

American River Parkway Preservation Society
Annual Organizational Report
October 1, 2016- September 30, 2017

Mission

**Preserve, Protect, and Strengthen the American River Parkway,
Our Community's Natural Heart.**

Vision

**We want our Parkway, seven generations from now, to be a vibrant,
accessible, and serene sanctuary, nourishing and refreshing the spirit of all
who enter it.**

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**American River Parkway Preservation Society
Organizational Leadership**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Michael Rushford, President
Criminal Justice Legal Foundation

Vice President/Secretary

Pete Bontadelli, Project Director/Consultant
Analytical Environmental Services

Treasurer/Senior Policy Director

David H. Lukenbill, President
Lukenbill & Associates

ENDOWMENT ADVISORY GROUP, CHAIR

William C. Schopfer, President
Fund Development Associates

SLOBE PARKWAY ADVOCATE AWARD RECIPIENTS:

Robert J. Slobe, President
North Sacramento Land Company

Franklin Burris, President
North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce

Mary E. Tappel, Environmental Scientist
California State Water Board

Dave Lydick, Deputy Director
American River Parkway & Regional Parks Division

Rob Kerth, President
North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce

Phil Serna, Supervisor, 1st District
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors

Marcos Breton, Columnist
Sacramento Bee Newspaper

Introduction

Last year we had some confidence that the combination of the new downtown development around the Sacramento Kings arena and the new Parkway governance coming from the California Wildlife Conservation Board <https://www.wcb.ca.gov/> as a result of Assembly Bill 1716 <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=137394&inline> would result in good things for the Parkway; increased riverfront development from the former and better management from the latter.

So far, neither has developed though there are some good tidings to report in both cases.

The recent Sacramento County approval of \$5 million to increase efforts to reduce Parkway illegal camping surely benefited from the new relation with the Wildlife Conservation Board, as reported by the *Sacramento Bee*:

Sacramento County supervisors on Wednesday approved a \$5 million plan to beef up patrols along the American River Parkway and clean up its homeless encampments.

The 3-2 vote came after dozens of residents packed the supervisors' chambers to support or denounce the proposal to add park rangers, maintenance staff and sheriff's employees to the 23-mile "jewel of Sacramento" and adjacent neighborhoods.

Some speakers recounted bad interactions with homeless people. Others expressed compassion for the homeless but said they wanted a clean, safe parkway. Still others denounced the proposal as "criminalizing the homeless."

Retrieved September 30, 2017 from
<http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article169023177.html>

The recent announcement about the riverfront is also encouraging, as reported by KCRA:

Construction is now underway in Old Sacramento as part of a dramatic facelift to the city's riverfront.

The idea is to make Old Sacramento an entertainment district that would attract both tourists and longtime residents by honoring the city's railroad heritage, while also building excitement about the future.

"I know they're talking about doing a lot of events along the waterfront," said Michael Coyne, general manager for the Delta King. "Maybe art shows, smaller concerts, those type of things."

The revitalization project is also likely to include a monument that showcases Old Sacramento, going way beyond the Pony Express statue that stands there today.

The goal is to build a must-see icon, with a draw similar to the Gateway Arch in St. Louis or the Space Needle in Seattle.

"We'll get lots of ideas," said Richard Rich, the city's Riverfront project manager. "I'm already getting great ideas from people, and we'll throw those all into a bucket, hire some of the greatest designers in the world and say, 'Here what can you do with this?'"

The cost of the monument is still being determined, but riverfront development pencils out to an estimated \$10 million to \$15 million with the money coming primarily from grants and a Destination Sacramento fund.

It will help transform the current I Street entrance into something exotic and futuristic.

Retrieved September 30, 2017 from <http://www.kcra.com/article/sacramento-launches-riverfront-redevelopment/10231683> “

So, all in all, we can—somewhat—feel positive that the future may be better for the Parkway, even though this has been, in terms of Parkway devastation from the illegal camping by the homeless, one of the worst years.

Public Communication & Education

Weblog

ARPPS maintains a weekday daily weblog at <http://riverparkwayblog.wordpress.com/> and during our program year, from October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017 we posted 145 individual messages concerning articles, reports, news items, and event information connected to our mission.

E-Letters/Newsletters

ARPPS ensures that all public leadership with some form of public participation in Parkway related issues receives our monthly e-letters and quarterly newsletters, as well as press releases, research report and policy briefings and position papers.

Public Advocacy, Support Letters, Press Releases

Public Advocacy

No meetings this year with public leaders.

Support Letters

No support letters this year to public leaders.

Press Releases

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release January 10, 2017 Sacramento, California

Auburn Dam, Now More Than Ever

I recently received an email from a reader of one of our e-letters noting the importance of someday building Auburn Dam where it was described “as so last century”; indicating how so incorrectly many still seem to regard the efficacy of Auburn Dam.

As a reminder of the many benefits, here is an excerpt from our newsletter due out later this month:

Most of us can remember that last year before the rains started, there was concern there might not be enough water to flush Sacramento toilets.

After substantial rain and snowfall, there are fears that too much water is being released from Folsom Dam during a drought year.

Both of these concerns point to the real underlying problem-too little storage for the American River Watershed, particularly, as compared to the watersheds statewide.

The original visionaries, who developed the water plan for California designed Shasta Dam to be 200 feet higher than it now is (which would have tripled its storage capacity) and Auburn Dam (more than twice the capacity of Folsom) adding the proper amount of storage capability on the American River.

The 200 additional feet were not completed on Shasta-though it is engineered for it-because of the need for raw materials during World War II, and Auburn was not built due to earthquake concerns, which a new design can remove.

The lack of available water storage, coupled with worsening drought conditions make it the perfect time to reopen discussions about the Auburn Dam. Here's why:

Major benefits of Auburn Dam still exist:

- 400 year flood protection
- 800 megawatts of power
- Recreation-"Numerous recreation trails used for hiking, running, biking, and equestrian purposes are located in the Auburn Reservoir area. New recreation facilities (described below) as part of the project would more than offset existing recreation uses in the American River Canyon. They would also offer an expanded array of recreation experience to a much broader population than under a no - action condition." (USBR, Auburn-Folsom South Unit Special Report - Benefits and Cost Update, Central Valley Project, California, p. IV-13)

American River Parkway/Lower American River (LAR) benefits include:

- Control of temperature and flow for spawning salmon in the LAR.
- Control erosion of the Parkway-when Folsom has to release water too fast-which threatens many old growth trees, other habitat, wildlife, and the bike trail.

Organizational Leadership
American River Parkway Preservation Society
Sacramento, California
January 10, 2017

Articles Published

No articles published this year.

Letters to the Editor

Published in Sacramento Bee January 2 2017

<http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article123713949.html>

County fails to protect parkway

Re “[How parkway safety goes beyond citations](#)” (Viewpoints, Dec. 28): Sacramento County has done an abysmal job of providing public safety in the parkway by failing to protect the parkway from the depredations of illegal camping by the homeless.

The newest effort described by Supervisors Roberta MacGlashan and Don Nottoli will, unfortunately, probably result in the same failure as all of the other efforts they have come up with over the years.

Our nonprofit organization has been observing, commenting on, and suggesting parkway policy for 13 years, and the illegal camping situation has gotten worse.

Someday, it is our hope, the parkway will be managed by a nonprofit organization able to dedicate itself fully to caring for it without the one-step-forward-three-steps-back approach so typical of our local leadership.

DAVID H. LUKENBILL, AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY, SACRAMENTO

Published in Sacramento Bee June 21, 2017

<http://www.sacbee.com/article157181964.html>

River parkway

Re “[Will cleaning up the American River Parkway send more homeless people into the suburbs?](#)” (sacbee.com, June 17): There is general agreement that solving the illegal camping in the American River Parkway requires vigorous enforcement of existing law. There is also agreement that there is nowhere for the illegal campers to go. What is needed is a homeless center that can accommodate large numbers of people, pets and property. Haven for Hope program in San Antonio provides the model. It shelters almost 2,000 people nightly in its combination of indoor and courtyard components.

San Antonio's homeless service organizations are also based there. It is an approach Sacramento should examine.

DAVID LUKENBILL, AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY

AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY FINANCIAL STATEMENT #13

October 1 2016 to September 30, 2017

PART I Revenue, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets or Fund Balances

Revenue

1. Contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts received \$1,043.80
2. Program service revenue including government fees and contracts ..\$0
3. Membership dues and assessments.....\$0
4. Investment income.....\$0
- 5a. Gross amount from sale of assets other than inventory\$0
 - b. Less: cost or other basis and sales expenses ..\$0
 - c. Gain or (loss) from sales of assets other than inventory \$0
6. Special events and activities . \$0
 - a. Gross revenue (not including contributions on line 1) \$0
 - b. Less: direct expenses other than fundraising expenses ..\$0
 - c. Net income or (loss) from special events and activities ..\$0
- 7a. Gross Sales of inventory, less returns and allowances.....\$0
 - b. Less: cost of goods sold ..\$0
 - c. Gross profit or (loss) from sales of inventory \$0
8. Other revenue (describe).....\$0
9. **Total Revenue (Add 1, 2, 3, 4, 5c, 6c, 7c and 8).....\$1,043.80**

Expenses

10. Grants and similar amounts paid.....\$0
11. Benefits paid to or for members.....\$0
12. Salaries, other compensation, and employee benefits ..\$0
13. Professional Fees and other payments to independent contractors.....\$1,168.75 (\$1,000.00,Capacity Building Consultant) (\$168.75 Web Services)
14. Occupancy [web], rent, utilities, and [web] maintenance ..\$0
15. Printing, publications, postage, and shipping ..\$176.70 (\$176.70 Postage)
16. Other expenses (describe) [Supplies, Meetings, Awards, Dues] \$138.48 (Meetings \$72.48) (Bank Fees \$36.00)(Parkway Blog Site Free of Advertising for one year \$30.00)
17. **Total Expenses (Add 10-16).....\$1,483.93**
18. Excess or (deficit) for the year (Subtract 17 from 9) ..(\$440.13)
19. Net assets or fund balances at beginning of year (from line 27, column A) must agree with end-of-year figure reported on prior year's return) \$376.08
20. Other changes in net assets or fund balances (attach explanation) ..\$147.20
21. Net assets or fund balances at end of year. Combine lines 18-20 ..\$523.30

PART II Balance Sheets

22. Cash, savings, and investments \$523.30
23. Land and buildings ..\$0
24. Other assets (describe) ..\$0
25. **Total Assets.....\$523.30**
26. **Total Liabilities** (describe) ..\$0
27. **Net assets or fund balances** (line 27 of column B must agree with line 21) \$523.30

Current Membership Status

FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING MEMBERS

The membership composed of students, individuals, families, businesses, nonprofit organizations, chambers of commerce, and foundations that provide financial support on an annual or one-time donation basis.

Subtotal **286 Members**

HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERS

Honorary memberships given to students, individuals, families, businesses, nonprofit organizations, chambers of commerce, and foundations that have provided extraordinary support to the organization.

Subtotal: **50 Members**

HONORARY LEADERSHIP MEMBERS

Memberships given to individuals in public leadership roles related to the Parkway.

Subtotal: **373 Members**

ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

The membership comprised of community members who have donated time and support working on one of several committees and/or advisory groups, or who are part of a community leadership group.

Subtotal: **35 Members**

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP **744 Members**

Retention Rate: **72%**

Strategic Plan (2015-2020)

The American River Parkway Preservation Society Strategy & Implementation

Preserve, Protect & Strengthen the American River Parkway *For As Long As The River Runs Through It* 2015 – 2020

Introduction

The leadership in our community has a responsibility to create a vision that preserves, protects and strengthens the treasured resource of the American River Parkway in perpetuity.

We have invested our first ten years—since our organization was founded in 2003—pursuing a strategy of organizational capacity building and conducting research in the practical approaches, emanating from our guiding principles, we’ve determined can address the critical issues impacting the Parkway, and communicating with our members and the public those results.

Six Critical Issues & Corresponding Guiding Principles

1) Continuing depletion of public funding to provide vital ongoing maintenance, facility repair, law enforcement presence, invasive plant management, and fully restore a sense of safety for those using our priceless public resource.

Our Guiding Principle: Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it’s a necessity.

2) Continuing pressure on the river, whether through flooding, illegal sewage discharge, or taking water for new development, hurts the salmon and other aquatic life.

Our Guiding Principle: What’s good for the salmon is good for the river.

3) Continuing habitat devastation, fires, and pollution from widespread illegal camping by the homeless, primarily in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway.

Our Guiding Principle: Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway: Social and environmental justice calls upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.

4) Continuing development pressure to build large homes along the Parkway edges, intruding on the view space, and encroaching into the commons.

Our Guiding Principle: If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.

5) Continuing exclusion of responsible usage by new Parkway user groups is contrary to the spirit upon which public ownership of a natural resource is predicated.

Our Guiding Principle: Regarding new parkway usages: Inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.

6) Continuing encasement of open space, restricting suburban community development upon which a sustainable tax base funding necessary public works is built, is contrary to sound future planning.

Our Guiding Principle: The suburban lifestyle—as surrounds the American River Parkway—which is imbued within the aspirational center of the California Dream and whose vision is woven into the heart of the American Dream, is a deeply loved way of life whose sustainability we all desire.

This past five year period resulted in the creation of our third strategic plan—designed to guide our work from 2015 to 2020—retention of a stable membership base of about 700, designation of a parkway advocate when someone emerges (seven individuals have

been acknowledged since 2004), and regular communications (letters, articles, daily blogging, monthly e-letters, quarterly newsletters, annual organizational reports and five research reports covering critical issues, and periodic planning position papers).

All of this information is available on our website.

Strategic Summary

We will be investing the current five years in two directions; one major, the other ongoing.

The major work will focus around trying to encourage local government to bring into reality the one idea from our research into approaches that can most significantly impact the major critical issues—funding and management—which is the designation of a nonprofit organization to provide daily management of the Parkway, under contract with a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) consisting of Parkway adjacent governments (Cities of Sacramento, Rancho Cordova & Folsom, and Sacramento County).

The ongoing work will focus on continuing to help build a community knowledge base around the results of our five research reports, buttressed by new information that becomes available.

The American River Parkway is the most valuable natural resource in our community and one of the most valuable in the nation.

Because of this singular nature, it has the potential to be governed through a singular process, a nonprofit organization, as other signature park areas in the country are governed.

This type of governance will give our Parkway the dedicated management and fund raising capability that are so necessary to retain and enhance its premier local and national status

Implementation Summary

To help in this process, ARPPS Former Executive Director, Kristine Lea, incorporated a nonprofit organization, the American River Parkway Conservancy (ARPC) to serve as an educational forum initially, and eventually, provide daily management for the Parkway.

The ARPC concept was presented to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on October 6, 2015, however the County went another direction, supporting the transfer of governing authority to a state agency, the California Wildlife Conservation Board, <https://www.wcb.ca.gov/> part of the California Department of Fish Wildlife.

Even with that development, to help create an environment where the nonprofit policy concept we have presented becomes accepted public policy it is important to provide information about successful adaptations of the concept to other public park areas in the nation, to the public and public leadership through the following venues.

Community Information

- Daily blogging: The Parkway Blog at <http://riverparkwayblog.wordpress.com/> is part of the ongoing work of ARPPS public education and advocacy around public policy issues that may be related to the Parkway and the adjacent communities along the American River in Sacramento, California. (150-200 blog postings annually)
- Monthly & special e-letters to membership and public leadership: We will continue the monthly e letters, with a focus, when possible, on illegal camping in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway and JPA governance. (12 - 16 annually)
- Quarterly newsletters to membership and public leadership: We will continue the quarterly newsletters with a focus, when possible, on ARPC management and JPA governance. (4 annually)

- Regular letters to the editor: We will seek opportunities to send letters that focus on ARPC management and JPA governance, Auburn Dam & Illegal camping. (2-6 annually)
- Occasional articles in local publications: We will seek to have articles published that look at governance by a JPA and ARPC as a viable option for the Parkway. (1-2 annually)
- Occasional policy planning papers: We will, when possible, cover the viability of Parkway management by ARPC and governance by a JPA. (1-2 annually)
- Organizational report (1 annually)

Public Forums

- Presentations to local business and neighborhood organizations: We will seek the opportunity to present information, when appropriate, about JPA governance. (1-2 annually)
- Meetings with public leadership: We will meet with public leadership, when appropriate, to discuss the option of JPA governance. (1-2 annually)

Review & Update

This plan is subject to annual review and updating every five years.

Status Summary

Our Guiding Principles, Critical Issues & Suggested Solutions: Status of Progress

Guiding Principles

- 1) *Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it's a necessity.*
- 2) *What's good for the salmon is good for the river.*

3) *Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway: Social and environmental justice calls upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.*

4) *If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.*

5) *Regarding new parkway usages: Inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.*

6) *The suburban lifestyle—as surrounds the American River Parkway—which is imbued within the aspirational center of the California Dream and whose vision is woven into the heart of the American Dream, is a deeply loved way of life whose sustainability we all desire.*

Status: These guiding principles—Number 6 was added in 2011—still animate our work, being prioritized as warranted.

Critical Issues/Solutions

We encourage policy discussions about the Parkway, addressing the five critical issues and our proposed solutions.

1) Continuing depletion of public funding to take care of the Parkway.

Solution: *Create a Joint Powers Authority and nonprofit organization for daily management and fundraising.*

Status: The nonprofit organization, American River Parkway Conservancy, created by ARPPS Executive Director, Kristine Lea, was presented to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on October 6, 2015.

2) Continuing pressure on the river, whether through flooding, illegal sewage discharge, or taking water for new development, hurts the salmon and other aquatic life.

Solution: *Build the Auburn Dam.*

Status: On hold, but still a congressionally approved dam site which could be revived by Congress, and the Regional Water Forum sponsored by the Auburn Dam Council in June of 2012 and 2013 was a welcome addition to the public discussion for the need for Auburn Dam.

3) Continuing habitat devastation, fires, and pollution from widespread illegal camping by the homeless in the Lower Reach.

Solution: *Strengthen and enforce laws against illegal camping.*

Status: Sacramento County continues efforts to reduce illegal camping, conducting daily searches, and with the addition of \$5 million in new money in the budget passed in September of 2017, this effort should intensify.

4) Continuing development pressure to build large homes along the Parkway edges, intruding on the view space, and encroaching into the commons.

Solution: *Prohibit such new building.*

Status: The new Parkway Plan strengthened the restrictions.

5) Continuing exclusion of responsible usage by new Parkway user groups is contrary to the spirit upon which public ownership of a natural resource is predicated.

Solution: *Give such groups an opportunity to make their case.*

Status: New groups seeking access to the Parkway, such as dogs-without-leases groups, mountain-bike groups (this group—Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates—finally got approval to develop a trail in the Parkway in the Fall of 2017, <https://sacbike.org/more-bikes-on-more-of-the-arp/>), disc-golf groups, mini-train groups, etc. are still finding little opportunity to present their proposals—which almost always includes doing the maintenance and initial set-up themselves—to the Parkway governing agency which has traditionally favored passive recreation over active.

6) Continuing encasement of open space, restricting suburban community development upon which a sustainable tax base funding necessary public works is built, is contrary to sound future planning.

Solution: *Support the growth of suburban communities.*

Status: There is an advocacy element in the Sacramento region which does not support suburban communities, and we shall continue to note that suburban communities are where the majority of people wish to live, and that planning decisions need to reflect this.

Appendix I: Monthly E-Letters

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #174, October 11, 2016

Annual Report Posted

Every October our organization compiles a year's worth of work and information into one easily accessible source and posts it to our website, as we have done this year.

Here is the Introduction;

Introduction

Borrowing from Dickens, last year was possibly the best of times and the worst of times for the American River Parkway.

It was the worst of times because of the increasing and deadly reverberations of the, as yet, unrestrained illegal camping in the Parkway which has grown way beyond the ground zero of the North Sacramento/Cal Expo area, and, in that ground zero area, arguably produced the greatest destruction of habitat—through fire and pollution—in the Parkway since its inception.

It was the best of times due to the exuberant development of downtown led by the truly beautiful, delightful arena and the surrounding development it is inspiring, which appears on the verge of actually making downtown as pivotal to the region as it once was; which will inevitably lead to riverfront and Parkway enhancement.

We are fortunate in that there are great visions of such enhancement already sketched out such as Gold Rush Park <https://www.facebook.com/GoldRushPark> , Sutter's Landing Park <http://www.sutterslandingpark.org/> as well as our idea of a Links Golf Course <http://arpps.org/news.html> (go to the August 8, 2014 Press Release).

Also, the recent creation of a Lower American River Conservancy Program http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB1716 while not changing the serious problem of ineffective Parkway management, may—which we say with some reservation—actually promise some change for the good.

Embracing the best, while acknowledging the maybe and the worst, it is surely time to feel pretty good about Sacramento and hope that feeling pretty good about the Parkway can soon follow.

The report is posted on our website at <http://arpps.org/annualreport.html>

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #175, November 7, 2016

Parkway Ranger Reports & Homeless Camp Removal

These monthly postings, posted online at <http://www.regionalparks.sacounty.net/Rangers/Pages/Latest-Ranger-Activity-Data.aspx> are invaluable for the public—and organizations like ours—having the ability to keep an eye on what is going on the Parkway that may be of danger to legitimate Parkway visitors.

However, as of today, the September and October reports have not been filed and we know there has been a lot going on that should be reported, as for instance this recent news story—and note the last paragraph which is very revealing—of the removal of a homeless camping site at the Watt and Highway 50 onramp, in the *Sacramento Bee*, which reports:

“The cleanup of a small homeless encampment that created a major eyesore near the Watt Avenue onramp to Highway 50 was complete Thursday.

“The cleanup started early Sunday when the Sacramento County Sheriff’s Department work crew ordered a handful of homeless people camping between a row of hedges and the concrete sound wall to clear out.

“The heaping pile of blankets, coolers, bikes, poles, tarps and clothing was impossible to miss as motorists zoomed by.

“There were at least a dozen homeless people with their carts and trash bags lined up along Watt Avenue between Fair Oaks and the 50 West freeway entrance,” area resident Kathy Fairbanks, told The Sacramento Bee.

“Two of the campers, a couple who identified themselves as Amy Anderson and John Norton, said people had lived there for two months.

“They came (Sunday) morning and said ‘You got 10 minutes to get out,’ ” said Anderson.

“Two other homeless campers left Monday. Tony Turnbull, a spokesman for the Sheriff’s Department, said the people at the camp refused homeless services.”

Retrieved November 5, 2016 from
<http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article112420532.html>

Our organization applauds the County Sherriff's office and assumes Parkway Rangers were also involved in the camp removal and we await their report.

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #176, December 5, 2016

Christmas in Sacramento

It has really been an interesting year around the world, in the United States and here in California, as well as along the Parkway, which is now under the governance of the California Wildlife Conservation Board as result of AB-1716, signed by Governor Jerry Brown on September 16, 2016, http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB1716 but, the Parkway is still under the management of Sacramento County.

What this all means is still too soon to tell, but, hope springing eternal, we look for the best, more funds, more public safety—especially for Parkway adjacent neighborhoods currently bedeviled by crime associated with a large homeless population illegally camping in the Parkway—and more enjoyment for Parkway visitors.

Whatever happens in the future, I suspect, and hope, that all of you are doing well and enjoying this holiday season, surely the most magical time of the year.

From the ARPPS board, we wish you a wonderfully Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!!

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #177, January 6, 2017

Bad Water Policy Meets Bad Homelessness Policy

Last month presented an educational example of both as water had to be released from Folsom to make way for storm runoff and the American River flooded along the Discovery Park/Cal Expo area forcing many of the homeless campers to find higher ground.

If public leadership had been wise enough to build Auburn Dam, all that runoff would have been stored; and if public leadership had been wise enough to do something effective about the illegal camping in the American River Parkway, we would not see the sad story—for the Parkway and the homeless—noted by the ***Sacramento Bee***:

“Danny Rasmussen, 69, has lived along the American River for 15 years and was flooded out a few days ago from rising river levels and moved his shelter to higher ground on Sunday December 18, 2016 in Sacramento, Calif. County rangers are ticketing far fewer people for illegal camping, with 602 citations through the end of November, or roughly half the pace of the 1,278 issued last year.

“By Brad Branan

“That people camp on the American River Parkway in violation of county law is well established. What might come as a surprise is just how settled some of them are.

“On a December weekday before the last storm, a metal door attached to two trees blocked access to a campsite otherwise surrounded by thick brush. Another site under the 12th Street bridge had a television powered by a generator. Upriver, Fred Gurr had a large cooler, an office chair and other items clustered around his site, which he shares with his black cat, Bug Out.

“I’ve lived here for four years,” said Gurr, a veteran who said he became homeless after losing a job. “I’ve been at the same location the whole time.”

Retrieved January 2, 2017 from
<http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article121884933.html>

Public leadership—as well-intentioned as they are—really has to do a better job on both as the lack of effective policy about water and homelessness is slowly destroying the natural heart of this community and in time, degrading the larger community as well.

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #178, February 6, 2017

Plenty of Water, Not Enough Storage

The *Sacramento Bee*, in a recent article—pretty good one—entitled, *Water, water everywhere in California – and not enough reservoir space to store it*, acknowledges the obvious; but though they do recognize the obvious, the *Bee* still cannot bring itself to mention the Auburn Dam.

It is too soon to tell, but perhaps we can look forward to a more common sense set of water storage policies coming from the new administration in Washington D.C.

Here is an excerpt from the *Bee* article.

After five years of drought, could California really have so much rain and snow there's no room to store all the water?

The answer – as the state's water picture careens from bust to boom – is yes.

One month into an exceptionally stormy 2017, river flows though the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta have been so powerful that the massive pumps that ship north-state water to Southern California and the San Joaquin Valley have roared at full throttle for weeks. The federal and state pumping stations near Tracy delivered more water in January than in any month in the last 12 years, according to a *Sacramento Bee* review of data supplied by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

With more rain and snow in the forecast, the pumps could stay at capacity for the next week or two. But pump operators probably will have to dial back because they're starting to run out of space in key reservoirs south of the Delta, said John Leahigh, who oversees day-to-day water management for the State Water Project, which delivers supplies to water agencies throughout California.

“This is definitely a 180 that we've done in terms of water supply,” Leahigh said.

Thursday brought more news of California's progress against what has been a withering drought. Snow surveyors found a whopping 90 inches of snow at Phillips Station, a long-standing measuring spot near Echo Summit. That translates into 28.1 inches of “snow-water content,” a leap of 22 inches in a month. The Phillips snowpack is at 153 percent of historical average and sits at its highest measurement for early February since 2005.

Frank Gehrke, the veteran Department of Water Resources official who runs the snow survey, said the strong results reflect the heavy precipitation that fell in January, which was “pretty much a banner month in terms of the snowpack.”

Across the entire Sierra Nevada, the results were even more impressive: Snow-water content stood at 173 percent of historical average. Many spots have as much snow as they typically have on April 1, when the snow season peaks. A healthy snowpack means extra water becomes available in summer, when lawns and crops get thirsty in California's arid central and southern expanse and demand soars.

“Basically, a seasonal snowpack (is) already on the ground,” Gehrke said. “And February and March quite often have very good storm activity.”

Retrieved January 4, 2017 from <http://www.sacbee.com/news/state/california/water-and-drought/article130352819.html>

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #179, March 6, 2017

Trouble with Triage Approach to Parkway Homelessness

The main objection to this approach—called for in this *Sacramento Bee* article <http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/op-ed/soapbox/article131211554.html>—is that it limits help to those most needing it, which, while appropriate in medicine, is not necessarily so in homeless social services where virtually everyone is in dire need of some sort.

Our suggested approach to deal with the long term illegal camping by the homeless in the Parkway, is a homeless transformation campus, which we wrote about in our September 2015 Press Release (also on our website news page at <http://arpps.org/news.html>)

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

September 28, 2015

Sacramento, CA

Homeless Transformation Campus

A primary question many ask when discussing removing the homeless illegally camping in the Parkway is, “Where will they go?”

Our position has long been that our concern is with the devastation illegal camping has been causing to the Parkway, rather than determining the fate of the homeless when and if they are ever fully removed from the Parkway.

However, like everyone else, we suffer when thinking about the misery and destitution that is part of the fabric of living without a home; and over the past several weeks have developed a possible strategy, based on our practice of examining working models in use somewhere else, that will answer the question of where will they go.

Sacramento County could consider creating a homeless transformation campus capable of handling the majority of homeless in the County based on the model of Haven for Hope in San Antonio, Texas which is the largest and most comprehensive homeless

transformation campus in the United States, providing residence to approximately 1,600 individuals on any given night.

The Haven for Hope campus is composed of fifteen buildings on 37 acres with almost five hundred thousand square feet of service space under roof.

The Sacramento location we suggest as capable of providing this level of service space is the Sacramento Army Depot, now known as Depot Park.

The various types of space available in Depot Park as of this writing (9/20/15) are:

Combined Warehouse—Workspace: 305,010 square feet (In several buildings, available immediately)

Warehouse — Workspace: 430,065 square feet (In several buildings, available immediately)

Office — Workspace: 68,269 square feet (In several buildings, available immediately)

Yard — Workspace: 3,000 square feet to 20 acres—paved and fenced

Proposed — Build to Suit: 500,850 square feet: Build to Suit Building

Retrieved September 20, 2015 from [Depot Park](#)

This is obviously more than enough space to accommodate the types of homeless services needed for a homeless transformation campus, including encouraging relocation to Depot Park two of the most important and largest homeless service organizations in Sacramento: Loaves and Fishes and Sacramento Steps Forward, as well as some of the programs providing residential service.

A perusal of the [Haven for Hope](#) website will provide more information about these specific strategies and we will be researching and presenting more information about this over the next several months.

[American River Parkway Preservation Society](#)

[E-Letter #180, April 7, 2017](#)

Sacramento, a Destination City & The Parkway's Skid Row

Over the years public leadership has spoken about making Sacramento a destination city, including our new mayor; but perhaps, given the realities, that is a stretch too far

and Sacramento would be better served focusing on what type of city it now is—good for families, good as the capitol of California—and improving on that.

And for many Sacramentans—those who live close to the American River Parkway—fixing the current non-family atmosphere of the Parkway might be a darn good place to start improving on our family-friendly city.

Instead, what has happened over time is that, if you judge policy according to actions, the city of Sacramento and Sacramento County have apparently made the decision—though not stated publically but publically evident, and certainly probably not intended—to allow illegal camping by the homeless in the Parkway.

The *Sacramento Bee* has helped by normalizing illegal camping along the Parkway, as evidenced in this March 19, 2017 editorial where homeless illegally camping in the Parkway are described as:

“Just when Sacramento seemed to be on a solid path to reducing the number of homeless people living under highway bridges and along the American River Parkway, the federal government has come along to inject uncertainty into the situation.”

Retrieved March 22, 2017 from

<http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/editorials/article139313213.html#storylink=cpy>

The editorial is topped by a picture of a contented illegal camper in his tent in the Parkway with the caption reading:

“Danny Rasmussen, 69, has lived along the American River for 15 years. Sacramento is on the verge of implementing a new plan to address homelessness, although it would depend heavily on uncertain pools of federal funding. Paul Kitagaki Jr. pkitagaki@sacbee.com”

Retrieved March 22, 2017 from

<http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/editorials/article139313213.html#storylink=cpy>

None of the neighborhoods in the Woodlake/Cal Expo area of the Parkway are surprised by this as they have known about this apparent policy decision by the city and county for years as they have seen their repeated pleas for help with the related crime and Parkway fires, pollution, and devastation either ignored or met with a brief period of stepped-up enforcement of the existing laws making camping in the Parkway illegal, but soon things return to the norm.

It is understandable (as residents in the impacted neighborhoods assume) why public leadership has taken this position privately, though certainly not publically, as the Woodlake/Cal Expo area of the Parkway is a better option for illegal camping by the homeless—from the perspective of public leadership—than further upriver.

There was a story in the *New York Times* about a town next door to a major Indian Reservation—where liquor sales are banned—that seems to exist primarily to sell liquor to Indians who travel there from the Reservation. The story focuses on the deep tragedy of alcoholism and the struggle to remove the stores from town.

In the story, the local sheriff had an insight perhaps applicable to the containment of illegal campers in the Woodlake/Cal Expo area of the Parkway:

“Sheriff Robbins echoed a common sentiment heard from both Nebraskans and Native Americans: If the stores lose their licenses and close down, people in search of beer will just drive farther to get it, endangering themselves and others on the roads. He favors containing the problem in Whiteclay, rather than allowing it to spread out over the county’s nearly 2,500 square miles.

“The people that want to drink are going to drive and get alcohol somewhere,” he said. “What I’m thinking is that it’s going to put more drunk drivers on the country roads.”

Retrieved March 26, 2017 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/25/us/whiteclay-nebraska-liquor-reservation-south-dakota.html>

This is much the same attitude taken by public leadership in relation to allowing skid rows to continue to survive, containing the behavior not wanted in the rest of the city or the suburbs.

What is truly tragic about the entire situation is how virtually everyone suffers, and perhaps most of all, the homeless themselves, who are left to try and live with some sense of safety and security in an environment that is anything but.

Containing the problem does not solve the problem.

Let’s make, for all the neighborhoods surrounding the Woodlake/Cal Expo area of the American River Parkway, a destination again rather than the Parkway’s skid row it now is.

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #181, May 8, 2017

The Parkway’s Skid Row, An ARPPS Member Comments

Skid Rows develop largely as the result of inaction by public leadership—or wanting to contain a problem—allowing a public area of a city, or in this case, of a park, to sink into

degradation by not appropriating the proper resources—including leadership—to ensure it remains safe and welcoming for residents and other visitors.

That this has happened to the Parkway from Discovery Park to Cal Expo and the long period of time that public leadership has allowed illegal camping on the Parkway is why it has—sadly and tragically for the adjacent neighborhoods and the homeless—become the Parkway’s Skid Row.

Yesterday morning an article appeared in the *Sacramento Bee* <http://www.sacbee.com/news/investigations/the-public-eye/article148678849.html> about unleashed pit bulls in the Parkway who seriously bit someone; something also mentioned—as well as much more—in this April 18th e-mail to me from an ARPPS member

“Hi David,

“It’s interesting that my area which was apparently once called the Woodlake Reach, is now referred to as Skid Row. Not a term I like, but very much representative of the facts. I grew up playing on what is now the parkway. I know the area from Cal Expo to Discovery Park like the back of my hand. Over the years, as you can imagine, I have spent hundreds of hours in the parkway. Much of it safe unless of my own doing, ok I confess to swinging on a rope swing or 10 out into the river, but no, it was never me jumping from the train trestle into the river....about 40 years ago....other things too which I have long since forgotten. I always felt safe there. Until now or last fall I should say, it’s when it got really bad to the point of being unusable.

“I am a runner. I should clarify by saying that I run a lot. Usually 25 to 30 miles a week. As CIM approaches every year, I run upwards of 40 miles a week. Most of it on the parkway – I can run from my house. I also am a biker. Not a casual weekend biker – I have a road bike and I am very passionate about my biking and consider myself to be an expert. No trying to brag, just laying some ground work here. I mountain bike as well and I take that very seriously. I am not a weekend warrior. My sports are very technical to me, and the fine nuances keep me working harder to always get better.....but that is not why I am writing.

“I no longer feel safe on the parkway. Twice this past winter I have almost been attacked by dogs owned by the homeless. Apparently they feel they are immune to the leash law. Calls to Sac PD were a waste of time – they asked me to call the Animal Shelter. The Animal Shelter only has one person to collect up stray dogs. When I pointed out that the dogs were not stray but belonged to the homeless, they said they could have someone out in about 3 weeks’ time. I am not kidding here. Animal Shelter referred me back to the police. The police dispatch did nothing except to ask if anyone had been injured. Apparently if I had had my leg ripped off, then perhaps they could send someone to help

but all patrol cars were busy both times I called. Of course this discounts the many many many times I have been yelled at, followed, approached, gawked at etc by homeless drunkards on drugs who want money for their habits and are willing to hurt me to get whatever I might have on my person.

“And then came the rains and they have now all moved into my hood where everyone can see them....what is to be done. The big question that no one has an answer for. Terrible I say. A double edged sword. No one should have to live like this. It’s terrible. It’s a filth like a third world county. But at the same time, the trash and the filth and the destruction of the parkway is unacceptable. As a tax paying citizen, I would like to be able to use my parkway.

“When I access the parkway beyond Cal Expo, I feel safe. Its clean. There are people who do not appear to want to hurt me. There are dogs ON LEASHES. Trash cans are empty. No trash everywhere. No used needles. No broken glass. No human feces. No used toilet paper. No dirty diapers. No mounds of trash and crap that is really unbelievable – how do they get all of that crap out into the parkway? Toilets are useable and don’t stink as though they have never been cleaned. Drinking fountains work. How is that fair? I pay the same in taxes as the folks upstream yet don’t get the same treatment. Why?

“Your newsletter states that the parkway is now under the domain of the California Wildlife Conservation Board. When I go to their web site, there is no way to find even one mention of the parkway.

“I am sick and tired of it. And now I see that my reach is referred to as skid row. Terrible. Frustrating. It’s like the last straw for me. I want to move. That must make my dad fluff up the ashes in his urn. I am born and raised in north sac as was my father. How did it all get so bad. Really, if I can’t even feel safe out on the parkway in my off time, my free time and I have to drive elsewhere to use it, I may as well move. I am done.”

And concluding, in a following e-mail:

“I spend, as you can tell, many hours there running and riding which lends its self to lots of time to think. I would really like to go for a run, perhaps this afternoon, on my favorite route, but it makes me nervous. I know my runs so well, I can identify trees and plants and I know how many miles I run and how much time it should take to get from point a to point b....yet I fear for my safety. Carrying mace would not be sufficient because one of the many loose pit bulls could get me silently from behind.”

It's not right that this ARPPS member and the person in the *Sacramento Bee* article who was bitten, that they—and all of us—cannot run and ride safely in that area of the Parkway.

Hopefully, someday we all can.

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #182, June 6, 2017

Parkway Rangers & The Parkway's Skid Row

Parkway Rangers:

We now have 25 Rangers looking out for our County Parks and Parkway and that is the most in a long time.

They are doing some pretty good work out there and it is often dangerous work.

They deserve our continuing gratitude and always our best wishes.

You can give them a gratitude shout-out at

<http://www.regionalparks.saccounty.net/Rangers/Pages/RangerStewardship.aspx>

The Parkway's Skid Row:

Skid Rows develop largely as the result of inaction by public leadership—or wanting to contain a problem—allowing a public area of a city, or in this case, of a park, to sink into degradation by not appropriating the proper resources—including leadership—to ensure it remains safe and welcoming for residents and other visitors.

That this has happened to the Parkway from Discovery Park to Cal Expo and the long period of time that public leadership has allowed illegal camping on the Parkway is why it has—sadly and tragically for the adjacent neighborhoods and the homeless—become the Parkway's Skid Row.

According to this April 21, 2017 article from the *New York Times*, this allowance is a status that has existed for many years.

Some excerpts, with bolding added:

SACRAMENTO — For Robert Friend, home was a tent pitched down by the American River off 12th Street. It was quiet, secluded in the bushes, a respite from life on the pavement downtown.

Or at least it was until the storms came.

“I got flooded out,” said Mr. Friend, 48, looking weary on a recent afternoon as he stood on the sidewalk he had escaped to a few blocks from the river. “This is the worst winter I’ve known **in the 10 years I’ve been here**. Last night and the night before I was just under a tarp, waiting it out. It was freezing-raining all night long.”

The rains that lashed California this year, continuing with yet another wave of downpours through last weekend, have pulled this state out of a historic drought. But they also exposed the extent and agony of homeless women and men **who have long made homes along the banks of the now-swollen rivers across California, and particularly in Sacramento, a city of 480,000 where a largely hidden community has lived on the outskirts since the Great Depression**. According to city and state officials, about 2,700 of the 118,000 homeless people in California live here....

Cale Traylor stood a few feet from a blue tent close to the American River, a dog barking in the background, late last month. The people who live here call themselves the River Dwellers, Mr. Traylor said, and he was once one himself.

Mr. Traylor, 37, slept not far from this spot during a five-year binge of alcoholism, drug abuse, petty crime and homelessness. He knows how to navigate this world that was once his own: Keep a respectful distance when approaching; carry a bone to distract an unleashed pit bull that might come bounding out of the brush.

There was a rustle inside the tent, and James Guidi, a Vietnam War veteran, emerged, a dazed look on his face.

Mr. Guidi, 65, said the riverbanks had been his home for eight years, and he is one of the few who has stayed here through the winter. The night before, he slept in a tent left behind by someone who had wandered on. But earlier in the week he had to sleep on the ground as the storms blew through, tearing away the tarp that provided him scant protection.

“I slept in a puddle,” Mr. Guidi said. “It was more terrible than any time I had in Vietnam. I can compare it to over there.”

Mr. Traylor’s struggle with homelessness began when his father committed suicide in 2010, when he was 30, and continued until he was sent to the California Correctional

Institution in Tehachapi in 2015 for stealing a car and trying to outrace the police. When he disappeared after his father's death, his family wrote him off as a lost cause.

Mr. Traylor said he was sober now, studying electronic automation at Sacramento City College. He sees his mother and sisters regularly.

“There used to be a ton of cover,” he said, pointing to a spot along the river. “It was an out-of-sight, out-of-mind mentality. If the police can't see you, then they typically leave you alone. When the water went up, it washed away all their coverage.”

Mr. Guidi said he didn't care that his campsite was largely deserted as people fled the rains. “I've been living by the river here and there, off and on, for eight years,” he said. “People get along.”...

The storms have forced women like Susan Zemansky, 58, who has been homeless since she lost her job at a Subway sandwich shop four years ago, out of the bushes. Ms. Zemansky, peering out of a slit of her tent on a sidewalk on B Street, told of huddling for warmth as the rain pounded on her tent before she escaped.

“The river was coming up way high,” Ms. Zemansky said. “The rangers came and made us move. We had 20 minutes to get out of there, 20 minutes before we flooded.”

Ms. Zemansky is now easy to spot, another homeless person living along the street, watching the cars drive by. People stop by to offer supplies — “bananas and stuff” — and words of encouragement. But she said she was eager to return to her spot on the river.

“There's a lot of traffic here, and you've got to get up every day and pack,” she said. “I'd rather be by the river. The river is peaceful. It is quiet.”

Retrieved April 21, 2017 from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/21/us/californias-deluge-of-rain-washes-away-a-homeless-colony.html?_r=0

Marcos Breton wrote an excellent column in the Sacramento Bee this past Sunday <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/marcos-breton/article154026369.html> about the Parkway, indicting Supervisor Phil Serna—in whose district the Parkway Skid Row is located—will ask for a doubling of money for parks.

We do support more money for parks but still believe the problem is largely not lack of money but lack of political will. As the Breton column notes, West Sacramento has solved the illegal camping problem on its side of the river.

An excerpt:

“As a city, we can do better to help people such as Samuel Cunningham, whom I met this week when walking the parkway with Serna.

“Cunningham, 35, is a former drywall worker who lives near the river. He became homeless after a back injury prevented him from working and found temporary refuge at the Union Gospel Mission near the railyard before heading to the parkway. He got meals at nearby Loaves and Fishes, the city’s massive homeless charity.

“He said he once lived on the West Sacramento side of the river but won’t go back because authorities there strictly enforce a no-camping ordinance. “They don’t play,” he said. “They arrest you and throw your belongings in a dumpster. They held me for six hours and then released me in Woodland in a beautiful pale blue jumpsuit and flip-flops.”

Retrieved June 5, 2017 from <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/marcos-breton/article154026369.html>

This is not a good way for people to have to live and this is not a good way to treat our Parkway.

We can do better on both counts.

Maybe more political will, rather than more money, is what is really needed.

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #183, July 10, 2017

Sacramento Suburban

Sacramento is the 18th Most Suburbanized City in America—Sacramento’s population is over 98% suburban—and it is largely why we love living here.

A recent story from the *Sacramento Bee* entitled **Why Sacramento can’t kick its addiction to big yards, suburban sprawl**, which can be read at <http://www.sacbee.com/news/business/real-estate-news/article158712524.html> seems to be under the incorrect impression—based on what home buyers are spending their money on—that Sacramento wants more non-suburban development.

This story from *New Geography* examines suburbanized cities, and Sacramento’s listing is found in the last graph of the story.

An excerpt.

Recently, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Newsday*, in a photographic spread, trumpeted the 70th anniversary of Levittown, the New York suburban development that provided the model for much of the rapid suburbanization that occurred after the Second World War in the United States. Levittown's production line building also set the stage for the similar suburbs of cities in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere.

Over the last seven decades, the United States has become a predominantly suburban nation. In 2011-2015, 85 percent of the population in the 53 major metropolitan areas (over 1,000,000 population) lived in the suburbs or exurbs. This is based on analysis at the small area level (zip code tabulation areas) from the American Community Survey that classifies population based on demographic data (Figure 1).

Generally similar findings have been made about [Canada](#) and [Australia](#) by research teams led by Professor David L. A. Gordon of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Gordon and his Canadian team pioneered this type of analysis, which is not dependent on core municipality versus surrounding area analysis. Core municipalities often do not reflect the realities of metropolitan areas because they vary so greatly in their share of metropolitan area population. For example, the city of Atlanta has only 8 percent of the metropolitan area population, while San Antonio has more than 60 percent of the metropolitan area population.

Suburban Nation: United States

Many people, including urban analysts, are unaware of the extent to which American cities have become suburbanized. But the former mono-centricity that characterized most metropolitan areas at the end of World War II has been replaced first by multi-centered suburban employment development (polycentricity) and more recently by dispersion of employment. As early as 2000, more people worked in dispersed worksites in the major metropolitan areas, including New York, than in the downtowns (CBD's) and suburban office centers, according to research by [Bumsoo Lee and Peter Gordon](#). City Sector Model analysis shows that CBDs lost two percent of their market share from 2000 to 2015, based on a City Sector Analysis of County Business Patterns data. It seems likely that the trend of dispersion has continued (Figure 2)....

There are a total of 34 metropolitan areas that are 95 percent or more suburban. These include examples such as Atlanta, at 99.2 percent San Diego at 98.9 percent Sacramento at 98.3 percent, Austin and 97.9 percent, Denver at 96.9 percent and Portland at 90.0 percent.

Retrieved June 28, 2017 from <http://www.newgeography.com/content/005640-us-metropolitan-areas-from-polycentricity-dispersed>

Yes, there is no doubt about it, suburbs rule, and you can read our research report: ***The American River Parkway's Suburban Setting: The Sacramento Dream*** at <http://arpps.org/Report5-SuburbanSetting.pdf>

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #184, August 11, 2017

Hatcheries Saving Salmon

There was a very good story last month from the *California Fisheries Blog* about the important role hatcheries play in saving salmon in the Central Valley Watersheds; and I will never forget the way Congressman Tom McClintock described the difference between hatchery salmon to wild salmon, I am paraphrasing: “The difference between salmon born in a hatchery from those born in the wild is the same as a human baby born in a hospital to one born at home.”

The alleged lower quality of hatchery salmon to wild salmon is one of the main arguments used to stop new dams; along with the same argument about farm versus wild salmon.

It is an argument with some validity as to farm vs wild as some farms do not practice good protocol, but little with hatchery vs wild.

This article focuses on the Coleman Hatchery, part of the National Fish Hatchery System https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Fish_Hatchery_System .

An excerpt from the *California Fisheries Blog* post.

“In a recent post I discussed ways to improve hatchery salmon smolt survival to increase coastal and river salmon populations devastated by recent droughts. This post is a follow-up addressing how to enhance the Coleman (Battle Creek) Hatchery¹ contribution. Coleman produces nearly half of the Central Valley’s 30 million hatchery-produced salmon smolts. Three state hatcheries in the Valley (Feather, American, and Mokelumne) produce most of the other smolts. Survival of Coleman hatchery smolts released to the Sacramento River is markedly lower in dry years.² Trucking smolts from the hatchery to the Bay increases survival and catch in fisheries, but at a cost of increased straying and low return rates of adults to the hatchery.

“Of all these hatcheries, Coleman has the toughest challenge, because it is nearly 300 miles from the Golden Gate. While trucking smolts to the San Francisco Bay improves smolt survival and adult salmon population numbers available to fisheries, trucking from Coleman leads to low hatchery-return rates and excessive straying to other Valley rivers. Only about 50-100 adults per million smolts trucked to the Bay find their back to

Coleman. In contrast, for each million smolts released at the hatchery, 400-500 return to Coleman to contribute eggs for the next generation.

“One measure to increase smolt survival-contribution I suggested in past posts is barging smolts to the Golden Gate. Unlike trucking, barging allows some imprinting by smolts for their eventual return route back to the hatchery. Barging requires a medium to large sized vessel, which would still necessitate nearly 200 miles of trucking to barge-accessible locations on the lower Sacramento River. Barging may reduce straying while providing enhanced smolt survival to the Bay, although past trucking and release at Knights Landing in the lower river only marginally lowered the straying rate compared to Bay releases. A balance between overall survival and contribution to the fishery and returns to the hatchery is the challenge for fisheries managers. Barging from Knights Landing or Elkhorn boat ramps may provide more returns to the Sacramento River above the mouths of the Feather and American rivers than trucking releases to these locations or the Bay. Regardless, barging should provide substantially higher survival and returns to the upper river than river release of fish, especially in dry years. Barging test studies conducted by the Feather Hatchery program should be expanded to test potential benefits of Coleman salmon smolt barging.

“Another measure that deserves testing is rearing Coleman fall-run fry off-site in Yolo Bypass rice fields. The higher survival and growth potential and earlier ocean entry of these smolts compared with smolts released at the hatchery, should increase the numbers of adult salmon available to the fisheries. Concerns include low returns to Coleman hatchery and straying of returning adults back to the Yolo Bypass. The State’s EcoRestore Program is planning fish passage improvement projects in the upper Bypass. Barging off-site-reared smolts to the Bay from nearby Knights Landing or Elkhorn boat ramp could potentially improve return rates to the hatchery and overall survival, especially in dry years

“A third proven measure that is possibly more promising and readily implementable is improving downstream migration conditions for smolts released to the upper Sacramento River from the Coleman hatchery. Smolt survival and contribution to fisheries and adult returns to the hatchery are better when flow, turbidity, and water temperature conditions are good at the time of release and in the immediate weeks thereafter in the 200 miles downstream to the Bay. To a certain extent, the hatchery can time releases to river conditions (and does so when feasible). However, the timing of smolting and the whole rearing process necessitates a week 15-17 release window (late April to beginning of May). When conditions are optimal in these key weeks, survival and contribution rates of smolts released at Coleman are nearly as high as they are for smolts transported to the Bay. Such 1-3% survival (returns) would produce hundreds of thousands of adults, compared to just tens of thousands under poor conditions when there is just 0.2-0.5% survival (Table 1). A 3% survival would yield 360,000 adult salmon returns from 12 million hatchery smolts, as compared to only 12,000 returns under a 0.1% survival.

“So what are good conditions in late April? Adequate stream flows are those necessary to meet existing water quality standards, water right permits requirements, and endangered species permit requirements in the upper 200 miles of river below Shasta

Dam. Such prescriptions are basically minimum targets: keeping the upper river within the 56oF limit upstream of Red Bluff and the river downstream to the Delta at 68oF or less. These standards were put in place decades ago to protect beneficial uses, including salmon survival.”

Retrieved July 25, 2017 from <http://calsport.org/fisheriesblog/?p=1728>

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #185, September 7, 2017

Money May Help Parkway, Then Again, it May Not

This August 21, 2017 article in the *Sacramento Bee* <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/marcos-breton/article168170422.html> makes a good and eloquent case that increasing the amount of money to the Parkway may help resolve the illegal camping destroying it, but history shows little change has occurred, regardless of the newest strategy—and there have been several over many years— used by the County to stop illegal camping.

We still think having the Parkway come under nonprofit management is the best option, one we outline in our research report about it on our website, <http://arpps.org/Report3-Governance.pdf>

A large part of the problem of why the County has such difficulty managing the Parkway, where the solution is having the County-wide political will to enforce the law and actually remove illegal campers; includes district-centric politics interfering with the ability to develop that political will, buttressed by the contemporary cultural motif of political correctness that the homeless are largely a result of society’s failures rather than an individual choice to live off the grid.

The County did approve the new money, as the *Sacramento Bee* reports on August 24, 2017, <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article169023177.html> and though we hope it works to accomplish what the *Bee* article title notes: **Supervisors OK effort to clean up American River Parkway’s homeless camps**, based on past experience, we won’t be holding our breath.

An excerpt from the August 21, 2017 *Bee* article.

The boat ride down the American River began near Howe Avenue and seemed idyllic for long stretches until we got closer to the city of Sacramento. Then it seemed like we had entered a third-world favela right in the capital of California.

We saw makeshift shelters lined up on the banks amid piles of trash. We saw abandoned shopping carts stranded in the water. We even saw a bicycle chop shop, with scores of bikes and metal parts stacked up on one another.

The environmental degradation of the lower stretch of the American River is not a new issue, but there is no way to truly understand its impact and implications until you view it from an unobstructed vantage point.

From a boat, you can see a virtual homeless city that's obscured by trees and bushes when approached by land. From a boat, you can get a full measure of the collection of illegal encampments, to the enduring shame of the city and county of Sacramento.

On Wednesday, Sacramento County Supervisors will decide whether to commit [between \\$3-\\$5 million in budget allocations](#) to pay for more park rangers, maintenance workers and animal control employees – all in an effort to cope with the negative impacts caused by a growing homeless population living in Sacramento's urban river parkway.

Truthfully, even \$5 million is insufficient. Protecting the American River Parkway deserves much more. But a "yes" vote for an issue pushed by County Supervisor Phil Serna would be a major allocation considering the county currently spends \$6.5 million on all of its county parks.

"It will represent a historic, bold step to finally prioritize the parkway the same way it is appreciated," Serna said. "The parkway is a unique natural and recreational asset that defines our community as very special."

With [homeless populations spiking in Sacramento](#), the environmental impacts on the soil, water and vegetation of the parkway may be reaching a tipping point. If county supervisors take a pass now, if they kick the can down the road, their inaction might one day be remembered as the moment a gorgeous natural resource was forsaken and ultimately allowed to become damaged beyond repair.

The captain of our excursion last week was Maury Hatch, a seasoned fishing guide. In addition to shopping carts, he's seen propane tanks in the water. He's seen human feces in the water, the same water in which illegal campers also urinate, and do their dishes.

"This is a unique view that lots of people don't get to see," Hatch said. "The amount of garbage, propane bottles, soap and fecal matter in the river has no doubt caused the water quality to go down.

"For now, the fish are still here, the mammals are still here – but there are a lot more humans here than were here before."

Others have been sounding the alarm as well. "My biggest concern is that the parkway won't be a place for recreation anymore," said Dianna Poggetto, executive director of the [American River Parkway Foundation](#).

Retrieved August 22, 2017 from <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/marcos-breton/article168170422.html>

Appendix II: Quarterly Newsletters

American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter: Issue 53 – Winter 2016/2017

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Announcement: *Annual Report Online*

Every October our organization compiles a year's worth of work and information into one easily accessible source and posts it to our website, as we have done this year, and here is the Introduction;

Introduction

Borrowing from Dickens, last year was possibly the best of times and the worst of times for the American River Parkway.

It was the worst of times because of the increasing and deadly reverberations of the, as yet, unrestrained illegal camping in the Parkway which has grown way beyond the ground zero of the North Sacramento/Cal Expo area, and, in that ground zero area, arguably produced the greatest destruction of habitat—through fire and pollution—in the Parkway since its inception.

It was the best of times due to the exuberant development of downtown led by the truly beautiful, delightful arena and the surrounding development it is inspiring, which appears on the verge of actually making downtown as pivotal to the region as it once was; which will inevitably lead to riverfront and Parkway enhancement.

We are fortunate in that there are great visions of such enhancement already sketched out such as Gold Rush Park <https://www.facebook.com/GoldRushPark> , Sutter's Landing Park <http://www.sutterslandingpark.org/> as well as our idea of a Links Golf Course <http://arpps.org/news.html> (go to the August 8, 2014 Press Release).

Also, the recent creation of a Lower American River Conservancy Program http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB1716 while not changing the serious problem of ineffective Parkway management, may—which we say with some reservation—actually promise some change for the good.

Embracing the best, while acknowledging the maybe and the worst, it is surely time to feel pretty good about Sacramento and hope that feeling pretty good about the Parkway can soon follow.

The report is posted on our website at <http://arpps.org/annualreport.html>

Mini-Essay: Sacramento Needs More Water Storage

Several months ago, during the last year of the recent drought, several people—engineers, analysts, folks from the Auburn Dam Council—gathered at my house to discuss Auburn Dam, they will remain nameless as it is still not professionally safe to express opinions so frowned on by the orthodoxy, and we drafted this article; the first sentence is updated.

Most of us can remember that last year before the rains started, there was concern there might not be enough water to flush Sacramento toilets.

After substantial rain and snowfall, there are fears that too much water is being released from Folsom Dam during a drought year.

Both of these concerns point to the real underlying problem—too little storage for the American River Watershed, particularly, as compared to the watersheds statewide.

The original visionaries, who developed the water plan for California designed Shasta Dam to be 200 feet higher than it now is (which would have tripled its storage capacity) and Auburn Dam (more than twice the capacity of Folsom) adding the proper amount of storage capability on the American River.

The 200 additional feet were not completed on Shasta—though it is engineered for it—because of the need for raw materials during World War II, and Auburn was not built due to earthquake concerns, which a new design can remove.

The lack of available water storage, coupled with worsening drought conditions make it the perfect time to reopen discussions about the Auburn Dam. Here's why:

Major benefits of Auburn Dam still exist:

- 400 year flood protection
- 800 megawatts of power
- Recreation—"Numerous recreation trails used for hiking, running, biking, and equestrian purposes are located in the Auburn Reservoir area. New recreation facilities (described below) as part of the project would more than offset existing recreation uses in the American River Canyon. They would also offer an expanded array of recreation experience to a much broader population than under a no - action condition." (USBR, Auburn-Folsom South Unit Special Report - Benefits and Cost Update, Central Valley Project, California, p. IV-13)

American River Parkway/Lower American River (LAR) benefits include:

- Control of temperature and flow for spawning salmon in the LAR.
- Reduces salmon bed scouring in the LAR during high water releases.

- Control erosion of the Parkway-when Folsom has to release water too fast-which threatens many old growth trees, other habitat, wildlife, and the bike trail.

The water rights for Auburn Dam have been revoked and they would have to be re-issued before proceeding, but if the political will can rise to the level of the environmental need, that can be done with congressional reauthorization for the dam and reapplication by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) for the water rights, as noted by State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights' David Rose-who led the prosecution team-in a 2008 news article:

Revoking the water right permits will not necessarily foreclose the possibility of constructing the project," he said. "If Congress ever re-authorizes the project, Reclamation could file new water right applications. Retrieved February 22, 2016 from <http://www.theloomisnews.com/detail/100166.html>

Another important strategy to consider is Local Control. Protecting existing local water rights on the American River and keeping Local Control in the forefront may be worth exploring further because an entity, other than the BOR, could then apply for the water right.

The old objection to Auburn Dam-danger of an earthquake-can be resolved through a new design, as the Bureau of Reclamation noted in its December 2006 report:

If an Auburn Dam were to be built, it could be designed to withstand the most conservative design displacements appropriate for the Sierran Foothills seismotectonic setting assuming the proper type of dam and dam design. (USBR Auburn-Folsom South Unit Special Report - Benefits and Cost Update, Central Valley Project, California, p. IV-7)

If planners are serious about water storage, mitigating future droughts, and flood protection for Sacramento, rethinking the Auburn Dam is more critical now than at any time in California's history.

Mini-Essay: *Dams Still Best Option for Storing Water*

There are problems with dams of course, even a newly discovered one of adding to global warming, as this article from *Reflections on Water* notes:

Last month, global atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations reached 400 ppm signaling that greenhouse gases are continuing to rise and the momentum of global climate change is well underway. Carbon dioxide is only one of several greenhouse gasses – where methane is the most potent of all and 30 times stronger than carbon dioxide. Most attention on methane emissions has been on that coming from burping corn-fed cows or leaks from fracking to produce natural gas. The notorious methane leak in Aliso Canyon by Southern California Gas Company during fracking didn't go under anyone's radar, since it resulted in a leak in 100,000 tons of methane gas – said to be equivalent to annual emissions from half a million cars. However, a new study published in *Bioscience* this past week has highlighted a new source of methane that was previously unaccounted for in global estimates – Dams. The study found dams emit 25% more methane than we previously thought. Meaning dams are contributing

approximately 1.5% of global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. Making a strong case that greenhouse gas emissions from dams be included in IPCC budgets and other global inventories, when previously they have not been.

How are dam reservoirs any different from lakes?

Methane release from both man-made reservoirs and lakes originate from the sediments beneath the water. The root cause of methane release is the decay of dead organic matter in these sediments that originated from leaves, trees, algae, and fish that sunk from the waters above. As you can imagine, the amount of oxygen present in the sediments under these waters can be quite low, causing bacteria eating this dead organic matter to depend on other molecules containing oxygen. These include nitrate, phosphate, sulfate, and carbon dioxide. The least appealing molecule to breathe for these microbes is carbon dioxide because it requires the greatest energy to break the molecule apart to access the oxygen. When these microbes have no choice than to breathe carbon dioxide, a process called “methanogenesis” occurs. This means that for every carbon dioxide molecule that is consumed, one molecule of methane is exhaled. When methane gas starts to accumulate in the sediments, it will bubble up, float to the surface of the water, and rise into our atmosphere.

There are three main differences between man-made reservoirs and lakes:

1. Man-made reservoirs require flooding terrestrial land, supplying a large pulse of dead organic matter from trees and grasslands. The timescale of how this happens to natural lakes is much longer.
2. Man-made reservoirs experience greater fluctuations than natural lakes. As reservoirs reduce in volume, the weight of the water over the sediments drop freeing even more methane molecules from the confines of their origin.
3. Man-made reservoirs are often closer to human activities, such as agricultural run-off containing fertilizers that can promote the growth of organic matter in the water.

What are the alternatives?

So, it seems as though hydropower is not as clean as we once thought. But that isn't a good reason to be ripping out dams. Hydropower generation often replaces much dirtier sources of energy, such as coal and even natural gas. In addition, dams provide us wide range of public benefits such as flood control, recreation, and water management. It is important to note, however, that if plans for a new dam are not going to provide hydroelectric supply and only provide water storage – groundwater storage may be a ‘cleaner’ alternative. Groundwater recharge basins are regularly maintained to have less organic matter at the bottom, since it can clog the percolation of water into groundwater aquifers beneath. In addition, recharge basins are shallower than man-made reservoirs and periodically become empty during dry periods when less water is available to recharge groundwater. This periodic drying out helps keep soils aerated, whereas man-made reservoirs can stay inundated with water for longer periods of time.

Although I'm the first to admit that I have huge concerns over the impact humans are having on climate change, I won't be loosing sleep over methane emissions from dams.

While dams contribute 1.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions, global agriculture (dominated by livestock) contributes to ~30% of greenhouse gas emissions, and electricity/heat production contributes ~25% of greenhouse gas emissions. Retrieved October 18, 2016 from <http://reflectionsonwater.org/blog/2016/10/7/damwho-knew>

Closing Comment

I have always been curious why liberals so detest dams and have come to the conclusion that it is the same reason they hate the suburbs and oil; all three create, in one way or another, more roads for more cars, and liberals really hate cars, except of course, electric ones.

Why is that? Perhaps Tom Wolfe knew the answer, as he wrote many years ago in the essay looking at the birth of stock car racing, *The Last American Hero*:

It got so on Sundays there wouldn't be a safe straight stretch of road in the county, because so many wild country boys would be out racing or just raising hell on the roads. A lot of other kids who weren't basically wild, would be driving like hell every morning and every night, driving to jobs perhaps thirty to forty miles away, jobs that were available only because of automobiles. In the morning they would be driving through the dapple shadows like madmen. In the hollows, sometimes one would come upon the most incredible tarpaper hovels, down near the stream, and out front would be an incredible automobile creation, a late-model car with aerials, Continental kit overhangs in the back, mudguards studded with reflectors, fender skirts, spotlights, God knows what all, with a girl and perhaps a couple of good old boys communing over it and giving you rotten looks as you drive by. On Saturday night everybody would drive into town and park under the lights on the main street and neck. Yes! There was something about being right in there in town underneath the lights and having them reflecting off the baked enamel on the hood. Then if a good old boy insinuated his hands here and there on the front seat with a girl and began . . . necking . . . somehow it was all more *complete*. After the war there was a great deal of stout-burgher talk about people who lived in hovels and bought big-yacht cars to park out front. This was one of the symbols of a new, spendthrift age. But there was a great deal of unconscious resentment buried in the talk. It was resentment against (a) the fact that the good old boy had his money at all and (b) the fact that the car symbolized freedom, a slightly wild, careening emancipation from the old social order. Stock car racing got started about this time, right after the war, and it was immediately regarded as some kind of manifestation of the animal irresponsibility of the lower orders. It had a truly terrible reputation. It was—well, it looked *rowdy* or something. The cars were likely to be used cars, the tracks were dirt, the stands were rickety wood, the drivers were country boys, and they had regular feuds out there, putting each other “up against the wall” and “cutting tires” and everything else. Those country boys would drive into the curves full tilt, then slide manically, sometimes coming around the curve sideways, with red dirt showering up. Sometimes they would race at night, under those weak-eyed yellow-ochre lights they have at small tracks and baseball fields, and the clay dust would start showering up in the air, where the evening dew would catch it, and all evening long you would be sitting in the stands or standing out in the infield with a fine clay-mud drizzle coming down on you, not that anybody gave a damn—except for the Southern upper and middle classes, who never attended in those days, but spoke of the “rowdiness”. (p. 32)

Society Information

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American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter: Issue 54 – Spring 2017

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Note: *Parkway Rangers Reports: Some Stats*

In going over the reports from November & December 2016 and January & February 2017—the last four posted as of this writing and available online at <http://www.regionalparks.saccounty.net/Rangers/Pages/Latest-Ranger-Activity-Data.aspx> —a few statistics representing all four months combined, bear mentioning.

Unlawful Camping Cites: 426

Camps Cleaned and Removed: 596

Felony Arrests: 25

It's still dangerous out there, so be careful, especially in the Skid Row area of the Parkway, Discovery Park to Cal Expo.

Essay: *Water, It's all About Water*

It really is all about water lately, water running out to sea, salmon swimming through the dams, water flooding the Parkway, and how bad water policy met bad homelessness policy.

Water Running Out to Sea

This article from the *Wall Street Journal* makes the case.

The drought is over but the greens keep sending the water out to sea.

Reservoirs and rivers are overflowing as storms have pounded California this

winter, and after years of drought that should be good news. The problem is that misguided environmentalism is wasting the water windfall and failing to store it for a non-rainy day.

Hydrologic records indicate that this year could be the wettest on record in California. Statewide snowpack measures 160% of average. Precipitation in Palm Springs exceeds the historic norm by more than 50%. Lo, the desert is actually blooming. Most of the major reservoirs in the north are full, and some are releasing hundreds of billions of gallons of water to prevent flooding and make room for the melting snowpack this spring.

While farmers and communities downstream can capture some of the discharges, millions of acre-feet will invariably flow into the ocean due to lack of storage capacity and rules to protect endangered fish species. One problem is that while the state population has increased 70% since 1979, storage hasn't expanded. Water districts in southern California have developed small local reservoirs and groundwater basins, but what's most needed is storage in the north where most of the rain and snow falls.

The Public Policy Institute of California estimates that five proposed reservoirs could add four million acre-feet of storage capacity at a cost of \$9 billion. Yet environmentalists have opposed every significant surface storage project for three decades. The state is even razing four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River that green groups complain impede fish migration.

Ah, the fish. Regulations intended to protect smelt and salmon have limited pumping at the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. As a result, some seven million acre-feet of water that was once available for Central Valley farmers and Southern California is flushed into San Francisco Bay each year.

Meanwhile, a 60-mile dry riverbed on the San Joaquin River that hasn't borne fish since the 1940s is being restored at a cost of \$1.7 billion to farmers and state and federal taxpayers. The river restoration is expected to divert an additional 170,000 acre-feet each year, but it could be more since the Chinook salmon that environmentalists want to revive require cool temperatures—meaning more water—to spawn and survive. Government biologists are spending millions of dollars to truck (literally) salmon around the valley while trying to calibrate optimal temperatures and water flows. Yes, these salmon have chauffeurs.

Last September the State Water Resources Control Board proposed limiting the amount of water that farmers and cities in the north could use from three tributaries that feed into the San Joaquin River in order to boost the Central Valley's fall-run Chinook salmon population, which numbers 750,000. The plan would reduce water available to farmers and cities by 250,000 acre-feet on average annually and 500,000 acre-feet during dry years....

Retrieved April 6, 2017 from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/californias-wasted-winter-rains-1491434129>

Salmon Swimming Through the Dams

The salmon's fishery is vitally important to California, and this paragraphs from a seminal environmental book, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and its Disappearing Water* notes some ideas I had not heard about before.

Even in the Northwest, where the sheer size of the dams, and the sheer value of hydroelectricity, make change terrifically difficult, it almost has to occur. You can perhaps imagine California salmon going extinct, but you can imagine no such thing in the Pacific Northwest, a region the salmon very nearly symbolizes. The great mainstem dams will never be torn down, but smaller dams may be. The federal government already has plans to purchase a high dam on the Elwha River, which drains the north side of the Olympic Range and hosts all five species of Pacific salmon, in order to tear it down. [which did happen, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elwha_Dam] And the mainstem dams, at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars, will be re-engineered in order to block fewer adult salmon and pass more juveniles through. Holes may be punched through their immense, solid insides and then sealed with ponderous metal gates; when the fish are running downriver, the gates may be open to let them pass without becoming chopped liver in the turbines. [I found no evidence this has been done yet] The river may be "managed" (for better or worse, it is in human hands in a completely different way: the reservoirs rapidly drawn down to quicken the current, the gates opened for the fish, the whole process repeated, again and again, water tumbling down a ladder, until each successive run is safely at sea. (pp. 513-514)

Marc Reisner: (1993, Revised & updated edition) *Cadillac Desert: The American West and its Disappearing Water*. Penguin Books: New York.

Water Flooding the Parkway

This story in the March 3, 2017 issue of the *Sacramento Bee* reveals the vast amount of trash stirred up by the recent flooding of illegal homeless camp sites, and other debris, due to the high water during this rainy season:

As floodwater recedes from the American River Parkway, plastic bags, bottles, bike parts and shopping carts remain on banks and tree branches, sparking a new partnership between county departments to hasten the clean up.

Director of Regional Parks Jeff Leatherman said this week that his department is coordinating with waste management and recycling staff to cart garbage and plant remains out of the parkway, which stretches 23 miles from Discovery Park to Lake Natoma.

The popular greenbelt was closed due to heavy flooding last month as the American River reached its highest level since 1997. Discovery Park remains underwater and is not expected to open until May, but other sections have slowly dried out under clear skies. The county announced Thursday that the Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail is open from miles 6 to 23 with one detour.

Leatherman said there are a few things he expects to see left behind. Debris, sand and silt have accumulated in parking lots at access points, particularly at the Harrington, Watt Avenue and Howe areas. Parking lot cleanup takes significant time and effort, he said.

On the dirt trail used by horseback riders and hikers, workers have started dealing with downed trees and branches where the water has cleared. Crews must wait for water to recede before clearing other parts of the parkway, particularly on the first few miles of the trail in Sacramento.

Leatherman said it's harder to figure out how to get trash out of trees. When the river rises as high as it did this month, it can reach tree branches that are normally 20 or 30 feet off the ground. Anything floating on the surface, like plastic bags, gets caught in branches and left behind when water recedes.

Some equipment from illegal campers may have gotten caught up in floodwaters, but Leatherman said maintenance staff and rangers worked hard to remove as many camping items and trash from the parkway as possible before the water level rose.

Using data from past high water years, "we essentially worked our way backward from the lower areas to the higher areas," he said.

Trash left in places inaccessible by roads pose the biggest challenge. Cleanup on the parkway can be time-intensive because typical garbage trucks can't get to where the most trash gathers – illegal campsites. Workers have to bag the trash and then carry it out to the truck.

Retrieved March 3, 2017 from
<http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article136120208.html>

Bad Water Policy Meets Bad Homelessness Policy

As we noted in our e letter from January 2017:

Last month presented an educational example of both as water had to be released from Folsom to make way for storm runoff and the American River flooded along the Discovery Park/Cal Expo area forcing many of the homeless campers to find higher ground.

If public leadership had been wise enough to build Auburn Dam, all that runoff would have been stored; and if public leadership had been wise enough to do something effective about the illegal camping in the American River Parkway, we would not see the sad story—for the Parkway and the homeless—noted by the ***Sacramento Bee***:

“Danny Rasmussen, 69, has lived along the American River for 15 years and was flooded out a few days ago from rising river levels and moved his shelter to higher ground on Sunday December 18, 2016 in Sacramento, Calif. County rangers are ticketing far fewer people for illegal camping, with 602 citations through the end of November, or roughly half the pace of the 1,278 issued last year.

“That people camp on the American River Parkway in violation of county law is well established. What might come as a surprise is just how settled some of them are.

“On a December weekday before the last storm, a metal door attached to two trees blocked access to a campsite otherwise surrounded by thick brush. Another site under the 12th Street bridge had a television powered by a generator. Upriver, Fred Gurr had a large cooler, an office chair and other items clustered around his site, which he shares with his black cat, Bug Out.

“I’ve lived here for four years,” said Gurr, a veteran who said he became homeless after losing a job. “I’ve been at the same location the whole time.”

Retrieved January 2, 2017 from
<http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article121884933.html>

Public leadership—as well-intentioned as they are—really has to do a better job on both water and homelessness policy as the lack of effective policy about water and homelessness is slowly destroying the natural heart of this community and in time, degrading the larger community as well.

All of this water—still raining as I write on April 17th—is truly a blessing, but what would even be more of a blessing is if we had the means to store some of it for the next drought.

Note: *New Parkway Governance: California Wildlife Conservation Board*

The Parkway is now, in effect, a state park program administered by the Wildlife Conservation Board <https://www.wcb.ca.gov/> . We cannot yet tell whether that will be good or bad for the future. Funding will probably increase, but solving the most serious Parkway problem—eradicating illegal camping—will probably remain elusive given the

current political stalemate denying the vigorous confrontation needed to eliminate illegal camping.

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Essay: *Parkway's Skid Row, An ARPPS Member Comments & More*

The first part of this essay is a copy of the May 8, 2017 ARPPS E Letter and I am including it due to its importance and as a preface to the rest of the essay.

Skid Rows develop largely as the result of inaction by public leadership—or wanting to contain a problem—allowing a public area of a city, or in this case, of a park, to sink into degradation by not appropriating the proper resources—including leadership—to ensure it remains safe and welcoming for residents and other visitors.

That this has happened to the Parkway from Discovery Park to Cal Expo and the long period of time that public leadership has allowed illegal camping on the Parkway is why it has—sadly and tragically for the adjacent neighborhoods and the homeless—become the Parkway's Skid Row.

Yesterday morning an article appeared in the *Sacramento Bee* <http://www.sacbee.com/news/investigations/the-public-eye/article148678849.html> about unleashed pit bulls in the Parkway who seriously bit someone; something also mentioned—as well as much more—in this April 18th e-mail to me from an ARPPS member

“Hi David,

“It’s interesting that my area which was apparently once called the Woodlake Reach, is now referred to as Skid Row. Not a term I like, but very much representative of the facts. I grew up playing on what is now the parkway. I know the area from Cal Expo to Discovery Park like the back of my hand. Over the years, as you can imagine, I have spent hundreds of hours in the parkway. Much of it safe unless of my own doing, ok I confess to swinging on a rope swing or 10 out into the river, but no, it was never me jumping from the train trestle into the river....about 40 years ago.....other things too which I have long since forgotten. I always felt safe there. Until now or last fall I should say, it’s when it got really bad to the point of being unusable.

“I am a runner. I should clarify by saying that I run a lot. Usually 25 to 30 miles a week. As CIM approaches every year, I run upwards of 40 miles a week. Most of it on the parkway – I can run from my house. I also am a biker. Not a casual weekend biker – I have a road bike and I am very passionate about my biking and consider myself to be an expert. No trying to brag, just laying some ground work here. I mountain bike as well

and I take that very seriously. I am not a weekend warrior. My sports are very technical to me, and the fine nuances keep me working harder to always get better.....but that is not why I am writing.

“I no longer feel safe on the parkway. Twice this past winter I have almost been attacked by dogs owned by the homeless. Apparently they feel they are immune to the leash law. Calls to Sac PD were a waste of time – they asked me to call the Animal Shelter. The Animal Shelter only has one person to collect up stray dogs. When I pointed out that the dogs were not stray but belonged to the homeless, they said they could have someone out in about 3 weeks’ time. I am not kidding here. Animal Shelter referred me back to the police. The police dispatch did nothing except to ask if anyone had been injured. Apparently if I had had my leg ripped off, then perhaps they could send someone to help but all patrol cars were busy both times I called. Of course this discounts the many many many times I have been yelled at, followed, approached, gawked at etc by homeless drunkards on drugs who want money for their habits and are willing to hurt me to get whatever I might have on my person.

“And then came the rains and they have now all moved into my hood where everyone can see them....what is to be done. The big question that no one has an answer for. Terrible I say. A double edged sword. No one should have to live like this. It’s terrible. It’s a filth like a third world county. But at the same time, the trash and the filth and the destruction of the parkway is unacceptable. As a tax paying citizen, I would like to be able to use my parkway.

“When I access the parkway beyond Cal Expo, I feel safe. Its clean. There are people who do not appear to want to hurt me. There are dogs ON LEASHES. Trash cans are empty. No trash everywhere. No used needles. No broken glass. No human feces. No used toilet paper. No dirty diapers. No mounds of trash and crap that is really unbelievable – how do they get all of that crap out into the parkway? Toilets are useable and don’t stink as though they have never been cleaned. Drinking fountains work. How is that fair? I pay the same in taxes as the folks upstream yet don’t get the same treatment. Why?

“Your newsletter states that the parkway is now under the domain of the California Wildlife Conservation Board. When I go to their web site, there is no way to find even one mention of the parkway.

“I am sick and tired of it. And now I see that my reach is referred to as skid row. Terrible. Frustrating. It’s like the last straw for me. I want to move. That must make my dad fluff up the ashes in his urn. I am born and raised in north sac as was my father. How did it all get so bad. Really, if I can’t even feel safe out on the parkway in my off time, my free time and I have to drive elsewhere to use it, I may as well move. I am done.”

And concluding, in a following e-mail:

“I spend, as you can tell, many hours there running and riding which lends its self to lots of time to think. I would really like to go for a run, perhaps this afternoon, on my favorite route, but it makes me nervous. I know my runs so well, I can identify trees and plants and I know how many miles I run and how much time it should take to get from point a to point b....yet I fear for my safety. Carrying mace would not be sufficient because one of the many loose pit bulls could get me silently from behind.”

It's not right that this ARPPS member and the person in the *Sacramento Bee* article (below) who was bitten, that they—and all of us—cannot run and ride safely in that area of the Parkway.

Hopefully, someday we all can.

Essay: *Parkway's Skid Row, ARPPS Member Comments (Expanded from May 8, 2017 E Letter)*

The link to the *Sacramento Bee* story reveals a tragic failure of public safety that has driven all too many people from using the area of the Parkway we now refer to as the Parkway's Skid Row—Discovery Park to Cal Expo—and this brief excerpt reflects that.

Excerpt from *Bee* article:

Gabriel Frazee was riding his bike near a homeless encampment on the American River Parkway last month when he was attacked by two pit bulls.

One dog, Wally, bit Frazee on the ankle and twice on the leg, hitting bone with the last two bites, Frazee said. The other dog, Felony, bit his forearm. Frazee received sutures for the bites in the emergency room, records show.

Getting attacked by an aggressive dog is a persistent fear among runners, bikers and other regular users of the American River Parkway. Just as illegal camping has increased garbage and fires along the parkway, it also accounts for another problem – unleashed dogs that serve as companions and security guards for homeless people clustered on the riverbanks.

Larry Glover-Meade, president of the Woodlake Neighborhood Association, and Jim Brown, executive director of Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, say they have received a number of complaints about dogs on the parkway. They believe the concerns deter people from using the parkway, particularly west of Sacramento State where camps are concentrated.

“Unfortunately what happened to Gabe (Frazee) is what a lot of people have feared or experienced on the parkway,” Brown said.

Lily Toppenberg said she was chased by a pit bull when she was riding her bike on the parkway to her home in the adjacent Woodlake neighborhood. She was not bit but remains fearful.

“I now carry bear spray on my handlebars when riding,” she said.

According to animal control officials for the city and county of Sacramento, most of the dogs owned by the homeless are pit bulls or pit-bull mixes. “The homeless seem to need these dogs for protection and sometimes these dogs don't know when protection is really needed and attack for the wrong reasons,” said Dave Dickinson, director of the county's Department of Animal Care and Regulation.

In the last three years, 17 dog bites have been reported to city animal control for incidents on the city portion of the parkway, said Sacramento Chief Animal Control Officer Jace Huggins. Dog bites are inevitably the result of a unleashed dog, he said. Under the state law, dogs cannot be tethered to objects, meaning that dogs on the parkway should always be held by the owner on a leash.

Sacramento County rangers cite about a half-dozen people every month for not having dogs on leashes in county parks, including the American River Parkway. More often than not, rangers let offenders off with a warning. Rangers issued 107 citations and 492 warnings for leash violations in 2014 and 2015, the last years complete statistics are available.

Fraze was bit by an unleashed dog and then by the other dog after its owner let go of the leash trying to assist Fraze.

County spokeswoman Kim Nava said rangers try to educate dog owners, citing them only after warnings fail to produce compliance.

Fraze blames county rangers for his attack. He said it would not have happened if the county enforced the camping ordinance and prevented homeless people and their dogs from living on the parkway. He pointed to a December story in *The Sacramento Bee* showing that rangers were on pace to cite half as many people for illegal camping on the parkway last year.

Retrieved May 8, 2017 from <http://www.sacbee.com/news/investigations/the-public-eye/article148678849.html>

Since this was written, a new initiative is being developed, according to this Marcos Breton column from the *Sacramento Bee*:

Fire isn't the only safety issue on the parkway. It can be dangerous to ride your bike on trails such as the one from the I-80 crossing near Cal Expo to the confluence of the American and Sacramento rivers at Discovery park. In recent weeks, two cyclists were attacked by pit bulls on the lower stretch of the parkway. The dogs belonged to homeless campers and were roaming free, not on leashes, in violation of parkway rules. [One cyclist was bit in the face.](#)

And then there's the refuse. In his office desk, Sacramento County Supervisor Phil Serna keeps a hypodermic needle in a plastic water bottle as a reminder of when the same needle stuck him in the hand nearly five years ago as he joined other volunteers to clear loads of trash left by homeless campers. The needle was one countless remnants of substance abuse you'll find on the parkway. For months, Serna lived with the fear that he would contract HIV or hepatitis. After an intensive 21-day course of medication and six months of blood tests, Serna learned he was OK....

After years of getting nowhere on this issue, Serna wants the county to finally commit real resources to protecting the parkway. He wants it to at least double its \$13 million parks budget, which would allow for the hiring of more park rangers. The county currently employs only 24 rangers to cover the thousands of acres of parkway. Campers move constantly, often setting up sites in the brush off the trails, and rangers simply are

spread too thin to properly enforce a simple ordinance: It's illegal to camp on the parkway.

The county will debate its budget this month. "I believe we should start the conversation at no less than double the (\$13 million) budget, given the vastness of our parkland inventory and the current limits on ability to maintain and patrol it," Serna said.

Serna's proposal promises to be a political fight because if you double the funding for parks, you take millions away from other programs. It's also a politically radioactive issue because homeless advocates and residents alike will rightly ask the same question: If you move homeless people out of the parkway, where will they live?

This always has been the question with no answer. And because there has been no answer, the problem never gets fixed – and, in fact, gets worse.

So where would they live? The county also is considering spending \$8.6 million over three years to fund a new full-service shelter for homeless people. The money would cover capital costs and operations for a shelter where pets would be accepted. A ban on pets often is an impediment to getting homeless people into housing.

All of this is well and good, but as we noted in a recent e letter:

We do support more money for parks but still believe the problem is largely not lack of money but lack of political will. As the Breton column notes, West Sacramento has solved the illegal camping problem on its side of the river.

"As a city, we can do better to help people such as Samuel Cunningham, whom I met this week when walking the parkway with Serna.

"Cunningham, 35, is a former drywall worker who lives near the river. He became homeless after a back injury prevented him from working and found temporary refuge at the Union Gospel Mission near the railyard before heading to the parkway. He got meals at nearby Loaves and Fishes, the city's massive homeless charity.

"He said he once lived on the West Sacramento side of the river but won't go back because authorities there strictly enforce a no-camping ordinance. "They don't play," he said. "They arrest you and throw your belongings in a dumpster. They held me for six hours and then released me in Woodland in a beautiful pale blue jumpsuit and flip-flops."

Retrieved June 5, 2017 from <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/marcos-breton/article154026369.html>

This is not a good way for people to have to live and this is not a good way to treat our Parkway.

We can do better on both counts.

Maybe more political will, rather than more money, is what is really needed.

Society Information

The American River Parkway Preservation Society is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. As a member, you will receive a monthly e-letter, quarterly newsletter, and periodic planning position papers.

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Our Mission

Preserve, Protect, & Strengthen the American River Parkway, Our Community's Natural Heart.

Our Vision

We want our Parkway, seven generations from now, to be a vibrant, accessible, and serene sanctuary, nourishing and refreshing the spirit of all who enter it.

Our Guiding Principles

- (1) Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it's a necessity.
- (2) What's good for the salmon is good for the river.
- (3) Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway, social and environmental justice call upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.
- (4) If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.
- (5) Regarding new Parkway usages, inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.
- (6) The suburban lifestyle—as surrounds the American River Parkway—which is imbued within the aspirational center of the *California Dream* and whose vision is woven into the heart of the *American Dream*, is a deeply loved way of life whose sustainability we all desire.

The Society depends solely on its membership to continue our advocacy to preserve the Parkway in perpetuity, and we deeply appreciate any additional financial support you can provide, or by encouraging others to become members. Thank You!

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American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter: Issue 56 – Fall 2017

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News Item: *Hepatitis A Outbreak Among Homeless Spreading Statewide*

One of the dangers of being homeless, as this story from *Breitbart News* reports:

The California hepatitis A outbreak is on the verge of reaching statewide epidemic status, as cases have spread through homeless tent cities from San Diego north to Sacramento.

by [Chriss W. Street](#) 8 Oct 2017 Newport Beach, CA

California health officials have reported that at least 569 people have been infected with the hepatitis A liver disease and 17 have died since a San Diego County outbreak was first identified in November. Cases have migrated north to homeless populations in Los Angeles, Santa Cruz, San Francisco and Sacramento over the last 11 months.

Although local and state authorities have tried to underplay the risks and severity of the outbreak, the most recent annual totals for cases of hepatitis A in the United States was 1,390 in 2015, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). California only reported 179 cases during the same year.

The highly-contagious hepatitis A outbreak may have taken root because of the City of San Diego's efforts in the run-up to Major League Baseball's All-Star Game held at Petco Park in July 2016 to push the homeless, and the rampant drug and prostitution trade among them, out of the downtown tourist venues. Those effort included locking public bathrooms and essentially relocating the homeless to the congested tent city encampments that stretch for blocks east of downtown near freeway onramps.

Another explanation may be the city's decision to ban plastic bags, which deprived homeless people of an alternative means of disposing of human waste when bathrooms were not available.

The last major hepatitis A outbreak was 900 cases and 8 deaths in Pennsylvania in 2003. The infected suffer flulike symptoms and jaundice, but the disease can progress to death.

Since 1998, national hepatitis A incidence rates had been “progressively lower each year” due to the development of a “safe and effective hepatitis A vaccines in 1995–1996.”

California homeless advocates have been successful across the state in forcing cities to accept the homeless living in large tent communities on public property. The advocates refer to anti-homeless ordinances as the modern-day equivalent to post-slavery Jim Crow and Depression era anti-Okie laws that allowed police to disperse people deemed “undesirable” after dark.

The City of San Diego was forced to sign the Spencer Settlement in 2006, which forbids its Police Department from enforcing the city’s “Illegal Lodging Enforcement Guidelines” between the hours of 9 pm to 5:30 am.

California, with 115,738 homeless, now accounts for about 21 percent of America’s total homeless population. Due to legal settlements against vagrancy laws, about 72.3 percent of California’s homeless are unsheltered, usually living in tent cities.

Retrieved October 8, 2017 from <http://www.breitbart.com/california/2017/10/08/california-hepatitis-a-outbreak-on-verge-of-statewide-epidemic/>

Announcement: *Introduction to Annual Organizational Report*

Our annual organizational report is online and here is the Introduction:

Introduction

Last year we had some confidence that the combination of the new downtown development around the Sacramento Kings arena and the new Parkway governance coming from the California Wildlife Conservation Board <https://www.wcb.ca.gov/> as a result of Assembly Bill 1716 <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=137394&inline> would result in good things for the Parkway; increased riverfront development from the former and better management from the latter.

So far, neither has developed though there are some good tidings to report in both cases.

The recent Sacramento County approval of \$5 million to increase efforts to reduce Parkway illegal camping surely benefited from the new relation with the Wildlife Conservation Board, as reported by the *Sacramento Bee*:

Sacramento County supervisors on Wednesday approved a \$5 million plan to beef up patrols along the American River Parkway and clean up its homeless encampments.

The 3-2 vote came after dozens of residents packed the supervisors’ chambers to support or denounce the proposal to add park rangers, maintenance staff and sheriff’s employees to the 23-mile “jewel of Sacramento” and adjacent neighborhoods.

Some speakers recounted bad interactions with homeless people. Others expressed compassion for the homeless but said they wanted a clean, safe parkway. Still others denounced the proposal as “criminalizing the homeless.”

Retrieved September 30, 2017 from <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article169023177.html>

The recent announcement about the riverfront is also encouraging, as reported by KCRA:

Construction is now underway in Old Sacramento as part of a dramatic facelift to the city’s riverfront.

The idea is to make Old Sacramento an entertainment district that would attract both tourists and longtime residents by honoring the city’s railroad heritage, while also building excitement about the future.

“I know they're talking about doing a lot of events along the waterfront,” said Michael Coyne, general manager for the Delta King. “Maybe art shows, smaller concerts, those type of things.”

The revitalization project is also likely to include a monument that showcases Old Sacramento, going way beyond the Pony Express statue that stands there today.

The goal is to build a must-see icon, with a draw similar to the Gateway Arch in St. Louis or the Space Needle in Seattle.

“We'll get lots of ideas,” said Richard Rich, the city’s Riverfront project manager. “I'm already getting great ideas from people, and we'll throw those all into a bucket, hire some of the greatest designers in the world and say, 'Here what can you do with this?'”

The cost of the monument is still being determined, but riverfront development pencils out to an estimated \$10 million to \$15 million with the money coming primarily from grants and a Destination Sacramento fund.

It will help transform the current I Street entrance into something exotic and futuristic.

Retrieved September 30, 2017 from <http://www.kcra.com/article/sacramento-launches-riverfront-redevelopment/10231683> “

So, all in all, we can—somewhat—feel positive that the future may be better for the Parkway, even though this has been, in terms of Parkway devastation from illegal camping by the homeless, one of the worst years.

Mini-Essay: *Homelessness Increasing in Rural Areas*

As we have seen with the large-scale illegal camping in the Parkway continually growing no matter what strategy Sacramento County Parks institutes; many of the homeless—especially those for whom living off the grid is an individual choice rather than a necessity brought on by circumstances beyond their control—prefer illegally camping in nature than in cities (it is much

easier to hide, hunt food, and find fresh water) as this article from the *San Francisco Chronicle* reports.

An excerpt.

California housing costs are spiraling so high that they are pushing the state's homelessness crisis into places it's never been before — sparsely populated rural counties.

A Chronicle analysis of biennial homeless counts taken early this year across California shows that the sharpest increases occurred not in San Francisco and other urban centers but in out-of-the-way places such as the thickly forested Sierra Nevada and the dusty flatlands and low hills of the northern Sacramento Valley.

Statewide, The Chronicle's examination shows, homelessness rose by 15 percent from 2015 to this year. In heavily populated centers such as Los Angeles and the Bay Area, where tent cities have long been part of the landscape, even double-digit increases like that might not suggest that something has fundamentally changed. But in rural areas, the increases have come as a shock.

When the number of people without homes in the historic Gold Rush territory of El Dorado County climbs 122 percent in two years, and the farmlands of Butte County see a 76 percent rise, it's jarring to neighbors, community leaders, police and homeless people themselves. Those counties lack the years of experience that cities have in creating services for homeless people and are starting almost from scratch.

There is no year-round shelter in El Dorado County, and camps are multiplying on the edges of the county seat of Placerville. In Butte County, the few shelters are overwhelmed, and panhandlers who were once an anomaly in the college town of Chico are becoming commonplace.

It's the same story in places like Lake County, north of the Bay Area; Shasta County, on the slopes of the Cascades; and Imperial County, along the Mexico border — all rural enclaves where housing that used to be cheap has suddenly become less affordable and where homelessness has spiked.

For many low-income residents of such counties, with few shelters or services to turn to when they lose their homes, there's pretty much nowhere to go but outside. And with a traditional intolerance of downtown drifters, that usually means into the forests, gullies and fields.

"I had a grocery store job and I had a home, but when I had to leave my apartment about a year ago because of domestic violence, I found that whatever I used to be able to afford, I just couldn't afford anymore," said 46-year-old Charisse, who did not want her last name used for fear of her former boyfriend. "You can't even put together first and last month's rent unless you have a really high-paying job. We're stuck."

Charisse sleeps in a camp at the edge of Lake Tahoe in El Dorado County, hidden at the end of a deer trail. She and her tentmates fish for their meals and go into nearby South Lake Tahoe infrequently “because they don’t like homeless people walking around there.”

Retrieved October 8, 2017 from <http://www.sfchronicle.com/news/article/California-s-homelessness-crisis-moves-to-the-12182026.php>

It has always been thought that most of the homeless illegal camping in the Parkway were among the more dangerous among the homeless and that is captured by this quote from the 2008 story, entitled *Hell’s half-acre: Sacramento’s homeless weigh in: Tent Town’s top 25 tips for surviving the economic downturn* from the *Sacramento News & Review*:

14. Stay away from the river

It’s a half-mile from Tent Town to the American River, where the hard-core, chronically homeless hole up in the dense foliage leading up to its banks. The level of depravity increases the nearer you get to the water, which is why the American River Parkway is heavily patrolled by park rangers from Discovery Park to Cal Expo. “We heard screams coming from there last night,” says Kim. She’d be pretty if all of her front teeth hadn’t been knocked out. “They hauled another body out of there the other day, some mummified dude,” Ace adds. Kim shivers.

Retrieved October 8, 2017 from <https://www.newsreview.com/sacramento/hells-half-acre/content?oid=877448>

Many of the homeless living off the grid in the Parkway have regular funds from a combination of welfare or social security and some of the homeless service programs help with check cashing so the relatively small amount received can go a rather long way if there are no rent or utilities to pay and food can be had pretty much daily from local service agencies, and of course there is—among several on the market—the 2011 book, *The Hobo’s Handbook: A Field Guide to Living by Your Own Rules* https://www.amazon.com/Hobo-Handbook-Field-Guide-Living/dp/1440512272/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_o?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

The history in America of people living off the grid can be a romantic one with pleasures most of us would find tedious, dangerous, and fleeting; but it is a lifestyle many still find appealing as the Facebook page, *Britt Hobo Days and Hobo Museum*, notes, which can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/britthobodays/> and of local homeless advocates like the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee at <https://sacshoc.org/>.

What is ideal—to homeless illegal campers in the Parkway—in addition to the thick growth hiding campsites, is the closeness of a veritable shopping mall of homelessness sustaining services a short walk away and ample panhandling opportunity a bit longer walk away.

There is so much more to being homeless than most of us really care about learning, but if we are to really make a strong community effort to do something about it, about the whole bit of it, we do need to learn more about it and learning from those who are out there—with discernment—is a very good way to start.

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