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## **For immediate release**

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### **River Partners Plants its One Millionth Tree at Levee Setback Project *Habitat Restoration Area Honored as a Flagship Project***

Marysville, CA – December 3, 2008 – Today 25 guests and 75 students joined River Partners as it planted its one millionth tree at the Bear River Levee Setback Restoration Area, 30 miles north of Sacramento. Geoff Geupel, on behalf of the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture (a 15 year old coalition of nonprofit organizations and government agencies responsible for management the state’s floodplain habitat resources) presented River Partners, its collaborators, and the Bear River project with the “Flagship Award,” in recognition of the outstanding riparian habitat management and restoration activities on this 639- acre site.

As part of the ceremony, John Carlon, River Partners’ president, welcomed guest speakers Ted Frink of the California Department of Water Resources, and Paul Brunner, Executive Director of the Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority. Both speakers acknowledged the multiple partnerships that made the restoration and levee setback possible. Two students from Barry Elementary School helped plant the millionth tree, which was grown by students from Las Plumas High School.

“Though the millionth tree is the culmination of our 10 year history, we chose this site because it represents the future of floodplain management,” said John Carlon, River Partners President. “By moving a levee back and widening the floodplain, the project has reduced the flood risk to Yuba County. By planting the larger floodplain with native plants, we’ve created critical habitat for wildlife and shown that riparian areas can be an effective floodplain management tool.”

#### **About the Bear River Levee Setback Restoration:**

The Bear River Levee Setback restoration project showcases River Partners’ large scale restoration efforts as well as the critical work that benefits public safety and the environment. River Partners planted over 100,000 trees and shrubs and more than 50,000 grass plugs on this 639-acre habitat restoration project.

Bear River project is designed to meet multiple objectives (hydraulic and ecological)

- Improves floodwater conveyance in the expanded floodway
- Restores fish, wildlife, and riparian habitat in the project area
- Minimizes long-term operation and maintenance costs

#### **About the Students:**

Seventy-five students visited the project to learn about restoration and help re-plant the footprint of the old levee. Schools participating in One Millionth Tree Field Day were Colusa High School, Marysville High School FFA students, Las Plumas High School ROP students, Barry Elementary school 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. These schools participated in River Partners’ Great Acorn Grow Out program. That means since February 2008, they’ve been growing valley oak acorns into viable trees for River Partners’ restoration projects. The One Millionth Tree was a Valley Oak grown by Las Plumas High School.

*Over the last 10 years, River Partners has restored more than 6,000 acres of river banks and floodplains, providing critical habitat for wildlife and sustainable solutions for California’s rivers. Our habitat restoration work supports efforts to sequester greenhouse gases, improve water and air quality, recover endangered species, improve public safety, and protect open space.*

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