

Camp Pollock is Open to the Public

When the Golden Empire Council of the Boy Scouts of America offered 90-year-old Camp Pollock for sale last year, Save the American River Association's governing board immediately asked Sacramento County's Board of Supervisors to acquire the 11-acre site and add it to the American River Parkway.

County officials refused, however, claiming they couldn't maintain the property. They also acknowledged they were having trouble providing money to preserve and police Regional Parks and Parkway lands under their jurisdiction.

The Sacramento Valley Conservancy stepped up and facilitated the Camp Pollock's purchase by the State Lands Commission. Under an agreement signed in January, the conservancy will manage the heavily wooded site in accordance with the American River Parkway Plan.

The camp is located on the north side of the American River

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The Lodge at Camp Pollock

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They're Out to Gut CEQA Again

BY STEPHEN GREEN

Efforts are being floated in the California Legislature once again to gut the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). And the backers — mostly developers — have an important ally in Gov. Jerry Brown who has said "CEQA reform is the Lord's work."

CEQA was signed into law by then-Gov. Ronald Reagan in 1970. It provides a framework for successful planning up and down the state whether it's the City of Folsom's controversial plan to pave the Lake Natoma shoreline or to prevent over-hunting of bears in Modoc County.

The fundamental principles of the law require public disclosure of the potential environmental impact of development proposals and to facilitate public participation in refining the visions and implementation of such projects.

Last year, Save the American River Association (SARA) joined a coalition of environmental and labor groups that stopped legislation to gut CEQA. This year, Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg has introduced a draft bill, SB 731, that is to be the vehicle for enacting CEQA reforms.

Once again, SARA is part of a bigger and stronger phalanx of people and organizations committed to protecting CEQA. So far, the CEQA Works Coalition has more than 150 members.

Coalition members believe it is essential to protect the right of citizens to file suits under CEQA. There is no state bureaucracy to enforce CEQA.

Developers, however, want the right to block suits and to build without doing an environmental impact report once they get approval for the project from a local government.

The problem, of course, is that many counties and local governments have the best elected governing bodies that money can buy. The City of Folsom comes to mind. Another is Kern County where in 1957 the supervisors passed an "unrestricted drilling" ordinance declaring that farming and oil exploration are compatible land uses. As a result, the state's largest oil-producing county does not require CEQA review for oil projects.

Kern County grower Fred Starrh has 6,000 acres. Oil wastewater from nearby

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Camp Pollock

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downstream from the Highway 160 overcrossing in an area infested with illegal campers in recent years.

Conservancy Executive Director Aimee Rutledge said her group is working to transform the area into a recreation gathering spot and nature education center. They are restoring the lodge built in 1924 so that it can be rented for special events, retreats and other private occasions. The lodge can accommodate up to 250 guests.

The primitive campground is open exclusively to youth and can accommodate up to 200 campers. It is one of the few urban camp sites in the country.

The conservancy has organized Saturday work parties on the property.

"We're working on a native plant garden we want to put in front of the lodge," Rutledge said. "We have some invasive weeds, like ivy, we have to get rid of. We are cleaning up buildings, doing some painting, cleaning, waxing the lodge floors."

Interpretative trails are planned along with facilities for kayakers, cyclists, hikers and school groups. When money becomes available, the lodge's kitchen will be remodeled.

The Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency donated \$150,000 for rehabilitation efforts, and Wells Fargo Bank and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation provided another \$50,000. Rutledge estimated the conservancy will need to raise another \$300,000 to finish their work.

Donations are tax deductible and may be made online at info@sacramentovalleyconservancy.org or mailed to the Sacramento Valley Conservancy, P.O. Box 163351, Sacramento, CA 95816.

People who would like to volunteer for work parties may sign up on-line. ■

They're Out to Gut CEQA Again

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unlined ponds seeped under Starrh's land and killed all his almond trees.

This is the same county that in 1910 had the biggest oil well blowout in U.S. history. The Lakeview Gusher spewed nine million barrels of crude oil over the landscape. The gusher lasted 18 months before the overburden finally collapsed and plugged the hole. People were using boats to get across the lake of oil.

In the current debate, Gov. Brown complains that CEQA litigation blocked infill development in Oakland when he was mayor there. He ignores the fact that his own Office of Planning and Research surveyed 87 percent of the planning directors in the state last year. They were asked to identify the principal barriers to urban infill. The directors ranked CEQA 12th on a list of 16 barriers.

The critics also insist that the 43-year-old statute needs updating. At last count, however, 334 sections of the law have been added, amended or repealed since 1990.

The CEQA Works Coalition, however, is supporting two bill to improve and strengthen CEQA introduced by Sen. Noreen Evans, D-Santa Rosa.

When special interests deride CEQA, they are attacking the kind of collaborative decision-making that has become a model for cooperative planning.

Her SB 617 would ensure that new information technologies are employed to make CEQA document filing and access easier. The second bill, SB 754, provides a framework to further strengthen CEQA's public participation process and improve the environmental protections of the law.

When special interests deride CEQA, they are attacking the kind of collaborative decision-making that has become a model for cooperative planning.

Please write your legislators and tell them to oppose any effort to gut CEQA. ■

The Big CEQA Lie

An often-heard lie spread by people trying to gut CEQA is that development, especially infill development, is being stopped by nuisance lawsuits filed under CEQA.

According to records compiled by California's Attorney General, 1,999 CEQA lawsuits were filed statewide

between 2002 and 2011 — or about 200 per year.

CEQA lawsuits account for 0.02% of the civil lawsuits filed in California!

In addition, Section 211.6911 of the code allows a court to impose a \$10,000 penalty on a party filing a frivolous suit. ■



Children from the Mustard Seed School examine holes made by Acorn Woodpeckers during a field trip at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Save the American River Association sponsored a field trip for an inner-city school class. Photo by Kelly Cohen

Dogs and Cyclists on the Parkway Get More Scrutiny

BY JOHN WHELAN

Rangers on the American River Parkway have been receiving an increasing number of complaints about dogs and cyclists.

Parkway users have been encountering off-leash dogs or dogs on very long leashes that give them wide range.

Cyclists are drawing complaints for going too fast, ignoring stop signs and riding off the paved trails.

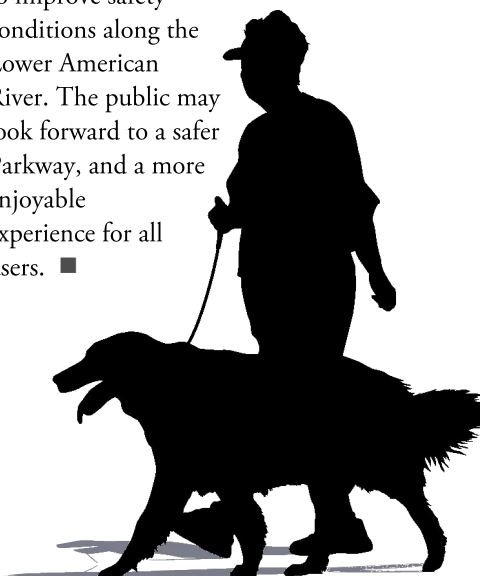
In response, Stan Lumsden, Chief Ranger for Sacramento County Regional Parks, told members of the American River Parkway Coalition that he has asked his rangers to educate the dog walkers and cyclists, then issue warnings, and finally issue citations.

Dogs are to be on leashes no longer than 6 feet, and under control all times, while in the Parkway.

Cyclists are to stay on the paved trails, stay within the posted speed limits, yield the right of way to all other users, and stop at posted signs.

Regional Parks staff members, including Lumsden, also are considering removing stop signs along the trail at intersections where it makes sense and does not compromise safety.

After Lumsden's announcement, many dog owners, cyclists, pedestrians, equestrians, and other Parkway users have come forward with suggestions to improve safety conditions along the Lower American River. The public may look forward to a safer Parkway, and a more enjoyable experience for all users. ■



Support County Parks — Buy An Annual Pass

The Pass pays 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 or over-sized vehicle (over 22 feet):	\$100
Vehicle + Horse trailer	\$75
Vehicle and small watercraft:	\$80
Parks supporter pass*	\$50

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

Where to Purchase Your Parks Pass

- Online through the Sacramento County Web site www.co.sacramento.ca.us
- 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

Sewer District Fights Order to Upgrade Treatment

BY STEPHEN GREEN

The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District has renewed its lawsuit challenging the discharge permit issued by the state in 2010 requiring a major upgrade of sewage treatment at its plant near Freeport. A Sacramento Superior Court Judge has set a Oct. 18, 2013, hearing on the suit.

The 2010 permit was issued by the state Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. It requires the Sanitation District to upgrade its treatment of waste dumped in the Sacramento River at its 30-year-old plant from secondary treatment to tertiary treatment.

The plant also is to reduce the release of nitrates and ammonia — nutrients from human waste which harm aquatic life. Currently, the plant dumps 14 tons of ammonia daily into the river and that is the source of more than 90 percent of the ammonia found in the troubled Delta waters.

Over the objection of environmental and sport fishing groups, the Sanitation District was given a ten-year time frame to upgrade its sewage treatment processes.

Initially, the Sanitation District filed its lawsuit but that was put on hold after an appeal of the ruling on the permit was filed with the state Water Resources Control Board. Last December, the 2010 permit was upheld and the lawsuit became active again.

Currently, the plant dumps 14 tons of ammonia daily into the river and that is the source of more than 90 percent of the ammonia found in the troubled Delta waters.

That was same month that the Sanitation District was fined \$21,000 by the state for discharging sewage into the Sacramento River with excessive amounts of manganese, copper and chlorine.

Despite the pending litigation, the Sanitation District is required to move forward with planning and

implementation of the new permit requirements. Initial studies already have demonstrated that the upgrade can be done for far less than a cost of \$2 billion. That is the figure Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson cited in his argument against doing the upgrade at a state hearing.

Former Sacramento Mayor and Assembly Member Phil Isenberg contends that the Sanitation District should have upgraded its treatment years ago when it would have been cheaper to do so.

“Most people think that polluters have a duty to clean up the problems they create,” Isenberg said.

The Freeport plant is the only major discharger in the Central Valley that does not provide tertiary treatment and significant nutrient reduction to the waste being released.

The plant serves 1.3 million people and businesses in unincorporated areas of Sacramento County and the cities of Sacramento, West Sacramento, Citrus Heights, Folsom, Elk Grove and Rancho Cordova. ■

Park Rangers to Patrol River by Boat this Summer

BY KELLY O. COHEN

Sacramento County has ossified and is making poor and highly detrimental decisions regarding the American River Parkway, a jewel that is valued by a majority of Sacramentans, as verified by a February 2011 telephone survey. In a May, 2011, Sacramento Bee editorial, it was pointed out that “there’s a big disconnect between the public’s views and actual financial commitment to regional parks by the Board of Supervisors.”

This disconnect was clearly on display in the lack of support the County demonstrated for the boat the Park Rangers received on loan from the Sacramento County Sheriff’s

Department. The long awaited boat will enable the rangers to patrol the river to enforce the law, provide protection of natural resources, and to conduct rescues and ensure safety. However, required for use of the boat is various safety and functional equipment. The County did not allocate the needed funds. Because having the park rangers patrolling the river is critical, after having learned that \$3,000 was needed, SARA put the word out seeking donations. Thanks to generous contributions by folks who value Sacramento’s Crown Jewel and appreciate what the Park Rangers do to protect the people and the Parkway, \$3,000 was received by SARA and used to purchase the needed safety equipment

which is now in the hands of the County’s Park Rangers for their use. It is the County’s responsibility, not the public’s, to adequately fund the operation and maintenance of our regional parks.

We are told that funding will be allocated next year for operation of the boat. Until the money is in the budget, we all need to send messages to hold the Board of Supervisors to it. And while we’re at it, let us pressure them to allocate funding in the budget for Sacramento County Regional Parks and not into a new arena for the NBA at the tune of approximately \$600,000 annually. ■

SARA Membership Donations *January — March 2013*

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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 Parkways 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 has received donations honoring the memory of the following friends:

Bill Griffith

Harold Hill

Louis Joseph Maniscalco

Stroube Richardson

Virgil Meibert

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 and those people are always very appreciative. The money is used to further SARA's advocacy work on behalf of the Parkway. Contributions may be made by check, Visa or Master Card. A form for contributions appears on the last page of this newsletter.

SARA also has a Legacy program. For information on the program, please call the SARA office (916) 482-2551.



Fair Oaks Bluffs
Photo by Warren Truitt

"In all things of nature, there is something of the marvelous." - Aristotle

Local Governments Need State Help to Deal with Homeless Citizens

BY STEPHEN GREEN

Most of us who frequent the American River Parkway have had encounters with illegal campers.

These people start fires, throw trash and garbage on the ground, and routinely urinate and defecate in the Parkway. They also have attacked and robbed people jogging or cycling on the Parkway, and killed wildlife.

The problem, however, extends far beyond the Parkway. Homeless people are found in locales statewide. That is why there is an urgent need for the state to begin providing resources to local jurisdictions that want to assist people who need housing, help with drug and alcohol problems — and especially those with mental health issues. In recent decades, the state has dramatically reduced mental health programs.

Communities in other states have successfully tackled chronic homelessness by investing in permanent housing with supportive programs.

Local jurisdictions lack the financial resources to deal with issues involving homeless people because Prop. 13 shifted most of the financial decision-making to the state. Yet state administrations come and go, and there is never the political will to help local jurisdictions that seek to deal with their homeless citizens.

According to the 2011 Homeless Population Census in the Sacramento area, the population includes people who are chronic substance abusers (41.0%), severely mentally ill (26.3%) or victims of domestic violence (21.9%). Still others



This illegal campsite was found in the American River Parkway last winter between Rossmoor and El Manto. Empty bags of potting soil were found among the trash scattered about. The former campers may have been growing marijuana. Photo by Guy Galante

are anarchists who chose to live on the streets and the American River Parkway.

The census, however, fails to include many people who are living in cars, couch surfing or camping in far suburbs. Some families are hiding so that children won't be taken away from them, as are teens who don't want to be put into foster care or juvenile detention.

Communities in other states have successfully tackled chronic homelessness by investing in permanent housing with supportive programs. The Eastlake Project in Seattle is a prime example. It provides housing and services to 75 chronic inebriates who formerly slept on sidewalks and in parks at night.

A study by the American Medical Association found the Eastlake Project produced net public savings of \$2,500 per person per month as a result of reduced incarceration and less use of emergency hospital services.

Programs in Wichita, Kan., reduced chronic homelessness by 61 percent in three years. Norfolk, Va., reduced chronic homelessness by 40 percent in two years.

Sacramento County Supervisor Phil Serna is one of the few local politicians who has spoken out about the need to assist homeless people. Serna was injured by a hypodermic needle last September while helping clean up trash left on the Parkway by illegal campers. "You are shocked by the truth of the matter that you are stuck by a hypodermic needle that you're pretty certain was used for illicit purposes," Serna said.

Serna was forced to go through extensive treatments with the anti-HIV, anti-hepatitis prophylactic drug Atripla. The drug's side effects hit him like "a freight train," Serna said. He experienced exhaustion, some depression and flu-like symptoms.

Statewide last year, an estimated 5,100 people went to hospital emergency rooms after being pricked by a hypodermic needle. California needs a state program to provide financial assistance to cities and counties that are trying to resolve homeless issues. ■

Once Again, State Government Ignores the Public Trust Doctrine

BY FELIX SMITH

Gov. Jerry Brown and his appointee political team are setting up a scenario to build The Delta's peripheral tunnels similar to the same way Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, his father's appointee political team, pushed to dam the San Joaquin River at Friant in Fresno County.

When "Pat" Brown was Attorney General, he, his staff and friendly allies formulated a flawed legal opinion (Opinion No. 50-89 dated July 23, 1951) to represent the state's position for approving the construction of Friant Dam on the San Joaquin River with no water reserved for protecting the southern-most runs of Chinook Salmon.

In 1955, "Pat" Brown was elected governor. Soon after taking office, Gov. "Pat" Brown appointed the same political allies to positions to enforce the flawed opinion, to support his political allies and to kill off any opposition to Friant Dam by the then State Dept. of Fish and Game officials.

In 1959, Governor Brown's political appointee in charge of the Dept. of Water Resources endorsed the bogus opinion and his appointee as chair of the State Water Board rubber-stamped the

giveaway of the San Joaquin River to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation with no water reserved for the southern-most runs of Chinook Salmon and other native fishes. It has taken the public 50 years of legal wrangling to reverse what happened under the administration of Gov. "Pat" Brown.

In 2005, they pumped more than 5 million acre feet of water for a high of 6,410,971 acre feet. The Chinook Salmon fisheries collapsed three years later.

Look for Gov. Jerry Brown, his political allies and appointees to push to modify the California Environmental Quality Act and Fish and Game Code Section 5937 so that the need to keep fish in good condition is diluted in State Law. In this way, there would be no liability upon the state to protect the fisheries and biota of the Sacramento River, the San Joaquin River and The Delta.

Southern California development interests and southern San Joaquin Valley corporate farms are not going to agree to pay for any tunnels that, in turn, require them to take less water. They want and will take all the water they can get any time they can get it. Central Valley Project administrators for the state and those at the Bureau of Reclamation already are aligned with that philosophy right now. They can't wait to try to pump The Delta dry.

In 2005, they pumped more than 5 million acre feet of water for a high of 6,410,971 acre feet. The Chinook Salmon fisheries collapsed three years later.

Delta agriculture, Chinook Salmon and Striped Bass fisheries and other Delta resources, uses and values are protected by the Doctrine of the Public Trust. These ecological resources, and ecological and agricultural values, are worth a lot more to California than the crops being grown in salt- and selenium-tainted soils. Contaminated agricultural runoff from the southern and western portions of the San Joaquin Valley also impacts the San Joaquin River's Public Trust resources, uses and values. ■



Maidu Indians once ground acorns on this granite outcrop in Indian Stone Corral Park in Orangevale.

County officials claim they are unable to open the park to the public due to a lack of funds to maintain it and build trails.

The park is 72 acres or 80 acres depending upon which county document one reads. Linda Creek runs through the park and provides habitat for a number of species including otters, beavers and minks. ■

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☐ Renewal ☐ New Membership ☐ Non Membership Donation

☐ Memorial - In Memory of *(Name):* _____

May we publish your name as a SARA member in a future *Riverwatch* issue?

*(Contribution amount will **not** be included)* ☐ Yes ☐ No

\$ _____ *(Please indicate your TOTAL contribution)* Check _____ VISA _____ MC _____

Insert credit card info below or go to our secure Web site to donate — www.sarariverwatch.org.

The following membership categories are suggested: *(Please circle your choice)*

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