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Check, Visa or MC welcome. Insert Visa/MC info below or go to our secure website to donate.

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SAVE THE AMERICAN RIVER ASSOCIATION

RIVERWATCH

VOLUME 48, ISSUE 3

WINTER 2009

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**SARA Honors Frank Cirill**

By Stephen Green

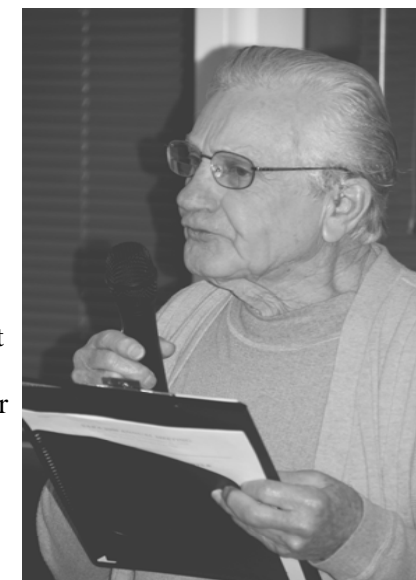
Many leaders are remembered for the monuments and movements they create. Leaders such as Frank Cirill will always be remembered for things that didn't happen. Their monuments are in the form of preserved ecosystems, dedicated open spaces, and protected wildlife habitat and water supplies.

As SARA honors Frank Cirill at our Dec. 5 annual meeting for his more than 40 years of service, we thank him for the fact that there has been no commercialization of Lake Natoma.

We are indebted to Frank for securing the

last undeveloped bluff property on the Lower American River for the parkway. For stopping the development of a 40-acre parking lot within the American River flood plain at CalExpo. For derailing plans for a golf course at Mississippi Bar. For helping guide the update of the recently enacted American River Parkway Plan.

Frank served in various SARA leadership positions during



Frank Cirill, President Emeritus SARA

the 20-year battle to prevent the East Bay Municipal Utility District from taking American River water from the Folsom South

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**Parkway JPA Update**

By Warren V. Truitt, President

The Summer 2009 issue of the *Riverwatch* included an article detailing American River Parkway (ARP) stakeholder concerns regarding certain language contained in a

proposed Parkway Joint Powers Authority Agreement (JPA).

The proposed JPA would, for the first time, extend ARP responsibility and associ-

ated powers beyond the County, to include representatives from, and the associated visions of, the cities of Sacramento, Rancho Cordova and Folsom.

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**SARA ANNUAL MEETING**

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 5TH, 2009**

**EFFIE YEAW NATURE CENTER**

**ARRIVE 9:30-10:00**

**MEETING BEGINS 10:00 A.M.**

- SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF FRANK CIRILL'S 40 PLUS YEARS ON THE SARA BOARD
- "STATE OF SARA" REPORT
- ELECTION OF OFFICERS
- A DELICIOUS LUNCH & HOLIDAY SHOPPING AT THE EFFIE YEAW NATURE CENTER FOLLOWS THE MEETING

## PARKWAY JPA UPDATE

(Continued from page 1)

A stated purpose of the JPA was to ultimately support the establishment of a benefit assessment district, which -- if successful -- would provide supplemental funding to the ARP.

While SARA and other ARP stakeholders are definitely supportive of creative funding solutions for the ARP, some of the language in the existing version of the JPA creates unnecessary and conflicting powers, and thus is not acceptable.

SARA's Betsy Weiland appeared before the July meeting of the Sacramento County Recreation and Parks Commission and cautioned that the JPA should not proceed any further until an opportunity for public input was scheduled. The Commission agreed and a JPA Public Workshop was ultimately scheduled for October 1, 2009.

Between July and October 1, an ad hoc committee of concerned Parkway stakeholders met on several occasions to review and discuss the existing JPA document -- section-by-section. The committee included members from SARA, American River Natural History Association (ARNHA), Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA), Parkway Foundation (ARPF), Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) and the Arden Arcade community.

On October 1, members of the ad hoc committee attended the JPA Workshop and presented each of their concerns to the Parks Commission. Our concerns included:

- Quest for funding cannot fracture responsibility for the Parkway: The primary reason for the ARP's success is that it has, from the beginning, been under the administration and vision of a single entity -- the County of Sacramento, which follows an American River Parkway Plan developed via an open public process. The committee is strongly opposed to (a) creating an opportunity, however remote, for competing visions which could shatter or undermine the single entity governance of the ARP, and (b) the possibility that the hard-won American River Parkway Plan could be watered down, ignored, or subject to individual interpretation.
- Limit the JPA to Special Benefit Assessment (s): The JPA must be limited to the sole purpose of supporting a benefit assessment district to provide supplemental funding to the ARP. No additional powers are necessary.
- Provide a Better Balance on the JPA Board: The existing JPA language proposes a 6-member JPA Board, with four members appointed by cities and two by the county. The committee's position is that this "unbalanced" board could result in city-county conflicts that would not be in the long-term interests of the ARP. The county owns, funds and manages the ARP, and the board makeup should reflect that. The



Listen up folks! This is the real scoop!

Blue Heron

committee has recommended that 50% of the board be appointed by the county and 50% by the cities, as we think that will result in a more cooperative, harmonious atmosphere.

- Independent Citizens Committee with oversight responsibility is needed: Currently there is no provision for citizen funding and spending oversight within the JPA document. An independent committee with authority and responsibility for budget and project oversight is critical to the success of a benefit assessment proceeding. We know from previous projects that property owners are much more likely to support benefit assessments if they can be comfortable that fellow citizens are independently watching the activities being funded. The stakeholder committee testified they would be hard pressed to support an agreement that does not provide for an effective, independent citizen's oversight committee.
- Permanent, long-term stable funding is needed for county

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## Such an Amazing Legacy

(Continued from page 3)

The challenges were many as he began putting the parkway together piece by piece. In the process, he became Sacramento County's first grants man. The county's application for federal money for land acquisition was the first one submitted west of the Mississippi River under an open-space program begun in 1961.

He resigned in 1968 to accept a position with the National Recreation and Park Association in Washington, D.C. But three years later, he was back in Sacramento planning to open a consulting business. Instead, he accepted an offer to head the County Housing Authority. In time, the authority became part of the Community Development Environmental Protection Agency, which also included jurisdiction over parks. Pond went on to head the County Gen-

eral Services Agency and then the Discovery Museum Science and Space Center.

Soon after retiring in 1983, county supervisors paid tribute to Pond by renaming Arden Bar Park the William Pond Recreation Area.

Pond remained active in park issues during most of his retirement years. He also did volunteer work with youth programs and at his church, Westminster Presbyterian in Sacramento.

"Anyone who enjoys the American River Parkway -- the kayaking, the hiking, bike riding



Muskrat on the River

-- owes a debt of gratitude to Bill Pond," said former County Supervisor Illa Collin. "Every time I think of the parkway, I think of Bill."

## SARA Honors Frank Cirill

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Canal. Many local political leaders felt we would never prevail in that fight. But Frank persisted, and we won.

Those are just a few highlights from the many contributions Frank has made in our region -- as a SARA president and board member, as a Sacramento County Parks and Recreation Commissioner, as founder and chair of the Lake Natoma Community Task Force, and as a participant on numerous committees and advisory bodies.

Frank has spent many thousands of hours in meetings and hearings, and conducting research. He did that at the expense of time with his family. He's given up many days of skiing, of meandering on the parkway and other personal pursuits.

Through it all, to every task he brought an engineer's discipline and a probing intellect that produced many positive results.

In honoring Frank, we also honor his wife Doris who has been his partner in many of these

pursuits.

There aren't enough superlatives to thank Frank and Doris for all they have accomplished.

# Thank You

## PARKWAY JPA UPDATE

(Continued from pg. 2)

**Parks:** The county budget problem has left the future of all County Regional Parks in jeopardy. SARA and our stakeholder allies support the examination of the formation of a regional district for County Regional Parks. We are concerned that County Park's scarce resources are being diverted from developing a "permanent, sustainable funding mechanism for Parks". We recognize that unless the other Regional Parks are thriving, usage of the Parkway will likely increase at the same time that County Budget cuts are reducing the ability to patrol and maintain the Parkway.

SARA and our allies believe that this is going to be a difficult proposition that can best be accomplished by a grass-roots effort supported by governmental entities, and we stand ready to help in such an effort.

We continue to support the Parkway stakeholder's frequently expressed desire to leave the Parkway "just as it is" (i.e. a natural setting as much as possible) and support increased funding that can be



Egret landing at Sailor Bar

obtained without doing violence to arrangements that have worked well in the past.

The Recreation and Parks Commission was scheduled to vote on the JPA at their November 19<sup>th</sup> monthly meeting. After the Commission vote, the JPA proposal will be heard and voted upon by the County Board of Supervisors, and then the respective City Councils of Sacramento, Rancho Cordova and Folsom.

### In Memoriam

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

Terisa Draper  
Dector Monzon  
Kevin Regan  
William (Bill) Pond  
John O'Connell

## Such an Amazing Legacy

By Stephen Green

William Pond's granddaughter, Rachel Pond Camero, said it best: "This is such an amazing legacy that he left."

She was referring, of course, to the American River Parkway and the man known as its "Father." We lost William Pond in September at age 91. But his legacy belongs to future generations of parkway users.

In 1959, Pond became the first Director of Parks and Recreation for Sacramento County. He understood the need to provide new recreation facilities for the county's growing population while also preserving the regions natural ecosystems.

He worked closely with SARA, landowners and the strife of interests found in the parkway



Bill Pond (left) pictured with SARA President Warren V. Truitt

corridor. His vision gave us a parkway and natural area that recently was extended to include the Lake Natoma environs. In 2008, the initial 23 miles of the parkway from Discovery Park to Nimbus Dam had visitation of 8.5 million.

"He was truly an enlightened man, and masterful in his ability to build cooperative ties among the agencies with jurisdictions along the parkway," said SARA President Emeritus Frank Cirill.

"He regretted that he could never secure permanent funding sources for parkway operations and maintenance." SARA will continue to pursue that goal until it is achieved.

Prior to coming to Sacramento County, Pond had held park management positions with the State of Washington, and park districts in Renton, Wash., and Beaverton, Ore. Soon after his arrival here, he began exploring the river's 5,000-acre flood plain 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"

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## SARA Has Made Some Changes

By Warren V. Truitt, President

After 19 years of faithful service to SARA, Wanda Denson has decided to step down as SARA's Executive Assistant. Wanda began her involvement with SARA, when SARA's president at the time, Frank Cirill, asked Wanda to take and prepare the SARA Board monthly minutes.

Over the years, additional office support needs surfaced and Wanda took them all on, including preparation of SARA communications, maintenance of the SARA website and membership renewal mailings. Please join me in thanking Wanda for her many years of service to SARA and our best wishes to enjoy whatever activi-

ties she chooses to pursue in the future.

Annemarie Vincent is SARA's new Executive Assistant. Annemarie previously served as the Executive Director of the American River Parkway Foundation, and Policy Manager for Breathe California. In this part-time position, Annemarie will manage the SARA office, serve as the SARA webmaster, publish the *Riverwatch*, SARA's quarterly newsletter, and assist SARA to build our membership base. Please join me in welcoming Annemarie and her many skills to SARA.

Effective November 1, 2009, SARA has a new office address,

phone number and email. Please update your address book!

### Mailing & Office Address:

4441 Auburn Blvd., Suite H,  
Sacramento, CA 95841-4139.

**Phone:** (916) 482-2551

**e-mail:**  
[info@SARAriverwatch.org](mailto:info@SARAriverwatch.org).

**website:** SARAriverwatch.org

## County Reduces Parkway Security & Maintenance

By Stephen Green

Sacramento County Supervisors have cut budgets in all departments in response to record deficits, and those reductions have fallen especially hard on the Department of Regional Parks.

Department Director Janet Baker told RIVERWATCH that her administrative staff was reduced by one half, including the position of the deputy director who oversaw the American River Parkway.

The 19 ranger positions for the parkway patrol were cut to 13, Baker continued. Then three of the positions were restored after a decision was made to divert some \$300,000 in habitat

restoration funds.

The maintenance staff also was reduced. The remaining staff will focus efforts primarily on the bike trail "and there will be a lot less maintenance in park areas," Baker added.

In September, the county cut off vehicle access to six areas of the parkway:

- Sara Park off Rogue River Dr.
- Waterton near La Riviera and Folsom Blvd.
- Gristmill near Butterfield and Folsom Blvd. (*Currently partially open*)



Turkey Vulture at Sunrise Riffle

- Northgate near Hwy. 160
- Sailor Bar at Olive Ave.
- Sailor Bar at Illinois (partially open)

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## Folsom Waterfront Plans Lack Support

By Dan Winkelman

The City of Folsom applied for and received a \$750,000 state grant entitled the Lake Natoma Waterfront and Trail Access Enhancement Project.

The city sought the funding for a project that would occur on Bureau of Reclamation land that is managed by the California State Park system. There are several discrepancies in the document that raise concern about its validity, and the appropriate nature of the project.

The project would create a concrete trail along the shoreline of Lake Natoma from Natoma Inn to the City of Folsom Corporation Yard. It includes the creation of a boat dock under Na-

toma Crossing Bridge and a ramp next to the bridge to provide disabled access to the trail.

The grant request describes State Parks as, "one of the biggest supporters of the project." Yet a memo to the city from Scott Nakaji, superintendent of Gold Fields District of State Parks, rejected the grant proposal.

"I question the real public benefit of the concepts contained in this specific proposal . . ." Nakaji wrote, "and with the mischaracterizations contained in this grant application and the unresolved issues regarding the proposed project. I cannot support it at this time."

To accomplish the disability access described in the grant, a 420-foot ramp would be necessary to meet the 1-in-12 slope standard required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Once completed, the ramp trailhead would not meet accessibility requirements. Do we really think that a disabled person would want to use a ramp that is 1-and-1/3 football fields in length to access the shoreline when Willow Creek and Negro Bar provides drive-up accessibility?

The proposed boat dock would be at the base of a 35 foot cliff where no one would be able to launch. It's doubtful that

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## Folsom Waterfront Plans Lack Support

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anyone who came to paddle on the lake would tie up to the dock and walk up to Sutter Street to shop and dine?

The four major user groups of this path will be discouraged from returning to the park. Runners prefer the current dirt path to concrete. Equestrians certainly prefer dirt paths to concrete. Mountain bikers enjoy

challenging steep dirt paths, and would use the Folsom path at high speed to return to dirt paths. Hikers also prefer dirt trails to concrete paths. There would be a conflict between high-speed bikes and hikers on the new trail.

Finally, to achieve the 1-in-12 slope standard on the new concrete trail, bulldozers would

need to plow away trees and shrubs, wooden bridges over creeks would be demolished, and steep areas would be devastated by repeated passes by the dozers. The natural qualities of the shoreline would be ruined.

The SARA board of directors asked the state to rescind the grant and is urging other organizations to file similar requests.

## Support County Parks! Buy an Annual Pass today

When you purchase a County Parks Pass, it will pay 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: \$100**

Includes oversized vehicles over 22 ft

**Vehicle + Horse trailer: \$75**

**Vehicle + Small Watercraft: \$75**

**Parks Supporter Pass: \$50**

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

You Can purchase your pass by going to the County Parks website!

[Saccounty.net/parks](http://Saccounty.net/parks)

## County Reduces Parkway Security & Maintenance

(Continued from page 4)

There are no longer routine ranger and maintenance services in those areas, and pedestrians are asked to pack out their trash.

The Gristmill site, however, was spared. "We had about 80 people at a community meeting who wanted the site kept open," Baker said. "They are taking responsibility for maintenance...It was a great win, win for everyone."

The cutbacks come at a time when more people appear to be using the parkway rather than travel out of the area to other recreation sites, Baker noted.

Parks employees "all are working a lot harder than in the past," Baker said. "I really admire the dedication of the Regional Parks staff. I am concerned about what

happens next year (during budget deliberations). We have cut everything that we can cut."



Fair Oaks Bluff