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The American River Canyons are beautiful examples of the natural northern California landscape left to flourish. From the small cabbage white butterflies, green starburst lichen, and bird nest fungi to the large sugar pines, black bears, and turkey vultures. I was lucky enough that my mother was raised in Cool, California. She taught me about the canyons and showing me the trails. Her family is full of nature geeks like myself, my hydrologist grandfather uncle and aunt all engranged with deep love for our river canyons. My aunt Anne also now owns the company Cool Trail Maps and was the one to introduce me to Protect American River Canyon. With them I have learned so much and I have been blessed to live in such an amazing place with such a diverse climate, but with the past year of 2020 our nature has had to face challenges unseen before. The trails that Coronavirus disease 2019 has brought to nature with the combined difficulties of social media all together configured one of the most difficult years for the river canyons yet.

The nature in the American River Canyons has endured more in the past year then any other, the hardships that our world has faced bleeding over into our nature. Coronavirus disease 2019 has had a dramatic effect on our society, forcing people to stay home and away from others. This eventually had a push back on our nature as loopholes were found. People now more than ever were making their way outdoors, finding solace in nature close to them. While this seemed like an amazing opportunity for people to become invested in the nature they might have not cared for before, it damaged the river canyons. Inexperienced hikers trekked over delicate plants, disturbed animals, and left behind trash. The damage didn't stop with nature, people were harmed as well. Families brought their kids to the rivers, unbeknownst to the powerful currents and uninformed on proper river safety. Hank Meals describes the issue in his article *Don't visit the South Yuba River this summer, it's too crowded*, he states "there is no such thing as 'sustainable tourism,' it's an oxymoron along the lines of 'friendly takeover,'" . There are simply too many tourists that don't know or care for proper conservation efforts and ruin the ecosystem they chose to indulge in. This has brought about the issue of "gatekeeping" nature, as it has become seemingly a fad. The rise in social media has not helped as well.

Social media in the past year has played a large part in the surge of tourists in the American River Canyons. As the demand to go outdoors is met with the rise of post of "local" or "hidden spots" nearby. The app Tik Tok is an example of this, as we saw with Yankee Jim. Yankee Jim was a popular swim spot before tik tok, but after a video went viral of it the number of visitors shot through the roof. Eventually California Department of Parks and Recreation had to release the following statement "In the last two weekends, Yankee Jims Road has received an unusually high number of visitors making any fire or rescue response extremely difficult to impossible. This past weekend (July 18-19), total vehicle counts in the area were above 300. After consulting with CAL FIRE, the Placer County Sheriff's Office and the California Highway Patrol, California State Parks will be closing Yankee Jims Road to parking July 23, 2020 until further notice ... " The amount of visitors had become a safety concern, but this did not even address the issue of the trash left behind and wildlife harmed during this upheaval popularity. The American River Canyons is one of the few remaining natural beauties in the Sacramento region, and without our protection there is a large chance that it could be ruined.

"California State Parks Partially Restricts Public Parking at Auburn State Recreation Area to Avoid Dangerous Visitation Surges." *California Department of Parks of Recreation*, 24 July 20AD, [www.parks.ca.gov/NewsRelease/964#:~:text=After%20consulting%20with%20CAL%20FIRE,safety%20concerns%20\(view%20video\)](http://www.parks.ca.gov/NewsRelease/964#:~:text=After%20consulting%20with%20CAL%20FIRE,safety%20concerns%20(view%20video))).

Meals, Hank. "Hank Meals: Don't Visit the South Yuba River This Summer, It's Too Crowded." *YubaNet*, YubaNet, 7 Aug. 2020, yubanet.com/regional/hank-meals-dont-visit-the-south-yuba-river-this-summer-its-too-crowded/.