

Annual Report **2011**



TULARE BASIN WILDLIFE PARTNERS
Creating Opportunities for Nature and People

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Kathy Wood McLaughlin
Niki Woodard

Cover Photo: Restored Atwell Island wetland.
Steve Laymon

President's View



Rob Hansen, TBWP President ©2010

*Dear TBWP partners, supporters,
and friends –*

It is with great pride that I reflect on the conservation successes made in the Tulare Basin this past year. And it is with a calm and confident hope that I look toward the future.

If there was a theme to glean from the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partner's (TBWP) successes in 2011, it involves the practice and expansion of integrated resource management (IRM) in the Tulare Basin. IRM is a collaborative approach to natural resources project planning and implementation that optimizes benefits for the environment, society and economy.

The concept is relatively new on the policy front, but it is not new to TBWP. We have been encouraging such an approach in the region since the inception of the IRM

process, and even before that, with the work of several TBWP partners. The Tulare Basin Working Group (a collaborative of more than 70 members), organized by TBWP, is the cornerstone of our region's IRM efforts.

The ongoing enhancements and expansion of the Atwell Island Project — 7,800 acres of wetland and upland restoration in Alpaugh, CA — aptly illustrates the benefits of the IRM approach. The project has uniquely and effectively brought together agencies that typically don't collaborate, and, as a result, they have achieved great success with benefits for people, wildlife (both common and endangered species) and retired farmland. Atwell Island is special to us for so many reasons: for its success as a model of restoration in the Tulare Basin, for its rebirth as an island between the historic Ton Tache and Tulare Lakes, and for its ecological significance as a destination for migrating and wintering birds traveling along North America's Pacific Flyway.

Another IRM-related success was the launch of the Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative (TBWI) in May of 2011. In many ways, TBWI

is an extension of the critical role that TBWP plays in convening natural resources managers for the purpose of implementing multi-benefit projects. I think you'll enjoy other stories in this year's report that highlight additional accomplishments made by the TBWI.

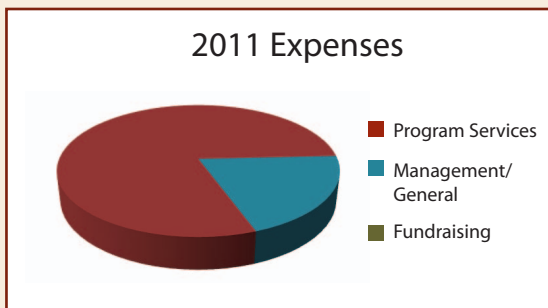
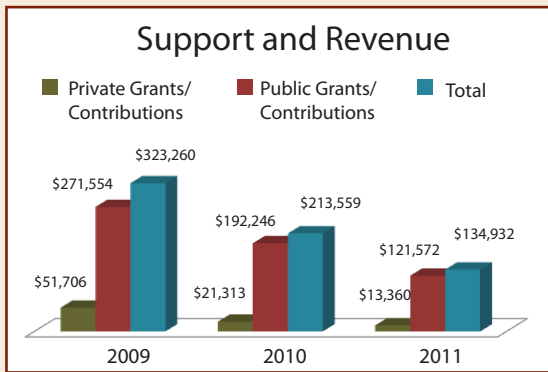
Furthermore, TBWP completed a thorough and ambitious update to its strategic plan for 2011-2013, incorporating the objectives of the TBWI, the goals established by TBWP's five conservation plans (completed in 2009), and a thoughtful, integrated analysis of our vision of the conservation horizon in the Tulare Basin.

The achievements we made in 2011 belong to all of the partners who made them happen, and all the people and wildlife who benefit from them. As we look ahead, I think we can all agree that things are moving in the right direction. Indeed, exciting times are ahead!

Sincerely,

Rob Hansen

Financial Statement 2011



Assets	2011	2010	2009
Savings and Temporary Cash Investments	\$47,768	\$79,098	\$142,578
Accounts Receivable	\$33,325	\$19,333	\$9,929
Other Assets	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Assets	\$81,093	\$98,431	\$182,545
Liabilities	2011	2010	2009
Accounts Payable & Accrued	\$29,619	\$26,575	\$24,293
Notes Payable	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Liabilities	\$29,619	\$26,575	\$24,293
Net Assets	2011	2010	2009
Net Assets	\$51,474	\$71,856	\$107,619

TBWP is deeply grateful for the investment the following individuals, organizations, and companies made to land and water conservation, restoration, and education projects in the Tulare Basin. Contributors during 2011 included:

Federal Agency Grants & Cooperative Agreements

- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, *Wetland Reserve Program*
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, *Central Valley Project Conservation Program - Habitat Restoration Program*
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *Central Valley Joint Venture*
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *Kern National Wildlife Refuge Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program*
- CA Department of Conservation Watershed Program

Foundation Support

Jay Kenney, *Wick Kenney Foundation*

Corporate Contributions

Kuyler Crocker, *Pacific Gas and Electric Company*
 William Delain, *Edison International/ Southern California Edison*

Individual Donors

John Austin (Combined Federal Campaign, Kings/Tulare)
 Sarah and Luke Campe
 Nan-Celia Horobetz
 Ivana M. Noell (Combined Federal Campaign, Central California)

Bea and Kevin Olson
 Robert Urtecho, in memory of his wife Claudine
 RollGiving Matching Gift

Services & In Kind Contributions

Artis & Company
 Conservation Strategy Group
 Pine, Pedroncelli & Aguilar
 Provost and Pritchard Consulting Group
 U.S.D.A Natural Resources Conservation Service, Visalia office
 Sequoia Riverlands Trust
 Watson's Veggie Garden

The Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative

In February of 2011, the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners received notification of a \$300,000 grant from the California Department of Conservation Watershed Coordinator Program. This award was the largest given to any group, highlighting the need for integrated resource management (IRM) in the Tulare Basin, and complementing TBWP's competence and expertise in IRM.

The grant program “offers organizations, such as the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners, a unique opportunity to improve and sustain the health of California's watersheds through a coordinated and collaborative approach,” said John M. Lowrie, state watershed program manager for the Department of Conservation (DOC).

The grant will be distributed over three years to fund a Watershed Coordinator and related activities that develop and promote watershed-based integrated natural resource management strategies in the Tulare Basin. The effort is known as the Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative (TBWI).

The goal of the TBWI is to create a healthy regional watershed with ecologically functioning waterways, wetlands and uplands that provide abundant clean water

TBWI

The Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative (TBWI) has a mission to promote watershed-based integrated natural resource management strategies in the Tulare Basin watershed by connecting diverse stakeholders in the Tulare Basin with resources to build capacity for projects that enhance water supply, water quality, flood management and ecosystem services.

for both people and wildlife.

The TBWI will achieve this goal by working with the seven Tulare Basin Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) planning groups in the Tulare Basin to ensure that IRWM projects consider and incorporate ecological, watershed and sustainability principles, and provide benefits to disadvantaged communities. These projects will enhance not only water quantity and quality, but will also integrate benefits to soil, air, open space, recreation, wildlife and other natural resources.

The Watershed Initiative is led by Watershed Coordinator, Kathy Wood McLaughlin, who has more than 30 years of experience bringing together people and resources to protect and restore water and wildlife. Core TBWI team members also include Sarah Campe, Assistant Watershed Coordinator and TBWG Coordinator, and Niki Woodard, TBWI/TBWP Outreach & Communications Specialist. Rounding out the TBWI effort is a team of advisors who donate their time and expertise, including Dick Moss as Project Director, Carole Combs as Project/Grant Manager, Rob Hansen, Tasha Newman, Elizabeth Palmer, Larry Saslaw and John Shelton.



TBWI, cont.

The Initiative was officially launched in May of 2011, and has made the following accomplishments in its first eight months:

- Identified project links among Tulare Basin IRWM projects and collaboratively-developed conservation projects (TBWP, Tulare Basin Working Group, Central Valley Joint Venture and NRCS easements) in preparation for the 2012 Prop 84 implementation grant cycle (March 2012).
- Initiated development of a comprehensive website that will serve the objectives of the TBWI and enhance IRWM projects with environmental and other natural resources benefits that serve the natural, economic and agricultural values of the Tulare Basin. The website, expected to be launched in June of 2012, will include a project database, funding database, interactive map and news stream of regional conservation updates.
- Met with regional organizations and agencies to determine opportunities for collaboration and common areas of focus.
- Worked with several disadvantaged to better position them for Prop 84 funding to improve community water systems.

Match funding for the DOC grant is provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service Wetland Reserve Program (through a cooperative agreement for 2011, renewed for 2012), Bureau of Land Management, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the Wick Kenney Foundation.



Kathy Wood McLaughlin,
TBWI Watershed Coordinator



Sarah Campe, TBWI Core
Team, TBWG Coordinator



Niki Woodard, TBWI Core
Team, TBWP Comm. Spec.



TBWP Welcomes New Advisors

The Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners is proud to welcome to the TBWP advisory committee two outstanding members – Larry Saslaw and Bob Shaffer – both of whom have extensive experience and expertise in wildlife science and restoration.

Larry recently retired from his post at the Bureau of Land Management in Bakersfield where he served as wildlife biologist for 26 years. His work focused on the effects of livestock grazing, fire, and oil and gas activities on several of the San Joaquin Valley listed animals.

Bob is the Coordinator of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Central Valley Joint Venture, a coalition dedicated to meeting the habitat needs of migrating and resident birds in the California's Central Valley, per recommendations by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. He has held that position for 12 years. Prior to that, Bob worked for the Bureau of Reclamation's Wetland Development Program.

Atwell Island Project - Integrated Resource Management Success Story



Great Egret at Atwell Island © Steve Laymon

The Atwell Island Project in Alpaugh, CA—managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bakersfield Field Office—continues to stand out for its exemplary application of integrated resource management techniques.

The project has uniquely and effectively convened agencies and nonprofits (including TBWP) to bring in diversified funding streams and scientific expertise. In a case where the sum of the parts is greater than the whole, the project's partners have efficiently resolved challenges on the land in order to make productive use of retired farmland, remove groundwater toxins, and restore wetland and upland habitat on more than 7,800 acres. BLM-Bakersfield is currently in a regional planning effort that will determine public uses and public access at the site.

In 2011, the Atwell Island Project saw the restoration of an additional 300 acres of upland habitat. Another major success was the installation of a new lift pump to maintain water levels in the restored wetlands. The pump is notable for its efficiency and ability to precisely control the amount of water distributed. Also significant was the beginning of serious conversations with UC Merced to locate a field research facility at

the project, which would stimulate high-quality environmental science research and activity in the region, as well as provide a boon to the underserved community of Alpaugh.

2011 marked a change in management for the project. Steve Laymon, the Atwell Island Project manager for BLM, transferred to a position with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Sacramento. Steve's knowledge and decade of dedication to the project leaves an indelible imprint on the past, present and future success of the project. Furthermore, his service to TBWP as agency advisor—appointed by the Tulare Basin Working Group—was equally invaluable. Bea Olson, a foundational leader in the project's development, also stepped down from her role, both on the Atwell Island Project, and as a board member for TBWP. TBWP thanks them both for their commitment, resourcefulness and expertise.

Steve Larson, BLM-Bakersfield Assistant Manager for Resources, is overseeing the project while BLM recruits a successor to Steve Laymon.

We all look forward to seeing the continued innovation and success at the Atwell Island Project as it grows to restore upland and wetland habitats to attract ever-increasing and diversifying populations of wildlife, and hopefully, soon, ever-increasing numbers of scientists—whether wide-eyed elementary students or advanced-degree professionals.



Steve Laymon and Bea Olson on Atwell Island observation deck © Niki Woodard

The Tulare Basin Working Group

Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners operates as the action arm of the Tulare Basin Working Group, an alliance of 70+ agency, nonprofit and industry partners with whom TBWP works to identify, fund and implement conservation projects.

Agency Partners: Federal Government

Central Valley Joint Venture (USFWS)
Central Valley Shorebird and Waterbird
Monitoring and Evaluation Group
Naval Air Station Lemoore
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)
USFWS Kern National Wildlife Refuge
USFWS Migratory Bird Program
USFWS 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 California State University, 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
Kings County Planning Agency
San Joaquin Valley Blueprint
Semitropic Water Storage District
Supervisor Allen Ishida, District 1,
Tulare County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Mike Ennis, District 5,
Tulare County Board of Supervisors
Tulare County Association of Governments
Tulare 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.

Nonprofit 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
Community Water Center
Ducks Unlimited
Great Valley Center
Land Trust Alliance
National Audubon Society
Point Reyes Bird Observatory
River Partners
Self Help Enterprises
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

Tulare Basin Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Groups

Kaweah Basin IRWM Planning Group
Kern County IRWM Planning Group
Poso Creek IRWM Planning Group
Southern Sierra IRWM Planning Group
Tulare Basin IRWM JPA Collaboration Group
Deer Creek/Tule River IRWM Planning Group
Upper Kings Basin IRWM JPA
Westlands/Sand Luis Delta Mendota Water
District Authority

About the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners



TBWP/TBWI Project Area



Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit that facilitates the engagement of partners, funders and stakeholders in multi-benefit projects to promote ecological and economic health, sustain our agricultural heritage and enhance the quality of life in the Tulare Basin for current and future generations.

The Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP) work to provide opportunities for conservation, water management and wildlife as land use continues to change in the Tulare Basin. With its work, TBWP hopes to sustain the qualities that define the region's unique character:

- Natural areas with native plants & animals
- Diverse & unique wildlife
- Opportunities for clean air & water
- Family farms & ranches
- Recreational & educational activities

TBWP is the go-to organization in the Tulare Basin for providing integrated land and water management solutions that balance nature, agriculture and the economy. Your partnership in conserving the Tulare Basin will ensure that future generations continue to benefit from the unique natural qualities of this special place.

A copy of the latest financial statement and registration filed with the Registry of Charitable Trusts may be obtained by contacting the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.