Save Our Bridge Campaign Gains Momentum!

These past three months have been very exciting for the Save Our Bridge campaign. Support for the campaign is pouring in from all areas of our community and beyond. Some of the highlights:

♦ Over $1600 donated by the Sierra Cinemas from the Classic Movie Series at the Del Oro Theatre in September 2013
♦ Over $11,000 total donations collected for the first three months of the campaign. We have received donations from as far away as Texas and a nice $250 donation from The Oregon Historical Covered Bridge Association
♦ Three new members volunteered to serve on the committee: Robert Bergman; Nevada City Councillor and Chairperson; Economic Resources Council Board of Directors, Laura Brown, Outreach Coordinator; Bear Yuba Land Trust and Don Denton, former SYRPA President. These new members have allowed the committee to reach a much larger audience and to expand the committee’s activities.
♦ Nevada City Board of Supervisors passed a resolution (see back page) strongly urging Governor Brown State legislators and DPR to find the monies necessary to complete repairs and restoration to reopen the bridge ASAP. This effort was led by Nevada County Supervisor and Board President Hank Weston
♦ DPR has committed the funds, appointed a Project Manager, attained the necessary permits and established a timeline to do the work necessary to stabilize the bridge so no further damage will occur. The timeline is for the project to go out to bid in late March 2014 with work to start in Sept/Oct 2014. This first phase is only to keep the bridge from deteriorating further; not to repair or restore the bridge.
♦ Nevada County Historical Society invited SYRPA President Dave Anderson to make a presentation at their November Board meeting. The NCHS agreed to have an SOB flyer inserted into their December member newsletter, establish an SOB link on their website, and welcomed an SOB presentation by Steve Pauly at their November “Speaker Night” event
♦ A “Speakers Bureau” has been established and a Power Point presentation developed to begin making presentations to service, community, and civic groups in 2014
♦ A “Save Our Bridge” logo and donation link has been established on the web sites for SYRCL, Penn Valley Chamber of Commerce, Nevada County Historical Society, and the Nevada County ERC. More to come in 2014!

There is still a great deal to be done. Many organizations to contact, grants to be written, public awareness raised, donations solicited and, most important of all, continuous pressure brought to bear on California State officials and DPR to find the funds necessary to Save Our Bridge. If you can help with a donation, serve on the committee, or volunteer your talent, it would greatly help the cause! You can contact Dave Anderson (530-432-2359) or Doug Moon (530-205-9554). Send donations to Save Our Bridge P.O. Box 1658 Penn Valley, CA 95946, or via website: http://southyubariverstatepark.org/index.html

submitted by Doug Moon
2014 is here and it is time to start planning for our next park season. The South Yuba River State Park has one of the best family beaches on the Yuba River and was busy all summer. School groups continue to visit the park with students panning for gold, learning about our local history, and the unique natural features in our park. Hopefully you were able to enjoy our Fall Festival and see the happy faces on so many families enjoying the activities. We are all hoping to have our bridge repaired soon, and actively working to that end. Now is the time to put together our plans for another great year on the river. Your continued membership in SYRPA is essential in this effort. Please consider asking your friends, neighbors, and relations to become members also! Thank you for your past support of our organization and we hope you will continue supporting SYRPA in 2014.

* Annual Individual Membership: $ 20
* Annual Family Membership: $ 25
* Lifetime Individual Membership: $150
* Lifetime Family Membership: $200
* Annual Small Business Sponsor: $ 50 (up to 5 employees)
* Annual Business Sponsor: $100

Make Checks Payable To:
SYRPA ATTN: Membership
P.O. Box 1658
Penn Valley, CA 95946

Submitted by Ellen Hamlin, Membership Chairperson

President’s Message

Happy New Year everyone! Time flies when you’re having fun, another year gone. Last year was very busy for our Association including our very successful Spring fundraiser, our Fall festival, both the Association picnic and Volunteer appreciation dinner, our Holiday party and the establishment of our Save Our Bridge Committee. The next phase of the Gas Station project is well underway and the diorama that will be on display in the station is really looking good.

With the New Year I would like to introduce three new members of our Board of Directors. They are: Robert Coates, Bruce Stanton and Warren Wittich. I look forward to their participation on the Board. I would also like to express my appreciation to the outgoing members who all have served our Association for six years and contributed much to our Association’s success. Ron Ernst served as President and Vice President, Hal Tiegs as Treasurer and Jean Wilson as Secretary. When you next see them, please be sure to thank them for their hard work. They’re not getting away though, as they will continue to support us in various committee assignments. We also have new office holders with Paul Keasberry as our Vice President, Ginny Brown as our Secretary and Bill Stamatis as our Treasurer.

Our most pressing challenge remains our effort to save our iconic bridge. The good news is that the project to stabilize the bridge has been funded and the contract will be issued sometime in the Spring with the work to begin in the Fall. Mike Brown from DPR has been assigned as the Project Manager and has briefed the SOB Committee on the plans for stabilization. The plans for restoration of the bridge are still not finalized and there is only about half of the $1.1 million estimated to be needed to perform that work. We are actively campaigning to obtain funding for that effort and to increase community awareness. We have received strong support from our County Board of Supervisors who passed a resolution “urging the Governor, Legislators of the State of California and senior leaders at the California Department of Parks and Recreation to fully fund the Bridgeport bridge renovation project in the 2014-2015 State budget and schedule the project for completion by April 2015.”

Please remember that it is time for us to renew our annual memberships. Membership dues play a large role in our ability to perform our mission of providing interpretive and financial support to our park. It is also a good time to invite others who enjoy our park to also join our association. With our heightened level of activity, the association also needs help for publicity, speakers for our SOB Committee, assistance in writing grant requests and many other activities in support of our goals. Please consider volunteering your time, I know we have a very talented pool of members.

Finally I want to wish for everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

See you in the park.

Dave Anderson
The Ghosts Return to Bridgeport

A more perfect day could not have been possible. It was warm, the sun was shining and golden leaves were falling. Our festival had some changes this year from the past few years. We had a tractor driven hay wagon, Wildlife Rescue & Rehab brought live wild birds which they displayed and talked about, and little kids were busy creating their unique painted pumpkins as well as making fall crafts. The Barn and Gas Station were open for tours, while blacksmiths were demonstrating the making of candle sticks. Kids had a turn at “Stumping A Ranger” and then moving on to do some gold panning to find that nugget! Everyone enjoyed the hotdogs and hamburgers and stuffed potatoes the Penn Valley Chamber was cooking, Culture Shock Yogurt satisfied those wanting their yogurt dressed with their selection of toppings. Blue Cow cookies were treasured by those who wanted more sweets. Throughout the day Michael Bremer's 'Rush Creek' Band played music and strolled amongst the visitors. A high point that day was the funeral procession of Yankee Jim for burial at the Kneebone cemetery. Children in their costumes were carrying the casket while Mark Lyons told the story of Yankee Jim. Final highlight of the day was the raffle with many great items that were raffled off. We had one item in a silent auction and that was a one-of-a-kind photo of the Bridge. All of the day's festivities were possible because of the many docents who volunteered their help at various stations and who helped set up the tables and popups.

The rangers also provided help on Saturday before the festival and the day of the event. A BIG Thank You to all who participated and helped with the Fall Festival. Your Fall Festival Coordinators, Jean, Mickey, Sharon and Bev

HAY PRESS HISTORY

The historic hay press on display in the Bridgeport barn was built in 1868 by Allen John Weldon at Quincy, Plumas County, CA. and sold to George Penman about 1877. Weldon used the press at his farm and shipped baled hay on mules to the Virginia City mines. The press was donated to the State of California in July 1922, and it has been on display at Sutter’s Fort and Plumas-Eureka State Parks, Plumas County Museum, and now at Bridgeport. Last November Tim and Darlene Buckhout of Clio, CA, relatives of George Penman, visited Bridgeport to see the press and discuss its history. They were joined by Donna Jones, DPR Curator, Don Denton, Barn interpreter, and Steve Pauly, History Coordinator. Donna was involved with the transfer from the Plumas Museum to Bridgeport and is researching state archives about the donation and early history. Considerable new information about the construction, early history, and restorations has been discovered and will be described in a future article. Pictured (l to r) are Donna Jones, Darlene Buckhout, Tim Buckhout, Don Denton and Steve Pauly.

Submitted by Steve Pauly, SYRPA Historian
Supervising Ranger Report  
Winter 2014

Happy winter! Or spring… It’s become pretty hard to tell which season it is with the goofy, dry weather we’re having. It was beautiful to see the river canyon draped with snow earlier in December, but as I write this, I’m almost expecting to see swimmers in the water. Welcome to California…

Last year, I wrote some resolutions for 2013, and looking back on them, I ended up batting about .500. I would have hoped for better, but considering all that’s been going on the last year or two, I feel lucky to have hit that figure. This year I’ll forego the resolutions and just keep working toward pushing our goals forward.

If there is anything that is constant in the job of a Supervising Ranger, it is change. It certainly keeps life interesting, but constant change can be frustrating when trying to get things done in our parks. In the last year, we’ve had a very significant change in headquarters management; so much so, that I’m not sure I could tell you who is running what division of parks. This might be good, and I hope it will be, but we’ll have to see how the changes trickle down into the daily operation of our parks.

For 2014, the restoration of the covered bridge will obviously be the #1 focus for South Yuba. You should be reassured that Matt Green, our Sector Superintendent, is working almost daily with the district and headquarters staff to get the bridge fixed and open to the public. I’ve stopped giving out estimated dates for completion, but I believe that the sense of urgency is truly felt by our decision makers from top to bottom. Please continue to offer any support you can to the Save the Bridge campaign so that we can enjoy this landmark for years to come.

On a lighter note, I want to publicly thank all of the work our park staff and volunteers did this last year. We were able to keep the trails open, the river clean, beaches safe for families, our buildings maintained, and our park association viable and active. It sounds simple, but using the well-worn phrase, “It takes a village”, we couldn’t keep South Yuba River State Park open without the assistance of a lot of dedicated people. I’m proud of what everyone has been able of accomplish, and hope we can do more this coming year. Happy New Year!

Don Schmidt

Say “Hello” to Matt!

Dear South Yuba River Park Association members and volunteers. My name is Matt Green and I am the new Sierra Gold Sector Superintendent for Malakoff Diggins, South Yuba River, and Empire Mine State Parks. I have returned after working, one month as the Sierra Gold Superintendent in 2010 and then serving as the Acting Sierra District Superintendent and the Gold Fields District Superintendent for three years. My family and I recently purchased a house in Grass Valley and I decided to move back closer to home when the Sierra Gold Superintendent position became available. I’ve worked as a Ranger at Lake Perris, the Salton Sea, Cuyamaca, and the Colorado Desert District in Southern California. I supervised state parks in Big Sur and was the Superintendent for Mono Lake, Bodie, and Grover Hot Springs State Parks. As you can see, I’ve worked throughout the state and so has my family. It’s an honor and a privilege to be back in the Sierra Gold Sector and I look forward to meeting and working with all of you. My thanks for everything you stand for and all the help and commitment that you provide to your state parks.

Matt Green
Bird walks at Bridgeport
With Bill Cortright

Our resident “birder”, Bill Cortright, will be leading bird walks again this year! Here is a schedule of birds you might expect to see on the walks.

Meet on Saturday mornings:
8:00am; at the Kneebone Cemetery

BIRDS EXPECT TO SEE:

Jan 11: Western Bluebirds, California Quail, Bald Eagles, Cedar Waxwings, Common Mergansers, Phainopepla
Feb 22: Bald Eagles, Varied Thrush, Canyon Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Lark Sparrows, Hermit Thrush
Mar 15: Bald Eagles, Kingfishers, Bewick’s Wren, White Crowned Sparrow, Nuttal’s Woodpeckers, Spotted Towhees
Apr 19: Cliff Swallows, Wren Tits, Bald Eagles, Violet Green Swallow, Oak Tit Mice, Red Shouldered Hawk
May 10: Yellow Breasted Chats, Yellow Warblers, Bald Eagles, Ash Throated Flycatcher, Western Tanager, Nuttal’s Woodpecker
June 14: Black Headed Grosbeaks, Bald Eagles, Western Kingbirds, downy Woodpecker, Violet Green Swallows, Bullock’s Oriole
July 12: Olive Sided Flycatcher, Lark Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, Yellow Breasted Chats, Western Tanager, Great Blue Heron
Oct 18: American Dipper, Phainopepla, Red Breasted Sapsucker, Yellow Rump (Audubon) Warbler, Kingfisher, White Crowned Sparrow
Dec 13: Acorn Woodpeckers, Wren Tit, Nuttal’s Woodpecker, Common Merganser, Fox Sparrow, Black Phoebe, Song Sparrow

Submitted by Bill Cortright

SYRPA HOLIDAY/CHRISTMAS PARTY 2013

On Dec. 6th Docents, Volunteers, some Association Members and Park Rangers gathered in the festive Oak Room at the Lake Wildwood Community Center to celebrate the Holiday Season. The potluck was great, as usual (we have a lot of good cooks). There was a lot of camaraderie, laughs, stories of the past year and enthusiasm for the year ahead. Instead of gifts for one another we all brought unwrapped toys to add to the “Toys for Tots” program through the Grass Valley CHP. Everyone was very generous. After dinner we were entertained by “The Wildwooders Barbershop Quartet”, who sang to us, then led us in a Christmas carol sing-along. The festive mood was enhanced by the lovely décor and the snow that began falling mid evening. It was a great way to say goodbye to 2013. Thank you to all who worked so hard to make this such a fun and festive event.

Jean Wilson

THE SOUTH YUBA RIVER PARK
ASSOCIATION WISHES ALL OF OUR
MEMBERS, DOCENTS, PARK
STAFF AND SUPPORTERS A VERY
HAPPY AND HEALTHY 2014!
HELP WANTED!!

Gas Station

The gas station committee has openings for people who are interested in the history of the Bridgeport Resort. The gas station committee is planning and implementing various projects to interpret the history of the resort in the 1920's and 1930's. The committee meets on an "as needed" basis to plan different ways to tell the story of the ranch and resort during that period of time.

Contact: Hal Teigs 432-8207
haroldtiegs@comcast.net

Native Plant Garden

We're looking for someone who likes to get their hands dirty, crawl around on their hands and knees, and their work hours are up to them. We need a Coordinator for the Native Plant Garden. You would not be working alone; you would have the assistance of Dan Lubin, Environmental Scientist with CA State Parks, and the Beautification Committee.

Contact Mickey for more details: mik@oro.net

New Park Docents Needed

President John F. Kennedy was famously quoted: “Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You, Ask What You Can Do For Your Country”. Even though that quote has become cliché, its true meaning is just as valid today as it was when JFK stated it.

It is also a well-known fact that without volunteers our state parks will not operate effectively and efficiently, and perhaps not at all.

Such is the case with our precious South Yuba River State Park, especially now that we are in full swing with our Save Our Bridge campaign. We have a very dedicated core group of volunteers and docents AND we would love to include you and your friends into that group.

We are recruiting from all age brackets and for every facet of Our Park, including trail walkers, the visitor center, wild-flower tours, barn/bridge/gas station docents, gold panners, greeters, etc. Do YOU want to join a fun and very talented group of people, AND do you know of someone else who has a few hours per month to dedicate to this cherished natural and historic gem in our region, popularly known as ‘Bridgeport’?

If so, our Ranger staff and volunteers will conduct orientation and training sessions early next Spring. On Saturday, March 1, 2014 we host a “Meet and Greet” reception in our Visitor Center at Bridgeport. This is followed by two consecutive training meetings at the Empire Mine S.P. on Friday, March 14 from 5:30 – 8:30 PM and Saturday, March 15th from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The training is totally free – AND we serve refreshments (to qualify as a docent there is a small fee for finger-printing and a background check, however) After these sessions you have the opportunity to target (a) specific area(s) of interest and will then have a mentor to further ‘show you the ropes’.

This truly is a fun and rewarding experience and you will be a valuable resource to our State Park and quality of life in wonderful Nevada County.

For more information and to sign up for the training please contact:
SYRP Ranger Dan Youngren, 530/432-2546 or Paul Keasberry, SYRPA docent, 530/432-1947 or 263-6077 or Any member of our Board of Directors.

SEE YA AT OUR PARK

Submitted by Paul Keasberry
RESOLUTION NO. 13-503
OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA


WHEREAS, built in 1862 by David John Wood with lumber from his mill in Sierra County, the 229-foot Bridgeport Covered Bridge at the South Yuba River State Park is the longest single-span wooden covered bridge still in existence in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in the 1860’s, the Bridgeport Covered Bridge was part of the Virginia Tumpike Company Toll Road which served the Northern Mines and the busy Nevada Comstock Lode, serving passenger and commercial traffic to the silver mines of Virginia City via the Henness Pass; and

WHEREAS, the Bridgeport Covered Bridge is a California Registered Historical Landmark, a National Historic Landmark, and an American Society of Civil Engineers Historic Civil Landmark; and

WHEREAS, for the past several years the Bridgeport Covered Bridge at the South Yuba River State Park has drawn upwards of 500,000 visitors annually to this region, not only from other states but other countries, thereby becoming one of Nevada County's most important tourist attractions; and

WHEREAS, after an engineering survey in 2011 revealed severe structural problems including twisted arches, dry rot of structural supports and misalignment of end supports, the bridge was deemed unsafe for foot traffic and was closed due to safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has estimated the cost for initial bridge repairs at approximately $1.1 million, and DPR has secured a $545,000 federal grant to be used toward this project, with local fundraising efforts working to raise a required $62,000 match; however, nearly $600,000 is still needed to fully restore and reopen the Bridgeport Covered Bridge for the community’s enjoyment once again; and

WHEREAS, over the last few years volunteers from the South Yuba River Parks Association (SYRPA) and the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) have donated over 11,000 hours in service at the Bridgeport Visitor Center, on the trails and beaches serving as docents, filling gaps left by down-staffing at the parks, cleaning up the park and talking to visitors about stewardship. The State has estimated the dollar value of the volunteer hours and recently agreed to allocate these estimated funds toward the stabilization project this year to prevent further deterioration and/or a catastrophic collapse; and

WHEREAS, SYRPA is spearheading a “Save Our Bridge” campaign to raise funds, increase awareness, and build widespread community and political support to save the Bridge from collapse and reopen it to the public. To date, SYRPA has partnered with the California State Parks Foundation to provide $30,000 in local matching funds to DPR, has met with state and local elected representatives to enlist their support, and expanded the Save Our Bridge campaign to include community and business leaders from SYRCL, the Economic Resource Council, local Chambers of Commerce, and welcomes other community leaders to join the campaign; and

WHEREAS, although DPR reports that the “Phase I” (stabilization) project is slated to begin February 2014 and be completed by Summer 2014, no firm plans or timeline have been formulated to date to secure the necessary funds for “Phase II”, the reconstruction necessary to reopen the Covered Bridge; and

WHEREAS, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors firmly believes that the Bridgeport Covered Bridge must be restored and re-opened to foot traffic as soon as possible so that the tens of thousands of visitors to the Park can once again walk across this bridge and experience the unique and memorable experience of walking back through time and history.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Nevada unanimously urges the Governor, Legislators of the State of California, and senior leaders at the California Department of Parks and Recreation to fully fund the Bridgeport Bridge renovation project in the 2014-2015 State Budget and schedule the project for completion by April 2015, and direct County staff to forward this Resolution to Governor Jerry Brown, State Senator Ted Gaines, State Assembly member Brian Dahle, Resource Secretary John Laird, and State Parks Director Anthony Jackson

To view the final, signed document, go to: http://www.mynevadacounty.com/bos/cob/docs/Board%20of%20Supervisors%20Resolutions/2013%20Resolutions/13-503.pdf