

**CALFED - 97N02 GRANT  
PROPERTY INFORMATION FORM**

**Site:** RX Ranch

**Location:**            **River Mile:** 194-195

**County:** Glenn

- **Unit Area:**    **Assessor's Area:** 261.52 acres

**Estimated Actual Area:** 259.4 acres

**Basis:** Mapping grade GPS unit

- **APN(s):** 032-300-005

- **Generalized Legal Description:**            **Section** 34            **Township** 22 N.    **Range** 1 W.

- **Acquisition History:**

Acquired on February 25, 2000 by The Nature Conservancy from Neitling and Dress, et.al.

Zoning: AE-40, Ag-exclusive – 40 acre minimum parcel size.

A Land Conservation Act Contract (Williamson Act) does not encumber the property.

- **Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum Reach:** Reach 2

- **The Nature Conservancy Subreach:** Chico Landing

- **Site Access - River Access:** The property abuts the Sacramento River but through thick forest and side channels.

- **Public Road Access:** The property can be accessed from adjoining County Road 23.

- **Private Road Access:** Not applicable – the property has public road access.

**Physical Description:**

The property is irregular in shape, bordered on the south by County Road 23, on the east by the Sacramento River and on the north, by a historic path of the Sacramento River (Jenny Lind Bend). The property occupies a high terrace that has been leveled for orchard planting that is just outside of the adjoining levee. The property is bordered on the west by land currently in agriculture and owned by The Nature Conservancy.

- **Soils:** Refer to Figure 2B in Appendix 2.

- **Inundation Frequency:** Refer to Figure 2C in Appendix 2.

- **Vegetation:** Refer to Figure 2D in Appendix 2.

**Habitat Types as of : June 1999**

Agriculture - 244.2 ac

Other (roads, water, open space) - 15.2

- **River Channel Meander History / 25 & 50-Year Projections:** Refer to Figure 2E in Appendix 2.

- **Existing and Historical Agriculture:**

Historical agriculture use includes field crops and orchards. The property currently contains 152 acres of almond trees, with approximately 105 acres planted in 1993-1995, and 47 acres planted in the 1960's, and 91 acres of walnut trees planted in 1993.

The property is under a farming contract for the 2003 crop year. The RX Ranch Farm Management Plan guides the agriculture practices to be implemented until restoration is initiated in 2004.

- **Analysis of Restoration Potential:**

The 260 acre RX Ranch is planned to be restored beginning in 2004, funding dependent on the awarding of a grant proposal currently being considered by CALFED. A site assessment for the property will be completed in March 2003. Based on the hydrology study conducted for the Chico Landing Subreach, three riparian communities are planned for a total of 243 acres of restored habitat: forest (10 acres), savanna (202 acres), and grassland (31 acres). If restoration is initiated in 2004, it will be completed in 2007.

**Threatened, Rare or Endangered and Special Concern Species:**

A nesting colony of Bank Swallows, a state-listed threatened species occurs on the west bank of the Sacramento River south of the Gunnhill property and north of RX Ranch. Western pond turtles, a federal- and state-listed species of special concern are found in the oxbow that forms the north border of this site. On east side of this property is a biologically rich slough bordered by mature riparian forests. Slough areas such as this are important rearing and refuge habitats for juvenile chinook salmon and steelhead.

**Research and Monitoring Activities:**

The Point Reyes Bird Observatory conducts detailed studies of songbirds at the remnant forest habitats just south and east of this site during the songbird breeding season (April-August). Data are collected according to the following methodologies to provide a variety of information useful in Conservation Science. Specifically PRBO conducts 1) Point count surveys to inventory bird communities and measure and compare species abundance, richness and diversity across time and space; 2) Spot map censuses to measure density of breeding pairs on nest plots; and 3) Nest searching and monitoring to measure bird productivity under different management regimes on replicated restoration and forest plots.

Dawn Wilson, Professor in the Department of Biology and California State University Chico has been studying turtle populations in the oxbow that forms the north border of this site. She and her field assistants have been individually marking both native western pond turtles and exotic red-eared sliders. They have also recently initiated telemetry studies to track the movement of turtles on floodplain habitats of the Sacramento River.

**Specific Management Considerations:**

Since this property is located along County Road 23, it is very accessible. Reports of trespassing, especially during hunting season are many. Given the easy public accessibility other future concerns may include dumping, littering, habitat destruction and other illicit activities. The Public Use and Access Study suggests establishment of an interpretive nature trail through the property. We suggest implementation of this trail, assuming it is consistent with other legally binding planning processes.

Long term stewards in the area should consider using the RX Ranch to further the goals of the Comp Study's Hamilton City project. The Comp Study has not completed their feasibility study yet so no final management recommendations are available from that effort. However, restoration implementation should be delayed in order to contribute these activities as part of the local cost share of the potential levee setback project. A portion of the RX Ranch can also be contributed to the project for actual construction of the levee.

A small private levee exists on the western edge of the RX Ranch. If a setback levee is constructed, protecting neighboring farms from flooding, long term stewards should consider removing or notching this levee for flood damage reduction and ecosystem benefit.

**Potential for Coordinated Management with Adjacent Properties:**

The property is part of the large complex of conservation properties in the Pine Creek / Hamilton City area. The management of the habitat, once restored, and the public recreation use of the property should be closely coordinated with the adjoining ownerships. Eventual transfer to DFG or USFWS, both of which have substantial holdings in the immediate area, would be desirable.