



TULARE BASIN WILDLIFE PARTNERS
Creating Opportunities for Nature and People

Annual Report 2010



INSIDE:	President's View	P2	Special Thanks	P4	Partners	P7
	Financial Statement	P3	Atwell Island Success	P5	About TBWP	P8
	Accomplishments	P4	Watershed Future	P6		

President's View



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Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners

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Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit 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. 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.

Cover Photo: Restored Atwell Island wetland.
Johanna Lombard ©2010.

Dear TBWP partners, supporters, and friends,

When I look back at the efforts put forth during 2010 by the more than 70 partners who work with Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP), I hear water flowing through new wetlands, see the numbers of birds using restored habitat increasing, and feel immense pride in the work we accomplished together to conserve or restore wetlands, uplands, and riparian areas in the Tulare Basin.

With your help, TBWP celebrated several project milestones, including completing phase one of a four-phase demonstration project in partnership with the Deer Creek and Tule River Authority to re-design a 105-acre recharge basin to improve groundwater recharge, control flooding, and provide wildlife habitat near Porterville, California. TBWP also celebrated the 400-acre wetland restoration and visitor services project at the Bureau of Land Management's Atwell Island Project, near Alpaugh, California. Working with our partners in the Tulare Basin Working Group, TBWP advanced several projects to protect or restore Tulare Basin habitats, reminding us about the importance of working with broad stakeholders to complete multi-benefits projects.

In 2010, TBWP completed the Tulare Basin Regional Conservation Plan, a five-volume guide to protecting and restoring important seasonal and permanent wetlands, riparian areas, and upland habitat for wildlife and people in the Tulare Basin. With this groundwork in place, the organization then developed a three-year strategic plan, which charts a path for imple-



Rob Hansen, TBWP President. ©2010.

menting regional conservation efforts by working with a broad network of partners and funding sources.

TBWP will bring a strong focus to watershed conservation in the Tulare Basin during coming years. By securing a \$300,000 grant from the Department of Conservation's *Watershed Coordinator Program*, TBWP will work with Integrated Regional Water Management efforts to implement projects that promote water interests, agriculture, and the environment. This exciting opportunity will broaden and strengthen collaborative conservation efforts throughout the region, benefiting people and wildlife for many years to come.

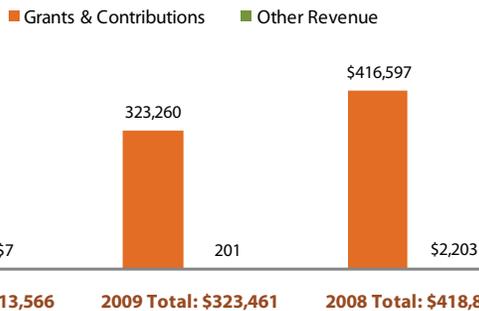
On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your efforts and support of conservation in the Tulare Basin. We truly have much to celebrate as we look back over 2010, and I look forward to continuing our work together to preserve our natural heritage and improve the quality of life in the Tulare Basin for all Californians.

Sincerely,

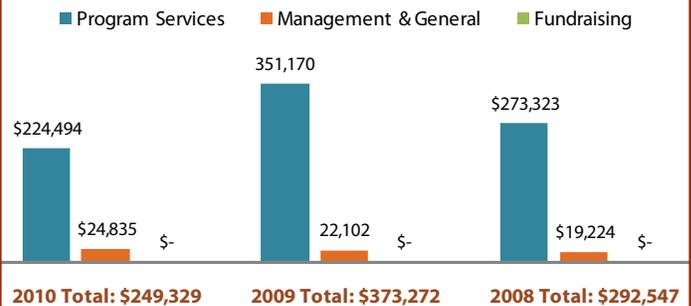
Robert B. Hansen

Financial Statement 2010

Support & Revenue



Expenses



Assets	2010	2009	2008
Savings & Temporary Cash Investments	\$79,098	\$104,319	\$142,578
Accounts Receivable	\$19,333	\$27,593	\$9,929
Other Assets	\$0	\$0	\$30,038
Total Assets	\$98,431	\$131,912	\$182,545
Liabilities			
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$ 26,575	\$24,293	\$25,115
Notes Payable	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Liabilities	\$26,575	\$24,293	\$25,115
Net Assets	\$ 71,856	\$107,619	\$157,430

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 2010 included:

Federal Agency Grants & Cooperative Agreements

Bureau of Land Management
 Natural Resources Conservation Service,
Wetland Reserve Program
 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, *Central Valley Project*
Conservation Program - Mid-Pacific Region
 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, South Central California
 Area Office
 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

Foundation Support

Anonymous
 JiJi Foundation
 Kenney Brothers Foundation

Corporate Contributions

Roll Giving Matching Gifts (Paramount Farms)

Individual Donors

John and Shauna Austin
 Sarah & Luke Campe
 Combined Federal Campaign (Kings-Tulare counties
 and Central California)
 Carol Sellers Herbert & James K. Herbert through
 The General James K. Herbert Foundation
 Steve Laymon & Pam Williams
 Melissa McKibben
 Richard & Charlene Moss
 Bea and Kevin Olsen

Services & In Kind Contributions

Artis & Co.
 Conservation Strategy Group
 Pine, Pedroncelli & Aguilar
 Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group
 Resources Legacy Fund
 Watson's Health Foods, Watson's Veggie Garden

Accomplishments

During 2010, TBWP charted a course for the future, secured funding, celebrated successes, and began implementing new partner-driven, high-priority, land and water conservation projects that will benefit people and wildlife for years to come. Highlights included:

Watershed Coordination: Applied for and secured a \$300,000, three-year grant from the California Department of Conservation for a watershed coordinator who will promote integrated natural resource management in the Tulare Basin watershed. This program will ensure that water supply, water quality, and flood control practices funded and carried out through the Integrated Regional Water Management process incorporate ecological, watershed, and sustainability principles in project design. For additional information, see page 6.

Restoration Success: Partnered with the Bureau of Land Management to restore 400 acres at the Ton Tache Wetlands. By the end of 2010, the wetland was 100% filled and hosted a record-high number of waterfowl. See success story, page 5.

Wetland Protection: Worked with a private landowner and the US Fish & Wildlife Service to provide fencing to protect an important and sensitive wetland area in Walker Basin.

Regional Approach: Partnered with state and federal agencies, county planners, academic, and non-profit entities to determine strategies for protecting riparian habitat while advancing regional planning and national security interests.

2011-2013 Strategic Plan: Redefined and clarified the mission and vision, articulated core values, and updated goals and strategies for the next three years. The plan focuses on conservation outcomes, both local and state-wide, with corresponding fundraising, outreach, and organizational development strategies essential to support the conservation achievements.

Riparian Corridor Protection: Began working with a private landowner and the California Department of Fish and Game (CA DF&G) to protect 209 acres of critical riparian forest along the Kings River as a CA DF&G Wildlife Management Area.

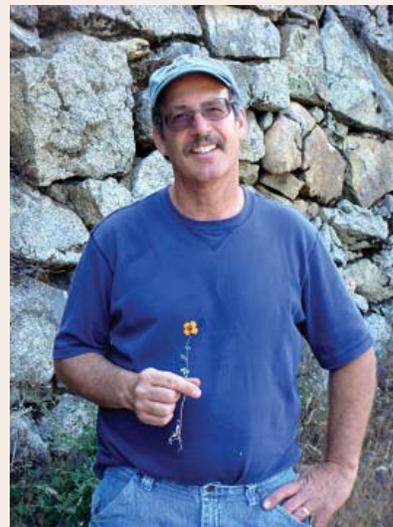
Corridor Conservation: Worked with URS Corp and CA DF&G officials to facilitate information exchange and ensure wildlife corridor protection during the high speed rail process.

Special Thanks

TBWP is deeply grateful for the critical support and assistance provided by the following partners:

Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Central Valley Joint Venture, California Department of Fish & Game, Region 4, and Natural Resources Conservation Service for their steadfast support and assistance to TBWP and the Tulare Basin Working Group since their inceptions.

Steve Johnson, John McCaull, and Tasha Newman, of Conservation Strategy Group, and **Ruth Norris**, of Resources Legacy Fund, for their critical input to and assistance with TBWP strategic planning efforts.



Steve Larsen, BLM ©2011.

Larry Saslaw, wildlife biologist for the Bureau of Land Management's Bakersfield Field Office, for facilitating the Tulare Basin Working Group and working to advance partner-driven conservation goals since the group's formation in 2003.

Atwell Island: A place for people and wildlife



Karl Kraft (left) and Steve Laymon (right) of the Bureau of Land Management cut the ribbon at the visitor viewing platform, April 30, 2010 (left). Visitors enjoy bird watching, photography, and learning about this restored wetland (right). Johanna Lombard ©2010.

On April 30, 2010, the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners convened members of the Tulare Basin Working Group for a celebration at the Ton Tache Wetlands' new wildlife viewing platform. Part of the Bureau of Land Management's Atwell Island Project near Alpaugh, California, the restored wetlands provide wildlife habitat and offer opportunities for visitors to bird watch, photograph, and learn about the ecology of the Tulare Basin.

Once covering 24 square miles, the vast, shallow Ton Tache Wetlands dried up over the past 150 years as canals diverted water for agricultural uses and wetlands were converted to farm fields. Today, the restored site provides nesting and foraging habitat for a diversity of waterfowl for the first time in more than 50 years.

The project started in early 2009, when the Bureau of Land Management created a five-cell managed wetland with levees and ponds. Volunteer crews immediately started planting willows, cottonwoods, and mulefat, as well as transplanting tule clumps to restore the site. In 2010, the agency started work on infrastructure, including visitor facilities.

"The viewing platform will offer the public an excellent access point to view wildlife in the newly constructed wetlands," said Steve Laymon, Bureau of Land Management site manager. "This is an important piece of wetland habitat that has been restored to natural conditions not found in this part of the Tulare Basin for 150 years. We look forward to completing the project and fully opening the site for public visitation by December 2012."

Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners played an instrumental role in moving this important wetland restoration project forward toward completion. The organization applied for and received a grant from the Bureau of Reclamation to augment project infrastructure, including a lift pump, water delivery canal and pipeline, and an access road that will enable future visitors to experience the wetlands.

Additional partners included the Natural Resources Conservation Service (wetland design, engineering, wetland construction, and restoration funding), US Fish and Wildlife Service (advice and maintenance staff through a cooperative agreement), Ducks Unlimited (repair of well and pump), and AmeriCorps NCCC (wetland restoration planting and visitor infrastructure construction).

This restoration and public access project is only a portion of a larger restoration effort spanning 8,000 acres of upland and wetland habitat managed by the Bureau of Land Management in the Tulare Basin. Atwell Island hosts several federally-listed and sensitive animal species, including the mountain plover, Tipton kangaroo rat, San Joaquin kit fox, tricolored blackbird, burrowing owl, and coast horned lizard.

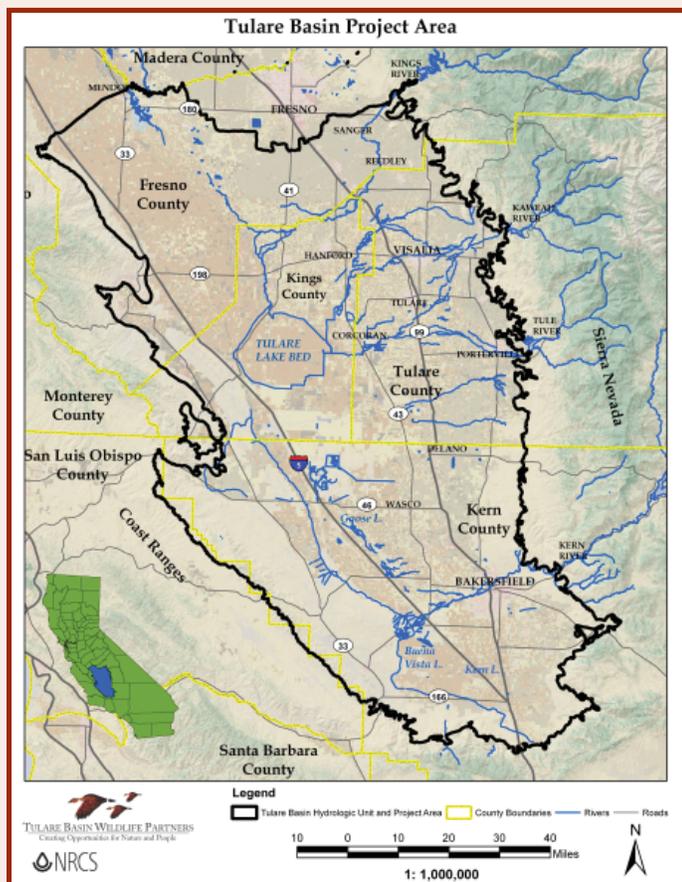
The Atwell Island Project serves as a model for other Tulare Basin land and water projects that restore retired farmland, create habitat for wildlife, benefit the local community, and offer new opportunities for people to access and enjoy the outdoors. For more information or to schedule a tour contact Steve Laymon, BLM Atwell Island Project Manager, at (559) 949-8489 or slaymon@lightspeed.net.

Watershed Focus for the Future

During the next three years, the TBWP watershed coordinator aims to add environmental components to Tulare Basin water and flood control projects and integrate regional planning efforts between Integrated Regional Watershed Management (IRWM) groups and partners. These endeavors will result in multi-benefit water projects that protect and restore strategically located wetland, riparian, and upland wildlife habitat, connecting corridors and offering opportunities for plant and animal migration under a changing climate. By synergizing industry, community, and wildlife needs, TBWP aims to enhance our agricultural heritage, economy, and quality of life for current and future generations. With funding from the Department of Conservation's *Watershed Coordinator Program*, the TBWP watershed coordinator will:

1. Identify environmental benefits that can be added to specific IRWM projects.
2. Match funding opportunities and facilitate state, federal, and private resources to IRWM and other projects that feature environmental benefits.
3. Coordinate with Resource Conservation Districts, San Joaquin Valley Resource Conservation & Development Council, and conservation and civic organizations to promote consideration of soil, air, open space, recreation, and wildlife in IRWM projects.
4. Coordinate with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to help implement their *Wetland Reserve Program* and other programs.
5. Coordinate with disadvantaged communities to identify overlap between community and environmental interests; work to integrate both components into specific IRWM projects.
6. Offer riparian and wildlife corridor expertise to assist IRWM groups with integrating climate change adaptation and sustainability strategies into specific IRWM projects.
7. Ensure stakeholder support of the watershed coordinator's efforts by submitting annual reports to the Tulare Basin IRWM Coordination Group and Tulare Basin Working Group. Solicit evaluation and consensus recommendations for future organizational and funding needs.
8. Coordinate with partners to secure funding to continue the watershed coordinator position after the end of the grant.

*"If there is magic on this planet,
it is contained in water."
~ Loren Eiseley in
The Immense Journey*



Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners project area. NRCS ©2008.

Tulare Basin Watershed

Located in California's southern San Joaquin Valley, the Tulare Basin encompasses portions of Fresno, Kern, Kings, and Tulare counties. More than 16 rivers and creeks flow from surrounding mountains into the Basin's lakes and wetlands. The watershed is bounded on the north by the San Joaquin River. The Sierra Nevada crest forms the eastern boundary; the crest of the Tehachapi range forms the southern boundary; and the Inner Coast Range crest forms the western boundary. This watershed measures 134 miles east to west, 163 miles north to south, covers almost 22,000 square miles, and ranges in elevation from 163 feet above sea level at Mendota Pool to 14,505 feet on the summit of Mt. Whitney.

Tulare Basin Working Group

Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners operates as the action arm of the Tulare Basin Working Group, an alliance of 70+ agency, non-profit, and industry partners, with whom TBWP identifies, 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
- 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.

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
- 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 Water Agency Integrated Water Management Planning Group
- Poso Creek IRWM Group
- Southern Sierra IRWM Planning Group
- Tulare Basin IRWM Coordinating Group
- Deer Creek/Tule River IRWM Planning Group
- Upper Kings Basin IRWM Authority
- Westlands/Sand Luis Delta Mendota Water District Authority

About Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners

With a solid foundation created from the Tulare Basin Regional Conservation Plan (2010), TBWP charted a course for implementation with a three-year strategic plan that clarifies the mission and vision and articulates core values and goals.

Vision

Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners aim to preserve our natural heritage and improve the quality of life for all Californians by conserving and restoring critical Tulare Basin upland, wetland, and riparian habitats for people and wildlife.

Wildlife corridors, along mighty rivers and scenic creeks, wind from the Sierra Nevada, Transverse and Coast Range mountains to the historic Tulare Lakebed in California's southern San Joaquin Valley. Restored wetland, upland, and riparian habitat, connected along these corridors, provides a healthy, regional watershed that mitigates the effects of climate change, offers abundant, clean water, recharges groundwater, and stores flood water, protecting thriving local towns. An abundance of wildlife, including more than 125 species of sensitive plants and animals, flourish in the surrounding open space where wildlife-friendly farms and ranches showcase the region's rich agricultural heritage and diverse farming operations. Scenic vistas and natural areas offer recreational opportunities for families, enhance educational experiences for our children, and increase business and tourism opportunities for residents and visitors.

Core Values

Professionalism	Transparency
Science	Respect
Balance	Sustainability
Collaboration	

Mission

Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners facilitate 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.

Goals

1. Lead and create a well-articulated, collaboratively developed, publicly supported, and multi-benefit results-driven conservation vision for the Tulare Basin.
2. Ensure priority projects are adopted and implemented by partner organizations and agencies.
3. Build an organization that is supported by its community; has sufficient, stable public and private funding; and has the capacity to implement its results-driven conservation vision and achieve its goals.

About Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners

Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners 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.

Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, was established in May 2005 as a resource for the Tulare 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.

Goldfields and white layia bloom at a Tulare Basin restoration site. Steve Laymon ©2005.

