

American River Parkway Preservation Society
Annual Organizational Report #17
October 1, 2020- September 30, 2021

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.**

In This Report:

| Section | Page |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Organizational Leadership | 2 |
| Introduction | 3 |
| Public Communication & Education | 7 |
| Financial Statement | 8 |
| Current Membership Status | 9 |
| Strategic Plan (2020=2025) | 10 |
| Status Summery | 14 |
| Appendix I: E-Letters | 17 |
| Appendix II: Newsletters | 44 |

**American River Parkway Preservation Society
Organizational Leadership**

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North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce

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

Marcos Breton, Columnist
Sacramento Bee Newspaper

Introduction

In rereading last year's Introduction to that year's Annual Report, I realized that it couldn't be improved on, except, things are even worse now, with a third of the Parkway virtually a no-go zone, so this year's Introduction will be last year's though with a few changes.

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. To read how bad it really is, right now, in the River District, see [Homelessness in the River District | Parkway Blog \(wordpress.com\)](#)

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—though the American River Parkway Foundation seems to be stepping up and has produced an excellent video, the *Parkway in Peril*, available at [Parkway in Peril - YouTube](#) as well as a discussion at [Parkway in Peril & Panel Discussion - FB Live Stream - YouTube](#)—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 for the Commons 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 resource 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, 2020 to September 30, 2021, we posted 158—we only post on weekdays—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.

Meetings With Public Leadership & Other Advocates

County Supervisor Rich Desmond (6/3/21) Mike Rushford (ARPPS President) and David Lukenbill (Senior Policy Director) met with the Supervisor in person to discuss Parkway issues.

River District Executive Director Jenna Abbot (Zoom meeting to discuss homelessness in the River District and the adjacent Parkway, 8/24/21)

American River Parkway Foundation Executive Director Dianna Poggetto (Email, Discussed joining a new Lower Parkway advocacy group. 9/17/21)

AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY FINANCIAL STATEMENT #15

(No due renewals have been requested since March of 2020 due to the virus)

October 1 2020 to September 30, 2021

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

Revenue

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts received..... | \$200.00 |
| 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)..... | \$200.00 |

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..... | \$168.75 |
| (\$168.75 Web Services) | |
| 14. Occupancy [web], rent, utilities, and [web] maintenance..... | \$0 |
| 15. Printing, publications, postage, and shipping..... | \$0 |
| 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)..... | \$198.75 |
| 18. Excess or (deficit) for the year (Subtract 17 from 9)..... | \$1.25 |
| 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)..... | \$1,139.68 |
| 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..... | \$1,140.93 |

PART II Balance Sheets

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 22. Cash, savings, and investments..... | \$1,140.93 |
| 23. Land and buildings..... | \$0 |
| 24. Other assets (describe)..... | \$0 |
| 25. Total Assets..... | \$1,140.93 |
| 26. Total Liabilities (describe)..... | \$0 |
| 27. Net assets or fund balances (line 27 of column B must agree with line 21)..... | \$1,140.93 |

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 **276 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: **395 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 **753 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

- Weekdays 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-leases groups, mountain-bike groups (this group—Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates—finally got approval to develop a trail in the Parkway in the Fall of 2017, <https://sacbike.org/more-bikes-on-more-of-the-arp/>), disc-golf groups, mini-train groups, etc. are still finding little opportunity to present their proposals—which almost always includes doing the maintenance and initial set-up themselves—to the Parkway governing agency which has traditionally favored passive recreation over active.

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

Solution: *Support the growth of suburban communities.*

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

Appendix I: Monthly E-Letters

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #222, October 5, 2020

Working from Home

An excellent article from *New Geography* breaking down the numbers of the new reality in virus world.

An excerpt.

“The 2019 market share data has just been released by the American Community Survey. Looking at driving alone and transit market shares, there has been virtually no change since 2010, with driving alone accounting for about three-quarters of commuting, while transit remains steady at 5%. The big news *before Covid*: the increase in people usually working from home (also referred to as telework or telecommuting)

“Working from Home

“Working from home has risen more than three times the rate that of driving alone or transit and about 10 times as much as car pools. Working from home passed transit in the number of commuters in 2017. This represents a reversal of two million commuters since 2010, when there were 800,000 more transit commuters than those working at home. Working from home ranks third behind driving alone and car pools in its share of the market. By the end of 2019, working at home attracted 5.7% of the market, compared to 4.3% in 2010.

“This is a nationwide phenomena. Among the 110 metropolitan areas with more than 500,000 population, working from home increased in 104. This is the first year that a larger metropolitan area has achieved a working from home market share exceeding 10%. Working from home is distributed fairly widely around the country. The median (middle) market has a working from home share of 5.3%.

“The highest working from home market share was in tech hubs Austin (10.3%) and Raleigh (10.2%). Daytona Beach, Pensacola and Denver all had working from home market shares exceeding 9% (Figure 1). The balance of the top ten were all above 8%, including Atlanta, Tampa-St. Petersburg, Cape Coral (FL), Sarasota (FL) and Ogden (UT).

“However, during the pandemic this figure has increased exponentially. Stanford University research estimates that the [work from home market share is now eight times as high](#) and, even after the pandemic, should reach about 20 percent, almost four times the pre-Covid rate.

“Strongest Work from Home Markets and Transit

“In some of these metropolitan areas, the rising in working from home comes despite the fact that there have been substantial public spending to establish new rail and busway systems. In Atlanta, where the federal government largely paid for one of the largest new rapid transit systems built in the last half century, more than three times as many people working from home as ride transit to work. Denver, with its more modest, but expensive light rail system opened over the past quarter century has twice as many working from home as transit commuters. Tampa-St. Petersburg, whose taxpayers are under virtually endless pressure to pay for a rail transit system has 8 times as many working from home as transit commuters.

“In Austin, with the largest work from home market share, the city council is now asking voters to approve a \$7.1 billion package, principally composed of [two new rail lines](#). This would impact only the city, which has less than 45% of the metropolitan area population. Since 2010, transit’s share has dropped a quarter in the city, despite the addition of a new rail line. At the same time, the working from home market share increased by half.

“The table below indicates the work from home and transit market shares for the 110 metropolitan areas for both 2010 and 2019.

“Transit and Working from Home

“Transit’s median market share among the 110 metropolitan areas is only 1.4%, less than a third that of working from home. This illustrates the concentration of transit commuting in just a few metropolitan areas. More than two thirds of transit commuting is in the [transit legacy cities](#) (New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Boston and Washington).

“Transit commuting is very concentrated. Nearly 60% of transit commuters work in just six cities that have only 6% of the jobs. Nearly one half of commuters to these jobs use transit. In the rest of the nation, with 94% of the jobs, only two percent of commuters use transit (Figure 2).”

Retrieved September 28, 2020 from <http://www.newgeography.com/content/006787-the-pre-pandemic-rise-working-home-telework-and-beyond>

Be well everyone!

David H. Lukenbill, Founder/CFO & Senior Policy Director
American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS)
*Preserve, Protect, and Strengthen the American River Parkway,
Our Community's Natural Heart*
Email: Dlukenbill@msn.com
Weblog: <http://riverparkwayblog.wordpress.com/>
Website: <http://www.arpps.org/>

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

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #223, November 9, 2020

Salmon are Salmon

Congressman Tom McClintock once said in a talk I attended, that the only difference between salmon born in a hatchery and in the ocean is the same difference of a baby born at home or in a hospital.

It's a great analogy, but I do not have the expertise to know if it is true; but this article from *UC Santa Cruz Newsroom* reports on what was once considered separate salmon species are now apparently the same.

An excerpt.

“Historically, spring-run and fall-run Chinook salmon have been considered as separate subspecies, races, ecotypes, or even as separate species of fish. A new genetic analysis, however, shows that the timing of migration in Chinook salmon is determined entirely by differences in one short stretch of DNA in their genomes.

“The new findings, published October 29 in *Science*, mean that within a drainage basin like the Klamath River, the different runs of Chinook salmon are all part of a single diverse population.

“It's like blue and brown eye color in humans—it just depends on what genotype you inherit from your parents,” said corresponding author John Carlos Garza, adjunct professor of ocean sciences at UC Santa Cruz and a research geneticist with NOAA's Southwest Fisheries Science Center.

“The study has profound implications for conservation and management of Chinook salmon, the largest species of salmon, and makes restoration of the beleaguered Klamath River spring run more feasible if plans for the removal of dams on the river move forward.

“We view this as very good news,” Garza said.

“Genome sequencing

“Garza’s team began by sequencing the complete genomes of 160 Chinook salmon from the Klamath River and Sacramento River drainages. The only consistent differences they found between spring-run and fall-run fish occurred within a single region on chromosome 28. Within that region, they identified a shorter “Region of Strongest Association” (RoSA) that occurs in two versions, dubbed “E” for early migration and “L” for late migration.

“RoSA includes parts of two genes and the stretch of DNA between them. The E and L versions differ in multiple places, making them “haplotypes,” the term for a set of DNA variations that are inherited together. Salmon, like all vertebrates, inherit two sets of chromosomes, one from each parent, so their RoSA “genotype” can be either EE, LL, or EL.

“Armed with genetic markers for the E and L haplotypes, the researchers sampled 502 Chinook salmon harvested by the Yurok Tribe in the Klamath River Estuary. For fish with the “homozygous” EE and LL genotypes, there was no overlap in the timing of migration, when the fish leave the ocean to swim up the Klamath and spawn. EE fish migrate early (spring run), and LL fish migrate later (fall run).

“Fish with the “heterozygous” EL genotype had intermediate migration times, overlapping with those of the homozygous genotypes. The migration times of EL salmon were skewed toward the spring run, but some overlapped with fall-run salmon.

“According to Garza, these results show that seasonal differences in migration are completely attributable to the RoSA genetic variants. “That was an extraordinary finding,” he said. “I know of no other gene region that so completely determines a complex migratory behavior in the wild in a vertebrate.”

“This finding is especially striking because people have long noted differences between spring-run and fall-run salmon in their fat content and other features, which were presumed to be part of a suite of heritable traits characterizing the different runs. But in fact, Garza said, all those differences are tied to the timing of migration as determined by the RoSA genotype.

“Spring-run salmon enter freshwater early in the year, where they encounter different environmental conditions, notably warmer water, which likely accelerates their

maturation. The fish spend the summer in cool, deep pools near their spawning habitat before spawning in the fall.

“People notice differences in fat content and body condition because they are encountering spring-run fish earlier in the maturation process than fall-run fish,” Garza said. “Spring-run and fall-run fish all start maturing at the same time in the ocean, but during that period after the spring run enters freshwater, they experience different environmental conditions, leading to differences in where and when they spawn.”

“When the researchers sampled the carcasses of salmon that had died after spawning in the Salmon River, a major tributary of the Klamath, they found evidence that the spring-run and fall-run salmon were freely interbreeding. The ratios of EE, LL, and EL genotypes were close to what would be expected for random mating patterns. Garza noted that if two EL fish mate, their offspring will include EE, LL, and EL fish.

“In other words, a spring-run salmon can have a fall-run sibling.

“It’s hard to come up with any scenario where you could classify individuals from the same nest as belonging to different populations,” he said. “For me, one of the underlying messages is that, in our attempt to categorize things, we’ve overlooked the fact that these are fundamentally the same animal.”

“The researchers extended their survey of post-spawning carcasses to rivers throughout northern California and the Siletz River in Oregon. Again, they found that heterozygous (EL) fish were widespread where early-migrating fish occur and suitable habitat for them exists”

Retrieved October 30, 2020 from <https://news.ucsc.edu/2020/10/chinook-salmon.html>

Be well everyone!

David H. Lukenbill, Founder/CFO & Senior Policy Director
American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS)
*Preserve, Protect, and Strengthen the American River Parkway,
Our Community’s Natural Heart*
Email: Dlukenbill@msn.com
Weblog: <http://riverparkwayblog.wordpress.com/>
Website: <http://www.arpps.org/>

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #224, January 11, 2021

Dark Waters

I just finished watching the movie *Dark Waters* starring Mark Ruffalo, (highly recommended), so this article from *ENSIA* was a must read.

An excerpt.

“A group of manmade substances that can cause serious health problems in humans and animals is increasingly threatening U.S. drinking water systems, experts say. Scientists are working hard to better understand per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances — or PFAS — and develop technologies to minimize harm from these extraordinarily durable pollutants.

“PFAS is the umbrella term for a variety of substances, including [PFOA](#), [PFOS](#) and [GenX](#). Exposure to high levels of PFAS may decrease vaccine response in children and cause some forms of cancer and birth defects. PFAS also affect the kidneys, liver and immune system, [according to](#) the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Products such as firefighting foam, water-repellent fabrics, nonstick products, waxes, polishes and some food packaging contain the chemicals. Dubbed “forever chemicals” for their durability, these substances went unrecognized as pollutants for decades. But now that society is aware that they have contaminated drinking water, the race is on to develop technologies that can eliminate them.

“I think we’ll see more technologies evolving, but it’s going to be a tough one to crack,” says Ginny Yingling, senior hydrogeologist in the Environmental Health Division of the Minnesota Department of Health. “It took nearly a decade or more for people to figure out how to get after the chlorinated solvents. We thought they were impossible, [but they’re] nothing compared to these chemicals.”

“Currently, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is involved in several research projects aimed at helping to clean up PFAS-contaminated sites. These include developing ways to measure PFAS in soil, sediments and groundwater; evaluating the effectiveness of methods for removing PFAS from drinking water; and evaluating approaches to destroying PFAS.

“The EPA also has formed partnerships with other agencies such as the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), states and cities. In addition, the agency has partnered with public works facilities, such as wastewater treatment plants and waste processing facilities, across the country. It has also funded research in the private sector.

“For fiscal year 2020, the EPA set aside [US\\$35 million](#) for PFAS research. The DoD, which is dealing with contaminated sites at military installations across the country, [budgeted US\\$40 million](#) for PFAS research.”

Retrieved December 26, 2020 from [PFAS chemicals are turning up in tap water across the country. How do we get them out? | Ensia](#)

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David H. Lukenbill, Founder/CFO & Senior Policy Director
American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS)
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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #225, February 1 2021

Camps as far as the Eye can See

This article from *The Nation* by Dale Maharidge—an excellent, long-time writer on homeless issues—about his revisit to Sacramento this past summer reporting on the then current state of homeless camping along the American and Sacramento River.

An excerpt.

“I returned to Sacramento in the early summer and saw what’s to come, in 2021 and beyond, by visiting the places I first reported on 40 years ago. Whereas the homeless camping spots were scattered, hidden, and temporary back in 1980, with the number of

unhoused people measured in the low hundreds, today there are thousands, and in places the camps sprawl as far as the eye can see. There are now three tent cities in Sacramento, the two major ones—the Island and the Snake Pit, the largest—on the American River.

“The camps have kind of developed like cities: You have a downtown part of the camp, and you have little areas off to the side where there’ll be eight or nine tents, kind of like subdivisions,” said Joe Smith, the advocacy director for Sacramento Loaves & Fishes, a nonprofit that provides homeless services, when he took me to visit them. He said the official count was some 5,500 unhoused people, but in reality, it was more like 10,000.

“Our first stop was at the Snake Pit. Dozens upon dozens of tents and tarps stretched into the forest on either side of a levee. Smith pointed beyond the wild almond trees heavy with nuts to patches of brush thick with Russian thistle. “Just going that way, there’s probably 500 people buried in there,” he said. It reminded me of the images Dorothea Lange took of homeless camps along the same river in 1936 for the Farm Security Administration. Using her photographs as a guide, I realized we were passing those exact sites nearly 84 years later.

“As we entered, we met George, from Oakland, Calif., who showed me the 100 watts’ worth of solar panels he installed near the door of his tent to power lights and a television; he also charges phones for his neighbors. We spoke for a while, during which he pulled out a scrapbook of his family and happier times, then ascended the levee bank together. There we found Smith talking to another resident, a middle-aged woman who could have come to life from one of Lange’s photographs—she had the same weary face and faraway gaze.

“I asked her why it’s called the Snake Pit. “There’s a bunch of snakes here,” the woman answered.

“And they’re not cold-blooded creatures,” George chimed in.

“There are some snakes here that live on the ground,” the woman added, “but most of them walk on two feet.”

“Smith said he’s bracing for a massive influx. “There’s a whole new segment of people that are going to go from being housed to unhoused, and it’s going to happen suddenly,” he told me. “It’s going to be very traumatic for them. They can react one of two ways. They can be scared and dysfunctional. Or they can come out here and just be as brutal as they can be—their survival instinct. And I know this because I did this. I was that person,” he added, trailing off. Smith was homeless and slept next to the river some years ago.”

Retrieved January 24, 2021 from [How the United States Chose to Become a Country of Homelessness | The Nation](#)

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David H. Lukenbill, Founder/CFO & Senior Policy Director
American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS)
*Preserve, Protect, and Strengthen the American River Parkway,
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E-Letter #226, March 8 2021

State Audit of California's Homelessness Programs

The audit reveals what is common knowledge among folks paying attention to the issue; there has, so far, been a big failure in addressing homelessness throughout the state, from *California Globe*.

Some excerpts.

“California State Auditor Elaine Howle recently released a [rather scathing audit](#) of the management or mismanagement of Homelessness in California. She said that the state continues to have the largest homeless population in the nation “likely in part because its approach to addressing homelessness has been disjointed.”

“In her [cover letter](#) to the Governor, President pro Tempore of the Senate, and Speaker of the Assembly, Howle said “At least nine state agencies administer and oversee 41 different programs that provide funding to mitigate homelessness, yet no single entity oversees the State's efforts or is responsible for developing a statewide strategic plan.”

“The state's plan to mitigate homelessness is not designed to achieve this, as the audit shows. Because if the 9 agencies and 41 different programs were, they would no longer be needed, the federal and state funding would dry up, and public employee union jobs would be lost. In California, no program ever sunsets.

“The State continues to lack a comprehensive understanding of its spending to address homelessness, the specific services the programs provide, or the individuals who receive those services.”

“Our audit found three additional factors that make state guidance to coordinate efforts to address homelessness especially necessary:

- CoCs do not always employ best practices related to identifying, planning for, and providing services for those experiencing homelessness.
- None of the five CoCs we reviewed has adequately determined whether it has enough service providers to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness.
- Two of the five CoCs we assessed do not have current comprehensive plans.”

In May 2019, Gov. Newsom announced the formation of the [Homeless and Supportive Housing Advisory Task Force](#) and its co-chairs Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg and Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, “two city leaders from cities ravaged by homelessness, filth, and disease,” the Globe [reported](#).

“Just the year before in 2018, a United Nations expert on housing singled out Oakland and San Francisco [in a report](#) as the only two U.S. cities which are part of a “global scandal,” saying the homeless encampments are “cruel and inhumane,” after visiting the Bay Area in January, KTVU Fox [reported](#). In the same report the Special Rapporteur says “residents of informal settlements affirm humanity in the most inhumane circumstances. The Special Rapporteur has visited many informal settlements in the global North and South. She has found the severity of the living conditions and the failure of States to respond to them profoundly disturbing.”

“California has spent \$13 billion in just the last three years on the massive homelessness problem. The auditor said the approach to dealing with homelessness is so fragmented and incomplete it actually hinders efforts at getting people into stable housing.

“Last year, Newsom vetoed a bill that would have created a uniform data-collection system on homelessness spending, saying the measure was duplicative and would create additional and unnecessary data collection costs,” KCRA Channel 3 reported. However, the auditor found a lack of coordination between agencies, and largely, no accountability by any agency our the task force.

“Some [highlights](#) from the audit:

- In recent years, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in California has soared. More than 151,000 Californians were homeless in 2019, an increase of 15 percent from 2017.
- Unlike in some other states, no single state entity in California oversees efforts to address homelessness or is responsible for developing a statewide strategic plan. Instead, at least nine state agencies administer and oversee 41 different programs that provide funding for purposes related to homelessness.
- Despite creating the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council in 2017, homeless council staff stated that the council has not set priorities or timelines for achieving all 18 statutory goals (below). Further, the homeless council still has not finalized an action plan that homeless council staff believe will serve as the council’s strategic plan, and has yet to fulfill some of its most critical goals.
- Council staff said they can request information from state agencies, but it does not currently have the authority to require this information from other state agencies and has not been able to track program spending to date.

“In September 2019, the Governor signed a package of 13 bills addressing homelessness, including Senate Bill 211, which authorizes the California Department of Transportation to lease certain property to local governments for temporary emergency shelters or feeding programs, and Senate Bill 450, which exempts certain hotels converted to supportive or transitional housing from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act until January 1, 2025,” the Auditor reported. “In January 2020, the Governor signed an executive order that focuses on preventing homelessness, providing shelter and services to people experiencing homelessness, and creating new temporary housing to reduce unsheltered homelessness. This executive order calls for, among other things, a multiagency state strike team to provide technical assistance and direct support to counties, cities, and public transit agencies seeking to bring people experiencing homelessness indoors and connect them with appropriate health, human, and social services.”...

“The auditor said her office reviewed a number of other states which have charged a single agency with addressing homelessness statewide and tracking funding information centrally. “These other states have fared better than California in stemming the number of people who experience homelessness.”

“The second part of the audit focused on the Continuum of Care organizations (CoCs), which “do not consistently employ best practices to improve homeless services in their areas.”

“The five CoCs we reviewed do not adequately conduct a comprehensive annual gaps analysis,” the Auditor [reported](#). And two of the CoCs don’t even have current

comprehensive plans. “Federal regulations require each CoC to have a plan in place to conduct an annual gaps analysis to determine whether the number and type of current services and service providers in its area are adequate to meet the needs of all the people it has identified as experiencing homelessness.”

Retrieved February 19, 2021 from [State Auditor Releases Scathing Audit of the Failure to Mitigate Homelessness in California – California Globe](#)

Be well everyone!

David H. Lukenbill, Founder/CFO & Senior Policy Director
American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS)
*Preserve, Protect, and Strengthen the American River Parkway,
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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #227, April 6, 2021

Announcement

The new American River Parkway Plan is available for public review and comment until May 15, 2021
at https://regionalparks.saccounty.net/Parks/Documents/ARP_NRMP_Public_Review_Draft_03-15-21.pdf

Sacramento’s New Homeless Plan

Another effort to address the homeless situation that helps the homeless and the residential and business communities suffering from the impacts of homelessness.

We wish them well, and this article about the new effort is from *City Express*.

An excerpt.

“Permanent supportive housing. Triage centers. Navigation centers. Safe camping. Safe parking. Motel conversions.

“These are some of the key strategies the City of Sacramento is utilizing to address homelessness via its Homeless Master Plan.

“The City Council on Tuesday shared district-specific updates on [the master plan](#), including potential sites for operationalizing these strategies. The Council also discussed guiding principles for the plan as well as “good neighbor” policies that will ensure that future shelter operations successfully cohere with their respective communities.

“The master plan is intended to designate sites – and really pre-approve sites – as much as we can to create thousands of roofs, beds and spaces for people,” Mayor Darrell Steinberg said.

“Steinberg emphasized the need to create enough shelter space so the City could effectively operate under the [Martin vs. The City of Boise](#) ruling, which states that it is unconstitutional to punish people for sleeping in public places when there aren’t enough shelter beds or housing available as an alternative.

“I think it’s really important that we link the Martin vs. Boise case and the desire to regulate ... the time, place and manner in which people can camp,” Steinberg said. “The only way we can do that is if we create enough capacity to be able to offer someone who is camping where we don’t want them to camp a safe place where they can camp or hopefully a place where they can have a roof over their heads.”

“Following Steinberg’s comments, Council members provided updates on the community meetings they have been holding in their districts. Council member Katie Valenzuela, who has been leading work to help campers [displaced by construction](#) on the W/X freeway, said she had identified potential locations in her district to accommodate up to 2,000 people in tiny homes, triage centers and safe camping.

“Council member Jeff Harris said his community meetings had been useful to not only inform the public of what the City is working to accomplish, but what the City already had accomplished as well.

“It was enlightening, I would say, for all of my constituents to understand that we have, for instance, housed 2,700 people last year,” Harris said. “That’s an astounding number and quite a tremendous win. But I worked hard to point out that this is a numbers game. Because of COVID, more people fell into homelessness than we could address.”

“The Council will review specific sites in each district at workshop meetings scheduled for April 13-May 4. The final vote for the master plan likely will occur in June.”

Retrieved March 28, 2021 from [City Council provides district-specific updates on homeless master plan – City Express \(sacramentocityexpress.com\)](#)

David H. Lukenbill, Founder/CFO & Senior Policy Director
American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS)
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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter Special #9, April 23, 2021

Turtle Pond/Sailor Bar Pond

A nearby resident called us and asked our help in getting out the word of the deterioration of this beloved pond so close to the Parkway that most folks assume it is part of it, but apparently is located on state property

She describes where it is and the current situation:

“Turtle Pond is located in the north edge of the entrance to Sailor Bar Park off of Illinois Avenue in Fair Oaks. It’s been a huge draw for fishing and families with kids teaching them how to fish. It’s been there for more than 50 years. It was a wonderful habitat for migratory birds such as wild ducks, geese and cranes and of course turtles. It also provided a place for the river otters to have their babies and there has always been beaver activity as well...It is now covered with an invasive plant species that began sometime during the winter months and has been completely covered for the past 2 months or longer. No sign of wildlife activity except the turtles seemed to be hanging on.”

According to this April 15, 2021 story from *Fox 40*, it is a plant called red mosquito fern.

Here is an excerpt.

“FAIR OAKS, Calif. (KTXL) — Fair Oaks residents are looking to the county for answers and action after an aquatic plant has taken over a popular pond.

“Usually, around springtime, the water at Sailor Bar Pond is crystal clear. But recently, it has been completely taken over by red mosquito fern, and concerned people are saying there has been no effort to control it.

“Fair Oaks-native Recardo Hernandez has been going to Sailor Bar Pond ever since he was a young boy.

“It’s beautiful, it’s green, there’s a lot of green. You can see all the turtles, you can see through the water,” he told FOX40.

“But Hernandez’s childhood haven has been taken over by a unique aquatic plant called azolla, or in this case, the red mosquito fern, which continues to grow out of control.

“It’s a problem Matthew Penny has also been watching for several months and created his own [public service announcement](#).

“Ducks will still come in and land on it but they’re not even getting wet,” Penny explained. “It can almost support the entire weight of a pretty big bird. The material alone would probably take dump trucks worth to capture it all.”

“It is significant,” said Kenneth Casparis with Sacramento County’s Regional Parks Department. “This is more than we’ve seen in the past.”

“Casparis said they have received numerous complaints from people who frequent the once-busy fishing spot in Fair Oaks and are worried the thick fern may be having a negative impact on local wildlife.

“When you have dense populations of the fern, the mosquito fern like we have here, it does block the light that goes into the water and it can deplete some of the oxygen levels in the water,” Casparis told FOX40. “Over the last two or three months, we’ve received a couple of reports of beavers being found around the pond. So we’ve contacted the Department of Fish and Wildlife to see if they’ll come in and help us determine a cause of death for those beavers.”

“According to Casparis, the native species poses no immediate threat to the public or other wildlife.

“Obviously, going to look at minimizing the amount of fern in there and seeing how we can curb the growth, but at this point, we don’t have plans to remove the fern from the water,” he said.”

Retrieved April 23, 2021 from [Red fern carpets Fair Oaks pond \(fox40.com\)](#)

David H. Lukenbill, Founder/CFO & Senior Policy Director

American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS)
*Preserve, Protect, and Strengthen the American River Parkway,
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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #228, May 10, 2021

Bass Eating Salmon

And therein lies the rub, as this story from *Ag Alert* reports.

An excerpt.

“Boosting flows on San Joaquin River tributaries may not bring the desired benefits to populations of protected salmon—because predatory bass in the rivers apparently eat half or more of juvenile salmon, regardless of river flow, according to studies by a fisheries consulting firm.

“The work on the lower Stanislaus River by the firm FISHBIO ties into a long-running debate about whether more water must be retained in the rivers, and therefore unavailable for human use, to benefit protected fish. In late 2018, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted a plan that would require water users to leave “unimpaired flows” of 30% to 50% in three San Joaquin tributaries: the Stanislaus, Tuolumne and Merced rivers.

“That plan became the subject of numerous lawsuits, while water districts and government agencies continue efforts to negotiate voluntary flow agreements intended to achieve the same fisheries goals with less-significant water-supply impacts.

“Andrea Fuller, senior biologist and principal of FISHBIO, said she and other fisheries biologists have been studying the hypothesis that salmon could be lost to predators “in high numbers.”

“Now,” Fuller said, “we have the data to say, even in good water years, we still have the potential for the predator population to consume upwards of 50% of the salmon produced.”

“With river flows as high as 5,000 cubic feet per second, she said, “we’re losing 50%-plus.”

“The bass are still eating salmon at 5,000 cfs at the same rate that they are at 1,000 cfs, and over a broad range of water temperatures,” Fuller said. “No matter what you do with flow, you’re still going to have substantial predation.”

“FISHBIO researchers gathered data on the lower Stanislaus River near Riverbank last week, as part of the Stanislaus River Native Fish Plan, a study funded by the Oakdale Irrigation District and South San Joaquin Irrigation District. The districts receive water supplies from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation under pre-1914 water rights on the Stanislaus.

“The study intends to learn the abundance of fish predators in the Stanislaus near the confluence with the San Joaquin. It was authorized in 2016 through the federal Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, and conducted in collaboration with state and federal fisheries agencies.

“With the use of “rotary screw traps” and fish-tracking technology, the FISHBIO team is estimating the number of juvenile salmon that enter and exit the river’s migratory corridor, Fuller said.

“If that mantra is correct, that more flow is going to give you more fish, then where are the fish? They’re not here. The numbers have dropped dramatically,” she said, adding that the impact of predators “seems to be in conflict with their desire to get more flow—but it shouldn’t be mutually exclusive.”

Retrieved May 5, 2021 from [Biologists say predators eat half of salmon \(agalert.com\)](https://www.agalert.com)

David H. Lukenbill, Founder/CFO & Senior Policy Director
American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS)
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E-Letter #229, June 9, 2021

Homelessness, More Government Money Adds to Problem?

Discouraging, but many folks who follow this issue have suspected this for years and in this excellent article at *California Globe*; tragically, we learn more.

Two excerpts.

“Earlier in the year, California lawmakers proposed a \$20 billion plan to give California cities funds to combat the homeless epidemic. Gov. Gavin Newsom proposed \$12 billion in spending, which seems only to entice more homeless people to move to California, and grow the mentally ill drug addicted street population.

“In a May statement, the Governor’s press office said:

“Governor Newsom’s \$12 billion plan to tackle the issue of homelessness will be the largest investment of its kind in California history. This investment will provide 65,000 people with housing placements, more than 300,000 people with housing stability and create 46,000 new housing units.

“In 2019, California had roughly 134,000 homeless people, amounting to one-quarter of the nation’s total homeless population. Some in the state admit to 161,000 homeless now, but looking at the governor’s numbers, it’s clearly much larger.

“In April, Gavin Newsom bragged that California set up a national model to “solve homelessness” by converting hotels into homeless housing. “Project Roomkey” hasn’t exactly been a success, with likely 200,000+ homeless in the state. And reports of scores of unused trailers in several cities isn’t helping.

“Untreated homelessness is so bad in Los Angeles, a U.S. District Court Judge ordered the city and country of Los Angeles to offer housing or shelter to the entire homeless population in the Skid Row neighborhood by October.

“And that is the real problem – the “homeless” are mentally ill, drug addicted street people who aren’t getting treatment. Many aren’t as much “unhoused” as they are “unsober” and “unhealthy” mentally. A friend in law enforcement said that for most of the drug addicted, mentally ill homeless, they can’t make it in society and never will.

“They need more than a trailer or old hotel room – involuntary psychiatric care is what mental health experts say is needed.

“California’s State Auditor Elaine Howle issued a rather scathing audit in February over the management or mismanagement of Homelessness in California. She said that the state continues to have the largest homeless population in the nation “likely in part because its approach to addressing homelessness has been disjointed.”

“Howle said “At least nine state agencies administer and oversee 41 different programs that provide funding to mitigate homelessness, yet no single entity oversees the State’s efforts or is responsible for developing a statewide strategic plan.”

“The state’s plan to mitigate homelessness is not designed to achieve this, as the audit shows. Because if the 9 agencies and 41 different programs did mitigate homelessness, they would no longer be needed, the federal and state funding would dry up, and public employee union jobs would be lost. In California, no program ever sunsets.

“California has spent \$13 billion in just the last three years on the massive homelessness problem. The auditor said the approach to dealing with homelessness is so fragmented and incomplete it actually hinders efforts at getting people into stable housing. And the auditor found the Continuum of Care organizations (CoCs) “do not consistently employ best practices to improve homeless services in their areas. The five CoCs we reviewed do not adequately conduct a comprehensive annual gaps analysis,” the Auditor reported. And two of the CoCs don’t even have current comprehensive plans.”

“Last year, Newsom vetoed a bill that would have created a uniform data-collection system on homelessness spending, saying the measure was duplicative and would create additional and unnecessary data collection costs,” KCRA Channel 3 reported. “However, the auditor found a lack of coordination between agencies, and largely, no accountability by any agency our the task force.”

“The Treatment Advocacy Center, whose goal is “Eliminating Barriers to the Treatment of Mental Illness,” issued a recent report on the lack of psychiatric care available in the 50 states. California earned a D- grade.

“*Grading the States: An Analysis of U.S. Psychiatric Treatment Laws* examines the laws that provide for involuntary treatment for psychiatric illness in each state. For each state, we analyzed whether an individual who needs involuntary evaluation or treatment can receive it in a timely fashion, for sufficient duration, and in a manner that enables and promotes long-term wellbeing.

“To do so, we asked a crucial question: Does the state law allow an individual in need of involuntary evaluation or treatment to receive timely care, for sufficient duration, in a manner that enables and promotes long-term stabilization?”

“The report explains: “Public mental health is primarily the responsibility of state and local government. State legislatures pass laws establishing the criteria and procedures for when and in what manner the state may override an individual’s refusal of mental health treatment.”

“Each state was evaluated on the following criteria and recommendations based on the Treatment Advocacy Center’s analysis of the treatment laws in each state, and key components of an ideally functioning system of mental illness treatment laws....

“The Treatment Advocacy Center also compared states to the other states in each category: Emergency (out of 15), Inpatient (out of 35), Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) (out of 50).

“California earned a score of 8 in Emergency (out of 15); 17 on Inpatient (out of 35); and 34 on Assisted Outpatient Treatment (out of 50).

“In the *Statutory Barriers to Treatment*, the Treatment Advocacy Center recommends against requiring certification by more than one professional in order to initiate emergency evaluation. “We found that five states – Alabama, Alaska, California, Idaho, and New Jersey – have adopted laws with this onerous requirement, which poses an artificial barrier to treatment.”

“California did not fail in every category, but the D- grade indicates there is a lot of room for improvement in the psychiatric care available for California’s mentally ill living on the streets – or lack thereof.

“As the California State Auditor reported, her office reviewed a number of other states which have charged a single agency with addressing homelessness statewide and tracking funding information centrally. “These other states have fared better than California in stemming the number of people who experience homelessness.”

Retrieved June 4, 2021 from [Spending on CA Homeless Increased Street Population, with Scant Treatment for Mentally Ill - California Globe](#)

David H. Lukenbill, Founder/CFO & Senior Policy Director
American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS)
*Preserve, Protect, and Strengthen the American River Parkway,
Our Community’s Natural Heart*
Email: DLukenbill@msn.com
Weblog: <http://riverparkwayblog.wordpress.com/>
Website: <http://www.arpps.org/>

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

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #230, July 9, 2021

The Parkway's Suburban Setting

In 2012 we finished our sixth research report, *The American River Parkway's Suburban Setting: The Sacramento Dream*

I love living in the suburbs and particularly enjoyed the research going into that report and I had occasion to reread it after perusing a new book on suburbanization that continued the ravaging of one of the greatest products of modern technology—private car ownership—as the prime culprit, in their opinion, of the evil of suburban sprawl.

Suburban living is an ancient way of living and a part of human history as long as cities have existed, which our report noted.

Here is the Executive Summary:

1) One of the primary reasons the suburbs have historically been an important refuge for city dwellers wishing to escape the city, is safety; most particularly when they are out and about in the city's public space, the city sidewalk, about which Jane Jacobs writes. "When people say that a city, or a part of it, is dangerous or is a jungle what they mean primarily is that they do not feel safe on the sidewalks." (pp. 9-10)

2) The smart growth oriented urban planner in Sacramento looks out over the sea of suburban housing surrounding the American River Parkway and sees wasted space, but the people fortunate enough to live here, see sacred space; space devoted exclusively to their families and their private lives, space where their children are relatively safe and can grow to maturity within the most defining aspect of the American Dream, the California suburban lifestyle, the Sacramento Dream. (p. 12)

3) While the car, among the urban planning community, is largely tainted by the negative narrative of suburban living—and correctly the cause of some pollution—much of the value of being in our own car as we tool around the community to work, play and shop, is the way in which it provides an extension of our personal space and comfort, as a buffer against the often chaotic and hard-edged nature of the public space we all have to traverse daily. (p. 15)

4) The suburban lifestyle we enjoy today—the “mass phenomenon”—is one sought from ancient times. “Outside the walls of Rome was what citizens called *suburbium*, meaning what was literally below or outside the walls. Here were land uses that couldn’t be accommodated in the city...” (p. 19)

5) In California the war against the suburbs is full-throated, as Kotkin (2011, July 26) writes: “In recent years, homeowners have been made to feel a bit like villains rather than the victims of hard times, Wall Street shenanigans and inept regulators. Instead of being praised for braving the elements, suburban homeowners have been made to feel responsible for everything from the Great Recession to obesity to global warming. In California, the assault on the house has gained official sanction. Once the heartland of the American dream, the Golden State has begun implementing new planning laws designed to combat global warming. These draconian measures could lead to a ban on the construction of private residences, particularly on the suburban fringe.” (p. 23)

6) Living in the suburbs is at the heart of the American Dream and virtually every day, I am reminded in some way of the great joy that is part of our family life largely resulting from our life in the suburbs, whether it is the busy chirping of the flocks of birds eating from our bird feeders or bathing in our bird baths, or the squirrels eating up the sunflower seeds sprinkled on the patio each morning, or the occasional hawk finding our back yard to keep the dove and squirrel population in check; or the warmth of the winter and early spring sun when sitting in the back yard, and the refreshing cool of the pool under the blazing Sacramento summer sun; and the peace and quiet largely surrounding us broken occasionally by a barking dog or the playing of the neighbors children or the murmur of a barbeque party; being able to jump in the car and within a couple minutes to be shopping in the grocery store or ordering in a restaurant for a spontaneous meal; or take the short walk to the river; it is all wonderful, all part and parcel of suburban life in the suburban communities surrounding the American River Parkway and the river flowing through it. (p. 26)

7) There is so much that has been learned over the past several decades about city planning and so much still needing to be learned, and for one fundamental idea—the actual structure of our cities—we can look to Bogart (2006) who wrote. “Even by 1960 observers such as Jane Jacobs and Jean Gottman has discerned a new structure for metropolitan areas, although popular interpreters of their work have neglected this insight. This new structure was called the *polycentric city*, in recognition of the multiple centers of economic activity that now comprised the metropolitan area. While some people have recognized this change for more than forty years, it still has surprisingly little impact on the design of public policy. (pp. 27-28)

The full report is accessible on our website at [Report5-SuburbanSetting\[1\].pdf](#)

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American River Parkway Preservation Society E-Letter #231, August 16, 2021

ARPPS Homeless Policy Brief

Sacramento has developed another effort to help the homeless (available here, [Final+2021-08.04+Sac+Homeless+Master+Siting+Plan+PUBLIC_DRAFT_WEB.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)) and we want to contribute to that by reminding public leadership that the Parkway has been devastatingly impacted by illegal camping.

Illegal camping by the homeless has been a serious issue in the Parkway before and since our founding in 2003, so we have, of necessity, been studying what can be done.

Helping the Homeless

Considering everything historically done to keep the homeless from illegally camping in the Parkway has not worked—indeed the problem is much worse now than even a few years ago—we suggest the adaptation of the Haven for Hope model, see brochure here [H4H Tri Fold MAY2018.pdf \(havenforhope.org\)](#) that has been so successful in San Antonio; which is the only model we have discovered providing the scale and help necessary while meeting the requirements of the Ninth Circuit's 2018 ruling in **City of Boise v. Martin**, which prohibits cities and counties from enforcing anti-camping laws unless there is shelter available for all local homeless.

An excellent article by Craig Powell who visited Haven for Hope can be read here, [The-San-Antonio-Way-Haven-for-Hope-Focuses-on-Transforming-Lives-of-the-Homeless.pdf \(eyeonsacramento.com\)](#)

Protecting the Parkway

County Parkway Rangers with city and county law enforcement assisting, accompanied by homeless treatment personnel, need to be given all the funds and political support needed to help move homeless campers from the Parkway to the homeless housing and treatment campus—based on the Haven for Hope model—many have suggested for Sacramento.

As far as siting goes—if public leadership decides this is a good way to proceed—vacant city or county properties, especially those with existing facilities that could be repurposed for the homeless housing and treatment campus, should certainly be at the top of the list

Michael Rushford, *President of the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation, ARPPS President*

Pete Bontadelli, *Director of the Biological Resources and Permitting Group at Analytical Environmental Services, ARPPS Vice-President,*

David Lukenbill, *Nonprofit Management Consultant, ARPPS CFO & Senior Policy Director*

David H. Lukenbill, Senior Policy Director
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American River Parkway Preservation Society E-Letter #232, September 7, 2021

Homelessness in the River District

We have been given permission by the author to publish this very important letter concerning the homeless situation in the River District, which, along with the Woodside neighborhood, and the Parkway, is surely homelessness Ground Zero in our area.

The Letter:

Sacramento County Supervisor Phil Serna
700 H Street, Suite 2450
Sacramento, CA 95814

August 19, 2021

Re: Item 22, 8/24/2021 Board Of Supervisors Meeting

Dear Supervisor Serna,

You will recall that I attended at the August 10th meeting of the Sacramento County Supervisors to speak on item 29, a progress report on Project Room Key (PRK) given by Acting Director Ethan Dye. While the item had no action attached to it, the River District Board is acutely interested in PRK because the River District has been hosting La Quinta Inn, a Project Room Key hotel, since April of 2020. At inception we were told that the hotel would be an emergency shelter for three months only. Supervisor Serna, we knew that once the hotel was established it wouldn't be three months but we never imagined it would be this long. Now, 16 months later, we have weathered several extensions and I note that item 22 on the 8/24/2021 meeting agenda is an ask made to the Board of Supervisors to extend PRK until November of this year and then through April of 2022. Today, on behalf of our board of directors, I am asking you to choose a different location from La Quinta Inn in the River District for this extension.

We understand, share, and support your dedication to housing our unsheltered neighbors and the River District has certainly been doing our part. For the last 30 years the River District, which is in your District 1, has supported the vast majority of the homeless and social services for the Sacramento region. Our 1.25 square mile area currently supports Union Gospel Mission, (60 emergency shelter beds) Quinn Cottages, (60 units of permanent supportive housing) The Salvation Army Shelter, (132 emergency shelter beds + 28 homeless hospital discharge beds) the County-run A Street Shelter, (100 emergency shelter beds + First Steps Communities triage) the VOA run Family Shelter on Bannon Street, (62 family shelter units) the City-run North 5th Street shelter, (120 emergency shelter beds + 100 new beds proposed in the City's new comprehensive homeless siting plan) La Quinta Inn (168 Project Room Key beds) and Sister Norah's Place and Mary House, (19 beds for homeless women). If we do the math, that's **849 units of sheltering inside our 1.25 square mile boundary**. In addition to shelter beds, the River District currently hosts numerous other social and homeless services including Loaves and Fishes which draws 600-1000 people per day for meals and to spend the day in Friendship Park. Further, the River District is estimated to have over 1500 people living, unsheltered, on our sidewalks, in our bike lanes, on city street shoulders, up against the America River Parkway and camped against private business. It is our fervent desire to reduce the human suffering our businesses witness daily and also the impact on those same businesses. Having said that, we would prefer not to be asked to continue to carry the lion's share of the burden and would prefer that another location be selected for the continuation of PRK.

The River District has been an accommodating partner for the county. Since April of 2020 we have agreed to each extension and have only asked for four things:

1. Fill the rooms at La Quinta with those currently unsheltered in the River District.
2. Share the daily security reports from the La Quinta
3. Share aggregated data on how many participants housed at La Quinta are from the River District vs those who are from outside the River District.

4. An end date and exit strategy for people left unhoused once the program ends.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to secure any of those things.

The unsheltered who live on River District streets and along the American River Parkway are some of the hardest to serve and PRK needs to show success by filling the rooms. That has meant that our unsheltered population remains outside while the rooms are filled with those from other areas who are easier to serve. A troubling byproduct of this outcome is that our population of unsheltered has grown as the friends and family of those residing in La Quinta traveled to the River District and set up camps adjacent to and on the American River Parkway, along Bercut Drive and on CalTrans land close by the hotel. Our privately contracted security calls to areas surrounding the hotel increased significantly as those housed at La Quinta socialized with friends and family in our public spaces and urban campsites instead of at the hotel where outside guests are not permitted. Our security provider has cataloged this trend.

While we did receive some security reports at the beginning of the program in 2020 we have never received information about where the residents were pulled from and how many were from the River District. Anecdotally we have been told by a reliable source that most of the residents were not recruited from within our boundary and frankly, this is not surprising given our population of hard to serve individuals. Early in the program we asked for some clarification on certain incidents outlined in the security reports. We were not asking for individual information but, rather, clarification on the process for transporting those who failed out of PRK due to what we read in the reports. Our greatest concern was that folks would simply walk away into the River District and the first few reports outlined that exact happening. The response to our request for clarity led to our version of the report being quickly scrubbed of this data. Eventually we simply told the provider that the reports were no longer helpful.

In terms of an end date and exit strategy we have had numerous conversations with County staff around what the plan is to move people from the hotel into a more permanent solution and an exit strategy for those who remain unhoused when PRK wraps up. To their credit they have been transparent that no such exit strategy exists. We have also asked for information on whether people will be returned to the areas from which they came if they fail out of the PRK program. Our worry is that, absent a strong commitment to resettlement at the point of origination, individuals fail out into the service-rich River District increasing the human suffering of both those now homeless again and our business owners who are being crushed under the weight of the human condition.

This time we are asking you, our county supervisor, and your colleagues who are copied to direct County staff to exit La Quinta and rehouse those currently in residence there to other properties instead of considering an extension at this location. We are overburdened and feeling the pinch. The deck of services needs reshuffling and some of our cards need to be dealt to other players.

Respectfully, Jenna Abbot
Executive Director
Capitol Station District DBA The River District

916 321 5599

cc. Acting Director Ethan Dye
Supervisor Don Nottoli
Supervisor Sue Frost
Supervisor Patrick Kennedy
Supervisor Rich Desmond
River District Board of Director

David H. Lukenbill, Senior Policy Director
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Appendix II: Quarterly Newsletters

American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter: Issue 68 – Fall 2020

Contents

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Annual Report Introduction | Page 1 |
| Resource: <i>Other Parks Managed by Nonprofits Partnering with Government</i> | Page 5 |
| Society Information: | Page 6 |

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 resource 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.

Our Annual Report is posted online at http://www.arpps.org/ARPPS_Annual_Report_2020.pdf

Other Parks Managed by Nonprofits Partnering with Government

This has long been advocated by the American River Parkway Preservation Society as the optimal method, based on our research, for increasing funding and providing dedicated daily management of the Parkway.

This type of public/private partnership is not a new idea and is being done by several parks around the nation:

Forest Park in Portland, <http://www.forestparkconservancy.org/>

San Joaquin River Parkway, <http://www.riverparkway.org>

Sacramento Valley Conservancy,
<http://www.sacramentovalleyconservancy.org/index1.asp>

This one in San Diego is managed by a Joint Powers Authority, <http://www.sdrp.org>

Local example of a nonprofit contracting with city to run the Sacramento Zoo, <http://www.saczoo.org>

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;
VP/Secretary, Pete Bontadelli, Project Director/Consultant, Analytical Environmental Services
Chief Financial Officer/Founder, David H. Lukenbill, President, Lukenbill & Associates

American River Parkway Preservation Society
2267 University Avenue * Sacramento, CA 95825
E-Mail: Dlukenbill@msn.com
Website: www.arpps.org * Blog: www.riverparkwayblog.wordpress.com
Newsletter Editor: David H. Lukenbill, Senior Policy Director

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

Our Guiding Principles

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

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

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American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter: Issue 69 – Winter 2020/2021

Contents

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Article: <i>Suburbia Rules: Now & in the Future</i> | Page 1 |
| Article: <i>Restoration Ecology</i> | Page 3 |
| Society Information: | Page 6 |

Article: *Suburbia Rules, Now & in the Future*

Indeed, as this article from *New Geography* explains; and as a suburbanite in a suburban city, this shines.

An excerpt.

“Mr. Covid has been the best city and regional planner Australia has ever had. The suburbs will shine, and regions will grow. Maybe we should forget about big city infrastructure projects for a while and spend it on our future resilient communities where people look out for each other.”

“That is a note from late 2020 from a good friend of mine - a highly regarded town planner in Australia, who has led city planning both for large metro cities and worked across the globe, most lately in the Middle East. He is no fool. The irony is – and he is right – that it has taken a global pandemic to shake ourselves out of from the focus on centralised, high density urban cores, surrounded by dormitory suburbs from which workers would commute daily, preferably in high volume public transport, to their city-based offices. Our subservience called for endless amounts of [public money to be thrown at inner city altars](#), rewarding the increasingly privileged professional clergy who enjoyed commensurately rising real estate prices, while suburban areas languished.

“But the lure of the emerald city was always an illusion. In early 2013 in [“The demography of employment part one: a suburban economy,”](#) I made the observation that none of the actual evidence supported this vision:

“We have collectively developed a fixation on our CBDs and inner-city areas as economic drivers of employment. While they are very significant in size, they are not dominant relative to the

spatial distribution of jobs throughout metropolitan areas. If the evidence is clearly pointing to cities with employment overwhelmingly located in suburban locations, and points to this trend continuing, it is possible that a variety of public policy settings could need resetting given the realities of our urban environment. It is equally possible that opportunities for growth and development to meet market demand for employment lands in suburban locations haven't yet been fully captured."

"By early 2015, in "[Is it time for suburban renewal?](#)" I wrote: "*there seem now to be no shortage of publicly funded initiatives focused on delivering a better quality of urban existence within a five kilometre ring of the CBD, and too few focused on the hard and soft infrastructure deficits that our suburban areas are still living with.*"

"However, no end of evidence or public debate was sufficient to wrest the planning orthodoxy from their centralised vision of the inner urban economy and its elites living, working, and playing within a mystical 5-kilometre ring of a CBD temple.

"Even obvious policy failures – rising congestion, chronic infrastructure lags and falling quality of life – did not test the faith of planners and pundits in the religion of centralisation. A 2018 ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) News investigation into overcrowding and infrastructure inadequacies in Sydney and Melbourne prompted the Planning Institute of Australia to respond with the suggestion that what was needed to fix the problems caused by centralisation and density by pushing more centralisation and density: "*We want Tokyos, Parises, and New Yorks – and we can do that by planning well.*" The fact that this policy prescription was electoral poison, and against the demonstrated market preference of consumers, was clearly irrelevant to PIA at the time.

"But as my friend has since wryly observed, a virus has changed all of that. Property industry leaders who once worshipped at the altar of centralisation have sniffed the winds and seen hope of new salvation in the suburbs. Fund managers are [predicting a significant fall in demand](#) for CBD offices as workers adopt more amenable work-life practices – working from home or from suburban hubs. The chief of publicly listed developer Stockland – Mark Steinert – [is now publicly predicting](#) a shift of the entire metropolitan economy away from CBDs to more suburban locations. Such comments would have been heresy only just 12 months ago and no doubt been savaged by Stockland's investors. This now amounts to conventional wisdom.

"The evidence is flooding in globally: high density urban cores are finding economic demand surge towards suburban homes or suburban work hubs. There has been an exodus of workers and their employers from centralised, expensive cores. Once prized New York real estate is [boarded up, tenants gone](#). Manhattan offices now are being touted as possible residential conversions.

"Elon Musk has [declared he is moving to Texas](#), while tech giants Oracle and Hewlett Packard have similarly set up shop in the more affordable, more amenable, more liveable cities of the Lone Star State. Fast growing US city economies are no longer poster-children cities like NYC or San Francisco or LA, but mid-scale cities like Austin Texas, Nashville Tennessee, or Phoenix, Arizona. The move is on. Remarkably, for the first time in 170 years, California has actually [lost population](#).

"Even the Emerald Isle – Ireland – has seen Covid-induced changes to work lead to public policy responses in support of remote working. "COVID-19 has brought a change in terms of the way we work and remote working - or connected working, as I call it - is now a reality," [said Irish Minister Social Protection Minister Heather Humphreys](#). "It was an aspiration only a year ago, and now it's a fact of a life - and it's a good thing".

“Here at home, the evidence is also piling up. Regional economic growth *even before* Covid, according to the [Regional Australia Institute](#) was shifting away of the CBDs. This trend appears to be [getting an adrenaline boost from Covid](#). Exhausted by lockdowns, the lure of a less dense environment is proving hard to resist for growing numbers of workers and employers. Regional cities that lie within a couple of hours of a major capital or an established lifestyle regions – Geelong or Bendigo in Victoria, or Newcastle, Gosford, or Byron in NSW - have been the first to feel the wave of demand from fleeing city dwellers.

“Only the most fervent centralist could not acknowledge that the age of centralisation has come to end. Indeed, as much was observed to be happening pre-Covid by the respected [Brookings Institute in early 2019](#) - the process is accelerating and is unlikely to reverse.

“Where does this leave the anti-suburban elites - the likes of Australian urbanist Elizabeth Farrelly who [infamously declared](#): “*The suburbs are about boredom, and obviously some people like being bored and plain and predictable, I'm happy for them ... even if their suburbs are destroying the world*”?

“Hopefully, it leaves them without a worshipping congregation anymore. After all, you can save energy and reduce emissions simply by working at home, or close to it. It is a lot more effective and convenient than taking the bus or crawling through big city traffic. Suburbanization could prove a surprising solution to reducing GHG. Hopefully, this will lead to a new emphasis on suburban infrastructure, from regional town centers to better wireless networks.”

Retrieved January 8, 2021 from [The Age of Suburbia | Newgeography.com](#)

Article: *Restoration Ecology*

A very interesting article from *Aeon Magazine* about the pros and cons of this strategy.

An excerpt.

“It is our sad lot that we love perishable things: our friends, our parents, our mentors, our partners, our pets. Those of us who incline to nature draw this consolation: most lovely natural things – the forests, the lakes, the oceans, the reefs – endure at scales remote from individual human ones. One meaning of the Anthropocene is that we must witness the unravelling of these things too. A tree we loved in childhood is gone; a favourite woodlot is felled; a local nature preserve invaded, eroded and its diversity diminished; this planet is haemorrhaging species.

“When a rare Panamanian frog was named in 2005 for George Rabb, an eminent herpetologist and friend to many in the Chicago conservation community, we celebrated this newly named animal. By the time he died in 2017, Rabb’s fringe-limbed frog (*Ecnomiohyla rabborum*) was assumed extinct in the wild.

“There are two types of charisma: the charisma of the lit stage and that of the lambent sanctuary. Rabb’s charisma was the latter, softer, form. One of the most influential conservation biologists of his generation, he directed the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago from 1976 until 2003. He was involved in the protection of species and habitats around the globe. I first met him in the late-

1990s at a meeting of the Midwestern regional conservation alliance, Chicago Wilderness. What I learned from George – who knew keenly what it is to endure loss – is that repair is possible.

“I had moved to Chicago in 1998 after several peripatetic years as a young scholar. Chicago’s reputation for art and architecture – in which I had a keen and longstanding interest – was familiar. This provided at least one reason why the move there was pleasing. Perhaps my youthful reading of Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906) had overly impressed me, as I had not anticipated much nature in that city. However, I happily discovered that, in place of Sinclair’s industrial ‘jungle’, there was much wild greenspace. The greater Chicago area has about 200,000 acres of protected open land (about the size of Shenandoah National Park in Virginia).

“I have now devoted two decades of my research life to thinking about conservation challenges in these fragmented preserves. Alongside such studies, I adopted a more serious approach to understanding art and learning, as an avocation: how to draw, if not well, at least well enough to illustrate a recent [book](#). It took years for me to appreciate how cultivating these private aesthetic interests might influence my professional outlook in conservation biology.

“The Chicago Wilderness alliance, where I first met Rabb, advocates for the protection of species in these wild lands within hitting distance of a sprawling metropolis. After I’d attended and contributed to a few meetings in the late-1990s, George, then in his 60s, ambled over and quietly presented me with copies of several scientific papers that he said would be helpful. These papers referenced the relatively newly minted discipline of ‘restoration ecology’. I had heard the term before but hadn’t realised that restoration management was regarded as the best hope for Chicago’s ailing ecosystems. Oak savanna, tall grass prairie and other relictual Midwestern habitats – where only small stands of once-vast habitats remain – are considered globally imperilled, rarer, in fact, than many iconic tropical habitats. Oak savanna, for example, with its well-spaced bur oaks and lush herbaceous undergrowth, was more or less resurrected from the dead (fittingly, the last remaining exemplars of this habitat were often found in old cemeteries). So rare had some of these ecosystems become that protection alone would never be enough; these natural areas needed active resuscitation. They needed restoration.

“William Jordan III, one of the pioneers of the field, coined the term restoration ecology while working at the University of Wisconsin-Madison arboretum in the 1980s, describing it as ‘the attempt, sometimes breathtakingly successful, sometimes less so, to make nature whole’. Where ecosystems have been degraded because of human activity – including an overexploitation of useful species, invasion by exotic pests, erosion of soils, pollution from excessive nutrients, overgrazing by animals, and so on – restoration promises to reverse the damage and give these systems new life.

“The practice was first championed as a cutting-edge conservation strategy by professional groups such as the Society for Ecological Restoration, established in 1988. Undeniably, there was controversy in the decade or so after. To what, exactly, should systems be restored or, more accurately, to *when* should they be restored: perhaps the target might be the conditions prior to European settlement in the United States, or, at an extreme, might we rewild to the conditions prevailing in the late Pleistocene? Some philosophers fretted over the ontological status of these newly managed systems – are they ‘faked nature’? Some Chicago writers complained that restorationists were ‘carving up the woods’. Some policy scholars worried that seeing nature as repairable could justify harsher use of the environment: why be concerned about resource extraction if all the parts sundered in the process could be adroitly returned to their place? Nonetheless, by the 1990s, restoration practices had gained widespread support among academic ecologists and landscape managers.

“In 1992, that titan of biodiversity conservation E O Wilson declared: ‘The next century will, I believe, be the era of restoration in ecology.’ True to this promise, and setting some of the early intellectual skirmishes aside, the successes of ecological restoration since have been numerous.

“In his [book](#) *Our Once and Future Planet: Restoring the World in the Climate Change Century* (2013), the environmental journalist Paddy Woodworth travels the globe bearing witness to the work and interviewing the architects of some iconic restoration projects. Noteworthy successes include the landscape-scale restoration project at Área de Conservación Guanacaste (ACG) in Costa Rica, an effort led by the conservationists Dan Janzen and Winnie Hallwachs. ACG stretches across several habitats – tropical dry forest, rain forest and cloud forest – and by some estimates the restored landscape provides habitat for up to 350,000 species.

“In New Zealand, where conservationists have been trying to bring back some of that country’s rarest species, such as the black robin and the Chatham Island taiko, from the brink of extinction, large-scale restoration is also underway. Another example, close to my heart since I spent several summers in the early 1980s volunteering in such efforts, are attempts to restore Irish oak woodlands. Despite Ireland’s image as a verdant island, it is the least wooded European country, most of the primeval woods having been felled centuries ago. Restoring hardwood forests to Ireland, in some cases by converting thousands of hectares of former commercial coniferous plantations to native woodland, would be a conservation achievement of immense significance. Several projects are already reporting success, and should increase habitat for trees, rare bryophytes, insects and rarer mammals.

“In the decades subsequent to my arrival in Chicago, I have learned all I can about restoration ecology, becoming both a published researcher in that subfield and a practitioner (in a minor key). I have cleared brush, I have burned acres, I have scattered prairie seed. I have witnessed great successes, and I have been aggrieved by the shortcomings of some of the work. Some of these shortcomings I initially took to be local problems, but now I realise are universal ones.

“Two instances, in particular, still haunt me.

“Almost 20 years ago, I hitched a ride from Chicago to the town of Normal, Illinois. It was shortly after learning about ecological restoration from Rabb, and I had become an immediate enthusiast, thinking of it as the great innovation of our era. Thus, I was travelling to a conference at Illinois State University with a restorationist who built wetlands for a mitigation-banking scheme. Under the US Clean Water Act, a wetland destroyed in Chicago, for example – by extending a parking structure, say – could be offset by the creation of a wetland of equal value in the same watershed, though far from the city.

“It was a summer day, the car windows were open, and we were brimming with optimism. A few miles out of Chicago, my friend mentioned that one of his sites was coming up; we could turn off the highway to witness it. As he described it, this wetland had been restored to a full flourishing of species – plants, amphibians, birds. However, when we pulled up and got out of the car, we saw it had become a cattail marsh, almost a monoculture. ‘We monitored it for years,’ he remarked stoically. And on we went. Again and again, he announced a project was coming up, and each time he registered his disappointment. It was as if we were wandering about the Louvre, looking for masterpieces, and yet all we were seeing were canvases blackened and charred. By the time we got to Normal, the restorationist was not even slowing down.

“More than anything else, this trip complicated my early enthusiasm about the prospects for an easy fix – determination alone would not suffice.”

Society Information

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2267 University Avenue * Sacramento, CA 95825
E-Mail: Dlukenbill@msn.com
Website: www.arpps.org * Blog: www.riverparkwayblog.wordpress.com
Newsletter Editor: David H. Lukenbill, Senior Policy Director

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**American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter:
Issue 70 – Spring 2021**

Contents

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Announcement: <i>American River Parkway Plan</i> | Page 1 |
| Articles: <i>Sacramento Flooding & Auburn Dam</i> | Page 1 |
| Article: <i>Sacramento Flooding</i> | Page 3 |
| Article: <i>Americans Love the Suburbs</i> | Page 4 |
| Society Information: | Page 6 |

Announcement: *American River Parkway Plan*

It is available for public review and comment until May 15, 2021
at https://regionalparks.saccounty.net/Parks/Documents/ARP_NRMP_Public_Review_Draft_03-15-21.pdf

Article: *Sacramento Flooding & Auburn Dam*

One of the major results of the Auburn Dam—the entire process might have to start all over and if it is built before it is needed—is strengthening the levees below it by giving more storage and more control over water releases; as the current Folsom Dam has proven inadequate to safely handle control of water releases in a major storm year.

This article from the *Denver Channel* discusses the weak levees throughout the country, including Sacramento.

“The U.S. levee system — once considered the second largest piece of the country's infrastructure ["rivaled only by the highway system"](#) — is now nearly a century old and failing inspections far more often than it passes them. Only one in 25 federal levees are rated Acceptable.

“Newsy's data analysis of the [National Levee Database](#) in the spring of 2020 focused on two things: the status of the overall infrastructure and finding the nation's most vulnerable levees.

“In the federal portfolio of levees, the most common inspection rating is Minimally Acceptable (57.1%). [It means](#) at least one part of the levee doesn't meet standards, but should survive a flood. Unacceptable ratings (38.7%) — meaning the levee isn't expected to perform as intended in a flood — are far more common than Acceptable ratings (4.2%).

“This trend is true across all types of levees, regardless of whether the federal government or locals built and maintain them.

“U.S. levees currently protect 19.5 million people, 5.5 million structures and \$2.5 trillion in property value.

“We focused on the 73 levee systems that were both rated Unacceptable and have been designated by the Army Corps of Engineers as being High Risk or Very High Risk. The Corps says nearly all of them have fixes either underway or in planning stages, though fixes often take years or decades.

“Those systems can be found nationwide, from the Sacramento region in California to the south Florida seaboard; from Appalachia to North Dakota to the Mississippi River Valley.

“And the people who maintain those vulnerable levees say their problems are remarkably similar: systems that are too old and far too expensive for locals to fix, much less replace.

“Brian Bracey, the executive director of the Water Quality Board in Huntington, West Virginia, says he has sleepless nights thinking about the levee system protecting the city.

"We jokingly, around with our staff and our senior leaders here, have said we should get T-shirts that say, 'Build our wall,'" says Bracey.

“Huntington — a city where nearly one-third of residents live below the poverty rate — has one of the oldest large-scale levee systems built on the Ohio River.

Bracey says the city struggles just to operate its infrastructure from the 1940s. Repairing or replacing it can't happen with local money alone.

“Joseph Countryman, a member of the Central Valley Protection Board in the Sacramento region, says the problem is nationwide and worsening. California has pumped hundreds of millions of dollars into the region's levees after a [devastating flood and dam collapse](#) in the mid-1980s, but he says the improvements aren't close to enough and red tape slows progress.

"The funding just isn't there," says Countryman. "If you're behind a levee, you're in a dangerous situation. And you should take it seriously and do what you can, but realize if you're going to count on the federal government, you're going to wait. It's not going to happen tomorrow."

Retrieved March 8, 2021 from [The Most Vulnerable Levees In The Nation Have A Lot In Common \(thedenverchannel.com\)](#)

Article: *Sacramento Flooding*

So far there isn't much concern about flooding this year, and this article from *Channel 10* reports on the situation, and while the article does not directly mention it, it is clear that Sacramento's flood protection system would benefit greatly from the Auburn Dam helping protect the levees below it.

An excerpt from the article.

“The risk of spring flooding due to Sierra snowmelt is low but Sacramento's flood risk remains near the top in the U.S.

“SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Sacramento is typically ranked first or second in the country for the risk of flooding.

“The region is surrounded by the Sacramento, American and Cosumnes Rivers. The American and Sacramento Rivers have flood control measures like weirs, bypasses and Folsom Dam. The Cosumnes River is an uncontrolled and natural river running from the Sierra Nevada foothills and flowing into southern Sacramento County.

“Most of the area is farmland, and farmer levees were made for containing storm flows.

“Much of the flood control system is over a century old. Some parts of the aging infrastructure is undergoing retrofitting to protect much of the growing population from catastrophic flooding like that in 1986, '92, '96, '97 and 2017.

“Some of those major floods were due to big atmospheric rivers, dumping rain in the valley and snow in the Sierra. Warmer weather followed and quickly melted snow, sending too much water downhill. The rivers, streams and dams couldn't hold it all. Water began overflowing riverbanks and putting pressure on levees that eventually gave way, allowing water into low-lying areas.

“This year, the California-Nevada River Forecast Center is forecasting a low potential for flooding due to spring snowmelt.

“The latest snow measurements show the statewide average is at 60%. Most of the state is also experiencing some level of drought conditions.

“March, April and May could still bring large storms with heaving rain and snow. This will keep flooding a concern in California with the potential of accumulated rain plus snowmelt through the spring season.”

Retrieved March 4, 2021 from [California Spring Flood Outlook 2021 | abc10.com](https://www.abc10.com/news/local/california-spring-flood-outlook-2021/)

Article: *Americans Love the Suburbs*

And, during a time such as now, the movement there from the big cities is accelerating an already existing trend, as reported by *American Enterprise Institute*.

An excerpt.

“America's urban leaders seem to prepare for the post-pandemic future with delusions that everything will go back to the way before the COVID-19 pandemic set in. Nothing can be more dangerous to the prospects for cities; the pandemic and recent rise in crime have created a vastly different prospect for cities, necessitating serious reconfiguration.

“Typical of the new urban hype was a recent Bloomberg report, which proudly declared “[Why We Don't Believe the Big City Obituary](#)” and proceeded to share statistics of a national survey of 1,200 residents of the nation's six largest metropolitan areas — New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Phoenix, and Philadelphia — about their attitudes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report

made numerous strong conclusions in support of city life, including that the bulk of residents in big cities “say they want to live in the type of community in which they currently reside.”

“Of course, this report made no mention of the movements within urban areas before COVID-19, where the population was already leaving core cities for suburbs and exurbs. Indeed, [well over four-fifths of all job and population growth](#) over the past decade took place in suburbs. And since the pandemic gripped the nation, there’s been [accelerating movement of city residents](#) to suburbs — Manhattan and San Francisco rents are falling, but those in the periphery have been rising.

“Indeed, the cities that have recovered fastest from COVID-19 — Denver, Charlotte, Nashville, and Dallas — are themselves overwhelmingly suburban. This fits well with the latest reading from a new [Los Angeles Times/Reality Check Insights national poll](#), which was taken after the November 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This national sample presents a slightly different, less rosy picture. In fact, when residents of big cities were asked about the ideal setting of their next home, a majority of big city dwellers said something other than their current situation. Just 44 percent would pick a big city once again, with significant numbers preferring a small city (9 percent), rural areas and towns (17 percent), or the suburbs (25 percent). Small cities did not fare much better either; only 38 percent of small city dwellers claim that their ideal location is another small city.

“Moreover, those most willing to leave are precisely those who cities need to stay. Only 35 percent of those with incomes over \$100K would ideally remain in a big city, compared to 44 percent of those with incomes under \$50K and 54 percent for those between \$50K and \$100K.

“The survey also directly asks respondents whether they would move away from their current community if they could, and Americans who live in big cities are the most likely to strongly state that they want to leave for somewhere else. Thirty-two percent of big city dwellers state that they would definitely move away from big cities if they could; this is notably greater than the quarter of those who live in suburbs of big cities and small cities who feel the same way, as well as under a fifth of all residents in suburbs of small cities (17 percent), rural areas (18 percent), and small towns (17 percent).

“Perhaps surprisingly, younger Americans are notably more interested in leaving big cities if they could. While 22 percent of Boomers state that they definitely would move elsewhere, more than a third of Gen Xers (36 percent) and Millennials (37 percent) definitely would leave big cities if they could. This lends credence to many other reports which have found that [younger Americans are](#)

[happy in areas outside big cities](#) but may be anchored to them for career opportunities.

“Finally, relationship status — where one is married, single, or living with a partner — has no real impact on leaving, as about a third of each group state that they would definitely leave the big city. But having children makes a big difference; having children under the age of 18 makes one twice as likely to claim that one would definitely leave a big city if one could do so.

“Rather than act as if nothing has changed, city leaders need to adjust to a new reality, where more people will choose to live not simply for employment but also for personal preferences. This should make them re-think pushing high-density housing and instead place more emphasis on things that might persuade them to stay like safe streets, strong neighborhoods, safer alternatives to transit, and better schools.”

Retrieved February 15, 2021 from [Despite wishful thinking, cities won't come back without major reform | American Enterprise Institute – AEI](#)

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American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter: Issue 71 – Summer 2021

Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| July Blog Roundup: | Page 1 |
| Society Information: | Page 6 |

Fusion Energy

In the field of energy, fusion is the ultimate and this article from The Economist about one effort is excellent.

An excerpt.

“An old joke about nuclear fusion—that it is 30 years away and always will be—is so well-known that *The Economist*’s science editor forbids correspondents from repeating it. No one doubts sustained fusion is possible in principle. It powers every star in the universe. Making it work on Earth, though, has proved harder. Engineers have tried since the 1950s, so far without success. The latest and largest attempt—ITER, a multinational test reactor in southern France—has been under construction for 11 years and is tens of billions of dollars over its initial, \$6bn budget.

“But that record does not dismay a growing group of “alternative fusion” enthusiasts. Through a combination of new technology and entrepreneurial derring-do they hope to beat ITER to the punch. On June 17th one of their number, a Canadian firm called General Fusion, put its investors’ money where its mouth is. It said it would build a demonstration reactor, 70% the size of a full-blown commercial one, at Culham, the site of the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy, Britain’s national fusion-research laboratory. Like ITER, it hopes its reactor will be up and running by 2025.

“Power play

“On paper at least, fusion is attractive. Existing nuclear plants rely on fission—the splitting of heavy atoms, usually of uranium, into lighter ones. The energy thus liberated is used to boil water into steam, which then turns turbines that make electricity. Fusion plants attempt to do the opposite, generating heat by combining light atoms to make heavier ones.

“Unlike coal or natural gas, fusion would produce no planet-heating carbon dioxide. Unlike solar panels and wind turbines, fusion plants could operate in any weather. Unlike fission plants, they pose no risk of spreading nuclear-weapons technology, and should generate much less radioactive waste. They offer safety, too. “I like to say that fission is easy to start and hard to stop,” says Christofer Mowry, General Fusion’s boss. “Fusion is the opposite.”

“Fusion is hard to start because it requires extreme conditions. Most Earthly fusion reactors aim to combine deuterium with tritium. (Both are isotopes of hydrogen, in which the single proton in that element’s nucleus is joined by either one or two neutrons.) Protons have a positive electrical charge, and like charges repel. Persuading two atoms to join forces therefore means overcoming this repulsion. And that requires a great deal of energy.

“General Fusion’s idea is to forge a middle path between two existing approaches, magnetic-confinement fusion (MCF) and inertial-confinement fusion (ICF), with less need for heroic engineering than either. ITER is a doughnut-shaped type of MCF reactor called a tokamak. It is intended to use carefully controlled, high-intensity magnetic fields to heat a hydrogen plasma to hundreds of millions of degrees Celsius, and then hold that plasma stable while its atoms combine. The trick is to control the fields precisely enough to keep the super-hot plasma together for long enough to allow a significant amount of

fusion to happen. The present record, held by an experimental reactor in France, is six-and-a-half minutes. ITER's goal is a reaction that lasts up to ten minutes.

“ICF forgoes finicky magnetic fields in favour of super-powerful lasers. Experiments like the National Ignition Facility, in California, use carefully timed pulses to smash fuel pellets from all sides, heating them to temperatures similar to those in MCF plants, but also compressing them by the application of billions of atmospheres of pressure. Thanks to this crushing pressure, fusion happens much more quickly. The hope is that, one day, a useful amount of energy can be produced and harvested in the tiny fraction of a second before the zapped pellet blows itself apart. Once again, though, properly controlling the lasers and ensuring that the pellet is evenly compressed has proved tricky.

“General Fusion calls its own approach “magnetised target fusion”. The basic concept dates back to the 1960s. The firm's reactor, says Mr Mowry, does away with magnetic confinement by using powerful electric pulses to create self-stabilising blobs of plasma that are injected into the reactor's core. He compares this to blowing a smoke ring, in which the air currents within the ring allow it to maintain its shape for a few seconds before it dissipates.

“The puffs of plasma actually last around 20 milliseconds. That would not be long enough to extract much energy were they to be injected into an MCF reactor. But it is long enough for them to be compressed, as in an ICF machine—and by something far less exotic than banks of advanced lasers. The core of General Fusion's British reactor will be lined with molten lithium and lead. Once a puff of plasma has been injected, ranks of gas-driven pistons will compress the core, changing it from a cylinder to a sphere and drastically boosting the fusion rate (see diagram).

“But while laser compression happens in mere billionths of a second, General Fusion's takes thousandths—comparable with the timescales on which internal-combustion engines operate, and well within the capabilities of digital electronics to fine-tune. The upshot, the firm hopes, is a reactor which should be cheaper and simpler to build and operate than either an MCF or ICF machine.” Retrieved June 28, 2021 from [The race to build a commercial fusion reactor hots up | The Economist](#)

Suburbs are Social

This article from *New Geography* refutes the misconception that suburbs are sterile.

An excerpt.

“Popular culture and academia alike are quick to celebrate the vibrant social life of urban spaces while lamenting the [sprawling emptiness and privacy of rural and suburban](#) America. Take Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical *In the Heights*, a vibrant

depiction of bustling life in New York’s Washington Heights neighborhood, in contrast to the solemn words of historian Kenneth T Jackson: “There are few places as desolate and lonely as a suburban street on a hot afternoon.” And, like Miranda, the band Green Day chronicled the opposite facet of American life in its musical, *American Idiot*, which focuses on the [empty life of suburbia and stifling suburban wastelands](#).

“Of course, there are just as many urban areas devoid of street life as there are intensely social suburbs. Still, [many believe](#) there are [meaningful differences in sociability](#) based on where Americans reside. New data from AEI’s Survey Center on American Life and its new report, “[The State of American Friendship](#),” counters this narrative and finds little difference in the social lives of urbanites, suburbanites, and their rural counterparts.

“The data from the [May 2021 American Perspectives Survey](#) reveals few differences in the socialization and friendship habits of those living in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Fifty-one percent of Americans who live in urban areas and suburban areas say they are completely or very satisfied with the number of friends that they have. Rural-dwelling Americans are not far behind their more densely packed counterparts, with 50 percent stating they are satisfied with their number of friends.

“Feelings of loneliness and isolation can manifest as easily in dense cities as in sprawling suburban and rural areas. About a quarter of urbanites, suburbanites, and rural Americans reported feeling lonely or isolated at least a few times in the past year (27 percent, 25 percent, and 26 percent respectively). Approximately two-thirds of each residential type report the past year was more difficult to manage than usual. Urban, suburban, and rural Americans all struggled in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic — no one location was a panacea.

“Differences in friendship across urban areas are minor to non-existent. Thirty-seven percent of Americans who live in urban, suburban, and rural conurbations all report having one to three close friends. Ten percent of urbanites report having no close friends compared 14 percent of those in suburban and rural areas. Despite prolonged periods of social isolation and quarantine that characterized much of American life over the past year, nearly half (46 percent) of Americans report having made a new friend within the past 12 months — again, with no appreciable variance by urban form.

“Across cities, suburbs, and rural communities, Americans are making friends in similar ways. Fifty-five percent of suburban and rural respondents have made close friends through employment or career channels, while urbanites are somewhat less likely to do so (52 percent). Almost half have met close friends through their own educational paths. Roughly a third of Americans in each urban form report meeting close friends in their neighborhood. Rural and suburban Americans are not lacking in social connection compared to those living in urban areas; equal numbers of neighbors become close and intimate friends regardless of spatial order.” Retrieved June 16, 2021 from [Suburbs Are Not Less Social Than Cities | Newgeography.com](#)

Dams & Desalinization

Yes, we need both, as this great article from *California Globe* explains.

An excerpt.

“When Californians can take showers, without flow restrictors, for as long as they want, and when Californians can have lawns again instead of rocks and cacti in their front yards, water infrastructure in California will once again be adequate.

“When California’s farmers can get enough water to grow food, instead of watching their suddenly useless holdings of dead orchards and parched furrows get sold for next to nothing to corporate speculators and subsidized solar farm developers, water infrastructure in California will once again be adequate.

“One of the difficulties in forming a coalition powerful enough to stand up to the corporate environmentalist lobby in California is the perception, widely shared among the more activist farming lobby, that desalination is more expensive than dams.

“That’s not true. It depends on the desalination, and even more so, it depends on the dam.

“As a baseline, consider the cost of desalination in California’s lone large scale operating plant in Carlsbad north of San Diego. The [total project costs for this plant](#), including the related pipes to convey the desalinated water to storage reservoirs, was just over \$1.0 billion. At a capacity to produce 56,000 acre feet per year, the construction cost per acre foot of annual capacity comes in just over \$17,000.

“When it comes to the price of desalinated water, payments on the bond that financed the construction costs form the overwhelming share of the cost per acre foot.

“For example, California’s second major desalination project, the [proposed plant in Huntington Beach](#), will have a total project cost of \$1.3 billion. Similar to Carlsbad, this plant will produce 50 million gallons of fresh water per day. A 20 year bond paying 7 percent will require annual payments of \$122 million. That payment, applied to the hundred cubic foot increments, or CCF, that typically appear on a consumer’s water bill to measure their consumption, comes up to \$5.03. By contrast, the cost per CCF for the desalination plant’s operating expenses is only \$0.41, and the price per CCF for a desalination plant’s electricity consumption (at \$0.10 per kilowatt-hour) is only \$1.08. Initial construction costs, comprising 77 percent of the price of desalinated water, are the only reason desalination is considered expensive.

“Compare this to the price of water from reservoirs, keeping in mind that paying off the construction costs for the dams are also the biggest variable in determining how much consumers have to pay for that water. With dams, unlike desalination plants, two factors come into play: the storage capacity, and the annual yield. With desalination plants the

yield is up to the managers. Run the plant, out comes fresh water. With dams, how much water is released from the reservoir to downstream consumers in any given year depends on rainfall.

“For this reason, the average annual *yield* of the reservoir is the most accurate way to measure its cost effectiveness. And this amount can vary widely. One of California’s biggest proposed new projects is the [Sites Reservoir](#). It would be situated in a valley west of the Sacramento River, north of the Delta. As an off-stream reservoir, it would have water pumped into it when storm runoff is causing flooding. A twin to the already existing San Luis Reservoir, located west of the California Aqueduct south of the Delta, the Sites would have a capacity to store 2.0 million acre feet. But its yield is estimated at 500,000 acre feet per year.

“In the case of the Sites Reservoir, this compares favorably to desalination. The Sites project is estimated to cost \$5.0 billion, so the construction cost per acre foot of annual capacity comes in at \$10,000, better than desalination at \$17,000.

“On the other hand, the case of the proposed [Temperance Flat Reservoir](#) is not so clear. The estimated cost for this dam is \$2.6 billion and the planned storage capacity is 1.3 million acre feet. So far so good. But while estimates vary, the most optimistic projected average annual yield is around 100,000 acre feet per year. This equates to a construction cost of \$26,000 per acre foot of annual capacity, considerably worse than desalination.

“Does the fact that desalination yields a better return on construction costs than Temperance Flat mean that the Temperance Flat Reservoir project should be abandoned? Not necessarily. Back in 2017, during record rains, the [San Joaquin River flooded](#), and that water – desperately needed by San Joaquin Valley farmers – could have still been in that reservoir and available for use today. The advantage of big surface storage reservoirs is not their return on capital investment, it’s that they can prevent flooding in wet years, and hold massive quantities of water in reserve for dry years.

“Similarly, foes of desalination point to the more cost-effective Sites Reservoir proposal as evidence that desalination is too expensive. But the productivity of desalination is impervious to droughts; the water just keeps coming, year after year, no matter what. And the electricity required to run desalination, while significant, is no greater than the electricity currently used by a series of massive pumping stations necessary to transport water from north to south, over the mountains, and into the Los Angeles Basin – over 2.5 million acre feet per year.

“Infrastructure development in California has been paralyzed by litigation and legislation. The result is a self-imposed scarcity of water that can be solved by an all-of-the-above strategy to develop new dams *and* desalination plants. Civilization requires a footprint, a plain fact that wasn’t lost on previous generations. We’ve learned how to mitigate the worst impact of new infrastructure, but cannot let the ideals of ecological perfection be an excuse to impoverish ourselves.” Retrieved June 7, 2021 from [Dams and Desalination – California Needs Both – California Globe](#)

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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American River Parkway Preservation Society
2267 University Avenue * Sacramento, CA 95825
E-Mail: Dlukenbill@msn.com
Website: www.arpps.org * Blog: www.riverparkwayblog.wordpress.com
Newsletter Editor: David H. Lukenbill, Senior Policy Director

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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