



Restore Hetch Hetchy

IN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Vol 2, No. 1

Summer 2003

Restore Hetch Hetchy Objects to O'Shaughnessy Dam Modification Project in Hetch Hetchy Valley

Eagle-eyed Monica Weakley of the Tuolumne River Preservation Trust was looking through the Sonoma Union Democrat for news about the Tuolumne, when she spied a tiny public notice by the City of San Francisco, saying that they were about to make a major modification of O'Shaughnessy Dam, which blocks Hetch Hetchy Valley. The City had tried to sneak the project past the public - a project the City has been planning in secret for eight years — by putting their legally required notice of the project in a paper they hoped no environmentalist would read.

WRONG! Monica's good work caught them in the act, opening up a public policy and perhaps legal drama which could spell an end to San Francisco's dedication to obscuring their plans from public view.

RESTORE HETCH HETCHY is objecting to the dam modification plans, and has appealed to the Board of Supervisors to require a full environmental review. This project would modify the 65-year old dam to add a 60-inch diameter pipe as a second, higher outlet by installing a 115-foot long vertical pipe on the face of O'Shaughnessy Dam to address a supposed "turbidity" (soil and debris) problem and to generate more electricity from a plant downstream.

RESTORE HETCH HETCHY believes that San Francisco has failed to comply with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and that the project itself doesn't make sense from a public policy and financial perspective. We have retained CEQA expert attorney J. William Yeates to represent us

before the Board of Supervisors, and may rely on his expertise to appeal to the courts, if necessary.

In testimony before the Public Utilities Commission, Ron Good, Executive Director of RESTORE HETCH HETCHY, stated that the project is unnecessary, a complete waste of money, has substantial environmental impacts, and it represents a further disruption to the visitor's experience in Yosemite National Park's Hetch Hetchy Valley: "The City has not complied with CEQA, because it does not evaluate all phases of the project and its foreseeable environmental effects, and it does not evaluate this project's environmental effects in connection with the overall \$1.6 billion Capital Improvements Program approved by the San Francisco voters last November in

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National Park or National Security Risk?

*By Paul Davis, member of Restore Hetch Hetchy
– a personal perspective*

All of us were deeply saddened by the terrorist attacks against our country on September 11, 2001. As we all remember, it was very difficult to get away from the horrific images and 24-hour news coverage of 9/11 during the days and weeks that followed.

In an attempt to escape from all of this, my brother and I scheduled a short trip to Hetch Hetchy in early November, not too long after 9/11.

sunrise photos of the valley. It was our thought that, in the early dawn, the reservoir would be more understated and the glory of Hetch Hetchy's waterfalls (Tueeulala and Wapama) and towering cliffs would be showcased.

I remembered reading that John Muir called Tueeulala Fall "the most graceful fall I have ever seen," and said it exceeded Yosemite Valley's Bridal Veil Fall in "height ...beauty and behavior." He went on

to say that Wapama Fall descends to the Hetch Hetchy Valley floor by "roaring and thundering, pounding its way like an earthquake avalanche."

We hit the road early, arriving at the



I needed to get away from reality, if even for a day, and Yosemite has always been the place where I can be at total peace with myself, and my surroundings. Our plan was to stay overnight in Groveland, arrive at Hetch Hetchy before sunrise, and then set off for a cross-country hike to climb Kolana Rock. My brother is a professional photographer and wanted to get some dramatic

Hetch Hetchy entrance gate at 5:45am. My brother and I were shocked to find the entrance gate locked, and new visitor day-use-only hours posted: 8am to 6pm [see photo for summer-time day-use hours]. Our plans to photograph the valley at sunrise were cancelled that day. My brother and I waited until the gates opened and spent our

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Public Access Denied in Hetch Hetchy Valley for a Full-Moon Walk

By Ron Good, RHH Executive Director

Over the weekend of June 14 & 15, the Board of Directors of RESTORE HETCH HETCHY met for a “retreat” and Board meeting at the rustic Evergreen Lodge near the entrance to Yosemite National Park’s Hetch Hetchy Valley. One of the reasons we chose that particular weekend was to be able to take a full-moonlight stroll at Hetch Hetchy on the evening of June 14.

On May 12, I made a written request to the National Park Service for permission for the stroll. As mentioned in the article by Paul Davis in this newsletter, and as graphically demonstrated by the photograph, after the events of 9/11/01 hourly restrictions were placed on public access to Hetch Hetchy Valley because of perceived terrorist threats to the O’Shaughnessy Dam. The “terror threat” level had escalated to “orange” over the Memorial Day weekend, but on May 30, the threat level was lowered to “yellow.” So, I had some hope that our request for the full-moonlight stroll for would be approved. Unfortunately, however, our request was denied by the National Park Service on June 4.

In response to this denial, I wrote the following letter to Yosemite National Park’s Chief Ranger, Steve Shackelton:

“Thank you for calling me this afternoon to chat about our request to have a full-moonlight stroll at Hetch Hechy on the evening of June 14th. Of course, I am disappointed that our request can not be granted; however, I do appreciate the difficult choices that you must make in these troubled times. From our perspective — and, I believe the perspective of the American people — it is unfortunate that the people’s national park can not be visited freely because of the presence of a potential terrorist target (the O’Shaughnessy Dam) in the park. As I stated in our phone conversation, I believe that one of the reasons we have our wonderful national parks is to allow people to go to some place where the “normal” cares of the world are far away and can be forgotten, and where Nature can speak the wisdoms of the ages.

“The reason I believe it would be important for us to receive a written response denying our request is to be able to document the loss to the American people when we can’t enjoy our national park because of the thing John Muir called the ‘damn, damn, damnable dam.’ Having that dam in the national park is the reason we have been denied access to Hetch Hetchy



on June 14th to enjoy the full moonlight on the great granite walls and the booming waterfalls; and, I believe the American people should be able to know how their freedoms have been curtailed in this

manner. I hope we can work out something in this regard.

“Having lived in and around Yosemite Valley for four years, I know the special excitement of being able to saunter in the meadows and along the river and near the waterfalls on full-moon-lit evenings. It’s magical. It’s delicious. Especially when the snow has been caught in the cracks and crevices of the cliffs, and the mellow moonlight skips lightly on the snow, the snow that looks like fireflies twinkling in the night. We deserve that experience in Hetch Hetchy Valley. The American people deserve that experience in Hetch Hetchy Valley. Will Colby, John Muir’s right hand man in the fight to preserve Hetch Hetchy Valley, said that the American people would rally to the defense of Hetch Hetchy “if it takes ‘till doomsday.” I believe that determined resolve is still with the American people today.” 

—Ron Good, Executive Director

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Proposition A. In addition, this new pipe is supposed to cure a turbidity problem (soil and debris during very high flows) that exists for at most only seven days out of the year. Even if there is a turbidity problem, it will be taken care of by the \$81 million improvements at the Sunol Valley Water Treatment Plant already authorized by the San Francisco voters in Proposition A.”

In its appeal to the Board of Supervisors, RESTORE HETCH HETCHY also cited the significant environmental impacts that will occur during the six-month construction period (during which time the City wants to put a huge crane on top of the O'Shaughnessy Dam), and its belief that a full Environmental Impact Report (under California CEQA) and a full Environmental Impact Statement (under federal NEPA) are required for this project. These environmental impacts include disruption of biological resources (threatened or endangered plants and animals), the population growth and sprawl in the Bay Area made possible by the improved water supply created by this project and the Capital Improvements Program that plans to

extract more water from the federally recognized “wild & scenic” Tuolumne River, and disrupting federally recognized wilderness values in Yosemite National Park. Restore Hetch Hetchy is also concerned that, if this project were completed, the City would be more committed to retaining the O'Shaughnessy Dam in Hetch Hetchy Valley.

Restore Hetch Hetchy was joined by the Tuolumne River Preservation Trust and the Sierra Club in some of our concerns about this project. Remarkably, Oral Moore, a former official with Hetch Hetchy Water & Power and Winchell Hayward, a former engineer for Hetch Hetchy Water & Power, both agreed in public testimony that the supposed problem of turbidity was not great enough to justify such a major expenditure.

The City claims that the project must be undertaken this fall, when the Hetch Hetchy water delivery system will be shut down for maintenance. This shutdown is rare, and presents a unique opportunity to build the project. But by trying to rush through the environmental process, and ignoring the broader implications of the project, San Francisco has ignored its requirements under California environmental law. RESTORE HETCH HETCHY is now considering legal action to require the City to comply with the same laws every

similar project proponent must recognize.

In response to our concerns, San Francisco PUC General Manager Pat Martell joined a conference call with RESTORE HETCH HETCHY Executive Director Ron Good and our attorney Bill Yeates. The call was cordial, and Martell promised that in the future San Francisco would make every effort to have their work understood by the public. A follow up letter the same day promised full involvement in the Capital Improvement Plan by the environmental community.

But our request for a full environmental analysis of the dam modification project was rejected, as was our request to consider an alternative in the upcoming environmental reviews for the Capital Improvements Project the possible removal of the dam. These rejections by the City leave us little choice but to either drop our objections or file suit, and the Board of Director of RESTORE HETCH HETCHY was considering these options as this issue of our newsletter went to press.

Thanks to Bob Hackamack, Chair of RESTORE HETCH HETCHY's technical/engineering committee for his great volunteer work in analyzing the San Francisco proposal!



Bringing the Word to the United Nations

In April, RHH Executive Director Ron Good presented the case for removal of the O'Shaughnessy Dam and reservoir from Hetch Hetchy Valley at an international health and water conference sponsored by World Information Transfer (WIT) at the United Nations in New York City! We were invited there by Dr. William Rom, who is affiliated with NYU Medical School and a WIT board member. 



Hetch Hetchy in the News

Several major newspaper articles about the proposed removal of the dam from Hetch Hetchy Valley have come out recently, and some papers have editorialized in support of a Feasibility Study regarding Hetch Hetchy's restoration. They include: New York Times, Los Angeles Times, San Jose Mercury News, Sacramento Bee, Contra Costa, and Ventura County Star.

People are finding out about this controversy, they are visiting our website, and joining RESTORE HETCH HETCHY.

You can read many of these articles on our website: www.hetchhetchy.org. In addition, you can see beautiful images of Hetch Hetchy Valley, and learn about John Muir's effort to preserve the Valley and our modern-day effort to restore it. Please visit us soon! 



Photo by Linda Cass

RHH Executive Director Ron Good (the "fiddler"), RHH Board member and volunteer Mark Cederborg, and RHH volunteer Kathy Schrenk, at our First Amendment/ Free Speech table at Hetch Hetchy over Memorial Day weekend

RHH volunteer Dennis Latona and RHH Executive Director, Ron Good, at Friends of the River event celebrating free-flowing rivers at Auburn.



National park or National Security Risk

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day hiking across the south rim to the base of Kolana Rock. During the day, we talked about the new day-use-only hours, and came to the obvious conclusion that the reason for the restricted hours had to do with 9/11. The potential terrorist threat, the O'Shaughnessy Dam and reservoir, which holds part of San Francisco's water supply, just happens to be in Yosemite National Park's Hetch Hetchy Valley. I asked myself, as I was looking down on the reservoir that afternoon, "I bet I am looking at the only National Park that is a national security risk." Then the absurdity of the whole situation became clear. National Parks were not created to hold dams that can be destroyed by our enemies and create havoc on our citizens. Our National Parks were created for the preservation of Nature and for enjoyment of the American people.



Later that day, I learned from a park ranger that this is not the first time Hetch Hetchy has been a perceived target of a foreign enemy. During the later stages of World War II, the U.S. Army planned and implemented security measures against the threat of a Japanese attack on the O'Shaughnessy Dam. The U.S. Army planned to stretch large cables across the top of Hetch Hetchy from Kolana Rock to the opposite side, in an attempt to knock down Japanese airplanes attempting to bomb O'Shaughnessy Dam. If this sounds crazy to you, the proof of this plan, the enormous

spools of cable, are still sitting up on the saddle between Kolana Rock and Smith Peak, unused.

As I look at the current situation, I certainly do not have access to intelligence information regarding overseas threats. Maybe there is a real, substantiated threat to San Francisco's water supply. If so, then I am in favor of keeping the area safe, even if that means limiting public access to the Hetch Hetchy area. However, if the O'Shaughnessy Dam were not in Yosemite, it needs to be emphasized that Al-Qaeda would have no use to bomb a grassy meadow, a meandering stream, or thundering waterfalls.

National Parks are for people to visit to escape the troubles of the world, not to be affected by them. John Muir once said that if you try to separate out any one thing in Nature, you would find it "hitched" to everything else in the universe. Unfortunately, this now also applies to Hetch Hetchy Valley and the events of 9/11/01. 



RHH Board member and volunteer Barbara Williams (at right holding bumper sticker) at the Crane Festival in Lodi.



Restore Hetch Hetchy wishes to THANK John Muir actor Lee Stetson and Scottish fiddler Alasdair Fraser for wonderful performances at our benefit event in San Rafael last November. Everyone had a wonderful time enjoying these two very talented performers!



Please Use Our Website Catalog To View the
Items Described Below at www.hetchhetchy.org.

- Please send ____ Restore Hetch Hetchy t-shirt(s). Size ____M ____L ____ X-L
I am enclosing a check for \$20 (plus \$3.50 for priority mail postage) for each shirt, or have entered my credit card information below.
- Please send ____ Restore Hetch Hetchy bumper stickers. I am enclosing \$1 for each bumper sticker (postage included), or have entered my credit card information below.
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- Please send ____ greeting cards at \$2 each or ____ sets of 6 for \$10 (price includes postage). I have included a check or have entered my credit card information below.
- Please send ____ copies of the color fact-sheet/fold-out poster. I am enclosing \$5 (price includes postage), or have entered my credit card information below.
- Please send _____ copies of David Brower's 1955 video, Two Yosemite's. I am enclosing \$10 (price includes postage), or have entered my credit card information below.
- Please enroll me as a new member or renew my Restore Hetch Hetchy membership.

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Enclosed is my tax-deductible **Restore Hetch Hetchy membership donation** of:

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and mail to Restore Hetch Hetchy.

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Meet Our Board: Mark Palley

RHH Board Secretary, and member of the Legal Committee

Mark Palley and his family had been visiting Yosemite for years when, on a day trip from the City of Berkeley's Tuolumne Family Camp, they encountered a spectacular granite-walled valley half-submerged under water behind a mass of concrete. It was late Spring and the waterfalls were gushing. There were sparkling pools near the trail and wildflowers everywhere.

Returning to that special place became a yearly family outing. But seeing that dam left Mark with a profound sense of loss, leading to irritation, and eventually to outrage. Though hardly a long-time environmental activist, Mark resolved to channel his emotions toward the goal of recovery of that special place. After searching websites, he stumbled upon Restore Hetch Hetchy. In 2000, he started

to attend meetings and to help with events. He joined the Board in 2001. His enthusiasm for that goal, coupled with typing skills, led to his appointment as Secretary of the Board in 2002.

A partner of the Oakland law firm of Marion's Inn, Mark has practiced civil litigation since 1985, handling a variety of cases, including health, bankruptcy and employment law. He has taught health law and serves from time to time as a pro tem judge. He commutes to work by bicycle when he can. He has coached youth soccer, and supports his 15- and 9-year-old children in all of their endeavors. Yet he also finds time to do what he can for that lost valley.

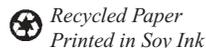
"We're beyond chasing windmills," Mark says. "In these past four years, we've seen a stunning growth in support for our project of



reclaiming our national park. The question is no longer whether - but when. While I'm ready for the long haul, I look forward to the day when I can hike with my children on the valley floor, surrounded by oaks and wildflowers and a meandering Tuolumne River. And I'm confident that day is sooner than many now imagine." 

Planning and Conservation League Foundation
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