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American River Bike Patrol is Providing “Outstanding Service”

The American River Bike Patrol, an all-volunteer unit of the National Ski Patrol and newly formed National Bike Patrol, has been named Outstanding Bike Patrol for 2022.

This is a great honor — especially since the American River Bike Patrol is only in its third year of operations. Nationwide, there are more than 100 bike patrols on urban trails and mountain bike parks.

The bike patrol members are not peace officers. They are on the American River Bike Trail to help people. The volunteers have received certifications for training in first-aid care, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, emergency bike repair, bike patrolling and rules that Parkway visitors are expected to follow. By late November, the patrol had 100 trained volunteers.

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The City and County of Sacramento Have Developed a Homeless “Action Plan”

BY STEPHEN GREEN

Despite a steadily growing number of homeless people in the Sacramento region, the City and County of Sacramento have been hesitant to work together to address what is being called the “Homeless Crisis.”

But the two entities have finally developed a Sacramento Local Homeless Action Plan with broad strategies to deal with the issues related to the homeless population. The key strategies include:

- Build and Scale a Countywide Coordinated Access System that would increase homeless crisis response services.
- Ensure Current and New Emergency Shelter and Interim Housing is Focused on Rehousing.
- Increase Permanent Housing Opportunities.
- Expand Prevention and Diversion Resources.
- Invest in Community Capacity-Building and Training for an expanded workforce to deal with homelessness and engage stakeholder support.

The 27-page plan is available on Sacramento County’s website. There also is a link to signup for e-mails or texts on updates for homeless issues.

The plan concludes by noting that “Success of this plan requires real commitment to implementation.” Stakeholder and business organizations couldn’t agree more. Save the American River Association (SARA) and other organizations will be closely monitoring the plan’s implementation and how money is spent.

Local officials estimate that since 2019 the county’s homeless population has numbered between 16,500 and 20,000 yearly. About 23 percent are adults with children and 45 percent are unsheltered.

Eleven percent of the people in Sacramento County are African American, but among the homeless about 39 percent are African American.

One out of four adults have been homeless for 12 months or more. One out of five adults report having a severe mental illness. One in ten report having a substance use disorder. People with daily involvement with homeless people, however, contend that the number with a substance abuse problem is much higher than one in ten.

The Sacramento County Coroner reported that 199 bodies of homeless people were brought to his facility in 2021. But the actual number of homeless deaths could have been significantly higher since many

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Action Plan

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of the deceased aren't taken to the coroner.

County spending on homeless service and programs continues to rise. In the 21/22 fiscal year, the county budgeted \$181 million. But even that substantial amount was not enough to keep up with the demand for services and programs.

On Nov. 15, the Board of Supervisors approved spending \$22,825,675 to acquire a vacant building on 13 acres in North Highlands. It is to become the third and largest Safe Stay Community the county has funded. Unsheltered people can stay there and engage in supportive services to aid them in exiting homelessness.

The building will provide space for up to 140 cabins for 160 people. In the vacant land near the building, there will be space for 50 cars and recreational vehicles housing homeless people.

During the last legislative session, SARA members worked with local legislators to secure \$25 million in state funds to provide shelter and services for homeless people living in the American River Parkway where there has been significant destruction of the natural environment.

In 2021, about 15 percent of the Parkway was burned including a Sacramento State University habitat restoration program at Bushy Lake. Most of the fires were started at or near illegal campsites. SARA members hope to gain more funding during the new legislative session to aid homeless people. ■

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Bike Patrol

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In 2002, the volunteers conducted 1,295 patrols, spent 3,500 hours patrolling and covered 27,062 miles on patrol.

They assisted 3,925 Parkway users, repaired 296 bikes, responded to 108 medical emergencies and made 911 calls 31 times. They also provide emergency services for major events such as the California International Marathon, IRONMAN California, and the Great American Triathlon. And recently, they began expanding their patrols on the El Dorado Trail which runs 37 miles from Folsom to El Camino.

Since the patrol was founded, they have been involved in two life-saving instances. Most of the injuries have involved scrapes and burns, according to Team Leader John

Poimiroo. Several people broke collar bones and one lady suffered a broken pelvis when her bike was t-boned by a coyote.

"Most of the interactions with people on the Parkway have been extremely positive," Poimiroo said.

Their work has been praised by Park Rangers on the Parkway and the state Assembly passed a resolution commending the bike patrol "for the outstanding contributions it has made to the local community through its services..."

Leaders of the bike patrol are looking for more volunteers to join their team. For more information on the American River Bike Patrol, visit:

AmericanRiverBikePatrol.org ■



The American River Bike Patrol was honored by the California State Assembly in October 2022, with presentation of a proclamation signed by Assembly Members Kevin Kiley (6th A.D.), Ken Cooley (8th A.D.) and Jim Cooper (9th A.D.) for being named the finest bike patrol in the nation.

Better Management of Dams is Needed to Save California Fish

More than half of California's 129 species of native fishes have been rated as heading for extinction and seven species already are extinct.

What is to blame?

There are a number of factors. But the most dominant one is the more than 1,500 dams and reservoirs in California.

The issues were recently detailed in a California WaterBlog by Peter B. Moyle, Associate Director of the Center for Watershed Sciences and Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of California, Davis, and Anna Sturrock, Lecturer in Marine Ecology and UKRI Future Leaders Fellow at University of Essex, Colchester, UK.

"Dams block access to major upstream spawning and rearing areas for salmon, steelhead trout and other native fishes," they wrote. "In California, 70% of critical upstream habitat for salmon and steelhead has been blocked. Below the dams, their habitats are often drastically changed by the absence of high flow events that shift and reshape the riverbeds. Such flows create the complex off-channel habitats needed for juvenile rearing and to maintain a diverse fish fauna.

"The so-called tailwaters below a dam may be cold enough to support salmon and trout, but the embedded substrate limits invertebrate production for food and makes digging nests (redds) for spawning difficult to impossible. As water warms up with distance from the dam, and as flows are further reduced by diversions, non-native species such as carp, catfishes and basses become dominant in the warm pools of remnant, diked river channels.

"The habitat, flow and thermal regimes below dams typically bear little resemblance to the historic regimes that supported native fishes and cued important physiological and ecological



Folsom Dam

events. The key ingredient for native fish habitat (cool, high-quality water), is greatly reduced or absent. This water is increasingly stored in reservoirs and not available to native fishes at the right times."

When some of the larger dams were built in the 1950s and 60s, many of the native fishes adapted well and became abundant in the reservoirs. But many state fish and game employees and anglers regarded them as trash fish that were suppressing populations of game fish through competition and predation.

State workers began poisoning fish in reservoirs (euphemistically called "chemical control operations") and those operations continued until the 1980s.

By then, however, native fish were being killed by introduced predators such as largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, striped bass and channel catfish. These non-native fishes thrive in reservoirs. Only a few native species adapted to reservoir life including the prickly sculpin, Sacramento sucker and rainbow trout.

Despite the damage that large dams and reservoirs have caused to river environments and fish populations, it is

generally acknowledged that they are essential for managing water in California's highly variable climate. Californians depend on them for water supply, hydropower, flood management and recreation. What is needed is major change in the way reservoirs are operated.

A team of scientists for the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) recently produced models for operating reservoirs to improve the state's freshwater ecosystems. A Ecosystem Water Budget would be created for each reservoir so they can be flexibly managed with timing of releases varied to create the most environmental benefits.

They concluded that the best way to administer the Ecosystem Water Budget is through a designated trustee who has the authority to allocate the water, prepare annual plans for its use, evaluate performance and coordinate with a range of parties including downstream restoration managers, reservoir operators, water users and regulators.

The team's report, titled "Storing Water for the Environment," can be found on the PPIC website: www.ppic.org ■

Four Klamath River Dams to be Removed

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has approved removal of hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River that have blocked salmon and steelhead trout migrations for more than a century.

The decision is a major victory for the Karuk, Hoopa Valley and Yurok tribes, and fishing and environmental groups that have fought for removal of the four dams for decades. The tribes' cultures, economies and spiritual lives are tied directly to the health of the Klamath watershed and the fish that spawn in it.

The Klamath is California's second largest river and fish migrations today are less than five percent of those that supported local tribes for thousands of years.

Three of the dams are in Siskiyou County, the Copco 1, Copco 2 and Iron Gate Dams. The J.C. Boyle Dam is the fourth structure in Klamath County, Oregon.

This will become the largest dam removal project in the country with costs estimated to exceed \$450

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Roland H. Brady III and Crystal Tobias were honored at SARA's annual meeting on Dec. 3 for their ongoing project to remove trash and debris from Steelhead Creek. As of late November, more than 157 tons had been recovered from in and around the creek. They were presented with framed photos of the Bald Eagles that have been nesting on the bluff above Lake Natoma. The photos were taken by Kathy Kayner who also took the photo of Roland and Crystal at the meeting.



SARA Membership Donations

July — October 2022

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SARA appreciates the support of our generous members. Without your support, SARA would not be able to continue our role as *Guardians of the American River and Parkway since 1961*. New and renewing members are listed in *RiverWatch* according to their preference (indicated on the SARA membership/renewal form).

In Memoriam

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. The money is used to further SARA's advocacy work on behalf of the Parkway.

Contributions may be made by check or online via SARA's website.

SARA also has a Legacy program. For information on the program, please contact the SARA office. ■

"Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed."

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON WHEN HE SIGNED THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT IN 1973



Dams

Continued from Page 4

million. California has pledged \$250 million for the work and another \$200 million is to be contributed by PacifiCorp (former owner of the dams) from surcharges on ratepayers on both sides of the border. The Copco 2 dam is to be removed by summer 2023 and removal of the other dams are to be completed by the end of 2024.

As expected, a group of water users in Siskiyou County immediately filed a lawsuit to stop removal of the dams. They claim the dam removals will damage the river which has protections under the federal Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. Advocates for the dam removals doubt that the suit will prevail, but it probably will delay the removal process.

The decision to remove the dams came almost 20 years after a catastrophic fish kill left more than



Klamath River

70,000 adult salmon dead and rotting along the banks of the Klamath before they could spawn. The fish perished from disease spurred by low, warm water conditions in river.

That disaster galvanized the collective will of the Klamath River tribes, community members, fishers, conservations and others who launched the two-decades-long effort to un-dam the Klamath and bring the salmon home. ■



The Iron Gate Dam near Holbrook, California

The decision to remove the dams came almost 20 years after a catastrophic fish kill left more than 70,000 adult salmon dead and rotting along the banks of the Klamath before they could spawn.

Sandhill Cranes

California's Central Valley is one of the best places to see Sandhill Cranes (*Antigone canadensis*). Tens of thousands of them migrate to the valley to spend the winter from as far away as Siberia and Alaska.

The Sandhill Cranes are large ashy gray wading birds with bare red-topped heads, white cheeks, long sharp bills and long black legs. They can stand more than four-feet tall and have a wingspan of up to 90.6 inches.

Large family flocks tend to winter in wetlands and agricultural lands. During the day they fly to surrounding landscapes to feed. The best time to see them is at dawn or dusk as they are leaving or arriving at their overnight roosting sites.

They are best known for their dancing skills. Courting cranes stretch their wings, pump their heads, bow and leap into the air in a graceful and energetic way. They bugle loudly – garoo-a-a-a – and can be heard up to two miles away. Large groups often fill the air with their distinctive rolling cries.

The cranes have the longest fossil history of any bird. The earliest known fossil was estimated to be 2.5 million years old and was unearthed in the Macasphalt Shell Pit in Florida.

On Nov. 3, 2022, Paul Miller photographed a 36-year-old banded crane at the Consumnes River Preserve. The USGS Bird

Banding Laboratory identified it as being banded on June 6, 1986, at the Alturas Ranches in Modoc County. It was too young to fly when banded and it's sex was unknown. A 40-year-old banded crane was once identified in the San Luis Valley.

Although some cranes start breeding at two-years of age, others may reach the age of seven before breeding. They mate for life and stay with their mates year-around. Females lay one-to-three eggs, but usually only one lives long enough to fledge. The chicks leave the nest within eight hours of hatching and are even capable of swimming. Juveniles stay close to their parents for nine-to-ten months after hatching.

Cranes must protect their nests and themselves from predators such as coyotes, raccoons, eagles and owls. They attack aerial predators by leaping into the air and kicking their feet forward. They take on terrestrial predators by spreading their wings and hissing, eventually resorting to kicking.

According to California Audubon, the best places to see the Sandhill Cranes are the Consumnes River Preserve, Staten Island in The Delta, the Merced National Wildlife Refuge and the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge in the southern San Joaquin Valley. ■

Support County Parks — Buy An Annual Pass

For as little as \$60 per year, you can have unlimited access and parking in the parks. All funds go directly towards maintaining and operating the 15,000-acre system.

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:	\$60
Vehicle + Trailer/Boat/RV:	\$120
Senior Citizen Vehicle*:	\$30
Senior Citizen Vehicle + Trailer/Boat/RV*:	\$60

** Senior discount applies to ages 65 or older and must have proof of age at time of purchase.*

Where to Purchase Your Parks Pass

- Online through the American River Parkway Foundation Web site arpf.org/visit
- 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 ■



Sandhill Crane—Photo courtesy of Sacramento Audubon and Paul Miller



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River and Parkway Since 1961*

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\$10-\$24	Student	\$25-\$49	Regular
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