

RIVERWATCH

VOLUME 46, ISSUE 1

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

SPRING - 2007

SARA in the 21st Century

by Warren Truitt, President



In 1981, our family moved to Fair Oaks from the Bay Area. Shortly thereafter, we discovered the American River Parkway and locked our anchor into the community.

During the early eighties, I read about an organization named Save the American River Association, and their ongoing battle with the East Bay Municipal Utility District – to keep the Lower American River from becoming a creek. I immediately sent a check to SARA and became a member.

Against unbelievable odds, this relatively tiny band of determined volunteers, affectionately known as SARA, won the court case, and kept water flowing to the confluence with the Sacramento River.

In December, 2003, I attended my first SARA Annual Meeting. I was thrilled as I finally met some of the selfless individuals who have defended the river and Parkway since 1961. In 2004, I was asked to join the SARA Board and became Vice President in 2005.

As the incoming President, I want to share SARA's vision of our role as we face 21st Century challenges to the American River and Parkway. SARA is not only proud to be the organization responsible for the founding of the Parkway, but also the body the community continues to look to – to lead the effort to preserve and protect the water, land, flora and fauna that is the Parkway.

As SARA's 50th Anniversary approaches, in 2011, our Parkway challenges are not dissimilar in magnitude to the ones the SARA founders faced. Current issues include: explosive growth, potential overuse and loss of habitat, competition for funding, Parkway leadership changes, water flow and quality issues, as well as inappropriate development in close proximity to the Parkway.

The American River Parkway's most serious need is adequate long-term funding. The current County Parks leadership is listed as *Interim* despite the significant credentials. The County supervisors, current elected stewards of the Parkway, are in discussion with the cities of Sacramento and Rancho Cordova regarding a possible Joint Powers Authority approach to Parkway management.

The Lower American River still lacks a necessary flow standard, and sewage spills by Sierra communities, lacking adequate treatment capacity, threaten the health and safety of the Lower American users.

The American River Parkway Plan Update – the first since 1985 – was approved by both the City of Sacramento and the County of Sacramento, yet still needs to go through the EIR process before being sent to the State Legislature – with adoption expected in 2008. Security and stability are needed.

(continued on page 4)

(See very important article regarding The Flood Assessment Vote on page 9)

Editor's Corner

Elke Guenter, Editor

"A time comes when silence is betrayal". Thus wrote Dr. Martin Luther King over 40 years ago.

In reading Alan's reflections in this issue plus knowing SARA's long history, silence has never, ever been an option for this relatively tiny band of warriors!! And, as Alan further states, there was, at one time, just a "handful of Board activists who carried the load." Yes, I remember it well—there were only about 7 of us at the turn of the 21st Century. And here we are in 2007, what a phenomenal change!!!

I have, on occasion, come under "friendly fire" by several well-meaning, fellow board members that as editor I need to be much more ruthless in slashing lengthy articles. So, I hereby let it be known that I have carefully considered the length of two articles in particular in this issue and have exercised my editor's prerogative to print them in their entirety!!

"Facts do no cease to exist because they are ignored." Aldous Huxley

Calendar of Events

Creek Week: A Kaleidoscope of Wonder
April 20-28 - Clean-up day, April 28, starting at 9:00 a.m. www.creekweek.net or call: 454-4544

Wildflower Weekend—Wildflower exhibit and native plant sale - April 21-22 - 10-4 p.m.
Crawford's Barn, 2715 Tiber Dr. Sacramento
www.sacvalleynps.org or call 812-2876

Earth Day – Act locally - live sustainably
Sunday, April 22 – 11-5
Main Quad, CSUS

Parkway Half Marathon – 1st Annual
A Race to Benefit the American River Parkway
May 5 - Two separate courses for runners and walkers - www.parkwayhalf.com
or call: 722-3481

Update Citizens Advisory Committee

by Betsy Weiland

On January 30, 2007, the Board of Supervisors heard the request from County Planning Staff and the American River Parkway Plan Update Citizens Advisory Committee to accept the Parkway Plan Update as recommended by the Planning Staff and the Committee.

After three plus hours of testimony from a large turnout of committee members as well as the public, the Board voted, 4 to 1, to move the Plan forward as recommended, with acceptable modifications, for environmental review. Much time was spent hearing requests for changes to the recommendations from Rancho Cordova City Councilwoman Linda Budge and Cordova Parks District representative Lee Freschette.

As the Parkway Plan continues to move forward through the process, SARA, with the help of many others, will closely monitor its progress.

There is no amount of thanks that can adequately express SARA's gratitude to Ms. Sunny Williams with the County Planning Department. She served as the Project Manager on the American River Parkway Plan Update, and it can truly be said that it was her dedication, guidance, and countless hours of hard work over the past two plus years that led us to the successful effort to date.

THANK YOU, SUNNY!

CHECK THE SARA WEBSITE FOR UPDATES
www.sarariverwatch.org

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SAVE THE AMERICAN RIVER ASSN., INC.
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American River Watershed Conference - April 12 - 13, 2007

by Felix Smith



The American River watershed is a unique resource of the Greater Sacramento - Central Sierra Region of California.

On April 12, the new – proposed Lower American River flow standard, its importance and its implementation will be discussed by representatives of the Water Forum, California Department of Fish and Game, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Fish and Wildlife Service. This is part of an all day Fish Workshop.

This Region makes important contributions to the economic well being, environmental, recreational and aesthetics to residents and visitors alike.

Factors affecting the health of the river and watershed include increasing flood control requirements, demands for water to meet local and areas south of the Delta, climate change, land use, and the need to protect public trust resources, uses and values of the Lower American River, just to list a few.

The conference theme is *"Factors Affecting the Health of the River."* This year's conference will be in conjunction with Local Government Commission and the California Extreme Precipitation Symposium.

On April 12, the opening plenary session will be a panel discussion:

Climate Change,

Land Use and the American River:

How will the Region Face its Future?

This will be followed up with topic discussions about the Folsom Dam modification, flood protection, climate variability, climate change and watershed assessment will be stressed.

Status of Chinook salmon spawning and escapement, status of steelhead of the Lower American River will be reviewed. During the afternoon scientific and technical papers focusing on river ecology, biology, hydrology and hydraulics will be presented.

Also on April 13 will be the 2007 California Extreme Precipitation Symposium. The theme is: Estimating Extreme Floods in California's Central Valley.

Who should attend: Agency and industry scientists and managers, local government water and land use managers and regulators and members of the general public. Cost is \$40.00 per day and you can register through the CSUS.

Students from high school and college are encouraged to attend the management and technical sessions at no cost; just show your student body card at the front registration desk. More information is available on the conference website at www.cce.csus.edu/conferences. SARA is proud to be participating in and a sponsor of this American River Watershed Conference of 2007.

Check our website for updates:

www.sarariverwatch.org

SARA in the 21st Century, (from page one)

To address these challenges, SARA is taking several steps:

Advisory Council: At our December, 2006 Annual Meeting, SARA introduced the first 12 members of our new Advisory Council. These individuals, from diverse backgrounds, including environmental, water, legal, fund raising, promotion, management and political, will serve as a *brain trust* to advise the SARA Board on issues within the scope of SARA's mission. (see page 7)

Networking: SARA is inviting to each of our monthly Board meetings a representative from other American River & Parkway stakeholder groups – to define their organization's mission. By serving as the *hub*, SARA intends that each added *spoke*, i.e. stakeholder group, will make our *wheel* of influence the strongest and most respected possible.

Connecting: Our SARA Board members regularly communicate, meet with and testify before elected officials at the City, County and State level, regarding issues affecting the River and Parkway. In addition, SARA is a founding member of the Water Forum, American River Parkway Safety Coalition and American River Parkway Coalition. Board members also serve on several other boards and committees associated with our work. Most recently, the Board had a strong presence on the UCAC (Update Citizens Advisory Committee) - a longer than two-year process. At times, SARA board members appear at still other civic organizations in an effort to educate the public at large about our mission.

Education & Stewardship: It is abundantly clear to the SARA leadership that our mission must include an educational element. This includes reaching out to and including students. After all, our youth will be the future stewards of the American River & Parkway. In 2006, SARA welcomed our first student intern, Chelsea McDaniel, from C.K. McClatchy Senior High School. Her impact has been so positive that we intend to continue and likely expand the student intern program.

Over the last several years SARA has also had a close working relationship with Guy Galante, a 6th grade teacher at the Gold River Discovery Center in

Gold River who not only uses the River and Parkway as a living, outdoor classroom, but also involves his students and often their parents in regular monthly clean-up efforts. (See Chelsea's article on page 8)

Water Watch: SARA continues to push for an American River flow standard, as we have done for years, to assure protection of flows in the River while simultaneously meeting area water needs. Our most recent effort was to get the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to commit to a timetable and urging other stakeholders to contact the Bureau as well. As of this writing, there has not been any response from the Bureau.

In addition, we are aligning with other water watchdog stakeholders to monitor and address inappropriate sewage releases into the Upper American River by dozens of smaller Sierra communities. Alan Wade, our immediate past president, has taken on the responsibility of monitoring and reporting on Central Valley Region Water Quality Control Board sessions—where such issues should be addressed.

Membership and Funding: These go hand in hand. SARA realizes we must strengthen our base by increasing our membership, not only to maintain our viability but also to fund our Parkway outreach, education and advocacy efforts via membership donations. Our goal is to increase our membership by the end of 2007 by 350 members. SARA has been guilty of not sending timely renewal reminders and worse yet, not actively seeking new members.

501(c)(3) Tax Status: We are currently awaiting an IRS decision to change from our 501(c)(4) status which is not tax deductible to a 501(c)(3), in which case all donations would be tax deductible. We have reason to believe that should this come about, SARA contributors would increase their donations. Escalating threats to the American River and Parkway require an enhanced response and outreach.

In closing, I ask that each reader imagine what would happen to our greater community should the American River & Parkway not have adequate river flows to support the dependent habitat, or, due to lack of funding, not have necessary maintenance and ranger protection. The American River and Parkway belongs in the center of our community as it is our sole refuge and binds so many of us to this area.

Reflections on my term as SARA's President

by Alan Wade, Immediate Past President



In the late 1990's, two SARA Board members (Jack Sohl and I) stopped for a beer in the midst of a particularly idyllic summer kayak trip down the Lower American River. Speculating about SARA's future, we wondered if our then 35 year old organization had outlived

its usefulness. Frank Cirill, at that time our president for more than eight years, had just spear-headed a legislative victory preserving Bushy Lake near Cal Expo from becoming a parking lot. And SARA's victory (along with others) in the 20-year plus law suit against EBMUD in the Judge Hodge decision still gave us a sense of optimism about the future of the River and the Parkway

We were unable to envision at that moment the challenges that were ahead amounting to what we might call the effort to kill the River and the Parkway by a thousand cuts. Put simply, we were unaware of what have seemed over the past eight years of my presidency to be a never ending stream of efforts to nibble away at the so-called (and rightly so!) *Crown Jewel of Sacramento*.

It is impossible in this small space to properly treat a saga that someday may be told in a manner better suited to its import in the recent social history of Sacramento. Here, I must be forgiven if I reduce to bullet point form a listing of accomplishments and challenges. Many of the latter are still confronting us, and have occupied my eight-year stint as SARA President. Having celebrated SARA's 40th Anniversary with a picnic on the Parkway in 2001, we already were well aware that closing shop was not an option.

Our mission was a tough one, indeed. We had little money, a small office in the home of a dedicated half-time secretary, and an apparently dwindling membership of about 300 dedicated folks, most of whom are of the older generation.

We also were increasingly aware of the new challenges facing the Parkway, and learned that no other organization was ready to take up the slack. Below are just a few of the issues that we took on:

- Became one of forty stakeholder organizations to sign the Water Forum Agreement in April, 2001, after six years of active participation by four SARA board members in the successful struggle to reach voluntary agreement as to the preservation of the Lower American River and the reasonable distribution of scarce water resources through 2030;
- After a disastrous accidental discharge of untreated sewage into Lake Natoma from Folsom's overburdened facility, aggressively renewed our role as watchdog over the enforcement procedures of the state enforcement agency; this role continues today as we look not only at Folsom, but also at Colfax and other growing upstream communities with inadequate wastewater treatment facilities.
- Prepared and sent dozens of letters to the editor and to government agencies on behalf of maintaining the flow of the river (not completely resolved even now), and keeping it clean;
- Devoted hundreds of volunteer hours meeting with government officials and especially with the nominal official stewards of the Parkway, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors;
- Took the lead in quickly responding to the late 2003 "Parkway in Peril" budget cuts that threatened the closing of the Parkway—organizing a "town hall" meeting that led to the creation of the Parkway Coalition with our sister organizations, ARNHA (American River Natural History Association) and ARPF, (American River Parkway Foundation).

(continued on page 6)

REFLECTIONS (from page 5)

- Played a key role in updating the 1985 Parkway Plan and insisting on maintaining the naturalistic open space character of the Parkway in the update process—still ongoing and pending a complex and by no means certain political process and outcome.
- Enhanced and improved our quarterly publication *RIVERWATCH*, and established our first website, www.sarariverwatch.org to expand our ability to communicate quickly and to relate to a new audience of younger Parkway and River devotees;
- Held a Board “retreat” in 2004, and agreed to expand our mission to include concerns for the entire watershed of the Lower American River, as well as expand our network of relationships with other who share our goals.
- Fought and “won” a lawsuit against Sacramento County, requiring a McMansion builder to observe proper environmental safeguards in plans for building in the Parkway’s Combining Zone - again, an ongoing issue in which we have taken leadership and provided financial resources by establishing a Parkway Defense Fund under “Friends of ECOS”;
- Encouraged and helped neighborhood organizations in Parkway-related legal fights, such as the successful effort in behalf of the Fair Oaks Bluff by the Save the Bluffs organization, and the subsequent beating back of an effort by an individual to erect a 10,000 square foot mansion overlooking the Bluff and the River;
- Expanded our Board of Directors, from the hard-bitten and dedicated six or seven on hand in 2000, to our present full board of 15 members, (with a waiting list!) with the support of the newly created 14 member Advisory Council, thereby expanding our reach of support in new directions.

- Embarked upon more effective internal “housekeeping” and administration, including the promulgation of an annual budget, a little over \$20,000 at this time—making SARA what I would call one of the “leanest and meanest” grass-roots organizations around; we have also been aware of the need to provide our non-pareil secretary, Wanda Denson, with a few office tools required for productivity.

Note that I have left out many, many issues and accomplishments, nor have I mentioned most of the dozens of dedicated, smart, and wonderful human beings who have made my presidency a labor of love. I could not possibly begin to mention them by name without either not doing justice to them, or neglecting others who should have been named.

Having said that, I must mention the folks at Print Tech, who early in this century volunteered, without solicitation, to take over *gratis* the printing of the *RIVERWATCH*, an enormous help to us in keeping the ongoing record of the complex political and social process involved in, well, serving as watchdog, which consists of (dare I say?) “Watching and Dogging” those who would do harm to the vision of our founders. I must also express appreciation to Jet Express Mail, who handles the mailing distribution of the Riverwatch.

Another exception to my rule of not mentioning people by name is Warren Truitt, who has taken on SARA’s presidency at a time marked not only by many issues that remain on the table, but a whole new set of challenges for the little but very effective grass roots group known as the *Save the American River Association*.

We need more dedicated members, we need a little more money (not a lot), and it is time for new leadership to take over. I know of no one more ready and capable of doing that than Warren Truitt.

See update on Alcohol Ban - page 7

*CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATES:
www.sarariverwatch.org*

SARA INTRODUCES ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Elke Guenter

The SARA Board of Directors is proud and honored to introduce the 14 members of this newly organized Council.

This outstanding group of men and women come from a variety of backgrounds, including environmental, water, legal, management, funding and fund raising, marketing, promotion and education. Their combined knowledge and expertise will greatly enhance SARA's mission as we navigate the increasingly turbulent waters of the 21st Century.

Elmer Aldrich - Bill Berry
Dave Clark - Maxine Clark
Illa Collin - Alcides Freitas
Les Gabriel - Jane Hagedorn
Bob Hanna - Pam Lapinski
Ron Stork - Ron Suter
Stephanie Taylor
Leo Winternitz

To quote from the Advisory Council proposal document, "The purpose of the Council is to advise the Board and the SARA 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 and introduce issues or matters of concern prompted by their own special knowledge...thereby also nudging the SARA Board in a direction beneficial to the American River and Parkway."

"E verybody 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

PROGRESS MADE ON AB 951 ALCOHOL BAN ON AMERICAN RIVER

Warren Truitt, President

On March 28th, AB 951, a bill sponsored by Assembly Member Dave Jones was heard before the Assembly Governmental Organizational Committee at the State Capitol. AB 951 would ban alcohol (whether in open or closed containers) on non-motorized vessels on the portion of the American River between Hazel and Watt Avenues during the summer holiday periods. Currently, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors prohibits alcohol on land portions along the river.

Warren Truitt, President of SARA, gave supporting testimony on behalf of the various Parkway stakeholder and user organizations. Undersheriff George Anderson represented Sacramento County, and provided information and statistics from a law enforcement perspective.

Truitt summarized the rapid and alarming decline in acceptable behavior and the general disregard for the Parkway during these periods – primarily by rafters – many from out-of-town, over the last several years. Truitt then stated, "We do not want our American River Parkway to turn into a Spring Break Circus for out-of-control young persons. *If we do not get control now, the problem will only get worse – as it has for the last 3 years.*"

The committee was informed that volunteers from SARA and other Parkway Coalition organizations – had participated in a trash bag and collection effort on the summer holiday weekends – in an attempt to keep trash out of the River. Although several truckloads of trash were collected at the receiving end, it only made a small dent in the problem. The river bottom – along the route of the rafts, was a mess of literally tons of cans, bottles, papers, and assorted materials discarded by the rafters.

Undersheriff Anderson's testimony described the level of indecent and unacceptable behavior including: attacks on innocent rafters, fighting on the rafts, on "Gilligan's Island" and other locations along the river; nudity & unacceptable sexual conduct; and treating the water and the banks of the river as a bathroom and garbage dump – "as out-of-control." (see page 10)

SARA's Student Intern

Elke Guenter

SARA has had the good fortune of having our first ever student intern during this current academic year. Chelsea McDaniel is a senior at C.K. McClatchy Senior High School. In addition to the projects she has pursued throughout the year, she has also been an eloquent voice for her generation by appearing at such public hearings as the Board of Supervisors and LAFCO. (Local Area Formation Commission)

As Felix Smith, her primary mentor has stated so well, "I have great confidence that whatever career choice Chelsea makes, she will be successful and will be a strong advocate for the environment. She is a focused and dedicated young lady with a outgoing personality. She would be an asset on the staff of any business."



Chelsea McDaniel, SARA Intern

The eyes of the future are looking back at us
and they are praying for us to see beyond
our own time.

They are kneeling with clasped hands
that we might act with restraint, leaving
room for the life that is
destined to come.

To protect what is wild is to protect
what is gentle Perhaps the wilderness
we fear is the pause within
our own heartbeats, the silent space
that says we live only by grace.
Wildness lives by this same grace.

Terry Tempest Williams



My Experiences as an Intern for SARA

Chelsea McDaniel

I became involved with SARA last summer when I contacted them about becoming a volunteer. Since then I have taken on the role of intern which has enabled me to become more knowledgeable about the Parkway and what it takes to protect it. Through this internship I have had the opportunity to work with activists, fish & wildlife specialists, environmentalists, & to learn extensively about environmental law.

Over the summer I began working with Felix Smith on a project involved with comparing the water qualities of the Lower American River and the Sacramento River and evaluating what factors contributed to the differences between the rivers. This was a great introduction to the American River Parkway and it helped me to realize what a valuable area it is.

SARA has also been a great resource of information for me. Just recently I had to write a paper for my government class and Alan Wade recommended that I write about the Parkway Plan Update. Frank Cirill helped me tremendously and gave me all of the information about the update project. I was even able to partake in the update process by attending one of the city planners meetings.

I have also become involved with the effort to get LAFCO to adopt strong environmental policies. Through my involvement with SARA I have gained a better understanding of my role as well as the community's role in the environment.

All of the opportunities that I have had have been great experiences that I will take with me to college. I plan to attend UC Santa Cruz and because of SARA I will be well prepared to be involved with environmental advocacy.

Those who contemplate the beauty of
the earth find reserves of strength
that will endure as long as life lasts.

Rachel Carson

MODEST FLOOD PROTECTION IS WITHIN OUR REACH

Elke Guenter

Many of us, as residents of the greater Sacramento County area, have an opportunity of historic proportions by voting YES on the Flood Assessment ballot and mailing it in before the April 18 deadline!!

At stake are not only our own lives and livelihoods but all of the basic needs and services we now automatically take for granted, ie. food, water, basic medical services, police and fire protection, transportation, our children's education, etc.

In addition, where else is a modest 10% investment returned nine-fold? State and federal funds will provide 90% of the flood protection price tag but, we the people, need to kick in a mere 10%!! So, to restate the obvious—should we fail to raise the required monies, *THERE WILL BE NO FLOOD PROTECTION!*

Steve Flynn, author of the very recent book, *The Edge of Disaster*, writes—"When it comes to being in the crosshairs of disasters, California leads the nation. Earthquakes, wildfires, mud slides, floods and tsunamis are perennially in the offing." I'd like to add volcanoes to this list as well!

Furthermore, our state capitol has the lowest level of flood protection of any major metropolitan area in the entire country, *INCLUDING NEW ORLEANS!* Additionally, according to the 2000 census, Sacramento County was among the ten fastest growing counties in the entire United States. And, the City of Elk Grove, almost totally dependent on levees to stay dry, actually grew at the second fastest rate in 2004.

Many diverse factors and conditions have combined to put us all into this extremely precarious and unescapable predicament and ultimate disaster. As Mr. Flynn points out, and rightly so, "While California officials were busy cutting back on the maintenance of the levees, they turned a blind eye to local development projects expanding into the floodplain." Yes indeed, did they ever!! We all know, only too well, that this is certainly the case in more than one area throughout our county.

Mr. Flynn further states that when a disaster does occur, it will be much more difficult to respond when there is a breach in a levee because some of the new housing developments interfere with moving heavy equipment and materials to the site—many of these homes have been built right up to the ten-foot easement that's required on the landside of the levee. Simply put, these houses get in the way.

"The stakes are enormous because there is a significant risk of additional breaches in the absence of a rapid response to a major levee failure"

All the reasons and causes for our current very grave situation are much too numerous and complex to address within the confines of this very limited space. Structurally speaking, in a very small nutshell, much of the levee system was originally constructed at the turn of the 20th century as local self-help projects, without the benefit of professional engineering.

Many factors and conditions have been converging on our rapidly aging levee system, leading to rapid deterioration and greatly impaired stability. Most were built with only peat soil, not even clay soils or any rock whatsoever. Peat is very porous and surrounding water eventually seeps in. "This underseepage is very difficult to detect, allowing water to act like a cancer, eating away at the underbelly of the levee, until one day it will become so unstable that it collapses." Extensive small animals burrowing on the inland side and at times powerful water flows on the external side, further hasten the structural demise. To quote Mr. Flynn one more time, "what makes a disaster a true catastrophe has more to do with our own acts of omission or commission than with the forces that lie beyond our control." We do have it within our power to keep a natural disaster which is, of course, out of our control, from becoming a horrific catastrophe, which is very much within our control!!!

Editor's note: All quoted passages are from the book, *The Edge of Disaster*, by Steve Flynn, published by Random House in 2007, in cooperation with the Council on Foreign Relations. This is an excellent, very readable book. Aside from the chapter, "Danger on the Delta," Mr. Flynn enumerates with great clarity the many other factors and circumstances which have, indeed, placed the United States of America at the edge of disaster.

NOTE: The SARA Board of Directors has unanimously endorsed The Flood Assessment Vote, and urges every resident to mail in their YES vote before the April 18th deadline.



Alcohol Ban on American River (from page 7)

Undersheriff Anderson also pointed out the potential for large numbers of serious injuries and drownings is very high. In 2006, 2 young persons died in a traffic accident after leaving the Parkway after a day of drinking and rafting on the Lower American River.

Warren Truitt concluded his testimony by stating, "The American River and Parkway is the jewel of the Capitol of California and must be returned to the community as a safe, clean and enjoyable place for families to relax and celebrate our summer holidays. On behalf of SARA, all of our Parkway Coalition partners and all legitimate Parkway users, I urge this committee to support AB 951."

The Committee voted 11-1 in favor of AB 951. The bill now goes to the Appropriations Committee, which it is expected to move quickly through to a vote by the full Assembly. Prospects for its passage – as an urgency bill – look good.

Drugging the Waters - Elke Guenter

Just when we thought that we were well aware of all the threats that can possibly confront the health and viability of our nation's waterways, a new problem is appearing on the horizon.

The quarterly journal "Onearth", a publication of The Natural Resources Defense Council, (NRDC) has raised a new and unique issue with respect to the future health of aquatic and amphibious species and the human species as well.

The article entitled, "Drugging the Waters" – how an aging population and our growing addiction to pharmaceuticals may be poisoning our rivers, appeared in the Fall 2006 issue. For the complete story, go to www.nrdc.org; under publications click on Onearth and then enter the above article.

Here then, are some very brief excerpts but hopefully I will have enticed some of you to read the entire story!

"We are a nation obsessed with pharmaceuticals. Americans now fill more than three billion prescriptions a year. Prescription drug sales rose by an annual average of 11% between 2000 and 2005...The rate at which prescriptions are dispensed is only going up as the population ages....Our rivers, already stressed by pollutants, groundwater pumping, reduced flows, and overburdened wastewater treatment plants that dump raw sewage, will be ever less able to cope."

Unavoidably, as all these drugs pass through our bodies, their biological activity doesn't stop once they exit. Additionally, "hospitals and nursing homes routinely dump unused or expired pills down the toilet and consumers have been advised to do the same. Effluent from pharmaceutical manufacturers also ends up at municipal wastewater treatment plants." And another huge source comes to mind – the enormous amounts of antibiotics, growth hormones, etc. used in the mass production of our many animal food products.

"In 2002, the USGS published the results of its first-ever reconnaissance of man-made contaminants. Using highly sensitive assays, the agency found traces of 82 different organic contaminants – fertilizers and flame retardants as well as pharmaceuticals – in surface waters across the nation. These drugs included natural and synthetic hormones, antibiotics, anti-hypertensives, painkillers and antidepressants...And while levels of pharmaceuticals are sometimes infinitesimally low, their supplies are continually replenished. As a result, organisms that constantly bathe in a chemical broth are beginning to reveal some alarming abnormalities."

Furthermore, another very troubling aspect is the fact any single chemical can easily fall into a below the no-effect level, unfortunately most chemicals do not appear as a single entity. Thus, "you could have six chemicals below the no-effect level, but all together they are above the no-effect level...Since exposure to only one compound is rare in the modern world, sorting out 'mixture effects' is a daunting but critical research area."

"Experts say pharmaceuticals have probably been in the environment for as long as we've been using them. We're discovering them now because analytical methods sensitive at the parts-per-trillion level and lower were only recently developed. Surely the technology is a boon to society, but it opens a Pandora's box of questions."

We know that low concentrations of some pharmaceuticals are affecting aquatic organisms, but what are they doing to humans? What happens when organisms are exposed to multiple chemicals at the same time? What happens when they bio-concentrate in living organisms or accumulate in sediment? Nearly every week, results of new studies on emerging contaminants appear in toxicology and environmental health journals."



ATTENTION: The SARA Board of Directors has unanimously endorsed the Flood Assessment Vote, and we urge every resident to mail in their "YES" vote before the April 18th

deadline. A "YES" vote on this issue may very well be the most important vote you ever make. A "YES" vote is necessary for the health and survival of our community.

Note to our members: Ordinarily we send out several renewal notices per year, however, it has not been possible this past year. We will be sending out renewal notices soon. In the meantime, please check the expiration date above your name on the mailing page. If the date is prior to 2007, you need to renew your membership dues as soon as possible.

SARA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Warren Truitt.....President
Kevin Regan.....Vice President
Elke Guenter..... Secretary
Jack SohlTreasurer
Alan Wade..... Immediate Past Pres.
Frank CirillPresident Emeritus
Jim Jones.....Past President

Deborah Baron.....Wayne Chubb
Bill Griffith.....Burt Hodges
Mary Beth Metcalf.....Jim Morgan
Ken PressFelix Smith

Betsy Weiland.....Volunteer/ARNHA Liaison
Dan Kopp.....CGNA Liaison
Chelsea McDaniel.....Student Intern
Bob Burrows.....Advisor
Howard Ross.....Advisor

SARA MEETING LOCATION

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. Please call ahead of time for possible changes to date or location.

(For information, please call Wanda at (916) 383-1298
Please leave name, phone number and message.
Messages will be answered as soon as possible.



SARA phone & fax line: (916) 387-1763
SARA E-Mail: riverwatch@comcast.net
SARA Website: www.sarariverwatch.org

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

SPRING - 2007 ISSUE

NAME: _____ NEW MEMBER? _____ RENEWAL? _____

ADDRESS: _____ WANT TO VOLUNTEER? _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ HOME PHONE: (916) _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____ WORK PHONE: () _____

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY - EMAIL ADDRESSES ARE VERY SPECIFIC

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

[] \$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

SAVE THE AMERICAN RIVER
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SACRAMENTO, CA 95827-7638

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RIVER SCENES
is the title of the new Chroma Gallery show featuring
local river scenes, many of which were done on location.
Part of the proceeds from the show will benefit the

Save the American River Association

*This new show opens with a
Second Saturday reception on May 12,
from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., and ends on June 3.*



*The Chroma Gallery is Northern California's foremost plein-air gallery,
and features more than twenty locally, regionally
and nationally acclaimed
impressionist artists.*

*Located at 10030 Fair Oaks Blvd., Fair Oaks, California, the gallery is open
Wednesday through Sunday from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.,
or by appointment.
For information, call 966-6020*