President’s Message January 2015

This is my last President's Message as I have termed out from our Board. It has been an exciting and challenging six years, but I believe we have made significant progress as an association. Looking back we were faced with possible closure of our beloved park but with the support of our entire community we prevailed in keeping it open. Then the discovery of deterioration of the bridge leading to its closure again required the mobilization of the community to find a way of saving this irreplaceable historic icon. The "Save Our Bridge Campaign" committee was formed. It included representatives from many of our local organizations including the South Yuba River Citizens League, Bear River Land Trust, City Councils, Chambers of Commerce and other interested citizens. Again, total community support and unprecedented efforts from our County Board of Supervisors and all three Nevada County City Councils resulted in the legislature and the Governor providing budget for the repair of the bridge. The Association has also accomplished some important things for our park. We obtained a grant of $10,000 from the California State Park Foundation and committed $20,000 of our own funds, matched by the State to provide $60,000 to guarantee a Federal Grant of $545,000 toward the repair of the bridge. We have supported and funded the restoration of the Shell gas station. We also paid for and installed a storage building in which to store Association property. Our Association has been successful in receiving a number of grants to support our volunteer efforts. We also applied for and received an update to the historic designation of the bridge to add the Bridgeport Ranch area including the barn, turnpike and cemetery.

To those who were unable to attend our Holiday Potluck, you missed an evening of excellent company, food and good cheer. We had the opportunity to meet Kelly, Ranger Dan’s charming wife, finally proving that he did in fact get married. Great choice Dan! Mike and Debbie Smittle were there with Mike providing another of his hunter’s dishes, a delicious elk stew. Many of you know Mike’s son, Garrett who is now starting his new career as a California Fish and Wildlife Warden in the Lone Pine area. We wish him the best.

I want to thank all of you for your support and ask that you continue to support your Association Board. Your new president is Robert Coats and Carol Berry is your new Vice President. We also have two new board members, Margaret Vodicka and Sally Herrera. I am confident that they will do a superb job in continuing our mission of providing financial and interpretive material support to the park and its volunteers.

On the horizon is the need to ensure that the restoration of the bridge proceeds on schedule. The Save our Bridge Campaign Committee will continue to serve until that effort is complete. There are also some new projects being planned and your Association is actively working to recruit not only new Association members but also new park volunteers. Please assist in those efforts as you meet new people and make new friends. I will, of course, continue to be a volunteer and to be available for such committee work as the board may request. Again, thank you for your past support.

Wishing all of you a happy and prosperous New Year.

See you in the Park.

Dave
Save Our Bridge Update – January 2015

The New Year finds our historic covered Bridge in the South Yuba River State Park swarming with workmen, finishing up the first phase of the project; to stabilize the bridge against further damage. Large concrete footings have been poured to support the steel structure going up to “cradle” the bridge. It will be ugly but hopefully effective and only temporary. As soon as this work is complete, Phase II, the Repair and Restoration work can begin in earnest.

Good News Regarding Phase II

The State Parks Department reports that all of the expenditures for the initial work necessary for repair and restoration project to begin have been made. This work entails developing preliminary plans, design and assessments. The scope of work has been developed, contracts have been awarded and work orders have been submitted to companies that include structural and geotechnical engineers, schematic design, wood, and historical assessment firms. Most of these companies are now waiting for the stabilization project to be completed so that they may access the bridge. The firms will then study, assess, test, and in some cases, remove parts of the bridge for more detailed assessment to determine the extent of damage and the repairs and restoration work necessary. This step of the project is expected to be completed by June 2015. This assessment, planning and design work are critical to get right before starting the extensive permitting process necessary for such a historical structure. This assessment will also more accurately determine the expected costs to complete the project.

We Will Stay Vigilant

The Save Our Bridge Campaign Committee will continue to meet regularly and monitor the progress of the project. We will stay in close contact with the California State Parks staff responsible for this project. We will also communicate progress of the project and let you know of any issues that may arise that need your support. What we can’t do enough is say “Thank You” to all of you for your help, support and commitment over the last year and a half to energize the State to take on this worthwhile endeavor. We ask that you please stay informed and involved.

Together we will Save Our Bridge!

The Save Our Bridge Campaign Committee

Submitted by Doug Moon
SUPERVISING RANGER REPORT

What is it about the holidays that make me feel so warm and fuzzy inside? Is it the round the clock holiday music being played inside every department store, grocery store or open car window that is playing 94.1 FM (around the clock Holiday music since Thanksgiving)? Is it the feeling of “unity” with other people standing in long lines at the Post Office, desperately and sometimes, not patiently, waiting to mail out the last minute Holiday Cards or gifts? Or is it, deciding to go to the Roseville mall for some last minute shopping since we all know no one else is doing this and getting nearly trampled when it is announced that Santa will be taking a break in 5 minutes?

I know what it is…It’s the time of year to spend with your family and loved ones as you recognize what you are thankful for. I am thankful for that the past few weeks; we have received a decent amount of much needed rain that has, overnight, transformed our majestic river into… well… a river again. I am thankful that I am seeing progress with the bridge stabilization project. I am thankful for having such a dedicated Park Ranger staff that has really taken on the challenges I have set forth for them.

Most importantly, I am extremely thankful that we (State Parks) have such an enthusiastic and dedicated volunteer force that is enhanced by partnership with the South Yuba River Park Association. I am honestly proud to be involved with such a great organization. I would like to say “Welcome” to the new Board members and that it has been a pleasure to have worked side by side with termed out president, Dave Anderson. I look forward to having the same respectable and productive relationship with our new president Robert Coats.

Happy Holidays everyone! Thank you for all of your time and effort in making the South Yuba River State Park a special place for all to enjoy!

Supervising Ranger Dan Youngren

A “CALL TO ACTION”

Supervising Ranger Youngren also declares, “On behalf of Ranger Marc, I have a CALL TO ACTION! The number of active volunteers at the park is at an ALL TIME LOW! We have a desperate need in the following program areas; Visitor Center, Gold Panning, Trail Roving, School Tours, Barn Tours, Bird Walks…basically everything. Our Call to Action is to “tell a friend”. I am asking ALL of you to tell one of your family members, friends or neighbors about becoming a volunteer at the South Yuba River State Park.
Have them contact Ranger Marc at (530) 432-2546 if they are interested in becoming a State Park Volunteer.”

Please help keep our park vital and alive for our visitors!

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IMPORTANT DATES!!

OPEN HOUSE FOR NEW DOCENTS:
For anyone interested in becoming a docent or finding out more about it are welcome to attend.

SATURDAY
FEB 21 10-2 at BRIDGEPORT for South Yuba River/Malakoff

UPCOMING NEW DOCENT TRAINING DATES:

Friday, March 6 ~5:30-8:30  Saturday, March 7~ 9am-1pm  OR Friday, March 13 ~5:30-8:30  Saturday, March 14~ 9am-1pm
TWO DEDICATED INDIVIDUALS VACATE THEIR SYRPA BOARD POSITIONS

Words cannot begin to describe the hard work and dedication that two outgoing Boards Members have contributed to South Yuba River State Park.

Dave Anderson, outgoing President of SYRPA has been on the board since 2009. Although he is not shy about appearing in front of a camera or microphone, most of Dave’s accomplishments have been “behind the scenes”. He was instrumental in obtaining the Historic Park Designation for Our Park, and pushed through our current ‘5-Year Strategic Plan’. With the threat of closure for SYRSP, Dave actively became involved in letter-writing campaigns, engaging our local Board of Supervisors and CA State legislators, partnering with SYRCL, and assisting DPR in the decision to keep our Park open. At the same time, with help from committees he helped organize, SYRPA was able to adsorb the maintenance and responsibility of the Independence Trail from the Sequoia Challenge, and completion of Phase II of our Gas Station. When DPR decided to close off our Bridge, Dave coordinated and became an integral member of the Save Our Bridge Campaign, again enlisting support of aforementioned agencies, and instigated a fund-raising and grant-writing drive. He was instrumental in achieving the State funding to stabilize and restore our Bridge. When he’s not at Bridgeport working, he spends evenings and weekends speaking to local organizations and State representatives.

Mickey Springer has served on the Board since 2009 and she is recognized as the “go to” person that has consistently taken on tasks and can always be relied upon to lead or participate on any and all projects. Whenever, there is a special function for the Park, you will always see Mickey actively involved. Without her participation in the planning and operation of our Visitor Center, the VC committee would have a more difficult time operating as well as it does. She is known for creating the Raffle Drawings at the Fall Festival which has resulted in positive financial contributions to SYRPA. Her love has always been the Native Garden. You will see her out there leading work parties to beautify the Visitor Center grounds. She works with Dan Lubin, the State botanist, to insure that the native plants are maintained and preserved throughout the years. Mickey is known to feed everyone that participates on a committee, work parties, etc. A little known fact is Mickey and Bud Springer’s generosity, they have donated cases of wine at almost every SYRPA function and fundraiser over the years. She has always given 100% of her time and energy to contribute to the improvements within the Park.

A Big THANK YOU goes to Dave and Mickey for all of their efforts and years on the Board. This is not a “goodbye” however; we anticipate their continued love and dedication to Our Park, and look forward to working alongside both in many more SYRPA endeavors.

Submitted by Paul Keasberry and Carol Berry
The Fall Festival At Bridgeport
Sunday October 26 was another smashing success!

Although we had much needed rain on Saturday and were concerned about more bad weather on Sunday, we had a nice warm day for our Fall Festival. Among the participants were: the hay wagon pulled by a vintage John Deere tractor provided by Ron Hisken; Wildlife Rescue & Rehab who brought live wild birds which they displayed and talked about; the Ranger’s booth sharing information about the park and encouraging visitors to consider joining the ranks of our docents; representatives of the Nisenan Tribe from the Nevada City Rancheria who shared their story; the local chapter of the Audubon Society; and the South Yuba River Citizens League which, in addition to its efforts to protect and preserve the river, have been a strong partner in the effort to save and restore our Historic Covered Bridge. Our docents engaged children with pumpkin painting, crafts, and, of course, the ever popular gold panning. The docents also provided interpretive tours of the Barn and the Gas Station.

A highlight of the day was the unveiling, by a representative of the State Office of Historic Preservation, the Native Sons of the Golden West and Nevada County Supervisor Hank Weston, a new plaque commemorating the recognition of the Bridgeport Historic District. In addition to our historic Bridge, this added historic designation to the Barn, the Gas Station and Kneebone Cemetery.

Visitors enjoyed the hotdogs and hamburgers and other treats cooked by the Penn Valley Chamber, the bakery items and lunch options provided by June’s Café and Deli and the yogurt treats proved by Culture Shock Yogurt.

Throughout the day Michael Bremer's 'Rush Creek' Band played music and strolled amongst the visitors. A high point of the afternoon was the funeral procession of Yankee Jim for burial at the Kneebone Cemetery. Children carried the casket while Mark Lyons and his fellow actors told the story of Yankee Jim and brought back the ghosts of Bridgeport. Finally, the day was capped off by the raffle with many great items available. We also had a silent auction for a one-of-a-kind painting of the Bridge with horses and a wagon.

The Festival was very well attended with many families enjoying all of the activities. The success of the Festival was the product of the efforts of the many SYRPA members and docents who generously volunteered their time and talents to staff the activities, to set up and then clean up at the end of the day. The rangers and park staff also provided help on the days leading up to the festival, before the festival and the day of the event. A BIG THANK YOU to all who participated and helped make the Fall Festival a memorable day for park visitors.

Submitted by Robert Coats
SYRPA Celebrates the Holidays

Once again, SYRPA held our annual Christmas Potluck Party at the Lake Wildwood Community Center on Saturday, December 13. The Oak Room was bedecked with very festive Christmas decorations.

With all the rain and storms we had in December, the weather that night was perfect! We had such an assortment of delicious and plentiful food; appetizers, salads, side dishes, main dishes and desserts. Paul Keasberry and Bill Stamatis were our jolly bartenders serving up an assortment of wines, beers and soda. We visited with friends we don’t see very often. It was good to see Mike and Debbie Smittle and Dan and Kelly Youngren, the first a retired Bridgeport ranger and the other our current Supervising Ranger and their lovely spouses.

Two door prizes were won; Ron Berry won a small Christmas tree and Daphne Towns won a poinsettia. Dave Anderson, outgoing President of SYRPA, introduced one of our two new Board members for 2015, Margaret Vodicka, and incoming SYRPA President Robert Coats. Dave thanked everyone for their service to the park and expressed his pleasure in serving as President. He wished everyone Happy Holidays and a Very Good New Year. A great time was had by all!

Submitted by Mickey Springer

Calling All Visitor Center Volunteers, Past and Present

The Visitor Center is a fun place to volunteer and spend time interacting with the general public. It is a great opportunity to meet people from out of the area and find out interesting things about the people visiting our park. They are most interested in finding out about the South Yuba River State Park! As a volunteer, you can make their trip memorable. Our visitors’ questions are quite usually simple and a small amount of information can be very important in making their time in our park more enjoyable.

Another piece of the Visitor Center activities is selling SYRPA items to raise money for our Association. As these duties are not done every day, the cash register and charge machine can be a bit daunting. Not to worry! Any errors can be corrected and Assistant Treasurer Shirley Moon is a whiz at balancing out the sales receipts.

We recognize that the Visitor Center might be a bit intimidating place to work by yourself, but be assured that there are people available to help or provide support. Efforts have been made to adjust the schedules to allow for shorter shifts, having two people work at the same time, etc. If you haven’t worked in the VC for a while and would like to be scheduled with a Mentor for a refresher course, we have people willing to provide the guidance and direction. Someone can work with you, or be available by phone for questions. It’s as simple as letting Sharon Anderson (530-432-2359) know that you want some additional training when she sends out the schedule. She will find someone to contact you and the two of you find a date that works for you to once again enjoy being in the VC and helping to promote our park and have fun doing it.

We will be having our annual coffee get-together for all VC volunteers in February and we encourage those who have not worked in the VC recently to join us for a morning of fun, food and good information.

Submitted by the Visitor Center Committee
TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SYRPA
MEMBERSHIP

*Annual Individual Membership: $20
* Annual Family Membership: $25
* Lifetime Individual Membership: $150
* 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
You can also pay on-line!
It’s easy!
Go to the SYRPA website:
www.southyubariverstatepark.org
and click on
“Become a Member”

HELP WANTED!!

We are in dire need of Docents at the Park! If you are a SYRPA member and not trained as a Docent, PLEASE consider offering your time and talents to help staff our many activities at the Park. We need help in the Visitor Center, Wild Flower walks, Gold Panning, Greeters, Barn Tours and Trail Rovers.

Please call:
Paul ~ 530-432-1947
or
Ranger Marc ~ 530-432-2546

Please see information about New Docent Open House and Training on Page 3.

Missing Diane Marten

She’s dedicated, energetic, creative, intuitive, enthusiastic, smart, has a passion for the outdoors, she can tell you the name of a bird just by its call – that’s Diane Marten. Diane served on the SYRPA Board in 2002 and was its president in 2005-2006. She has a deep love for the Bridge and Barn, well, actually for the Park itself. She’s been involved in the Spring/Fall Festivals, fund raising events, bird watching excursions, and school activities. She was on the Sesquicentennial committee, or as Don Denton called it, the Nifty One-Fifty committee, and co-chaired the School Tours which was a one-day event during the 3-day celebration. About 150 school kids attended the precision planned schedule of activities for the children that day – that’s Diane.

In 2006 while she was president of SYRPA, Diane was very instrumental in having the Barn restored. A committee was formed called the Barn Stormin’ Committee with a following of 20 helpful members. Fund raising and a grant to repair two historic freight wagons were accomplished. While the wagons were sent off to Pennsylvania for authentic repair, restoration in the Barn took place. Groups, families and individuals were invited to help in the project. Official Barn Dedication took place on October 29, 2006, JP Carius, also a past-president of SYRP, worked with Diane in several capacities while on the SYRPA Board. “I have always been impressed by her professional, common sense approach and capacity to get things done! I’m proud to call her friend and adopted sister” says JP. “We miss her.” Kay Carius adds.

Diane has put her heart and soul into our beautiful Park. She has now moved to a new home that is further away, in Lincoln. She’s no longer in ‘our backyard’, but we still plan to see her roaming thru South Yuba River State Park and attending our upcoming events. We miss you Diane.

Submitted by Mickey Springer
Mystery of Rice’s Crossing Solved

Rice’s Crossing Road begins at Oregon House in Yuba County, traverses the Yuba River at Rice’s Crossing (former bridge site), and continues across South Yuba River State Park on its way to French Corral. For years, many of us have wondered “who was Rice” and “when were the road and bridge built?” The only clue was that the bridge builder was the Rice brothers. Recently, I found that Rice and Atchison constructed a turnpike from Oregon House to Foster’s Bar Bridge to Camptonville. I learned that road had been built by three Rice brothers and four Atchison brothers. Digging into the Rice brothers on the internet, I found that in April 1852, Peter Rice purchased the Oregon Ranch (now at Oregon House) in Yuba County and sent for his family, then living in Ohio.

Rice had been born in Pennsylvania in 1818, came to Hangtown (Placerville) in 1849 during the Gold Rush, and was a successful miner allowing him to purchase the property at Oregon House. Sometime between 1852 and about 1855, with the help of his younger brothers Samuel and William, he built the South Branch Turnpike (later known as Rice’s Crossing Road) including the bridge across the Yuba River known as Rice’s Crossing. During the Gold Rush, the mining bar at the Crossing had been known as Lousy Level, Liar’s Flat, and Liases Flat. In 1862 the toll for the Crossing was $3 for 8 horses or mules or a loaded oxen team (half that for the Bridgeport bridge at the time). The Rices sold the road in 1864. In later years the turnpike was owned by Thomas Freeman, George Fagg (David Wood’s son-in-law), and David Wood.

I followed Peter Rice to Virginia City (1869-71) and to Ventura County in 1871 where he farmed until his death in 1890. A detailed biography for Peter Rice in the 1883 Thompson & West History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties confirms that Peter had been President and Treasurer of three turnpikes including the South Branch Turnpike (Rice’s Crossing Road). Armed with names and dates, I constructed a Rice family chart and learned that several of Peter Rice’s descendants are living. A great-great-granddaughter, living near Salinas, is one of the family historians and has located and shared much valuable information including several of Peter Rice’s 1853 and 1854 letters. More on Peter Rice’s letters will come in future newsletters.

*Steve Pauly*
SYRPA History Coordinator