

I may live in the flatlands of Placer County, but I belong in the rolling foothills and rugged mountains of the American River and Canyons (ARC). As a boy scout, I have camped and hiked in the rugged and unspoiled watershed areas of the Middle Fork of the American River near French Meadows, Hell Hole and Loon Lake. As a mountain biker, I have explored and experienced the lower river areas – from the confluence to deep in the hills.

The ARC has something for everyone to experience. Kids can skip stones in the water or go on easy hikes with their parents; Runners, bikers, campers, horseback riders, climbers, boaters, adventure, and serenity seekers are all welcome. The river drowns out the hustle of everyday life, and provides a place for connecting with nature, a place for reflection & appreciation of nature at its best. All of this – right here in our backyard.

The ARC is part of California's heritage - from the earliest people to the gold rush, and it will be a part of California's future. We must continue to preserve the beauty, history, habitat, and resources of the ARC for our community's future; for clean water, hydroelectric power, the preserved natural habitat for fish and wildlife, and for our children to experience.

My generation must continue to protect the natural habitats and resources within the watershed, rivers and canyons. I am in the Fire Science program at school. The recent massive and deadly wildfires in California have shown me that we need to protect our canyon's habitat from devastating wildfire. While I do not have the answer on how to best mitigate the fire dangers, it is important we continue to work with experts to help protect the ARC from potentially devastating wildfire.

I think that one of the most important ways to preserve and protect the ARC is for people to feel an emotional, spiritual, or mental connection to the river and canyons. This can only be done when they are able to go out and experience the beauty that the watershed has to offer.

For educational programs, we start young - school age groups can learn about the importance and beauty of the ARC, so that it becomes a part of their personal history and memories. Classes are great, but being out in nature is even more vital. PARC can use social media, such as Instagram to connect with my generation. Increased trail markings or signage can help adventurers stay on trails and teach about the habitat resources in each area.

My generation will continue to protect the ARC habitat by getting more of the river designated as wild and scenic, teaching and living the principals of leave no trace, continued educational programs, and using our vote to help protect the ARC. For all Californians, especially those of us living in Placer, El Dorado, and Nevada counties, the ARC is an important part of our heritage that we cannot afford to lose.