# Roots

*The people, places, and partnerhips behind land protection.*

**FIRE IS THE FIX**
How intentional burns forge new partnerships.

**THIS WILL ALWAYS BE A FARM**
The Harrises & the legacy they're leaving at Grand Island.

**GROW MORE THAN CROPS**
Hedgerows work for you and for the planet.


SEQUOIA
Riverlands Trust

# Roots

*The people, places, and partnerhips behind land protection.*

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# Contents



*ABOVE: aerial view of the Kings River in Parlier, CA*

*BELOW: SRT's Executive Director, Logan Robertson Huecker, PhD. BELOW (RIGHT): Logan Robertson Huecker welcomes the crowd to Breakfast on the Bluff.*

# THE LAND & LEGACY THAT GROUND US

Dear friends,

I'm delighted to introduce the inaugural edition of *Roots*, a publication created for you—the farmers, ranchers, and landowners who collaborate with Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT) to conserve the working and natural lands of our region.

Whether you've been connected with us for decades or are just beginning to explore the idea of a voluntary land protection agreement, *Roots* is your space—to learn, to engage, and to be celebrated for the essential role you play in protecting land, livelihoods, and legacies.

SRT is rooted in the dedication and hard work of our three founding land trusts—Four Creeks, Kaweah, and Tule Oaks. Our work with landowners began in 1997, with two small properties in the Three Rivers area. A year later, additional lands in Springville and Three Rivers were protected.

In 2000, the three land trusts united, and since then, we've grown alongside you—farm by farm, ranch by ranch, relationship by relationship. Today, more than 120 properties and 50,000 acres have been conserved thanks to landowners like you who care deeply about the future.

*Roots* is more than a name—it reflects our shared commitment to the land that grounds us, feeds us, and sustains our communities. We are honored to walk beside you as you steward the places you love. Your commitment ensures these lands will thrive for generations to come.

With deep appreciation,

Logan

**Logan Robertson Huecker, PhD**
*Executive Director*

> ***Roots* is more than a name—it reflects our shared commitment to the land that grounds us, feeds us, and sustains our communities.**

*BELOW (TOP): SRT's Carrizo Team (Ian Axsom, Camdilla Wirth, & Ben Munger) pose in fire protection gear. BELOW (LEFT): a wide angle view of intentional burning.*

# FIRE IS THE FIX

## Intentional Burns, Tribal Knowledge, and a Shared Vision for the Carrizo Plain

**By Ian Axsom**
Carrizo Land Steward

Just two short years ago Sequoia Riverlands Trust's Conservation Team was interested in using fire to improve habitat on our conserved lands in the Carrizo Plain but didn't know how to begin. Since then, we have connected with many amazing people, organizations, tribes and agencies. These relationships have led to conservation opportunities that we could never have imagined. SRT's introduction of fire for land management in the Carrizo Plain has gone well beyond our original goal of improving vegetation management for our native species. Fire has served as a catalyst for community building, resulting in strong relationships that will aid SRT's broader mission to conserve the lands and waters of California's heartland.

Why fire? Well, first we must understand a little about the habitat in the Carrizo Plain. Prior to arrival of Europeans, it is thought this landscape was dominated by shrubs, perennial bunch grasses and seasonal forbs. As a result, it was a relatively open landscape with gaps between plants that our native animals could easily move through. However, as Europeans arrived, they brought with them Mediterranean plants that

thrived in California's similar climate. In particular, annual grasses like bromes and barleys came to dominate our lands. Because these grasses create continuous, dense carpets across the landscape, they can seriously hinder the movement of native animals like the San Joaquin kit fox, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, and blunt-nosed leopard lizard. When movement is harder, these animals must spend more energy finding food or mates and are more easily caught by predators. But these annual grasses have also become an important food source for many native species. As land managers, we aim for a "goldilocks" zone where there isn't so much vegetation that animals struggle to move, but there is still enough to provide food for healthy populations.

> Fire has served as a catalyst for community building, resulting in strong relationships that will aid SRT's broader mission to conserve the lands and waters of California's heartland.

Sounds simple enough, but it gets more complicated when managing thousands of acres like SRT does in the Carrizo Plain. The options to manage vegetation at this scale are limited. Methods like herbicide application, mowing or hand removal are too expensive to use broadly. Grazing, mainly with cattle, has been the best strategy. By working with local ranchers, SRT can manage vegetation for its conservation goals while the ranchers get forage for their cattle. This arrangement benefits both parties making it economically viable over large areas. However, there are limitations to grazing. Not all vegetation is palatable to grazers and in wet years it can be difficult for ranchers to bring in enough cattle to keep up with the new growth. This, in turn, leads to extra vegetation on the landscape that can last for years but no longer provides nutrition for animals.

This is where fire comes in. It can consume old, unpalatable vegetation, opening the landscape for animal movement and allowing new growth for plants in the spring. Native peoples used fire for many thousands of years to steward California's ecosystems. For decades the San Luis Obispo County Range Improvement Association (SLO RIA) has used fire to increase forage quality and reduce wildfire risk. Because fire can be applied at scales of hundreds or thousands of acres, it is viable at the scale SRT needs in the Carrizo Plain. However, using fire for vegetation management has its challenges. Special equipment, engines and experienced personnel are needed to manage fire at large scales. There is a regulatory process that must be navigated before fire can be put on the ground. And the weather must be suitable for fire to be safe and effective.

These were some of the uncertainties SRT's Conservation Team faced two years ago as we first explored the possibility of using fire for vegetation management. As such, we knew we needed help from someone with experience. SRT started with the SLO RIA, but found the initial target project wasn't a good fit for their organization. Next, SRT reached out to CAL FIRE in San Luis Obispo. They not only supported SRT's use of fire, but they connected us with yak tit'u tit'u yak tiłhini Northern Chumash Tribe (ytt) who were working to reclaim fire as a vital part of their culture and connection to the land. As a landless tribe, ytt needed a partner with land to allow them to burn. SRT had land but needed fire resources and training. Luckily, the Tribe was discussing with CAL FIRE how to get some experience with fire ahead of what would become ytt's first cultural burn in over a century. This led to a two-day fire training in May 2024 on SRT land where CAL FIRE introduced SRT staff and ytt members to their culture of fire, and everyone got hands-on experience putting fire on the ground. In total, eleven acres of a 200-acre pasture were burned.

This modest start was just the beginning. Soon after the training, SRT staff attended a one-day seminar on cultural fire put on by ytt as part of the leadup to their first cultural burn. Then, in June 2024 ytt conducted their long-anticipated first cultural burn in over a century at Johnson Ranch Open Space in San Luis Obispo, which SRT staff were privileged to witness. At these events, SRT staff connected with others interested using intentional fire (beneficial fire started by people), and the San Luis Obispo Prescribed

> [CAL FIRE] connected us with yak tityu tityu yak tiłhini Northern Chumash Tribe (ytt) who were working to reclaim fire as a vital part of their culture and connection to the land.


*LEFT: SRT and partners pose together in their fire protection gear during an intentional burn*

Burn Association (SLO PBA) was born. SRT has strongly supported the SLO PBA as it works to be a community-based, mutual aid network that helps private landowners put beneficial fire back on the land. At these same events SRT staff also connected with the Cal Poly Fuels and Vegetation Education (FAVE) program. In October, along with many partners, FAVE and SRT put on the 2024 San Luis Obispo Training Exchange, a weeklong experiential training for fire practitioners interested in burning for ecological, cultural and wildfire mitigation outcomes. During this event the remainder of the 200-acre pasture was burned, except for five-acres that was set aside for ytt to conduct a cultural burn the following month.

It's amazing how much has happened in just the last year, but SRT has even more planned for 2025. CAL FIRE continues to work with SRT with several burns planned in the Carrizo Plain this spring, with goals of controlling invasive species, reducing wildfire risk and thinning dense vegetation for wildlife movement. SRT is also supporting the SLO PBA's growth, with the hope that it will soon be supporting SRT in planning and implementing burns on conserved lands. Additionally, SRT's connection with ytt has only deepened with time, as we work on plans for future cultural burns and other ways that SRT can support the Tribe's connection with their ancestral homelands in the Carrizo Plain and beyond.

SRT would like to give a huge thank you to yak tit'u tit'u yak tiłhini Northern Chumash Tribe, CAL FIRE, Cal Poly Fuels and Vegetation Education program, and the San Luis Obispo Prescribed Burn Association, who have made all this possible. We look forward to growing these relationships and accomplishing even greater things in the future.

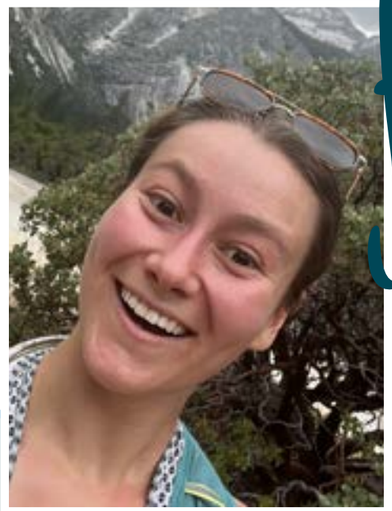
*BELOW: SRT's Conservation Biologist, Camdilla Wirth, and Carrizo Land Steward, Ian Axsom, pose in their fire protection gear.*

## SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS:

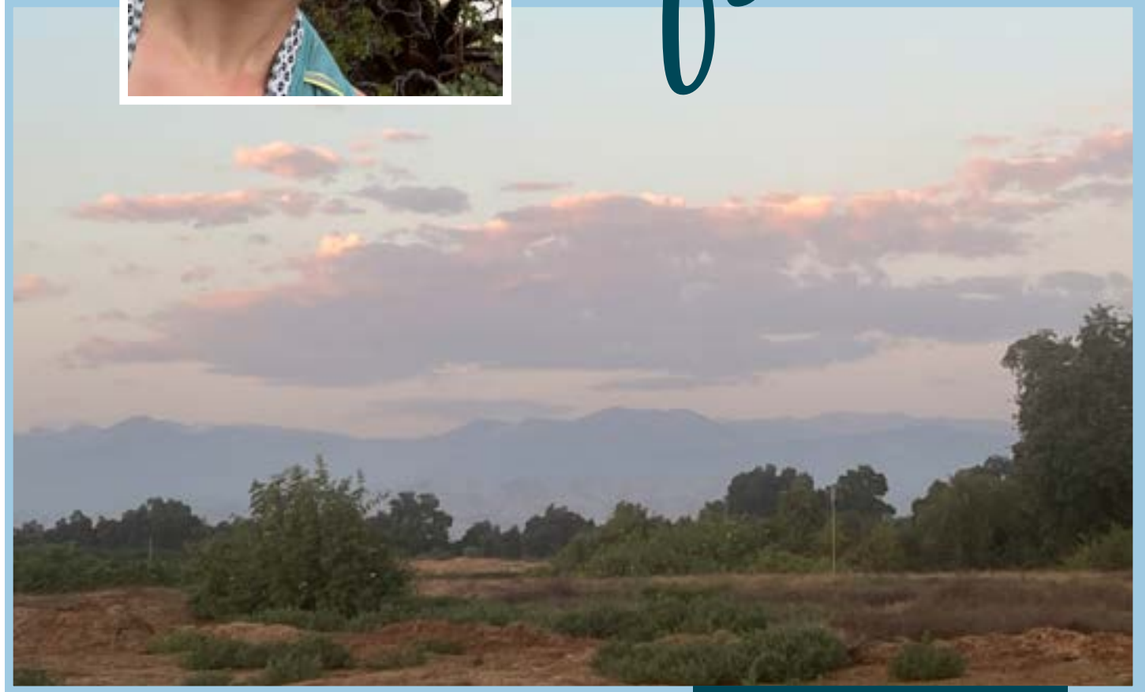
CAL FIRE · Fuels and Vegetation Education · Northern Chumash Tribe · Prescribed Burn Association



*BELOW: Emily Boettger | Land Protection Outreach Specialist | Sequoia Riverlands Trust*



# from the field



## See for yourself!

Scan the QR code to get directions to Kaweah Oaks Preserve.

**29979 Road 182**
**Visalia, CA 93292**

Land Protection Outreach Specialist, Emily Boettger, has always been a sucker for the way evening light turns mountains into purple giants. Here is one of her favorite views from Kaweah Oaks Preserve.

# TANNER'S TOOLKIT

Identify common California invasive plants and learn removal techniques

**By Tanner Statham**
Land Stewardship Associate





Not all plants play nice. Some barge in uninvited, hog the resources, and make it nearly impossible for native species to thrive. Meet four of California's most notorious green bullies: the deceptively lovely Tree of Heaven, the prickly Bull Thistle, the sneaky Yellow Star Thistle, and the towering Arundo (a bamboo look-alike with a thirst for domination). From stealing water to blocking wildlife, these invaders wreak havoc on fields, pastures, and waterways. But don't worry—there are ways to fight back. With the right timing, a little elbow grease, and sometimes a touch of herbicide, you can send these botanical bad guys packing. ®

| | NAME | ABOUT | REMOVAL |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | **TREE OF HEAVEN** *(Ailanthus altissima)* | • 3–30 ft tall<br>• Leaves resemble California Walnut<br>• Native to China/Taiwan<br>• Spreads via roots<br>• Outcompetes native plants | • Target root system<br>• Apply herbicide (summer–fall)<br>• Use multiple methods if needed |
|  | **BULL THISTLE** *(Cirsium vulgare)* | • 2–6 ft tall<br>• 2 year life cycle<br>• Native to Europe/Asia/N. Africa<br>• Grows solo or in patches<br>• Reduces forage for wildlife and livestock | • Mow every 3 years before seed (if no herbicide)<br>• Hand-pull small patches<br>• Herbicide as a last resort |
|  | **ARUNDO OR GIANT REED** *(Arundo donax)* | • 1–3 ft tall<br>• Yellow flowers with sharp spines<br>• Native to the Mediterranean<br>• Produces 100,000+ seeds<br>• Toxic to horses | • Mow before seed set<br>• Apply herbicide<br>• Controlled burning<br>• Use integrated methods |
|  | **YELLOW STAR THISTLE** *(Centaurea solstitialis)* | • 4–15 ft tall<br>• Bamboo-like appearance<br>• Native to Asia<br>• Grows in riparian zones<br>• Displaces native plants, impedes stream flow | • Apply herbicide in fall<br>• Use caution near water<br>• May require repeat treatment |

**Have questions or concerns about Invasive Species Removal?**
Contact Tanner Statham: ***tanner@sequoiariverlands.org***

# THANK YOU!

This spring, Sequoia Riverlands Trust welcomed a major delivery from Pacific STIHL: more than $10,000 worth of new land management equipment, including battery-powered chainsaws, blowers, trimmers, and more. For field crews tasked with habitat restoration, trail maintenance, wildfire prevention, and native plant care, it was more than just a box of tools — it was a boost in capacity, safety, and sustainability.

*DELIVERY DAY: Pacific STIHL and SRT officials celebrate their new brand partnership with tools that will make stewarding 50,000+ acres much easier—and more sustainable. FROM LEFT: Will Martyn, Product Representative, Pacific STIHL | Aaron Vogelsang, Former Director of Branch Operations, Pacific STIHL | Evan Jolly, Kaweah Oaks Preserve Caretaker, Sequoia Riverlands Trust | Logan Robertson Huecker, Executive Director, Sequoia Riverlands Trust | Aaron Collins, Director of Investments & Partnerships, Sequoia Riverlands Trust*

# THIS ISN'T JUST A FIELD TRIP

## Hands-on outdoor education is connecting kids to nature—and to careers that protect it.

**By Zachary Arnold**
Education Technician

Sequoia Riverlands Trust's education programs such as Nature Explorers, in partnership with with Visalia Unified School District-Expanded Learning Opportunities Program and ProYouth HEART, bring





*ABOVE: students and their teachers line up on a dock overlooking a water basin at McCarthy Blue Oak Ranch Preserve while on a field trip.*

*BELOW: students line up for an activity during a field trip to McCarthy Blue Oak Ranch Preserve. RIGHT: SRT's Education & Volunteer Program Manager, Sam Weiser, leads a discussion and activity during a school field trip at Kaweah Oaks Preserve.*

elementary students from throughout the Central Valley to Kaweah Oaks Preserve, introduce simple land and water management practices, increase awareness of environmental issues and regional history.

First through third grade students from all 27 of VUSD's elementary schools are brought on an average of 4 field trips to Kaweah Oaks Preserve over the course of several weeks, In between these trips, students are given complementary lessons to aid on their trips.

Each trip consists of a nature hike where students are led along trails and taught about the local flora and fauna. By the end of their Nature Explorers program, students are able to identify local plants like elderberries and gourds for their positive benefits as well as identify other plants to avoid, such as stinging nettle. Students are taught good trail etiquette, such as not pulling unknown plants, as well as "Leave no Trace" principles to leave everyone's lands unpolluted.

Each field trip also includes educational games and activities centered around water to help further instill an understanding of ecological relationships and the impact of human activity on the environment. At the end of each session, students are invited back to Kaweah Oaks Preserve with their families so they can show off what they have learned. "It's vital to get these kids outdoors and away from their screens" said one parent when asked about her child's experience.

> I liked touring nearby preserves because before joining [Earth Academy] I didn't realize we had any preserves near where I lived, and nature felt so distant.
>
> *—Granite High School Student*

As students grow into high schoolers, they can continue to develop their interest and understanding in ecology, forestry and environmental science through real-world experience in programs like Sequoia Riverland Trust's Earth Academy, where they are taught the skills needed to manage land sustainably and implement science-based conservation strategies. Students are taken to several different preserves, to see the different land management systems in place and practice skills such as land surveys. Students can then partner with SRT to put those skills in practice at volunteer days throughout the year participating in local restoration projects like the Kaweah Oaks Preserve Mitigation Sites.

Even if students decide that land management is not for them, other programs such as Sequoia Riverland Trust's Sequoia Environmental Youth Leadership exist to help bridge that gap. This program assists high school students in creating educational curricula and gives them the opportunity to gain real-world experience by teaching their newfound knowledge to elementary school students. By helping students develop soft skills such

*ABOVE: high school students in the Sequoia Environmental Youth Leaders (SEYL) program lead a field trip for elementary students.*

as communication, problem-solving, and planning, we further promote the ability to communicate a need for informed decision-making that prioritizes ecosystem health. One student from Granite High School stated: "I care a lot more about hands-on learning than I thought I did, because learning in a class did not teach me as much as those little trips we did to show us nature." Another student from Monache High School said "I believe I'm more confident and I participate more," when asked about what they gained from the program.

Not only do these programs develop students' skills in land conservation and life, but they also foster an appreciation for the natural beauty of the Central Valley. "I learned that I love to learn about nature and love to explore," stated one student from Mission Oak High School.

If, or when, these students pursue higher education, there is a greater likelihood they will remain in—or return to—the Central Valley as a resource that benefits the local community rather than taking their knowledge elsewhere. One student stated "I liked touring nearby preserves because before joining [Earth Academy] I didn't realize we had any preserves near where I lived, and nature felt so distant."

Ultimately, education is the foundation for effective conservation. It provides the knowledge that spurs action. By giving students time and experience in nature, these educational pathways raise awareness among youth of the actions they can take, or careers they can pursue, fostering a generation of environmentally conscious citizens. This guides and helps to advocate for land management practices that are ecologically sound, socially just, and economically viable. Through widespread understanding and shared outdoor experiences we can inspire the next generation to protect the natural world that sustains us all. ®

*LEFT: second grade students gather around a table to learn about watersheds and ways to protect the ecosystem.*

# THIS WILL ALWAYS BE A FARM

*LEFT: Robert & Dave Harris (left to right) stand side-by-side with a plane they are currently restoring on their Grand Island farm.*

## The Harris Family's Generations-Long Bond with Grand Island

**By Emily Boettger**
Land Protection Outreach Specialist

## If the land could speak,

Grand Island would tell a story of invention, wonder and a family's foresight to protect their connection to California's farming heartland. In an era when fertile fields are disappearing to pavement at alarming rates, the Harris family made a different choice—not just for today but for generations to come.

Along a storied bend of the Kings River lies Grand Island and the D.B. Harris Farm, a rich mosaic of agriculture, ecology and heritage. Here, generations of the Harris family have lived, worked, invented and flourished—leaving their imprint in both the soil and the stories passed between rows of fruit trees. Today, the family's decision to permanently protect the property in partnership with Sequoia Riverlands Trust reflects a profound commitment to legacy, stewardship and love of place.

"You know, my kids feel like I do. We live in a park!" said Dave Harris on the fortunate experience of growing up on the farm.

### Generations of Grit & Growth

The Harris family story reaches back to pre-statehood California. In 1845, a relative, John Wolfskill, settled and began ranching near Winters. That land—portions of which the family would later donate to UC Davis to become the Wolfskill Experimental Orchard—was the beginning of the family's California agricultural legacy.

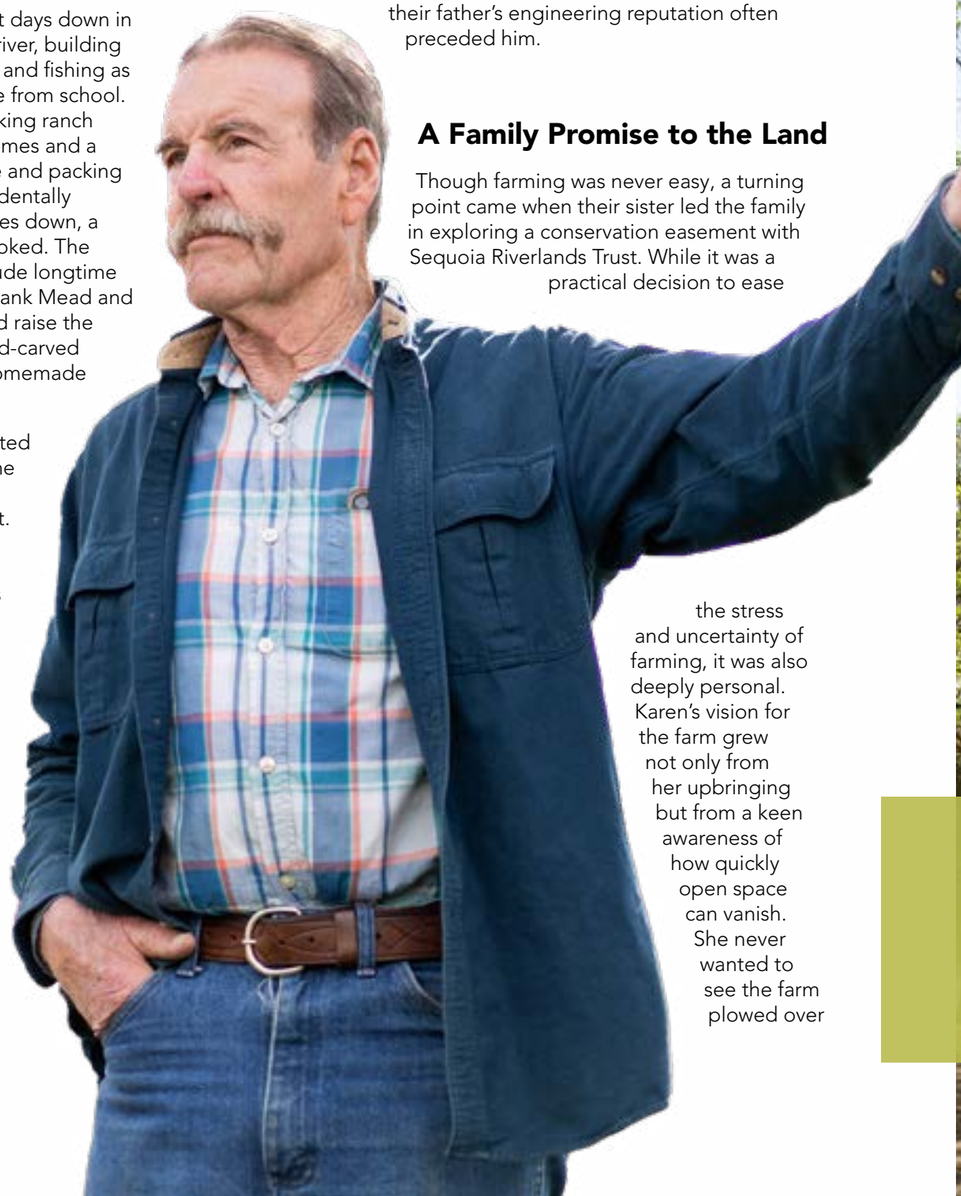
With time and through marriage, the Harris family eventually came to farm along the Kings River outside of Parlier on a piece of land that is full of historic lure. Once the site of the first ferry across the river, and the first voting place in Fresno County, the island is also where famed early Californian and trader James Savage met his end. Today the farm is owned by Dave and Robert Harris and Dick Peterson, the husband of their late sister, Karen. The siblings' grandfather originally partnered to farm the property before their father took the reins, giving his children a picturesque playground among the orchards.

The three of them spent days down in the "jungle" along the river, building rafts out of milk cartons and fishing as soon as they were home from school. The property was a working ranch with several workers' homes and a handmade cold storage and packing line. A young Dave accidentally burned one of the houses down, a rite of passage Robert joked. The family extended to include longtime foreman of the ranch, Hank Mead and his wife Lita, who helped raise the Harris children with hand-carved peachwood toys and homemade baked goods.

Those early days cultivated a deep connection to the land—its rhythms, its floods, its shade, its fruit. In spring, the orchard bursts into bloom, and the air buzzes with bees hard at work. Hawks circle above, while the riparian corridor hums with frogs, dragonflies and the occasional heron. Grand Island is more than a farm. It's a living ecosystem sustained by the stewardship of the Harrises. The brothers happily share the tales of the ancient almond tree on the bluff, which oak branches are poised to snap, and where kids might find buried treasure on the beach—knowledge that runs deep and personal.

The success of the ranch was undeniably tied to their father's ingenuity. From designing mobile packing trailers to installing wired phone lines from the orchard to contact brokers in real time, the remnants of David Harris' inventions still grace the property, including a forklift fashioned from a 1958 Dodge truck.

"Just make sure you take Harris. All he needs is a hammer and a torch," recalled Robert about how their father's engineering reputation often preceded him.



## A Family Promise to the Land

Though farming was never easy, a turning point came when their sister led the family in exploring a conservation easement with Sequoia Riverlands Trust. While it was a practical decision to ease the stress and uncertainty of farming, it was also deeply personal. Karen's vision for the farm grew not only from her upbringing but from a keen awareness of how quickly open space can vanish. She never wanted to see the farm plowed over

> You know, my kids feel like I do. ***We live in a park!***
>
> *—Dave Harris (left)*

> We just want it to survive.
>
> —*Dave Harris*


*ABOVE: Robert Harris shows off his grandfather's original logo that has been with this family farm for more than four generations.*





in asphalt and row houses, the wild river banks converted to an overly manicured golf course. Beyond safeguarding the farm from development, the easement also supports the family's ability to keep farming by offering financial benefits and long-term certainty. In the beginning, the brothers remember being apprehensive but now appreciate the added confidence to plan for the future knowing their land will remain intact as a farm so that their family and others will be able to enjoy it forever.

The easement has ensured that wildlife, water and wonder remain a part of Grand Island's future. Valley Oaks provide shade for family gatherings and habitat for birds. Fish flood the lower field in high water years. A small beach has become the family's favorite gathering spot.  The younger generation now floats in kayaks (just a small upgrade from the milk carton rafts) and stories of past escapades are passed down with laughter. These rituals root the family even deeper into the land and reaffirm why protecting it matters. These connections to place enable more meaningful play, reflection, and belonging. They are part of the Harris family identity.

"We just want it to survive," said Dave Harris

Thanks to their partnership with Sequoia Riverlands Trust, that hope has become a promise. Grand Island will remain a place for farming, wildlife and adventure in perpetuity.

Sequoia Riverlands Trust knows that every easement tells a story—not just of land, but of love, values and hard choices made in service of the future. We are honored to stand beside families like the Harrises, helping turn a family's vision into lasting protection.

*TOP: Dave Harris admires his collection of vintage signs while sitting in his restored Ford tractor. LEFT: an original Lac Jac street sign graces the porch of the garden cottage. ABOVE: Robert Harris takes in his view of the Kings River.*

# SMALL CREATURES BIG IMPACT

## Conservation Science with Giant Kangaroo Rats

**By Camdilla Wirth**
Conservation Biologist

*RIGHT: a Giant Kangaroo Rat is safely caught at nighttime in the Carrizo National Monument.*

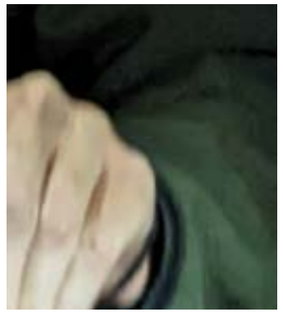
Despite its name, this animal is neither a kangaroo nor a rat. It's a small, nocturnal rodent about the size of a chipmunk, with powerful hind legs, silky soft fur, and a long tufted tail. What makes it "giant" is that it's the largest of all of the kangaroo rat species and it's incredibly important for the health of the arid habitats it's found in.

Giant kangaroo rats are charismatic, charming little animals. They hop on two legs, using their long tails for balance and can jump over six feet high. They also use their hind feet to thump on the ground to communicate with other giant kangaroo rats. They get all the water they need by creating it metabolically in their bodies without ever drinking a single drop.

They dig elaborate underground homes with numerous burrow entrances and chambers inside. These burrows provide homes for other animals too, including lizards, snakes, insects, and other rodents like the San Joaquin antelope squirrel.

Giant kangaroo rats are "farmers" as well as "home-builders". They harvest and store seeds to eat in little underground pantries. Not all of these seeds get eaten;

*ABOVE: Conservation Biologist, Lindsay Peria, conducts a health check on a Giant Kangaroo Rat.*



some germinate, which influences the plant species that grow on and around giant kangaroo rat burrows. Burrowing and seed caching helps spread native vegetation and maintain healthy soil.

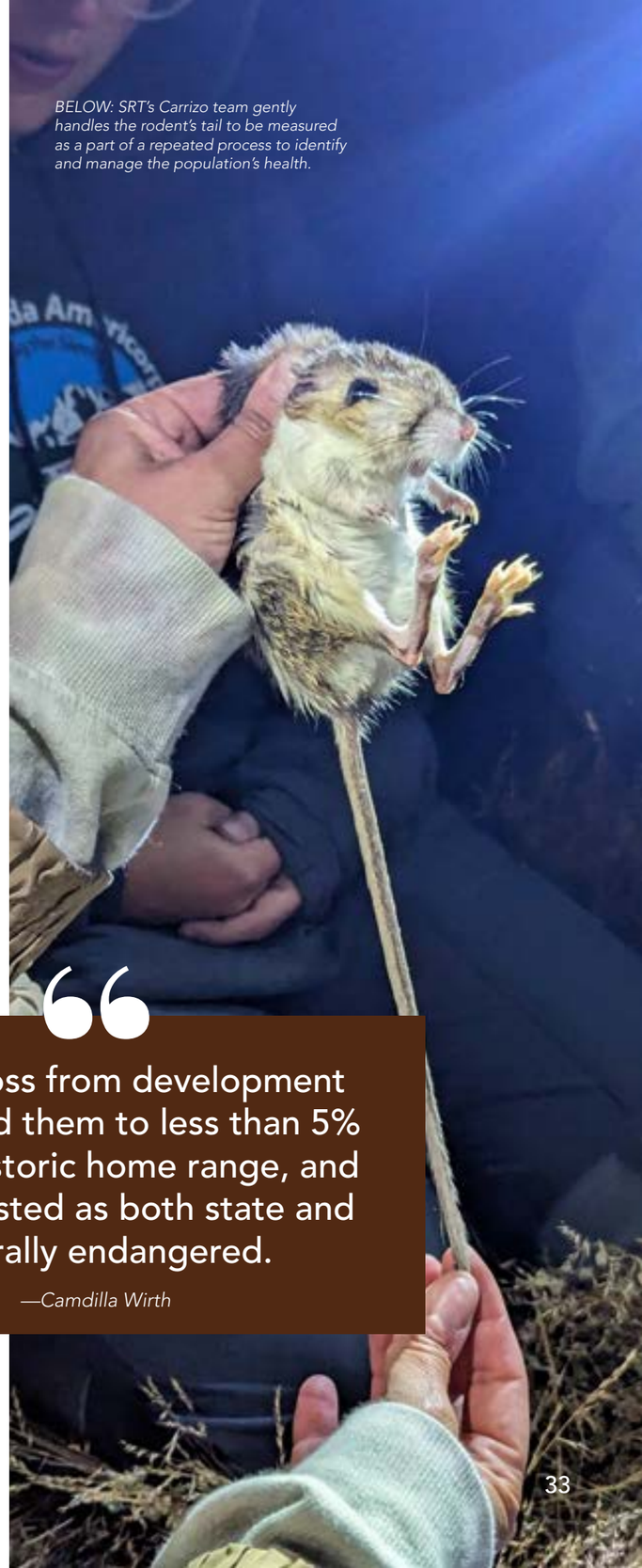
Because they have such a big impact on the plant and animal communities in which they live, giant kangaroo rats are considered "keystone species." Unfortunately, habitat loss from development has pushed them to less than 5% of their historic home range and they are listed as both state and federally endangered. Sequoia Riverlands Trust is working to protect and monitor them, especially on lands set aside to offset environmental impacts from large solar farms.

Giant kangaroo rats are active only at night, and they spend most of their lives in underground burrows. In order to monitor them, SRT biologists conduct mark/recapture surveys to estimate their population density on the land we manage. We set out small, humane traps at sunset in areas where kangaroo rats are known to live. Each trap is baited with seeds and lined with a paper towel to keep the animals warm. A few hours later that night, we check each trap. If we catch a kangaroo rat, we gently handle it to record its weight, sex, and other details and then give it a tiny microchip tag (exactly like the kind used for pets). This allows us to identify the individual animal if we catch it again later. Each animal is released exactly where it was found, usually within minutes. By repeating this process over several nights and tracking how many new vs. recaptured animals we see, we can estimate the total population in that area. This study helps us understand where kangaroo rats are thriving, where they're struggling, and how our land management like grazing or prescribed fire is helping them.

As part of our monitoring efforts, SRT invites our AmeriCorps members and high school students from programs like Earth Academy to participate in fieldwork, including our giant kangaroo rat trapping surveys.

These opportunities provide them with a hands-on introduction to conservation biology and the daily life of a biologist. Under supervision, students and Americorps members assist with setting and checking live traps, recording field data, and learning basic techniques used in wildlife monitoring. This direct involvement allows them to experience field methods in action and gain insight into how data is collected to support species recovery efforts.

During trapping surveys, participants occasionally have the chance to briefly hold a giant kangaroo rat before releasing it, an experience that is often the highlight of the night. With guidance from



*BELOW: SRT's Carrizo team gently handles the rodent's tail to be measured as a part of a repeated process to identify and manage the population's health.*

> Habitat loss from development has pushed them to less than 5% of their historic home range, and they are listed as both state and federally endangered.
>
> *—Camdilla Wirth*

*BELOW: a healthy and thriving Giant Kangaroo Rat enjoys the interaction with kind humans.*

SRT biologists, they learn how to safely handle the animals and gently return them to their habitat. The releases can be unpredictable and memorable: some kangaroo rats pause just long enough to hide under the nearest boot before hopping away, while others take off in a single leap. On one particularly lively night, a feisty individual darted straight up a participant's pant leg before being safely redirected. These close encounters leave a lasting impression and help foster a personal connection to the species and the work being done to protect it. Seeing a threatened species up close offers a powerful and memorable experience. It also highlights the importance of ecological stewardship and the value of science-based land management.

Giant kangaroo rats play a critical role in the ecosystems they inhabit. By monitoring their populations and managing their habitat, Sequoia Riverlands Trust helps protect not just one species, but the entire community of plants and animals that depend on them. Involving students and AmeriCorps members in this work builds awareness, skills, and a deeper connection to conservation. Every trapping survey is not just data for land management but an opportunity to protect an endangered species and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards. Ⓡ

*BELOW: SRT employees and friends gather to set up traps in hopes they get to see and report on Giant Kangaroo Rats overnight.*

# GROW MORE THAN CROPS

## Turn underused borders into buzzing, blooming allies that protect your farm and support the planet.

**By Ashley Robinson**
Nursery Manager

*BELOW: SRT's Nursery Specialist, Erika Enomoto, shows off a native plant available for purchase at Dry Creek Nursery.*

Hedgerows are dense plantings of trees, shrubs, and perennials that can be grown on the edges of fields, and their benefits are numerous.

### Support Pollinators & Beneficial Insects

Hedgerows bring greater diversity by attracting insects and pollinators to agricultural areas. The presence of these beneficial, predatory insects can reduce the need for pest management and pesticides in your fields. Using native plants in hedgerows will attract and support native pollinators, whose populations are in decline. They will also provide vital nesting habitat for native bees. Attracting more native pollinators reduces dependence on the European Honeybee, whose population is also in severe decline.

### Protect Your Soil, Water & Crops

Besides bringing greater diversity to your field, hedgerows can also improve your soil structure and prevent erosion. Native plants slow runoff and increase water infiltration into the soil. This helps to prevent pesticides and fertilizers from running off into nearby waterways. Hedgerows can also act as a barrier to neighboring fields pesticide drift and dust; this can be especially beneficial to organic farms. They also create a windbreak, giving your crops protection and giving you the ability to create microclimates as needed. Adding more trees and shrubs to your farm will increase carbon sequestration, contributing to your farm's climate resilience strategies. As the rows grow in, the dense plantings will shade and outcompete many of the weeds that pop up along the edges of the fields, reducing the need for herbicides.

### Enjoy Year-Round Beauty & Wildlife

The aesthetic benefits of hedgerows are unmistakable. Adding native plants will bring beautiful blooms and seasonal changes to your fields. They will attract wildlife, birds, bees, and butterflies. If planned correctly, you could have blooms throughout the entire year!

### Let's bring more life, resilience, and beauty to your fields—naturally.

We would love to help you make a plan and provide native plants for hedgerows on your farm. At Dry Creek Nursery, we grow a variety of California native plants that can suit your farm's unique needs. If you happen to find that we are not growing a plant you are looking for, let us know, and we may be able to grow them for you.

We are excited to help you bring diversity and beauty to your fields and orchards!

SEQUOIA
Riverlands Trust
SERVING LAND and PEOPLE

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*total acres protected to date*

Central to Sequoia Riverlands Trust's mission to conserve the lands and waters of California's heartland is our commitment to land protection. In 2024, Sequoia Riverlands Trust helped conserve more than 4,300 additional acres through voluntary agreements and partnerships—bringing the total area permanently protected through our efforts to over 50,000 acres.

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**sequoiariverlands.org**




## Dry Creek Nursery

Dry Creek Nursery specializes in native plants for residential and commercial drought-tolerant landscapes and xeriscapes, as well as for habitat restoration for CEQA compliance and other public works projects.

- ✔ Residential
- ✔ Commercial
- ✔ Custom

## HOURS
**8:00 AM–2:00 PM**

Monday–Friday
First 2 Saturdays of the Month
(CLOSED WEDNESDAYS)

**VISIT TODAY**

**35220 Dry Creek Drive | Woodlake, CA 93286**
sequoiariverlands.org/nursery

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## WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR MISSION?

Ways for you to get involved:

- Volunteer at a preserve
- Recycle this newsletter
- Give: ***srt.social/give***