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## Eppie's Great Race Hits the American River July 21

By Anita Fitzhugh

Hundreds of kayaks will take to the American River on July 21 as athletes compete in the world's undisputed oldest triathlon. The 39<sup>th</sup> annual Eppie's Great Race is a summertime tradition in the Sacramento area. This unique triathlon replaces the traditional swimming component with paddling.

The race consists of a 5.82-mile run, 12.5-mile cycle and a 6.35-mile paddle on a course located on the lower American River.

The run-bike-paddle triathlon is named for its founder, Eppie Johnson, formerly an avid skier and restaurateur known for unusual promotions — this triathlon being one of them.

"The popularity of Eppie's Great Race continues to grow," said Johnson. "I think one of the reasons is because the triathlon offers something for everyone. Athletes can compete as iron men or iron women — taking on all three legs of the race. We also offer a number of team divisions including open canoe, tandem kayak, corporate, junior and family."

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California Poppies by Warren Truitt

## The Regional Parks Budget is Approved — For Now

By Bill Davis

On a sultry day in June — a day when a 16-year-old girl was reportedly sexually assaulted, likely on the American River Parkway — Sacramento County's Board of Supervisors approved a Regional Parks Department Budget that (a) added two more Park Rangers to work as a target enforcement team to address "hot spot" locations in all Regional Parks and (b) increased funding for Regional Parks from franchise fees levied by the County Solid Waste Authority.

In previous years, a hearing on the Regional Parks budget has been scheduled before the County Board of Supervisors to allow public input before the Board adopted the County Budget. This year, the County Executive did not schedule a public hearing on the Regional Parks Department budget. Thanks to requests by Supervisor Phil Serna and others, a public hearing was scheduled, but only with one day's notice. Approximately 20 persons attended and commented generally on the need for additional rangers.

### Restored Park Rangers

In prior years, the Supervisors reduced the number of authorized park rangers by more than 50 percent to a total of fourteen authorized rangers for the entire 15,000 acre County Regional

### Isn't crime down on the Parkway?

A while ago, the Sacramento Bee ran a story that crime in the Parkway was down. SARA evaluated the situation and concluded that published crime statistics don't support a conclusion that crime is decreasing in the Parkway. Statistics are incomplete and do not take into account factors such as actual number of visitors, effects of prolonged wet weather last year which tends to reduce activity, crimes going unreported because of lack of rangers and lack of reporting by users, crimes reported to other police agencies and not included in statistics, and quality of life incidents that go unreported and can lead to more serious crime.

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## DFG Sues Corps of Engineers

*By Stephen Green*

The California Dept. of Fish & Game (DFG) has sued the Army Corps of Engineers over its decision to require removal of all trees and shrubs along 1,600 miles federal levees in the state.

The Corps adopted a policy requiring the removal of vegetation on levees nationwide after Hurricane Katrina. The cost of stripping California levees is estimated at \$7.5 billion.

DFG's suit contends the Corps blanket policy fails to account for regional differences and also conflicts with the federal Endangered Species

Act. Various studies have shown that vegetation is protecting California levees from being breached when rivers are at flood stage. In fact, after the levee failure in December 1955 that flooded Marysville, the Corps required the

planting of trees and shrubs on levees.

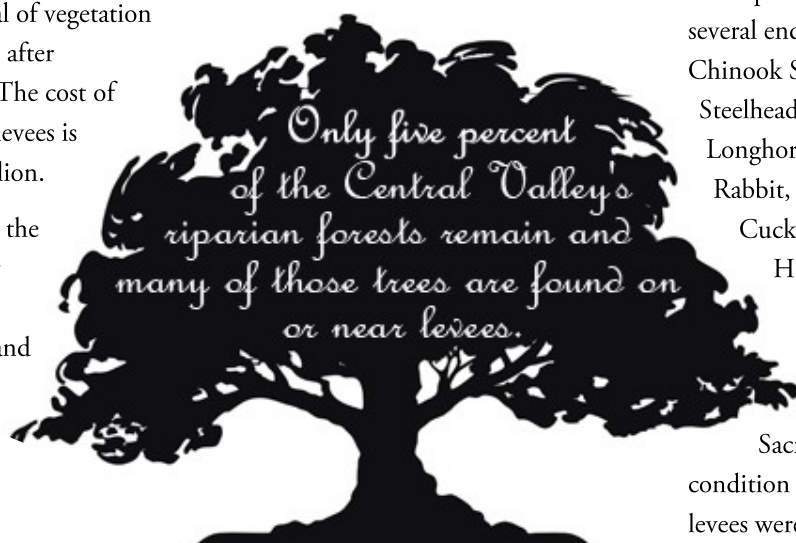
Only five percent of the Central Valley's riparian forests remain and many of those trees are found on or near levees.

The riparian habitat "is essential for several endangered species including Chinook Salmon, Central Valley Steelhead, Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, Riparian Brush Rabbit, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Swainson's Hawk," the suit said.

California has many fragile levees — particularly in the

Sacramento area. That condition exists because many of the levees were built narrowly to accommodate agriculture and urban growth, according to a study by a University of California, Davis, engineering professor. It would be more beneficial to upgrade levees than to remove trees, the study said.

In a May 26 editorial, the Sacramento Bee urged the Corps to revise its policy since "research has shown that tree roots can actually strengthen levees instead of weakening them." The Corps should "get back to its historic role of being a partner instead of an obstacle," the editorial concluded.



## Eppie's Great Race

*Continued from Page 1*

Kids can take part in the fun by participating in the US Bank Kids Duathlon, a 2-mile run and 5.75-mile bike ride that provides young athletes up to age 17 with their own event.

Fitness and camaraderie are two great reasons to participate in Eppie's Great Race. Another reason to take part is to support the event's beneficiary — Sacramento County Therapeutic Recreation Services (TRS).

Every year, the net proceeds of Eppie's Great Race benefit this program that helps thousands of

people with physical and mental disabilities to live more fulfilling lives through organized trips and community events. To date, Eppie's Great Race has raised close to \$1 million for TRS.

The race festivities begin the day before with the Great Race Expo and spaghetti feed at River Bend Park in Rancho Cordova.

For more information, training packages or to register for Eppie's Great Race, visit [www.eppiesgreatrace.org](http://www.eppiesgreatrace.org) or call 916-381-0255. ■

## The Regional Parks Budget is Approved – For Now

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Parks System. Analysis by SARA, published as “Review of Sacramento County Park Rangers Services” dated April 17, 2012, found that:

- Routinely, only one ranger is available to patrol both sides of the 23-mile Parkway and to assist and respond to Parkway users.
- The lone ranger on patrol in the American River Parkway is in addition to the Illegal Camping Detail, the two rangers dedicated to management of illegal camping in the lower six miles of the Parkway. (These Rangers do not patrol elsewhere in the Parkway and are not dispatched to calls for service that do not involve emergencies such as threats to human life, hot pursuits, major crimes in progress, and backup for other rangers.)
- No rangers are available for routine patrol in any other county parks.

Based upon recommendations of law enforcement professionals who reviewed the County Park Ranger Service for the Grassroots Working Group, Save the American River Association (SARA) had sought restoration of 5.5 ranger positions. SARA understands the budget predicament facing the Board of Supervisors and the challenge of

finding funds for all of the needed additional rangers.

Simply stated, the rangers are an important part of the county’s regime for maintain law and order and, as such, funds need to be made available to restore past cuts to the Park Ranger Service. SARA views the restoration of two Rangers as a beginning, not the end, of efforts to address law and

### What’s Going on in the Parkway?

Crimes that recently have been reported in the Parkway include: illegal camping, regular non-holiday occurrences of drunkenness and violence at Riverbend Park, an assault with deadly weapon in Ancil Hoffman Park, and an attempted robbery with a gun at Hagan Park. Also, three-to-five parolees and two-to-four sex offender registrants reportedly are encountered on a weekly basis in the Parkway.

Sacramento County Sheriff’s Dept. crime maps reveal serious urban crimes are occurring with increasing regularity in close proximity to the Parkway and other regional parks. Access to the Parkway and other regional parks is not tightly controlled.

SARA’s leadership believes that the current situation poses a risk to public safety and welcomes the restoration of two Rangers as a start on addressing the law and order issues in the Parkway and other Regional Parks.

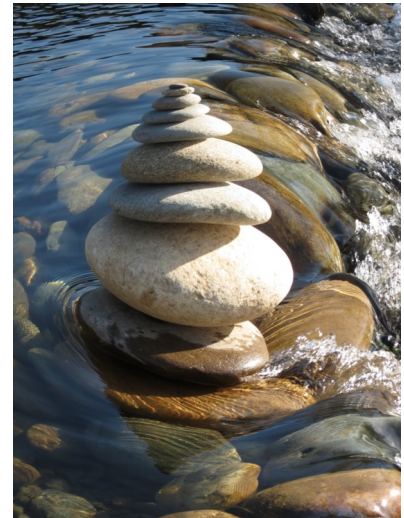


Photo Credit: Guy Galante

order issues in the Parkway and other Regional Parks.

### Solid Waste Authority Funding

Thanks to the leadership of Supervisor Serna, the County Board of Supervisors provided an additional \$106,000 to pay the costs of cleanup of illegal dumping the lower American River Parkway and Dry Creek Parkway. These funds came from an increase in the fees charged to private garbage haulers.

### The Future

The County Regional Parks Department Budget includes some \$572,000 (\$372,000 in Habitat Restoration Funds, \$200,000 contribution from Teichert Mining) in revenues that

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## The Regional Parks Budget is Approved – For Now

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are not expected to be available after June 30, 2013. Regional Parks Department Director Jeff Leatherman has advised that the county's fee structure is being reviewed to identify opportunities for increased revenue together with opportunities for increased operation and maintenance efficiencies. SARA will work with the Regional Parks Department staff and other stakeholder groups with the goal of mitigating the expected loss of these revenues.

The County Budget approved by

the Board of Supervisors on June 13 will be revisited in September after the State of California budget is finalized. Adjustments to the County Budget will be made as necessary to reflect the final decisions by the state. It is expected that the final state budget will assume that the Governor's tax proposals are approved by the voters in November 2012.

Adjustments to the County Budget needed to respond to the voter's decisions in November will be identified at the county's midyear budget review in January or February 2013. The impact on the Regional Parks Department Budget, if any, will not be known until the information is before the Board of Supervisors in September 2012 and early 2013. ■

### How many Park Rangers are needed?

County Regional Parks Director Jeffery Leatherman, in response to a question at the hearing on the Regional Parks Budget, advised the Board that County staff had concluded that a total of 19 full-time Rangers, augmented by seasonal Rangers, are needed.

SARA first learned of this conclusion at the Board of Supervisors meeting on June 13<sup>th</sup> and will be working with the Chief Ranger to understand the basis for this conclusion and to ensure mutual understanding of the problems that need to be addressed by the County Park

## New SARA Board Member

John Whelan joined the Save the American River Association Board of Directors at the June meeting.

"I've been cycling on the Parkway almost daily for the last 15 years," Whelan said. "I look forward to continuing to help SARA with the Lake Natoma proposal, the potential purchase of in-held lands, the Safety Committee, any bicycling issues, and any other future issues where my talents might be put to good use."

Whelan retired last year after 38 years as a State of California Real Estate Officer. He served on the board of the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates for five years, volunteers at the Sacramento Blood Bank, and was a contributor to the 4th Edition of "Hiking and Biking the American River Parkway."

Whelan has resided in the Rosemont (Grist Mill) neighborhood since 1983. ■



New SARA Board Member John Whelan

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

*- Margaret Mead*



## SARA Membership Donations *April—June 2012*

Lawrence & Suzie Augusta	Leslie McGill
Richard & Carol Baker	Bob & Mary Beth Metcalf
Janet Baker	Kathy Downey & Jim Middleton
John & Deborah Barris	Eric Milstein
Susan Bostick	Ray & Celia Nunez
Linda & George Crandell	Nancy Oprsall
Allen Davenport	James Queiralo
Doug Dempster	Carolyn Schimandle
Charles Duty	Larry Hickey & Ursula Stehle
Marilyn Evans	Ron & Patty Suter
Alan Feuerwerker	Helen Taylor
Jean Garrity	Mary M. Wagaman
Jodi Guenter	Katherine Keysor West & Jim West
Joanne Hagopian	Jarian M. Westfall
Rod Hall	Howard J. Whitaker
Claudia Kirkpatrick	SARA appreciates the support of our generous members. Without your support, SARA would not be able to continue our role as <i>Guardians of the American River and Parkways since 1961</i> . New and renewing members are listed in <i>Riverwatch</i> according to their preference (indicated on the SARA membership/renewal form).
James Pacht & Jude Lamare	
Jordan Lang	
Bob Larne	
Richard L. Korff & Susan Leber	
Ed & Marsha Littrell	
Ernie & Katherine Long	
Larry Masuoka	
Joe McCormick	

## In Memoriam

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

### Kevin Regan Martin Smith

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.**

## 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:	\$75
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](http://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

## Off-leash Dogs are at Risk on the Parkway

By Stephen Green

Although the extent of the problem is largely anecdotal, many visitors to the American River Parkway and Folsom Lake State Recreation Area say they are seeing many more off-leash dogs. With fewer rangers on the Parkway and the SRA, that situation probably will get worse.

Loose dogs have attacked people and wildlife, chased bicycles and equestrians, and are leaving nasty deposits in picnic areas. In May, a loose pit bull was seen killing Canada Goose goslings on Willow Creek in Folsom. The pit bull's mistress, leash in hand, stood on the bike trail and made no effort to stop the killing.

People who let their dogs run loose in the parks should know their animals are at risk of meeting one of the area's most feared residents — the Western Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*).

These critters especially like brushy lowlands of the Parkway and areas near the reservoirs. That is prime habitat for rodents and therefore a good place to hunt.

Western Rattlesnakes can grow to more than five feet in length (62") and can strike with lightning speed. A bite from a baby snake can be just as lethal as one from a full-grown reptile.

Some veterinarians charge \$800 or more to administer a vial of anti-venom to a dog. And a big dog may need two vials.

If a dog is bitten, immediate treatment should be sought. ■



Western Rattlesnake at Nimbus Flat

## Folsom Powerhouse Visitor Center Opens Sept. 8

By Stephen Green

The new Folsom Powerhouse Visitor Center opens to the public on Saturday, Sept. 8.

The Center will offer opportunities for park visitors and school groups to learn about basic principles of electricity. It will feature interactive, hands-on exhibits and highlight the discoveries of early electrical technology. Other exhibits will focus on the history of the powerhouse and the visionaries who made it operable.

When the powerhouse began

generating electricity in July of 1895, hydro-electric power was transported over copper wires to downtown Sacramento some 22 miles away. It was a new achievement in long-distance transmission of electricity — one heralded in newspapers throughout North America and in Europe.

The original powerplant is still in place near the Folsom Historic District and is open to the public. It is now part of a State Historic Park and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.

Friends of the Folsom Powerhouse Association was organized in 1985. It's members work with state park employees to preserve and enhance the park. They also give tours to more than 5,000 school children annually. ■



Folsom Powerhouse Visitor Center

## Wildlife Care Association (WCA)

*By Theresa Bielauski, President, Wildlife Care Assn.*

Wildlife Care Association (WCA) is an independent, volunteer-operated, non-profit 501(c)(3) association serving Sacramento, Placer, and Yolo Counties and beyond.

Operating since 1975, WCA is one of the longest-running animal non-profits in California. WCA also is one of the largest wildlife rehabilitation groups in terms of number of animals taken in each year. The primary mission is the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of sick, orphaned, and injured wildlife.

WCA provides medical services and extended care to more than 6,000 wild animals each year. Trained volunteers examine the animals, give them emergency care, and determine further medical and care needs. Local veterinarians provide expert care for any major problems when needed. Once the animals have recovered from their injuries, or have grown and learned to fend for themselves, they are released back

into the wild, giving them a second chance at life.

Animals are brought to WCA's facility at 5211 Patrol Road, McClellan, (on the former McClellan Air Force Base) by concerned citizens as well as agencies such as the California Department of Fish & Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Animal Control agencies, Parks and Recreation agencies, and the Sacramento and Placer County SPCAs. WCA does not receive any funding from government or public entities, and relies solely on donations from caring citizens.

Wildlife Care Association's facility is open daily from 10am to 6pm. WCA accepts all wild animals except bats and skunks, but can help direct where to go for those species. Most avian species are housed on-site, from hatchlings in incubators to nestlings, fledglings, and adult birds housed in outdoor, pre-release aviaries.

Mammals and other species are dropped off at the facility, but they typically go to home rehabilitators for care. Unfortunately, WCA does not provide a pick-up service, so all animals must be brought to their facility.

It is currently the peak of the busy season and WCA has more than 1,000 avian residents. Due to the high volume of animals, WCA always is looking for additional volunteers to help with everything from answering the phones to feeding the animals. Training is provided.

WCA also is dedicated to educating the public about the importance of wildlife. The education team gives more than 50 presentations a year to schools and community groups. They can bring three species of owls, a Yellow-billed Magpie, a leucistic (white) American Crow, and a Virginia Opossum to these events.

For more information about Wildlife Care Association, volunteering, or making a donation, please visit their website at [www.wildlifecareassociation.org](http://www.wildlifecareassociation.org). If you find a wild animal in need, please call (916) 965-WILD (9453) for detailed instructions. ■



Barn Owls in Rehab

*"In every walk with nature, one receives more than he seeks."*

*- John Muir*





*Guardians of the American  
River and Parkway Since 1961*

#### SARA Officers 2012

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Stephen Green — *Vice President*

Mary Beth Metcalf — *Treasurer*

Alan Wade — *Secretary / Past President*

Warren Truitt — *Immed. Past President*

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Ron Suter                      Stephanie Taylor

David Thesell                      Linda Villatore

Leo Winternitz

#### Volunteers & Staff

Betsy Weiland — *Volunteer Coordinator*

Sara Stephens — *Office Manager*

4441 Auburn Blvd., Suite H  
Sacramento, CA 95841-2551

Phone: (916) 482-2551

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

[www.sarariverwatch.org](http://www.sarariverwatch.org)

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## Membership and Contributions

My gift to SARA is a: *(Please indicate with an "X")*

☐ 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](http://www.sarariverwatch.org).*

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

\$10-\$24	Student	\$25-\$49	Regular
\$50 +	Supporting	\$100 +	Family
\$250 +	Business	\$1,000 +	Sustaining

☐ **Please send me information on SARA's Legacy Program.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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