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Growing up in Cool, the American River canyon has been an instrumental part of my life. While going to school in Auburn, I drove the curvy roads of the canyon with beautiful scenery on a daily basis. Along with my consistent trips through the canyon, I love to hike the trails. Being in the Placer Environmental Club, trash pickups and hiking days came often. Furthering my appreciation for the canyon, these hikes helped me explore and understand the trails of the American River.

Because I drove the canyon often, I became complacent with its beauty. In the past couple of years, I took time to appreciate the enchanting river and luscious greenery. Whether it be swimming, relaxing, or hiking, the American River holds many activities for those that enjoy nature. On the last hike with the Environmental Club, we took a hike down Quarry Trail. One of the most popular trails for its low difficulty, many enthusiasts take the light trek to see its views. We ventured on the hike with one of the park rangers, and he showed us Hawver Cave, a limestone cave found by Hawver, an amateur geologist, in the early 1900s. In 1907, the University of California, Berkeley explored the cave and discovered evidence of prehistoric life. The history of this cave only advances the complexity of our American River Canyon.

Due to its lush vegetation and jaw-dropping views, influencers have taken a liking to the canyon. In recent years, social media has brought an excess amount of visitors to the state park. Posts on Instagram and Tiktok can be harmful to the well-being of the park. Because many tourists lack understanding, litter is left and flora is stolen. Despite the kind rangers and empathetic locals, many visitors take advantage of the resources and do not respect the environment. To combat this issue, visitors should come to the park informed with knowledge of the guidelines and regulations, and compassion for the complex ecosystem. In order to limit the misuse of the park, individuals must take personal responsibility. We must educate ourselves, both about the specific regulations of the park and general comprehension of the best practices to keep when visiting state parks. Afterall, "leave no trace" became popular for good reason.

High school has brought many opportunities to experience the wonders of the American River Canyon. I have grown to comprehend and understand the sheer allurement the canyon beholds. With the winding roads, varying trail levels, and rushing waters, the canyon is a charm that should be held in high esteem. As a local, I believe the canyon's charms should be shared and valued. I greatly cherish the fact that I am in close proximity to such an admirable part of nature.