

MCCLINTOCK VOWS TO REVIVE AUBURN DAM

The Confluence

Spring 2011

We regret to inform you this is not a joke. Rep. Tom McClintock is actually serious about attempting to revive the Auburn dam, the long-discredited pork barrel project that McClintock's predecessor John Doolittle tried and failed to resurrect throughout his eighteen year tenure in Congress.

With the Republicans now in the majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, McClintock has been

appointed chairman of the House water and power subcommittee, which writes water development legislation and oversees the Bureau of Reclamation's budget. This position gives McClintock a platform for pushing his agenda to "restore abundance as the focus of federal water and power policy" by constructing new water storage projects, including Auburn dam.

McClintock has thus far provided few specifics as to how his proposed

dam would be funded. He has floated the questionable notion that the federal government could loan money to a joint powers authority comprised of the project's intended beneficiaries (presumably, unidentified water districts and county governments), who would then build the dam and pay off the loan with the proceeds of water and power sales.

With the most recent federal study (in 2006) pegging dam construction

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Gary Hughes Photo

Our most treasured historic river landmark the Mountain Quarries Railroad Bridge, aka "No Hands Bridge", celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2012. It would be buried under 650 feet of water by the proposed Auburn Reservoir!

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McClintock Vows to Revive Auburn Dam

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costs in the six to ten billion dollar range, it is difficult to envision how the modest water and power potential of an Auburn dam could ever generate the revenue needed to make such a financing scheme fly.

Nevertheless, McClintock's

proposal must be taken seriously. Fiscally irresponsible public works projects have won congressional approval before, and under the right (or rather, wrong) political conditions it could happen again. PARC will be working with Friends of the River and our other

American River allies to defeat this new proposal. We call on all who cherish a free-flowing American River and its pristine canyons to support us in our renewed efforts!

Auburn Canyon Fire-Safe Project Update

Canyon fire-safe work, initiated by loyal, hard-working community volunteers, is beginning to reap huge benefits for Auburn and the surrounding neighborhoods. A fire-safe grant permitted Auburn's American River Canyon Fire Safe Project to move into the Olive Orchard canyon rim area this past fall and winter with an aggressive shaded fuel break fire prescription. A swath of canyon rim from Canyon Creek to highway 49 has been cleared

by the California Conservation Corps under the supervision of California State Parks and the Bureau of Reclamation. The project was directed locally by Fire Chief Mark D'Ambrogi and City Councilman Kevin Hanley. Plans are underway to continue the fire break from Canyon Creek to the Auburn-Foresthill Road. There will be more volunteer opportunities and the Auburn Chamber of Commerce can accept tax deductible donations for fire-safe Auburn projects.

NOTE: To accomplish the fire safe goals some bird-nesting habitat had to be removed. PARC is looking for community volunteers to build bird-nesting boxes to help restore some of the lost habitat. We have secured a materials donation for the project.



Terri & Henry Batsel, who own the El Toyon historic residence on the canyon rim in Auburn, lead efforts in their neighborhood to create a sustainable shaded fuel break from the Robie Point area to Highway 49. Their contributions of time, money, resources help reduce the risk of catastrophic fire.

The Confluence is a seasonal, or as needed, publication of **Protect American River Canyons**. *The Confluence* is included with basic annual membership.

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Placer and El Dorado Counties, City of Auburn Demand Changes In ASRA Management

The campaign to transfer federal management responsibility for the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) from the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to the Bureau of Land Management gained a huge boost in January when first the Auburn City Council and then both the Placer County and El Dorado County Board of Supervisors adopted resolutions calling on the Department of Interior to immediately address ASRA management and funding deficiencies.

The nearly identical resolutions extol the many virtues of the American River canyons and their value to our region, and also note the failings of BOR to live up to its management responsibilities. The resolutions conclude by demanding that the Secretary of the Department of Interior address these land management deficiencies and "provide sufficient funding to protect public safety, responsibly address wildfire prevention and fire suppression needs, properly manage the recreational use of ASRA lands, and protect ASRA's natural, cultural and historical resources."

The resolutions have led to recent discussions between local elected

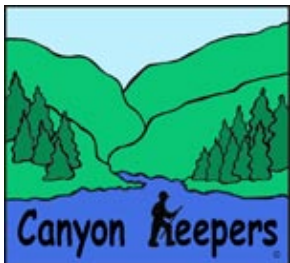
officials, staff members from the offices of Senators Boxer and Feinstein and Rep. McClintock, representatives of CalFire and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and BOR officials. BOR has reportedly now pledged to secure long-term funding commitments that will boost annual ASRA funding from its current \$1.1 million level to 2 million dollars..

Recent reports suggest that as much as 2.7 million dollars may be appropriated for ASRA management and fire prevention work in the coming fiscal year, although some unknown portion of those funds is apparently earmarked for Folsom Lake State Recreation Area management instead. (It is also unclear how much of the \$2.7 million is allotted to fire prevention as opposed to other ASRA management needs.) Additionally, BOR is reportedly now working on developing a new long-term agreement with State Parks for future ASRA management. Auburn City Councilman Mike Holmes and Placer County District 5 Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery deserve a big thank you for leading the effort to bring about these positive changes.

While these recent developments

are encouraging, the coming months will reveal whether the promised funds for the next fiscal year are actually secured and whether BOR is able to meet its pledge to secure long-term funding increases for ASRA management. Frankly, we remain deeply skeptical of BOR's commitment and ability to become a better steward of the ASRA canyonlands. For decades BOR has resisted calls for even modest investments in recreational improvements, adhering to an obsolete management philosophy that discourages recreational use because of the dubious assumption that an Auburn dam will eventually be built.

If, as we suspect, BOR fails to make fundamental and lasting improvements to the way it manages and funds ASRA, we will call on our local, state and federal elected representatives to engage the U.S. Secretary of the Interior in a dialogue aimed at transferring ASRA land management responsibilities to the Bureau of Land Management, an agency that is far better suited to manage the magnificent canyons of the American River.



Canyon Keepers Take Good Care of the River

The Auburn State Recreation Area Canyon Keepers are gearing up for the 2011 recreation season on the American River. The Canyon Keepers host a monthly meeting and program at the Canyon View Community Center the first Tuesday of the month. Volunteers are needed for Confluence docent services, community river education programs, Junior Ranger programs and trail maintenance. To find out more about volunteer opportunities and monthly information programs free to the public contact Shelly Reimers @ 916-708-2669.

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SPRING-SUMMER AMERICAN RIVER EVENTS CALENDAR & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

PARC HIKES

Saturday, March 19 Vernal Equinox ~ AMERICAN CANYON NEWT HIKE

A favorite annual hike that descends approximately 2 miles into American Creek canyon to a pretty waterfall. The California Newt is a fairly large salamander with a fiery-orange belly from which it derives its nickname. The hike out is moderately steep. We may explore other nearby trails and loop out on a different trail. For meeting time and location contact Eric @ 530-885-8878 or parc@jps.net.

Sunday, March 27 ~ Knickerbocker Hike

Indian grinding rocks, a gold rush mining camp, newts, a bob cat, a spectacular waterfall and wildflowers are all possibilities on this grand approximately 8 mile loop hike in the rolling hills and canyon rim of the Knickerbocker area "beyond" Cool. For meeting time and location contact Tom Petersen @ 530-333-4911 or Twcoyote532@hotmail.com

Saturday, April 9 ~ Windy Point Hike

Expect to enjoy many mid-season wildflowers, river access, historical sights, and the trail's famous poppy field on this 3 miles round trip moderately strenuous hike to the meadow and river. Hardy hikers can continue as far as Indian Creek, for a 6 mile round trip that includes stream crossings and a much more strenuous hike out. Hike leader will be Evan Jones. For meeting time and location contact Eric @ 530-885-8878 or parc@jps.net.

Sunday, April 10 ~ South Fork American River Trail

We will hike a section of this new trail that features views of the south fork and the surrounding rolling foothills. There are a few short steep climbs to ridge tops We can lunch at Satins Cesspool a formidable legendary south fork rapid. Round trip is approximately 8 miles. For meeting time and location contact Tom Petersen @ 530-333-4911 or Twcoyote532@hotmail.com.

The Wild Side of Auburn Series ~Sponsored by ARD

Dr. Laird Thompson presents American River Ecology and History from experts! Featuring talks and discussions on Thursday nights 7pm-9pm at Auburn Recreation Park Craft Room with a hike into the canyons the following weekend, at the discretion of the presenter – either Saturday or Sunday. To register for the classes contact ARD @ 530-885-8461 or register online at www.auburnrec.com. Cost is \$50 for residents. Below is a sampling of topics. You must register for the class to take advantage of these ARD Sponsored presentations and hikes.

Thursday, April 14th, Nissenan-Maidu Presentation

Roger & Sue Grohgan will give an animated and enjoyable presentation about the indigenous Nissenan-Maidu people of the area before Auburn was settled, but had a very wild side.

Thursday, April 21st, Geology Talk

Geologist Dr. Laird Thompson will give a talk on the geology of the Sierra Foothills.

Thursday, April 28th, Bird Hike

Join Deren Ross on this hike. Deren, is our local bird expert, with LOTS of hours of birding in the Foothills in his experience. He knows all the birds on a first name basis!

Thursday, May 5th, Historic Auburn Hike

Gary Noy from Sierra College will take you on the Wild Side of Auburn history. Gary is a historian who has lived in the Foothills for some time and has many tales of the Wild goings-ons during and after the Gold Rush.

Thursday, May 12th

Joe Medeiros – ecologist and "plant man" extraordinaire. Joe will present the Canyon dwellers, great and small.



AMERICAN RIVER CONFLUENCE FESTIVAL

Saturday, June 11

7:00-9:00PM

Overlook Park-Pacific Ave--Auburn



This year's festival kicks off Saturday evening from 7-9pm with wine and beer tasting from local vintners and brewers and cabaret style music with Tepid Club of Cool to launch this year's American River benefit silent auction. The auction continues through early Sunday afternoon. Tickets are \$15.



Sunday, June 12th

9:00AM-4:00PM

Overlook Park on Pacific Avenue --Auburn

Sunday, the River Stage multi-instrumentalist **Joe Craven** leads the entertainment of extraordinary local talent that brings music, dance and theater to the river stage. The festival



features family-friendly nature, art, and canyon recreational activities, wild animal presentation, a rock climbing wall, information booths and vendors, and delicious food and much more in a shaded river village atmosphere. To volunteer, donate items for the auction, sponsor or participate in the festival or wine and beer tasting, please contact Andrea Rosenthal @ 530-887-9314 or e-mail parcauburn@yahoo.com.

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Susan Whitaker, Director

PARC Membership Information

Protect American River Canyons is a river education and conservation organization dedicated to the protection of the natural, recreational, cultural and historical resources of the North and Middle Forks of the American River and its canyons. **PARC** is very active in the community, sponsoring a variety of social, river service and educational events each year. **PARC** remains vigilant to the political threats to the river canyons.

To schedule an American River Confluence Parkway presentation for your group, contact PARC at (530) 885-8878.

Visit our web site at <http://www.parc-auburn.org>

Yes! I want to join PARC and help shape the future of the American River!

Send to: PARC, PO Box 9312, Auburn, CA 95604

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS

\$25 Regular Member-Receive Confluence Parkway Map or ASRA Patch

\$50 River Guardian-ASRA Topo Map and Canyon Keepers Trails Book or Tom Petersen's Georgetown Trails Book

\$100 River Patron-Receive John Muir Laws "Guide to the Sierra Nevada" flora and fauna book (Normally sells for \$24.95 + \$5 for shipping.)

\$250 River Champion-Tim Palmer's California Rivers Book

\$500 River Angel-Tim Palmer's California Rivers Book and choice of one other book

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Grant Supports Confluence Area Improvements



Gary Hughes Photo

Over this past fall and winter a Boating & Waterways grant to the Auburn SRA provided funding for several new improvements for the Confluence Area including new concrete vault toilets and a redesigned parking area that features a convenient handicapped parking space and a staging area for river canyon recreation.

PARC the ASRA Canyon Keepers the CA State Parks Foundation and ASRA staff collaborated with Rich Ferreira, owner of Circle Welding, to create a new steel Confluence information panel. The two-sided panel contains maps, park visitor information, historic photos and interpretive information on the American River Watershed natural history. The information panel also has room for flyers on upcoming canyon hikes, rides and events as well as seasonal Auburn SRA park information. To post your flyer simply drop it by park headquarters at 501 El Dorado Street or call 530-885-4527 to have it approved and eventually inserted into the locking information panel. Please give State Parks plenty of lead time to insert your information flyer. Future improvements, as donations and funding become available, include a shade structure with picnic tables for the Confluence recreation staging area.

Negotiations Resume on PCWA License Conditions

On March 2nd negotiations resumed between Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), state and Federal natural resource agencies, and various stakeholder groups to agree on new license conditions for operating the Middle Fork Project (MFP).

PCWA is renewing its license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to operate this water supply and hydroelectric project for another 50 years. The current 50-year license ends on February 28, 2013. The MFP provides water for much of Placer County's growing population west of Auburn.

Among the license conditions to negotiate are increasing minimum flows to improve ecosystem health for aquatic life and the timing of recreational flows coming down the Middle Fork American River below Oxbow Powerhouse. PARC is advocating higher minimum flows for ecosystem health and earlier rafting flows on the weekends in the American River Confluence Parkway from the Confluence to China Bar. This will increase boating recreation opportunities so people can use this newly opened river reach.

The relicensing process began in 2006. PARC has been working with boating, fishing, hiking, and other recreational groups under the banner of the Foothills Water Network (FWN). PARC Board member, Gary Estes, has attended many days of meetings and negotiations since it started. He said, "We are fortunate PCWA has made this a collaborative process. All stakeholders were invited to participate. There are many interests in the room, but reasonable people can come to agreement." The PARC Board appreciates all the volunteer time Gary has put into this project.

Negotiations are supposed to end in late June and additional work by PCWA before an environmental impact review is performed by FERC. A new license is expected by March 1, 2013, unless delays extend the schedule.

The Really Cool Auburn River Festival

Friday, May 20th to Sunday, May 22nd

Sponsored by Sierra Outdoor Center this whitewater extravaganza takes place at the China Bar pump station rapids on the American River. The restored river at the Auburn dam site will feature a whitewater rodeo, slalom races, swift water rescue competition as well as information, gear and food booths. There will also be a down river race from the Confluence to China Bar. Spectators are encouraged to attend all events. Enter the Auburn State Recreation Area from the Cool side. There is a park entrance fee. For a schedule and more information contact Guy at Sierra Outdoor Center 530-885-1844 or visit the Auburn Whitewater Festival website.





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*Protect American River Canyons
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conservation of the natural,
recreational, cultural and
historical resources of the North
and Middle Forks of the American
River and its canyons for all to
responsibly care for and enjoy.*

PARC'S ANNUAL EARTH DAY American River Clean-Up

Saturday, April 16
8:00AM to 1:00PM

Volunteers should meet at the curved bridge in the Confluence Area near the Highway 49 crossing of the American River 3 miles south of Auburn.

A very special Historic Bridges of the Confluence Area and American River Ecology hike will take place at approximately 9am.
We will also be dedicating the Confluence Visitors Area improvements.

Earth Day Clean-up volunteer patches will be handed out while supplies last.
Bring water, gloves and a lunch.

For more info contact the Auburn State Recreation Area office
@ 530-885-4527 or PARC @ 530-885-8878

