



San Joaquin River  
Parkway and  
Conservation Trust, Inc.

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Javier began visiting Sycamore Island with his dad at the age of three. His father loves fishing and wanted to instill the same joy in his son at a young age.

During one of their first trips together, Javier and his father met Bill, the Trust's lead park host. They were fishing at the Trout Pond from the bank, and their lure became tangled in the bushes. No matter what Javier's dad tried, he couldn't get the bait free. Bill was out on the pond fishing from his kayak and saw Javier and his dad struggling. He paddled over to help.

*"I was watching you from out there. You were casting like a much older kid. You are going to be a great fisherman,"* Bill said as he freed the lure.

Javier is about seven years old now, and ever since the first day they met, Bill has called him "little man." Javier's family visits Sycamore Island nearly every weekend of the season. They were heartbroken when the property had to close earlier this year due to COVID 19. And they were among the first to return when the Trust reopened the site in May.

Today I am writing to share Javier's story with you because you are part of the wonderful things happening at Sycamore Island. Javier's family is just one example of the outdoor community growing along the Parkway.

**And with your special year-end donation of \$50 or more, you can help more families discover the joy of spending time together in the outdoors.**



**CREATING AND PROTECTING THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER PARKWAY**

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Places like Sycamore Island, Jensen River Ranch, and the River Center have provided individuals, children, and families respite from the challenges this year brought. Looking back on the last twelve months, something that stands out for me is how critical the availability of outdoor open space is to our community's health and well-being.

At Sycamore Island, the regular anglers, birders, cyclists, and hikers were among the first to arrive when the property reopened in mid-May. But as the months passed, more and more newcomers ventured out to explore Sycamore Island for the first time. They arrived with new fishing equipment. They rode in on bicycles rescued from the corners of garages. They came with binoculars and picnics.

The River Parkway Trust's park operations staff regularly received feedback and gratitude from those discovering Sycamore Island's accessible protected open space.

More people in our community discovered the wonders available along the banks of the San Joaquin River. And they came to take care of their mental and physical health by engaging in positive outdoor recreation.

The gratitude belongs to you. Thank you for helping make places like Sycamore Island possible with your generosity. I suspect if he had the chance, Javier would thank you too.

When you support the River Parkway Trust, you help advance the effort to create and protect the Parkway. You are conserving and stewarding land, and you are helping create safe access for children like Javier and his family.

**Your impact on the Parkway today and in the future is real.  
You can make a difference today with your generous year-end gift!  
Please consider making a gift of \$50, \$100, or more.**

That brings me back to Javier.

I need to stop and tell you that Javier is not his real name, but his story is real. And your support helped make it happen.

During a visit to Sycamore Island, Javier's mother shared that the thing he looks forward to most each week is seeing Bill. He loves to tell big fish stories and list what he caught the previous week. Whenever he has the chance, Bill enjoys giving Javier fishing tips.

Reflecting on my own early experiences playing, learning, and exploring outdoor spaces with my family, I know that Javier's time at Sycamore Island with his family will leave a positive lasting impact.

Javier's weekends at Sycamore Island have been a recess from this year of isolation, increased screen time, and non-traditional school experience.

People like you conceived the vision for a 22-mile Parkway more than 30 years ago. I am thankful for the foresight of the River Parkway Trust's founders. And I am grateful for you because your support has advanced the Parkway effort in many ways.

You have helped protect land, restore wildlife habitat, educate the community about the river and the resources it provides, and provide access to outdoor places for public enjoyment.

Places like Sycamore Island, where Javier has become a regular fisherman along with his father over the last few years. Someday, Javier may want to bring his children out to discover the joys of fishing at Sycamore Island.

You can make sure he has the chance.

**Will you help the River Parkway Trust continue advancing the Parkway? Will you help ensure the future of the Trust's core programs because kids like Javier need more opportunities to spend time outside? Will you make a year-end donation of \$50, \$100, or more today?**

It's been a challenging year. But I think it's important to remember that the River Parkway Trust's work is grounded in something lasting, land conservation. And our collective experience this year has reinforced the critical need for access to outdoor places.

Your support today will meet both the immediate need to help children like Javier get outside and the long term need of continuing to lay the groundwork for the future of land conservation and public access throughout the Parkway.

**Please consider making a year-end donation of \$50 or more because advancing the Parkway means contributing to the quality of life and health of our community. Please write a check today or donate online by December 31<sup>st</sup>!**

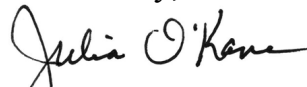
Good things are happening, and exciting things are on the horizon. The River Parkway Trust's program team has adapted the River Field Trip Program to a virtual format. The next phase of wildlife habitat enhancement is underway at Spano River Ranch. The River Center is open 7-days a week for you to enjoy some time outside. And Sycamore Island will open for the 2021 season at the beginning of February.

Javier is probably counting down the days, and we can't wait to see him casting a line with his dad at the Trout Pond.

Thank you for your support and your commitment to the future of the San Joaquin River Parkway.

I look forward to seeing you soon down by the San Joaquin.

Sincerely,

  
Julia O'Kane  
Board President

P.S. In this time of continued uncertainty, you can make a real difference with a year-end donation. Please write a check or visit [riverparkway.org](http://riverparkway.org) to donate online by December 31<sup>st</sup>!