

SAVE THE AMERICAN RIVER ASSOCIATION

RIVERWATCH

50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

VOLUME 51, ISSUE 1 FALL 2011



Photo courtesy of Guy Galante

Please Join Us For SARA's Annual Meeting

Saturday, Dec. 3, 2011 | Effie Yeaw Nature Center

9:30 a.m. — Coffee, Breakfast Rolls and Socializing

10:00 a.m. — Meeting Begins

11:30 a.m. or so — Buffet Lunch

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SARA's First 50 Years

By Stephen Green

Most crusades begin in a small meeting somewhere. This one was launched on the night of Feb. 28, 1961, in the Community Room of the Fulton-El Camino Park District in Sacramento.

A group of river warriors gathered there to discuss how to preserve the fishery, wildlife and recreation values of the Lower American River and its 23-mile riparian corridor. By the time the warriors adjourned to a nearby pub, Save the American River Association (SARA) had been born.

For 50 years, SARA members have been the foremost policy advocates for preservation and enhancement of what has become the magnificent American River Parkway.

The catalyst for that long-ago meeting was a decision by the Sacramento County Planning Commission to approve the placement of a subdivision within 125 feet of the Lower American. SARA's founders weren't about to let that happen.

"SARA stalwarts," wrote historian Peter J. Hayes, "are usually the first to go to court,

testify at hearings and write letters to the editor to stop threats to the river and Parkway."

Dave Jones, a former Sacramento Assemblyman and current California Insurance Commissioner, has said region's residents "are truly blessed to have SARA as the advocate for this treasure. ... I wish you another 50 years of continued advocacy."



With more than 8 million visits annually, the Lower American is the most heavily used river for recreation in California. The river meanders through the 6,160-acre Parkway in some of the most densely populated areas of the county. No other urban area in the West has a comparable resource.

The Parkway has become a prime destination for people who fish, bike, walk, jog, golf and float down

the river in rafts, kayaks and canoes.

People come to the Parkway for recreation, picnics, bird watching, horseback riding, or simply to enjoy the natural beauty and wildlife in the area. Even in inclement weather, people cycle to work on the Parkway's 82 miles of maintained trails.

Each of those Parkway visits generates an average of \$19 for the regional economy, or more than \$364 million annually, according to a 2006 study.

The Parkway's initial 23 miles stretched from the face of Nimbus Dam to the American River's confluence with the Sacramento River in downtown Sacramento. After the revised American River Parkway Plan was incorporated into state law in 2009, the Parkway now extends another 6 miles over Lake Natoma (the small reservoir created by Nimbus Dam) to the face of Folsom Dam. That addition gave the Parkway another 500 acres of surface water and 1,600 acres of land.

But on that night SARA was established 50 years ago, what we now call the American River

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Parkway looked far different. The Lower American River corridor included:

A sewage plant.

Three large farms.

The Deterding Ranch (now Ancil Hoffman Park).

An abandoned area called a "borrow" where dirt and rock had been extracted for infill elsewhere (now River Bend Park).

Six sites where aggregate was being dug up for construction -- *including two sites in the river.*

Acres of dredger tailings left behind during the Gold Rush.

One trailer court and tavern.

One riding stable.

Numerous trash and dump sites.

The transformation has been accomplished because SARA's

For 50 years, SARA members have been the foremost policy advocates for preservation and enhancement of what has become the magnificent American River



Photo courtesy of Charlie Willard

advocates have spent countless hours working cooperatively when possible with local, state and federal governments, concerned citizens, business leaders and like-minded organizations.

Much of the advocacy has led changes in federal and state laws and regulations, and in local ordinances, in addition to long-range planning. SARA also has developed grassroots groups to take on special projects and for land acquisition, to fight intrusive development on the Parkway, to promote bond issues, and to work for restoring fisheries and improving flow standards on the river.

There have been victories and losses, and lawsuits – including one that was in the courts for 20 years. But from the beginning, SARA has looked more like a movement of

people dedicated to restoring and enhancing the Lower American River corridor.

There also was recognition that the American River is part of a complicated statewide network of water storage and delivery. Whatever occurs in any link of the chain can have adverse effects on the American River. Consequently, SARA has been involved in water and fishery issues in many areas of California.

The creation of the Parkway, however, was a concept that was a long time coming. In fact, it predates SARA's founding by more than a half century. In 1915, City Planner John Nolen submitted a plan to Sacramento City Commissioners calling for a continuous park along the American

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River. He even referred to it as, quote: "The American River Parkway."

After passage of the first State Park Bond Act in 1929, Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr., son of the planner and landscape architect considered the Father of American Landscapes, surveyed the entire state for potential park and recreation sites.

In the Sacramento area, he proposed a parkway plan for the Sacramento River and its tributaries. In 1947, Olmstead updated the Sacramento River plan to include development of recreation facilities, public parking and docks. The plan also called for controlling development adjacent to the parkway thru local planning and zoning.

Two years later, the county received a \$200,000 matching grant from the

State Parks Commission, and in 1950 the first property acquisition was made at Paradise Beach.

But there was little progress for nearly a decade. Folsom and Nimbus Dams were completed in 1955 as the region's population was surging. New levees were built by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers along the north side of the river from the then-end of Arden Way (where the bicycle bridge is now) down to Cal Expo, thus all allowing the land behind the levee to be developed for urban uses. The levee location has two impacts. First, it reduced the amount of land that eventually would be in the Parkway. Second, as we found out years later, it reduced the flood channel capacity, thus creating serious flooding problems for Sacramento.

"My main interest and focus remained the potential for a unique environment and recreational opportunity offered by the American River."

William B. Pond

Finally in March of 1959, the Sacramento County Supervisors adopted an ordinance forming the County Dept. of Parks and Recreation, and hired William B. Pond as the director.

Pond had held management positions in parks departments in Renton, Wash., and Beaverton, Ore. He worked well with politicians, county employees, industrialists and land owners. And it was soon obvious to all that he was a gifted and able visionary. As his son Steve Pond has said: "Good people saw their own better natures reflected in him."

Pond formed friendships with people who would be founders of SARA including Jim Mullaney, Harold Severaid, Elmer Aldrich, Howard Leach and the indefatigable



Photo courtesy of Guy Galante

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In Memoriam

Save the American River Association has received donations honoring the memory of the following friend:

Robb Deignan

Save the American River Association frequently receives donations in memory of lost loved ones, many of whom were users

and supporters of the American River Parkway. Some donors give names. Others prefer to remain anonymous.

SARA notifies family members when donations are made and those people are always very appreciative. The money is used to further SARA's advocacy work on behalf of the parkway.

Contributions may be made by check, Visa or Master Card. A form for contributions appears on the last page of this newsletter.

SARA also has a Legacy program. For information on the program, please call the SARA office (916) 482-2551. ■

SARA Membership Donations

July-September 2011

American River Raft Rentals	Hon. & Mrs. Eugene Gualco	Ted Robinson
Eve Abrahams	Jeff Harris	A. Ellison Rumsey
Dan Allison	Ruth Holland	Carl Stein
Crystal Barber	Michael Covey & Jacqueline Delu	Nancy & Mick Tooley
Marc Bennett	DelMar Janson	Janet Walden
Gerald L. Bernier	Kathy Klusky	Dr. Frances M. Wrightson
Robert & Helen Bernstein	Adele & Jim Kruger	<p>SARA appreciates the support of our generous members. Without your support, SARA would not be able to continue our role as <i>Guardians of the American River and Parkways since 1961</i>.</p> <p>New and renewing members are listed in <i>Riverwatch</i> according to their preference (indicated on the SARA membership/ renewal form).</p>
Brad & Annette Braddon-Walker	Richard J. Lawrence	
Lisa Burke	Targe & Joanne Lindsay	
Alison Harvey & Dave Loera	Clyde & Ellen Macdonald	
Sharon Doughty	Mary Menconi	
Yvonne Dufault	Christina Miller	
Elizabeth Ewing	Virginia & James Moose	
Janet Feil	David & Carol Newland	
Bill Felts	Eldon & Mary Raber	

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Effie Yeaw, the Carmichael school teacher who regularly took children on nature walks on the river while campaigning for creation of the Parkway.

Soon after Pond's arrival, he was exploring the Lower American by foot, horse and canoe, "trespassing when I couldn't get permission," he would say later. "My main interest and focus remained the potential for a unique environment and recreational opportunity offered by the American River."

Pond began directing development of the first master plan for the Parkway in 1960. Soon thereafter, county supervisors approved the first land acquisitions for the Parkway. When the final plan was before the supervisors in 1962, it was unanimously adopted in concept and incorporated into the

County General Plan.

SARA's future founders were involved in the master plan development, including the drafting of the operating concept which remains in place today:

"The American River Parkway is a unique regional facility which shall be managed to balance the goals of:

- a) preserving naturalistic open space and protecting environmental quality within the urban environment and*
- b) contributing to the provision of recreational opportunity in the Sacramento Area."*

Goal b was restricted to the "accommodation of the demand for passive, unstructured, river-oriented recreational pursuits in a natural environment which are not normally provided by other

For a \$1 donation, people would get a mock deed for one square yard of Parkway land. SARA raised enough to buy 15 acres including a half mile of waterfront upriver from the Watt Avenue Bridge.

The "Elbow Room" Project

County recreational facilities, in a manner which minimized the impact on the environment."

Pond was among those present at SARA's 1961 organizational meeting. He led a long and productive life and was active in park issues until shortly before his passing at age 91 in 2009. In 1983, county supervisors paid tribute to Pond by renaming Arden Bar Park the William Pond Recreation Area.

One of SARA's first projects was the production of a film, "Operation STAR – Save the American River." SARA's speaker's bureau had members talking at service clubs,



Sky and river
Photo courtesy of Guy Galante

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homeowner associations and any other venue they could find. They distributed pamphlets and courted the news media.

And there were some unique fundraising campaigns such as the “Elbow Room.” For a \$1 donation, people would get a mock deed for one square yard of Parkway land. SARA raised enough to buy 15 acres including a half mile of waterfront upriver from the Watt Avenue Bridge. The land was conveyed to the county and is now named SARA Park.

From the beginning, SARA has had strong leadership. One of the most exceptional leaders joined the organization in the mid-1960s, a fly fisherman named Frank Cirill.

Cirill held key positions in SARA through the 1970s, 80s and 90s, and still serves on the SARA Board of Directors as President Emeritus. During those decades, he produced some of SARA’s most consequential victories. To every task, he brought an engineer’s discipline and a probing intellect that often produced positive results. Much of his success is attributable to his ability to recruit new members with expertise in water law, wildlife and environmental issues, and community organizing.

One of Cirill’s early concerns was inadequate water flows in the Lower American, which sometimes dribbled as low as 250 cubic feet per second. That led in 1969 to the organization of a coalition of fishing



Fall along the shore
Photo courtesy of Guy Galante

clubs and environment groups called “The Committee for an Adequate Guaranteed Minimum Water Flow on the Lower American River.”

In 1972, the State Water Resources Control Board issued Decision 1400 which set minimum flows of 1250 cubic feet per second and 1500 feet per second during the peak recreation season. Decision 1400 would only have applied if Auburn Dam had been built. Since it wasn’t, Decision 1400 had no effect. Minimum flows remained at 250 cubic feet per second -- and nearly 40 years later, SARA is still lobbying for increased flows in the river.

Two years earlier, the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) negotiated a contract with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for 150,000 acre feet of American River water annually. That set off decades of

disputes and legal actions that went to the U.S. Supreme Court and consumed much of the time of SARA’s leaders and finances through the 1970s, 80s and 90s. SARA’s position was that there were to be no more water diversions from the Lower American. That is the position that eventually prevailed.

The bureau began construction of the Folsom South Canal in the early 1970s to suck water out of Lake Natoma 23 miles upstream from the American River’s confluence with the Sacramento River. It was to carry water down the Central Valley’s east side. But a suit by SARA and the Environmental Defense Fund (and eventually joined by Sacramento County) stopped canal construction at the now-defunct Rancho Seco nuclear power plant in south Sacramento County.

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EBMUD's plan was to divert water from Nimbus Dam into the Folsom-South Canal. EBMUD water then would be sent from the canal into the EBMUD's existing pipes that carry Mokelumne River water from the Sierras (east of Stockton) to Alameda and Contra Costa Counties in the Bay Area. But the environmental litigants weren't about to let that happen. SARA's position was that the river would be substantially damaged by EBMUD's proposed diversion, which would be about 10 percent of the river's flow.

The U.S. Supreme Court eventually remanded the case to Alameda County Superior Court. And in 1989, Judge Richard Hodge upheld EBMUD's contractual rights to American River water, but specified the EBMUD could not divert water unless there were "adequate flows" in the river. Those flow quantities

Today, SARA continues to be embroiled in Parkway issues involving river flow standards, fisheries, inappropriate recreational activities, public and private development adjacent to the Parkway, and illegal sewage discharges upstream.

have since been known as the "Hodge Flows" and represented a significant victory for SARA and Sacramento County.

In 1994, SARA took the issue to the Sacramento Area Water Forum. After more years of contentious meetings and incredibly hostile negotiations, the Water Forum, SARA and their allies convinced EBMUD that the only way for EBMUD to get the water it needed was to tap the Sacramento River rather than the American. The

Sacramento River diversion facility was completed by EBMUD and Sacramento County at Freeport, about a dozen miles south of the confluence of the American River with the Sacramento River.

EBMUD diversion plans were SARA's most expensive and time-consuming battle to date. But it was just one of many issues SARA has tackled over the years.

The Parkway's master plan has been updated twice and was eventually incorporated into state law.

Encroachments on the Parkway are an ongoing problem as are inappropriate activities such as drunken orgies and off-trail mountain biking in wildlife areas.

In 1972, SARA promoted a \$12.6 million bond issue which voters approved. Approximately 80 percent of the money was spent on Parkway land acquisition and development of the bicycle trail along the length of the Parkway. In 1978, SARA won voter approval of a



SARA Park is one of the Parkway access points closed by the county due to budget cuts.

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second bond measure to relocate a sewage plant and permanently stop sewage discharges into the Lower American.

In the early 1980s, contaminated groundwater was found in Rancho Cordova wells and leaching into the Lower American. The sources eventually were traced to the Aerojet General Corporation chemical and rocket plants, and to a similar operation owned by McDonnell-Douglas Corporation (since acquired by the Boeing Company). As the underground plumes of contaminated water from the industrial plants spread, existing domestic water wells became polluted and unusable. That has forced water purveyors to look to alternative supplies, including the American River. SARA engaged local and state regulators in the problem, and a vast area of the county became a federal Superfund site.

Incredibly, however, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the State Dept. of Toxic Substances Control and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board all agreed to a groundwater cleanup program that could last for 200 years!

In 2009, the Sacramento County Dept. of Water Resources filed suit to force expedited cleanup. No court date has been set, and SARA is monitoring the case. When the suit was filed, Keith DeVore of the



Photo courtesy of Warren Truitt

county department said that “after more than nine years of discussion, Aerojet and Boeing have yet to accept their responsibility and provide any meaningful proposal to resolve the very serious damage they have inflicted on the area’s water supply.”

In 1980 and 81, SARA lobbied President Jimmy Carter’s Administration to designate the Lower American a federally protected Wild & Scenic River. Approval was granted several hours before Carter left office.

SARA supported establishing the Sacramento State University Aquatic Center on eight acres adjacent to Lake Natoma in 1981. SARA representatives were involved in planning and development for the state-of-the-art facility that replaced metal sheds on the site in 2003.

By 1985, however, there were proposals to put a recreation vehicle campground on Lake Natoma along

with a dinner boat, and to establish a golf course at Mississippi Bar. SARA put together a coalition of environment groups and neighborhood associations called the Lake Natoma Community Task Force. Legal action was initiated and the proposals eventually died.

In 1993, Cal Expo planned to put a 40-acre parking lot in the Parkway near Bushy Lake -- an area that was predominately wetlands and wildlife habitat. The plan was in direct conflict with the Bushy Lake Preservation Act – another SARA initiative – which was signed into state law in 1976. SARA board members spearheaded the effort to kill the parking lot project and even had to beat back state enabling legislation. The area has been preserved in its original state.

That same year, SARA was a founding member of the Sacramento Area Water Forum composed initially of 15 government and

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stakeholder organizations with an interest in the Lower American. After six years and the expenditure of \$10 million, the Water Forum Agreement was adopted in 2000 which guides management of the river to protect water quality and wildlife over the following 30 years.

In 1995, a six-year struggle began to preserve the Fair Oaks Bluffs, a 4.5-acre parcel offering stunning views of the river, the Sierra Nevada and portions of the Central Valley. SARA again put together a coalition of concerned organizations and citizens, went to court and the land is now part of the Parkway.

Today, SARA continues to be embroiled in Parkway issues involving river flow standards, fisheries, inappropriate recreational activities, public and private development adjacent to the Parkway, and illegal sewage discharges upstream.

In the past year, much time, energy and financial resources have been committed to the crisis facing Sacramento County's Regional Parks. Sacramento County has dismantled its Regional Parks Department and cut funding to the point that there are no longer sufficient resources for clean, properly maintained facilities, and the policing of parks for public safety and to prevent vandalism.

SARA convened the Grassroots

Working Group (GWG) of park stakeholders which spent a year and more than \$50,000 studying options for securing adequate, stable and long-term funding for the regional parks.

After surveying potential voters, GWG concluded that Sacramento County voters would be willing to approve a one-tenth of a cent sales tax increase to fund an independent parks district to provide permanent funding for regional parks.

To date, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors hasn't accepted that recommendation. Instead, they announced plans for an advisory committee to explore options for long-term funding, operations and maintenance of the regional parks.

SARA leaders expect to participate and will continue to look at options for establishing an independent regional park district. Already, a successor group to the GWG is forming to carry on the effort to secure stable funding and management of the regional parks.

"The crisis facing our regional parks, and the American River Parkway in particular, continues unabated," said SARA President Warren V. Truitt. "SARA's leadership is committed to the advocacy of appropriate solutions."

He noted that SARA's founders thought the organization would

outlive its usefulness once the Parkway was established.

"And here we are 50 years later, still advocating for preservation of the values on which the Parkway was founded," he reflected. "The American River Parkway always will be a work in progress – as will SARA's mission as the Parkway's champion."

Public recognition has been given to four former SARA directors. "Their names have been given to features and facilities on the Parkway to forever commemorate their outstanding contributions," Truitt said. They are:

Effie Yeaw

The Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Jim Mullaney

Jim Mullaney Memorial Grove

Hal Richey

Hal Richey Bicycle Bridge

Jim Jones

Jim Jones Bridge & Recreation Area ■

Rescuing Our Regional Parks: *The Grassroots Working Group's Next Phase*

With the dismantling of Sacramento County's Regional Parks Department, the crisis facing our Regional Parks and American River Parkway is greater than ever. The county is unable to provide sufficient funds for a regional park system that is clean, well maintained, and safe to use.

The Grassroots Working Group (GWG) – formed more than a year ago to secure adequate, stable, long-term funding for our Regional Parks and Open Space System – continues to develop support for recommendations to address threats to our Regional Parks system, despite setbacks.

On May 24, 2011, the GWG recommended legislation that would give Sacramento County

permission to put a one-tenth of one percent (a penny per \$10) sales tax before the voters. Funds from that tax would be dedicated to parks.

On August 9, 2011, the county Board of Supervisors decided to move ahead with legislation recommended by county staff that would authorize any city or county in California to place before the voters a one-tenth-of-one-percent sales tax, or multiples thereof, dedicated to parks.

Despite the best efforts of the county's legislative advocate, the sales tax legislation was not approved by the supervisors. Reasons given include: (1) being too late in the legislative process, (2) lack of support since a bill enacted earlier in the year authorizes every

city and county to levy sales taxes in multiples of one-eighth of one cent, and (3) unwillingness of author(s) of related subject bills to accept amendments.

Despite the recommendations by the GWG, the supervisors did not ask the Legislature for changes that would allow the board to initiate the future creation of a regional park district. Instead, the county executive was directed to appoint an advisory committee on parks to address (1) long term funding, (2) arrangements for operation and maintenance of regional parks, and (3) governance of the regional parks system. The committee is to report its recommendations in December 2011.

The GWG recommendations will be among the options studied by the advisory committee. A GWG representative – and another from Save the American River Association – will participate. While the GWG believes that its recommendations offer the best chance to rescue our regional parks, the group would be supportive of an alternative that accomplishes the same results with an equal chance for success.

The Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce has established a Civic



Photo courtesy of Guy Galante

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Proposed Solar Array Project on Hold

By Betsy Weiland

The proposed solar array on 100 acres of habitat adjacent to the American River Parkway at Sutter's Landing Regional Park is on hold while the City of Sacramento officials take more time to evaluate the project.

Save the American River Association, Friends of the Swainson's Hawk, Friends of Sutter's Landing, the California Native Plant Society and others submitted comments on the environmental document, a mitigated negative declaration.

The document, in our view, was woefully inadequate in

analyzing the biological resources and impacts on same, consistency with the American River Parkway Plan, the city's own General Plan, as well as the Sutter's Landing Regional Park's Master Plan.

The comments may have had some influence on the city's October 24th announcement that they will not be responding to comments at the moment and will be conducting a further project evaluation.

It is really unfortunate that the city did not take advantage of alternative sites that do not seem to have significant environmental impacts or incorporate solar at

Sutter's Landing Regional Park in a more context sensitive way. Both options are possible.

A disturbing twist to protecting the valuable natural resources at Sutter's Landing surfaced October 24th, late in the afternoon. You may have seen the news coverage on Channel 13.

Evidently the City of Sacramento's Department of Utilities took it upon themselves to cut down an

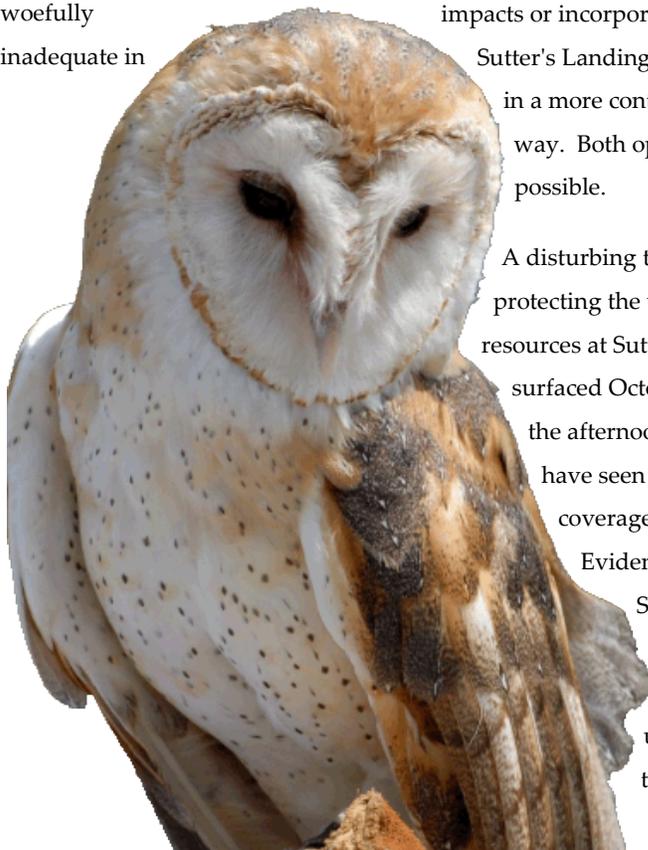
acre of mostly cottonwood trees adjacent to the proposed solar array site.

The ostensible reason given was the problem with illegal camping, camp fires, and methane gas buildup at this former landfill site. SARA and our partners are investigating further and will hold those responsible accountable for any violations of the American River Parkway Plan and applicable environmental laws.

Again, this appears to be a drastic measure taken for a problem that, if given proper public review, would have resulted in a more reasoned solution.

I would encourage everyone who is not familiar with this area of the Parkway to visit, enjoy and marvel at the abundant and varied wildlife.

One night, just after the sun set, leaving memories of an expansive blue sky lit in hues of red and gold, two barn owls raced by just above my head inside of five minutes. They were speeding toward dinner on the proposed solar array site. At least for now the hawks, white-tailed kites and many other species that use these hunting grounds will find food for their dining delight. ■



JOC Development Threatens the Parkway

By Clyde Macdonald

The American River Parkway faces another threat, a LARGE threat.

The federal Bureau of Reclamation and the state Department of Water Resources operate the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project, respectively. Years ago, the two agencies decided to co-locate their water project operating staffs into a Joint Operating Center (JOC). Currently, the JOC is located on El Camino Boulevard in Sacramento, but the lease runs out in 2014.

The agencies' preferred new site is next to the American River Parkway, across the bike trail from the Nimbus Fish Hatchery. The facility would have a number of buildings, 840 parking spaces, eight-foot fences, guards, full nighttime security lighting, and tall communication towers. The site would be subject to federal Homeland Security protection rules – as a possible terrorist target.

The building site is immediately adjacent to the official American River Parkway, but road access to the site would be through the Parkway.

The agencies have two "second choice" sites, both of which are far from the Parkway. The environmentally preferable site,



The proposed JOC location in Gold River, adjacent to the American River Parkway

according to the draft EIR/EIS, would be at Mather Airport.

SARA has been working with local neighborhood groups and locally elected officials to oppose locating the JOC on the Parkway.

The first argument against the site is that it would be imprudent to put the statewide emergency flood center (the JOC does this during flood events) below Folsom Dam -- in an area that would be flooded if there were rare but very high releases from Folsom Reservoir.

The second argument is that federal, state, and local agencies have spent millions to acquire and develop the Parkway into the best river parkway in the western United States and it would be inappropriate to place a huge center (the size of a Walmart Supercenter with a huge parking lot) next to the Parkway.

A third argument is that locating the JOC at the Fish Hatchery will convert this area into an urban site, almost fully blocking the existing wildlife corridor that exists from the high Sierra to confluence of the American River with the Sacramento River.

A fourth argument is that a Homeland Security site should not be built so close to neighborhoods and the heavily-used bicycle trail.

The two agencies held a public meeting on the project at the Aquatic Center in September. Save the American River Association held a press conference before the meeting to oppose the site. Joining SARA were County Supervisor Roberta MacGlashan, County Supervisor Susan Peters, and Rancho Cordova City

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JOC Development Threatens the Parkway

Councilmember Linda Budge.

About four hundred people attended the meeting, all expressing heated opposition to locating the JOC at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery site. No one spoke in favor of the site.

Comments on the Draft EIR/EIS are due in November and SARA will be commenting.

Local opposition includes the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, the Sacramento City Council, the Rancho Cordova City Council, Assemblymember Roger Dickinson, Congresswoman Doris Matsui, and Congressman Dan Lungren. ■

“In every walk with nature ... one receives more than he seeks.”

John Muir

It's Official! The American River Parkway is a Regional Treasure!

By Betsy Weiland

The California Park and Recreation Society plans to award the American River Parkway its “Regional Treasure” designation and include the Parkway in the society’s District II Hall of Honor.

The Parkway will receive the designation at the society’s awards banquet on March 9, 2012, at the Barbara Wackford Community Center in Elk Grove.

The honor is being given in response to a joint application by Save the American River Association and the American River Natural History Association.

The society was founded in 1946 as a nonprofit and an advocate for California park and recreation

professionals. It provides its more than 4,000 members with career development, networking and resources.

District II includes the Northern California counties of Alpine, Amador, Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Yolo and Yuba.

All Parkway friends and advocates are invited to participate in the Award Banquet. A detailed invitation will follow closer to the event.

For more information, please contact Betsy Weiland at flweiland@yahoo.com. ■



Photo courtesy of Charlie Willard

Support County Parks - Buy An Annual Pass

The Pass pays for itself in 10 visits and all funds go directly towards maintaining and operating the 15,000-acre system. For as little as \$50 per year, you can have unlimited access and parking in the parks.

Pass holders receive free daily entry into Regional Parks and annual passes are valid for one year from date of purchase.

Pass Fees Are Based On Use:

Vehicle	\$50
Vehicle + Trailer or oversized vehicle (over 22 feet):	\$100
Vehicle + Horse trailer	\$75
Vehicle and small watercraft:	\$75
Parks supporter pass*	\$50

* This pass is for those who want to support Parks but do not drive to Parks facilities

Where to Purchase your Parks Pass

- Online through the Sacramento County Web site www.co.sacramento.ca.us
- At REI stores in Sacramento, Roseville and Folsom
- Patriot Cycles in Fair Oaks
- Effie Yeaw Nature Center at Ancil Hoffman Park
- Regional Park offices and park kiosks
- American River Parkway Foundation Office at the William B. Pond Recreation Area

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The Grassroots Working Group's Next Phase

Amenities Committee to explore development of a comprehensive and collaborative plan for development of civic amenities (e.g. entertainment, the arts, sports, science, recreation, sustainable agri-tourism and cultural attractions) in the Sacramento region. The GWG plans to participate and send a representative to brief the committee on the regional parks situation. This activity is a logical extension of the GWG work and provides opportunity for the business community to join in efforts to rescue our Regional Parks and Open Space System.

The GWG's work to-date has focused on the establishment of a countywide nongovernmental organization to work in support of the entire Regional Parks system. The idea of a successor entity – first discussed among the GWG in June 2010 – could be modeled on the East Bay Regional Parks Foundation. If formed in time, the successor entity could replace the GWG in responding to outputs of the county advisory committee and continue to develop support for the GWG recommendations or a satisfactory alternative. In the longer term, the successor entity also could raise funds to support parks, conduct education and outreach, and generally support either the county or a regional

parks district – whichever is the final outcome.

There is a need to prevent further deterioration of the Regional Parks and Open Space System while the long-term solution is developed. The GWG believes that means must be found to ensure that the work by the GWG is not wasted and to keep focus on the crisis facing our Regional Parks and local parks until an effective course of action is identified and implemented.

Visit the GWG web page to keep informed of the situation as it develops: www.sarariverwatch.org/grassroots.php. ■

While the Grassroots Working Group believes that its recommendations offer the best chance to rescue our regional parks, the group would be supportive of an alternative that accomplishes the same results with an equal chance for success.

