

RIVERWATCH

SAVE THE AMERICAN RIVER ASSOCIATION, INC.
ORGANIZED AND INCORPORATED MARCH, 1961

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WINTER - 2006

MORE GRASS ROOTS SUPPORT NEEDED FOR SARA

by Alan Wade, President

We are in the midst of a best of times / worst of times scene for those of us dedicated to conservation. Just a few days after Tuesday's November 7th election, the Sierra Club tells us that "the environment has won a resounding victory..." John Doolittle was re-elected, but Pombo was defeated, and the former's power to continue his obsessive push for an Auburn Dam has been dealt a severe blow. Further, poll results show that more of us than ever regard preservation of our natural environment as a high political and personal priority.

What is ahead for SARA, a grass roots organization formed in 1961 to spearhead the creation of the Parkway, and to preserve and protect the Lower American River for future generations? Many good things are happening as we see our 50th Anniversary on the near horizon. Our Board of Directors has been revitalized. We will be introducing our first-ever Advisory Council at the Annual Meeting of our 45th year. (Please read the following article "**SARA Forms Advisory Council**" by Warren Truitt, Vice President)

We have become more effective as we work with our partners, ARNHA (American River Natural History Association) and ARPF, (the American River Parkway Foundation) in the Parkway Coalition.

We helped convince the County Board of Supervisors to ban alcohol on holiday weekends in the Parkway, to control the hooliganism that has become an increasing threat, and we continue with the heavy-lifting as we work toward legislative action leading to the update of the existing (1985) Parkway Plan. Just a few years ago, we had to beg folks to join our Board of Directors—now we have a "waiting list" of enthusiastic and talented people, but the picture is not all sunshine and roses. The Parkway has been subjected to increasing public demand...a recent poll estimates that it now receives far more daily visitors than just a few years ago.

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SARA FORMS ADVISORY COUNCIL

by Warren Truitt, Vice President

The American River and Parkway continues to face multiple challenges as we escalate the 21st Century. The American River Parkway Plan, the document governing the Parkway is in the midst of a complicated and lengthy update process. A realistic flow standard for the Lower American River has not yet been agreed upon. Several highly qualified County Parks leaders have, or will soon be, retired.

Representatives of the cities of Sacramento and Rancho Cordova have been meeting with representatives of the County of Sacramento to discuss the feasibility of managing the Parkway under a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) agreement. The current County Parks Director position is an interim one - apparently being held out as a carrot in the JPA discussions. The Parkway continues to operate on less than a full budget and is in dire need of a long-term full funding mechanism. Serious issues all!

To quote from the Advisory Council proposal document, "The purpose of the Council is to advise the Board and the President, individually and as a group on matters of concern that are within the scope of SARA's mission." Also, Council members are expected to "...initiate / introduce issues or matters of concern prompted by their own special knowledge..." thereby also nudging the SARA Board in a direction beneficial to the river and Parkway.

The Advisory Council concept and the selected members - who come from a variety of backgrounds including environmental, water, legal, management, funding & fund raising, marketing, promotion, and education - will be introduced at SARA's 2006 Annual Meeting on December 2nd.

For the latest news on current issues,
please visit our web site for updates.
www.sarariverwatch.org

EDITOR'S CORNER - by Elke Guenter, Editor

I fell in love with the American River and Parkway the very first time I saw it! The year was 1977 and my family and I had just moved here from the East Coast. I guess one could call it "love at first sight."

Over the years, my relationship with this special place has grown and flourished and when I moved to Rancho Cordova ten years ago, that relationship became even more profound.

Only a chain link fence separates my backyard from the Parkway and all that lies beyond. I consider myself extremely blessed to actually see the river from my windows.

Dusk is one of my favorite times to ride by bike on the trail when the Parkway and river offer a constantly changing panorama of sights, sounds and smells. A brief glimpse of the river reveals one solitary egret at the water's edge, its tall, slender legs partially submerged in glistening ripples of crimson and gold. How can something standing so still look so incredibly elegant and graceful?

Overhead I hear the unmistakable cry of seagulls—a small group is headed upstream, their white bodies bathed in the golden glow of the setting sun. In the distance, stately evergreens are etched sharply against the evening sky. A quote I recently read comes to mind—"the loss of one tree stills a thousand songs."

At other points where the river is fully visible, I am aware of dark, swift-moving shadows silently dipping and darting across the river—swallows are in hot pursuit of their evening meal. As I approach Hazel Avenue, I become aware of commuter traffic but I prefer to think of the sounds as cascading waters of a distant waterfall.

Daytime sounds begin to ebb with the fading sunlight. At times, absolute stillness envelops me and all I hear is the subtle hum of my bicycle tires on the pavement. Suddenly up ahead, two deer appear at the trail's edge. I slow down and we stare at each other briefly, or so it seems, before they nonchalantly wander off and disappear among the bushes and trees.

My reaction to seeing these gently creatures is always the same—I'm absolutely thrilled! The western sky has suddenly lost its last vestiges of color and the cool evening air is punctuated with an occasional chorus of the night. I head for home, refreshed in body, mind and spirit. I am at peace with myself and the world!

Effie Yeaw Story - by Peter Hayes

A new, expanded edition of "Effie Yeaw, A Sketch of Her Life" is on sale for \$4.95 at the nature center in Ancil Hoffman County Park what was named for her. The late Carmichael kindergarten teacher introduced thousands of children to nature, but no so widely known today was her role in the establishment of SARA and the American River Parkway.

Author Frederic R. Gunsky recounts how Effie Yeaw, as an activist in the environmental awakening in the 1950s and 1960s, belonged to a group started by J. Martin "Mike" Weber, science consultant in the County Office of Education.

"Effie pushed us to start thinking of a natural area along the American River, and to consider an American River Parkway," Weber recalled. She became a founder and charter member of SARA and secretary of the organization from the beginning.

The 40-page booklet, publishes by the American River Natural History Association in cooperation with the Sacramento County Historical Society, was expanded to include the story of "Carlyle the Crow," one of the tales the teacher would tell the children.

Everybody needs beauty
as well as bread, places to play in
and pray in, where nature may
heal and give strength to
body and soul alike.

John Muir

CHECK THE SARA WEBSITE:

www.sarariverwatch.org

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MORE GRASS ROOTS SUPPORT NEEDED FOR SARA

(continued from page one)

A stable budget for the Parkway's maintenance and operation is still a fantasy—we are doing minimally ok right now, but next year could well be a different and more depressing story.

Although SARA has been working with other environmental groups through the Water Forum to get the Bureau of Reclamation to establish an adequate flow standard for the river, the political will to get it done has thus far been lacking.

Further, Ron Suter's retirement leaves a vacuum in permanent Parkway management. It is probable that his successor will not be recruited until some new financing and administrative arrangement has been devised for the Parkway, perhaps a Joint Powers Authority. Meanwhile, everyone wants a piece of the Parkway.

The new City of Rancho Cordova is trying out its fledgling political muscle with power plays aimed at nibbling away at the Parkway nature preserve for expansion of its own parks.

We can't be sure what the City of Sacramento wants out of the Parkway in the future, but it is certain that they will want a piece of the action. We continue to take the lead in working with local politicians to insure preservation of the American River and the Parkway as it was conceived by SARA's founders in the early 1960's.

The problems listed are only a few of the vexing problems facing the River and Parkway's ability to survive as a nature preserve and unique urban open space. From its founding to the present time, SARA has been the lead voice for preservation. In order to continue our work, we need a regular and dependable source of funds.

Imagine then, our disappointment to learn that of our approximately 600 members, almost one-third are a year or more overdue. Our 2006 income from membership dues through September 30 is only 40% of our projection and \$6,000.00 less than last year over the same period. We are taking several steps to remedy this challenging problem.

The membership renewal date that reflects one year since the member last renewed, was inadvertently omitted from the Fall 2006 issue. Hopefully this was a one-time occurrence.

We will be sending out a **“we don't want to lose you”** notice to all past-due members in the next few weeks. In addition, we have made it possible for new and current members to sign up and pay through our new **“click and pledge”** service—a secure credit card payment device through SARA's website at www.sarariverwatch.org. Just click on the **“how to help”** button and follow the directions—save paper and stamps and help SARA at the same time.

If you have any questions about your membership status, please call Wanda Denson at 383-1298.

Almost all of our work is done by dedicated volunteers, however, we need financial support for our small infra-structure – which is paramount to our functioning and existence. Occasionally we need financial support for legal fees.

SARA has neither the desire nor the capacity to pester our members with constant notices about their membership status, but in order to keep financially stable, we do need our loyal members to stay current with their dues.

**SARA can't afford to lose you,
nor can the Parkway!!**



AN UPDATE: CARMICHAEL UNDERGROUND CONTAMINATED WATER PLUME:

by Jack Sohl

Most of our readers most likely are aware of the north-western progression of the Aerojet chemical contamination of the aquifer flowing from their plant site under the American River into the Carmichael area. This impingement is similar to the plume penetration into the Rancho Cordova area, where several wells were closed due to chemical contamination.

Representatives from the Carmichael Water District and Aerojet briefed the SARA Board recently on the current status of contamination and the activities being taken to contain and clean-up the contaminated underground water supply. It is hoped that remediation measures are in place before the at-risk wells used by the Carmichael Water District must be closed, resulting in the necessity of taking more water from the Lower American River.

A number of test wells in the Carmichael area were put in place to determine the boundary and movement of the contaminated plume. Design and implementation of a groundwater remediation system has been initiated. One extraction and treatment plant will be sited near the Ancil Hoffman Golf Course in a 6000 square foot facility. This will be the only treatment plant planned for the immediate future.

The architect's drawings of the planned facility show an attractive building that will not have light, sound or aesthetic issues. This facility will extract and treat 864,000 gals per day. Future extraction wells (if needed) will be located based on aquifer response to the first system's operational results. This first system is expected to be operational in mid 2008. Treatment for perchlorate may be required later if allowable safe limits are exceeded. (per-chlorate)

The primary treatment will concentrate on reducing NDMA* levels to mandated minimum levels. Processed water will be used for Hoffman Park Golf Course irrigation and for a pressurized fire protection system in Effie Yeaw Park. For an all-year operation a discharge of treated water into the American River will be necessary.

* N-Nitrosodimethylamine

**CHECK OUT THE SARA WEBSITE:
www.sarariverwatch.org**

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

by Elke Guenter

Is there a biker, hiker, walker, bird watcher, kayaker, fisherman/woman, photographer, runner or nature lover in your life? If so, how about giving a gift membership to SARA? And you will even save time and money by not having to gift wrap anything.

If, on the other hand, you would rather gift wrap something or would like to purchase some additional gifts, the gift shop at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center is a great place to find something special.

The shop has a great selection of both adult and children's books, especially on our local area and more specifically on the American River and Parkway.

There are also some other nature-related items available as well, and, of course, all the proceeds benefit this wonderful refuge in our sprawling urban area.

The Effie Yeaw Nature Center is located in Ancil Hoffman Park, Carmichael - and should you wish to call, the number is 489-4918.

VISIT THE SARA BOOTH

When you see the booth below, please stop in and talk to the SARA representatives. Learn more about SARA and the Parkway.



You can usually find this booth whenever there are events such as Earth Day Events, the Annual Salmon Festival, Eppie's Great Race, and others.

**SARA'S 45TH ANNUAL MEETING IS COMING UP!
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2ND, AT 10:00 A.M.**

AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY COALITION UPDATE

by Warren Truitt

The American River Parkway Coalition was formed in early 2004 in response to proposed Sacramento County budget cuts that threatened closure of the American River Parkway. A December 26, 2003 article by Sacramento Bee writer, Blair Robertson, entitled *Parkway in Peril* was the catalyst for a January 10, 2004 emergency community meeting held at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Over 350 citizens and elected officials attended. It was now clear that enhanced communication and action by Parkway stakeholders was in order.

Representatives from the three historic Parkway protection and preservation organizations, Save the American River Association, (SARA) the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) and the American River Parkway Foundation (ARPF) continue to meet on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month at the Parkway Foundation Volunteer Center in William Pond Park. The combining of resources, ideas and actions has provided the American River Parkway an even stronger steward.

Successful past Coalition collaborations include:

PDA Day (Public Display of Affection) on the Parkway in 2004 and 2005; the **2005 Parkway Coalition Stakeholder Summit** at the County Supervisor's Chambers -attended by over 250 community leaders,

three Summer Holiday trash bag distribution and collections to / from rafters to reduce river and Parkway litter, plus; annual meetings with each of the County supervisors. The Coalition was also a major advocate for the recently activated Parkway alcohol ban on the 3 Summer Holiday weekends.

The Parkway Joint Powers Authority (JPA) discussions between Sacramento County and the cities of Sacramento and Rancho Cordova are of great interest to the Coalition. A possible JPA approach to Parkway management, the Parkway Plan Update and a long-term Parkway funding mechanism are three of the most important issues currently confronting the Parkway. The Parkway Coalition is definitely monitoring each of these situations.

Fourth Quarter, 2006 Coalition agenda topics have included presentations and discussions regarding: the Fair Oaks Bluffs Donor Plaza; status of Lower Parkway clean-ups; Sacramento County Transportation Master Plan; Soil Born Farms; 2006 Salmon Festival, Parkway Mitigation Planting Guidelines and; the American River Parkway Plan Update status. The last Coalition meeting of the year, on December 8th, will be devoted to discussing and laying out the Coalition's 2007 calendar and budget.

SARA representatives to the Coalition are Betsy Weiland, Alan Wade and Warren Truitt. Board members of each of the Parkway Coalition organizations are welcome to attend Coalition meetings.



THE SOUTH DELTA IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

by Felix Smith

The South Delta Improvement Program (SDIP) includes dredging, barrier construction, and channel alignment in the Southern Delta. These activities will eventually lead to additional Northern California water being pumped south from the Delta. This export could increase from 6,680 cfs to 8,500 cfs. Some of the additional water when applied to saline-seleniferous soils will lead to more leaching of selenium and other salts from soils on the San Joaquin Valley's Westside. This selenium leachate will contaminate ground and surface water, including those of managed wetlands and will be taken up via the food chain, by fish and wildlife of the San Joaquin River and the Southern Delta.

With the SDIP improvements in place there is the potential to increase the exports from 6,680 cfs to 8,500 cfs means that additional Northern California water will be needed to meet that demand. A 2 to 3 percent of the increase in the amount of water pumped from the Delta could reach 600,000 acre-feet annually during some years.

If 20 to 25 percent of this increased amount (120,000 to 150,000 acre-feet) of water came from Folsom Reservoir, it could have a severe impact on maintaining an adequate coldwater pool in Folsom Reservoir so necessary to protect salmon and steelhead resources of the American River. This in turn would impact the survivability of summering over steelhead in the American River.

It could also severely impact adult Chinook salmon holding in the Lower American River waiting for the desired water temperature conditions to spawn. It could also increase Chinook salmon pre-spawning mortality as a result of this delay in spawning. Such conditions become critical in those years when American River Basin runoff is average or below. This is especially so when such average runoff and below average runoff years occurs back to back.

During such times there will be great pressure to reduce the storage in Folsom Reservoir to meet irrigation contracts south of the Delta.

The depletion of the coldwater pool of CVP reservoirs will be at the expense of Public Trust resources and values of the American River and other rivers with CVP facilities.

Stream flow fluctuations that occur when trying to meet additional exports and Delta water quality standards will (as they have in the past) result in flow fluctuation in the American River of 500 to 1,000 cfs flows over a period of 7 to 10 days.

Chinook salmon, steelhead and other aquatic resources of the American River has not yet secured adequate institutional protection to assure resources and ecosystem sustainability equivalent to planned objectives, including those of the Water Forum. This protection must be secured and assured before any effort is entertained to pump more from the Delta.

SARA believes that impacts of the SDIP will extend upstream to Federal Central Valley Project (CVP) AND State Water Project (SWP) facilities. SARA believes that the SDIP is another attempt by the SWP and the CVP to pump additional water from an already severely compromised Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta-Bay Estuary that could only worsen the Delta Ecosystem Pelagic Organism Decline.

SARA also believes that exporting additional Northern California water to irrigate Westside soils could further exacerbate the irrigation / selenium drainage / groundwater, surface water, fish and wildlife contamination conditions.

The continued use of water for such an activity is poor and illogical thinking as well as a waste and unreasonable use of the State's waters.

SARA's first priority is that the American River ecosystem and associated native fish species (Chinook salmon and steelhead resources) must be assured a long-term and a high level of renewability by the State Water Resources Control Board before any effort is entertained to export more Northern California water from the South Delta.

THANKS TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS!

These regular, generous donors are in many ways the bread and butter of SARA. Individual memberships are, of course, extremely important as well. We have been fortunate to receive support from Print Tech, Jet Express Mail, CFFU, Granite Bay Flycasters, River City Paddlers,

Central California Canoe Club, Fly Fishers of Davis, American River Raft Rentals, American Fly Fishing Co., and several long time SARA members who prefer to remain anonymous, who are very committed to helping the Parkway. We are grateful to all those who support us.

SARA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

- Alan Wade.....President
- Warren Truitt.....Vice President
- Elke Guenter.....Secretary
- Jack Sohl..... Treasurer
- Frank Cirill.....President Emeritus
- Jim Jones.....Past President

- Wayne Chubb.....Bill Griffith
- Burt Hodges.....Gary Keill
- Mary Beth MetcalfJim Morgan
- Kevin ReganFelix Smith

- Betsy Weiland.....Volunteer & ARNHA Liaison
- Dan Kopp.....CGNA Liaison

- Bob Burrows.....Advisor
- Howard Ross.....Advisor
- Elmer Aldrich.....Advisor

LOCATION FOR SARA BOARD MEETINGS

SARA's Board meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are currently being held in the Conference Room in the County Parks and Recreation Dept., located at 3711 Branch Center Road. From Bradshaw Road turn right onto Ecology Lane - Turn right again into the first parking lot. Call ahead of time for possible changes to date or location.

SARA Website: www.sarariverwatch.org

SARA phone and fax line: (916) 387-1763
SARA E-mail: riverwatch@comcast.net

For general information, call Wanda at 383-1298

Word Processing and Layout by Wanda Denson

NOTE: BECAUSE SARA IS THE PRIMARY ADVOCATE APPEARING BEFORE GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY AGENCIES ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY, YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES AND/OR SPECIAL DONATIONS, ARE NOT TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: SAVE THE AMERICAN RIVER ASSOCIATION, INC. (OR SARA)
MAIL TO: SARA - P.O. BOX 277638 - SACRAMENTO, CA 95827-7638

SAVE THE AMERICAN RIVER ASSOCIATION, INC.
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL AND APPLICATION FORM

WINTER - 2006 ISSUE

NAME: _____

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WANT TO VOLUNTEER? _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ HOME PHONE: () _____

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

WANT TO VOLUNTEER? _____

- \$10.00 FULL TIME STUDENT \$25.00 REGULAR \$50.00 SUPPORTING \$100.00 FAMILY
- \$100.00+ SUSTAINING \$250.00 CORPORATE/BUSINESS \$1,000.00+ LIFETIME/PATRON
- \$ _____ LEGAL FUNDS \$ _____ PARKWAY \$ _____ GIFT \$ _____ OTHER

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***You are cordially invited to attend the 45th Annual Meeting of the
SAVE THE AMERICAN RIVER ASSOCIATION, INC.***

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2006

10:00 A.M. TO 1:00 P.M.

LOCATION: COMMUNITY BUILDING AT THE EFFIE YEAW NATURE CENTER
DIRECTIONS: CALIFORNIA AVE. TO TARSHES DRIVE / ANCIL HOFFMAN PARK ROAD

Our program will honor SARA founders and pioneers and other outstanding advocates. SARA's Board of Directors will be elected, and board members will report on our activities of the past year. In addition, we will be welcoming and installing the members of SARA's new Advisory Council.

If you or someone you know would like to be considered for Board services, please let us know as soon as possible. Refreshments and fellowship will follow the business meeting, along with the first public presentation of Guy Galante's delightful DVD, "The River Moves."
The historic video "STAR" will also be presented once more.

For updates on SARA activities, please visit our web site at: www.sarariverwatch.org

Questions? Call Alan Wade, President: 455-7083 or Wanda Denson, Secretary: 383-1298