

Decades of inspired visions, vested stakeholders, willing property owners, and collaborative planning led Waterford to make progress on the Tuolumne River Parkway over a long period of time. In the early 2000's, when talk of development along the river intersected with community desires for open public access, visions became plans and plans started to get funded. What follows is a brief summary of historical occurrences along the way to the parkway seen today.

In 2004, a \$625,000 state grant from Proposition 13 funds with support from the Friends of the Tuolumne and the Tuolumne River Coalition was awarded to acquire river parkway properties. Later that year, the River Pointe housing subdivision developers The Grupe Company deeded part of their river frontage property to the City of Waterford, and an effort to acquire more properties along the Tuolumne River heading west was underway.

In 2005, the city's General Plan was updated and it contained specific policies and standards regarding the preservation and use of the Tuolumne River Corridor, including: identifying and preserving wildlife habitats; maintaining the corridor in a natural state, and enhancing the scenic urban forest; and acquiring additional properties along the river to maintain open space areas for natural riparian preserves and recreation areas. Shortly afterward, 1.85 acres owned by the Caro family was purchased for \$275,000 using city parkland dedication funds that are part of today's River Park.

In 2006, the City of Waterford entered into a public design process with local residents involving the preparation of an illustrative site plan for a concept on the Caro property known as the Waterford River Park. This site plan identified new vehicular access developments, interpretive exhibits, a new trail system, river access, recreational amenities, structures, and a comprehensive list of successive wildlife habitat improvements to take place at the site.

In 2007, the City of Waterford purchased 9.1 acres from Lucinda Rae just east of S. Reinway Ave. along the river for \$227,000 utilizing the 2004 Proposition 13 grant and some local matching funds. In 2008, an additional property was purchased from Lucinda Rae totaling 19.6 acres west of S. Reinway Ave up against the Modesto Irrigation District canal. This purchase in the amount of \$1,274,000 was made through a purchase lease debt issuance paid for by local funds. In 2009, a 7.51 acre parcel owned by the Lambert Brothers, initially intended to become a mobile home park, is today's western portion of River Park. It was purchased for \$300,400 using Proposition 13 grant funds.

In 2011, the California Sierra Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects hosted a Tuolumne River Wayfinding Design Competition with multiple proposals for river parkway logos and interpretative signage that helped encapsulate the vision for the educational and marketing opportunities with the project. Later this year about 35 residents and stakeholders gathered for two community workshops and a public hearing to put vision to paper in the Tuolumne River Parkways Design Plan. The public hearing and approval by the Waterford City Council on October 6, 2011 led to the submittal of a Proposition 84 grant for construction of the trail system, and a grant for a non-motorized boat launch facility. That fall, the final river frontage portion of the parcel owned by the Muncill family near S. Reinway Ave. was acquired for \$54,464 using remaining Proposition 13 grant funds.

In fall 2012, the State of CA Parks Department, Division of Boating & Waterways awarded the City of Waterford a \$50,000 planning grant to permit the River Park boat launch with their design assistance. In spring 2013, the long-sought for and big prize of a Proposition 84 grant for \$1,478,340 was awarded to develop the river trail system including amenities, enhance river access, and restore the riparian habitat. Additional funds were awarded in fall 2014 from the State Parks Land & Water Conservation Fund in the amount of \$220,075 to construct the S. Reinway Ave trailhead with bathroom, parking lot, bathroom and exercise stations, and in spring 2016, the Division of Boating & Waterways awarded \$470,290 for the construction of the non-motorized boat launch at River Park.

With grant funds in place, some sort of environmental report, permit, in-lieu credit payment, lease, or approval were acquired during 2013 for work along the Tuolumne River from the following agencies: Central Valley Flood Protection Board, Department of Fish & Wildlife, USA Corp of Engineers, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, The National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Native American Heritage Commission, Office of Planning & Research, State Historical Preservation Office, US Department of Interior Fish & Wildlife Services, US Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the CA State Lands Commission.

The City of Waterford with various City Council's and staff has led the effort to implement the Tuolumne River Parkway Project, but could not have been as successful without key partner organizations and stakeholders including the City of Waterford's Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commissions, Waterford Unified School District, Tuolumne River Trust, Stanislaus Audubon Society, East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District, River Park Citizen's Group, Waterford Lion's Club, River Pointe Home Owner's Association, Greater Boy Scouts of America - Yosemite Area Council, and the California Sierra Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

As the residents of Waterford have long identified the Tuolumne River as a valuable, but under-utilized resource that can greatly enhance their quality of life, members of these organizations have actively participated in the technical assistance, planning, design, and public support roles for the project for which the community for generations to come will be grateful.

Special recognition goes to Mayor Mike Van Winkle, Vice Mayor Jose Aldaco, and Councilmembers Ken Krause, Josh Whitfield and John Gothan, as well as former Mayor's and City Council members who supported the project over the years; City Manager's Chuck Deschenes, and Tim Ogden, Public Works Director Matt Erickson, planners John Anderson, Robert Borchard, Charlie Simpson, and Mark Niskanen, city engineers Tony Marshall and Rob Marler from MCR Engineering, Inc., biologist Diane Moore from Moore Biological Consultants, and contractor Ross. F. Carroll Inc.

Project Dedicated on May 21, 2016