



# THE CONFLUENCE

DECEMBER 2024

## How Gary Estes Helped Stop Auburn Dam



*Gary Estes with engraved rain gauge recognizing his 30 years of CEPASYM leadership*

When PARC board member Gary Estes moved to Auburn in 1990, efforts to resume construction of Auburn Dam were in full swing. It didn't take Gary long to join the fight against the dam.

Early on Gary focused on one of the primary arguments dam proponents were making – that the dam was needed to strengthen flood protection for the city of Sacramento. This was

a critical issue, because there was no question that Sacramento was at risk of catastrophic flooding and needed additional protection, something Auburn Dam would have provided.

But was the dam the only solution? Gary wasn't so sure. An interesting idea was proposed by Don Baker, another Auburn Dam opponent with a degree in meteorology. Don had observed a weather pattern over the Pacific Ocean when flooding rains occurred in California. His research confirmed and identified the weather pattern. He proposed this knowledge could be used to operate Folsom Dam by releasing water in advance to create more flood storage space in Folsom Reservoir. We now know this pattern as being an Atmospheric River (AR). What to do with this weather pattern knowledge? Gary had the idea of holding a scientific symposium to share Don's weather pattern research.

What was to be a one-time event evolved into an annual event focused on extreme precipitation.

First held in 1994, and each year since except for 2000, the California Extreme Precipitation Symposium (CEPSYM) this year celebrated its 30th anniversary, all under the leadership of Gary Estes.

The work sparked by the symposium eventually led to the adoption of what is now called Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) at Folsom Dam. The new operating rules, combined with the new Auxiliary Spillway added to Folsom Dam, has dramatically increased the level of flood protection Folsom Dam provides. Proven to work at Folsom, FIRO has since been integrated into flood control operations at other reservoirs in California and other western states.

The significance of the work Gary inspired cannot be overstated – it has resulted in increased safety in many communities  
*Continued on page 2*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Maidu Museum & Trail Roger's Poem	2
State Route 49 Bridge Debris Removal update	3
High School Essay Contest	4
Outings and Events	5
Bear River Update Giving opportunities	6
Laurel's Mystic Letterpress	7
PLT Land Acquisition	8

### SAVE THE DATE

See Page 5 for Details

Winter Solstice Hike.....December 20

New Year's Day Hike.....January 1

New Year's Cleanse Hike.....January 26

PARC Spring Gathering.....February 28

# Gary Estes

Continued from pg 1

downstream of reservoirs, including Sacramento. Oh yes, it also had one other impact of significance - by effectively eliminating the flood control argument for Auburn Dam, it dealt the dam's prospects for revival a crushing blow.

To learn more about Gary's role in revolutionizing flood control management at Folsom and beyond, see the recent article by Robin Meadows in Maven's Notebook:

<https://mavensnotebook.com/2024/09/24/notebook-feature-how-the-fight-against-auburn-dam-advanced-flood-control-in-california/>

Or scan this QR code:



# Poem by Roger Groghan

## A Tree Looking For A Name

The candidates: Gray, Bull, Ghost  
or maybe Foothill but not digger  
because rhymes with the no no word;  
go figure

Or that native women were tending  
patches of lilies and Brodiaea.  
What chutzpah as goldiggers  
lifted the river from its bed.

Often with two trunks. In the distance,  
like people dancing, arms uplifted  
circling the Central Valley,  
sparsely dressed in smoky green needles

For the invaders, it was no good wood,  
twisted and sappy, little shade  
and falling cones can kill.

It's more than a tree looking for a name;  
for those who came first, a sweet nut  
of autumn and brown beads.

What do the Native People on the American,  
Cosumnes and the Yuba call them?

# Native American Tribute & Museum

*The American River Canyons are the ancestral lands of the Maidu, Miwok, Washoe and Nisenan people. Please respect the land and their culture.*

Visit the Maidu Museum & Historic Site in Roseville to learn about the Nisenan Maidu who called this place home for thousands of years. The exhibits inside the museum feature California Indian traditional practices, such as acorn processing and basket weaving. Walk the trail to see bedrock mortars, ancient petroglyphs, and native plants and

animals. Every Saturday there is a public tour of the Museum,s Historic Site Trail starting at 10:00 am, free with admission.

The Museum and Historic Site are located at 1970 Johnson Ranch Road, Roseville. Museum hours are 9 AM to 4 PM Thursday – Saturday. Call 916-774-5934 info.



**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.

P.O. Box 9312

Auburn, CA 95604

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

E-mail: [eriverpeach@gmail.com](mailto:eriverpeach@gmail.com)

Thanks to our advertisers.

Articles and Editing by Eric Peach, Tim Woodall & Gary Estes

Layout by Alice Tenscher Dunbar

Printing & Mailing by API-marketing

Special thanks to Laurel and LeAnn of Mystic Design.



# Update: SR-49 Bridge Debris Removal Project~by Gary Estes

On August 27, 2024, the project team kick-off meeting for the State Route (SR) 49 Bridge Debris Removal Project was hosted by the Placer County Public Works Department in Auburn. Through a competitive bidding process, the County selected Dokken Engineering (Folsom) to provide environmental consulting and associated professional engineering services and Myers & Sons Construction (Sacramento) for construction manager/general contractor services.

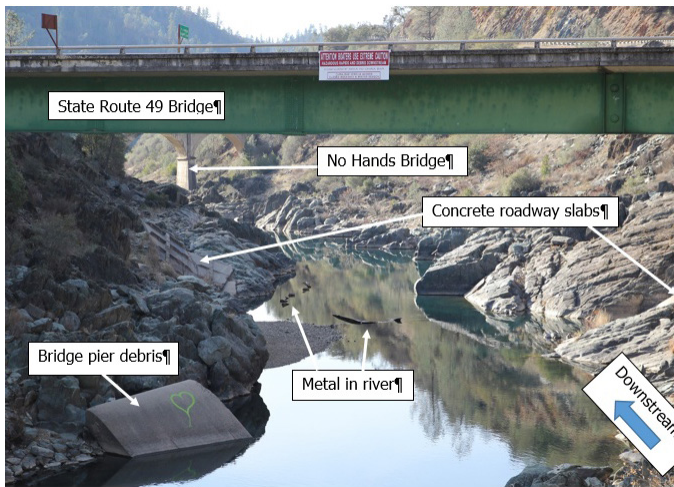
Other team members are U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, California State Parks, Placer County Water Agency, and PARC.

The project will remove the steel beams/girders and concrete roadway slabs from when the SR-49 Bridge washed into the North Fork America River on December 23, 1964. An atmospheric river event overwhelmed the incomplete Hell Hole Dam under construction for Placer County Water Agency (PCWA). The result was the release of a wall of water which pushed against the bridge's 10-foot tall flat

girders and the force collapsing the bridge.

The County would like to remove the debris in late summer through October, 2025. October is historically the lowest river flow period before the heavy rains, which makes for a safer working environment in the river. Also it is when PCWA is not using the river for releasing water for hydropower sales. This hopeful schedule is dependent upon getting five agencies to provide permits and/or complete environmental reviews in time for the work to be done next year.

There will be some unavoidable recreational impacts during the debris removal work. The Western States Trail from SR 49 to No Hands Bridge will be closed to public use, although an alternative route from the Confluence to the Western States Trail downstream of No Hands will be provided. The river itself will also be closed to recreational use during this time. Once the project is completed, the closed trail segment will be re-opened, as will the river itself.



**Peach Arts**  
CERAMICS AND MUSIC  
CLASSES • SALES • COMMISSIONS

ERIC & PAULA PEACH

phone 530-210-5717      Eric eriverpeach@gmail.com  
website www.peacharts.com      Paula paulapeach13@gmail.com

**Sierra Outdoor Center**

Kayak School, Rentals, Raft Repair, Cross Country Skis, Snowshoes and Retail Store

**530 885-1844**  
440 Lincoln Way Auburn, CA 95603

# 13th Annual PARC Scholarship Essay Contest

Over \$28,000 Awarded to local high school seniors since 2013!



Jade Biittner  
Colfax High School

*Some say it's just a river, but I see so much more. From the smallest speck of sand to the massive canyon walls, everything in between is impacted by us as a community. ....the river is so much more than a place to recreate. Thousands of species and habitats are negatively impacted by human activity. I call upon those that visit the American River to advocate and participate in conservation efforts, because the river is not just a river, it is so much more, and as Dr. Suess once said, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not".*

Jade Biittner, Colfax High School 2024 Winner

## \$3,000 in Total Scholarship Awards for 2025 Essay Contest

The Essay Contest topic for high school seniors graduating in 2025 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 related to the river or canyons.**

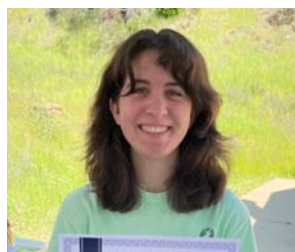
Students can apply for the PARC Scholarships by submitting an original essay of no more than 500 words describing their response to the topic question about the North and Middle Forks of the American River and their canyons located upstream of Folsom Reservoir, in the Auburn State Recreation Area.

Contestants must be high school seniors, and residents of Placer, Nevada or El Dorado County, but may attend school in another county.

Essays will be judged on response to topic question and overall impact. Preference will be given to students who have engaged in environmental, educational, recreational or other stewardship activities related to the American River and its canyons.

Deadline for submission is March 15, 2025. Details and application forms for the 2025 PARC Scholarship Essay Contest are NOW available on the PARC website: [www.parc-auburn.org](http://www.parc-auburn.org).

The PARC Board of Directors would like to congratulate these 2024 winners pictured on the left. To read this year's winning essays visit our website: <https://www.parc-auburn.org> and click on the Scholarship page or scan the QR Code:



Jeanette Messina  
Placer High School



Anna Reimers  
Colfax High School



Sydney Yacullo  
Placer High School



Kimberly Lum  
Oakmont High School

# American River Outings and Events

---



## **OLMSTEAD WINTER SOLSTICE HIKE**

**Friday, December 20, 2024 Meet at 10:00 AM**

Celebrate the shortest day of the year by spending the morning in the rolling hills of the Olmstead Area. On this hike we will appreciate the winter landscape, the kinship of fellow hikers, and the roots of some of wintertime traditions. Both hikes will depart at 10:00 from the Olmstead Parking Lot. The Short Course is an out and back on the paved dam road for a total of approximately 3 easy miles. This route is wheelchair and stroller accessible. The Long Course is out on the paved dam road and back on the Olmstead Loop trail. This route is an easy to moderate 5 miles total. Meet at the Olmstead Loop Trailhead in Cool, CA at 10:00 AM. There are restrooms at the trailhead; however no running water. \$10 fee or valid state park pass to park at trailhead. Please bring plenty of water, a snack, wear sturdy shoes, and dress in layers. Friendly dogs on leash welcome. Rain cancels. No need to RSVP. Hike leaders: Joe Shanahan and James Oslie (530) 863-8848.

## **CHINA BAR NEWYEARS HIKE**

**Wednesday, January 1, 2025 Meet at 9:00 AM**

Start your year and your day off right with Auburn SRA on a First Day Hike. Get some fresh air, exercise, and learn about the deep history of the American River and the several attempts to harness its power. The Short Course is an out-and-back on the access road to the damsite for a total of 3 easy miles. The Long Course adds a loop down to the river on Cardiac Trail and Oregon Hill Road. This addition will add 3 moderate miles for a total of 6 miles. Meet at the Oregon Hill Parking Lot located in the China Bar Entrance at 9:00 AM. There are restrooms at the trailhead; however, there is no running water. Fees are waived for those attending this program. Bring water, optional trail snack, and other essentials. Friendly dogs on leash welcome. Rain Cancels. No need to RSVP. Hike leaders: Peggy Egli (530) 718-0448 and Joseph Shanahan (530) 863-8848.

## **NEW YEAR'S CLEANSE HIKE**

**Sunday, January 26th**

Amy Stroud will lead this hike for PARC members who would like to welcome positive energy and experiences into 2025 and say goodbye to negative experiences from 2024. As we hike, we will collect acorns, leaves, and sticks to represent the negative experiences we want to let go of in the New Year. When we get to the river we will let these negative experiences float away. To make room for positive energy, we will do about 10 minutes of easy standing Tai Chi movements. Well behaved children and dogs welcome. Approximately 2 hours of hiking moderate terrain with two steep ascents. The location is near the confluence area in Auburn. If you would like to participate, please contact Amy at [amiandnia@yahoo.com](mailto:amiandnia@yahoo.com). Space is limited. Details will be sent upon e-mail confirmation. Rain, snow, and cold temperatures cancel.

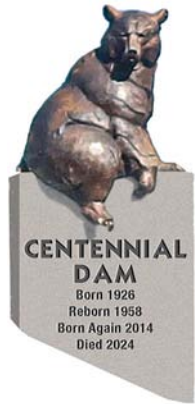


## **PARC SPRING GATHERING**

**February 28, 2025 at the Gomez Center-Auburn.**

Check back on our website or stay tuned to your emails from PARC for more information on this event.

# Bear River Update



Celebrate, celebrate...it's party time! Centennial Dam is DEAD! On September 25 the Nevada Irrigation District Board of Directors voted UNANIMOUSLY to "remove Centennial Dam from consideration" and directed the General Manager to withdraw NID's application for water rights from the State Water Resources Control Board. Done! Gone! Shout it out to the heavens: Centennial Dam is DEAD! Go ahead! It only took a decade, and PARCsters more than anyone know that dam fights can last a lifetime.

But then, know that the job is not yet over. Scan the QR code above to see a map of the area. NID bought \$10+ million of property in the past decade for this dam. In addition to the lands NID has owned since 1926 when they first proposed this dam, there's nearly seven miles of contiguous river corridor that is now owned by just the wrong entity. NID's General Manager said on September 25 that they will likely sell those lands to recover their investment. Sell to whom? For what purpose?

Our job now is to make sure that those lands remain in public ownership for all the right reasons: open space, wildlife and fisheries habitat, natural fire ecosystem restoration for fire protection, scenic and recreation management with trails and boating, and watershed ecological education. There's a good chance we can pull that off. The Bear River Park is at the heart of the seven miles of river at stake, and it is owned by the CA Department of Fish & Wildlife. On November 6, California passed Proposition 4, which has a bundle of loot designated for those purposes. In addition, Governor Newsom's, "30% by 2030" campaign aims to acquire more of the Sierra Nevada for just that purpose, and river corridors are a main target. Further, Newsom as a child grew up in Dutch Flat playing in the Bear River. The stars just might be aligned for this next phase.

The best way to stay tuned is to sign up for BearPARC's newsletter which will come out bimonthly for these next critical years as we turn the page to preserve and restore the Bear River from the headwaters to the confluence with the Feather. <https://bearparc.com/register/> PARC is always so generous in helping this sister Sierran river. Collaboration is the key to our future together. Let's stay in touch... and watch for BearPARC's Dead Dam presentation and party at PARC's spring gathering.



©Gary Moon

## Help PARC Legacy Fund Reach \$100,000

Since starting in 2008, the PARC Legacy Fund has grown with your support to \$83,000. Thank you! We would like to celebrate reaching \$100,000 in 2025. Each small step will help reach the summit. We are thinking about PARC's next 50 years as we marked our 50th anniversary in 2023. You can contribute by mailing a check or going online to the Placer Community Foundation where the endowment is professionally managed.

Mail option: Make check payable to PCF/PARC Legacy Fund.  
Mail to: Placer Community Foundation, P0 Box 9207, Auburn, CA 95604.

Online option: <https://www.placercf.org/parc-legacy-fund> or scan QR code.



To Learn more about other 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](mailto:jhubbard@placercf.org) or (530) 885-4920.

## Membership and Donation 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](http://www.parc-auburn.org) and click on "Join PARC." or use this QR code:



There is also a link on our website for contributing to the **High School Senior Scholarship Award Fund.** or use bottom QR Code on left.



# Vintage 1914 Letterpress Rolls Out River Art at Mystic Design Studio



since her first Confluence Festival poster in 1998. She continues to be inspired by the unique living treasure chest of flora and fauna found in our river-canyon ecosystem that she discovered as a child exploring the North Fork at Yankee Jims with her family and friends.

Laurel reflects on her river art and its significance, “Some of my most fulfilling work has been in helping PARC protect and preserve the American River and its canyons. And through my work I hope to inspire a sense of wonder in others, inviting them to appreciate our local treasures that often go unseen. A passion for the natural world has fueled my art for over 35 years, visually weaving the tales of our local flora and fauna through printmaking, linocut, scratchboard, pen and ink, and digital artistry.” She also blends science with art by often including the Latin names of the illustrated species in her work.

PARC is very grateful for all her art and design work that has created so much support from our communities for river conservation. Our missions merge into a blend of introducing the public to the river and introducing the river to the public in a responsible, respectful, artful way.

For more information visit Laurel’s website [mysticdesign.net](http://mysticdesign.net) or call 530-613-2134.

After rewinding the streets of Auburn with her Confluence shuttle electric transit bus wraps that feature images of otter, great blue heron, kingfisher, trout and butterflies from the American River canyons, Mystic Design’s Laurel Mathe now reaches back in time for her latest American River inspired art. She and her husband Mike restored a 1914 Chandler & Price Treadle Letterpress that she used to produce a series of note cards for the 2024 Placer Artists Tour. The cards feature animal design elements from her favorite river art work. Once the clattering foot-powered behemoth press gets rolling, twin rollers pass over a circular rotating metal ink pad that transfers ink to the design plate. Pulling a lever presses the paper board into the embossed design plate transferring the inked design onto the prepositioned note card sheets.

Laurel has been producing river designs for PARC



Voted Best of the Best

**Auburn ROOFING INC.** Lic. 375323

SHEET METAL - GUTTERS

**(530) 823-9900**

Jim Doughty

Fax (530) 823-9903 • 130 Elm Ave. • Auburn, CA 95603  
[AuburnRoofing.com](http://AuburnRoofing.com)

2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 & 2023!

*Wildbird Station*

The Backyard Bird Feeding Specialty Store



“Time to Get Outdoors and Enjoy the Birds.”

In Victorian Village • 530 889-BIRD  
1153 Grass Valley Hwy. • Auburn

OUR STORE IS “STRICTLY FOR THE BIRDS”



PRSR STD  
AUTO  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUBURN, CA  
PERMIT NO. 128

Return Service Requested

P.O. Box 9312 Auburn, CA 95604  
www.parc-auburn.org

*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.*



# Placer Land Trust Scores Big on the North Fork American!

Placer Land Trust permanently protected 1,566 acres of North Fork and Upper Clementine river-canyonlands in the summer of 2024. Working with the Trust for Public Land, PLT secured a Land & Water Conservation Fund grant for this acquisition that was slated to be developed into the atrocious “Kalorama” 97 lot subdivision on Long Point ridge. Placer Land Trust’s Jeff Darlington says, “The [North Fork] is the lifeblood of Placer County...it provides clean drinking water...it’s a signature location where healthy outdoor recreation supports our local economy, and the river and forests provide critical [habitat] a natural corridor for fish and wildlife.” PARC Board member Alice Tenscher Dunbar contributed to the promotional video that was used to secure funding. PARC’s 80 acre PARClan Preserve is immediately adjacent to the property.

