



**TULARE BASIN WILDLIFE PARTNERS**  
Creating Opportunities for Nature and People

# Annual Report 2007-2009



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## Annual Report 2007 - 2009

### Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners

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### Board of Directors

Robert B. Hansen President  
Richard M. Moss, Vice President  
Bea Olsen, Treasurer  
Carole K. Combs, Secretary  
Carol Sellers Herbert  
Bruce Roberts  
C. Jeff Thomson

### Advisors

Steve Laymon  
Bill Loudermilk

### Planning & Implementation Team

Sarah Campe  
Bobby Kamansky  
Johanna Kamansky  
Stephen A. Laymon

Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit dedicated to protecting, enhancing, and restoring wildlife and their habitats in the Tulare Basin. A copy of the latest financial statement and registration filed with the Registry of Charitable Trusts may be obtained by contacting the organization. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

*Dear TBWP partners, supporters, and friends,*

I was reflecting recently on the amazing spring we experienced in the Tulare Basin, a region with less than 10 inches of rain each year. Our rains came often and at just the right time to turn Kings County's normally dry, golden Kettleman Hills into a floral carpet of brilliant color that surpassed any tapestry or manicured landscape. Our "Valley of tules", the richest agricultural area in the world, still encompasses remnant natural treasure – wetlands, prairie, and forests – that flourish side-by-side with productive grazing land, orchards, vineyards, and row crops. After collaborating with our agency and private partners for the past two years on comprehensive, forward-thinking landscape-level planning and research, we are excited about the opportunity to implement priority conservation projects that will help to maintain the phenomenal natural heritage we still enjoy today.

All of TBWP's Board members and advisors can look with pride at the collaborative projects already accomplished. We firmly believe that our community has the creativity and the will to turn back the hands of the "habitat loss clock" just a little. Together, we can devise creative approaches for sharing limited water resources with agricultural producers in ways that help restore some of the natural scenery. We can also once again make the Tulare Basin a popular destination for increasing numbers of sportsmen, nature-lovers, and tourists.



Rob Hansen, TBWP President. ©2010.

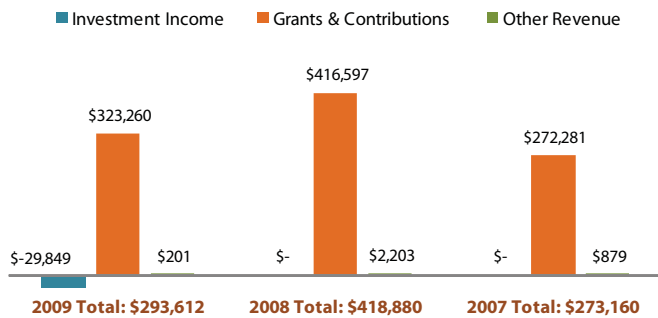
We have shown that wildlife and their habitats will continue to benefit from the partnering that is the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners' trademark. Partnering provides multiple benefits to farming, water supply, water quality, flood control, air quality, and the local economy. This approach provides a blueprint for a more wildlife-friendly future for the Tulare Basin and a better quality of life for the current and future generations living in or visiting this area.

We do this work because we sincerely hope that children who grow up here can grow up in a healthy environment with an abundance of open space and wildlife; enjoying our surroundings enough that they may choose to settle here themselves. We thank you for your support of the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners during its founding years and look forward to your help to make this vision a reality.

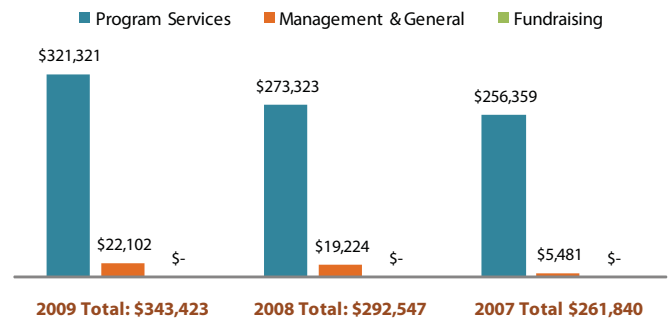
*Sincerely,*

# Financial Statement 2007-2009

## Support & Revenue



## Expenses



	2009	2008	2007
<b>Assets</b>			
Savings & Temporary Cash Investments	\$104,319	\$142,578	\$88,110
Accounts Receivable	\$27,593	\$9,929	\$16,903
Other Assets	\$0	\$30,038	\$0
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$131,912</b>	<b>\$182,545</b>	<b>\$105,013</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$24,293	\$25,115	\$71,336
Notes Payable	\$0	\$0	\$2,500
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$24,293</b>	<b>\$25,115</b>	<b>\$73,836</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$107,619</b>	<b>\$157,430</b>	<b>\$31,177</b>

TBWP partners with a wide range of public agencies and private organizations to secure funding and low-cost services for conservation, restoration and education projects in the Tulare Basin. 2007 - 2009 contributors included:

### Grant Support

Bureau of Land Management  
 California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley,  
*Seed Grant Program*  
 County of Fresno  
 County of Tulare  
 Jiji Foundation  
 Natural Resources Conservation Service  
 Resources Legacy Fund Foundation  
 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, *Central Valley Project  
 Conservation Program*  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Central Valley Joint  
 Venture  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *Central Valley Project  
 Improvement Act Habitat Restoration Program*  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Migratory Bird  
 Program (Region 8)

### Donors & Contributors

Anonymous  
 Shauna & John Austin

### Donors & Contributors (continued)

Combined Federal Campaign (Kern, Inyo & Mono  
 Counties; Kings-Tulare Counties; Fresno-Madera  
 Counties)  
 Carole Combs  
 Rob Hansen  
 Carol Sellers Herbert & James K. Herbert  
 Steve Laymon & Pam Williams  
 Melissa McKibben  
 Charlene & Dick Moss  
 Bea & Kevin Olsen  
 Nancy Robb  
 RollGiving Matching Gifts (Paramount Farms)  
 Tulare Basin Wetlands Association

### Services

Artis & Company  
 Conservation Strategy Group  
 Pine, Pedroncelli & Aguilar  
 Will Murray Company

# Accomplishments

Between 2007 and 2009, TBWP completed important planning and research projects to direct future conservation efforts in the Tulare Basin. Then, with the groundwork in place, TBWP set to work implementing new opportunities through partner-driven, high-priority conservation projects that will benefit people and wildlife for years to come.

## *Planning & Research Projects*

Collaborated with California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Tulare Lake Basin Working Group participants to develop the Tulare Basin Regional Conservation Plan, a comprehensive guide to protecting and restoring important seasonal and permanent wetlands, riparian areas, and upland habitat, benefitting wildlife and people in the Tulare Basin.

Completed a comprehensive watershed study of water flow, use, and management in the Tulare Basin. Developed strategies to assess, define, and obtain the water supply for high-priority, multi-purpose, conjunctive use conservation projects.

Prepared riparian and wildlife corridor studies and reports for the Tulare County Association of Governments and Council of Fresno County Governments.

Completed mitigation bank site recommendations for the Tulare County Association of Governments to enable the county to complete much-needed road and other transportation improvement projects while meeting state and federal environmental regulations.

## *Implementation Projects*

Completed Phase 1 of a four-phase demonstration project in partnership with the Deer Creek and Tule River Authority to re-design an 105-acre recharge basin to allow for increased flexibility in water management for fall and winter migrating waterfowl habitat, brood water habitat for nesting ducks, groundwater recharge, and flood control.

Partnered with the Bureau of Land Management to restore 400 acres of marshes, sloughs, and ponds for important wetland-dependent plants and animals, such as herons, egrets, ducks, rails, and southwestern pond turtle, at the BLM's Atwell Island Project, near Alpaugh, California. Project includes a nature trail and viewing area that offer new education opportunities.

Assisted the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in undertaking a new program of voluntary conservation agreements on private wetlands near Kern National Wildlife Refuge.

## *Honors & Awards*

Recognized by the Central Valley Joint Venture for conservation leadership in partnership building on behalf of the San Joaquin Valley's wildlife resources, particularly those involving wetlands and associated migratory bird habitats within the Tulare Basin. Acting executive director Carole Combs received this honor.

Carole Combs, acting executive director, was appointed to the State Watershed Advisory Committee to work with the Natural Resources Agency and the Department of Conservation to guide development and implementation of a statewide watershed program.

Restored wetland near Alpaugh, California. Johanna Kamansky ©2010.



# Planning for Success

What does success look like? Often, success is measured in quantifiable results. The number of acres conserved or restored; or the number of school kids learning about a natural area, for example. But, before you can measure success, you must plan for it. So, that's exactly what the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP) did.

In 2005, the Tulare Lake Basin Working Group, an alliance of over 70 non-profit, agency and industry partners, directed TBWP to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for the Tulare Basin, built on, updating, and expanding existing conservation plans. Five years later, TBWP completed the Tulare Basin Regional Conservation Plan, a science-based, results-oriented, five-volume set that charts goals and strategies to protect and restore open space, natural habitat, and wildlife in the Tulare Basin.

The Tulare Basin Regional Conservation Plan studies one million acres on lands surrounding three of the historical lakes in the Tulare Basin, as well as the corridors that connect those areas to surrounding landscapes and the water supply needed for such conservation work. In-depth, science-based planning such as this is crucial to conservation project success. It determines the current status of wildlife, habitats, and water supply and prioritizes leading opportunities to protect, restore, and enhance habitat at the watershed and landscape scale.

Based on the information in the Tulare Basin Regional Conservation Plan and with input from the Tulare Lake Basin Working Group, TBWP developed a list of 67 priority projects for potential implementation over the next 10 years. From this list, 11 projects emerged as high-priority opportunities to protect or restore seasonal and permanent wetlands, riparian areas, and upland habitat, benefitting wildlife and people in the Tulare Basin. Criteria used to select the proposed projects included: wildlife value, water management, connectivity to other protected lands, availability of funding, and the availability of willing landowners. All projects provide opportunities for climate change adaptation and enhancement of degraded habitat.



Members of the conservation planning and implementation team. TBWP ©2008.

Take, for example, the four-phase Deer Creek/Friant Kern Canal Basin Modification and Environmental Groundwater Banking Project. This demonstration project, in partnership with the Deer Creek and Tule River Authority, implements structural and engineered improvements to an existing groundwater recharge basin to increase the acreage of managed wetland habitat for endangered species, breeding and migratory waterfowl and shorebirds, and Neotropical migrant birds. In addition, this project provides a model to demonstrate how water districts and NGOs, such as TBWP, can collaborate to improve flood storage and groundwater recharge; enhance wildlife habitat; generate baseline and ongoing monitoring data; and provide public recreation and education opportunities.

So, what does success look like? It's doing science-based research, creating a foundation of baseline information, making a plan, and implementing on-the-ground conservation with proven results. By taking a holistic view of the Tulare Basin, TBWP sets the stage for integrated, partner-driven success that will help mitigate the effects of climate change and provide new opportunities for people and wildlife for many years to come.

# Five-Year Goals

Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners is a science-driven, collaborative organization that uses the most current and complete data to identify priorities and engage significant partners in pursuing its goals. Current five-year high-priority projects, grouped by watershed, include:

## Implementation Phase

### Deer Creek Riparian Corridor

*Atwell Island Sustainable Wetland Project:* Upgrade Ton Tache Wetland facilities, including: installing a lift pump to move water from the Homeland Canal to the wetland; installing a solar power generating station to ensure an affordable water supply; and reconditioning four wells and pumps.

*Deer Creek/Friant Kern Canal Basin Modification & Environmental Groundwater Banking Project, Phase 2-4:* Enhance and expand existing habitat and restore a more natural hydrologic regime to the area; develop public outreach and recreational opportunities; and create a watershed-wide resource management plan to coordinate resources and efforts between local, state, and federal entities, as well as other interested parties.

### Kern River Riparian Corridor

*Goose Lake Ephemeral Lake Conservation:* Protect 4,100 acres in Goose Lake, including creating a new California Department of Fish & Game Wildlife Area, to conserve pristine grassland, shrubland, marshes & streams in the Tulare Basin's last ephemeral lake.

## Planning Phase

### Deer Creek Riparian Corridor

*University of California Natural Reserve Research Station in the Tulare Basin:* Establish a research station on the 8,000-acre Atwell Island Project to inform conservation and resource management about the effects of climate change on flora and fauna; upland, wetland, and riparian ecosystems; and salinization of agricultural lands.

*White River – Allensworth Ecological Reserve Rehabilitation & Flood Control:* Design a 4,000-acre flood control system that will protect important upland habitat for endangered wildlife, the town of Allensworth, and Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park.

### Kern River Riparian Corridor

*Goose Lake Wetlands Reserve Program Residual Value Purchase:* Conserve 4,100 acres in Goose Lake by providing a secure water supply for wetlands and public recreational benefits via duck clubs on private land.

### Kings River Riparian Corridor

*Kings River Valley Oak Restoration:* Restore 6,000 acres with valley oak riparian woodland, broadening the existing floodplain vegetation; provide flood control, groundwater recharge, and recreational opportunities.

### Fresno Slough, Deer Creek, and Kern River Riparian Corridors

*Finding Conservation Buyers for NRCS Wetland Easements:* Identify and partner with conservation buyers to manage 15,000 acres of wetlands on lands protected through NRCS Wetland Reserve Program easements.

### Poso Creek Riparian Corridor

*West-East Pintail Slough:* Construct a water facility and 7-mile conveyance system to enhance historical seasonal wetlands that benefit migratory water birds and shorebirds.

*Semitropic Water Storage District Poso Creek Detention Ponds & Upland Enhancement:* Restore 320 acres of native habitat; manage sediment deposition in detention ponds.

*Semitropic Water Storage District, Pond-Poso Spreading Grounds Habitat "Bench" Management:* Restore terraced "benches" surrounding 780 acres of recharge basins to native upland habitat; provide sites for spreading pond expansion on 640 acres.



Greater yellowlegs. Steve Laymon ©2007.

# Tulare Lake Basin Working Group

Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners operates as the “action arm” of the Tulare Lake Basin Working Group, an alliance of 70+ agency, non-profit, and industry partners, with whom TBWP determines, funds, and implements conservation projects.

## *Agency Partners: Federal Government*

- Naval Air Station Lemoore
- Central Valley Joint Venture (USFWS)
- Central Valley Shorebird and Waterbird Monitoring and Evaluation Group
- US Bureau of Land Management - Bakersfield Field Office
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- US Congressman Devin Nunes
- US Congressman Jim Costa
- US Congressman Kevin McCarthy
- US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Kern National Wildlife Refuge
- USFWS Migratory Bird Program
- Pixley National Wildlife Refuge
- US Senator Barbara Boxer
- US Senator Dianne Feinstein

## *Agency Partners: State Government*

- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Department of Parks and Recreation
- California Department of Conservation
- California Department of Water Resources
- Endangered Species Recovery Program, administered by CSU, Stanislaus Foundation
- Riparian Habitat Joint Venture (state-agency affiliated)
- University of California Berkeley, Department of City and Regional Planning
- University of California Merced, Sierra Nevada Research Institute
- Wildlife Conservation Board

## *Agency Partners: Local Government*

- Deer Creek and Tule River Authority
- Fresno County Council of Governments
- Kern County Council of Governments
- Kern County Planning Department
- Kings County Association of Governments/ San Joaquin Valley Blueprint
- Kings County Planning Agency
- Semitropic Water Storage District
- Supervisor Allen Ishida, District 1, Tulare County Board of Supervisors
- Supervisor Mike Ennis, District 5, Tulare County Board of Supervisors
- Supervisor Ray Watson, 4th District, Kern County Board of Supervisors
- Tulare County Association of Governments
- County Resource Management Agency
- Tulare County Water Commission

## *Industry Partners*

- Conservation Strategy Group, LLC
- Greenbridges LLC
- Michael Nordstrom, Attorney at Law
- Paramount Farms
- URS Corporation
- Westervelt Ecological Services
- Wildlands, Inc.

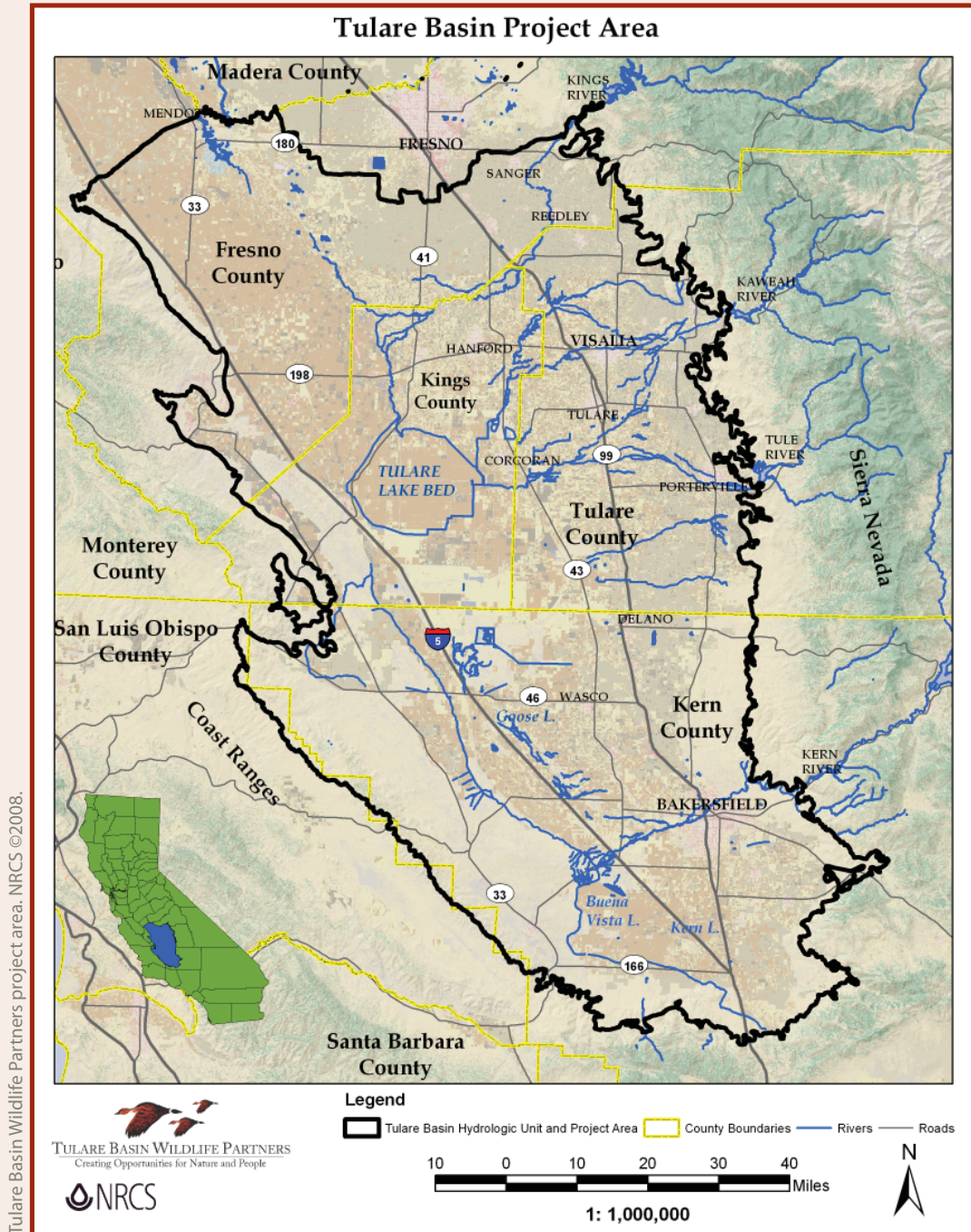
## *Non-Profit Partners*

- American Farmland Trust
- American Land Conservancy
- Audubon California
- California Institute for Biodiversity
- California Outdoor Heritage Alliance
- California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley
- California Watchable Wildlife
- California Water Institute
- California Waterfowl Association
- Center for Natural Lands Management
- Ducks Unlimited
- Great Valley Center
- Land Trust Alliance
- National Audubon Society
- Point Reyes Bird Observatory
- River Partners
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust
- Sustainable Conservation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trust for Public Land
- Tulare Basin Wetlands Association
- Tulare County Audubon Society
- Tulare County Farm Bureau
- US Green Building Council Central California
- Water Education Foundation
- Western Rivers Conservancy

## *Water Work Group Partners*

- Kaweah Basin Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Group
- Kern County Water Agency Integrated Water Management Planning Group
- Poso Creek Integrated Regional Water Management Group
- Southern Sierra Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Group
- Tulare Basin Integrated Regional Water Joint Powers Agreement
- Tule River Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Group
- Upper Kings Basin Integrated Regional Water Management Authority

# About Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners



TBWP is a leadership and advocacy organization with a local focus that works to form partnerships, implement projects, educate the public and secure funding for wildlife and their habitats in the Tulare Basin.

We cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate with individual business, non-profit and agency partners to maximize the benefits of our shared wetland and upland resources. We strive to develop a regional identity where freshwater and saline wetlands and upland natural communities in the Basin can be protected, enhanced and restored as a microcosm

of the historic natural richness in a way that complements agricultural productivity and recognizes and expands the economy of the southern San Joaquin Valley.

Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, was established in May 2005 as a resource for the Tulare Lake Basin Working Group, an alliance of more than 70 public agencies and private entities who joined together in May 2003 to coordinate existing and future conservation projects in the Tulare Basin.