

## County Parks Reporting System Now in Place

BY WARREN TRUITT

Sacramento County Regional Parks recently made it easier for parks users to report non-emergency issues: There are three ways to report: (1) dialing 311; (2) downloading Sac County 311 Connect from the app store on a smartphone, or; (3) by visiting 311.SacCounty.net.

Reportable issues might include:

- Area needing Maintenance
- Illegal Camping
- Injury to Person/Animal
- Potential Hazard
- General Comments
- Illegal Dumping
- Dogs off-leash
- Cyclists off paved trails
- Trail-Use Conflict
- Damaged or Missing Signage

County Executive Brad Hudson stated: "Parks users, runners and bicyclists can report non-emergency concerns directly to 311 and representatives will do the rest." 311 staff is available to route calls, follow-up to verify and resolve issues and answer questions, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.

Using the 311 smartphone app – available for both Apple and Android users, you will be able to take a picture of the concern and include it in your report directly from your phone, or include the photo with your e-mail.

Online: To report a problem

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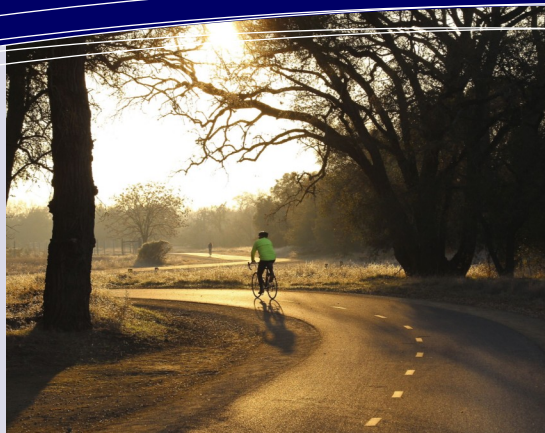


Photo by Linda Thomas

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## Urban River Parkways Improve Your Health

BY STEPHEN GREEN

Urban river parkways improve the physical and mental health of people who use them. In fact, every \$1 invested in trails for physical activity leads to nearly \$3 in direct medical benefits and health-care savings in the region.

Those are the findings reported in the first-ever study of the health benefits afforded by urban river parkways released in July entitled: "Urban River Parkways: An Essential Tool for Public Health."

The lead author was Dr. Richard Jackson, chair of the Environmental Health Sciences Department at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Jackson also has served as the state Health Officer and worked at the federal Centers for Disease Control.

"There is no medicine or treatment that works as well to reduce the negative effects of obesity and related illnesses as physical activity, such as walking, running and bicycling," Dr. Jackson said. "River parkways, particularly in urban areas, are nearly irresistible because they provide the proper

infrastructure and attractive setting for engaging in physical activity. River parkways can benefit physical, mental, community and environmental health, as well as the overall economic well-being of the population at large."

We've known for some years that the American River Parkway receives nearly eight million visits yearly and generates \$364 million for the local economy. But now it has been documented that the Parkway has an impact on people's

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## Please Join Us for SARA's Annual Meeting

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2014**  
**EFFIE YEAW NATURE CENTER**

Coffee, Breakfast Rolls  
& Socializing — 9:30 a.m.  
Meeting Begins — 10:00 a.m.  
Lunch — 11:30 a.m.

Support the EYNC:  
Enjoy the Annual Holiday Sale —  
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

## Health

*Continued from Page 1*

health and the cost of health care in the region. That is something elected officials should take in account next time they are considering park budgets. It's also a strong argument for expanding the Sacramento River Parkway through the Pocket Area.

The study reported a direct link between lack of physical activity and California's chronic obesity rate. As of 2012, 25 percent of California adults were considered obese, leading to higher rates of heart disease, stroke, Type 2 Diabetes, hypertension and some cancers.

River parkways also provide affordable opportunities for residents of all income levels to get outdoors, recreate, exercise, live a more active lifestyle and improve their health.

In the last session of the Legislature, Assemblyman Jimmy Gomez, D-Los Angeles, carried a bill to set up a grant program for communities that want to establish parkways. The bill passed the Assembly, but died in the Senate. Gomez has promised to bring the bill back when the Legislature reconvenes in January. Save the American River Association was part of a coalition of organizations supporting the bill in the last session and will continue lobbying for its passage.

More than a dozen California communities are working to establish parkways, including Stockton, Modesto and Fresno.

Each year, the Effie Yeaw Nature Center provides nature programs for school children. The center staff and

volunteers raise money to bring children from inner-city schools to take part in the programs. Many have never been on the Parkway, or seen deer or turkeys in the wild.

For them, the Parkway visit can be their first bond with nature. ■

*"River parkways can benefit physical, mental, community and environmental health, as well as the overall economic well-being of the population at large."*

**DR. RICHARD JACKSON**  
CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL  
HEALTH SCIENCES DEPARTMENT AT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,  
LOS ANGELES

## Parks Reporting

*Continued from Page 1*

within the Sacramento County Parks system go to [www.regionalparks.saccounty.net](http://www.regionalparks.saccounty.net). On the home page, there is a box with a green oak leaf in the upper right-hand corner. Click on the leaf to access and submit the report. As always, to report crimes, and safety-related matters, continue to dial 911 or 916-875-PARK (7275).

Prior to County Regional Parks adding 311, SARA was seriously looking at purchasing and offering Park Watch to Parkway users. Park Watch is a reporting and information system currently being successfully used within the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area unit of California State Parks. Besides accepting reports, the system includes an interactive feature allowing park users to also view timely entries



made by other users, detailing issues such as: a downed tree on the horse trail or bike path; a mountain lion sighting in a given area, or a trail detour.

The SARA Safety Committee, chaired by Jan Lee, has been in discussions with County Regional Parks Director Jeff Leatherman, and has asked that a Park Watch-type information feature be included in

the 311 system. At press time, this feature has not been added. The Safety Committee will continue to push to have this important feature added at the earliest possible time.

Check out the 311 system at your earliest convenience and use it when you need it. Responses to these reports by the county have been excellent. If the information feature is added, we will all have a much better idea of the various kind of problems our rangers are experiencing. Where? What kinds of issues? How many of each type of issue are occurring each month? What is being done about them? Sharing this information can and will make for a more informed and safer regional parks users. ■

## Lawsuits Target Wastewater Permits

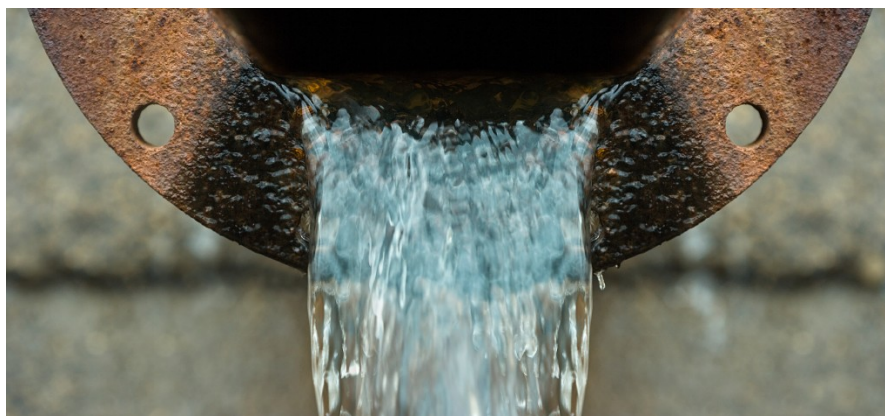
BY STEPHEN GREEN

Whenever the state agency responsible for regulating entities that dump wastewater in the Central Valley rivers, sloughs and streams, it often takes a lawsuit to bring the discharge permit into compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.

That happened again on Aug. 18 when a judge ruled that a permit issued by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board for the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant at Freeport violated federal Clean Water Act requirements. The permit must be revised to limit the release of certain metals and warm water into the Sacramento River, the ruling said.

The plant discharges up to 181 million gallons of treated wastewater into the river daily, representing 85 percent of all wastewater discharged into the river and 60 percent of the total volume of municipal wastewater discharged in The Delta. As a result, the area in the vicinity of the plant's discharges is considered an Impaired Water Body and Toxic Hot Spot.

The suit was brought by the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance which did a study several years earlier of 20 permits issued by the water board. It concluded "...the Regional Board is issuing wastewater permits that have steadily reduced the protection provided to water quality and the critical beneficial uses of water in the Central Valley. ...the



Regional Board issued permits that fail to comply with explicit regulatory requirements."

The same week the court ruling was issued, the California Senate confirmed the re-appointment of two board members: Chairman Karl E. Longley and Carmen L. Ramirez. They were re-appointed by Gov. Jerry Brown despite objections by Save the American River Association (SARA). SARA and Friends of the North Fork representatives also testified against their confirmation by the state Senate. That resulted in a deferral of the confirmations for a week. And then the Senate awarded the confirmations without further public testimony.

Both appointees have a long history of voting for permits controlling waste discharges that do not comply with state and federal laws and regulations. Both have allowed sewer plants to routinely discharge effluent into Central Valley waters. They have routinely agreed to waive fines for the illegal discharge of pollutants.

Neither raised objections when the board staff refused to participate in enforcement actions to stop toxic runoff from illegal marijuana grows.

At one point, a senator asked Ramirez why she had wanted serve on the board. She replied that "the regulated community needed protection." The board's mission is: "To preserve and enhance the quality of California's water resources for the benefit of present and future generations." But for Ramirez, the regulated community comes first.

Ramirez was appointed by Gov. Brown. Longley was Gov. Schwarzenegger's appointment.

The board currently has one vacancy and the terms of two other members were due to expire at the end of September. SARA wrote Gov. Brown urging him not to reappoint any existing board members. If he does, SARA representatives once again will be testifying against their confirmation by the Senate. ■



## Invasive Weed on the Parkway Can Kill Horses

One of the nastiest invasive weeds in California is Yellow Starthistle, *Centaurea solstitialis*, which — despite decades of eradication efforts — grows in great abundance on and near the American River Parkway.

The weed grows up to five-feet and develops spikes that prick people and wildlife. Its seeds germinate from fall through spring when its roots can extend more than three feet into the soil. That allows Starthistle to suck up water that would have been available to more shallow-rooted native plants during the dry summer months.

Horses who chomp the weed can develop a nervous disorder called chewing disease, *nigropallidal*

*encephalomalacia*, which becomes fatal once symptoms develop. No other animal is known to suffer from ingestion of Starthistle. Cattle and goats routinely graze on it.

Starthistle thrives on well-lighted soil surfaces that have been disturbed such as along a roadway or in burned over areas. Most seeds germinate in the first year, but they can remain viable for more than three years.

When the weed dries out, it presents a severe fire hazard. If it could be removed from the Parkway, there would be less fire danger.

The best time to eradicate the weed is after the last rains and before the seeds are produced. Each year, various organizations field teams of volunteers to remove Starthistle from



Yellow Starthistle Flower

the Parkway. They make a dent in the population, but are never able to get it all.

Starthistle is native to Eurasia and was introduced in California about 1850 from South America. University of California, Davis, botanists estimate that it infests between 10 and 15 million acres in California below the 7,000-foot level. ■

## Fires Prompt Smoking, BBQ Restrictions

After the 30th fire broke out in county parks this year, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors approved emergency ordinances restricting smoking and barbecues in time for the Labor Day Weekend. Twenty-nine of the fires were in the American River Parkway. All were believed to be started by people.

Smoking is now banned in nature areas and unpaved trails on the Parkway. Visitors can still smoke on paved trails, levee tops, golf courses and picnic areas.

Barbeques can no longer be set up in open areas. Charcoal grills are



Fighting fire on the Parkway  
Photo by Guy Galante

permitted only in designated picnic areas. Gas or electric grills are allowed on beaches.

First offenders can be fined \$50 and are required to pay court fees. Fines double for repeat offenders. ■

*When the blood in  
your veins returns  
to the sea, and the  
earth in your bones  
returns to the  
ground, perhaps  
then you will  
remember that this  
land does not  
belong to you, but  
you belong to the  
land.*

NATIVE AMERICAN

## Tour the Folsom Historic Powerhouse

Free group tours of the Folsom Historic Powerhouse are being offered. Visitors can tour the powerhouse and the visitor center with its interactive and interpretive museum. The grounds also have picnic tables and there is access to Lake Natoma.

Tours are offered from noon to 4 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday. Call (916) 985-4843 for more information. ■



Folsom Historic Powerhouse

## SARA Membership Donations April—June 2014

Granite Bay Flycasters  
Christine Bailey & Bill Becker  
Chuck & Lorraine Bucaria  
Wayne Chubb

Kelly Cohen  
William & Bonnie Coop, Jr.  
Susan Davidson & Dennis Neufeld

Malcom Ettin

Guy Galante

Judy Tachibana & Steve Gibson

Eugene Graham

Caroline Cornwell & Greg Redmond

Rod Hall

Diane & Julian Holt

Michael Covey & Jacqueline Delu

Pam Lapinski

Chris Lewis

Charles Lindquist

Kathy Downey & Jim Middleton

Tony & Joyce Mihanovich

David & Tameron Mitchell

Richard Moore

Steven Mopsick

John Mott

George Nyberg

Nancy Oprsal

Diana Parker

Ellen Dillinger & Richard Wood

Mary Ann Robinson

Ted Robinson

Lynn Seal

Cheryl Slama

Susan Solarz

Cheryl Stewart

Lloyd & Linda Swan

John Wagaman

Steve & Tracy Wetzel

Doris Brown & William Patterson

Glenn Yee

Donald & Gloria Yost

### In Honor of:

Stephen Green

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 has received donations honoring the memory of the following friends:

### Charles P. Bucaria, Jr. Bill Griffith

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. ■**

## Is the BDCP Dead in the Water?

BY STEPHEN GREEN

After seven years of planning and \$250 million (spent mostly for consultants), state officials yanked the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) on Aug. 27 to give some aspects "additional study."

The next day, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a scathing 43-page letter on the plan. EPA researchers "found that by diverting freshwater from three new intakes proposed on the Sacramento River - further upstream from existing intakes - the project is likely to increase concentrations of salinity, mercury, bromide, chloride, selenium and pesticides in the estuary (Delta)," the letter said.

Coincidence?

Most critics think state officials had a preview of the EPA letter and pulled back the plan in an attempt to blunt the criticism.

"It was inevitable that they would have to restart their efforts," said Jonas Minton, an adviser at the Planning and Conservation League. "The problem is that they cannot justify the project based on adverse impacts that their own work has already identified."

Burt Wilson, editor of the Public Water News Service, said that employees at the state Dept. of Water Resources "have privately told their friends (who have passed it on)



that the BDCP would destroy the Delta. Well, we all knew that."

The plan, championed by Gov. Jerry Brown, calls for building massive tunnels, 40 feet in diameter and 30 miles long, to divert Sacramento River water at three intakes near Courtland and ship it under the Delta. Beneficiaries of the water would be water districts in Southern California and other districts supplying huge agribiz operations in the San Joaquin Valley. The price for the project has been put at \$25 billion. But others contend the costs would be much higher.

The EPA letter said that while the project "would improve the water quality for agricultural and municipal water agencies that receive water exported from the Delta, water quality could worsen for farmers and municipalities who divert water directly from the Delta."

The letter went on to say the project failed to analyze environmental effects both upstream and downstream from the Delta, particularly in San Francisco Bay. It also warned of harm to several native fish species, including the endangered Delta smelt and longfin smelt. Juvenile fish could become trapped by the river intakes and their habitats would shrink.

The letter recommended that further studies consider

measures to ensure freshwater flow can meet the needs of the entire Delta ecosystem.

State officials had hoped to finalize the plan this year, but the delay will likely push the planning well into 2015.

Opponents of the plan, however, suspect it simply will fade away.

If a permit is eventually issued to build the BDCP's tunnels, "there will be so many lawsuits filed the next day we may run of lawyers!" said Burt Wilson. "Horrors!" ■



## Wildlife Care Association Won't Have to Close

The Wildlife Care Association (WAC) at the former McClellan Air Force Base cares for and tries to rehabilitate nearly 6,000 orphaned, sick and injured animals yearly.

Earlier this year, the WAC was facing possible closure because of declining contributions and an increase in the number of animals taken in who were suffering from conditions related to drought.

But a Sacramento Bee article on the WAC's problems sparked an outpouring of donations.

"We are so grateful that the community has really stepped up and helped us out," WAC President Theresa Bielawski said. "We will be able to stay open throughout the winter."

WAC is planning several fundraisers this fall. But donations are still needed. They can be made through WAC's website or by sending a check to Wildlife Care Association, P.O. Box 680, North Highlands, CA 95660. ■



Fox at the Wildlife Care Association

*"Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower."*

ALBERT CAMUS

### *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](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



*Guardians of the American  
River and Parkway Since 1961*

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Warren Truitt — *Vice President*

Mary Beth Metcalf — *Treasurer*

Alan Wade — *Secretary / Past President*

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Linda Villatore      Leo Winternitz

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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: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Visa/MC #: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Expires: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_