



Auburn to Cool Trail Bridge Update



Image depicts one version of a potential trail bridge connecting Auburn to Cool. See page two for second image.

This year saw significant planning progress for an Auburn to Cool (ATC) trail bridge crossing at China Bar. CONSOR Engineering provided perspective illustrations for two types of bridges, a stress ribbon as well as a conventional suspension design. CONSOR also confirmed the environmental and geotechnical viability of two potential bridge locations - one just below the Pump Station Rapids and the

second in the Birdsall Takeout area (the latter area was also considered as a possible bridge crossing site in State Parks' 2007 ATC bridge study). Additionally, PARC has been engaged with State Parks in an effort to identify potential funding sources for bridge design and construction, as well as for operations and maintenance costs once the bridge is completed. We hope in the coming year to close in on

a tipping moment where we can start to seek funding for the geotechnical and bridge design study process prior to actual construction. We will continue to push State Parks to make the bridge project a priority. Construction of the ATC trail bridge is included in Folsom SRA's General Plan as a key component in the completion of a planned 360-degree trail around Folsom Lake. It
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SAVE THE DATE

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Auburn to Cool Trail Bridge

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is also proposed in Auburn SRA's General Plan as a means to expand trail access and to help reduce congestion and improve safety at the Confluence.

(In an encouraging sign, Auburn SRA is currently evaluating the Knickerbocker Area trails network for trail improvements and better signage.)

Image right depicts version two.

A proposed suspension pedestrian bridge between Auburn and Cool.



Planning Underway for State Route 49 Bridge Debris Removal

By Gary Estes

Last year about this time, we reported that \$8 million was included in the California 2022-23 budget for removing the steel and concrete wreckage of the former State Route 49 Bridge that currently lies in the North Fork American River downstream of the Confluence area.

The Placer County Public Works Department stepped forward to undertake this project with the funding coming through Caltrans. The engineers have been busy getting the scope of work together in order to request bid proposals from firms to provide environmental consulting and associated professional engineering services for the bridge debris removal project. The County's Procurement Services Division is handling the contracting details, and the request for proposals (RFP) has now been released.

Proposals are scheduled to be received

and evaluated in late December and early January. PARC Board member Gary Estes has been invited to assist with the evaluation of the proposals submitted by consultants. A contract might be completed in the first quarter of 2024, if everything moves along without delays.

The next step will be to select a construction manager/general contractor to perform the removal work.

Many thanks to all the Placer County personnel who have worked to get this project to this point.

We look forward to posting debris removal updates on PARC's website in the New Year!

THE CONFLUENCE is a seasonal, or as needed, publication of **Protect American River Canyons**.

THE CONFLUENCE is included with basic annual membership. Visit our website to be added to our e-news list.

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<http://www.parc-auburn.org>

E-mail: eriverpeach@gmail.com

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How Pat Brown Stopped Auburn Dam~by Jerry Meral

In 1955 a huge atmospheric river caused extensive flooding throughout California. More than 15 inches of rain fell in a single storm. The levee protecting Yuba City from the Feather and Sacramento Rivers failed, and the entire town was flooded. 38 people died.

California Attorney General Pat Brown took his 17 year old son Jerry and flew over the catastrophe. He vowed to never let it happen again. In 1960, Governor Brown sponsored Proposition 1, the State Water Project, which passed in November of that year by a tiny margin. It included authorization of the California Aqueduct, Oroville Dam, and many other features.

Although the Legislature had previously authorized a small flood control structure on the Feather River to slow future floods, Oroville was to be an order of magnitude larger. Indeed, it was to be the tallest dam in the United States, and the second largest reservoir in California (after Shasta).

In early 1961, Department of Water Resources engineers told Brown that it would be possible to meet State Water Project water demand simply by pumping water from the Delta for many years, until water demand in the Bay Area, Central Valley, and Southern California built up. Only then would water from Oroville Dam be needed.

But Brown demanded that construction on Oroville Dam begin immediately, because of the flood protection benefits it would provide to Marysville and Yuba City. Construction began later that year.

In 1975 a magnitude 5.7 earthquake was caused by the enormous water pressure of Lake

Oroville. This kind of thing had happened at other reservoirs around the world.

Having a reservoir induced earthquake so nearby caused geologists and engineers to rethink the thin arch design of Auburn Dam. Eventually, studies revealed earthquake faults in and near the Auburn Dam site, and the thin arch design was abandoned.

Although the dam was redesigned to be a more conventional earthfill dam, delays in the project and rising costs eventually caused the dam to be abandoned, although not without some serious attempts at revival in Congress.

So, it is fair to say that Governor Pat Brown killed Auburn Dam, by ordering the early construction of Oroville Dam!

A side note: Bryce Whitmore, a legendary raft company operator, took Governor Brown up on an invitation to all Californians to bring rocks from around the state to put into the mix of rock used to build Oroville. Bryce resented the loss of the beautiful Feather River, so he brought up some rocks from the failed St. Frances Dam on San Francisquito Creek near Los Angeles and threw them in the hopper!

Jerry Meral, PhD, one of the founders of PARC in 1973, was Deputy Director of the CA Department of Water Resources from 1975-1983, Deputy Secretary of the CA Natural Resources Agency from 2011-2013, and is currently Director of the California Water Program at the Natural Heritage Institute.

Squatter's Cabin Land Abuse Cleaned After Decades of Misuse



The Miner Squatter Bud camp on the Middle Fork of the American River near the historic Sliger Mine area across from the Poverty Bar Trail has been cleaned up. It was decades in the making. When Bud died the Bureau of Land Management and the new property owners stepped up to clean up the toxic camp on several acres of land.

12th Annual PARC Scholarship Essay Contest

Over \$25,000 Awarded to local high school seniors since 2013!



Anna Kerr

The more time I spent on the American River, the more I felt the inherent value of the natural world. The pristine beauty of the North Fork American River Canyon awed me the first time I kayaked Chamberlain Falls. The granite was sculpted and polished, and we found a bird's nest nestled in a crevice along the shore. Tiny ferns decorated moist alcoves like lace. I could see the shadow of my kayak gliding over the river bed through crystal clear water.

Anna Kerr, Charter University Prep High School



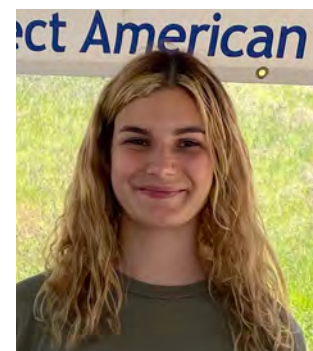
Mari Ziegler
Colfax High School



Audrey Lund
Placer High School



Andrew Oates
Placer High School



Calista Schroeder
Placer High School

\$2,500 in Total Scholarship Awards for 2024 Essay Contest

The Essay Contest topic for high school seniors graduating in 2024 will be:

Why do you care about the American River and its canyons, and what should be done to help protect them for the future? Please describe any activities you have participated in that relate to the river or canyons.

Students can apply for the PARC Scholarships by submitting an original essay of no more than 500 words describing their response to the topic question about the North and Middle Forks of the American River and their canyons located upstream of Folsom Reservoir, in the Auburn State Recreation Area.

Deadline for submission is March 15, 2024. Details and application forms for the 2024 PARC Scholarship Essay Contest are NOW available on the PARC website www.parc-auburn.org.

To read this year's winning essays visit our website:
<https://www.parc-auburn.org> and click on the Scholarship page.



American River Outings and Events



CELEBRATE THE WINTER SOLSTICE with a Cool Hike in the Knickerbocker Trails Area Thursday, December 21, 2023 10:00 am

Meet at Olmstead Loop Trailhead behind Cool Fire Station.

Short Hike: An easy 3 mile out-and-back walk that is also wheelchair and stroller friendly. We'll hike paved Haul Rd Trail that bisects the Knickerbocker Trails Area.

Long Hike: A moderate 5-mile loop on pavement, ranch roads, and single-track trail. We'll leave the short hike group at their turnaround to make a northerly loop through rolling terrain of pine and oak woodlands, past Salt Creek, secret meadows, old ranches, a pond, scenic views and trail **surprises**.

INFO: Parking \$10 cash or free with park permit. Bring water, trail snacks, and essentials. Friendly dogs on leash welcome. Rain cancels. No need to RSVP. ASRA's Joseph Shannan & Canyon Keeper Peggy Egli will lead. For info contact the Auburn SRA at 530-745-2202

CELEBRATE NEW YEAR'S DAY 2024 WITH A QUARRY TRAIL HIKE

Monday, January 1 2024 10:00 am

Meet at the Quarry Trailhead

Short Hike: Celebrate the New Year with a morning hike along the American River. On this easy 2.5 mile out and back hike, learn about the natural, geologic, and mining history of the Middle Fork Canyon from State Park Interpreters. This route is wheelchair and stroller accessible. Rain Cancels. Well trained dogs on leash welcome. No need to RSVP. Leads: James Oslie and Joseph Shanahan (530) 745-2202

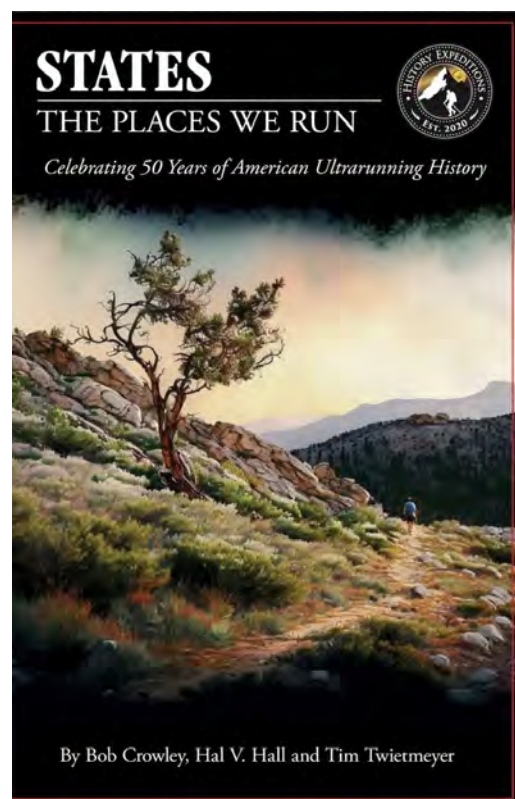
Long Hike: A 6.5-mile option using trails near the Limestone Quarry Area. Call for details.

STATES: THE PLACES WE RUN

**Friday, February 9th 2024 from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
General Gomez Art Center 808 Lincoln Way Auburn**

The origins of the fanciful names and fascinating history is the subject of STATES: The Places We Run, a new Western States Trail name book by Tevis Cup Rider Hal Hall and Western States Runners Tim Twietmeyer, and Bob Crowley. The Western States Trail passes through a Sierra Nevada landscape, sculpted by volcanoes, glaciers and rivers, and a mother lode of tales of "happiness and tragedy, boldness and grit, beauty and tradition." All are reflected in the trail location names like Devil's Thumb, Last Chance, Red Star, and Ruck-a-Chucky. The authors invite you to preview their STATES e-book link at <https://historyexp.org/states/> and step into the rich history of the Western States Trail from its rough-and-tumble origins to the present.

Admission is free or donations are welcome. The evening includes a multimedia presentation, a book signing table, and a raffle. A no host beer, wine and non-alcoholic beverage bar will be available. For more information call 530-537-2241 or email info@PARC-Auburn.org



50 Years of American River Conservation



Right, American River Heroes; Jerry Meral and Ron Stork (seated) talk with Tony DeRiggi

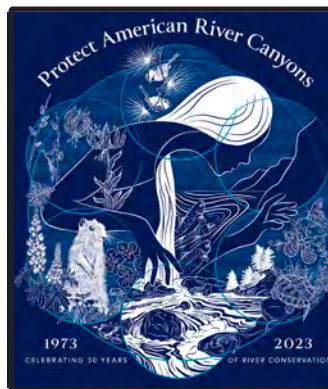
2023 marks the 50th anniversary of PARC's founding in 1973. To celebrate the occasion PARC hosted a free event at General Gomez Arts in Auburn on October 14. The evening's festivities included a slide presentation on PARC's history, talks on the natural history of the American River canyons by Sierra College Professor Emeritus Joe Medeiros and Auburn State Recreation Area Interpretive Specialist Joseph Shanahan, river conservation awards to American River heroes Ron Stork and Jerry Meral, a hilarious environmental fashion show by Haute Trash, and much more. A good time was had by one and all.

PARC's history, of course, began with the efforts of its founders to do whatever they could to help prevent Auburn Dam, already under construction, from being completed. Against long odds, the work to stop the dam has proven to be a spectacular success. Given a reprieve by the 1975 Oroville earthquake that raised serious questions about the seismic safety of the proposed dam, PARC and its allies were able to mount an effective public education campaign that over time generated widespread support for saving the canyons. Thanks to these ongoing efforts and determined political lobbying led by Friends of the River, repeated attempts to revive the dam during the 1980s and 1990s were thwarted. When the Auburn Dam water rights permits were revoked in 2008, we were all able to breathe a sigh of relief, since this decision meant that

for all practical purposes the dam threat was over, at least for the foreseeable future.

PARC's founders had a second objective, one that remains unfulfilled: to gain permanent protection for the rivers and canyons that the dam would have destroyed. Despite all the gains of the last 50 years, the 28,000 acres comprising the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) remain under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation, a dam-building agency, and the Auburn Dam technically remains a federally authorized project. The permanent protection these canyons and river segments so richly deserve will not be secured until Congress acts to deauthorize the dam and the ASRA canyonlands are given protected status, perhaps as a National Recreation Area. Achieving this protected status, as well as Wild and Scenic designation of the North Fork of the American River, will remain PARC objectives in the coming years.

As always, PARC remains deeply appreciative of the support we receive from our members and donors. The accomplishments of the last 50 years simply would not have been possible without the chorus of voices letting the world know that the American River and its canyons are too precious to lose; that same show of support will be essential to ensuring they are permanently protected for future generations to enjoy.



Celebrate PARC's 50th Anniversary with a limited edition t-shirt that is a tribute to the 50 years of passion, love and respect the American River Community showered on the river and canyons. Mystic Design's Laurel Mathe has cleverly woven a river woman's spirit into a lush river-canyon landscape tapestry of waterfalls, blooms and wildlife. To order: <https://www.parc-auburn.org/books--maps.html#tshirt>

Membership, Donation and Estate Planning Opportunities

For your convenience, please take a moment now to complete and return the enclosed envelope to renew your yearly membership. If you prefer to renew online, go to www.parc-auburn.org and click on "Join PARC."

There is also a link on our website for contributing to the **High School Senior Scholarship Award Fund** and **PARC Legacy Fund**. To Learn more about your estate planning options please contact Jessica Hubbard at Placer Community Foundation. She is available for free consultations to support your charitable interests and answer your questions. No obligation is necessary. jhubbard@placercf.org or (530) 885-4920.



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-Tim Palmer The Wild and Scenic Rivers of America 1993

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Poem by Roger Groghan

Working Meditation

Stacking stove wood on a hot afternoon,
I stop for a moment of rest.
Photons fall on my skin,
mingle into me making vitamin D,
a last vibration of summer.

Almond logs,
cut and split for a sixteen inch stove.
Started as select seed, sprouted to saplings,
grown in acres of rows,
transplanted and nursed into production.

And they produce until the area under
the curve of a differential equation
tells the manager nuts are in decline.

It's firewood.
Not just one tree, but the whole crop,
making room for the new bare-root stock.

Warm air rising from the ground carries
the smell of pine needles.
Acorns slapping through the trees, the
distant trill
of Sandhill cranes flying south
remind me
there is wood to be stacked.



P.O. Box 9312 Auburn, CA 95604
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Protect American River Canyons (PARC) protects and enhances the natural, recreational and cultural resources of the North and Middle Forks of the American River through leadership and collaboration.

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Ponderosa Way North Fork Bridge Replacement Completed

The Bridge has been replaced, the road repaired and resurfaced and reopened to river and Codfish Falls Trail access in November 2023. Say goodbye to the original steel and timber Parker pony truss one lane bridge and welcome the sleek modern steel beam and concrete one lane replacement. A Bureau of Reclamation 2020 inspection determined the bridge to be structurally unsound when the bridge was closed. The concrete river footing and timber bridge deck had deteriorated beyond repair. Parking as well as river and trail access were all improved as part of the project.

The Bridge was originally built as part of the massive 800-mile Depression Era Ponderosa Way Firebreak Project. Initiated by the US Forest Service on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, it was designed to separate the Ponderosa Pine forests from the Central Valley. The project included roads and bridges for emergency vehicles and employed approximately 4,800 Civilian Conservation Corps workers.

Placer County plans to start construction on a replacement bridge at Yankee Jims in 2025. The historic bridge will remain as a pedestrian bridge.



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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMeny0tPxUIMR9hrVyuzOyA>