Save our Bridge Campaign

As all of you know, our treasured bridge is suffering from structural deterioration and deformation and as a result is closed for safety concerns. Engineering analysis to date has identified the initial work required to reopen and protect the bridge, although some additional work will be necessary to provide seismic and high wind protection. The cost of those initial repairs is currently estimated at $1.1 million. We have been informed that this fall there will be a $131,000 effort to stabilize the bridge to prevent further deterioration. That effort will not allow for the reopening of the bridge. The National Historic Bridge Preservation Program has awarded a Federal Grant of $545,359 to the State for the repair of the bridge, however, that grant requires matching funds of $43,629. As can be seen, even with that funding, there is still a shortfall of over a half a million dollars to perform these initial repairs.

With these challenges before us, the SYRPA Board has initiated an ambitious campaign to Save Our Bridge. The elements of the campaign include:

- Letters to the Governor and our State representatives informing them of the issue and soliciting their help in reallocating funds for statewide deferred maintenance in the parks ($1.3 billion) and encourage them to make repair of our bridge a high priority.
- Follow up with face-to-face visits with our representatives to fully inform them of the facts and efforts to date to save our bridge.
- Compose letters to and schedule face-to-face visits with the Department of Parks and Recreation Director and his staff and our District Superintendent.
- Commence community outreach to inform the public and to encourage their action to communicate with representatives and state officials.
- Work with community business leaders especially with the goal of documenting the beneficial financial impact of our parks to the community.
- Engage news media with information that can be presented by radio, newspapers, television and other media to encourage support for our efforts.

We have initiated an aggressive fundraising effort and have committed $20,000 of SYRPA funds to the repair of the bridge. We have applied for and received a $10,000 grant from the California State Parks Foundation. Those funds are to be matched by the State in a donor agreement between the State and SYRPA. That will ensure that the Federal matching requirement will be met and that about half of the required funding for the repair of the bridge will be available.

The covered bridge at Bridgeport is a valuable historic landmark in California history and one of a kind in the world. It must be saved.

We thank you, our Association Members, involved community members and organizations, for your continued support, and we look forward to a very successful Save Our Bridge Campaign.

Dave Anderson
Docent Led Wild Flower Walks

The Wildflower Walk Season was a success in several ways. Prior to the start of the season six brand new docents and several trainees participated in training classes. The flowers presented us with a very nice display this year, the weather was much more cooperative and the guests were plentiful in March and early April. It did get quite hot the last weeks of April and took a toll on the flowers however. As a result we cancelled the last two weekends of scheduled tours. Another positive aspect of the season was the contribution made by the Visitor Center Basket docents who brought water, wildflower books and other gift store items to sell to the visitors prior to each hike. Many wildflower books were sold and many visitors made an effort to go over to the Visitor Center after the hike.

Many thanks to everyone who made the Wildflower season a success.

Ruth Peterson

From the Visitors Center:

We invite everyone to come to VC and look at our items for sale. We continue to add new items or books so the scene does change.

We are selling lots of tea towels and scarves as they are usually different, with a variety of birds. Check them out.

Again, we thank all the wonderful Docents that keep the VC open, especially during the summer months. We are open 11-4 everyday. Thank you for your dedicated service.

If anyone has ideas of items to sell, please let us know. We are always happy to get your input.

VC Committee, Ardie Obert, Sharon Anderson, Bev Morgan, Carol Berry, Patricia Stein

Dinner with John Muir Fundraiser

A Great Success!

June 7, 2013 was a special day at Empire Mine State Historic Park - John Muir came back for a visit to the South Yuba River to tell us about his life and travels. Social hour started on time at 5:00 PM. Everyone seemed to enjoy a pre-dinner beverage and visiting. Dinner was served promptly at 6:00, a great buffet catered by Chef Antonio.

The special treat for the night was National Park Service Ranger Frank Helling who presented his interpretation of John Muir. Frank is a life long fan of John Muir and really brought him to life for all of us. Everyone was caught up in Muir's travels from Scotland through his preservation efforts in the early 1900's. It was a masterful presentation!

This event could not have taken place without the close partnership and cooperation of our local State Park Supervising Ranger Don Schmidt, Park Rangers, Park Aides and Park Maintenance staff. Their help throughout the event is most appreciated. And, of course, allowing SYRPA to have the event at Empire Mine; the setting was perfect.

The Board of SYRPA also wants to recognize several people for their work and donations that made the event such a success. Bud and Mickey Springer donated two cases of wine, helping make the social hour and dinner even more enjoyable. Nevada County Farm Supply in Penn Valley provided trees and potted plants to set the scene for John Muir, making him feel a little more at home. Roy Roberts of Nor Cal Beverage Co. donated the beer for the event. Frank Helling (John Muir) gave the stipend that we provided back to SYRPA for our fund raising effort. And a special thanks goes to all the SYRPA volunteers that helped with the planning (starting 6 months ago), helped with the serving, the set up and clean-up to make sure the area was ready for the next group. Since this was also a fund raiser, the bottom line needs to be mentioned. From ticket sales SYRPA was able to raise over $4,300 (after expenses). We also received nearly $100 in direct donations, several new SYRPA memberships (including 2 new life members) and the Visitor Center sales table, with items specific to the South Yuba River State Park, had sales of $104.

An enormous "Thank You" goes out go to everyone who spends their precious time, energy and money supporting SYRPA and the beautiful South Yuba River State Park.

Glenn Fuller
President’s Message

This has been an active and important three months for our Association. As reported in our lead article, we are very actively pursuing a campaign to save our treasured bridge. We conducted a very successful fundraising event, “Dinner with John Muir” also reported in this newsletter. We owe Glenn Fuller and his John Muir Committee a huge “well done” for their efforts.

Looking ahead we are already involved in planning for our future events with an emphasis on our Fall Festival. You can look forward to some changes in the format of the Fall Festival to make the event more interesting and better focused on our park.

We extend a warm welcome to a number of new members who joined our Association at the John Muir fundraiser. Our membership is our most important asset. Not only for the obvious financial support, but also for the ability to spread the message about our wonderful park and to encourage others to participate and provide help. Given our current and future challenges, your active support is even more valuable. Please invite others that have an interest in our park and the preservation of its resources to join our Association.

Our summer season is already in full swing and the park is filed with happy visitors. It's great fun to see the children enjoying our beaches, the families enjoying their picnics and to talk to the people enjoying our trails. I hope to see you there.

President Dave Anderson
SUPERVISING RANGER’S REPORT

Well, if I didn’t know any better, I would believe that we’re part of some weird weather experiment practiced by little green people. It’s hard to complain about rain in June, but when it’s bookended by 100+ degree temperatures, it gets hard to know which uniform to put on each day. Hopefully, the fire danger will be slightly less over the 4th of July that it could have been.

Rain in the summer always seems to bring something positive to the air, which is a fitting analogy for the state of State Parks. I believe that we’ve been through the worst of the budget problems and that there is truly a dim, but visible, light at the end of this dark tunnel we’ve been in. It’s hard to believe it could get worse – weathering a potential closure and the fight to keep the park open was the low point in my 31 year career. The budget picture looks no worse than last year and there are signs that it might actually improve for the coming fiscal year. Good news, indeed!

While we’re thinking positive thoughts…. You will see some support work being done on the covered bridge this early Fall to keep it in place. A number of steel beams will be placed on either end, and possibly in the middle, with suspension cables anchored on the ends, to support the weight of the bridge. This will be a temporary structure, temporary being 3-5 years, until the actual restoration work can be completed. It is being designed to just keep the bridge in place, not for any human or vehicle traffic.

We are hopeful that we’ll be able to get all the funding in place for a full restoration of the bridge. The SYRPA board has committed significant money, combined with state matching funds, to move the project forward so we can begin the permitting process. This is a huge step, as we had to commit to approximately $60,000 before we could access the federal grant funding awarded State Parks last year. Without SYRPA’s help, and you as a member, this would not have happened and the project would languish even longer.

One last positive step in the right direction is the hope that we can start replacing some of the staff members and positions we have lost in the last couple of years. Our maintenance staff was particularly hard hit, so we’re looking forward to being able to replace Frank, the maintenance worker at Bridgeport, along with other park positions.

Enjoy your summer, and hope to see you at South Yuba River State Park!

Don Schmidt
GOLD PANNERS

First of all ~ A huge “Thank You” to all of the volunteer gold panners who helped staff the Gold Rush Days Event in Downtown Grass Valley June 22nd and 23rd. The Gold Panning Booth was very busy throughout the event and was enjoyed by everyone. And thank you, Denia Pearson, for the extra work involved in coordinating all of the volunteers. The next big event will be the Nevada County Fair August 7-11. We will again need extra help to staff the gold panning exhibit at the Fair. The kids attending the fair love our booth! Please mark your calendars and plan a time to help out at this wonderful annual event.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW RANGER!
Meet Jim Collins

Welcome to our new Ranger Jim Collins. He provided us with the following short Biography:
I spent the majority of my life in Borrego Springs where I was surrounded by the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park where my mother worked. I attended Borrego Springs High School and graduated in 2000. After graduation I went to Grossmont College where I got my degree in Administration of Justice. I started my career with State Parks in 2001 as a Park Aide at Silver Strand State Beach in Coronado, CA. While working at the Strand, I saw how much the Rangers there enjoyed their job and decided then that I wanted to become a Ranger. Over the next six years I worked seasonally as a park aide at Anza-Borrego Desert SP, Tahoe SRA, and Sugar Pine Point SP all while finishing my college degree and going through the Ranger background process. Finally in 2007 I went through the Ranger academy and I was assigned Anza-Borrego Desert SP as my park. After 3 years at Anza-Borrego, I wanted more excitement so I transferred to Ocotillo Wells SVRA (an off-highway vehicle park just next door to Anza-Borrego). I spent three years there bouncing around the desert and dealing with injured off-roaders before I decided a change of scenery was in order. I transferred up here in January with my wife Anne and two sons Thomas and Joshua and we love the area.