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Parkway and  
Conservation Trust, Inc.

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“Oh wow, that fish is as tall as me!” exclaimed seven-year-old Levi.

It was a sunny February afternoon. Levi and his family joined the River Parkway Trust for a Weekend Youth Naturalist program at Sumner Peck Ranch. After venturing out to the bridge connecting Ball Ranch to Ledger Island, the group stopped to enjoy the view of the San Joaquin River.

Just then, an amazing thing happened!

Two adult Chinook salmon were spotted swimming in the riffle beneath the bridge. As soon as she saw them, Program Assistant Katie seized the opportunity to teach the Youth Naturalists about the incredible lifecycle of salmon. She pointed out the salmon and began to tell the story of what these fish endure to return to their spawning ground.

Stunned by their size, Levi couldn’t help but continue to talk about the salmon throughout the rest of the program.

Have you ever seen a salmon swimming in a river? When I heard this story, I was reminded of my first experience with a live salmon. It was on the Tuolumne River about 15 years ago. Like Levi, I stood on a bridge and looked down into the murky depths, hoping to spot a salmon, but I had no luck. Instead, I only caught a glimpse of a few Sacramento sucker fish. An hour or so later, from the seat of a canoe, I saw the real thing. Salmon are enormous! And their hooked snout and spiky teeth make them look like a prehistoric life form. This is not the kind of fish you want to run into in a dark alley. I suddenly understood why Chinook are commonly called King Salmon.



As I reflect on these experiences, I think about the people who made these opportunities possible. People just like you who have generously contributed to the effort to protect San Joaquin River landscapes and the 22-mile Parkway. This is the reason that I am writing to you today.

**Will you consider making a special donation of \$100 or more to support opportunities for children like Levi to experience the wild wonders of the San Joaquin River?**

Because developing a connection to the San Joaquin River during childhood can lead to a lifelong enjoyment of, and concern for, the river's resources. I imagine early childhood experiences fishing, hiking, and exploring are what led to Edward K. Martin's lifelong concern for the conservation of local natural resources.

You might not immediately recognize his name, but Edward (Ted) Martin played a role in Levi's experience learning about salmon earlier this year. Ted Martin was passionate about salmon restoration, land conservation, and creating opportunities for future generations to learn about the river and land.

Several years before his death at the age of 90, Ted Martin made the decision to leave a legacy gift to the River Parkway Trust. His bequest created a fund for pursuing land acquisition projects along the San Joaquin River. His generosity positioned our organization to permanently protect Sumner Peck Ranch for the San Joaquin River Parkway.

We announced the exciting news about the River Parkway Trust's acquisition of Sumner Peck Ranch in late December 2020. And just two months later, Levi and his fellow Youth Naturalists were on-site to learn about salmon and other San Joaquin River plants and animals.

Without the Edward K. Martin Land Acquisition Fund, the River Parkway Trust may not have been able to permanently protect Sumner Peck Ranch.

*And without the generous support of friends like you, the River Parkway Trust wouldn't be able to steward and provide access to protected land like Sumner Peck Ranch for the community both today and in the future.*

The effort to create and protect the 22-mile San Joaquin River Parkway relies on people like you who add to the legacy of land conservation and the development of future generations of river stewards like Levi.

**Your donation of \$100 or more will become part of this legacy. Can I count on you to make a special gift for our programs and projects this year?**

Support from generous people like you has contributed to increasing public access at Sumner Peck Ranch through open house days and new youth programming during the early months of this year.

Through the Trust's new Weekend Youth Naturalists program, younger children like Levi have come out to explore the orchards and vineyards, while learning about the importance of the San Joaquin River to local agriculture. In the Teen Environmental Leadership Program, high-school-aged youth have enjoyed sunset kayaking, hiking at dusk, and developing new team-building skills. During the summer, pre-K, and Kindergarten-aged children will enjoy the Young Explorers day camp at Sumner Peck Ranch.

It's exciting to think about the experiences kids like Levi will have at Sumner Peck Ranch and other Parkway properties this year and in the future. There will be new connections made to the incredible natural resources found along the San Joaquin River.

And perhaps future wildlife sightings will spark the beginning of their own lifelong connections to the natural wonders of the San Joaquin River.

*This is where you come in. I'm writing to you now because you have so generously supported the River Parkway Trust in the past.*

**With a donation of \$100 or more today, you can impact the future of the Parkway. Your gift will support the important work of land stewardship, public access, and outdoor programs to connect people of all ages to the river.**

Most importantly, your support today means contributing to the collective legacy of friends like Ted Martin and the many others who care about the future of the Parkway.

When I think about the excitement Levi showed over the discovery that salmon are as long as he is tall, my heart is filled with hope. And Levi's story is just one of many where amazing things happen down by the San Joaquin River.

Ted Martin left a legacy with his bequest that helped make the permanent protection of Sumner Peck Ranch a reality. Someday, inspired by their own childhood experiences along the river, young people like Levi may choose to add to that legacy as well.

**Will you consider making a donation of \$100 or more right away to help fund land protection and wildlife projects, programs to foster tomorrow's river stewards, and opportunities to get outside and be well?**

Thank you again for your past generosity and support. I appreciate your commitment to land conservation on the San Joaquin River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sharon Weaver".

Sharon Weaver  
Executive Director

***P.S. If you haven't been to Sumner Peck Ranch yet, give me a call and we'll take a tour. My number is (559) 248-8480 extension 105.***