

Relaxing Conservation Standards was “a big mistake.”

When California’s drought worsened last year, California Gov. Jerry Brown ordered the state’s 411 water agencies to cut water usage by an average of 25 percent below consumption in a baseline year – 2013.

Water agencies responded. And by the end of August 2015, water usage was cut an average of 27 percent statewide compared to August 2013.

But then, a weak El Nino gave us a little more water this past spring. The state Water Resources Control Board said agencies no longer had to meet any set conservation standards as long as they could certify they have enough water to last three dry years. Agencies were allowed to “self certify” their water supply. The board made no effort to determine if the certification was accurate.

And what happened? Water use jumped.

In August 2016, the water-saving rate fell to 17.7 percent

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Fishing at sunset. Photo by Linda Thomas

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A Conservancy is Being Established on the Lower American River

Assembly Bill 1716 was signed into law in late September establishing the Lower American River Conservancy Program with the goal of enhancing and protecting the natural habitat and water conveyance of the Lower American.

“The Lower American River and the Parkway is the jewel of our community,” said Assembly Member Kevin McCarty, D-Sacramento, the bill’s primary author. “This new program will assist us in ensuring that we can continue to improve access, while at the same time protecting this natural resource and preserve the surrounding habitat for future generations.”

McCarty was joined in sponsoring the legislation by Sen. Richard Pan, D-Sacramento, and Assembly Member Ken Cooley, D-Rancho Cordova. Sacramento City Council Member Jeff Harris and Sacramento County Supervisor Phil Serna also had input in the legislation and worked to win its approval as did members stakeholder organizations including Save the American River Association.

The initial bill was drafted by Sacramento attorney Corey Brown who has helped create other river conservancies. He was heavily involved with the bill as it was worked through the legislative process.

The conservancy goes into effect Jan. 1,

2017, and covers the Parkway from Nimbus Dam to the American River’s confluence with the Sacramento River.

It will be administered by the state Wildlife Conservation Board which will seek bond and grant funds for projects and land acquisitions in and adjacent to the Parkway in consultation with an advisory committee.

Day-to-day management of the Parkway will continue to be the responsibility of Sacramento County. Before funding any project, the Wildlife Conservation Board must consult with the county as to whether the proposed action is consistent with the American River Parkway Plan.

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Please Join Us for SARA’s Annual Meeting

SAT., DECEMBER 3, 2016
at the 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 Nature Center:
Enjoy their annual Holiday Sale on
December 3rd from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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.regionalparks.saccounty.net
- 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

Conservancy

Continued from Page 1

In addition to acquisitions, funds are to be used for restoration, enhancement and maintenance of fish and wildlife habitat and other natural resources, including resources impacted by wildfires. Funds also will be used for improvement and expansion of public access and recreation, including trails, interpretive and educational facilities, and for control of invasive species and propagation of native species.

Assembly Member McCarty said he expects new bond issues will be on the statewide ballot in 2018 and he plans to see that funding for the Lower American Conservancy Program is included.

The board also is to provide funding and assistance to the county for the development of a natural resource management plan and can issue grants to other local agencies and nonprofit organizations for projects approved by the county.

Any land acquisitions funded by the board are to be held by the county or another local public entity willing to hold title.

The advisory committee will work closely with the Wildlife Conservation Board as projects and acquisitions are developed

and implemented. The committee members include:

- Three members of the county Board of Supervisors or their designees.
- Two representatives of the City of Sacramento, including city council members or their designees.
- One member of the Rancho Cordova City Council or a designee.
- Representatives from the state Natural Resources Agency, Department of Finance and State Lands Commission.
- Three members from the public-at-large who have demonstrated knowledge of and interest in the American River Parkway and the American River Parkway Plan. One public member will be appointed by the Governor, another by the Senate Rules Committee and the third by the Speaker of the Assembly.

Other conservancies in California include the San Diego River Conservancy, San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles River and Mountains Conservancy, San Joaquin River Conservancy (in Fresno and Madera Counties), Santa Ana River Conservancy, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, State Coastal Conservancy, and San Francisco Bay Conservancy. ■

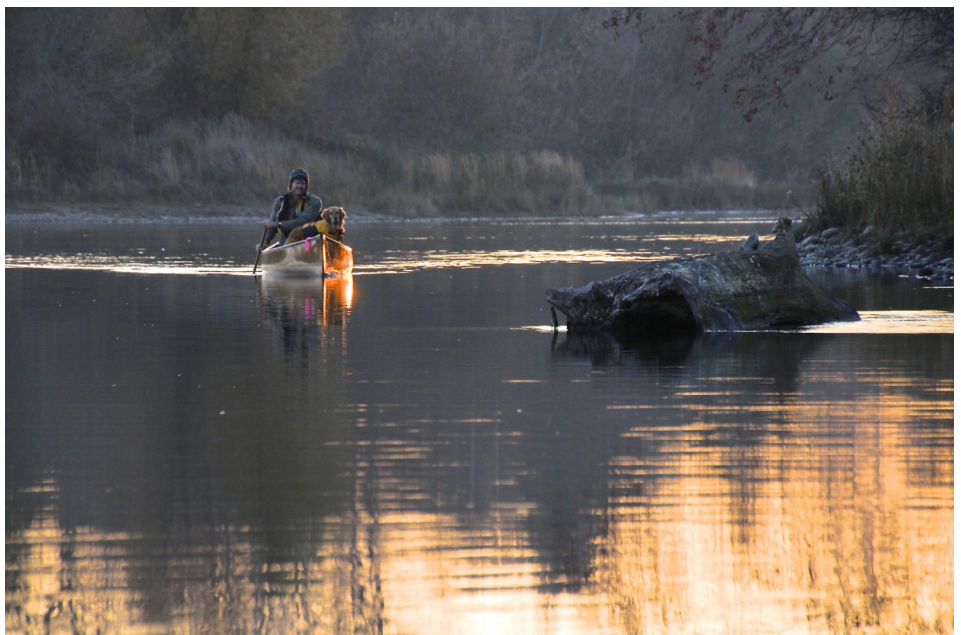


Photo by Linda Thomas

Water Conservation

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below the baseline set in 2013. In the Sacramento region, all the large water agencies distributed water in excess of the previous conservation targets.

One of the few agencies that kept its mandatory cuts was the San Jose Water Co. Last August, San Jose's usage was down 35.6 percent from the 2013 base year.

As we enter the sixth year of California's drought, it's clear that the state board's relaxing of conservation standards will make it more difficult to meet the state's water needs in future years. Meteorologists say it will take five years of normal-to-heavy rain to replenish depleted reservoirs and groundwater supplies.

"The lifting of the mandatory conservation targets was a big mistake," said Peter Gleick of the Pacific Institute, a water-issues think tank. "It sent the wrong message, it stopped the implementation of a growing set of effective urban conservation and efficiency programs, and it took pressure off both utilities and individuals to continue to improve water-use efficiency."

As the Sacramento Bee editorialized, climate change is creating a new world. "Hoping for the best won't make the heat less hot or the drought less brutal," The Bee said. "If California is to hold onto the historic strides it has made in saving water, the water conservation mandate should be restored." ■



Water Provider	Missed Conservation Target	Est. Gallons Per Capita Used Daily
City of Galt	27.5%	193.1
CA American Water Co.	27.2%	121.6
Orange Vale Water Co.	25.9%	273.2
City of Sacramento	25.4%	153.4
Fruitridge Vista Water Co.	24.9%	159.4
Rio Linda Elverta Community Water Dist.	24.7%	268.9
City of Woodland	23.7%	117.1
Citrus Heights Water Dist.	22.9%	242.4
City of West Sacramento	22.7%	173.6
Carmichael Water Dist.	22.6%	276.7
Elk Grove Water Service	22.0%	143.9
Fair Oaks Water Dist.	21.8%	282.2
Sacramento Suburban Water Dist.	21.1%	162.6
Golden State Water Co. Rancho Cordova	20.8%	228.1
City of Davis	19.9%	128.2
City of Roseville	19.1%	166.4
Sacramento Co. Water Agency	18.5%	167.8
Placer Co. Water Agency	16.8%	210.3
El Dorado Irrigation Dist.	15.4%	208.2
City of Folsom	11.0%	259.2

Parkway Rangers are Understaffed

With more than 2,600 illegal campers estimated to be living in the Sacramento region, the American River Parkway has become the favorite place for many to squat. They erect shelters, trash the environs and some have been blamed for starting damaging fires.

The situation has gotten worse in recent months. As the Golden1 Center was about to open, Sacramento City Police began rousting people living in downtown areas. Many moved on to the Parkway.

That represents an increasing challenge for the overworked rangers who patrol the Parkway. There are only 26 peace officer positions assigned to the regional parks and two of those positions were vacant as of mid-October.

In addition to dealing with illegal campers, rangers respond to car burglaries, assaults, drunks, holdups and illegal use of firearms, among other crimes. They rescue drowning swimmers and stranded rafters, and responded to reports of injured Parkway users. Twice weekly, they supervise probationers who cleanup trash-strewn camp sites.

More than a thousand people showed up for the Rafting Gone Wild outing in July, and event with no permit for Parkway use. Rangers made one arrest, issued 34 alcohol-related citations, nine citations for County and State Fish and Wildlife Code Violations, and six parking citations. Rangers seized more than 200 cans and bottles of alcoholic beverages. Marine 7, the ranger boat unit, conducted two water rescues for distressed swimmers, including a 10-year-old girl, and assisted four stranded raft parties.

Ranger's positions were cut during the recent recession and now they have been restored. But ask any ranger and he/she will tell you that they still are spread too thin. Often, there is only one ranger on duty in the entire Parkway. If a ranger is in the Sunrise Area and gets a

Save the American River Association has urged the county Board of Supervisors to give rangers the same pay and benefits that county deputy sheriffs receive.

call about a fight underway at Paradise Beach, the parties involved will be gone before the ranger could get there.

Vacancies frequently occur on the ranger force. Compensation seems to be the primary reason. Our rangers are paid at a rate 16-18 percent lower than peace officers in similar jurisdictions. When there is an opportunity to move to a job that pays more, they take it. Some have even resigned to take another job while still in training for a ranger position. The lower pay also is a hindrance is attracting top-caliber people for county ranger positions.

County rangers are peace officers and they frequently encounter dangerous situations. Save the American River Association has urged the county Board of Supervisors to give them the same pay and benefits that county deputy sheriffs receive. But the supervisors seem to be indifferent.

Listed below is the Ranger Activity Report for August 2016, chronicling crime and services performed during one of their busiest times. Parkway users should find this report alarming.

RANGER ACTIVITY REPORT *August 2016*

INFRACTIONS – 104 citations

Unlawful camping cites — 54

Building structures — 1

Ropes tied to trees — 1

In parks after hours — 10

Alcohol prohibited — 7

Dog off leash — 9

Vehicle Code moving violations — 8

Vehicle Code fix it tickets — 8

Glass containers — 3

Motor vehicles prohibited — 2

Bicycles speeding — 1

ARREST — 35 Arrests

Felonies: 5

Felony warrant arrest — 2

Stolen Vehicle arrest — 1

Assault with deadly weapon — 2

Misdemeanors: 30

Misdemeanor warrant arrests — 4

Illegal fires in park facility — 2

Suspended license — 17

Possession of controlled substance — 2

Resisting arrest — 1

Jumping from bridges — 2

Weapons in the park — 1

Public intoxication — 1

CALLS FOR SERVICE

576 calls for service

CRIME REPORTS

1 Mental health detention 5150WI

2 Stolen/Recovered stolen vehicles

2 Burglary reports

1 Missing person locates

10 Fires on the American River Parkway—Largest 4 to 5 acres

Assault with deadly weapon at Gilligans Island (Rafting Gone Wild)

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Rangers

Continued from Page 4

1 Indecent exposure on American River Parkway

1 Robbery by force report

PARKING CITATIONS

Park Ranger Assistants

Failure to Pay Fee — 390

OTHER INCIDENTS

Rafting Gone Wild non-permitted event

38 Outside agency assists

8 Casualty reports including bike collisions and rope swing injuries

9 Reports of “shots fired/heard shots”

ILLEGAL CAMPING

48 hours’ Notice to Vacate 50 postings

Occupied & Cited 52 citations

DHA Referral — 0

Camps cleaned & removed — 102

Work Crew Clean-up 29 removed

Garbage sites — 145

Property collected — 0

Camp fire citations — 0

Camp fire with no suspects — 1

Parkway Watch Reports — 53 reports

Top two issues are illegal camping and maintenance issues. Other issues reported were 3 crime incidents, 1 bike on equestrian trail, 1 dog off leash, 1 speeding bicycles complaint, and garbage along the ARP.

Sacramento County 311 connect reports — 4 reports

There was 1 maintenance issue, 1 bicycle on equestrian trail, one illegal rope swing, and one garbage pick-up request along the ARP. ■

SARA Membership Donations *July — September 2016*

American River Parkway Trail Patrol

Clifford Anderson

John Baker

Elaine Bickford

Geri Bigelow

Janice Brial

Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Carboni

Charles Duty

Rick Eytcheson

Guy Galante

Judy Tachibana & Steve Gibson

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Gaylord & Janet Moulds

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Eldon & Mary Raber

Ellen Dillinger & Richard Wood

Howard Ross

Ruth & Rod Sime

Robert Sydnor

Steve & Tracy Wetzel

Lynda White

Frances M. Wrightson

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:

Bill Berry

William J. Pesce

Carolyn Lorraine 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 or online via SARA's website. **SARA also has a Legacy program. For information on the program, please call the SARA office (916) 482-2551.** ■

www.sarariverwatch.org

Yellow-Billed Magpies are Only Found in California

Only two bird species are found exclusively in California — the Island Scrub Jay which lives on Santa Cruz Island in the Channel Islands National Park and the Yellow-billed Magpie which hangs out in the Central Valley and part of the south coast.

Yellow-billed Magpies (*Pica nuttalli*) are sometimes seen eating bugs on the backs of Mule Deer in the American River Parkway. They also hang out in neighborhoods near the Parkway, in stream groves and scattered oaks, and in farms and ranches where their raucous qua-qua-qua and querulous quack are often heard.

Magpies have a long-black tail and can measure up to 16.5 inches in length when mature. Its bills and the area around the eyes are bright yellow.

They nest in small colonies. Both sexes build the nest, placing it far out on a tree limb, usually 40-to-60 feet above ground. The nest is a bulky domed structure with an entrance on one side. It is made of sticks and twigs. The interior of the nest

usually is made of mud lined with fine plant materials.

Magpies have one brood yearly. Usually four-to-seven eggs are laid and both parents feed the young, even for a week or so after they leave the nest.

Their diet varies with the season, but about 30 percent of their food is plant material and the rest is animal material (mainly insects). On ranches, they are often seen turning over dung in search of bugs. Magpies steal food from each other and other birds. Sometimes they will create a cache in the crotch of a tree or hole in the ground. In winter, they bury acorns — an important role in maintaining what's left of the Central Valley's oak woodlands.

Magpies are known to live up to ten years. In 2004 when West Nile virus arrived in California, it may have killed 90,000 or more magpies within two years. Mosquitoes transmit the virus



Yellow-billed Magpie Range

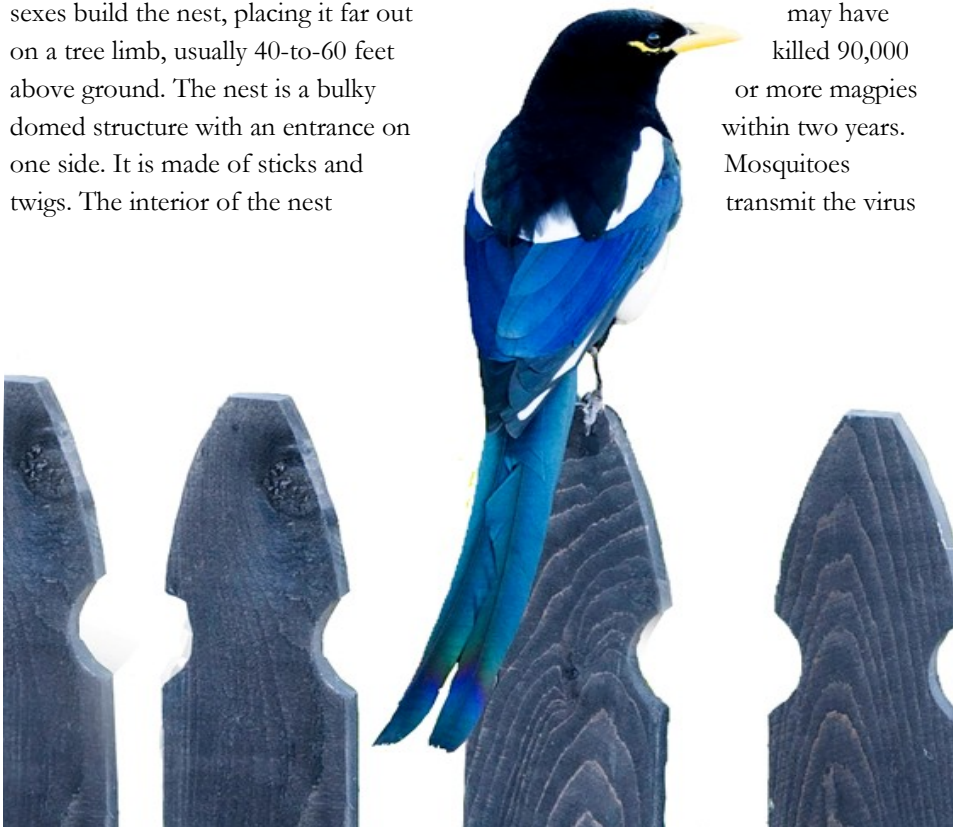
to birds and mammals through their saliva. Magpies often roost in communities, a practice that encourages rapid disease transmission.

In 2006, volunteers working with the California Dead Bird Surveillance Program collected 12,211 magpie carcasses. Tests on more than 1,000 of those showed 78 percent were positive for West Nile virus. Twenty-one live birds were trapped and tested. Only one had any level of immunity.

California's population continued to decline for several more years. But in the last few years, they've made a significant comeback in parts of the Central Valley, particularly in and around the American River Parkway.

A number of studies are underway, tracking the population and attempting to get an understanding of the disease. Magpies are now on the State of the Birds Watch List.

Ornithologists also are concerned that climate change could affect their range in California. ■



Pipeline Project has been Completed



Carmichael Water District workers remove an abandoned 33-inch pipe from the American River at Rossmoor Bar.

The Carmichael Water District recently completed a \$5 million pipeline project under the American River from the district's Bajamont Water Treatment Plant to Coloma Road in Rancho Cordova.

The 24-inch in diameter pipe, some 7,400 feet in length, was installed about 80 feet below the river bed using a pressure-drilling method that did not disrupt the river bed or the channel. On the river's south side, it goes through Rossmoor Bar.

The project also involved removal of an abandoned 33-inch pipe dating from the 1950s that crossed the river along with a cement culvert and other cement structures, some of which had been crumbling over the years. Additional work was done to stabilize the riverbank and restore habitat on both the north and south sides of the river.

The Carmichael Water District is now supplying up to 4.5 million gallons per day to the Golden State Water Company which serves Gold River and part of Rancho Cordova. Golden State has lost significant portions of its groundwater supply over the years as the plume of chemical contamination beneath the Aerojet/Rocketdyne property in Rancho Cordova has spread westward.

The new water supply comes from remediated groundwater at the Aerojet/Rocketdyne Superfund site. It is discharged into Buffalo Creek where it flows to the river and then is recaptured downstream at the Carmichael District's infiltration galleries. The water then gets further treatment at the Bajamont plant before being shipped in the new pipeline to Golden State's service area.



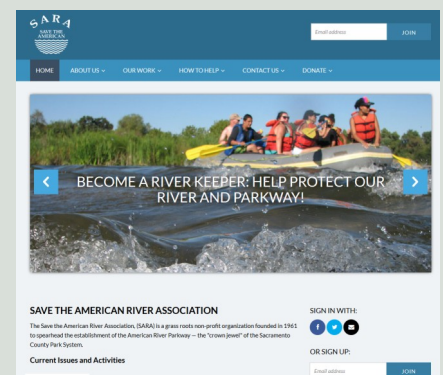
New SARA Website

Save the American River Association (SARA) has rolled out a new website which can be accessed at sarariverwatch.org.

The website contains photos and information on the Parkway along with comprehensive insights on water issues, recent news, and the progress of SARA advocacy efforts, among other features.

Viewers can also send messages to SARA board members and comment on content.

The new website was designed and implemented by Sara Stephens, SARA's gifted office manager. ■



"We may lose this particular fight, but truth and right will prevail at last. Anyhow we must be true to ourselves."

JOHN MUIR



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River and Parkway Since 1961*

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Membership and Contributions

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

☐ Renewal ☐ New Membership ☐ Non Membership Donation
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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.**

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