As you walk on towards the river there are some California black walnut trees on your right, and then more valley oaks. A cursory inspection of the oak leaves underfoot will reward you with at least two or three kinds of galls. The very large oak apples are galls, as are the minute, variously-shaped growths on the leaves. Another common gall is the swelling at the base of the stem on a cottonwood leaf.

RIVERS' OVERLOOK

Turn at the "Rivers' Overlook" sign to walk down to the river. You can find several types of galls growing on the sandbar willows here. Praying mantis egg cases are also frequently found on the sandbar willows. They are a hard brown growth about the size and shape of a finger joint attached to the branch. Enjoy looking at them, but please leave them there so they can hatch.

The water's edge is a good place to find the tracks of different animals. Look for the footprints of skunk and raccoon and the smaller tracks of muskrats and gophers. Downriver on the opposite side look for a straight-sided steep bank full of holes (a scope is helpful here).

This is a nesting colony of bank swallows (March-May). Scan the shore on both sides of the river for sandpipers, American pipits, greater yellowlegs and killdeer.

As you look across the river, you can see the mouth of the much smaller Bear River as it joins the Feather. The Feather then flows down and joins the Sacramento River at Verona. The rivers' boundaries change constantly. The sandbars change shape from year to year as the currents change; the banks build up in one area while eroding in another. Although the flow is normally controlled upstream by the Oroville dam, the river still overflows its banks during wet years. In 1986 Bobelaine was almost completely underwater.

After relaxing by the river for a while, you can retrace your steps or explore some of the other trails on your own. As you leave, remember that all the rivers in the Great Valley once were surrounded by this kind of riparian forest. Please help us preserve this little that remains.