

# Atwell Island-Alpaugh-Allensworth Trail (AAAT) Project

## March 2016 Update

**Project Description:** This Project will create a multi-use trail to connect the communities of Alpaugh and Allensworth with one another as well as with two unique and historical attractions; the Bureau of Land Management Atwell Island Project and CA State Parks & Recreation Colonel Allensworth Historic State Park. The AAAT Project will offer recreational and educational opportunities as well as expand access to southwest Tulare County's outstanding birdwatching and wildlife viewing for community members, youth, and visitors alike.

**Location:** Southwest Tulare County, in the Deer Creek sub-watershed. Deer Creek is unique in that it is one of the few undammed streams remaining in California, which enables it to serve the full range of natural ecosystem functions that benefit humans and wildlife. Deer Creek is emblematic of Tulare Valley's native landscape, with riparian corridors adjacent to upland desert scrub habitat. The region has many natural treasures that already call attention to it as a tourist destination, especially among birders. It is also home to many cultural treasures, including Colonel Allensworth Historic State Park and the Native American Yokut heritage found in the vast, historic Tulare Lakebed. There is significant opportunity to invest in the region to elevate it as a tourist destination bringing more wealth to the communities and to invest in youth education and nurture future stewards of the valley.

**Route:** *Under consideration*

**Estimated Funding:** \$230,000 (Phase 1 April 2016 – March 2017)

**Opportunities:** The project will align with other conservation efforts to achieve multiple benefits including ecosystem restoration, land stewardship, environmental education and youth leadership development. It will celebrate and educate the public regarding the cultures of the earliest settlers in the Atwell Island, Alpaugh and Allensworth area; develop capacity for intra-community leadership and collaboration through the AAAT Intra-Community Advisory/Management Council, create tourism opportunities, reduce greenhouse gases due to vehicle travel between communities and enhance quality of life.

**Challenges:** *No insurmountable challenges expected.*

**Partners/participants to date:** Alpaugh and Allensworth citizen advocates and schools, BLM Atwell Island Project, Colonel Allensworth Historic State Park, Friends of Allensworth, Tachi Yokuts Tribe, Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners, Self-Help Enterprises, Deer Creek Storm Water District and local water agencies, Southern California Edison, High Speed Rail, CSET, Tulare County Resources Management Agency and Tulare County Board of Supervisors. Other potential partners include agricultural - philanthropic interests and the Central Valley Community Foundation.

