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## Yuba River preservation group shares experience with Corps

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By Robert Kidd

Much-needed spring rain fell from blue-gray skies as members of the South Yuba River Citizens League displayed their Yuba River riparian enhancement project at Hammon Bar to a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District study team on May 5.

The Corps' Yuba River Ecosystem Restoration Study team is researching further restoration possibilities for this Northern California river that was deeply affected by California's historic gold mining boom of the 1800s.

"This tour was a great opportunity for us to gather information about a project that provides hope for restoration in the Yuba Goldfields and to help build our relationship with interested stakeholders in the area," said Chelsea Stewart, project manager for the Corps study.

"It was terrific to take the Army Corps Yuba River Study team on a tour of the lower Yuba River - a stretch of the river with great promise to restore habitat for wild salmon and steelhead," said Caleb Dardick, executive director of SYRCL. "We appreciate the team's interest in our Hammon Bar project, where we planted over

Photos

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Members of South Yuba River Citizens League and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District's Yuba River Ecosystem Restoration Study team confer during a May 5 tour of SYRCL restoration work at Hammon Bar on the Yuba River. (Photo by Vanessa Nino-Tapia)

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Downstream view of the Yuba River from Hammon Bar, noting erosion on the far bank. The Yuba River ecosystem was greatly affected by the California gold rush of the 1800s. (Photo by Vanessa Nino-Tapia)

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6500 trees in 2012, and we look forward to working together on large-scale restoration projects for the health of the wider ecosystem."

SYRCL, based in Nevada City, along with a number of partners including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and the Bureau of Land Management, constructed the Hammon Bar project in 2011 and 2012 to study the methods and benefits of planting large cuttings of cottonwood and willow trees to provide large woody structure for enhanced habitat.

SYRCL's project site can be seen across the river from Hammon Grove County Park. Hammon Bar is one of the largest alluvial features of the lower Yuba River and contains some small stands of diverse riparian habitat. But, as is typical of bars on the lower Yuba River, it was mostly devoid of vegetation before SYRCL's project.

"Having an opportunity to engage with a group that has so much experience regarding the Yuba River greatly advanced my own understanding of the possibilities here," said Vanessa Nino-Tapia, civil engineer on the Sacramento District study team. "I very much appreciate SYRCL members taking time to share their knowledge and enthusiasm for restoring the Yuba."



From left to right: Caleb Dardick, South Yuba River Citizens League executive director; Phil Sutherling, consultant; and Rachel Hutchinson, SYRCL river science director, examine riparian growth in the Hammon Bar region of the Yuba River. (Photo by Vanessa Nino-Tapia)

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Preservationists hope that riparian plantings like these on Hammon Bar in the Yuba River will improve habitat for a host of wildlife in and near the river. (Photo by Vanessa Nino-Tapia)

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