Dinner with John Muir

As a Special Event Fundraiser the South Yuba River Park Association presents “Dinner with John Muir” on Friday, June 7th at 5:00 PM. We invite you to step back in time to enjoy, learn and be a part of John Muir’s life. The evening will start at 5:00 PM with a social hour of wine and other beverages at the Empire Mine State Historic Park Club House. Then a special treat - gourmet dinner catered by Chef Antonio Ayestaran from 6-7 PM. Dinner includes Fruit Platter, Garden Salad, Chicken Scaloppini, Mesquite Grilled Tri Tip, Vegetable Medley, Rice Pilaf, Rolls and Brownie a la Mode.

The entertainment/educational portion of the evening from 7-8:15 will be an interpretation of John Muir by National Park Service Ranger Frank Helling. Frank recreates John Muir for us starting with his early life in Wisconsin until being recognized as the Father of the National Park Service in the early 1900’s.

Tickets are $75 per person and nearly the entire donation supports the Docent activities in the State Park. Reserve a table for 6–8 of your special friends in advance. To reserve your tickets for this limited seating event, please send a check to:

South Yuba River Park Association
PO Box 1658
Penn Valley, CA 95946
530-432-2546

For detailed information call:
Glenn Fuller  432-4432
Dave Anderson  432-2359

John Muir visited the South Yuba River in 1874. He wrote one of his most famous stories about being in the top of a pine tree during a violent winter storm. Afterwards he said “One of the most beautiful and exciting storms I ever enjoyed in the Sierra occurred in December, 1874, when I happened to be exploring one of the tributary valleys of the Yuba River”
HELP WANTED!

Sign Committee Members Needed

If you have been to Bridgeport lately you may have noticed that some signs and bulletin boards are missing or in a deteriorated condition. We are forming a committee to research and recommend new signs for the Park. The Association recently received a grant to fund the production of new signs. We invite you to participate in this rewarding project. If interested please contact

Ron Ernst: 432-8846 or
The Visitor Center: 432-2546

A-Tisket, A-Tasket

Help with Wildflower Basket!

Volunteers needed prior to wildflower walks on Sat and Sun mornings. It takes about one hour, from 10:15—11:15. A simple display of items from the Visitor Center, along with cold water and energy bars to get our walkers started. If interested, or more info, please contact

Patricia Stein: 432-3177

Dinner with John Muir Event

Volunteers needed to help with this very important SYRPA fund raiser. For information on how you can help, please contact

Dave Anderson 432-2359 or
Mickey Springer: 432-4926

Calling All Car Enthusiasts

Volunteers needed as Docents for Car Tours. Enjoy Vintage Auto Tours while showing off our Park. If interested please contact

Fred Huberty 432-7769

President’s Message

Spring is here and the flowers are bursting forth in their beauty. This is the time of year that our park is at the height of its glory. Be sure to plan plenty of days for hiking the trails and taking in the color. Tell your friends about our Wildflower walks and take advantage of them yourselves.

In the past few weeks Glenn Fuller and I have had the opportunity to represent our Association on two occasions in Sacramento. The first was a courtesy call on Maj. Gen. Anthony Jackson, USMC (Ret) who is now the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation. It was a wonderful experience and gave us great confidence that his leadership will lead the Department out of its current difficulties. He listened carefully to us and was very interested in the condition of our bridge. I have subsequently heard that he is making inquiries about our bridge within the Department. He expressed his desire to visit our park, especially as his wife is very interested in wildflowers.

The second occasion was to participate in Park Advocacy Day at the Capitol, sponsored by the California Parks Foundation. It was an all-day event with 220 representatives of Parks and Associations from all over the state visiting with their legislators to seek support for favorable parks legislation. The key messages were 1) that the work to defend our parks is not over, 2) we need to see confidence restored in our park institutions, 3) there needs to be a blueprint for the future of our parks, 4) there needs to be increased access to our parks and 5) overall funding remains insecure and inefficient to meet current and future needs. In our conversations with our fellow representatives there were many common concerns including $1.3 Billion in deferred maintenance, insufficient staffing, perceived lack of interest in the economic effects of park closures, inability to determine the actual costs of running each park and many others.

After team preparation and briefings from legislative guest speakers we met with representatives from Senator Price’s, Senator Nielson’s, and Senator Gaines’ offices. We also met with Assemblyman Dahle. Perhaps the highlight of our day was the speech given by General Jackson. He further reinforced our confidence that the Department of Parks and Recreation is in good hands and that he is taking the right actions to restore confidence in the Department. It was a long and tiring day but very much worth the effort.

Looking ahead, we have many things to look forward to. Our wildflower walks, gold panning, bird watching, school tours and barn tours are organized and ongoing. As you will read, we have an exciting fund-raising event planned in June and of course we are already planning our Fall Festival. If any of you would like to help in that effort we could really use your assistance. Please contact me or Mickey Springer if you are interested. See you in the Park.

Dave Anderson
SUPERVISING RANGER’S REPORT

Ahhhh, don’t you just love spring? Although I’ve spent the majority of my life in winter climates, I just love to watch California reawaken after winter, and springtime on the South Yuba River is as beautiful as anything I’ve seen anywhere in the world. I hope you plan to come visit this incredible park before the heat of summer reminds us of our true latitude.

I wish most topics were as light and airy as spring wildflowers, but unfortunately, they are not. The Little Hoover Commission has recently released its report on the state of California State Parks, and it can be summed up with the idea that change is always good. I have seen many positive changes since I started with State Parks in 1982, but other changes should have had more thorough thought. For example, one outcome in the report stated that we should have been focusing more on maintaining what we could fund, rather than acquiring more and more land. With a nearly $1.2 billion (with a “B”) backlog of deferred maintenance, it’s hard to disagree with their assessment. However, we would not have been able to protect places like the South Yuba River without the many land acquisitions that took place over the years to create open access to the river. Which decision would have been the better one to make?

From this point forward, you can bet that State Parks will be looking at budgetary decisions much more closely and with a much more multi-disciplinary approach. We will have to be prepared for others to look at our local park needs differently than we might, and know that the competition for funding particular projects is going to be tighter than ever. From this perspective, I would like to reiterate that your support for the partnership between California State Parks and the South Yuba River Park Association is more important than ever.

We have nearly completed phase one of our 2013 volunteer training, thanks to Ranger Dan Youngren, Ranger Greg Sherr, and Senior Park Aide Ehren Pelonio. We had a good group in attendance looking to become part of helping the public enjoy both South Yuba River and Empire Mine. The next phase will come in May when we train new River Ambassador volunteers in conjunction with the South Yuba River Citizen’s League. I’m looking forward to seeing the new (and long term – not “old”) volunteers out on the river this summer!

Come out to the park and enjoy this beautiful time of year!  

Don Schmidt
Docent Led Wild Flower Walks

Here is a special treat for those who want to get out, take a hike and learn about our incredible river valley. Docent lead Wild Flower Walks at the South Yuba River State Park begin March 16 and continue thru May 19, every Saturday and Sunday at 11:00 AM. This is a spectacular show of wildflowers.

Early in the season you will find Western Buttercup, Larkspur and Shooting Stars. By mid season the hills turn gold and purple with Poppies and Lupine. In mid to late season it is a special treat to find delicate Fairy Lanterns, Chinese Houses and Bird’s Eye Gilia. In mid to late season it is a special treat to find delicate Fairy Lanterns, Chinese Houses and Bird’s Eye Gilia. A real find is when you see the California Dutchman’s Pipe. You’ll learn about the unique symbiotic relationship it has with the Pipevine Swallowtail Butterfly.

The Docent lead hikes last about 2 hours. The Buttermilk Bend Trail is an easy 2 mile round trip with spectacular views of the River. Meet in the north parking lot, just past the concrete bridge which crosses the river on Pleasant Valley road. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water, snacks and a camera. Dogs are not permitted on the hike as the trail is narrow and the groups can be large. A $3.00 donation is requested. Rain may cancel the hike.

To make the day complete, allow extra time to visit the covered bridge and barn (both built in 1862), the restored 1920’s gas station and the Park Visitor Center. The Visitor Center has a great collection of wild flower books, bird books and many other educational items. It is open 11 -3:00, Thurs-Sun until Memorial Day and everyday 11-4:00 starting May 25th. For more info or questions call the park at 530-432-2546 or go to www.southyubariverstatepark.org.

New Visitor Center Sign

Back in late summer of 2012 our Visitor Center directional sign from the turnpike to the VC fell apart due to years of weathering. Attempting to find a suitable artistic or historic looking stock sign that the State could supply proved to be a difficult task. In my journey to find a volunteer artisan who had the skill to create a unique sign for Bridgeport I found Tom Bumgarner.

Tom was a welder for PG&E for 30 years before we enlisted his skills as a volunteer in the “Over the Hill Gang” at Empire Mine State Historic Park. Tom says he joined the OTH Gang to learn woodworking but once those guys found out he was a welder...well, let’s just say he’s still welding.

Tom has been welding broken things back together again and beautifying Empire Mine with his skills. He keeps pretty busy up at Empire so I was surprised when he offered his services to build our new Visitor Center sign for Bridgeport.

Tom found some letter templates online; he hand drew these templates on paper and transposed them to some sheet metal. He used a torch to cut out the letters, welded them together in an arrow frame, installed them onto a redwood board and welded a custom stand for the whole thing. He even created a custom State Park Bear template, incorporated that into the design and it turned out beautiful.

Be sure to come see our new sign next time you’re at Bridgeport. And thanks again Tom for applying your skills to our park and for creating such a lasting piece of visual art.

Ranger Marc Wetherbee

Visitor Center Update

Our thank-you get together for Visitor Center Docents was held on Feb.18th. It was well attended and fun. We hope everyone enjoyed seeing old friends and making new ones.

Spring is arriving and with it there are some new additions to our VC merchandise. We have new T-Shirts that are brightly colored and have four different sayings on them. We hope they will be well received, let us know what you think. We have added a beautiful new pottery mug in two colors, dark blue and dark green. They are made in the USA and are really quite nice. Some new style earrings have been added to our gold leaf collection. They are crafted by local artist Judy Cole. Last but not least we are now selling a selection of Cliff Bars and Mrs. Mays bars for our hungry visitors.

Please take a look at these new items and keep the Visitor Center in mind when you need a special gift. Thank you again for all your support. We could not keep it open without you.

Bev Morgan
News from Your SYRPA Board

Your SYRPA Board of Directors has term limits to ensure that there are opportunities for new ideas and thinking. Unfortunately, that also means that we lose some very hard working, talented people. This year, Director Steve Pauly has "termed out". He has served on our Board with distinction for six years and we are sorry to see him leave. Steve will, however, continue doing fine work as our Association Historian and Web Master.

As we will have three more Directors who will term out next year we have augmented our current board. This will allow new members time to become familiar with the nuances and responsibilities of the Board.

Our new directors are:
- Ginny Brown, Carol Malnor, Doug Moon and Bill Stamatis
- Ginny, as a volunteer, enjoys working as a Gold Panner and has served on committees for Lake Wildwood Association.
- Carol is also a volunteer and is the author of several children’s wildlife books. She is president of the local Audubon Society. You may have seen her booth at our Spring and Fall festivals where she entertained our youthful (and youthful thinking) visitors.
- Doug, also a volunteer Gold Panner, has been very active with the Association and participated in the effort to save our park. He and his wife Shirley are now the co-editors for our SYRPA newsletter.
- Bill has been active in the Welcome Club and served as their treasurer. He is a CPA and will bring that expertise to our board.

Welcome to our new board members. Please thank them for their efforts when you see them. President Dave Anderson

WELCOME TO OUR NEW RANGER!

Ranger Dan Youngren #1308

I grew up in the Sacramento area and attended El Camino HS graduating in 1998. While attending American River Community College, I also started my State Parks career. Like so many young folks, I had no idea what I really wanted to do in life and by chance, I started as a Maintenance Park Aide at Angel Island State Park. I knew after a week of scrubbing toilets and picking up trash, that State Parks was my future. I attended the Park Ranger Academy in 2004 were I graduated at the top of my class. My first assignment was Millerton Lake S.R.A located just outside Fresno, CA. Millerton Lake was an “eye opener” to say the least but I learned a lot about myself and the importance of teamwork, communication and good moral in the work place. I was a Field Training Officer for four years, training 15 new Ranger/Lifeguards. I am an EMR (medical) instructor and was an Acting Supervisor for two years prior to my transfer to South Yuba. I am currently engaged to Kelly Jones after 9 years together (I can hear that!) and we will be married in May. We live in a small zoo consisting of 5 cats and 3 dogs. Yes, we are crazy cat people. I am the world’s worst fishermen but still like to try and I am an avid snowboarder. I am so excited to be a part of something that is as special as the Volunteer Program at South Yuba and I look forward to working side by side with you all for many years to come.

SYRPA Seeks New Members

Many of you reading this already belong to SYRPA—and we thank you very much for your support. Your dues are an important part of our annual income and therefore our support to the Park.

We are beginning a drive to strengthen our SYRPA ranks. Increased membership is especially important now, as we are taking a larger role in the Park’s finances. Additionally, new direct support to the Park will be rewarded with matching funds derived from the “extra” $20 million recently discovered by State auditors.

Please seriously consider yourself, your friends, and your neighbors as new and continuing members of the Association. The new income will help us fund Park projects, develop trail guides, print wildflower, tree and shrub brochures, present the “Ghosts Return to Bridgeport” in the Fall, finish the restoration of the historic Shell gas station and preserve the historic wagons in the 1862 barn. Applications are at the Visitor Center and online at the Association website.

Paul Keasberry
In Remembrance of Howard Voshell

SYRPA member and Docent Howard Voshell passed away March 9, 2013. A native of Illinois, he served in the army in Korea, married his wife Norma in 1953, and lived in Lake Wildwood for the past 21 years. He was a member of the first docent training class for Bridgeport and enjoyed interpreting the bridge, barn and (especially) the gas station. His vision was for the renovation and restoration of the Shell Station. Howard delighted in giving tours to auto club members who enjoyed the excitement of driving their cars from the Virginia Turnpike entrance up to the Covered Bridge and the Shell Gas Station.

Docent Diane Marten recalls that “Within 24 hours of moving to Lake Wildwood, my doorbell rang and my new neighbor introduced himself and welcomed me to the community. “Hello, my name is Howard Voshell,” he said. After eyeing my husband’s golf clubs, he asked if I played, too. “No”, I said, “I like to hike, bird watch and enjoy nature and the outdoors.” Howard then began to tell me about the docent training program at Bridgeport. Through all of the adventures of becoming a docent and serving on the Board for SYRPA, Howard was always there to encourage me. He enthusiastically supported our Barn and Wagon Conservation Project.”

Howard’s ear-to-ear grin and optimism will be missed by all who knew him.

~~And Howard’s legacy continues……..

Datsun Car Club Visits -- Our First Car Tour of 2013

On Saturday March 23rd, the Sacramento Datsun Owners Club included a visit to the park during their “fun run” from Cameron Park. Eleven various models of older Datsuns (1968-1973) were escorted into the park along the Virginia Turnpike, and then parked near the barn and gas station. Both buildings provided a wonderful setting for photos, and the gas station was opened for their enjoyment. While the cars were on display, the group enjoyed a picnic lunch and the chance to attend a barn tour conducted by Don Denton. The tour was hosted by Fred Huberty with assistance from Ardie Obert. Car Tour Coordinator Fred hopes to continue the enthusiastic standard set by Howard Voshell over the years.

Fred Huberty