

# 2 Recreation Facilities, Infrastructure, and Usage Assessment

Chapter 2 provides an inventory of existing public access recreation facilities and uses in the Sacramento River corridor study area from Red Bluff to Colusa. It also includes an analysis of the facilities, describing their condition and distribution within the study area, including a determination of where gaps exist. The analysis enables the determination of public access recreation opportunities and constraints provided in Chapter 3, Opportunities and Constraints Analysis.

Chapter 2 is presented in two formats. First is a geographical description of facilities and recreation use opportunities from north to south. Second is a description of specific facilities and uses, grouped by federal, state, local, and private landowners and, finally, by the five focus sites of this study. These sites are shown in the map exhibits (Exhibits 2-1, 2-2A-E) accompanying this document and the site and facility characterizations are summarized in Table 2-1 (arranged by river mile, from north to south) and Table 2-2 (arranged by land ownership group).

Locations of facilities are described in terms of river mile references. The river miles follow the convention of the 1999 Sacramento River Atlas produced by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR 1999). Throughout this and the following chapters, “River Mile X – L (or RM X-L)” refers to the left side of the river at River Mile “X” when facing downstream, which is generally on the east side of the Sacramento River. Conversely “River Mile X – R (or RM X-R)” refers to the right side of the river when facing downstream, which is generally the west side of the river.

## 2.1 Geographic Distribution of Recreation Facilities, Infrastructure, and Usage

Within the study area, the greatest variety of amenities associated with recreation access to the Sacramento River occurs between Red Bluff and the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park within the Red Bluff/Los Molinos and Woodson Bridge subreaches. This is primarily because of the availability of privately owned, recreation-based facilities. In contrast, south of Bidwell-Sacramento State Park, there is a reduced variety and density of facilities.

The majority of the public properties in the study area south of the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park are owned by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), as part of the Sacramento River Wildlife Area (SRWA); the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as part of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge; and the State of California Reclamation Board

(Reclamation Board). The types of recreation uses available on DFG and USFWS properties are consistent with their mission of natural resource preservation and enhancement and, in the case of DFG, wildlife-related recreation uses. Reclamation Board properties have generally been acquired not only for flood control purposes, but also for preserving key stands of riparian vegetation, which are beneficial in stabilizing the river channel protecting levees from wind-driven wash, reducing bank erosion, assisting in maintaining hydraulic control of the flood control project and, in some instances, protecting flood control project features from potentially damaging high-velocity flows and as mitigation for flood control projects.

### **2.1.1 Facilities with Public Road Access**

Tables 2-1 and 2-2 indicate whether or not each facility/site is accessible from public roads in the study area. All privately owned recreation facilities in the study area, as well as those owned by local government agencies and the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), are accessible from public roads. Regarding public road access to unimproved sites, it also is important to recognize:

- A facility/site may be accessible from a public road, but the road may not connect to the river, so access to the river may not always be possible from a public roadway to the river itself, and
- Public road access to a portion of the site may not mean that the entire facility/site is accessible. Natural features such as oxbow lakes, sloughs, and dense riparian vegetation often preclude pedestrian access to the entire site.

With regard to public lands other than those owned by DPR, public road access is most available within the upper three subreaches of the study area: the Red Bluff/Los Molinos, Woodson Bridge and Chico Landing subreaches covering a span of 32 river miles.

The largest gaps in public road access to public lands occur in the following stretches:

- between Colusa and the town of Princeton (approximately 15 river miles along both sides of the river),
- between Packer Lake and Ord Bend (approximately 16 river miles along the right side of the river), and
- between the SRWA Princeton Unit East and the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park Big Chico Creek Day Use Area (approximately 30 river miles along the left side of the river).

Private roads in the study area are generally not available to the public and are often gated and locked to discourage trespassing.



Exhibits 2-1 and 2-2a-e, pages 2-3 thru 2-16

Tables 2-1 and 2-2, pages 2-17 thru 2-20

## 2.1.2 Boating Facilities

### Boat Ramps

The availability of functional boat ramps is similar to that of facilities with public road access, as discussed above. Major gaps in the availability of boat ramps occur in the following two stretches:

- between Scotty's Boat Landing near Hamilton City and Ord Bend (approximately 12 river miles, Chico Landing Subreach), and
- between Ord Bend and Colusa (approximately 40 river miles, spanning the Colusa, Beehive and part of the Chico Landing subreaches).

The Ord Bend to Colusa gap is primarily because of the loss of function of two existing ramps, one at Colusa and one at Butte City (Exhibit 2-3), because of channel siltation. In the future, boat ramps could become entirely unavailable between Scotty's Boat Landing and Colusa because of the siltation occurring at Ord Bend.

### Marinas, Boat Docks, or Landings

Marinas, boat docks and landings are in shorter supply than boat ramps, and are found only at privately owned resort facilities. These types of facilities allow boaters to tie up and access their boats without having to get into the water. Additionally, marinas allow boaters to keep their boats in a particular location and access them easily without the challenges of launching and taking out.

Major gaps in this type of boat facility occur in the following stretches:

- between the Woodson Bridge RV Park and Scotty's Boat Landing (approximately 22 river miles), and
- between Scotty's Boat Landing and Colusa (Bert's Steelhead Marina) (approximately 26 river miles).

## 2.1.3 Camping Facilities

Public camp facilities are provided at the three state-owned campgrounds that are located within the study area: Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area, Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park, and Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area. These three state facilities provide a total of 57 reservable campsites. Approximately 30 additional campsites are available at the federally owned Red Bluff Recreation Area. Private resorts provide for another 260 RV/trailer/tent sites.

Exhibit 2-3, page 2-22

Camping opportunities in the southern portion of the project area are more limited than in the northern portion. Boat camping is also generally available, but is limited to gravel bars below the ordinary high-water mark anywhere on the river (Exhibit 2-4). Otherwise, camping opportunities are absent for approximately 50 river miles in the following stretches in the southern portion of the study area:

- between Colusa and the Irvine Finch Unit, on the right (west) side of the river, and
- between Colusa and Scotty's Boat Landing adjacent to Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park, on the left (east) side of the river.

#### **2.1.4 Bank Fishing Access**

Designated areas for fishing are available at most federal, state and local properties, parks and resorts within the study area corridor. The USFWS Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge sites do not have designated fishing areas, however fishing is allowed at the edge of those properties below the ordinary high-water mark. In general, fishing is possible from the river and from gravel bars below the ordinary high-water mark throughout the study area corridor.

While fishing opportunities are readily available, only one fish-cleaning station exists in the study area, at DPR's Irvine Finch River Access Site.

#### **2.1.5 Hunting Access**

Hunting is allowed seasonally at all of the sites that comprise the DFG SRWA. The SRWA sites are distributed throughout the study area corridor with the exception of the Red Bluff/Los Molinos Subreach. Hunting is not allowed on the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge sites pending a determination as part of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

#### **2.1.6 Nature Observation Opportunities**

Nature observation opportunities, especially bird watching, are available at every accessible site. In general, the only limiting factors to this activity are the availability of trails to access remote areas where more reclusive species might be observed, and any perceived safety concern in SRWA areas during the hunting season.

#### **2.1.7 Picnic Facilities**

Picnic facilities (Exhibit 2-5) are provided at almost every location that provides recreation access along the river within the northern portion of the study area. Within the southern portions of the study area, however, with the exception of facilities located at Ord Bend, there are no picnic facilities for approximately 50 miles between Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park and Colusa.

**Exhibit 2-4, page 2-24**

**Exhibit 2-5, page 2-25**

### **2.1.8 Hiking and Walking Trails**

Designated trails exist in the study area corridor at a number of federal, state and local parks, including the Lake Red Bluff Recreation Area, Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area, Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park, Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area, three Tehama County parks and facilities, one Glenn County park, and one City of Colusa park. Many of the formerly farmed parcels that have been purchased for resource conservation purposes still have remnant roads that could be used as trails in the future. Rough, unplanned trails also exist on many sites in the study area that are used by hikers, hunters and fishermen, as well as wildlife.

### **2.1.9 Other Amenities**

#### **Restaurants, Stores, and Bars**

Restaurants, stores, and bars were evaluated only if they were associated with sites having public recreation access that were included in this study. Additional restaurants, stores, and bars are located along the river within the study area, but are not included in this report.

Sites with restaurants, small stores and/or bars include Scotty's Boat Landing and Bert's Steelhead Marina. Scotty's Boat Landing is in the middle of the study area and Bert's Steelhead Marina is located next to the City of Colusa.

#### **Potable Water**

Potable water is more readily available at facilities in the northern portion of the study area and near the City of Colusa in the south than in the remainder of the study area. Aside from Scotty's Boat Landing, potable water is unavailable from approximately River Mile 145 to 215, about 70 river miles.

#### **Shower Facilities**

Shower facilities are available primarily in association with camping facilities at the DPR sites and private resorts. Shower facilities are absent for approximately 50 river miles between the Irvine Finch Unit of the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park and the Colusa-Sacramento River State Park.

#### **Toilet Facilities**

Flush toilets and sinks are typically found at the more developed federal, state, and local parks and resorts with more permanent types of facilities, whereas portable toilets are typically provided at less developed sites.

Consistent with the absence of facilities in general, toilet facilities are lacking on the stretch of river between Ord Bend and Colusa (approximately 37 river miles).

## 2.2 Recreation Facilities Site, Infrastructure, and Usage Assessment for Federally Owned Sites

### 2.2.1 Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Both **Todd Island** (Exhibit 2-2A) and **Foster Island** (Exhibit 2-2B) are owned and managed by the BLM. These two properties are expected to be transferred to the USFWS following completion of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (see Section 2.2.3 for a discussion of the CCP). Public access is expected to be a condition of the transfer.

Location: Todd Island is located at River Mile 238 - R. Foster Island is further south at River Mile 211 - R.

Access: Both islands are cut off from land access by sloughs and have no public road access. They are accessible only by boat.

Facilities: None.

Topography/Hydrology: During most years these islands are frequently submerged in winter and spring.

Vegetation: Both islands are characterized by dense mixed riparian forest, making access beyond their gravel banks extremely difficult.

Current uses: Fishermen occasionally use these islands to fish from the gravel bars.

Adjacent Land Uses: Todd Island is completely bordered to the west by the La Barranca Unit of the USFWS Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge, while Foster Island is bordered by private agriculture land. The properties across the river from both of these islands are in agricultural production.

### 2.2.2 U.S. Forest Service

The 488-acre **Red Bluff Recreation Area** (Exhibit 2-2A) serves more of the function of an urban regional park than the typical park owned and operated by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). It is also home to the Sacramento River Discovery Center.

Location: This site is located at the north end of the study area just south of the intersection of Interstate 5 and Highway 99 at Red Bluff at River Mile 243 - L. The site is adjacent to the Red Bluff Diversion Dam, which forms Lake Red Bluff.

Access: Access to the site is by public roads and by boat from both above and below the Red Bluff Diversion Dam.

Facilities: This facility provides the only public campground within the Red Bluff/Los Molinos Subreach. Facilities include:

- 30 non-reservable RV/trailer/tent campsites (available on a first-come, first-served basis)
- A group camp area (up to 100 persons) with cooking/dining cabanas
- Six cabin shelters
- An amphitheater for evening programs
- Restrooms with flush toilets
- Two concrete boat ramps, one located upstream and one located downstream of the Red Bluff Diversion Dam. [Note: there is a second concrete boat ramp upstream from Red Bluff Diversion Dam which is used by the drag boat racers and agencies, but is not open to the public (Cepello 2003)]
- A fish viewing plaza for watching migrating salmonids pass through the fish ladder
- The Sacramento Discovery Center, with hands-on educational exhibits and programs for the general public
- Two-acre Discovery Garden (a native plant demonstration garden)

Topography/Hydrology: This site lies within the 150-year meander zone (inner river zone) and is characterized by low and high floodplain terraces.

Vegetation: Consistent with the variations in the topography and hydrology at the site, the vegetation varies from riparian scrub and mixed riparian forest near the banks to valley oak savanna on the upper terrace. The vegetation includes a number of non-native invasive species.

Adjacent Land Uses: Although this site is immediately south and adjacent to the Red Bluff city limits, the major portion of the park site is bordered by privately owned farmland.

Current uses: This park is used for group and family camping, boating access, environmental education, hiking, birdwatching, and watching the drag boat races, a very large event held on Memorial Day weekend in this vicinity.

### **2.2.3 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

The ***Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge (SRNWR)***, owned and managed by the USFWS, consists of 10,868 acres contained within 22 units distributed throughout the study area (Exhibits 2-2A-D). The purpose of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge (SRNWR) is to preserve, restore, and enhance riparian habitat for threatened and endangered species, songbirds, waterfowl, other migratory birds, anadromous (migratory) fish, resident

riparian wildlife, and plants. It is the goal of the USFWS to ultimately conserve 18,000 acres as part of the wildlife refuge. Most of the Refuge area is not open to public access and use at this time. Pursuant to federal legislation, public use of Wildlife Refuge properties is not allowed until the compatibility of such use with the wildlife conservation objectives of the Refuge is formally established. The SRNWR is in the process of developing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and public use is one of the issues addressed in this process. Public meetings were conducted by the USFWS during 2002 to gather information and discuss ideas for the CCP. The CCP is expected to be completed in the summer of 2003 and will guide the Refuge's management for the next 15 years.

Location: The units are located throughout a 77-mile stretch from River Mile 164 to 240 between Red Bluff and Princeton on both sides of the river. Packer Lake, the only unit allowing public access at this time, is located at River Mile 167 - R.

Access: Public access is limited to fishing at Packer Lake. It is reached via State Highway 45.

Facilities: None.

Topography/Hydrology: The topography and hydrology of the various units are fairly typical of land within the river's floodplain. Most units lie at least partially within the 150-year meander zone, are relatively flat, and have a high flood frequency.

Vegetation: Vegetation on the units varies from row and tree crops and fallow farmland to mixed riparian forest.

Adjacent Land Uses: Typically, adjacent land uses are agricultural. However, in some cases, the Refuge sites adjoin DFG units of the Sacramento River Wildlife Area, creating a larger wildlife habitat area.

Current uses: Visitor opportunities at Packer Lake are generally limited to fishing and wildlife viewing. Small watercraft, such as canoes and kayaks may be put in at the lake.

## **2.3 Recreation Facilities Site, Infrastructure, and Usage Assessment for State-Owned Sites**

State agencies with public recreation access opportunities in the study area include lands owned and managed by the Department of Fish & Game, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Reclamation Board.

### 2.3.1 Department of Fish and Game

**The Sacramento River Wildlife Area** (SRWA) consists of 3,624 acres of mixed riparian forest, meadows, and gravel bars distributed over 13 units located throughout much of the study area (Exhibits 2-2B-E). These lands are managed to protect and enhance habitat for wildlife species and to provide the public with wildlife-related recreational uses.

Location: The 13 SRWA units are non-contiguous and are distributed along a 68-mile stretch on both sides of the river from Corning (River Mile 215) to Colusa (River Mile 145).

Access: For the public, access to the majority of the SRWA units is by boat only. Public road access is only available to portions of the Princeton (East), Princeton (North), Shannon Slough, Pine Creek and Merrill's Landing units.

Facilities: None.

Topography/Hydrology: The topography and hydrology of the various units are typical of most lands along the river within the study area. Most units lie at least partially within the 150-year meander zone, are relatively flat, and have a high flood frequency.

Vegetation: The Shannon Slough, Ord Bend, Oxbow, Stegeman, Moulton South and Colusa units are generally characterized by dense, mature mixed riparian forest, except where gravel bars exist.

The Pine Creek Unit, Jacinto Unit, Beehive Bend, all Princeton units and Moulton North Unit are characterized by grassland, willow scrub and mixed riparian forest in various stages of succession; emergent marsh in low-lying depressions and channels; and sparsely-vegetated gravel bars. Some of the units include areas that were previously farmed. These areas are either revegetating naturally or are actively restored.

The Merrill Landing Unit consists largely of a gravel bar generally characterized by newly colonizing riparian forest and scrub species.

The Wilson Landing and Dicus Slough units have proportionately larger disturbed areas in comparison to the other sites. These units are characterized by mixed riparian forest along the river and adjacent sloughs. However, the disturbed areas are largely grassland or are sparsely vegetated depending on the site conditions, including elevation and site history (e.g., farming, natural disturbance).

Adjacent land uses: All of the units front the river and all but one are otherwise bordered by active farms and/or Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge lands. The Pine Creek Unit,

however, is completely surrounded by a combination of the National Wildlife Refuge, state park land and land purchased for restoration and conservation.

Current uses: All of the units are available for hunting, fishing, nature observation, hiking, environmental education, and nature interpretation.

### **2.3.2 Department of Parks and Recreation**

There are two state recreation areas and one state park within the study area. They are the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park, the Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area, and the Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area.

#### **2.3.2.1 Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park**

The 243-acre Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park (Exhibit 2-2C) provides four (Big Chico Creek Day Use Area, Indian Fishery Day Use Area, Pine Creek Boat Launch, Irvine Finch River Access) day-use areas: three along the left side (east) of the river and a camping and boating access on the right (west) side. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is in the process of developing a General Plan for this park. Small outbuildings and a modular office, which flood on a fairly regular basis, function as the only maintenance facilities.

Location: The units are distributed in non-contiguous parcels from River Mile 193 to 199. The majority of the sites are located on the left (east) side of the river, west of Chico on River Road just south of Highway 32. Only the Irvine Finch Boating Access Area is located on the right (west) side of the river, near Highway 32, about a ½ mile east of Hamilton City.

Access: All of the sites within the state park are accessible from the public roads identified above. Boat access is available as indicated below.

#### Facilities:

##### *Big Chico Creek Day Use Area:*

- Unpaved parking area
- Gravel bar
- Portable toilet

##### *Indian Fishery Day Use Area:*

- Trails
- Picnic tables (Exhibit 2-5)
- Fishing
- Portable toilet

*Pine Creek Day Use Area:*

- Newly constructed concrete boat ramp (Exhibit 2-3)
- Unpaved parking area that can accommodate boat trailer parking (Phase II will pave, stripe, light and add a pit toilet and running water – 2003/2004)
- Picnic tables (shaded by trees)
- Portable toilet

*Irvine Finch River Access:*

- Trailer/tent camping on a first-come, first-served basis
- Restrooms with flush toilets
- Informational kiosk
- Boat ramp for small boats

Topography/Hydrology: The Irvine Finch site is the only site within the state park that is located outside the levee. The remaining sites are highly prone to flooding. The topography varies from site to site, ranging from gradual gravel bars to steep, heavily vegetated banks along the river's edge and low floodplain areas away from the banks.

Vegetation: The vegetation within these four sites varies by site. The Big Chico Creek Day Use Area is characterized primarily by dense mixed riparian forest. The Indian Fishery and Pine Creek areas are characterized by a mix of valley oak woodland, mixed riparian forest and willow scrub. Irvine Finch, in contrast, is a remnant walnut orchard.

Adjacent land uses: The properties bordering the individual units are mostly agricultural. Areas across the river and by Pine Creek are in conservation ownership by USFWS, DFG and the Reclamation Board and are either scheduled for restoration or are revegetating naturally.

Uses:

*Big Chico Creek:*

Recreation uses available at Big Chico Creek include sunbathing, fishing, small boat take-out, nature viewing, and picnicking.

*Indian Fishery Day Use Area:*

Recreation uses available at the Indian Fishery Day Use Area include nature viewing, hiking, picnicking, and fishing.

*Pine Creek Day Use Area:*

Recreation uses available at the Pine Creek Day Use Area include boat launching, fishing, kayaking/canoeing, and nature viewing.

*Irvine Finch River Access:*

Recreation uses available at the Irvine Finch River Access include boat, kayak, canoe and inner tube launching, camping, picnicking, and fishing.

**2.3.2.2 Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area**

The 325-acre Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area (Exhibit 2-2B) consists of three separate areas, each with very different qualities. The main area consists of approximately 114 acres and is located on the left (east) side of the river immediately adjacent to Tehama County Park, which provides visitors with beach access and boating access to the river. Across the river, on the right (west) side, is another 186 acres of preserve area, which is separated from the bank of the river by a slough, which is making it inaccessible to hikers and vehicles. This area is a winter home to the bald eagle and summer nest site for the yellow-billed cuckoo. The remainder of the park site is located across the slough on the west bank of the river.

Location: The State Recreation Area is located in the Woodson Bridge Subreach at River Mile 219 – L, approximately 6 miles east of Corning immediately adjacent to the Tehama County Park on South Avenue.

Access: The main entrance to the Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area is located on South Avenue, a county road. A small dirt parking area off Kopta Road serves as the trailhead to the primitive, boat-in campsites located on the west side of the river. This area is also accessible by boat from Kopta Slough; however, the main area used by campers has no bank access because of severe cutting that occurred during recent floods. The preserve area is largely inaccessible because of dense vegetation. The trails in the main part of the park provide pedestrian linkage to the neighboring Tehama County River Park.

Facilities: The Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area provides:

- 35 reservable RV/trailer/tent campsites in a tree-shaded turf area
- Small group camp area within the shaded, turf area
- Restrooms with flush toilets and showers
- Nature trails through oak woodland habitat
- Primitive walk-in/boat-in campsites

Topography/Hydrology: The accessible parts of the site sit well above the river and do not appear to flood as frequently as the riparian forest areas. The bank along the main camping area was severely cut during the last major flood event.

Vegetation: The campground and surrounding area are characterized primarily by valley oak savanna. The preserve area, in contrast, is characterized by dense mixed riparian forest.

Adjacent land uses: Farmland borders the state recreation area to the east and west on the right side of the river. The recreation area abuts the Tehama County Park, on the left side of the river. The northern boundary of the Rio Vista Unit of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge is to the south, near South Avenue.

Current uses: Allowable uses at the state recreation area include camping, fishing, nature observation, hiking, environmental education, nature interpretation, interpretation of historic resources, and picnicking.

#### **2.3.2.3 Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area**

The Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area (Exhibit 2-2E) is 66.5 acres in size, and includes a 9.6-acre triangular-shaped area used for the campground and parking lot, and a 9-acre maintenance yard which near the west side of the levee. Both the campground and parking lot are bounded on the south and west by the levee and on the east by a boat channel and the river. This state recreation area includes the only boat ramp and camping facility within the Colusa and Beehive subreaches.

The dynamic nature of the river has been lengthening the channel leading from the ramp to the river over time and in the process depositing sediment in the channel. The build-up of sediment is to the point that the boat ramp becomes unusable towards the end of the summer season even for small fishing boats. Dredging the channel has not been conducted this year because of budget constraints.

Location: This state recreation area is located within the Colusa Subreach on the north perimeter of the City of Colusa one block from Highway 20 at River Mile 144 - R.

Access: This facility is available both by public road and by boat. However, access by boat is limited by channel closures and the lack of a dock or landing.

Facilities: This state recreation area provides:

- 14 reservable RV/trailer/tent campsites in a tree-shaded turf area
- Small group camp area within the shaded, turfed area of the park

- Restrooms with flush toilets and showers
- Concrete boat ramp
- Large asphalt-paved parking lot that can accommodate boat trailers
- Wide, graded hiking trail through the densely vegetated 50-acre riparian forest that characterizes the majority of the site

Topography/Hydrology: Although the majority of the park site is located on the river side of the levee, it appears that the area used for camping may not flood as frequently or deeply because it is slightly higher than the remainder of the site. The site's approximately 600 linear feet of banks have been steeply cut by the river, making it difficult or hazardous to reach the edge of the river from those areas.

Vegetation: The majority of the site is covered with dense, fairly mature mixed riparian forest that has been overgrown with native grape. The campground is mostly covered with turf and a variety of mature non-native trees provide shade for much of the area.

Adjacent land uses: The park is bordered on the south side (the other side of the levee) by a residential trailer park. The area to the west is under agricultural production. Directly across the river lies a patchwork of mixed riparian forest and farms. To the north is a large parcel owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), known as the Ward property. It is anticipated that the Ward property, one of the focus sites of this study, will be transferred to DPR ownership in the future.

Current uses: Allowable uses at the state recreation area include camping, fishing, nature observation, hiking, environmental education, nature interpretation, interpretation of historic resources, boat launching, and picnicking.

### **2.3.3 The State of California Reclamation Board**

The Reclamation Board's mission is to control flooding along the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and their tributaries in cooperation with USACE; to cooperate with various agencies of the federal, state and local governments in establishing, planning, constructing, operating and maintaining flood control works; and to maintain the integrity of the existing flood control system and designated floodways through the Board's regulatory authority by issuing permits for encroachments. Flood management activities recognize the importance of environmental resources and strive to protect these and other resources while meeting public safety responsibilities. For this purpose, the Reclamation Board has purchased numerous sites along the river, 14 of which are of significant size to include in this study (Exhibits 2-2C-E). These sites include approximately 1,365 acres. Six of the sites are located in the Chico Landing Subreach, five are located in the Beehive Bend Subreach, and the remaining three are located in the Colusa Subreach. Some of these sites were purchased as mitigation for flood control

projects and others because they stabilize the river channel, protect levees from wind-driven wave action, reduce bank erosion, assist in maintaining hydraulic control for the proper operation of the Sacramento River Flood Control Project and, in some instances, protect flood control project features from potentially damaging high-velocity flows (Reclamation Board 1978).

These 14 parcels are characterized by dense mixed riparian forest and gravel bars. Other than levee repair and other flood management-related maintenance activities, the Reclamation Board takes a passive management role with these parcels and neither allows nor disallows public access. The very nature of the riparian forest renders the majority of these parcels virtually inaccessible by land, but they are generally accessible by boat.

### **Cruise n' Tarry Marina**

One site that differs significantly from the others is the old Cruise n' Tarry Marina site, located just south of the Colusa Weir on River Road at river mile 146 – L. The marina site is the only Reclamation Board parcel that is actively used by the public. This site was severely damaged by flooding in the 1990s and the marina no longer exists. However, the public continues to use the ramp for launching small boats and kayaks. The site is leased to Colusa County and is managed by the Colusa County Fish & Game Commission. The Commission has been pursuing the permits required for dredging to keep this access available, but have not yet been successful.

Remnants of the parking lot are still visible, although parking now appears to be occurring further into the site, closer to the bank. A sediment bar has developed in what was once the marina and created a pond in the center of the site.

## **2.4 Recreation Facilities Site, Infrastructure, and Usage Assessment for Local Agency-Owned Sites**

### **2.4.1 City of Colusa**

#### **2.4.1.1 Levee Scenic Park**

Levee Scenic Park (Exhibit 2-2E) is a small linear park constructed on the levee in the City of Colusa.

Location: This park is located on the north side of Main Street on the levee in downtown Colusa at River Mile 144 – R.

Access: This facility is easily accessed from city streets; however, no boat access is available.

Facilities: This city park provides tree-shaded picnic tables and barbecues.

Topography/Hydrology: The park site is constructed on the levee, spanning from curb to river's edge. The site's banks have been steeply cut by the river making conditions hazardous to reach the edge of the river. Regardless, people still use this river access point.

Vegetation: The entire park site is covered with turf and ornamental shade trees located to provide shade for picnic tables and benches.

Adjacent land uses: The park parallels a city street in the old business district of the city.

Current uses: Allowable uses at the state recreation area include picnicking, fishing, and nature observation.

## **2.4.2 Glenn County**

Glenn County operates two facilities that provide public access to the river: the Butte City Launch Facility (Exhibits 2-2D, 2-3) and the Ord Bend Park (Exhibit 2-2C).

### **2.4.2.1 Butte City Launch Facility**

The Butte City Launch Facility is closed to boats because of siltation of the channel. Both the permitting process and the cost of dredging are the limiting factors in the continued accessibility of this facility.

Location: This facility is located on the northeast side of Butte City at approximately River Mile 169 - L.

Access: This facility is easily accessed from the main city street.

Facilities: This county park provides:

- One tree-shaded picnic table with a barbecue
- A small, paved parking lot that can accommodate a few boat trailers
- Portable toilet
- Concrete boat ramp

Topography/Hydrology: The park site is constructed on the river side of the levee and the site's banks are steep.

Vegetation: A narrow strip of woody riparian vegetation on the banks border the parking lot and boat ramp.

Adjacent land uses: The area north of this site is dominated by dense mixed riparian forest between the river and the levee. The area to the east is mostly farmland and the small town of Butte City is immediately to the east.

Current uses: Allowable uses at the state recreation area include picnicking, boat launching, and fishing.

#### **2.4.2.2 Ord Bend Park**

Ord Bend Park provides the only boating access between Colusa and the Pine Creek Day Use Area of Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park.

Location: This facility is located at River Mile 184 - R at the southern end of the Chico Landing Subreach where County Road 32 crosses the river.

Access: This facility is easily accessed from County Road 32 and from the river.

Facilities: This county park provides:

- A wide, concrete boat ramp
- Ample paved parking lot that can accommodate boat trailers
- Restrooms with flush toilets
- A variety of picnic facilities (Exhibit 2-5), including picnic tables, cabanas, and barbecues
- Ball fields for softball and soccer
- Drinking fountains

Topography/Hydrology: The park site is situated such that the boat ramp is located up a small slough adjoining the river. The site's bank is steep on the riverside of the park and it is fenced for safety reasons.

Vegetation: The park site is bordered by a narrow band of riparian trees and shrubs on the riverbanks. Otherwise, the site is planted with turf and trees consistent with its use as a regional/community park. Dense mixed riparian forest dominates the area across the slough from the boat ramp.

Adjacent land uses: This park is bordered by farmland to the north and west. To the south is the Ord Bend Unit of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. The Reclamation Board owns the area opposite the boat ramp on the opposite side of the slough.

Current uses: Allowable uses at the park include boat launching, picnicking, and sports activities.

### **2.4.3 Tehama County**

Tehama County offers three facilities that provide public access to the river: the Tehama County Park (Exhibit 2-2B), Mill Creek Park & Boat Launch Facility (Exhibit 2-2A) and the North Mill Creek Fishing Access (Exhibit 2-2A). New boat ramps have recently been constructed at both Tehama County Park and the Mill Creek Park Launch Facility. These new ramps will increase accessibility to the river in this region.

#### **2.4.3.1 North Mill Creek Fishing Access**

Location: This area is located just up-river from River Mile 231 – R north of Los Molinos within the Red Bluff/Los Molinos Subreach.

Access: This site is accessed via a narrow dirt trail to the river from a small dirt parking area located at the end of Gravel Pit Road, which is off Highway 99.

Facilities: This fishing access provides:

- Dirt parking area for 3 to 4 vehicles
- Gravel beach for fishing and small boat launching

Topography/Hydrology: This site is primarily a gravel bar.

Vegetation: Scattered riparian scrub occurs throughout the gravel bar.

Adjacent land uses: This facility is flanked by both farms and single-family residences on large lots.

Current uses: Allowable uses include canoe and kayak launching, picnicking, fishing, wading, nature observation, and sunbathing.

#### **2.4.3.2 Mill Creek Park and Boat Launch Facility**

The 51-acre Mill Creek Park & Boat Launch Facility is owned and operated by the County of Tehama. In addition to river access, Mill Creek Park also serves as a regional park for county residents.

Location: This facility is located at River Mile 229.5 - L on the north side of Tehama-Vina Road. It is located just across the river from the town of Tehama within the Los Molinos/Tehama Subreach of the river.

Access: The park is accessed from Tehama-Vina Road on the opposite side of the river from the town of Tehama.

Facilities: This county park provides:

- A concrete boat ramp
- A parking lot that can accommodate boat trailers
- Restrooms with flush toilets
- A variety of shaded picnic facilities, including picnic tables, cabanas, and barbecues
- Ballfields
- Play Equipment
- Tennis Courts
- Basketball Court
- Horseshoe Pits
- Drinking fountains

Topography/Hydrology: This park site is located on a gentle curve of the river. The banks are fairly steep over the entire length of the park.

Vegetation: The majority of this park is turf and trees, with the majority of the trees growing on the western half of the site, providing for shaded open space between the river and ballfields. The bank is characterized by a fairly narrow strip of riparian trees and shrubs.

Adjacent land uses: This county park is bordered on the north and south by privately owned resorts and to the east by farmland.

Current uses: Allowable uses at the park include boat launching, picnicking, nature observation, fishing, ballgames, and other traditional park activities.

#### **2.4.3.3 Tehama County River Park**

The 14-acre Tehama County River Park is bisected by South Avenue, but a pedestrian undercrossing allows park users to cross back and forth between the two areas safely.

Location: The 14-acre Tehama County River Park is located at approximately River Mile 218 - L. This facility is located within the Woodson Bridge Subreach on both sides of the river where South Avenue crosses the river immediately west of Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area, 6 miles east of Corning.

Access: This facility is easily accessed from either side of South Avenue.

Facilities: This county park provides:

- A concrete boat ramp
- Two parking lots, one of which can accommodate boat trailers
- Restrooms with flush toilets
- A variety of family and group picnic facilities, including picnic tables, cabanas, and barbecues
- A large gravel bar (beach) for sunbathing & swimming
- Basketball court
- Horseshoe pits
- Drinking fountains

Topography/Hydrology: This park site is located on the inside curve of a very sharp bend in the river. The banks become steeper towards the south end of the site as the bank wraps towards the Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area.

Vegetation: Ornamental shade trees provide the majority of the vegetation on the site. The south half of the park site is covered with turf, while the northern half is more natural due to the large gravel bar. The vegetation on the steeper banks consists of dense mixed riparian forest.

Adjacent land uses: This county park is bordered on the northeast by the Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area and on the southeast by the Rio Vista Unit of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. To the south is the Woodson Bridge RV Park and Landing.

Current uses: Allowable uses at the park include boat launching, picnicking, sunbathing, wading/swimming, and fishing.

## **2.5 Recreation Facilities Site, Infrastructure, and Usage Assessment for Privately Owned Sites**

### **2.5.1 Resorts, Marinas, and Landings**

The privately owned resorts are primarily concentrated in the Tehama/Los Molinos area. Most of the resorts are RV/trailer parks partially occupied by permanent residents with some spaces available for seasonal or overnight RVs.

#### **2.5.1.1 Hunter's Resort (may be closed at this time)**

Location: This small, 12-acre mobile home park/resort is located on Byrne Drive, approximately halfway between Los Molinos and Red Bluff on Butte Slough at River Mile 235 – L, within the Red Bluff/Tehama Subreach.

Access: This facility is easily accessed by public road and the river.

Facilities: This facility provides:

- Boat ramp
- Small floating dock
- Ten RV sites with some hookups
- Four apartment/motel units
- Single-family home

Topography/Hydrology: This site is flat with steep banks.

Vegetation: There are a few shade trees on this site, but not much other vegetation.

Adjacent land uses: Most of the adjacent land uses are either farms or single-family residences.

Current uses: Allowable uses included boat launching (for a fee), fishing, and RV/tent camping.

#### **2.5.1.2 Hidden Harbor Marina and RV Park**

Location: This small resort is located at approximately River Mile 229.5 - L between Mill Creek and Mill Creek Park within the Red Bluff/Los Molinos Subreach.

Access: This facility is easily accessed from a public road that runs along the east side of Mill Creek Park and from the river.

Facilities: This facility provides:

- Two boat ramps (a concrete ramp and a 4-wheel drive ramp)
- Small floating-dock marina (for 8 boats)
- 27 pull-thru RV sites and 35 full RV hookups
- Four tent campsites
- 19 permanent RV and mobile home sites
- Picnic tables
- A club room
- Restrooms with flush toilets and showers
- Laundry room

Topography/Hydrology: This flat site is flat with steep banks.

Vegetation: The majority of the site is turf and trees with the exception of the marina, which is separated from the mouth of Mill Creek by dense mixed riparian forest.

Adjacent land uses: There is a single-family residence between the resort and Mill Creek and farmland to the east of the site. Mill Creek Park is immediately adjacent to the south. The land on the opposite side of the river is all agricultural.

Current uses: Allowable uses include boat docking and launching (for a fee), fishing, and RV/tent camping.

#### **2.5.1.3 Driftwood RV and Fishing Resort**

This resort was sold this year and was undergoing substantial renovations in September 2002.

Location: This small resort is located at approximately River Mile 229.5 - L immediately south and adjacent to Mill Creek Park in Tehama County on the north side of the Tehama Bridge within the Red Bluff/Los Molinos Subreach.

Access: This facility is easily accessed from both the adjacent public road serving the county park and from the river.

Facilities: This facility provides:

- A small boat dock
- Fish-cleaning station and scales
- RV/camping sites
- Canoe rentals
- Picnic tables
- Indoor recreation/meeting room
- Restrooms with flush toilets and showers
- Laundry room
- Grey water disposal
- Black water dump station

Topography/Hydrology: This site is flat with steep banks.

Vegetation: The entire site is turf and trees. Other than a few cottonwoods scattered among the ornamental trees, there is no riparian vegetation present at this site.

Adjacent land uses: This site is bordered by another resort (River Rest) to the south and a trailer park to the east. The small town of Tehama is directly across the river from this site to the south of the bridge and farms lie north of the bridge. Mill Creek Park is immediately adjacent to the north.

Current uses: Allowable uses include boat docking and small boat launching, fishing, and RV/tent camping.

#### **2.5.1.4 River's Rest Resort**

Location: This small resort is located at River Mile 229 - L on the north side of the Tehama Bridge and immediately adjacent to and south of the Driftwood Village RV & Fishing Resort within the Red Bluff/Tehama Subreach.

Access: This facility is easily accessed from both the adjacent public road and the river.

Facilities: This facility provides:

- A small boat dock
- 32 RV/camping sites and 6 motel units

Topography/Hydrology: This site is flat with steep banks.

Vegetation: This entire site is turf and trees. Other than a few cottonwoods scattered among the ornamental trees, there is no riparian vegetation on this site.

Adjacent land uses: This site is bordered by another resort (Driftwood Village) to the north and a trailer park to the east. The small town of Tehama is directly across the river from this site to the south of the bridge. Farms are located north of the bridge. Mill Creek Park is less than ¼ mile to the east on the opposite side of the trailer park resort.

Current uses: Allowable uses include boat docking, fishing, and RV/tent camping.

#### **2.5.1.5 Woodson Bridge RV Park**

Location: This facility is located at approximately River Mile 218 – L immediately adjacent to and south of the Tehama County River Park, 6 miles east of Corning, within the Woodson Bridge Subreach.

Access: This facility is easily accessed from both the adjacent public road (South Avenue) and the river.

Facilities: This facility provides:

- A multi-slip boat dock for guest use
- 120 RV/trailer sites, 90 with full hookups
- Picnic tables and barbecue area
- Restrooms with flush toilets and showers
- Laundry room

Topography/Hydrology: This site has very steep banks.

Vegetation: Other than a few mature cottonwoods that provide minimal shade, there is only sparse vegetation along the bank. Other non-native ornamental trees are planted within the park and provide shade for visitors.

Adjacent Land Uses: This site is bordered on the north by the Tehama County River Park site and to the east and south by the Rio Vista Unit of the SRNWR.

Current uses: Allowable uses at the park include boat docking, RV/trailer/tent camping (families and groups), and fishing.

#### **2.5.1.6 Scotty's Boat Landing**

Location: Scotty's is located at the confluence of Pine Creek and the river at approximately River Mile 196 - L. This site is located on the Pine Creek Landing Unit of Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park (approximately 7 miles west of Chico).

Access: This facility is on River Road and is easily accessed from the river as well.

Facilities: This facility provides:

- A multi-slip boat dock
- Boat ramp
- Bait and tackle equipment
- Bar and grill
- RV parking/camping

Topography/Hydrology: Similar to the Pine Creek Landing at Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park, this flat site has gravel banks.

Vegetation: Other than a few mature cottonwoods that provide minimal shade, there is only sparse vegetation along the bank. The area is dominated by weedy species.

Adjacent land uses: With the exception of farmland immediately to the south and across the road to the east, the remainder of land surrounding Scotty's is in public ownership for preservation and conservation. Immediately across Pine Creek are the Pine Creek units of both the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge and the Sacramento River Wildlife Area. Immediately to the south is a trailer park, which is owned and managed by Scotty's.

Current uses: Allowable uses at the park include boat docking, dining, RV camping, and fishing.

#### **2.5.1.7 Bert's Steelhead Marina**

Bert's Steelhead Marina would be more accurately classified as a landing because no boat ramp facilities are available.

Location: This facility is located on Butte Slough Road at River Mile 143 - L approximately 1 mile east of the Colusa Bridge.

Access: This facility is easily accessed from both the adjacent public road and the river.

Facilities: This facility provides:

- A multi-slip boat dock
- Bait and tackle equipment
- Bar and grill
- RV parking/camping
- Propane sales

Topography/Hydrology: This facility is located on the top and to the land side of a steep levee immediately adjacent to the river.

Vegetation: Other than a few mature cottonwood trees that provide minimal shade, there is only sparse vegetation along the bank. The area is dominated by weedy species.

Adjacent land uses: The entire area surrounding this facility is farmland.

Current uses: Allowable uses at the park include boat docking, dining, RV camping, and fishing.

## **2.6 Recreation Facilities Site, Infrastructure, and Usage Assessment for Focus Sites**

The focus sites for this study include the Gunhill Tract, Rx Ranch, Capay Unit, Dead Man's Reach, and the Ward Tract, in order from north to south in the study area. Gunhill Tract, Rx

Ranch, and the Ward Tract are held by TNC. The USFWS owns the Capay Unit and Dead Man's Reach.

### **2.6.1 Gunhill Tract**

Located in Glenn County, the 64-acre Gunhill property was acquired TNC in April of 2000. There are approximately 54 acres of walnut orchard, which are still under a farming contract with the sellers.

Location: This site is located approximately 3 miles southeast of Hamilton City and south of Highway 32, at River Mile 195.5 - R.

Access: From Highway 45, south of Hamilton City, the access to this site is via a private, gated dirt road that connects to Road 23. No public access is available at this time. Future public access would depend on access across other conservation properties. The entire 4,000 feet of river frontage is functionally inaccessible by boat because of the eroding bank conditions.

Topography/Hydrology: The northeastern two-thirds of the site are located within the 150-year meander zone (Inner River Zone), and the entire site lies within the 2½-year flood zone of the river. This triangular-shaped parcel sits on the outside of a bend in the river. The banks on this site have been severely eroded and, as a result, several walnut trees have been lost.

Vegetation and Wildlife: The property contains walnut orchards that are being phased out as the trees become less productive.

This site provides limited habitat for wildlife. (see discussion in Section 1.4.4.8, Agricultural Land of Chapter 1). However, walnut trees can provide habitat for some riparian bird species, especially when located near stands of riparian habitat. Relatively healthy stands of mature cottonwood riparian forest and mixed riparian forest occur across the river, adjacent to the site. Many riparian bird species are expected to nest in this area. Two occurrences of nesting yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), a state-listed endangered species (see discussion in Appendix A, Sensitive Biological Resources), have been reported in the vicinity. A nesting colony of bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*), a state-listed threatened species, is known to occur on the west bank, south of the Gunhill property and north of the Rx Ranch property.

Adjacent land uses: This site is bordered on two sides by other properties that have recently been purchased by TNC: the Vereschagin tract to the west, and the Brattan and Kaplan tracts to the south, all of which are still farmed. The northeastern tip of Gunhill adjoins the Pine Creek Unit of the SRWA. The Department of Fish and Game has expressed an interest in acquiring the property as an expansion of the adjoining Pine Creek Unit.

The 'J' Levee separates Gunhill from these other parcels and runs north along the river providing flood protection for Hamilton City; however, this levee is not structurally sound. A study is underway for a new levee, which is proposed to be setback from the existing levee giving the river more room to meander in this area. Upon construction of the new levee, the existing levee will either be breached or removed.

### **2.6.2 Rx Ranch**

The 262-acre Rx Ranch, located in Glenn County, was acquired by TNC in February of 2000. The property includes 152 acres of almond orchard and 91 acres of walnut orchard that are farmed. DFG has expressed an interest in acquiring the property as an expansion of the adjoining Pine Creek Unit.

Location: This site is located at River Mile 194 - R, approximately 3 miles southeast of Hamilton City and south of Highway 32.

Access: From Highway 45, south of Hamilton City, the access to this site is via Road 23. The property is not directly connected to the Sacramento River and future river access would be via DFG's adjacent Pine Creek Unit.

Topography/Hydrology: The northern and eastern portions of the site are located within the 150-year meander zone (Inner River Zone). With the exception of the western portion, this site sits within the 2½-year flood zone.

Vegetation and Wildlife: The vegetation and wildlife characteristics for this site are similar to the Gunhill tract, above, which the site adjoins. This site contains walnut and almond orchards. The orchard is scheduled to be removed in the fall of 2003 and the site is planned for restoration in 2004, pending funding. This site does not abut the river but does have a dense band of mixed riparian forest along Jenny Lind Bend, a remnant slough that forms the northeast boundary.

Adjacent Land Uses: This site is completely surrounded by conservation lands. North of Jenny Lind Bend and wrapping to the east is the Pine Creek Unit of the SRWA. Bordering the entire south edge is the Capay Unit of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge, and bordering the west edge is the Vereschagin tract, recently purchased by TNC.

### **2.6.3 Capay Unit (previously Kaiser Ranch)**

The 666-acre Capay Unit is located in Glenn County and is owned by USFWS as part of the SRNWR. The property was formerly orchards, and is planned for habitat restoration.

Location: The Capay Unit site is located at approximately River Mile 193 – R, approximately 3 miles southeast of Hamilton City, immediately south and adjacent to the Rx Ranch site.

Access: From Highway 45, south of Hamilton City, the access to this site is via Road 23. The Capay Unit is also accessible from the river.

Topography/Hydrology: The eastern third of the site is located within the 150-year meander zone (Inner River Zone). As with Rx Ranch, most of the site, with the exception of the most western portion, lies within the 2½-year flood zone.

Vegetation and Wildlife: The majority of the site was formerly in agricultural production. A 50-acre walnut orchard was removed in the fall of 2002. It is disked and farmed with row crops to eliminate and control weeds. The southern two-thirds of the site include 116 acres of mixed riparian forest, with cottonwood riparian forest and willow scrub nearest the river. Elderberry shrubs, which are habitat for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*), a federally-listed threatened species are present. The riparian vegetation onsite may provide habitat for several species of nesting birds including yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia brewersterii*), a state-listed threatened species.

Adjacent Land Uses: The site is bordered to the north by the Rx Ranch which is evaluated for conservation purposes. The property is bordered by farmland to the west.

#### **2.6.4 Dead Man's Reach (formerly Koehnen Ranch)**

The 632-acre Dead Man's Reach, located primarily in Butte County with the northwestern tip in Glenn County, is owned by USFWS and is one of the newest additions to the SRNWR. The property includes 318 acres of walnut orchard, 246 acres of almond orchard, and 67 acres of mixed riparian forest. The property is farmed, the almond orchard is planned to be removed and restored to riparian habitat in 2003.

Location: This site is located at River Mile 185 - L, approximately 6 miles south of Hamilton City, within the Chico Landing Subreach.

Access: USFWS personnel can access this parcel via private farm roads, which are not available for public use. It can be accessed from the Sacramento River.

Topography/Hydrology: The western quarter of the site lies within the 150-year flood zone (Inner River Zone). With the exception of the eastern-most portion, this site lies within the 2½-year flood zone.

Vegetation and Wildlife: The site is primarily actively farmed walnut orchards with a sand bar on the northwestern corner and mixed riparian forest on the higher portions of the sand and gravel

bar. The natural meander progression is moving southward, cutting into the walnut orchard on the site's northern bank. Walnut trees falling into the river as the bank erodes, most likely provide habitat for the Sacramento River chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), as well as other anadromous fish. The sand and gravel bar likely provides habitat for ground nesting species such as killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*), spotted sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*), and lesser nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*).

### **2.6.5 The Ward Tract**

The 238-acre Ward Tract in Colusa County, was acquired by TNC in April of 2001. At the time of the purchase, the property included approximately 73 acres of prune orchard, 15 acres of pecan orchard, 48 acres of riparian habitat, 89 acres classified as vacant and overgrown farmland, and 13 acres of roads and turnouts, as calculated from an aerial photograph. The Department of Parks and Recreation has expressed interest in acquiring this land to expand the adjoining Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area (SRA).

Location: This site is located approximately ¼ mile northeast of the city limits of Colusa at approximately River Mile 145.5 – R.

Access: The only access to this site, other than by river, is by a gated, private levee road that flanks the western border of the site. No public access to the site is available at this time. Future public access may be possible through the SRA.

Topography/Hydrology: The eastern portions of the site are located within the 150-year meander zone, and the entire site lies within the 2½-year flood zone of the river. The property's highest elevations occur on the northwest side of the site. The tract has a shoreline spanning approximately 6,000 feet, most of which is steep bank incised by the river. A substantial gravel bar has accreted along the eastern portion of the site (known as Cobb's Bend). The bar is accessible by what appear to be deer trails through the brush. The gravel bar has become a popular spot for boaters to stop and recreate (Exhibit 2-4).

Vegetation and Wildlife: All of the plum and pecan trees were removed in 2002. The previously farmed area was disked twice, except in areas with existing and emerging mixed riparian species, to control weeds. The former orchard site is farmed with a winter wheat crop. A band of mature mixed riparian forest borders the site to the east and northeast and divides the upper terrace from the large gravel bar that has been accreting at Cobb's Bend.

Patches of riparian vegetation remain in a few areas and along the edges of the property. In particular, cottonwood saplings appear to be re-establishing naturally on a lower terrace of the property near the existing levee. A narrow band of cottonwood riparian forest exists on the edge of the property near the river. The southern portion of the property, which adjoins the

Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area, contains a larger area of riparian vegetation, mainly riparian scrub and herbaceous cover, and cottonwood and mixed riparian forest.

At the northeastern boundary, a large gravel deposit occurs where the river bends. A remnant channel has formed an off-channel wetland. Beaver (*Castor canadensis*) and black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) were observed in this location. A pair of Swainson's hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*) is known to nest across the river from the property. Other sensitive species are known to occur at the southern boundary with the SRA, including valley elderberry longhorn beetle and yellow-billed cuckoo (state-listed as threatened). A historical nesting site for willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*), a state-listed endangered species, also is listed for this location, however, currently this species is not expected to nest along the Sacramento River (See Appendix A, Sensitive Biological Resources, Table 1). A bank swallow (state listed as threatened) colony has been reported from the Colusa-Sacramento State Recreation Area.

Adjacent land uses: The 36-acre Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area borders the site on the south. The northern portion of the tract adjoins the DFG Sacramento River Wildlife Area. The site also adjoins a small agricultural parcel and, further to the west, an area of dense mixed riparian forest. Land is actively farmed on the opposite side of the levee, to the west.