing KRV Heritage Foundation.

Success! Our application, requesting \$500,000 has been approved and a Grant Administrator assigned.

Where we stand – With the Audubon and River Parkways grants we now have \$600,000 that can be used just for the purchase and another \$40,000+ in “Grass Roots” funding that can also be used for other acquisition costs such as the appraisal, environmental site inspection, etc. So, we still have a ways to go to reach our total acquisition budget of \$900,000, but we’re getting close to the \$750,000 purchase price. If you would like to help, send your donation, large or small, to KRVHF, P.O. Box 1249, Lake Isabella, CA 93240.