



Dave Brooksher
dbrooksher@theunion.com

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Bear Yuba Land Trust acquires 2,707 acres for \$3.25M



Bear Yuba Land Trust board members celebrated the acquisition of 2,707 acres known as Rice's Crossing on Tuesday.



Rice's Crossing.



Rice's Crossing includes six miles of frontage along the Yuba River.



Bear Yuba Land Trust Trails Coordinator Larry Gruver has been scouting the 2,707 acre Rice's Crossing property in preparation for future public access trails.

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The Bear Yuba Land Trust has acquired 2,707 acres along the Yuba River, including six miles of river frontage. Escrow closed Wednesday, but this project has been in the works since 2007.

The multimillion-dollar price tag was covered in part by \$1.9 million in Proposition 84 funding, \$1 million from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and an additional \$350,000 from CalTrans. The Sierra Fund and the Trust for Public Land also played key roles in moving this acquisition forward.

Rice's Crossing is currently private land, but staffers at the BYLT are working to make river access points and open spaces available for public use as soon as possible.

Larry Gruver, the BYLT's trails coordinator, has been scouting the property to identify the future locations of public access trails. They hope to have the first ones open by the end of 2014.

"That's going to happen as quickly as we can make it happen," said Marty Coleman-Hunt, the BYLT's executive director.

"We are kicking off our annual Trails Appeal fundraising campaign, which will build much needed financial resources to do this work."

In the coming years, Coleman-Hunt hopes to see the trails within Rice's Crossing connect South Yuba River State Park, Plumas National Park, Tahoe National Forest and the New Bullards Bar Recreation Area. Rice's Crossing is also adjacent to land owned by the Bureau of Land Management, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Yuba County Water Agency.

There are plans to start river restoration efforts, creating habitat for trout. Environmentalists also hope to see the return of threatened and endangered salmonids.

"Our acquisition helps facilitate the restoration work. In the end, the river will become a better fish habitat," Coleman-Hunt said.

"In addition to the benefits of healthy natural processes, this is going to make a lot of anglers happy."

Readers can find out more about Rice's Crossing and the Bear Yuba Land Trust at www.bylt.org.

To contact staff writer Dave Brooksher, send emails to dbrooksher@theunion.com or call 530-477-4230.

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