

May 15, 11am – noon. Free webinar on river restoration for flood protection utilizing nature-based solutions will be offered. Sustainable Conservation presents river biology experts from the science-based non-profit groups American Rivers and the River Project. The speakers will discuss planning, policy, restoration, and management of rivers and riverine habitat to protect resources, properties, life, and resilience. Lessons learned from this event are likely to be applicable to the many natural waterways of Ventura County.



THURSDAY, MAY 15
11:00AM – 12:00PM

Climate Resilience in Action

Restoring Rivers for Flood Protection



JOHN
CAIN
SPEAKER



SARAH
PUCKETT
SPEAKER



AYSHA
MASSELL
MODERATOR

Restoring Rivers for Flood Protection

As California faces more frequent and intense severe weather events, how can we work with nature—not against it—to protect people, water, and wildlife?

In the third webinar of Sustainable Conservation's *Climate Resilience in Action* series, we turn our focus to flooding. Building on earlier discussions

about California's latest devastating wildfires, the importance of forest health, and the need for ecosystem restoration, [***Restoring Rivers for Flood Protection***](#) will explore how natural floodplains and restored rivers can reduce the state's increasing flood risk while providing critical habitat, safeguarding water supplies, and protecting communities.

We're honored to have experts from [River Partners](#) and [American Rivers](#) join us to discuss how **collaborative, nature-based approaches are redefining flood protection in California**. Through smart river restoration and floodplain reconnection, we'll explore how communities and ecosystems can leverage these approaches to be better prepared for a future shaped by extreme weather and complement existing drought and fire strategies to build a healthier, more resilient California.

[Join us May 15!](#)

Many thanks to [Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery](#), [Wilson Sonsini Foundation](#), and Jennifer Hernandez, Holland & Knight, for sponsoring our Spring 2025 webinar series and for sharing Sustainable Conservation's vision of stewarding California's most precious resources for the benefit of nature and people. **Interested in our webinar sponsorship opportunities? [Contact Jan Merryweather.](#)**

Speakers

John Cain, Senior Director of Conservation, River Partners

John Cain, M.L.A. is the Senior Director of Conservation for River

Partners. Over the last 25 years, his work has focused on the interrelated issues of river restoration, water supply management, and flood management in California's Central Valley and Delta where he has advanced several large scale habitat restoration projects including the 1,200 acre Dutch Slough tidal marsh restoration project, re-watering of the San Joaquin River, and reconnecting the Yolo Bypass. Since 2009 his work has focused on integrating ecosystem restoration into the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan and integrating flood plain restoration into state and federal efforts to reduce flood risk, improve water quality, recharge aquifers, and restore fish and wildlife habitat. At River Partners, he is responsible for building partnerships to accelerate the pace and scale of riparian and floodplain restoration across the state of California. In 2017, he was honored as "Floodplain Manager of the Year" by the Floodplain Management Association. He previously served as the Conservation Director for American Rivers for 10 years, Restoration Ecologist at the Natural Heritage Institute for twelve years and staff scientist for the Mono Lake Committee. He holds a bachelor's degree in physical geography and a master's degree in environmental planning from U.C. Berkeley. In addition to his duties at River Partners, Mr. Cain serves as an Associate Director of the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District and the President of Reclamation District 2098 – the site of the 3,000 acre Lookout Slough restoration project.

**Sarah Puckett, California Central Valley Program Director,
American Rivers**

Sarah oversees the Central Valley Program, where she leads a dedicated team that works to plan, fund, and implement small and large-scale multi-benefit river, wetland, and floodplain restoration projects. The Central Valley region includes the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Prior to starting at American Rivers in 2021, Sarah worked as an environmental consultant for over 10 years specializing in

implementing urban creek and wetland restoration projects and advancing multi-benefit stormwater and green infrastructure projects around the San Francisco Bay and Delta. She has also worked at the Natural Heritage Institute, Trust for Public Land, and National Park Service. Sarah earned a Masters in Environmental Management in Resource Ecology with a focus on wetland ecology from Duke University, a B.S. in Environmental Economics and Policy, and a minor in Geography, from the University of California at Berkeley. Sarah loves urban creeks and rivers and has a special connection to the Stanislaus and Tuolumne rivers in the Sierra Nevada.

Moderated by Aysha Massell, Program Director, Water for the Future, Sustainable Conservation

Aysha has over 20 years of experience working in sustainable agriculture, water reuse systems, and river restoration. Prior to Sustainable Conservation, Aysha served as the Director of California Integrated Water Systems for American Rivers, where she collaborated with agencies, farmers, and partner NGOs on projects and policies that combine sustainable groundwater management, flood risk reduction, habitat enhancement, and surface and groundwater quality improvement. Before that, she was the storm water permit manager for UC Berkeley, where she translated state and federal regulations into campus-wide policies and actions and helped to initiate and complete several creek restoration projects. Aysha received her MS in Environmental Engineering from UC Berkeley, and her BA in Liberal Arts from St. John's College in Santa Fe, NM. In her free time, Aysha likes to hike, bike and play music.

Register: [Climate Resilience in Action - Restoring Rivers for Flood ProtectionRegistration, Thu, May 15, 2025 at 11:00 AM | Eventbrite](#)