

American River Parkway Preservation Society

Annual Organizational Report #16

October 1, 2019- September 30, 2020

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

Founder/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 I reported that we had the worst year for the Parkway in a long time, and though this year started off pretty good—see newsletter #65 on page 48—this year may have been even worse.

Due to medical and political reasons, the negative impacts on the Parkway from illegal camping have increased, though the Parkway Rangers are doing heroic work to protect the Parkway.

The central feeding area for the transit of illegal campers to the Parkway, the River District, is actually increasing the concentration of homeless and homeless services, which will increase the negative impact on the Parkway and adjacent neighborhoods.

This is why we refer to the lower part of the Parkway—from Discovery Park to Cal Expo—as *Parkway Skid Row* rather than the long-gone though once-deserved appellation, the *Jewel of Sacramento*.

Unfortunately, there does not exist a well-established advocacy community for helping the Parkway, as there exists for that which hurts it; but that will not curtail our efforts as we knew from the beginning in 2003 that this was to be a long struggle as protecting the Commons has always been.

The long struggle is noted in the 1990 book by Dr. Elinor Ostrom:

Hardly a week goes by without a major new story about the threatened destruction of a valuable natural resource. ...

The issues of how best to govern natural resources used by many individuals in common are no more settled in academia than in the world of politics. Some scholarly articles about the “tragedy of the commons” recommend that “the state” control most natural resources to prevent their destruction; others recommend that privatizing those resources will resolve the problem. What one can observe in the world, however, is that neither the state nor the market is uniformly successful in enabling individuals to sustain long-term, productive use of natural resource systems. Further, communities of individuals have relied on institutions resembling neither the state nor the market to govern some resource systems with reasonable degrees of success over long periods of time.

We do not yet have the necessary intellectual tools or models to understand the array of problems that are associated with governing and managing natural recourse systems and the reasons why some institutions seem to work in some settings and not others. (pp. 1-2)

Dr. Elinor Ostrom. (1990 & 2015). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press; United Kingdom.

The model we have suggested is management by a nonprofit organization contracted to a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) of the Parkway adjacent county and cities: Sacramento County, Sacramento City, Rancho Cordova, and Folsom.

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.

We initially thought having the JPA—made up of local leadership of the Parkway adjacent county and cities—provide the daily management, but soon realized that would be too much impacted by whatever current political forces ascendent at the time.

The advantage of a nonprofit organization providing the daily management—as our model the Central Park Conservancy (CPC) does—while contracted with local government, in our case the JPA.

Here is how CPC is described in Wikipedia:

The **Central Park Conservancy** is a private, [nonprofit park conservancy](#) that manages [Central Park](#) under a contract with the [City of New York](#) and [NYC Parks](#). The conservancy employs most maintenance and operations staff in the park. It effectively oversees the work of both the private and public employees under the

authority of the publicly appointed Central Park administrator, who reports to the parks commissioner and the conservancy's president.

The Central Park Conservancy was founded in 1980 in the aftermath of Central Park's decline in the 1960s and 1970s. Initially devoted to fundraising for projects to restore and improve the park, it took over the park's management duties in 1998. The organization has invested more than \$800 million toward the restoration and enhancement of Central Park since its founding. With an endowment of over \$200 million, consisting of contributions from residents, corporations, and foundations, the Conservancy provides 75 percent of the Park's \$65 million annual operating budget and is responsible for all basic care of the park. The Conservancy also provides maintenance support and staff training programs for other public parks in New York City, and has assisted with the development of new parks, such as the [High Line](#) and [Brooklyn Bridge Park](#).

Retrieved October 5, 2020 from
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Park_Conservancy

CPC struggled to convince the city of New York that its suggested public-private park administration would work, as the founder, Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, notes in her book:

Looking back, I realize that the birth of the Central Park Conservancy was essentially a matter of luck and timing. The current unquestioned acceptance of the concept of public-private park partnerships and the cooperative alliance between New York City government and the Conservancy today makes it hard for us to believe the degree of resistance to its creation in the first place. The proposal to form an official working partnership between city government and a group of private citizens was viewed warily and would probably not have been accepted at that time by public officials jealous of their authority and reluctant to give up the opportunities that elected office grants when political patronage is the norm. In addition, if the city had not been under duress, the municipal workers union (District Council 37) would have claimed that privately funded employees were usurping the jobs of union men. Even if this were not the case, objections would be raised by residents maintaining that they were taxpayers, ergo the care of parks was a city responsibility. Moreover, some existing not-for-profit park support organizations were questionable. "Private groups should not get in bed with the city," declared a board member of one, explaining that the role of citizen's groups was to criticize the policies and practices of public officials and to campaign for reform, not to act as a partner of government. (P. 14)

Elizabeth Barlow Rogers. (2018). *Saving Central Park: A History and a Memoir*. Alfred A. Knopf: New York.

Of course, things have changed substantially since then, as witnessed by the number of public-private partnerships that have arisen since then and here are two examples:

One is the Emerald Necklace Conservancy in Boston which describes its Vision:

Vision

In its role as a steward of Frederick Law Olmsted's 100-year old park system, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy will be seen as a trusted collaborator working seamlessly with its public partners to restore, improve, maintain, and protect this iconic urban landscape. This work will be visible to all and recognized nationally for setting standards of excellence and creating best practices in preservation, advocacy, education, conservation, programming, safety, sustainability and park administration.

Retrieved October 9, 2020 from <https://www.emeraldnecklace.org/about-us/>

Two is the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy:

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy was founded in December 1996 by a group of citizens concerned with the deteriorating conditions of Pittsburgh's historic city parks.

A nonprofit organization, the Parks Conservancy has worked closely with the City of Pittsburgh since 1998 under an official public interest partnership agreement to restore the city's parks.

To date, the Parks Conservancy has raised nearly \$130 million for parks and has completed 22 major improvement projects. Currently active in 22 of the city's 165 parks, the Parks Conservancy has expanded into community and neighborhood parks throughout Pittsburgh.

Retrieved October 9, 2020 from <https://www.pittsburghparks.org/the-conservancy>

The Parkway has the potential to become as strongly supported by its community as CPC now is, but not under the current management.

Public Communication & Education

Weblog

ARPPS posts regularly and maintains a public daily (on weekdays only) weblog at <http://riverparkwayblog.wordpress.com/>.

During our last program year, from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020, we posted 153 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 reports, policy briefings and position papers.

Articles

Inside Publications published an interview with me on suburban living: *Suburban Glory: Who Needs Urban Cool when you have Ranch Houses*, in the June 2020 issue, p. 26, online at

https://issuu.com/insidepublications/docs/inside_arden_june_2020/1?e=9541663/78387716

AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY FINANCIAL STATEMENT #14

October 1 2019 to September 30, 2020

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

Revenue

1. Contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts received.....	\$400.00
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).....	\$400.00

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.....	\$224.00
(<u>\$225.00 Web Services</u>)	
14. Occupancy [web], rent, utilities, and [web] maintenance.....	\$0
15. Printing, publications, postage, and shipping.....	\$137.20 (\$137.20 Postage)
16. Other expenses (describe) [Supplies, Meetings, Awards, Dues].....	\$30.00 (Parkway Blog Site Free of Advertising for one year \$30.00)
17. Total Expenses (Add 10-16).....	\$391.20
18. Excess or (deficit) for the year (Subtract 17 from 9).....	\$8.80
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).....	\$808.43
20. Other changes in net assets or fund balances (attach explanation).....	\$0
21. Net assets or fund balances at end of year. Combine lines 18-20.....	\$817.23

PART II Balance Sheets

22. Cash, savings, and investments.....	\$1,139.68
23. Land and buildings.....	\$0
24. Other assets (describe).....	\$0
25. Total Assets.....	\$1,139.68
26. Total Liabilities (describe).....	\$0
27. Net assets or fund balances (line 27 of column B must agree with line 21)....	\$817.23

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 **273 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: **356 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: **32 Members**

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP **711 Members**

Retention Rate: **73%**

Strategic Plan (2020-2025)

The American River Parkway Preservation Society Strategy & Implementation

**Preserve, Protect & Strengthen the American River Parkway
For as Long as The River Runs Through It
2020 – 2025**

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 seventeen 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.

Our fourth strategic plan—designed to guide our work from 2020 to 202—includes 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 and was rejected.

We continue to advocate for that solution.

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, as a result of court cases allowing the homeless to camp in public spaces if there are no homeless housing available for them, has essentially given up on this issue for now.

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-leashes 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 #210, October 7, 2019

Police Calls Increase near Homeless Shelters

Proving the falseness of the narrative pushed by those supporting placing homeless shelters near residential neighborhoods and business; that the presence of homeless shelters does not increase crime in the surrounding neighborhood—which common sense knows is false—is contained in this article from the *Sacramento Bee*.

In our area, a strategy helping the homeless (and local residents and business who suffer the impacts) needs to be developed that is capable of safely sheltering up to 2 or 3 thousand homeless folks a night safely distant from residential neighborhoods and business—with available transformational services—and San Antonio's **Haven for Hope** program

<http://www.havenforhope.org/downloads/docs/H4H%20Brochure%2010-31-2016.pdf> especially the courtyard strategy they use for safe rapid shelter for large numbers, seems to offer an answer.

The response of local leaders in the *Bee* article would have us believe that crime has fallen near the shelters, but this does not take into account the fact that the very increase of police, sirens, ambulances, etc., in adjacent neighborhoods is, in itself, a sign that their neighborhood is more dangerous now.

An excerpt.

“Sacramento police responded to nearly 800 calls made from in and around a north Sacramento homeless shelter during the 17 months the facility was open – an average of about one and a half calls per day, a Sacramento Bee analysis of police data found.

“While city officials stressed that overall crime declined in the area while the shelter at 2040 Railroad Drive was open, calls for homeless-related incidents increased roughly 30 percent. About 97 percent of calls for police service to the shelter address were “founded,” meaning law enforcement determined the request was justified.

“At least 240 calls – the largest share – were for suspicious activity, vehicles or people. Disturbances accounted for 127 calls. Assaults, whether misdemeanors or felonies, made up 54 of the calls. At least 21 of the calls cited an incident involving a “mental” person,

suggesting a mental illness may have been related. Seven calls contained references to weapons.

“Calls about property crimes were less common. There were four calls related to robberies and no requests pertaining to burglaries or motor vehicle thefts.

“In its public records request, The Bee asked for police “check ups” to be excluded, though some calls appear to be less serious, such as 20 “errand” calls and 50 “welfare check” calls.

“The overall police call volume at 2040 Railroad Drive before the shelter opened, when the building was an empty warehouse, was not available. Calls for homeless-related incidents in the .65-mile radius around the shelter grew from 983 in 2017, before the shelter opened, to 1,250 in 2018, when the shelter was operating, an increase of about 30 percent, according to police data.”

Retrieved September 11, 2019 from
<https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/homeless/article234710487.html>

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #211, November 5, 2019

ARPPS Annual Report Online
It can be accessed at <http://www.arpps.org/annualreport.html>

American Psychosis

That is the title of a very important book describing how so many mentally ill people wound up homeless—with so many camping in the Parkway—and/or in prison, and the subtitle gives the main reason: “*How the Federal Government Destroyed the Mental illness Treatment Center*”

This review from the website of the book on Amazon says it all.

The Review:

"In 1963, President John F. Kennedy delivered an historic speech on mental illness and retardation. He described sweeping new programs to replace "the shabby treatment of the many millions of the mentally disabled in custodial institutions" with treatment in community mental health centers. This movement, later referred to as "deinstitutionalization," continues to impact mental health care. Though he never publicly acknowledged it, the program was a tribute to Kennedy's sister Rosemary, who was born mildly retarded and developed a schizophrenia-like illness. Terrified she'd become pregnant, Joseph Kennedy arranged for his daughter to receive a lobotomy, which was a disaster and left her severely retarded.

"Fifty years after Kennedy's speech, E. Fuller Torrey's book provides an inside perspective on the birth of the federal mental health program. On staff at the National Institute of Mental Health when the program was being developed and implemented, Torrey draws on his own first-hand account of the creation and launch of the program, extensive research, one-on-one interviews with people involved, and recently unearthed audiotapes of interviews with major figures involved in the legislation. As such, this book provides historical material previously unavailable to the public. Torrey examines the Kennedys' involvement in the policy, the role of major players, the responsibility of the state versus the federal government in caring for the mentally ill, the political maneuverings required to pass the legislation, and how closing institutions resulted not in better care - as was the aim - but in underfunded programs, neglect, and higher rates of community violence. Many now wonder why public mental illness services are so ineffective. At least one-third of the homeless are seriously mentally ill, jails and prisons are grossly overcrowded, largely because the seriously mentally ill constitute 20 percent of prisoners, and public facilities are overrun by untreated individuals. As Torrey argues, it is imperative to understand how we got here in order to move forward towards providing better care for the most vulnerable."

Retrieved November 5, 2019 from <https://www.amazon.com/American-Psychosis-Government-Destroyed-Treatment/dp/0199988714>

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #212, December 10, 2019

American Psychosis, Part II

Last month we included an excerpt from a review of this excellent book. This month here is an excerpt from the book itself especially relevant to the Parkway and adjacent neighborhoods, including downtown Sacramento.

The excerpt:

“Effects on Community Residents

“Individuals with severe mental illnesses are not the only victims of the breakdown of the mental illness treatment system. Many community residents are victims as well insofar as they no longer feel comfortable going downtown to shop or using community parks and playgrounds. Homeless individuals, especially those who are mentally ill, have expropriated public spaces in many American communities.

“San Francisco provides an especially sad example. As described in 2008 by one resident: “One is hard pressed to walk around just about any neighborhood without having to run a gauntlet of panhandlers, step over passed-out drunks or drug addicts, maneuver around the mentally ill or try to avoid the stench of urine and the human feces littering the sidewalks....I often feel sorry for the confused tourists who take a wrong turn off Union Square only to find themselves in the sudden squalor of the Tenderloin or the Hell-on-earth intersection of Sixth and Market streets....In 2007, a homeless man snatched a woman’s baby away from her and attempted to throw it over the railing above the Powell Street MUNI/BART station, but was stopped by several onlookers.”

“San Francisco has no monopoly on such frightening behavior. In Los Angeles in 2011, a mother pushing her infant son down the street watched in horror as another woman grabbed the child by his leg and swung “the child over her head...slamming him into a metal rail.” The severely mentally ill woman told police that “she tried to break off the baby’s arm so she could eat it.”

“Less dramatic variations of such scenes are being played out in every American city. Among those being victimized are shopkeepers and store owners, whose businesses suffer because customers find shopping downtown too unpleasant. For example, in Fort Lauderdale in 2008, downtown business owners complained about homeless individuals on the streets “leaving the rancid smell of urine, stealing food off plates at outdoor cafes, chasing away business and offending tourists.” Such problems are completely predictable. As two observers wrote as early as 1973: “To discharge helpless, sick people into the streets is inhumane and contributes to the decline of the quality of life in the urban environment.”

“The situation with public parks and playgrounds is even worse. Nobody has yet made a count of the number of such places that have been effectively lost to public use because they have been taken over by mentally ill homeless individuals. Walking your dog or teaching your child to ride a bike amidst men and women who are merely drunk or

drugged is unpleasant, but doing so amidst psychotic men and women who are angrily shouting at unseen voices is frightening. In addition, many city parks are now devoid of benches or other places to sit because they were removed to discourage people from sleeping there. Cities such as Santa Monica, Las Vegas, Orlando, and Fort Myers have tried to restrict the use of city parks by homeless persons, arguing that such people should use the existing soup kitchens and public shelters. Such ordinances have been challenged by civil liberties advocates. In Las Vegas, for example, it was claimed that city parks are especially important for mentally ill people because “the chronically mentally ill people who make up a sizable part of the homeless population typically resist treatment and services” and will not use public shelters.” (pp. 128-129)

Here are the first two solutions of the ten Dr. Torrey offers:

“1. Public psychiatric hospitals cannot be completely abolished. A minimum number of beds, perhaps 40 to 60 per 100,000 population, will be needed. This is approximately four times more beds than we have available today.” (*Ibid.* p. 146)

“2. Lack of awareness of illness (anosognosia) must be considered when planning any mental illness treatment system and provision made for the implementation of some form of involuntary treatment, such as assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) or conditional released for approximately 1% of all individuals with severe mental illnesses who are living in our communities.” (*Ibid.* p. 148)

E. Fuller Torrey, M. D. (2014). *American Psychosis: How the Federal Government Destroyed the Mental Illness Treatment Center*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, New York.

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E-Letter #213, January 7, 2020

Homelessness Strategy

We understand there is the chance that Sacramento County and the cities within the County might be soon working together to come up with ideas to confront homelessness on a regional level.

As part of the prior education to that work, we suggest they read this recent article by Heather Mac Donald, “**San Francisco, Hostage to the Homeless: Failure to enforce basic standards of public behavior has made one of America’s great cities increasingly unlivable.**”

Here is an excerpt.

“Everyone’s on drugs here . . . and stealing,” an ex-felon named Shaku explains as he rips open a blue Popsicle wrapper with his teeth. Shaku is standing in an encampment of tents, trash, and bicycles, across from San Francisco’s Glide Memorial Church. Another encampment-dweller lights a green crack pipe and passes it around. A few paces down the street, a gaunt man swipes a credit card through a series of parking meters to see if it has been reported stolen yet.

“For the last three decades, San Francisco has conducted a real-life experiment in what happens when a society stops enforcing bourgeois norms of behavior. The city has done so in the name of compassion toward the homeless. The results have been the opposite: street squalor and misery have increased, even as government expenditures have ballooned. Yet the principles that have guided the city’s homelessness policy remain inviolate: homelessness is a housing problem; it is involuntary; and its persistence is the result of inadequate public spending. These propositions are readily disproved by talking to people living on the streets.

“Shaku’s assessment of drug use among the homeless is widely shared. Asked if she does drugs, a formerly homeless woman, just placed in a city-subsidized single-room-occupancy (SRO) hotel, responds incredulously: “Is that a trick question?” A 33-year-old woman from Alabama, who now lives in a tent in an industrial area outside downtown, says: “Everyone out here has done something—drugs, you name it.” On Sutter Avenue, a wizened 50-year-old named Jeff slumps over his coffee cup at 7:30 AM, one hand holding a sweet roll, the other playing with his beard. A half-eaten muffin sits next to him on a filthy blanket. “I use drugs, alcohol, all of it,” he tells me, his eyes closed, as a pair of smiling German tourists deposit a peach on his blanket. Last night it was speed, he says, which has left him just a “little bit high” this morning. “The whole Tenderloin is for drugs,” Jeff observes, before nodding off again.

“An inadequate supply of affordable housing is not the first thing that comes to mind when conversing with San Francisco’s street denizens. Their behavioral problems—above all, addiction and mental illness—are too obvious. Forty-two percent of respondents in the city’s 2019 street poll of the homeless reported chronic drug or alcohol use; the actual percentage is likely higher. The city relentlessly sends the message that drug use is not only acceptable but fully expected. Users dig for veins in plain view on the sidewalk; health authorities distribute more than 4.5 million syringes a year, along with Vitamin C to dissolve heroin and crack, alcohol swabs, and instructions on how to best tie one’s arm for a “hit.” Needle disposal boxes have been erected outside the city’s public toilets, signaling to children that drug use is a normal part of adult life.

Only 60 percent of the city's free needles get returned; many of the rest litter the sidewalks and streets or are flushed down toilets.

"Drug sellers are as shameless as drug users. Hondurans have dominated the drug trade in the Tenderloin and around Civic Center Plaza and Union Square since the 1990s. They congregate up to a dozen a corner, openly counting and recounting large wads of cash, completing transactions with no attempt at concealment. Most of the dealers are illegal aliens. One might think that city leaders would be only too happy to hand them off to federal immigration authorities, but the political imperative to safeguard illegal aliens against deportation takes precedence over public order. Local law enforcement greets any announced federal crackdown on criminal aliens with alarm.

"Curious to test the Hondurans' threshold of suspicion, I made repeated inquiries along Hyde Street about the going rate for a dose of fentanyl, the city's up-and-coming drug of choice. To get a quote, I would have to show the money, I was told. I offered \$8, not wanting to overpay, and was directed down the block. At the corner of Hyde and Golden Gate, steps away from the UC Hastings law school, I struck a deal at \$16. The seller took the cash halfway up the block and exchanged it with a skinny, bare-chested man covered with tattoos, who handed him a small Ziploc bag containing a crumbly white pellet.

"Hey, baby, remember me!" my seller crooned as he handed me the packet.

"Further down Hyde, a 36-year-old man in a plaid shirt, with sandy hair and blue eyes, sat on the sidewalk slouched against a car as he searched unsuccessfully for a vein in his right wrist. Switching to his left hand, he managed to draw blood into the syringe, marking a vein. I asked him to verify that I was indeed sold fentanyl. Was I a cop? he asked, accepting my response at face value. He would have to taste my purchase to confirm its authenticity, he said, honorably breaking off just a few grains rather than popping the whole pill in his mouth. (His forbearance was wise: at two grams, the pellet could have been lethal if ingested all at once, depending on its purity.) "Can I ask you how much you paid?" the addict asked groggily. "Motherfucker!" he burst out when told.

"You'd ordinarily get much less than that for 20 fucking dollars. It's because you're new." The junkie, originally from Seattle, begged for my stash so he could sell it to his own customers or take it himself. "If I was sober, I wouldn't want you to give it to me," he said, "but my problem now is that I only have five fucking dollars and I want to go to Big 5 [a sporting-goods store] because someone stole my backpack."

"The brazenness of the narcotics scene has worsened since the passage of Proposition 47, another milestone in the ongoing effort to decriminalize attacks on civilized order. The 2014 state ballot initiative downgraded a host of drug and property crimes from felonies to misdemeanors. (See "[The Decriminalization Delusion](#)," Autumn 2015.) Local prosecutors and judges, already disinclined to penalize the drug trade so as to avoid contributing to "mass incarceration," are even less willing to initiate a case or see it through when it is presented as a misdemeanor rather than a felony. San Francisco officers complain that drug dealers are getting neither jail time nor probation. Drug courts have closed in some California cities, reports the *Washington Post*, because

police have lost the threat of prison time to induce addicted sellers like the Seattle man into treatment. The number of clients in San Francisco drug court dropped from 296 in 2014 to 185 in 2018, a decline of over 37 percent.”

To read the rest, retrieved from *City Journal* January 1, 2020, go here,
<https://www.city-journal.org/san-francisco-homelessness>

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E-Letter #214, February 7, 2020

Homelessness Strategy #2

In last month's E Letter we noted that there is the chance that Sacramento County and the cities within the County might be soon working together to come up with ideas to confront homelessness on a regional level.

Then last month we read the following:

“Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg spoke about his efforts as mayor and as head of the California Commission on Homelessness and Supportive Housing. In Sacramento, Steinberg has a three-pronged approach to the homelessness issue: First, lower the cost of new housing with innovations including manufactured housing; second, create a 100-bed center that focuses on meth treatment; and third, develop a large Sacramento facility similar to the 23-acre Haven for Hope in San Antonio that serves nearly 1,000 people each night and has helped to reduce San Antonio’s downtown homeless count by 80% since it opened in 2010.”

Retrieved January 30, 2020 from <https://www.newsreview.com/sacramento/dr-drew-mayor-steinberg/content?oid=29675181>

Then, in a major validation of what Haven for Hope has accomplished in San Antonio, one of our members who was there recently wrote in an email to me:

"I was shocked by how nice it is in San Antonio. I saw ONE homeless person. I saw no tents, no mess, no trash on streets and highways and no begging no scary people begging and aggressively pan handling. What do they do that we don't? Of course, my thoughts considered that perhaps they give their drug addicts/alcoholics and mentally ill all bus tickets to Calif.....San Antonio is a much larger city than Sacramento – why can we not get it right? I spent time all over the city. I never saw employees out cleaning up messes and believe me, I looked. I walked all over. The Riverwalk – all 15 miles of it. I had several beautiful mornings of running along it and I spent several days in and around the city with my son. Clean, no trash, no homeless – amazing. Downtown, old San Antonio – the Alamo – clean, same thing. The Pearl district – stunningly clean, beautiful. Just what is their secret? I was so jealous....."

So, yes Mayor Steinberg, you are on the right track, just up the speed as much as possible as it is pretty bad here right now, especially in the Parkway.

Finally, an update to ARPPS strategy from ARPPS president, Michael Rushford:

"Sheltering the Homeless

"Many state and city leaders believe that the unprecedented homeless population in California is largely the result of a shortage of affordable housing. The supposition is that if there were more low-cost housing, a significant segment of the homeless would move in, go to rehab and straighten out their lives. Building enough housing units required to accommodate the roughly 130,000 people living outside in California would be extremely expensive and would undoubtedly take far longer than many of the homeless can be expected to live. Virtually everyone who has actually looked at the homeless population reports that perhaps half of them suffer from serious mental illnesses and many are addicted to drugs. As Dr. Drew Pinsky noted in a recent speech in Sacramento, the immediate problem is providing shelter to keep people from dying on the streets and treatment to give as many as possible with a chance for recovery. As cities and counties across the state struggle to decide whether to refurbish an urban hotel, build a tent city or lease a warehouse for a 100 bed shelter to house some small segment of the homeless, there are vacant properties in every urban county that could be quickly repurposed to provide shelter and services for thousands.

"This week the Sacramento Bee reported that Sacramento County taxpayers have payed \$2.3 million over the past five years to maintain the vacant Boys Ranch sitting on 140 rural acres with twelve buildings. While mentally ill and drug addicted homeless wander around downtown Sacramento to get the limited services available, then spend the night under freeway overpasses, on sidewalks or along the river, a large county-owned property sits vacant that could accommodate thousands of homeless who just want a secure place with a toilet where they can pitch their tent with their dog, with buildings to house and feed those willing to accept treatment.

"If city and county leaders are serious about addressing the homeless problem, they should immediately authorize turning the Boys Ranch into a homeless campus. Those living on the streets who don't want treatment or to obey rules would be moved to the

ranch to camp. Other than being prohibited from assaulting each other, there should be no other requirements for those camping at the ranch. They can get drunk or ingest drugs if they want and come and go as they please, but if they are caught sleeping in the city, the suburbs or along the river, police would take them back to the ranch. This arrangement would comply with the Ninth Circuit's 2018 ruling in **City of Boise v. Martin**, which prohibits cities from enforcing anti-camping laws unless there is shelter available for the homeless. If the city and county leaders have the backbone to consolidate current services at the ranch, it would serve two important purposes 1) move the homeless and accompanying blight from downtown and 2) provide a central location where those who want and need shelter and services can get them.

"Those among the homeless who actually prefer to camp along the river, won't like this arrangement and that's too bad. But many more will appreciate a place where they are welcome, fed and have a safe place to stay.

"Michael Rushford, President, Criminal Justice Legal Foundation."

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E-Letter #215, March 9, 2020

Greening Sprawl

In this excellent article of the same name, the case is made for a revisioning of sprawl.

An excerpt.

“Suburban residential landscapes are popularly understood to be socially and environmentally homogeneous places where expanses of mown lawn appear in an alternating rhythm of driveways and predictably similar houses. Much has been made of suburban social pressures for conformity, epitomized by the pressure to have a perfect lawn; even, green, and weed free. More recently, the environmentally detrimental effects of lawn irrigation, pesticides, fertilizers, leaf blowing, and mowing have been widely discussed. Beyond these immediate environmental impacts of lawn culture, the more insidious societal costs associated with car-dependent suburban transportation systems are of growing concern. Social and health effects of sedimentary lifestyles and long commuting times, social equity effects of jobs beyond the reach of public transportation, as well as climate effects of greenhouse gases emitted by cars—all contribute to arguments for adopting more dense urban settlement patterns as alternatives to suburbia.

“Yet suburban development is massive and growing. In the United States, large-lot residential development covered a total area fifteen times larger than did dense urban settlement in 2000, and suburbs have continued to grow more quickly than cities. The market for suburban residential development remains a vital driver of metropolitan landscape patterns. Even if market demand for new suburban development were to disappear today, the legacy effects of the more than 5 percent of the US land area in suburban development would remain. This reality suggests that, rather than only critiquing suburbia, we should consider how low-density suburban development patterns can provide broader societal benefits.

“Viewed through another lens, the lawn culture landscape of suburban “sprawl” looks like “greening.” In city neighborhoods, greening means bringing maintained turf, trees, and gardens back into a largely paved landscape. In contrast, suburban neighborhoods, typified by expansive lawns, canopy trees, and flowers and shrubs, are green. But suburban green landscapes could provide far more substantial ecosystem services related to human health, biodiversity, stormwater management, and carbon storage to contribute to climate change mitigation. How do we “green” sprawl to deliver these societal benefits? Could design and planning guide the resources expended on keeping suburbia green differently—to achieve a stronger balance in favor of ecosystem services compared with environmental costs?

“Understanding the vernacular aesthetics of suburban landscapes as part of the land development process can suggest some answers. Respecting what residents want their landscapes to look like could help planners and designers devise development patterns that nudge suburban residents and developers to want landscapes that provide greater ecosystem services. To make suburban sprawl a deeper shade of green, designers can use the nudge concept that has become familiar in the fields of psychology and behavioral economics: giving people what they want in a landscape pattern that also embodies what society needs.” (p. 507)

Joan Iverson Nassauer (2017). Greening Sprawl: Lawn Culture and Carbon Storage in the Suburban Landscape. (pp.507-517) *Infinite Suburbia* (2017) (Editors, Alan M. Berger, Joel Kotkin, with Celina Balderas Guzman). Princeton Architectural Press: New York.

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E-Letter #216, April 6, 2020

Remembering the Homeless

They are a vulnerable population and as much as they harm the Parkway, we still need to remember them during the virus epidemic, as this article from *City Journal* a week or so ago, reminds us.

An excerpt.

“Thus far, no homeless people have tested positive for coronavirus, though that may be due mainly to the sporadic nature of America’s current testing regime. Homeless-services agencies long ago realized the threat that they face. The “phony war” character of the last few weeks has given officials time to plan their response. Most assume an outbreak of COVID-19 among the homeless as a question of when, not if.

“The homeless population is large and diverse, and some are more at risk than others, both in terms of contracting the virus and dying from it. Many of the street homeless practice social distancing as a lifestyle. Shelters strictly regulate access by non-clients.

The homeless are unlikely to have attended a [Biogen conference](#) or traveled recently on a cruise or plane.

“But the social isolation of the homeless has major downsides as well, insofar as it may impede the heightened public-health consciousness that officials claim is crucial to mitigating the crisis. A [number of news articles](#) have reported worries among the homeless, but it’s hard to say how representative those reports are, because low-functioning, highly isolated homeless people are less likely to speak to reporters.

“As a whole, the homeless are disproportionately young. In the U.S. in general, 22 percent are 60 and older, but among those who stayed in a shelter at some point during 2017, only [5.4 percent were 62 or older](#). In San Francisco, 10 percent of the homeless are [61 or older](#). In New York, [7 percent of sheltered single adults are over 65](#). Los Angeles County reports that [6.5 percent of its street population is 62 or older](#). The relative youth of the homeless is likely a macabre testament to their low life expectancy and poor health. A hard-core chronic case is likely to die decades before the ordinary American.

“In terms of the fatality risk from coronavirus, we should be just as worried about the formerly homeless as those sleeping on the subway and in tents. Advocates often speak about housing as tantamount to treatment. In his 2020 State of the State speech, for example, California governor Gavin Newsom [recommended](#) using Medicaid funds for housing. But a recent survey by the National Academies [found little evidence](#) that permanent supportive housing improved health outcomes among the formerly homeless. Tens of thousands of formerly homeless people age 60 or above live in supportive housing.

“Homeless-services administrators have been focused thus far on public-health efforts to slow the spread of the coronavirus and increasing capacity in their systems. In particular, increasing housing capacity has been the goal for years, and cities are always behind on this, [even when they have an abundance of resources at their disposal](#). Now they really can’t wait. San Francisco has [acquired RVs](#). King County in Washington bought a hotel for quarantine purposes. Anchorage [is eyeing](#) a city-owned ice arena. Even if shelters aren’t full, additional capacity is required to thin out overly dense sleeping areas, per [the directive](#) of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

“For service providers, the nightmare scenario is if their frontline staff can’t work because they’re infected, or are quarantined because they might be infected, or have to tend a child whose school has closed. To forestall any staffing crisis, homeless-services agencies should be developing plans to recruit idle staff from elsewhere in the public sector, such as school systems and higher education. These workforces are enormous—K-12 districts always rank among the largest employers in their communities—and some of their functions overlap with those of homeless-services agencies. Even if only a fraction of the idle security and human-services staff can be recruited for use in homeless services, it could well be enough to meet providers’ emergency needs.

“Security staff will be essential if there’s trouble getting people into quarantine. Overcoming “service resistance” has always been a challenge in homeless services. We justify involuntary civil commitment of the mentally ill if they are an immediate danger to others; anyone infected with COVID-19 is similarly a danger to the community. Many agencies and homeless-advocacy organizations have put out planning protocols for coronavirus, but these are notably silent on what to do about people ordered to quarantine but who don’t want to go or stay there. Breaking quarantine orders may trigger fines and jail time, but are those credible threats for someone who’s been cycling for years through the criminal-justice system? Service-resistance challenges have emerged early on for Washington’s King County. At King County’s isolation hotel, one homeless man wandered off while awaiting his COVID-19 test results. He ignored a security guard, went to a convenience store, and “allegedly shoplifted a doughnut then jumped on a northbound Route 153 Metro bus.” He was only the second client to be placed in the hotel.”

Retrieved March 17, 2020 from <https://www.city-journal.org/homeless-coronavirus>

Be well everyone!

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #217, May 4, 2020

Announcement

Susan Maxwell Skinner has been following the family life of a pair of Eagles living in the Parkway and has been sharing it with the public on her Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Susan-Maxwell-Skinner-1543823865927571/>

This gives us the great pleasure of having some of the noblest creatures of sea and sky—salmon and eagles—in our Parkway and the river running through it.

California Water Wars

A lot going on right now, here's a good recap from *Bloomberg News*.

An excerpt.

“Water contractors in California are suing the state over its new permit that authorizes water deliveries, the result of a conflict with the Trump administration’s policies.

“The groups suing California supply water to nearly 75% of the state’s population, 4 million acres of farmland, and many hundreds of thousands acres of critical habitats.

“The complaints, filed in Superior Court in Fresno County, have to do with California’s complex water delivery system, which is shared between federal authorities and the state.

“State Water Contractors, which represent 27 public water suppliers that get their water from state facilities, sued Wednesday, saying new state water permits impose rules that exceed California’s protections for endangered species.

“The rule limits water supplies based on inadequate justification, will increase costs by \$22 million annually, and causes conflicts between state and federal water management, according to the complaint.

“The permit “has left us with no other choice than to file litigation that could and should have been avoided,” State Water Contractors General Manager Jennifer Pierre said in a news release.

“Shared Jurisdiction

“More than two-thirds of the state’s precipitation falls in the north, and a complex series of levees, rivers, reservoirs, pumping stations, and other facilities divert water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to elsewhere in the state, including thirsty southern California.

“The California Department of Water Resources and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation operate those facilities. In the past, they used to work together.

“But in March, the state obtained an operations permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife because it no longer agreed with the Trump administration’s philosophy over endangered species.

“California disagreed with new water use policies implemented by the Trump administration, saying the new guidelines weren’t backed by science and failed to ensure fish wouldn’t be hurt by operations such as the use of pumps to draw water out of rivers.

“California Natural Resources Agency spokeswoman Lisa Lien-Mager said the state couldn’t comment on litigation but stands behind its permit and water management operations. Species protection is more important in light of federal opinions, she said.

“The state’s permit strikes a necessary balance by providing much-needed environmental protection while advancing smarter operations that support the water needs of California communities and agriculture,” Lien-Mager said in an email.

“Claims Rules Aren’t Science-Based

“The water contractors’ suit claims violations of the state Environmental Quality and Endangered Species acts.

“The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which supplies water to agencies serving 1 in 17 Americans, also sued over the state permit on Tuesday, on similar grounds.

“A lengthy legal battle will not produce a sound solution for the Delta ecosystem,” General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger said in a statement. “We need a state permit that uses the best available science to address the environmental impact of operations and strikes a balance in providing water supply to California’s farms and cities.”

“Suppliers that get their water from federal facilities also filed a lawsuit. Those suppliers include the Tehama Colusa Canal Authority, San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority, Friant Water Authority, and several Sacramento River settlement contractors.

“That complaint, which claims violations of the state Environmental Quality Act, said the new state permit could cause water delivery disruptions, and stall negotiations on agreements to restore habitat while protecting water resources.”

Retrieved April 30, 2020 from <https://news.bloomberg.com/environment-and-energy/california-water-wars-heat-up-with-suits-from-state-contractors>

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #218, June 8, 2020

Announcement

Inside Arden published an article I wrote about living in the suburbs, available here on pages 26-27,
https://issuu.com/insidepublications/docs/inside_arden_june_2020/1?e=9541663/78387716

Clearing Hundreds of Parkway Homeless Camps

The inability of Parkway management to do so over the past several years can cause other problems, sometimes a very serious one, as this May 26, 2020 story from *Channel 13* reports.

An excerpt.

“SACRAMENTO (CBS13) — Law enforcement said the homeless camps along the river made thermal imaging difficult to use while searching for 5-year-old Ziyon Butler Monday night near Discovery Park.

“Butler was found Tuesday morning under the bridge near the park. He was last seen near the beach at Discovery Park with family around 6:30 p.m. on Monday.

“A law enforcement spokesperson told CBS13 it was tough to use the thermal imaging in that area due to the number of trees and **hundreds of homeless encampments along the American River.** (highlighting added)

“Some of the homeless people worry the worst when it comes to the criminal element living among them. Robert Witt has been living in the area for a couple of months. He was one of dozens of people who police interviewed in the search for the five-year-old boy.

“There is people out here who will take kids, it’s a shame,” Witt said.

“While Ziyon was found, it brings to light to how difficult it is to find someone in the dark, with so many living along the water’s edge.”

Retrieved May 26, 2020

from <https://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2020/05/26/helicopter-thermal-imaging-search-homeless-ziyon-butler/>

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E-Letter #219, July 9, 2020

Water Cooperation

It can be done, as this great story about a wonderful program from *Cal-Trout Current* shows.

An excerpt.

“The saying rang true when Mark Twain coined it, “Whiskey is for drinking. Water is for fighting.” 150 years later it still resonates and throughout the arid West, it is often repeated as gospel. But in California’s Central Valley an unlikely group of partners are coming together to write a new chapter in the saga of California water. Farmers, water districts, government regulators, and conservation scientists are all putting acrimony aside and getting down to business, working alongside one another to integrate a 21st century scientific understanding of how rivers work and how fish use them into farm and water management. In so doing, they are creating multiple benefits for birds, fish, farms, and people.

“The [Fish Food on Flooded Farm Fields program](#) aims to help dwindle salmon populations by recreating floodplain-like wetland habitats on winter-flooded farm fields. The program works with rice farmers and water districts to intentionally inundate rice fields in the non-growing season to create the near-ideal conditions to grow the water bugs on which juvenile salmon and other fish depend on as a food source. Tons and tons of water bugs can be grown in these floodplain fields and sent into the nearby river channels where the fish are, to replenish the fish food supplies that have been dramatically reduced over the decades due to the river being disconnected from the natural floodplain.

“The Need for a Solution

“California’s native salmon populations are struggling for survival. In its 2017 report, [State of the Salmon II](#), CalTrout and UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences estimates that ten of the twelve California distinct salmon populations are at high or critical risk of becoming extinct in the next 50 years if current trends continue. The reasons behind the decline of salmon are complex, but we know that changes to landscapes and rivers that have reduced both flow and habitat availability are common problems for all salmon runs.

“The rivers of the Central Valley of California, especially, have been dramatically modified to create the rich agricultural area it is today. Before European settlement, every rainy season rivers would swell with rain and snowmelt, overflow their banks and flood over 4 million acres of floodplain wetlands. In an attempt to control flooding and convert wetland to farmland, more than 1,600 miles of riverside levees have been built in the Valley since the goldrush. As a result, 95% of the floodplain now is cut off from rivers and is no longer inundated each winter. In addition, 20 major dams have been built to store water from the wet winters for use in the dry summers to irrigate fields but they also block salmon from migrating upstream to the majority of their native spawning grounds.

“Controversies over the use of water for agriculture or for wildlife usually ended up in court and are often positioned in the press as a fight of fish vs. farms. Many such conflicts persist. But CalTrout is also cultivating a spirit of cooperation in farm country where government regulators, farmers, and conservation organizations have identified new on-farm water use practices that are good for birds, fish, and farms.

“Several years ago, the [Nigiri Project](#) studies began to show that juvenile salmon given access to shallowly flooded rice fields in winter grow at a much faster rate than do fish stuck in adjacent leveed river channels,” said lead researcher Jacob Katz, Ph.D., CalTrout’s senior scientist.

“The Nigiri studies also clearly demonstrated that flooded rice fields can be an ideal place for small aquatic insects called zooplankton to grow. When juvenile salmon are given access to the zooplankton in the field, they feast on these abundant, fattening bugs and grow at dramatic rates. But, of course, wild salmon fry hatch in the rivers not in the rice fields. As mentioned earlier, the Central Valley’s rivers are now mostly separated from the rice fields that now occupy much of the historic floodplain by levees specifically designed to prevent rivers from overflowing their banks. So how do we reunite the salmon, stuck in the food-starved river channels on the “wet side” of the levee with the abundant water bug fish food that grows in floodplain farm fields on the “dry side” of the levee? Fortunately, a recently completed CalTrout study addressed this exact question.

“Fish Food on Floodplain Farm Fields

“What started out as a muddy puddle in the corner of a five-acre flooded rice field in 2011 has now grown into a series of landscape-scale experiments utilizing the flood and farm water infrastructure that allows the Central Valley to be among the most intensively farmed and most productive ag landscapes on Earth. “The Fish Food study expands the Nigiri Concept and shows even where fish can’t leave the river to swim to managed wetlands on floodplain farms, they can still benefit from the nearly 500,000 acres of valley rice fields,” said Katz.

“Dubbed the “Fish Food on Floodplain Farm Fields” experiment, this latest study explored the ecological impact and operational feasibility of increasing fish food supplies (i.e., increasing the abundance of zooplankton) in the Sacramento River itself. The experiment relied on existing irrigation and flood protection infrastructure to intentionally flood winter farm fields to encourage the growth of invertebrate food resources for fish. Shallowly flooded fields mimic the natural floodplain wetland conditions where algae and plant matter are consumed by microbes which in turn feed and promote the growth of small insects and crustaceans that are the main source of food for juvenile salmon.

“As part of the 2018 experiment, more than 5,000 acres of farmland, owned by California Reclamation District 108 in the Calusa Basin near Knight’s Landing, was flooded to a depth of about a foot in mid-November. The field was left flooded for one month to allow the food web to mature and produce the abundant zooplankton the salmon prefer. Then, over the next month, one-quarter of the fields were drained per week. The water, now dense with zooplankton, was delivered through drainage canals to the Rough and Ready Pumping Facility where it was lifted by large pumps into the Sacramento River.”

Retrieved June 11, 2020 from <https://calt trout.org/article/the-fish-food-story>

Be well everyone!

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #220, August 4, 2020

Infinite Outer Space

A wonderful article from *Aeon Magazine* reminding us that it truly is infinite and a great read for those of us feeling so cooped up lately.

An excerpt.

“Space, as they say, is big. In *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* (1979), Douglas Adams elaborates: ‘You may think it’s a long way down the road to the chemist, but that’s just peanuts to space.’ It’s hard to convey in everyday terms the enormity of the cosmos when most of us have trouble even visualising the size of the Earth, much less the galaxy, or the vast expanses of intergalactic space. We often talk in terms of light-years – the distance light can travel in a year – as though the speed of light is somehow more intuitive than a number written in the trillions of kilometres. We give benchmarks in the same terms (it takes light 1.3 seconds to travel between the Earth and the Moon) but, in our everyday experience, light is instantaneous. We might as well talk about the height of a building in terms of stacking up atoms.

“Maybe, if we’re feeling more adventurous, we use analogies based on personal experience. The distance to the Moon is 32 million school buses! If you could drive there in one of those school buses, going at 60 miles per hour, it would take you 166 days! I’m not sure that helps.

“I wish I could say that astronomers have a better intuitive grasp of all this. We don’t. Brains don’t really work that way. So we cheat with numbers. We use longer yardsticks to talk about bigger spaces: kilometres, light-years, parsecs, kiloparsecs, megaparsecs, gigaparsecs. We get comfortable with exponents (1,000 is 10^3 ; 1 trillion is 10^{12}) and think in logarithmic intervals, where each successive step is a new power of 10. At some point, distance stops being a straightforward concept entirely. Here in the Solar System, space and time are both more or less well-behaved, but when you have to deal with the cosmos as a whole, you have to factor in the fact that it refuses to sit still for its fitting.

“Space is expanding. It has been since the Big Bang, and it’s not stopping any time soon. If you look at a galaxy far, far away, not only do you have to factor in that the image you’re looking at is old, you have to account for the fact that it’s no longer where it was when you saw it. Let’s say you see a supernova go off, in a galaxy a billion light-years away. Did the supernova just go off, or did it go off a billion years ago? You can say the latter, because the light has been travelling to us for a billion years, but since there was no way to observe it back then, what does saying that it went off in the past even mean? And that billion-light-year-distant galaxy – how far away is it, really? Maybe a billion years ago it was a billion light-years away, but the Universe has been expanding all that time, so now it must be much farther. Which distance do we use?

“Even time is distorted by the stretching of space. We can watch the brightening and dimming of that exploding star, as the shockwave tears through it, and say it took about 100 days to fade away. But if we compare it with a [supernova](#) nearby, on average, we’ll see that the distant one takes a few days longer. From our perspective, it’s exploding in slow motion.

“Even with the limitations of definition, we do our best to measure our space and quantify its farthest reaches. We have catalogued countless galaxies, some so distant that their light has taken almost the entire lifetime of the cosmos to reach us. We have [searched](#) our maps of the cosmos for some indication of an edge, or a centre, and found none. We have no reason to believe the cosmos doesn’t just go on forever, in every direction, without any significant change in content or structure. Our galaxy is a single grain of sand in a vast unbroken desert; zoom out far enough, and everything [looks](#) more or less the same.

“There is a limit, though. However powerful our telescopes, and however long we stare, we will never see anything farther away than the [edge](#) of the cosmic bubble we call our ‘observable universe’. This is an imaginary sphere, centred on us, and defined by the speed of light and the age of the cosmos. The radius of this bubble is the distance that a beam of light could cover if it travelled for the *entire age of the Universe*.

“If every time we look out into the cosmos, we’re looking into the past, it stands to reason that looking far enough away could mean looking at the time so far into the past, it’s the moment when the Universe first formed. That’s what defines our *cosmic horizon*. Put another way, anything beyond our cosmic horizon is so far away that even if a light beam left it at the very moment the Universe started, 13.8 billion years ago, the distance

is so vast that the light beam hasn't had time to reach us yet. There hasn't *been* enough time.

"We have good reason to believe that in this apparently boundless universe, there are galaxies beyond the horizon, just as, when you stand on the ocean shore and see nothing but water, you have reason to believe there's land out there eventually, beyond what you can see. If you jumped in a ship and sailed away, your horizon would move with you, and you would eventually see that land. Similarly, if you could take off in an interstellar rocket ship to another part of the cosmos, your horizon would still be centred on you, wherever you were. Unfortunately, limited as we are by the laws of physics and the constraints of our modes of travel, getting far enough from home to significantly change our field of view isn't practical. But we can still make inferences about what might lie beyond it. And despite the cosmic horizon being as subjective a boundary as a horizon is on Earth, it has one very important difference.

"When we look out to the edge of the observable universe, what we see is something truly astounding. The most distant light is also the oldest; it's the light from the Big Bang itself. The early universe, right after the first moments of creation, was hot and dense, everywhere, humming with vibrating plasma; right at the edge of our vision, we're looking into the past so far that we literally see that glowing plasma. The inferno persisted for around 380,000 years before space expanded and cooled enough that light and particles could travel freely through it. When we look at the edge of the observable universe, we see the last smouldering embers of that hot dense phase. We see a cosmos that is still on fire."

Retrieved July 31, 2020 from <https://aeon.co/essays/our-cosmic-horizon-is-both-unreachable-and-closer-than-ever>

Be well everyone!

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #221, September 8, 2020

Wildfires, Some Good Along with the Horribly Bad

This article focuses on the good, and we already know the horribly bad—loss of life, property, wilderness—but according to this article from *The Revelator*, some good does occur after the fire

An excerpt.

“Earlier this month a series of lightning strikes touched off dozens of fires across California, burning 1.5 million acres, choking cities with smoke and claiming at least six lives. Outside California, large wildfires are burning in Colorado and Oregon, too.

“For people who live near the path of flames or the drifting smoke, wildfire season can be dangerous. And this year’s sudden eruption of multiple blazes is stretching resources thin, as firefighters — already facing restrictions due to the pandemic — work hard to protect lives and property.

“Amidst the barrage of media images of charred homes and sweeping flames, it can be easy to forget that for some native species that live in western forests, wildfires are actually beneficial and necessary, creating valuable habitat and some of the most biodiverse forest ecosystems.

“Burned forests may seem “gone” or “dead” following a severe fire, but if you look closely “there’s an absolute treasure trove of life thriving in there,” says wildlife biologist [Monica Bond](#), principal scientist at the Wild Nature Institute.

“Longhorn beetles and other wood borers are usually the first to arrive after a fire, when they follow the smell of smoke to feast on recently burned trees, still rich in sapwood but lacking the ability to secrete the sticky, toxic resins that would normally fend off the insects. Black-backed woodpeckers often arrive next, feeding on beetle larvae and carving out nest cavities in the trees that will provide habitat for other birds after the woodpeckers move on.

“As flowers and shrubs begin to grow back, that draws more insects and birds. Certain wildflowers, like [fire poppies](#), emerge only from the ashes, and wildfires can create [bumper crops of morels](#), a group of beautiful, delicious mushrooms.

“Mammals, meanwhile, arrive in waves, looking for different types of food. “You have seeds that have been exposed by the fire that small mammals are eating,” says Bond.

That entices larger predators. Studies have also shown that burned forests are beneficial for numerous bat species.

“Then, as long as you don’t cut down the standing dead trees, you can have species like spotted owls returning, too,” she says. The snags, as the dead trees are called, also provide shelter for a range of forest life, including bluebirds, flying squirrels and Pacific fishers.

“Even the fallen dead trees become an important component, cycling their nutrients back into the soil.

“It’s a process that’s been repeated across western forests for millennia, including the Pacific Northwest, Canada’s boreal forests, the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada. All have historically burned with a mix of fire types, including severe wildfires, says Bond.”

Retrieved August 31, 2020 from <https://therevelator.org/wildfire-snag-biodiversity/>

And for an excellent article about how the Indians have known all along about keeping the forest floor clear of debris, see <https://www.kvpr.org/post/manage-wildfire-california-looks-what-tribes-have-known-all-along>

Be well everyone!

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Appendix II: Quarterly Newsletters

American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter: Issue 64 – Fall; 2019

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Annual Report Online: *Introduction*

This has been one of the worst years ever for the Parkway with the rampant proliferation of homeless encampments and the related problems this has caused; including fires, adjacent neighborhood crimes, polluted river water, levee weakening which could lead to flooding, as well as the continued crimes numerated in the monthly Sacramento County Parkway Ranger reports which can be accessed at <https://regionalparks.saccounty.net/Rangers/Pages/Latest-Ranger-Activity-Data.aspx> with just two data points from October 2018 to the August 2019 report (latest available at writing) being enough to justifiably shock us; total number during that time of **Camps Cleared: 6,445** and of **Garbage and debris removed: 1,358.5 tons.**

This is why we refer to the lower part of the Parkway—from Discovery Park to Cal Expo—as Parkway Skid Row rather than the long-gone and once-deserved appellation, the “Jewel of Sacramento.”

One of the major contributing factors in the illegal camping in the Parkway by the homeless is the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill that took place over the past several decades.

This important article from *The Balance* regarding a new study provides context and history.

An excerpt.

“Deinstitutionalization is a government policy that moved mental health patients out of state-run “insane asylums” into federally funded community mental health centers. It began in the 1960s as a way to improve treatment of the mentally ill while also cutting [government budgets](#).

“In 1955, the number peaked at 558,000 patients or 0.03 percent of the population. If the same percentage of the population were institutionalized today, that would be 750,000 mentally ill people. That's more than the population of Baltimore or San Francisco.

“Effects

“Between 1955 and 1994, roughly 487,000 mentally ill patients were discharged from state hospitals. That lowered the number to only 72,000 patients. States closed most of their hospitals. That permanently reduced the availability of long-term, in-patient care facilities. By 2010, there were [43,000 psychiatric beds](#) available. This equated to about 14 beds per 100,000 people. According to the Treatment Advocacy Center's report, “Deinstitutionalization: A Failed History,” this was the same ratio as in 1850.

“As a result, [2.2 million](#) of the severely mentally ill do not receive any psychiatric treatment at all. About 200,000 of those who suffer from schizophrenia or bipolar disorder are homeless. That's one-third of the total homeless population. Ten percent are veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or other war-related injuries.

“More than 300,000 are in jails and prisons. Sixteen percent of all inmates are severely mentally ill. There were about 100,000 psychiatric beds in both public and private hospitals. There are more than three times as many seriously mentally ill people in jails and prisons than in hospitals.

“Three Causes

“Three societal and scientific changes occurred that caused deinstitutionalization. First, the development of psychiatric drugs treated many of the symptoms of mental illness. These included chlorpromazine and later clozapine.

“Second, society accepted that the mentally ill needed to be treated instead of locked away. This change of heart began in the 1960s.

“Third, federal funding such as Medicaid and Medicare went toward community mental health centers instead of mental hospitals.

“History

“1946 - [Congress passed](#) the National Mental Health Act. It created the National Institute of Mental Health in 1949. The Institute researched ways to treat mental health in the community.

“1954 - The Food and Drug Administration approved Thorazine, known generically as chlorpromazine, to treat psychotic episodes. The only other treatments available at the time were electroshock therapy and lobotomies. There were only 7,000 psychiatrists, 13,500 psychologists, and [20,000 social workers](#) in the entire country.

“1955 - The number of patients in public mental health hospitals reached a record of 558,000. They suffered from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and severe depression. Many had organic brain diseases such as dementia and brain damage from trauma. Others suffered from mental retardation combined with psychosis, autism, or brain damage from drug addiction. Most patients were not expected to get better given the treatments at the time. Congress passed the Mental Health Study Act of 1955. It established the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health to evaluate the nation's mental health situation.

“1961 - The commission published its findings in Action for Mental Health. It recommended that community health centers be set up to treat those with less severe mental illnesses. The American Psychological Association's paper, “Recognition and Prevention of Major Mental and Substance Use Disorders,” said the commission's research estimated that 20 percent of the population suffered from some form of mental illness and distress. It focused on treating these disorders to prevent them from becoming more severe.

“1962 - Ken Kesey published [“One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.”](#) It was a fictional story about abuses in a mental hospital. The author dramatized his experiences as a nurse's aide in the psychiatric wing of a California veteran's hospital. The book helped turn public opinion against electroshock therapy and lobotomies. These were procedures commonly used at the time.

“1963 - [President John F. Kennedy](#) signed the Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act. It provided federal funding to create community-based mental health facilities. They would provide prevention, early treatment, and ongoing care. The goal was to build one for every 125,000 to 250,000 people. That many centers would allow patients to remain close to their families and be integrated into society. But it ignored statistics that showed 75 percent of those in hospitals had no families.

“1965 - [President Lyndon B. Johnson](#) signed the Social Security Amendments of 1965. It created Medicaid to fund health care for low-income families. It did not pay for care in mental hospitals. As a result, states transferred those patients into nursing homes and hospitals to receive federal funding.

“1967 - California's Governor [Ronald Reagan](#) signed the [Lanterman-Petris-Short Act](#). It limited a family's right to commit a mentally ill relative without the right to due process. It also reduced the state's institutional expense. That [doubled](#) the number of mentally ill people in California's criminal justice system the following year. It also increased the number treated by hospital emergency rooms. Medicaid covered those costs. Other states followed with similar involuntary commitment laws.

“1975 - The film, [“One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest,”](#) hit theaters. Jack Nicholson's Oscar-winning portrayal of a mistreated patient further turned public opinion against mental hospitals.

“1977 - Only 650 community health centers had been built. That was less than half of what was needed. They served 1.9 million patients. They were designed to help those with less severe mental health disorders. As states closed hospitals, the centers became overwhelmed with those patients with more serious challenges.

“1980 - President Jimmy Carter signed the Mental Health Systems Act to fund more community health centers. But it focused on a broad range of a community's mental health needs. That lessened the federal government's focus on meeting the needs those with [chronic mental illness](#).

“1981 - President Reagan repealed the Act through the [Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act](#) of 1981. It shifted funding to the state through block grants. The grant process meant that community mental health centers competed with other public needs. Programs like housing, food banks, and economic development often won the federal funds instead.

“1990 - The Food and Drug Administration approved clozapine to treat the symptoms of schizophrenia. That strengthened the prejudice against hospitalization of the mentally ill.

“2004 - Studies suggest approximately 16 percent of prison and jail inmates or roughly 320,000 people were seriously mentally ill. That year, there were about 100,000 psychiatric beds in public and private hospitals. In other words, three times as many mentally ill people were in jail than in a hospital.

“2009 - The Great Recession forced states to cut [\\$4.35 billion](#) in mental health spending in three years.

“2010 - The [Affordable Care Act](#) mandated that insurance companies must cover mental health care as one of the [10 essential benefits](#). That included treatment for alcohol, drug, and other substance abuse and addiction. Patient co-pays could be as high as \$40 a session. The number of therapist visits could be limited.”

Retrieved October 11, 2019 from <https://www.thebalance.com/deinstitutionalization-3306067>

All of that notwithstanding, we will continue our work of advocating for common sense solutions for the homeless issue with our particular focus on the Parkway.

In our area, a strategy helping the homeless (and local residents and business who suffer the impacts) needs to be developed that is capable of safely sheltering up to 2 or 3 thousand homeless folks a night safely distant from residential neighborhoods and business—with available transformational services—and San Antonio's Haven for Hope program, especially the courtyard strategy they use for safe rapid shelter for large numbers, seems to offer an answer, which you can read about from their brochure at <http://www.havenforhope.org/downloads/docs/H4H%20Brochure%2010-31-2016.pdf> and you can read more about Haven for Hope applicability in our area from our news release of October 26, 2018 on our News Page at <http://arpps.org/news.html>

ARPPS E Letter: Police Calls Increase near Homeless Shelters

Proving the falseness of the narrative pushed by those supporting placing homeless shelters near residential neighborhoods and business; that the presence of homeless shelters does not increase crime in the surrounding neighborhood—which common sense knows is false—is contained in this article from the *Sacramento Bee*.

The response of local leaders in the *Bee* article would have us believe that crime has fallen near the shelters, but this does not take into account the fact that the very increase of police, sirens, ambulances, etc., in adjacent neighborhoods is, in itself, a sign that their neighborhood is more dangerous now.

An excerpt.

“Sacramento police responded to nearly 800 calls made from in and around a north Sacramento homeless shelter during the 17 months the facility was open – an average of about one and a half calls per day, a Sacramento Bee analysis of police data found.

“While city officials stressed that overall crime declined in the area while the shelter at 2040 Railroad Drive was open, calls for homeless-related incidents increased roughly 30 percent. About 97 percent of calls for police service to the shelter address were “founded,” meaning law enforcement determined the request was justified.

“At least 240 calls – the largest share – were for suspicious activity, vehicles or people. Disturbances accounted for 127 calls. Assaults, whether misdemeanors or felonies, made up 54 of the calls. At least 21 of the calls cited an incident involving a “mental” person, suggesting a mental illness may have been related. Seven calls contained references to weapons.

“Calls about property crimes were less common. There were four calls related to robberies and no requests pertaining to burglaries or motor vehicle thefts.

“In its public records request, The Bee asked for police “check ups” to be excluded, though some calls appear to be less serious, such as 20 “errand” calls and 50 “welfare check” calls.

“The overall police call volume at 2040 Railroad Drive before the shelter opened, when the building was an empty warehouse, was not available. Calls for homeless-related incidents in the .65-mile radius around the shelter grew from 983 in 2017, before the shelter opened, to 1,250 in 2018, when the shelter was operating, an increase of about 30 percent, according to police data.”

Retrieved September 11, 2019 from
<https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/homeless/article234710487.html>

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.

Federal ID # 20-0238035

Board of Directors: **President**, Michael Rushford, President, Criminal Justice Legal Foundation;

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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!

American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter: Issue 65 – Winter 2019/2020

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Issues Update: Good Beginning of New Year

Regarding four of our key issues—homelessness, flood & drought protection, suburbs, and salmon health—this has been a good beginning of the New Year, as these recent blog posts indicate.

Homelessness

The Parkway is ground center for Sacramento homelessness and this San Antonio project has been our fix-it model for years.

We are very encouraged that it is also becoming so for our Mayor, as reported in this story from *Sacramento News & Review*.

An excerpt.

“I have lived in Sacramento for 31 years. And over the last three decades, I have attended almost every annual State of Downtown breakfast, like the one held Jan. 21. But this one was special.

“Usually, these events consist of presentations about how well the community is doing—new buildings rising, new businesses coming in, videos with snazzy soundtracks of happy energetic people enjoying many wonderful features of the city. It is often a bit much. People pat themselves on the back so hard that I worry about dislocated shoulders.

“At this year’s event, with 1,000 community leaders attending, there was much to celebrate, including the planned new soccer stadium, the railyard expansion, billions of dollars in investments and all the new construction downtown. But this year’s event had something more.

“The Downtown Sacramento Partnership, under the leadership of Michael Ault, took the opportunity to bring attention to our homelessness problem. The keynote speaker was radio personality Dr. Drew, also known as physician Drew Pinsky, who has worked in psychiatric hospitals more than 30 years. He is on a mission to address the carnage on the streets, where thousands are dying because of a lack of treatment and housing.

“It was a remarkable presentation, one hard to describe. Pinsky was part Old Testament prophet with the power of commitment and the force of righteousness, and part medical doctor with a deep understanding of the problems of addiction and the public health concerns of having so many homeless on our streets.

“Dr. Drew asked what body count was necessary before we address the problem. He described the academic history of mental health over the last 50 years. And then he talked about a future that includes typhoid, tuberculosis and the possibility of bubonic plague. This possibility could become reality, particularly in Los Angeles County, which has 60,000 people without toilet facilities and an increasing rat population.

“Dr. Drew supports legislation that changes the definition of “gravely disabled,” giving law enforcement and others more power to get people into treatment. He was like a John the Baptist who had attended medical school.

“Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg spoke about his efforts as mayor and as head of the California Commission on Homelessness and Supportive Housing. In Sacramento, Steinberg has a three-pronged approach to the homelessness issue: First, lower the cost of new housing with innovations including manufactured housing; second, create a 100-bed center that focuses on meth treatment; and third, develop a large Sacramento facility similar to the 23-acre Haven for Hope in San Antonio that serves nearly 1,000 people each night and has helped to reduce San Antonio’s downtown homeless count by 80% since it opened in 2010.”

Retrieved January 30, 2020 from <https://www.newsreview.com/sacramento/dr-drew-mayor-steinberg/content?oid=29675181>

Flood & Drought Protection

The title of this article from *Capital Public Radio* is **“Could Sacramento Flood Like New Orleans? It’s Possible, But Water Managers Are Trying To Make It Less Likely.”**

It's a good read, and describes good work, but the Auburn Dam is still the best solution.

An excerpt.

“Three years ago, water began seeping out of yards and pooling in roadways in the Sacramento Pocket neighborhood.

“But the water wasn’t from a recent storm.

“It hadn’t rained for a couple of weeks,” said Rick Johnson, executive director of the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency. “This is water coming up through and under the levees into people’s yards. What’s scary about it is that the homes are right there.”

“The Pocket is a neighborhood of around 30,000 people about 10 miles south of downtown, bordered by the Sacramento River on the north, west and south. Standing at a point along the levee, you can see on one side a gated community of one and two story homes and on the left the noticeably higher river. Year-round maintenance and future work are planned in order to protect them, but they’re still at risk.

“The Pocket is somewhere you can see what challenges we have in Sacramento … if it would flood certain areas like this would have a big impact,” said Lon Peterson, the city of Sacramento’s public information officer for the Department of Utilities.

“Weak and problematic levees are a big reason why there was so much destruction when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005. It cost Louisiana and Mississippi more than \$150 billion dollars and killed more than 1,800 people.

“But could something like this happen in the Sacramento region?

“The possibility led Jeffery Lewis from Folsom to ask CapRadio this question: “Given that we have two rivers going through Sacramento and we have an old levee system can flooding like in New Orleans happen here?”

“Not If, But When

“The answer CapRadio heard from levee experts is yes, Sacramento could see that type of flooding, but there are a lot of things that lower that risk.

“It’s not really a matter if a big flood’s going to happen, it’s just a matter of when,” said Nicholas Pinter, associate director of the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences.

“But Pinter says a lot of risk of flooding has been engineered away due to new infrastructure like dams. Still, he admits that “every year is a roll of the dice. There is always a possibility of catastrophic flooding. There is a very slight possibility it could overwhelm our defenses.”

“There are more than 1,100 miles of levees — plus weirs, bypasses and Folsom Dam — in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that help protect the region from flooding. It’s an aging system with many levees over a century old. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers say it’s “among the most at-risk regions in America for catastrophic flooding … but that system, just like a chain, is only as strong as its weakest link.”

“The system has flooded with dire consequences. In December 1861, a series of storms called ‘Pineapple Express’ hit the West Coast — they are warm moist storms with potential for lots and lots of rain.

“These storms melted snow in the Sierra Nevada and water flowed down into the Sacramento Valley from the east for more than 40 days. The levees holding back the rivers acted like dams, flooding the city of Sacramento in as much as 30 feet of water in some places. It was so bad that the state legislature moved to San Francisco until the floodwaters dried out.

“Since that megaflood, there have been a lot of smaller floods. A flood in 1986 killed 13 people, breached levees and crushed bridges. In 1995, then-[President Bill Clinton](#) met with flood victims and surveyed damage from another flood.

“Then there was the 1997 New Year’s Flood. Rain fell high in the mountains melting snow engorging rivers. Sacramento was spared, but levees in nearby communities broke damaging more than 23,000 homes in Northern California and killing nine people.”

Retrieved January 22, 2020 from <http://www.capradio.org/144537>

Suburbs

Still growing faster than urban areas—because the suburbs are where most people want to live—as reported by *New Geography*, complete with the charts and graphs for which they are renowned.

An excerpt.

“The suburbs and exurbs continue to dominate population growth in the nation’s 53 major metropolitan areas, according to a City Sector Model (Note 1 and Figure 9) analysis. We traced growth between the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey 5-year data, from samples taken over the period of 2014 to 2018. The middle-year was 2016.

“Population Growth by City Sector

“In the years since the 2010 Census, the ACS 2014/2018 estimates indicate that the suburbs and exurbs attracted 91.8% of major metropolitan area population growth, while 8.2% of the growth was in the urban core.

“Among the five city sectors (defined in Figure 9), the three suburban and exurban sectors each had considerably more population growth than either of the two urban core sectors. Exurban areas, added more than twice the population as the two urban core sector combined (18.3% versus 8.2%). The Later Suburbs sector (generally outer suburbs) accounted for nearly one-half of the population growth (48.2%), while the Earlier Suburbs (generally inner suburbs) had 25.5% of the growth.

“As a result, the share of the population living in suburban and exurban areas increased to 85.6% in 2014/2018, (Figure 2) up from the 85.3% in the 2010 Census.

“Comparing Growth Rates with 2010 Population Shares by Sector

“The distribution of population growth over the period illustrates the continuing, if unheralded shift of population from the urban core to the suburbs and exurbs. Both urban core sectors enjoyed proportional growth less than their 2010 share of the population, while each of the suburban and exurban sectors gained at a rate more than their 2010 share.

“The Urban Core: Central Business District, which garners much fawning media attention grew 1.2%, slightly slower than its 1.3% of the 2010 population. The Urban Core: Inner Ring accounted for 7.0% of the growth, little more than one-half of its 2010 population share. The Earlier Suburbs had 25.9% of the growth, about 40% less than its 2010 population share of 41.9%. The Later Suburbs added 48.2% to their population, nearly 80% greater than their 2010 population share of 26.9%. The Exurbs added 18.1% in population, somewhat above their 16.4% 2010 population share.” Retrieved January 15, 2020 from <http://www.newgeography.com/content/006527-population-growth-concentrated-auto-oriented-suburbs-and-metropolitan-areas>

Salmon Health

So far, this is a very good year, according to this report from ACWA.

An excerpt.

“Kat Perkins, a scientist with the Sacramento Water Forum, poured over an aerial image of the lower American River near Sailor Bar in Fair Oaks, looking for redds—underwater depressions or “nests” created by female salmon to lay their eggs. Part of an annual ritual to systematically count redds first by inspecting aerial imagery and then in person, last year she found zero. This year was a different story—the area teamed with redds—more than 345 this time around.

“The difference? A new habitat restoration effort completed in fall to protect salmon and steelhead in the lower American River, spearheaded by the Water Forum in partnership with Sacramento County Parks, Sacramento County Water Agency and local water providers, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and other federal, state and local agencies. Over three weeks in September, the project placed more than 14,000 cubic yards of cleaned and sorted gravel into the river and carved out a new side channel to help fish spawn and rear their young.

“The results are gratifying,” said Tom Gohring, Executive Director of the Water Forum, a nearly 20-year-old organization that represents a diverse group of local water providers such as Sacramento County Water Agency, environmental organizations and governments focused on safeguarding the lower American River for both drinking water and wildlife. “Salmon were here long before we were. Nurturing their survival is not only important to sustaining a species but to also sustaining our region’s identify and quality of life.”

“The lower American River is home to 43 fish species, including struggling fall-run Chinook salmon and federally threatened Central Valley steelhead, and is a major water supply source for nearly 2 million people. The river and parkway, which runs 23 miles along the river’s shores, hosts up to 8 million visitors and brings \$364 million into the economy each year.

“The restoration project at Sailor Bar is part of the Water Forum’s ongoing science program that uses cutting-edge techniques to further understand how to improve the river’s environment for fish survival. Over the past several years Water Forum studies have produced detailed information about the conditions salmon and steelhead find ideal for spawning and rearing their young, including:

1. Detailed underwater maps of the lower American River to identify the best locations for enhancing habitat that also won't impact flood safety.
2. The ideal size of gravel and river flow for spawning.
3. How long it takes for salmon to use a restoration site after construction, and how long they continue to use the site.
4. How cover (woody material, branches or tree roots) in a side channel improves survival for juvenile fish.

"This year's effort at Sailor Bar was the region's ninth project restoring fish spawning gravel beds and improving juvenile fish rearing habitat on the lower American River. Since 2008, the Water Forum and its partners have invested more than \$7 million to create over 30 acres of spawning beds and 1.2 miles of side channels."

Retrieved January 9, 2020 from <https://www.acwa.com/news/new-habitat-restoration-project-nurtures-record-number-of-salmon-nests/>

Society Information

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Introduction

For this month's newsletter it seems appropriate to include an article (originally posted April 14th on our blog) related to the virus, whose effects we are all suffering through, and one also somewhat related (originally sent out as the *March E Letter*) about suburban living; which in this day of pandemic seems worthy of reconsideration as, perhaps, the optimal way to live, with its built-in social distancing including single passenger

automobile transportation, positive ecological tendencies, and generally more healthy attributes than the denser urban model.

Article Excerpt: *Question Authority*

One of the few good sayings to come out of the sixties and this is an excellent, provocative, article about the information too often being used to deal with the virus, by Victor Davis Hanson, one of America's most treasured writers—and a California resident—from *American Greatness*.

An excerpt.

"The virus will teach us many things, but one lesson has already been relearned by the American people: there are two, quite different, types of wisdom.

"One, and the most renowned, is a specialization in education that results in titled degrees and presumed authority. That ensuing prestige, in turn, dictates the decisions of most politicians, the media, and public officials—who for the most part share the values and confidence of the credentialed elite.

"The other wisdom is not, as commonly caricatured, know-nothingism. Indeed, Americans have always believed in self-improvement and the advantages of higher education, a trust that explained broad public 19th-century support for mandatory elementary and secondary schooling and, during the postwar era, the G.I. Bill.

"But the other wisdom also puts a much higher premium on pragmatism and experience, values instilled by fighting nature daily and mixing it up with those who must master the physical world.

"The result is the sort of humility that arises when daily drivers test their skills and cunning in a semi-truck barreling along the freeway to make a delivery deadline with a cylinder misfiring up on the high pass, while plagued by worries whether there will be enough deliveries this month to pay the mortgage.

"An appreciation of practical knowledge accrues from watching central-heating mechanics come out in the evening to troubleshoot the unit on the roof, battling the roof grade, the ice, and the dark while pitting their own acquired knowledge in a war with the latest computerized wiring board of the new heating exchange unit that proves far more unreliable than the 20-year-old model it replaced.

"Humility is key to learning, but it is found more easily from a wealth of diverse existential experiences on the margins. It is less a dividend of the struggle for great success versus greater success still, but one of survival versus utter failure.

“So far in this crisis, our elite have let us down in a manner the muscularly wise have never done.

“Botched Models, Bad Advice

“Take any contentious issue—travel bans, the advantages of masks, the Chinese compromising of WHO, the entire industry of grievance politics infecting criticism of China’s despicable behavior, delayed testing by the Centers for Disease Control and FDA, modeling, the efficacy of antimalarial drugs—and our elite seem unable to admit they were wrong, and wrong with a great deal of costly arrogance.

“It is no exaggeration to say that most models that the best and brightest offered the public, from the imported Imperial College in London to those from the University of Washington and many more besides, were not just inaccurate, but quite mistaken in two tragic ways: First, they were accepted as gospel by governments and thus their flawed assumptions became the basis for policies that in many cases may prove counterproductive. Second, the modelers themselves either did not promptly correct their warped inputs, or were not completely forthcoming about their data and methodologies, or blamed their flawed assumptions on others or circumstances beyond imagination, or claimed that their mistakes were in fact salutary—if not sorta, kinda planned—in galvanizing a presumably infantile public to accept draconian measures that it otherwise would not.

“I know a plumber and an electrician, both skilled in the pragmatic engineering of pipes and wires, who would not dare to think they could offer a model of plumbing or electrical prediction if they had no idea of the real size of the denominator and were likewise unsure that the numerator was widely accepted as accurate and clearly defined.

“If I called my car mechanic and explained that I had a bad knock in my engine in the middle of night in the middle of nowhere, he likely would tell me ways to risk driving home, even if possibly hurting the engine, given the lose-lose proposition of spending the night in an unsafe area—in a way our media class seemed to have little clue that hydroxychloroquine for those who cannot breathe need not be certified as 100 percent efficacious in their effort to inhale one more day.

“On March 12, Governor DeWine of Ohio, flanked by his state health director, told the 11 million residents of Ohio that based on models he knew that 100,000 “had” active cases of the disease. That was a caseload that his experts further warned would double every six days. In other words, at the then roughly 2 percent lethality rate of the known actively infected—his medical team all but frightened the state with the certainty that in 24 days there could be 1.6 million infected Ohioans and an assumed 40,000 dead.

“In fact, about a week ago, on April 6, there were fewer than 5,000 known cases and less than 200 Ohioans who had succumbed to COVID-19. Even with far more unknown cases than known and the efficacy of slowing viral transmission via mass sheltering, the data

was not just flawed but perhaps even preposterous. State officials could have offered some official explanations for their misinformation other than the subtext that such fright was medicinal in persuading a public to do something they supposed the public did not know was good for it to do.

“When California Governor Gavin Newsom warned that 25.5 million Californians “will” get the virus in the eight weeks following March 18, albeit without his shelter-in-place orders, he was also essentially stating that, at a then 2.6 percent lethality rate for Californians known to have the active virus, about 1 million would die. As I write, 24 days out from his prediction and nearing the half-way point to Doomsday, about 23,000 Californians have tested positive, and either are fighting the disease or have recovered. Since late January, about 650 of 40 million Californians have died from the disease, in a state where well over 700 people die from some cause every day.

“If 10 times that number of known positive tests are now actively infected, we legitimately could assume at least 222,000 residents are now active or past carriers. Those who advised Newsom to shut down the world’s sixth-largest economy, including universities like Cal Tech, UC Berkeley, and Stanford, Silicon Valley, and the commerce and livelihoods of 40 million residents, apparently did not factor into their models some possible collective immunity among thousands of Californians who, for months, were on the front lines of arriving flights from China.

“Nor did modelers seem to factor in the ability of people to social distance even before the shutdown was ordered, or the fact that a virus that does not kill 95.5 percent of those who are infected, but not frontline health workers or over 60 years old, may be deemed by the public manageable in a way that does not require having multigenerational small businesses ruined, or careers destroyed, or retirement savings accounts wrecked, or key appointments with doctors postponed or canceled.”

Retrieved April 13, 2020 from <https://amgreatness.com/2020/04/12/the-thin-facade-of-authority/>

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #215, March 9, 2020

Greening Sprawl

In this excellent article of the same name, the case is made for a revisioning of sprawl.

An excerpt.

“Suburban residential landscapes are popularly understood to be socially and environmentally homogeneous places where expanses of mown lawn appear in an alternating rhythm of driveways and predictably similar houses. Much has been made of suburban social pressures for conformity, epitomized by the pressure to have a perfect lawn; even, green, and weed free. More recently, the environmentally detrimental effects of lawn irrigation, pesticides, fertilizers, leaf blowing, and mowing have been widely discussed. Beyond these immediate environmental impacts of lawn culture, the more insidious societal costs associated with car-dependent suburban transportation systems are of growing concern. Social and health effects of sedentary lifestyles and long commuting times, social equity effects of jobs beyond the reach of public transportation, as well as climate effects of greenhouse gases emitted by cars—all contribute to arguments for adopting more dense urban settlement patterns as alternatives to suburbia.

“Yet suburban development is massive and growing. In the United States, large-lot residential development covered a total area fifteen times larger than did dense urban settlement in 2000, and suburbs have continued to grow more quickly than cities. The market for suburban residential development remains a vital driver of metropolitan landscape patterns. Even if market demand for new suburban development were to disappear today, the legacy effects of the more than 5 percent of the US land area in suburban development would remain. This reality suggests that, rather than only critiquing suburbia, we should consider how low-density suburban development patterns can provide broader societal benefits.

“Viewed through another lens, the lawn culture landscape of suburban “sprawl” looks like “greening.” In city neighborhoods, greening means bringing maintained turf, trees, and gardens back into a largely paved landscape. In contrast, suburban neighborhoods, typified by expansive lawns, canopy trees, and flowers and shrubs, are green. But suburban green landscapes could provide far more substantial ecosystem services related to human health, biodiversity, stormwater management, and carbon storage to contribute to climate change mitigation. How do we “green” sprawl to deliver these societal benefits? Could design and planning guide the resources expended on keeping suburbia green differently—to achieve a stronger balance in favor of ecosystem services compared with environmental costs?

“Understanding the vernacular aesthetics of suburban landscapes as part of the land development process can suggest some answers. Respecting what residents want their landscapes to look like could help planners and designers devise development patterns that nudge suburban residents and developers to want landscapes that provide greater ecosystem services. To make suburban sprawl a deeper shade of green, designers can use the nudge concept that has become familiar in the fields of psychology and behavioral

economics: giving people what they want in a landscape pattern that also embodies what society needs." (p. 507)

Joan Iverson Nassauer (2017). Greening Sprawl: Lawn Culture and Carbon Storage in the Suburban Landscape. (pp.507-517) *Infinite Suburbia* (2017) (Editors, Alan M. Berger, Joel Kotkin, with Celina Balderas Guzman). Princeton Architectural Press: New York.

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The best things are nearest: breath in your nostrils, light in your eyes, flowers at your feet, duties at your hand, the path of God just before you. Robert Louis Stevenson

Be well everyone!

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Parkway Eagles Story

Great article about our Parkway eagles by Susan Maxwell Skinner from the *Carmichael Times*.

An excerpt.

“SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) – Few experiences could be more life-affirming than seeing birds in debut flight. When those creatures happen to be two bald eaglets (fledging auspiciously close to July 4), gasps and tears are among observer reactions.

“Among very few of their species in Sacramento County, a mated eagle couple is now completing a fourth breeding season on the American River. Having recorded each of those seasons, I note the 2020 nursery unique for surprise and heartbreak.

“In spring, observers were astonished to find three chicks in the eagle nursery. In previous broods, the parents reliably raised only two babies. Judging by its size, the unexpected baby probably hatched 10 days after the alpha we called Courage; and perhaps a week after middle sibling Hope. We named the surprise baby Miracle. “It’ll be a miracle if he survives,” predicted a riverside wit. But the smallest eaglet escaped bullying often suffered by raptor runts. His parents favored him with plenty to eat. A feisty, competitive personality quickly developed.

“The family dynamic was disrupted when alpha Courage fell from the nest before he was old enough to fly. Though the parents fed him on the ground, coyote and bobcats must also provide for their own babies. One day the fallen eaglet simply disappeared. Crisis support arrived in the form of an eagle helper that has assisted the family in previous summers. The parents absented themselves as the babysitter we call “Hunter” dutifully mentored, fed and suffered the remaining two eaglets’ ingratitude. Mama and Papa took compassionate leave from months of exhausting hunting and childcare.

“In their absence, second eaglet Hope reached 12 weeks old and was poised for flight. Her debut promised a much-needed lift for her kin and for fans who had taken the family to their hearts. Hope did not disappoint. On summer solstice, she scrambled from the nest to a favorite branch. Here she spread massive wings and claimed her sky. An ungainly series of flaps got her 50 yards to an adjacent pine.

“Before setting a course for the home tree, the debutante gave a “here I come” squeal. She flew with greater confidence to achieve a high limb. Though Hunter had just delivered a trout, she ignored his celebratory offering and chose flight over food. Off she winged to partly loop the river and descend on a new branch. Thence she sped to a new tree, then another. Alone for the first time in his life, sibling Miracle was beyond consolation. He screamed and screamed. An hour passed before Hope made a clumsy, talons-splayed touch-down in the nest. Hers was a text-book fledge that would have made absent Mama proud.

“By last week, brother Miracle had also reached fly-by date and was jumping aggressively on branches outside the nest. Mama and Papa returned, bearing fish and a small rodent as gifts. Unplacated, their runt screamed from noon till sunset, seemingly demanding maternal permission to fly. Perhaps fearing an evening fledge and the risk another of baby on the ground, Mama endured his awful cacophony and kept the wannabe pilot under her yellow thumb. By dawn, the reunited family and faithful Hunter watched Miracle’s brave first step into the abyss.

“His 250-yard flight achieved a leafy bluff oak. Then he ventured a longer spin to a low, rotted stump. Papa and sister Hope perched encouragingly in a nearby pine. On an aborted relaunch, they saw him plummet over the bluff. Human observers groaned at the memory of Courage’s ill-fated fall, but rookie Miracle did not tumble far. His eager little face soon reappeared and he regained his stump. His next flit — to a mockingbird nesting tree — brought on fierce harassment by its tiny occupants. Off he flew to join sibling Hope on a more hospitable pine. Though the older fledgling tried to bully him into takeoff, the new aviator stood firm.

“When Miracle swooped to his next destination, his talons grabbed flimsy pine needles. This common rookie error flopped him upside-down and bat-like till he lost hold and fell to a solid branch. Here he quickly perceived a second error: he was back in the mockingbird tree and under renewed attack. Fleeing over the river, he soon returned to claim familiar cliff pines.”

Retrieved July 8, 2020 from <http://carmichaeltimes.com/articles/2020/0701-Fiercely-Independent/index.php?ID=8354>

Urban Density & the Virus

Good article from *New Geography*.

An excerpt.

“There is wide consensus that the COVID-19 virus spreads person-to-person, especially in confined spaces that are insufficiently ventilated. It is exacerbated by prolonged proximity, which John Brooks, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s chief medical officer indicates is 15 minutes or more of unprotected contact with someone less than 6 feet away. Avoiding such proximity is the justification for social distancing and face masks and the lockdowns that have been implemented around the world.

“Preventing infection means minimizing exposure density, which is the duration of risky contacts that can be estimated using factors from population density to much more precise measures of crowding that vary by personal lifestyles and living conditions.

“The best (lowest) geographic level for which there is comprehensive national COVID-19 death data available now is for counties. It may be tempting to evaluate death rates using county population densities, which are readily available. However, many counties have

very large rural areas that drive down overall densities and can mask significant urban densities.

“By definition, a disease spread by personal contact is likely to be associated densities that reflect the risk of exposure — the sum of exposure densities, duration weighted. Exposure density is far greater in urban areas than in rural areas and strongly associated with higher urban densities, as indicated below.

“This article is provided from a perspective of COVID-19 death rates by categories of county urban, rather than total county densities, through July 8, 2020, based on data published by [USA Facts.org](https://www.usafacts.org).

“The Influence of Large Rural Areas on County Densities

“Overall county densities differ markedly from their urban densities.

“The ultimate example may be a comparison between Cuyahoga County Ohio (Cleveland) and San Bernardino County (in the Los Angeles combined statistical area).

“In 2010 Cuyahoga County’s 1.2 million residents lived at an overall population density of 2,800 per square mile and an urban density of 3,063 per square mile. In other words, Cuyahoga’s urban density was about 9% denser than its overall density.

“In 2010 San Bernardino County’s 2.2 million residents lived at an overall population density of 101 per square mile and an urban density of 3,090 per square mile. San Bernardino’s urban density was about 3,000% more (30 times more) than its overall density.

“San Bernardino’s huge rural area drives down the overall density. For the purposes of COVID-19 analysis, the urban density is more appropriate than the total density, because the urban density is a better surrogate for the proximities that can be associated with infection.

“This applies to much more than Cleveland and San Bernardino. For example, other million-plus counties with under 1,000 per square mile densities include Maricopa (Phoenix), fifth most populous county in the nation, San Diego, Riverside (California) and Palm Beach (Florida). Their much higher urban densities are substantially diluted because their rural areas are so large.

“This problem was identified by the [Census Bureau](https://www.census.gov) with respect to metropolitan areas in 2012: “Overall densities ... can be heavily affected by the size of the geographic units for which they are calculated.” Counties are the building blocks of metropolitan areas, and their often-overwhelming rural land areas create this difficulty....

“County Death Rates by Urban Density Categories

“Counties with higher urban densities have a far higher percentage of the COVID-19 deaths, as is illustrated in Figures 3 and 4. Further, the higher urban density counties tend to have proportionally more deaths than their share of the national population (Figure 5). With just 4.3% of the nation’s population (Figure 6), counties with 7,500 per square mile urban population densities have 21.7% of the COVID-19 deaths (Figure 7) as of July 8, 2020....

“The good news is that death rates have dropped substantially. During the first eight days of July, daily deaths declined 73% from the peak daily rate of April 16-30 (Figure 10). What seems clear is although the virus has spread widely, its most lethal impacts have, for the most part, been felt where urban densities are greater.”

Retrieved July 11, 2020 from <http://www.newgeography.com/content/006707-perspective-u-s-covid-19-deaths-and-urban-population-density>

Feeding the World

It once seemed impossible, but no more, as this wonderful article from *City Journal* reports.

An excerpt.

“During the height of the coronavirus lockdown, with a substantial portion of the world’s population in quarantine and the global economy sliding toward a deep economic recession, most of us still ate our fill every evening. We should rejoice in this miracle. Hunger, which has accompanied humanity from our beginnings, has practically disappeared. Isolated cases of malnutrition—but not of famine—remain, due to local conflict and extreme forms of poverty, themselves on their way to remission.

“Since 1970, world population has doubled—but food production has tripled. In 1970, India was known as “the famine continent,” and the economic literature was uniformly pessimist, an echo of the writings of Thomas Malthus, who proclaimed 170 years earlier an inevitable contradiction between demographic growth and agricultural growth. Humanity escapes this proclaimed fate, thanks to science and commerce—the two foundations of progress, including agricultural progress.

“Science has made it possible for 1.5 billion farmers to nourish 7.7 billion people. Science progresses by leaps, from one paradigm to another—from the steam engine to the electrical motor, and from there to electronic technology. The same is true for what fills our plates. After the selection of species comes their hybridization; from hybridization, we leap to genetically modified organisms. These GMOs have yet to fulfill their promise, having so far improved only the yields of corn and soy, foundations of the food industry.

We don't yet know whether ideological resistance to GMOs will permit future progress in this area, especially concerning wheat.

"What saved us from famine was the 1970s Green Revolution: a combination of species selection, hybridization, and the application of farming techniques such as irrigation and fertilization. When these techniques were applied to wheat and rice, average yields tripled, especially in India, China, Vietnam, and Indonesia. The leaders of this revolution, which we do not celebrate enough, were two agronomists: [Norman Borlaug](#), a Texan who transformed wheat cultivation in his laboratory near Mexico City; and M. S. Swaminathan, an Indian from Chennai who applied Borlaug's method to rice in a laboratory near Manila. Borlaug received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 (Swaminathan was overlooked). Never was the Nobel Peace Prize more deserved—or so soon forgotten.

"Progress is seldom, if ever, unanimously welcomed. Activist groups in India and the United States have blamed Borlaug and the Green Revolution for creating new inequalities. It's true that all Indian peasants were equally poor and hungry before the Green Revolution. Those who applied Borlaug's recommendations became more prosperous than those who stuck to the old methods. It's easy to achieve equality when there is nothing to distribute; leftists seem to prefer scarcity to plenty if plenty implies unequal portions. The same people who condemned the Green Revolution now oppose GMOs. Their ancestors, in the early nineteenth century, justified destroying new textile machines using the same arguments. Science progresses; ideologies spin their wheels.

"The Green Revolution would not have been enough to nourish the world without the commercial revolution that accompanied it. In eighteenth-century France, the provinces that produced wheat surpluses could not export their grains to neighboring provinces without multiple bureaucratic authorizations; the resulting famines led straight to the 1789 revolution. Little has changed today, but the scale is planetary. Certain states, in the name of "alimentary sovereignty"—the European Union, in particular—attempt to restrain commerce in grains. Luckily, they have little success. Commerce in foods has multiplied six times in the last 30 years, while the price of meat, wheat, and cereals continues to drop. Overall, four-fifths of humanity is fed by calories originating in another country. Eating "local" and "organic" is a pleasant luxury reserved for privileged consumers. And to the great disappointment of the Left, the brokers who move food from regions of surplus to regions in need are capitalist businesses—such as Cargill, based in Minnesota, or even Beijing's COFCO."

Retrieved July 13, 2020 from <https://www.city-journal.org/the-modern-food-miracle>

Be well everyone!

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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