



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust and San Joaquin River Conservancy Announce Renaming of Ball Ranch to K'uik'ui Ranch

K'uik'ui Ranch (pronounced Kwik-kwee) honors Gashowu Yokuts cultural heritage.

FRESNO, CA - The San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust (Trust) and San Joaquin River Conservancy (Conservancy) are proud to announce that the property known as Ball Ranch has been officially renamed K'uik'ui Ranch.

The name honors a sacred Gashowu Yokuts text in which K'uik'ui, a small duck, plays a central role in the creation of the world. When the earth was covered with water, many animals dove in search of sand, but only K'uik'ui succeeded. From the small amount of sand he carried to the surface, the land and mountains were formed, and the world began. This story, carried forward through generations, reflects the deep relationship between people, water, and the land, a relationship the Conservancy aims to honor through this renaming.

Renaming the property is a step toward honoring the region's Native American heritage. It aligns with AB 2022 (Ramos 2022), which directs public agencies to prioritize names that honor and recognize tribes,

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cultures, and Indigenous languages specific to the geographic region. By moving away from names tied to prior ownership and instead uplifting Native languages and stories, the Conservancy and Trust affirm their shared commitment to cultural respect and inclusive stewardship.

To ensure this process was community-driven, the Conservancy and Trust engaged in public dialogue and tribal consultation. In 2024, the Parkway Action and Community Engagement (PACE) Group hosted meetings and a community naming contest that generated 86 suggestions. In 2025, the Conservancy engaged with local Native American tribes and tribal community members through requests for consultation and partnership meetings for input on the renaming. From this collaborative process, the Conservancy Board selected K'uik'ui for its cultural resonance and symbolism of beginnings.

This land is deeply connected to the history of the San Joaquin River Parkway. In the mid-1980s, it became the focus of a community fight to protect the San Joaquin River from development. That grassroots effort, spearheaded by the Parkway's "Founding Mothers" and supported by countless community members, catalyzed the movement to create the Parkway.

"Names carry deep medicine. Choosing K'uik'ui honors the story, the land, and the spirit that have always been here," said Michelle Pipkin, Community Garden Coordinator at the Fresno American Indian Health Project. "For those of us who work with the plants and gather from the river, it's powerful to see a name that speaks our language and carries our teachings forward. It reminds us that everything begins with the land."

"Renaming Ball Ranch to K'uik'ui Ranch is recognition of the cultural significance of the land and the Native people who stewarded land along the San Joaquin River long before European immigrants arrived," said

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Sharon Weaver, Executive Director of the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust. "It is significant that the site that sparked the Parkway's creation now carries a name that symbolizes beginnings."

"Renaming K'uik'ui Ranch is part of the Conservancy's responsibility as a state agency to engage in right relations with the tribal communities whose ancestral lands we are entrusted to steward," said Kari Kyler Daniska, Executive Officer of the San Joaquin River Conservancy. "Honoring the Gashowu Yokuts language through this name demonstrates our commitment to cultural respect."

The Conservancy and Trust recognize that there may be an adjustment period as the community becomes familiar with the new name. Both organizations are committed to leading this transition with respect, ensuring that future references, signage, and communications reflect K'uik'ui Ranch while honoring the significance of the change.

About the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust

The San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust is a 501 (3) nonprofit land trust established in 1988 working to create and protect the 22-mile San Joaquin River Parkway. The Trust's mission is to preserve and restore San Joaquin River lands having ecological, scenic, or historic significance; to educate the public on the need for stewardship; to research issues affecting the river; and to promote educational, recreational, and agricultural uses of the riverbottom consistent with protection of the river's resources. The Trust offers programs in its three core mission areas of conservation, education, and recreation.

About the San Joaquin River Conservancy

The San Joaquin River Conservancy is a agency of the Sate of California created by the Legislature to create the San Joaquin River Parkway by: acquiring 5,900 acres from willing sellers for Parkway purposes; enhancing and restoring riparian, floodplain, and other habitats; conserving natural and cultural resources on its lands; and developing and managing its lands for public recreational and educational uses compatible with resource protection.

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About Fresno American Indian Health Project (FAIHP)

FAIHP aims to promote a culture of wellness and enhance the quality of life for all Tribal Nations and Communities. FAIHP embraces and empowers people from all nations and communities and provides culturally-based health and wellness services supporting the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of Native Communities.

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