

SARA's New President

Clyde Macdonald, an expert in water resources and law, was elected president of the Save the American River Association at the January Board of Directors meeting.

He replaces Warren Truitt who had led SARA's advocates for the past five years during a period of many challenges. Truitt plans to remain on the SARA Board and focus his energies on membership development.

Macdonald spent 35 years working for the California Assembly, including stints as chief of staff for the Committees on Water, Parks and Wildlife, and on Local Government.

Macdonald staffed Sacramento Assemblyman Ed Z'Berg, helping to protect Bushy Lake which is in the American River Parkway. Later, he worked for Sacramento Assemblyman Gene Gualco and helped get funds for the extension of the Jedediah Smith Memorial

Continued on Page 2



Clyde Macdonald



Swainson's Hawk soars over Sutter's Landing Park

this issue

New Era for Sutter's Landing Park P.1

SARA's New President P.1

Feinstein's Gift to Water Brokers P.2

The State is Failing to Regulate Waste Dischargers P.4

Donations and In Memoriam P.5

Book Reviews P.6

Stinkwort — "Kill on Sight!" P.7

It's a New Era for Sutter's Landing Park

By Betsy Weiland

Recent controversies over a proposed solar development and tree cutting at Sutter's Landing Park have spawned renewed interest in reshaping the area. It could become a scenic destination park and enhanced gateway for the 31.5-mile American River Parkway.

The 163-acre park is in the heart of Sacramento and lies between the river and the Elvas/Capitol City Freeway. For centuries, it was the home of Nisenan or Southern Maidu Native Americans. In 1839, John Sutter and his men paddled some three miles up from the mouth of the American River and established a camp at the northeast corner of what is now Sutter's Landing Park.

Sutter eventually built Sutter's Fort nearby, the first settlement in the area. As a city developed, soil was removed from the future park site to build levees to prevent flooding. In time, the excavated pits became a garbage dump known at the 28th Street Landfill. It was finally closed in 1997.

Over time, facilities were developed including an amphitheater, bocce ball

courts, skateboard park, dog park, picnic area and a nature trail. The area is popular with fisher people and the home to river otters, beavers, deer, coyotes, rabbits, raccoons, lizards and other critters. There also are Swainson's Hawks (a threatened species), Red-Tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers and owls.

The main garbage dump is now a grassy mound that has been fenced off and will remain that way for another 15 years as monitoring continues over the area where fill is decaying and generating releases of methane. But that hasn't stopped an invasion of rodents which are being aggressively hunted on the mound by owls and raptors.

The City of Sacramento had proposed covering much of the mound with a solar array, but that drew strong opposition from birdwatchers and environmental and neighborhood groups.

Then last fall, city workers decided to chop down a grove of 100 cottonwood trees as a way of getting rid of what had

Continued on Page 3

SARA's New President

Continued from Page 1

Bicycle Trail along the north side of the Nimbus Reservoir.

He also worked for Assemblyman Fred Keeley, staffing one of the state park bond acts. And for Assemblyman John Laird, he staffed the bill creating the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

Macdonald was elected to three terms on the board of the American River Flood Control District which is responsible for the river's levees. He also served on the Sacramento Regional Flood Control Agency as a district representative.

He has been on the Sacramento Water Forum since 1995, served on the City of Sacramento's Water Master Plan Advisory Committee, and also served on the County of Sacramento's Ad Hoc Park Funding Advisory Committee.

Most recently, Macdonald has been SARA's vice president. He grew up in the East Bay and lives in Sacramento.

He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering from the University of California, Davis, and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of California, Berkeley.

Other officers elected at the meeting were:

Stephen Green, Vice President

Alan Wade, Secretary

Mary Beth Metcalf, Treasurer

Warren Truitt, Immediate Past President and Membership Chair ■

Feinstein's Gift to Water Brokers

By Stephen Green

An editorial in the San Francisco Chronicle called it a "Slick Move."

It was just two sentences that U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein slipped in 1,221-page spending bill last fall and they now are law. The change makes it easier for a handful of powerful San Joaquin Valley water brokers to sell federally subsidized agricultural water in the private market for as much as 150 times more than they pay for it.

Feinstein's earmark stripped out of the law protections that Congress approved in 1992 that restricted the sale of publicly owned water for private gain.

Earlier, Feinstein had pushed measures to provide this welfare to the water barons and ran into strident opposition from environmentalists and Northern California water interests. One of her proposals in early 2011 generated unanimous opposition from Bay Area members of the House of Representatives. So, she resorted to giving the spending bill a tiny rider that was given no public scrutiny.

The major beneficiaries are the Westlands Water District, the nation's largest irrigation district controlled by a handful of agri-biz giants. And Beverly Hills billionaire Stewart Resnick, a major contributor to Feinstein campaigns, who runs the privately controlled Kern Water Bank.

The water bank is a 19,900-acres underground reservoir which can hold

more than a million acre-feet of water. It was built by the state as a source of water to be tapped in drought years. Through a series of shenanigans unique to California water wars, the bank was eventually shifted to private operation. Resnick's Paramount Farming controls more than 50 percent of the reservoir. The water brokers take federally subsidized, \$20-

per-acre-foot water that growers with federal contracts receive, and re-sell it to the highest bidder.

The conveyance for moving that water is tax-payer built storage facilities, canals and other conveyances, and pumps using electricity from public power. State and federal regulators have never exercised appropriate regulation or

oversight of these transfers. And fees paid for use of the conveyances do not cover operating costs.

In short, says Patricia Schifferle of Pacific Advocates, the process "socializes the costs and capitalizes the profits...The (Feinstein) measure will make it possible for a handful of these high rollers to dominate the California water market and squeeze whatever profits they can out of thirsty urban water users, leaving the fish and wildlife at the mercy of so-called free market economics."

A handful of people should not be allowed to control and exploit California's privatized water supplies. Our elected representatives need to fix this problem. ■

The change makes it easier for a handful of powerful San Joaquin Valley water brokers to sell federally subsidized agricultural water in the private market for as much as 150 times more than they pay for it.

It's a New Era for Sutter's Landing Park

Continued from Page 1

become an illegal campground. Once again, local groups came together to express outrage over the loss of riparian habitat and the failure of the city to deal effectively with illegal campers.

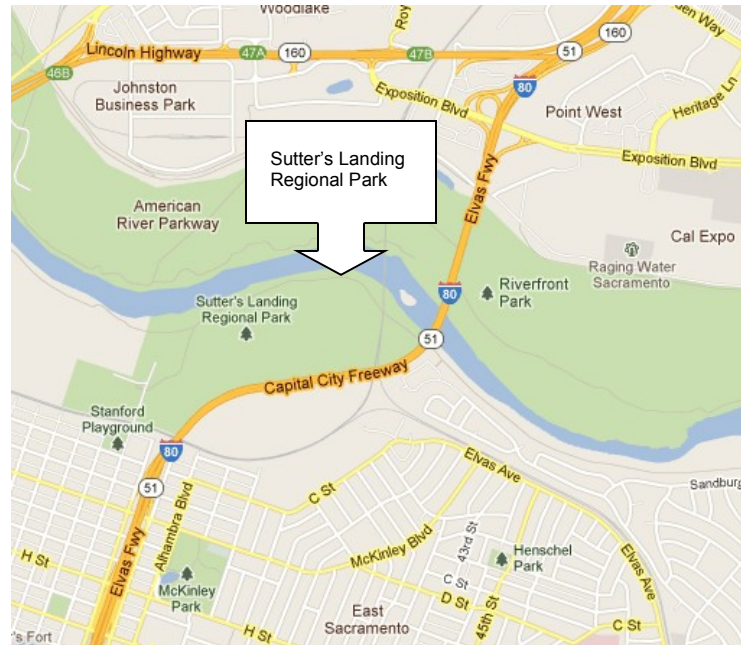
There now appears to be commitment to “take a bad situation and make something good out of it.”

Corey Brown, head of Friends of Sutter's Landing Park

The result has been positive discussions over the future of the area among city officials and interest groups, including Save the American River Association. There now appears to be commitment to “take a bad situation and make something good out of it,” said Corey Brown, head of Friends of Sutter's Landing Park. “This could be one of the most significant riverfront projects statewide. We have time to do this right.”

For starters, the city in partnership with Friends of Sutter's Landing Park has applied for a \$1.48 million state grant from the Proposition 84 River Parkways Program. The money would be spent to:

- Restore native plants to a three-acre area on the south bank of the American River.



- Provide interpretive signage.
- Build a three-quarter mile, multi-use trail.
- Improve the American River levee.

A vision was developed to “create a welcoming and safe place along the American River Parkway at historic Sutter's Landing Park in Midtown

Sacramento where families and individuals can relax, recreate and enjoy the beauty and wonders of nature, both now and for generations to come.”

That is a vision compatible with the American River Parkway Plan. And it is off to a good start. ■

“And if all others accepted the lie which the party imposed – if all records told the same tale – then the lie passed into history and became the truth.”

George Orwell

The State is Failing to Regulate Waste Dischargers

By Stephen Green

The California Sportfishing Protection Alliance published an evaluation of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's compliance with state and federal regulations that govern the issuance of permits controlling discharges of municipal and industrial wastes to surface waters.

The report finds that the Board has significantly modified its procedures for developing permits and is relying upon underground regulations that have not been publically circulated and adopted pursuant to legal rule making requirements.

Consequently, recent waste discharge permits issued by the Board fail to comply with lawfully adopted regulations, the report concluded. The permits also are significantly less protective of water quality and critical beneficial uses of water, including fisheries and public health.

The report's lead author is Richard McHenry, a civil engineer and former senior supervisor at the Board. When he retired, he was a senior engineer at the State Water Resources Control Board's Office of Enforcement. The report is titled: "An Evaluation of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's Compliance with Federal and State Regulations Governing the Issuance of NPDES Permits." It is available at the Alliances' web site: calsport.org.

The board failure to follow and enforce clean water law was evident during a day-



long hearing in December on sewage discharges by the City of Colfax. Since 1979, Colfax has been periodically dumping sewage into a tributary of the North Fork of the American River — including 25 million gallons on a day last March. Save the American River Association and Friends of the North Folk had petitioned for the hearing.

The Board issued orders to Colfax to fix

Since 1979, Colfax has been periodically dumping sewage into a tributary of the North Fork of the American River — including 25 million gallons on a day last March.

the discharge problems without a firm deadline for compliance and without standards for the toxicity of the discharges. They also ignored SARA's request for a ban on new sewage hookups in Colfax until the problems are corrected.

Throughout the Central Valley, there are sites where pollutants are being discharged in violation of water laws and regulations. Here are a few examples:

After years of mitigation efforts, California's largest plume of toxic groundwater is still spreading in Sacramento County. And the Board is willing to allow the land owners where the pollution originated — Aerojet and Boeing Corps. — to spend another century or more conducting ineffective cleanup efforts at this federal Superfund Site.

In Rancho Cordova, the Board is allowing six wrecking yards to discharge pollutants into the City of Rancho Cordova's stormwater drainage system which flows into an unnamed tributary of Morrison Creek and ultimately to the Sacramento River. The wrecking yards are violating the General Industrial Stormwater Permits issued to each of them by the Board.

In the San Joaquin Valley, the San Luis Delta Mendota Water Authority is dumping massive quantities of toxic waste into the San Joaquin River — without a proper discharge permit.

SARA has joined a lawsuit against the Westlands Water District and the Bureau of Reclamation over discharges that harm water quality and wildlife.

It seems that the only way we can get enforcement of water law is to file suits.



SARA Membership Donations *October — December 2011*

Ronald D. Anderson
Wayne Anderson
Wesley & Catherine Apker
Mike & Toni Arnold
Dan Bacher
Dodie Backus
Paul Barth
Dwight Bartlett
Geri Bigelow
Joyce M. Bishop
Vicki Briggs
Michael & Pamela Britton
Shelly Bromberg
Skip Amerine & Lea Brooks
Mrs. Richard Chin
Frank & Doris Cirill
Joetta & Richard Connors
Alice Corley
E. Patrick Creehan, M.D.
David Dawson
Tony & Margie De Riggi
Catherine J. DeMauro
Julie Didion
William C. Dillinger
Carol W Doersch
Daniel W. Edwards, Ph.D.
Malcom Ettin
James C. Flint
Friends of the Swainson's Hawk
Guy Galante
Anne Geraghty
Judy Tachibana & Steve Gibson
David Graber
Stephen Green
Dan & Janie Greene

Kay & Hugh Griffin
Ken & Lynn Hall
Carole W. Harper
Jill A. Haslam
Diane & Julian Holt
Virginia Horning
Greg Hoyt
Steve & Gale Hughart
Tomiko Ibser
Allen Jamieson
Cyrus & Charlotte Johnson
James & Nancy Joye
Gary Keill
Thomas & Rebecca Kidwell
Joseph Klun
Gary J. Kukkola
Howard Leach
Chris Lewis
Laurie Litman
J.S. Livermore
Wilhelmina Loree
Clyde & Ellen Macdonald
Kingsley Macomber
Marty Maskall
Tony & Joyce Mihanovich
Mary Morris
John Mott
Jim & Emily Moulton
Jan & Kelly Nimtz
Stephen Oliva
Stewart Patrignani
Doris Brown & William Patterson
William & Elaine Pesce
Katherine Pinch
Ken & Cesslie Pollard

Mollie & Tom Quasebarth
Joe & Diane Ramsey
Michael Silver & Christine Ratekin
James Read
Howard Ross
Michael & Ann Rothschild
Michael T. Savino
John & Julia Serences
Anthony & Diane Shakal
Jenny Smith
Doran E. Smout
Terry & Tricia Snyder
Susan Solarz
Curtis & Judy Spencer
Carl Sweet
Ellen Taylor
Linda Fischer Thomas
Warren & Mary Truitt
Linda Villatore
Kirk & Kris Vyverberg
Mary M. Wagaman
Russ & Cindy Warnock
Frederick & Betsy Weiland
Steve Wetzel
John Whelan
Steve White
Charlie & Joan Willard
Dave Ward & Colleen Wong
Sacramento Bike Hikers

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:

Dick Backus

Robb Deignan

Robert Jacobson

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.

Special Recognition

Save the American River Association also received donations **in honor of** the the following members:

Jim Jones

Stephen Green

Book Reviews

BIKING AND HIKING THE AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY

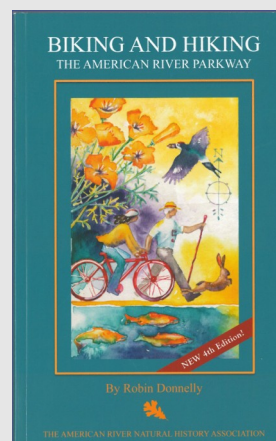
by Robin Donnelly, 4th Edition, American River Natural History Association, 144 pages, Paperback, \$14.95.

The new and expanded 4th Edition of BIKING AND HIKING THE AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY is a mile-by-mile narrative of the natural and cultural history along the Jedediah Smith Memorial Bicycle Trail from Discovery Park to Beal's Point on Folsom Lake.

Even if you have been biking, hiking or horseback riding on the Parkway

for years, this book will expand your knowledge of the Parkway and introduce you to new places to explore.

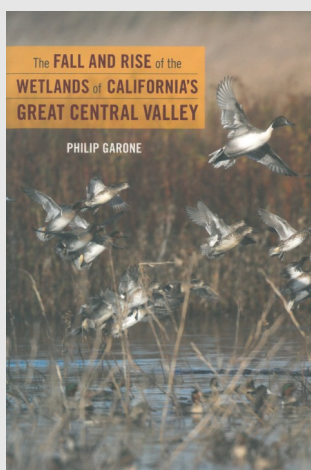
New features include equestrian staging areas and the Two Rivers Trail on the south side of the American River from Jibboom Street to 12th Street. There are descriptions of the Parkway's plants and animals, and many historic photos including one of the Southern Pacific locomotive that broke through an old trestle and fell in the river. You'll even learn about a locale where robbers hung out while waiting for a stage coach to come by.



The book can be purchased at the Discovery Shop at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, bicycle shops, some books stores, and at ARNHA.org. ■

THE FALL AND RISE OF THE WETLANDS OF CALIFORNIA'S GREAT CENTRAL VALLEY

by Philip Garone, University of California Press, 422 pages, Hard Cover, \$39.95.



This book is the first comprehensive environmental history of the wetlands of California's Great Central Valley. It frames the Central Valley in terms of its seminal importance as the wintering area for approximately 60 percent of the migratory waterfowl of the Pacific Flyway, and contributes to the scholarship of environmental history by adopting an ecological perspective.

The destruction of over 90 percent of the Central Valley's original four million acres of wetlands, and the efforts over recent decades to restore portions of those wetlands, relate directly to issues of Western environmental and agricultural history---particularly irrigation, reclamation, flood control, and large-scale agriculture.

The book explores the fate of the wetlands in each of the four physiographic provinces of the 430-

mile-long Central Valley and discusses the evolution of scientific and public attitudes toward a greater appreciation of the ecological value of wetlands. It concludes with an appraisal of the present condition of wetlands in each region of the valley and of their future prospects in the face of continuing threats.

In addition, it recounts Felix's Smith's heroic efforts to expose the contamination of the Kesterson National Wildlife Refuge by agricultural runoff.

Maps, charts and historic photographs are included. The author, Philip Garone, is an assistant professor of history at California State University, Stanislaus. The book is based on his Ph.D. thesis at the University of California, Davis. It can be ordered at ucpress.edu or amazon.com. ■

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
- 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

Stinkwort – “Kill on Sight!”

By Stephen Green

Stinkwort, a grossly obnoxious invasive plant has been migrating into the American River Parkway. The California Native Plant Society has issued a bulletin to “Kill on Sight!”

Stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*) is part of the sunflower family and is native to Africa, Asia and Europe. It was first observed in California in 1984 and has spread to various locales from San Diego County to Butte County. Stinkwort grows to about three feet in height in the conical shape of a small Christmas tree and has yellow flowers.

It is smelly like camphor, toxic, sticky, can crack asphalt, cause contact dermatitis in allergic humans, and kills sheep who graze it heavily during periods of drought. It can even flavor hay, grain and milk. Stinkwort has a three-year life cycle, but is hearty enough to reappear after a wildfire. Each plant produces winged seeds that

are spread by wind, livestock, machinery and people walking near it.

The plant prefers disturbed areas such as the shoulders of roads, crop lands and pastures, and excavated areas. It tends to show up by June and hangs around until killed by frost.

The earlier it can be eradicated, the better. It can be grubbed out or cut off at the base – preferably before it flowers. But the surest death is a good dose of Roundup. Wear gloves, long sleeves and eye protectors as Stinkwort hairs can irritate skin. ■



Stinkwort hairs



Stinkwort plant

Political language “is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.”

George Orwell



*Guardians of the American
River and Parkway Since
1961*

SARA Officers 2012

Clyde Macdonald — *President*

Stephen Green — *Vice President*

Mary Beth Metcalf — *Treasurer*

Alan Wade — *Secretary / Past President*

Warren Truitt — *Immed. Past President*

SARA Directors

Frank Cirill — *President Emeritus*

Bill Davis Betsy Weiland

Burt Hodges Elke Guenter

Jim Morgan Felix Smith

SARA Advisory Council

Mike Arnold Dan Bacher

Deborah Baron John Barris

Katie Baygell Rick Bettis

Lea Brooks Wayne Chubb

Dave Clark Maxine Clark

Illa Collin Al Freitas

Guy Galante Bill Griffith

Jane Hagedorn Bob Hanna

Callie Hurd Jim Jones

Tim Keenan Gary Kukkola

Pam Lapinski Joseph Larzalere

Dave Lydick George Nyberg

Randy Smith Ron Stork

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit 0922
Sacramento, CA

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.

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: _____