

## 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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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.

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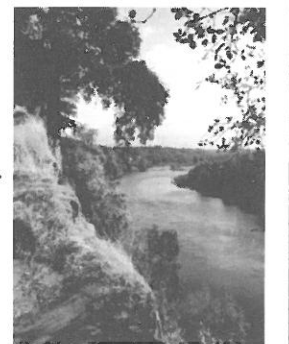
There are no longer routine ranger and maintenance services in those areas, and pedestrians are asked to pack out their trash.

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