Bridgeport News
South Yuba River State Park
South Yuba River Park Association

SYRPA Newsletter
October 2011

The Ghosts of Bridgeport – October 30

Halloween is supposed to be a scary time with ghosts, witches and tricks. This year there is a Halloween event that is fun for the whole family. Janine Martin, who has been organizing this year’s event, wants everyone to have fun at the Fall Festival. She also said “this is a terrific way to show support for our local State Parks. It’ll be a great afternoon, lots to learn, lots of activities, a haunted bridge and admission and parking are free”. So, before going out next evening to Trick or Treat, visit the Park and be a part of “The Ghosts of Bridgeport Return on Halloween”! The South Yuba River State Park invites you to the Fall Festival on Sunday, Oct 30, from 11:00-4:00 PM. There aren’t any witches or tricks, but there are lots of other activities. The Friendly Ghosts return to Bridgeport and tell their stories at the Covered Bridge. Once again, Mark Lyon, the Ghost Tour Guy from Nevada City and Grass Valley will call forth spirits of several Ghosts who lived, loved, laughed and worked in our wonderful part of the world. They will appear and tell you of their lives in the late 1800’s.

For kids there is face painting, pumpkin painting, wagon rides and games for all ages. For adults there is music by “Ragged But Right,” living history characters and blacksmith demonstrations. There will be gold panning, magic Halloween wands and head bands, and loads of fun. Besides all the activities, there will also be lots to learn. The Visitor Center will be open with a whole new selection of children's books.

Local author and birder Carol Malnor will be there to sign her children’s book “The Blues go Birding Across America”. The Audubon Society has some special activities for the children. There will also be great food and drink available: Penn Valley Chamber of Commerce will be selling hot dogs, baked potatoes and drinks, June’s Deli’s will have a selection baked treats, and a selection of ice cream will be

Continued on page 2
**SyRPa Newsletter October 2011**

**Page 2**

**Fall Festival**
Continued from page 1

available from Lazy Dog Ice Cream. Or, bring your own picnic and sit under a shade tree. The event is sponsored by the South Yuba River Park Association. Association President Dave Anderson said “this is one of the best opportunities to learn about the Park and to have a great time with the family”. The admission and the parking are free, so come visit the Park and be a part of the “Ghosts Return to Bridgeport”. The Park is on Pleasant Valley Rd where it crosses the South Yuba River just north of Penn Valley. Call the Visitor Center for more information, 530-432-2546 or visit the Association website which is at www.southyubariverstatepark.org.

Glenn Fuller

**Visitor Center News**

As we wind down the busy summer season at the Park, we want to thank everyone that helped to keep the Visitor Center open every day. It takes a lot of people giving their time to make it happen, and we are very grateful. Starting on Tues. Sept. 5th, we shifted to our Fall through Spring schedule which is Thurs. through Sunday from 11 to 4. At some point in the winter, we will shorten the time to 3pm, but that date has not been determined yet. We will let everyone know when that date is selected.

For those of you who have been to the Park recently, you will have noticed that we have added several new items to our store. We are now offering wine glasses with the bridge logo, bandannas with a bird, flower or the bridge logo, tote bags with the bridge logo and more t-shirts with flowers and birds. Please note that a docent may order the bandannas or totes in their own choice of colors or design by giving Bev Morgan a call. It is a great opportunity to have your item personalized to your own taste. We hope you like the merchandise we have selected.

The 30th of October will be our Fall Festival this year and we will need four docents to operate the VC that day. The morning shift will run from 10:30 to 1:30 and the afternoon shift will run from 1:30 to 4:30. If you would like to participate please let us know. There will also be other venues that need help, and if you would like to try your hand at helping the children paint pumpkins or participate in another area, please contact Bev Morgan or Glenn Fuller or Janine Martin. It is always a huge event at the Park and we need all the docent support we can find.

Visitor Center Committee

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**Independence Trail Update**

It has been a very busy spring and summer out on the Independence Trail. Much work has been done to help bring the trail back to a good standard. However, more work will be needed. SyRPa volunteers are planning several work parties this fall and winter.

This spring some funds were found and State crews worked on the east trail. A lot of brush and a downed oak tree were removed. Several small flumes (bridges) were repaired, redecked, and new railing installed. Work was done to drain rain water and smooth the trail surface. With some more brush removal, the east trail should be accessible through the fall.

Some time ago, the Nevada City Rotary donated funds to place benches on the trail. Two beautiful redwood benches were constructed by the “Over the hill gang” at Empire Mine State Park. The benches were then transported to the trail, placed at two locations and set up for use. Volunteers Ron Berry, Bill Haselhorst, Frank Hamlin, Steve Pauly, Ron Ernst and Warren Wittich worked to complete the

Continued on page 3
Independence Trail Update
Continued from page 2

Birdwalk October 15

Bill Cortright will lead the final birdwalk of the year on Saturday, October 15. Meet at 8am at the north parking lot across the river.

We will be looking for the American dipper, common merganser, white crowned sparrow, phainopepla, rock wren, Audubon warbler, wrentit and canyon wren.

Ranger Report

What an interesting summer it has been! With park closure discussions at the forefront, a late start to summer with high water flows into July, and almost half of our normal ranger staffing, it has been a challenging few months. Due to deep snow late into the year, the high water runoff continued into mid-July this year. Visitation did not pick up until July 16 and peaked in late August with a very high number of visitors around the weekend of August 20. We were not able to fill any of the vacant ranger positions this summer, but we did receive some assistance from retired rangers Mike Smittle and Jon Burgasser to fill some scheduling holes. Marc Wetherbee and James Carey did a fantastic job this summer at Bridgeport, and they also covered Empire Mine special events after their regular shifts. Rangers Jane Hall (Empire Mine), Greg & Christy Sherr (Malakoff) and I covered the upper end of the river this summer trying to keep a lid on illegal activity and keep the public safe. Fortunately, we did not have any fatalities or serious injuries.

I want to thank all the volunteers who have helped this summer keeping our park open and safe. We would not be able to offer the high level of public service we do without your commitment. While we have not been told (as of this writing) whether South Yuba River State Park will close, we have been told to attempt to offset some of the operating cost deficit by charging parking fees in our parking lots for the first time ever. Soon we will have begun installation of some type of self-pay station in both the main and north parking lots. This is a project that will require assistance and support from Nevada County and the local residents who may be impacted by vehicle restrictions placed on Pleasant Valley Road. The issue of park closures has been on the burner for a while, and we’re getting closer to the implementation of the $11 million cut for fiscal year 2012/2013. It is imperative that everyone stay informed and involved with the South Yuba River Park Association and your state parks. We are facing great fiscal challenges which will require your help in the coming months. Above all, keep smiling and enjoy the Fall season on the river.

Don Schmidt
**Falcon Auto Club Visits the Park and Shell Station**

The River City Chapter of the Falcon Club of America visited the Park on July 23. Several sedans, convertibles and Rancheros from the 1960 were in the group. Docent Dave Macdonald was the host and interpreted the bridge, barn, gas station and cemetery. The tour was followed by photos at the gas station and a potluck picnic.

Earlier in July, Steve and Jane Hobart of Stockton, drove their 1964 Falcon Ranchero 2,063 miles to Steamboat Springs, CO, where they took a first prize at the FCA National Convention.

The restored gas station certainly is a magnet for car clubs.

**New Paint and Signs for the Gas Station**

New signs are up. Accent colors have been added to the gas station to the concrete foundation, island, portico support poles, cold storage room, garage doors, and trim.

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**President's Message**

I know that we all have the same question about our park remaining open. Although we have not received any official notification as to when the park is supposed to close, and it is still on the closure list, there are some hopeful signs. The state has backed down on closing some parks already because of legal constraints. It appears that, if there is sufficient reason, a park may be removed from the dreaded closure list. Another development is that our Supervising Ranger has been directed to implement a system for collecting parking fees at the Bridgeport North and South parking lots. In my opinion this is encouraging because I believe the decision as to which parks are to be closed was based almost entirely on cost versus revenue. As you probably know, our park had no entrance fees and no revenue for DPR, so it was an easy target. This development may provide an opportunity to offset some of the cost of park operations. Our biggest expenditure is for Ranger Staff necessitated by the large patrol area and the four river crossings. By obtaining some relief on patrol responsibilities so that staffing can be reduced and by showing some revenue, the danger of closure may be mitigated.

I continue to remain upbeat. The SYRPA Board is continuing to plan for future events and will conduct business as usual. We continue our membership and fundraising events and continue to support the financial and interpretive needs of the Park. Our park store has been especially strong in providing funding for our efforts and I would like to thank our visitor center volunteers for their efforts and positive attitudes. I believe that a vibrant, supportive and active park association can also make a difference with the DPR decision makers. You can help by attending the Fall Festival—See you there!

Dave Anderson