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Why do I care about the American River, and what is my vision for the protection of the river and its canyons for future generations?

THE RIVER IS OUR BACKYARD

Growing up in Placer County within walking distance of the North Fork of the American River will forever be memorable. Through exploring the cool, turquoise sparkling waters and hiking the trails rich with purple lupine, I have experienced the profound beauty available to all of us locally. Many of my birthdays have been spent on the trails, happily sharing the beauty with friends who live here but had never experienced the rushing waters of Codfish Falls. Immersing ourselves into the white rapids by relaxing on the speckled rock walls until we were soaked and laughing. Splashing and swimming for hours in the rich, green pools. This is why I care about our American River!

"Water is the best of all things" (Pindar). These simple words are relevant today as Northern California has the current need for conservation of our most precious resource. I believe that protection of the river starts with exploration. This can happen through recreational use, such as: hiking, biking, horseback riding, kayaking, rafting, swimming or tying on a fly and throwing in a fishing rod. We have a plethora of uses for these river waters, especially with community experiences that spread the word of conservation. Programs such as Junior Rangers, Canyon Keepers and River Cleanup Day are necessary to continuing the legacy of our serene treed canyons. One of my first experiences on the American River was on Kayak Day in which volunteers shared their knowledge and taught me the art of kayaking. I was seven years old and on the river because of the kayakers' passion to share and educate. Thank you volunteers!

I will continue to support these adventures through advocacy of the richness of experience with elementary students and the public, as I have been a public library volunteer for ten years. I fancy that people desire to help, volunteer, and educate each other. Group projects share exploration, then experience leads to education and finally preservation.

Today's technology helps us protect our resources online as well. The passion for conservation is sparked by reading, watching, or listening to video of the beauty of the river. We all want to be a part of the history of the American River, protecting the fragile balance of the red foxes, the hopping bunnies, the lumbering black bears, and our swift mountain lions. In the words of Ansel Adams: "Let us have a splendid legacy for our children . . . let us turn to them and say 'this you inherit and guard it well, for it is far more precious than money . . . and once it is destroyed, nature's beauty cannot be repurchased at any price'" (Adams).

Each one of us holds the key to preserving and conserving our most precious resource for generations to come. Explore the opportunities available, experience the adventure and freedom in the canyons, and continue to educate future generations about the journey of the American River, which is truly connected to all of us, right in our own backyard.

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