



San Joaquin River  
Parkway and  
Conservation Trust, Inc.

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Greetings,

“*Well, that was beautiful timing!*” Eli gleefully said as he looked up towards the sky.

A bald eagle soared overhead just beyond the tops of the palm trees that stand along Old Friant Road. Eli’s third-grade class had just wrapped up Migration Headache, a lively game in which children simulate the challenges bald eagles face migrating between summer and winter habitats.

I spent a few minutes observing the game and was beginning to head back to my office when I spotted the signature white head on the bird flying above us. The River Parkway Trust’s Education Docent was in the middle of the activity wrap-up, asking Eli’s class questions about their experience pretending to be migrating eagles. I walked out on the lawn to make our Docent aware of the incredible teaching opportunity. She pointed out the bird to Eli’s class while making connections between what they had just learned about eagles and how amazing it was for one to appear at that moment.

Other students in the group exclaimed, “*wow, I wonder if it migrated from Canada.*” And “*It’s so cool we get to see an eagle in real life!*”

Watching the scene unfold, I had to agree with Eli; the timing was beautiful. Thinking about it now makes me smile and reminds me of the value of the River Parkway Trust’s work.

That’s why I’m writing to you today.



Generous people like you are the reason Eli and his classmates had the chance to come to learn about eagles and then spot one in the wild, an experience they won't soon forget. And it's these experiences in early childhood that contribute to a lifetime of outdoor enjoyment and support for conservation.

**Will you make a year-end donation of \$50, \$100, or more today? Your gift will connect more local children to the Parkway and the wildlife it supports in the year ahead.**

Before the eagle appeared, Eli's class gathered on the River Center Kremen Lawn to learn about wildlife migration. The students answered questions about the definition of migration, what types of animals migrate and why, and what animals need to survive. *"Today, you are majestic eagles, and you will have to face a migration headache,"* the Docent instructed as twenty-five third-graders with energy to burn lined up and waited for the cue to begin running.

Eli placed his foot on a habitat square, preparing to begin the first phase of migration from Canada. ***"Migrate!"*** With that, the students were off, and sounds of joyous chaos ensued. During the first round of the game, there is plenty of habitat for each "eagle" to survive. In the following rounds, the Docent introduced scenarios that would reduce habitat, meaning fewer "eagles" survive their migration.

Throughout the game, students shared ideas about what they believe contributes to habitat loss and what communities can do to improve wildlife habitat. Eli and his classmates focused on the benefits of planting trees, reducing pollution, and making sure some land is set aside for animals like eagles.

During the wrap-up to the activity, the Docent made connections between the ideas the class shared for improving habitat and the on-the-ground work of the River Parkway Trust. It made my heart sing as I listened to the enthusiasm these kids had when they learned about how the Trust's conservation work provides the food, shelter, water, and space all animals need to survive.

**And then, as if on cue, the eagle appeared overhead.**

Eli and his classmates returned to school that day with a new appreciation for the world we inhabit.

As a River Parkway Trust supporter, you help protect the habitat bald eagles need to survive. And you make it possible for children like Eli to get outside to learn about and explore the natural world of the Parkway.

**Will you make a year-end donation of \$50, \$100, or more to support land conservation projects and outdoor programs in the year ahead?**

Because children like Eli are the future of the San Joaquin River Parkway. With your help we can reach them now to provide the experiences and tools to become conservationists and land stewards in the future.

While watching Eli's class play Migration Headache, I noticed all the students wore matching t-shirts with a large 32 on the back. Upon closer inspection, I realized the shirts said Class of 32. After recovering from the shock about the year these students would graduate from high school, I began thinking about what the Parkway will look like in 2032.

I believe Eli can look forward to a future of well-managed public and private land with a continuous multi-purpose trail system stretching from Friant Dam to Highway 99, with numerous entry and exit points, biodiverse habitat, safe places to play, clean restrooms, picnic tables, and other quality visitor amenities.

*Can you see it?*

**If you are excited about fulfilling the Parkway vision, please consider making a year-end donation today. Your gift matters, no matter its size, and you can help make the Parkway more accessible, more beautiful, and more biologically diverse in the years ahead.**

The River Parkway Trust is an organization dedicated to protecting the river and the wildlife it supports. And we recognize the importance of instilling conservation values in future generations of river stewards. Your support makes this work possible and helps connect people of all ages to the wild wonders of the San Joaquin River Parkway.

I find joy in the unexpected moments, like a bald eagle appearing in the sky at the end of a lesson about bald eagles. They remind me of why the River Parkway Trust's work is so important.

We're creating a unique community amenity where scientists, naturalists, volunteers, artists, students, and YOU can protect and restore land, learn about nature, and relish the benefits of spending time together outside.

**Will you consider a year-end gift of \$50, \$100, or more? Your generosity will support a new year of conservation projects and outdoor programs. Please write a check or donate online before December 31st!**

I feel a renewed responsibility to expand access to the Parkway whenever I observe children enjoying a River Field Trip. With more access, more local children like Eli will have the opportunity to experience a beautifully timed wildlife sighting.

Thank you for considering the River Parkway Trust in your year-end giving plans. In this season of gratitude, I am grateful for your support of creating and protecting the San Joaquin River Parkway.

Sincerely,



SHARON J. WEAVER  
Executive Director

**P.S. Your year-end donation translates to more joyful river experiences for the community. Please write a check or donate online by December 31st!**