Great news!!
The Visitor Center and Gift Store (VC) is now open every day!

Starting Monday, April 8th until Memorial Day weekend, the hours will be 11-3, then from the Memorial Day weekend through the Labor Day weekend, the hours will be 11-4. The ability for the VC to be open 7 days a week is due to a new seasonal Senior Park Aide, Elliott Bringman being added to the SYRSP Staff. He will staff the VC Monday through Wednesday and our wonderful Park Volunteers will continue to staff the VC Thursday through Sunday. Come discover what’s in the SYRSP Visitor Center at Bridgeport. There are a lot of fun facts for children and adults about the area; including animals, plants, history and current events. The State has produced a wide variety of brochures for your information and reference. The “store” part of the Visitor Center is abundant with great souvenirs and gifts for you and family and friends. Come on by and chat with a Volunteer or meet Elliott.
Wonderful News 
for the Historic Bridgeport Bridge Renovation Project!

It was announced on Monday April 9, 2018 that the permitting phase of the project was finally complete! The Federal Highway Administration review of the permitting package is complete, CalTrans has given their approval and now the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) can go forward with the construction phase of the project. A quote from Mike Brown, DPR Project Manager for the Bridge project when he received the good news was, "Our intent is advertise, bid, & contract the project such that contractors could start work this July making construction in the low water season a reality. Thank you for your continued support!"

We can now look forward to actually seeing the reconstruction and renovation work starting. Matt Green, Chief Ranger reports, “The bid advertisement period for the South Yuba River Covered Bridge Rehabilitation will likely begin this Friday (April 13, 2018), lasting a period of three weeks. This public works bid will include a mandatory job walk and contractor pre-qualifications for historic work and bridge work.” Things are starting to move fast!

A big “Thank You” to DPR staff, Chief Ranger Matt Green, the Save Our Bridge Campaign Committee and especially Nevada County Supervisor Hank Weston for persevering, never giving up and keeping their eyes on the ultimate goal to Save Our Bridge! You can look forward to more updates on the project, the temporary impacts the project may have on activities at the Park and the progress of the construction process.

Doug Moon, SYRPA Director, Chair, Save Our Bridge Campaign Committee
President’s Message

Spring is here! Wildflower Walks are underway on Saturdays and Sundays through mid-May at 11:00 am. School Tours will begin shortly. Visit the park before the hectic summer season. Whether you go with a docent or on your own, do not miss your chance to experience the wildflowers. Also check on the information elsewhere in this newsletter to the dates and times for Bird Walks and Geology Walks.

When you visit you will see that the river, after our wet March, is now running high and cold. As always, enjoy the river, but respect its power.

The restoration of our historic covered bridge continues to require our attention. State Parks staff has informed us that we are still on schedule for restoration to begin in late Summer. Given that it is expected that construction will be in process in October, State Parks staff has advised us that there will be no Fall Festival this year. It is sad to miss a Fall Festival, but we will certainly have cause to celebrate when we have a Fall Festival after the restoration is completed. Please see the separate article for more on the Save Our Bridge Committee.

In January, I attended the Sierra District All-Staff Meeting, a full day session at Donner Memorial State Park reviewing the accomplishments and challenges faced by the staff over the past year. It was an opportunity to hear about what is happening at all the parks across the Sierra District (The Sierra Gold Sector, which is comprised of the three parks in western Nevada County, is part of the Sierra District). It provided perspective on the process of addressing the needs of South Yuba River State Park and Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park.

Largely as the result of the efforts of John Field and Janet Peters, the association is initiating photo workshops. The first photo workshop is scheduled for June 2nd at Malakoff Diggins SHP. It is good to see new programs introduced.

I am pleased to report that Rhea Williamson in now a Director of SYRPA. Rhea has recently moved to the area after retiring from Humboldt State University as Dean of Research, Economic & Community Development. From 2012 to 2016, she served as a Board Member of the National & State Redwoods Park Association. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to your Board of Directors.

In addition to Rhea and myself, the Directors of SYRPA are Carol Berry (Vice President), Bill Stamatis (Treasurer) Ann Wright (Secretary), John Field, Paul Keasberry, Doug Moon, Bob Slyker, Bruce Stanton, Margaret Vodicka and Warren Wittich. If you have an opportunity, please thank them for their efforts on SYRPA’s behalf. Also, please let me know if you have any questions, comments or concerns about SYRPA.

We are approaching the end of the process of renewing our annual memberships. If you have not yet renewed, please renew either through the website or by mailing in your payment. Membership dues play a large role in our ability to perform our mission of providing interpretive, educational and financial support to our parks. It is also a good time to invite others who enjoy our parks to join our association and/or to volunteer.

SYRPA also needs help on fund raising, website management and many other activities in support of our goals. Please consider volunteering your time. We have a very talented pool of members. Please contact me if you are interested in exploring volunteer opportunities and sharing your talents with SYRPA.

See you in the parks.

Robert Coats
SUPERVISING RANGER REPORT

Spring is in the air as the wild flowers on the Buttermilk Bend trail come into bloom, the gardens at the Empire Mine come back to life and the beautiful Maple trees that line downtown North Bloomfield at Malakoff Diggins develop their new foliage. It is an exciting time within our department as we continue to move into a new era with the recommended changes from the Parks Forward Commission. Locally, we are bringing back seasonal employees that have taken the winter off. These folks, just like our dedicated park volunteers, are the backbone to the day-to-day operation within our parks. They are the face of California State Parks as they interact with our park visitors on a daily basis. We also welcome in a fresh group of new Park Volunteers that attended our March orientations. These new volunteers have shown that they are extremely enthusiastic and passionate to start their volunteer careers. Our Park Volunteer Coordinators are extremely busy connecting with these folks and you will see them soon in the field.

We are gearing up for a busy summer season. We anticipate that we will see ever-increasing numbers of park visitors that have traveled from all over the world to come visit the places we help protect and interpret every day. In the meantime, it is time for you to get out onto the trails and enjoy this beautiful spring weather.

Dan Youngren

Welcome to the new South Yuba River State Park Seasonal Senior Park Aide, ELLIOTT BRINGMAN!

I'm excited to join the South Yuba team this season as a Senior Park Aide. Having grown up in Penn Valley, I'm pretty biased that South Yuba is the best State Park in the system. I can't think of another place where you can dip in turquoise waters, soothe sore muscles while laying out on sun-baked granite rocks, all with the shadow of a historic covered bridge off in the distance. To me, it's a romantic landscape where history and nature combine to showcase the best of the Old West.

Since graduating from Nevada Union High School in 1998, my college life took me to UC Santa Barbara where I received a BA and MA in German, with a minor in History. I studied abroad in Germany, and eventually became a US Fulbright Scholar, which allowed me the opportunity to teach English and American Studies at an inner-city Berlin high school. During my time in Germany, I visited many rich historical and cultural sites, which preserve key moments and developments in German civilization. In visiting these sites, I quickly realized the important role State Parks plays in ensuring the successful communication and transfer of California's own development and cultural memory.

After 10 years in San Francisco, and through a few career twists and turns, I'm grateful for the opportunity to return to Nevada County to pursue a career in Parks. During my time in the Bay Area, I worked to build a Personal Training business where I often brought clients to State Parks to train outside. I found that when people connect with nature, they're more dedicated to achieving their goals and living better lives. In this spirit, I'm fully aligned with the mission of State Parks, and I look forward to contributing to a great season ahead."

Elliott Bringman
Point Defiance Loop Trail Hikes at South Yuba River State Park

What: Guided Hikes to Point Defiance
When: Thursdays: April 19, and May 17
Time: 9:30 am

Come join us on a guided hike to Point Defiance, a three-mile loop trail that requires moderate hiking skills as it passes through varied habitats.

The Pt. Defiance Loop Trail begins across from the North Parking Lot, is approx. 3 miles, and ascends thru exquisite Blue Oak Woodland, studded with such wildflowers as Western Buttercup, Blue Dicks and Pacific Sanicle. Continuing through mixed forest canopy, we cross over a saddle to a gated, dirt road to descend the shady, north slope above the Middle Fork of the Yuba River. Big Leaf Maples, Madrone trees, Ponderosa Pines and shrubs line the road in this Lower Conifer Forest. Here we will look for some special treasures: flowers that are different from those found on the Buttermilk Bend Trail. Fairy Lanterns and Fawn Lilies plus ferns and mosses might be seen, as well as Bowl-tubed Iris, Grand Hound’s Tongue and hanging gardens of Indian Pinks.

About two miles into the hike, the road ends at Pt. Defiance at the confluence of the Middle and South Forks of the Yuba River, where there is a BLM campground that is only reached by hiking or boating. Turning east, the trail narrows and goes up-and-down over rocks through a Riparian Forest. There is a myriad of lovely wildflowers among the trees and flowering shrubs as the trail winds back toward the covered bridge. Along with views of the South Yuba River, we may see the resident Bald Eagles in or near their nest. Our guided hike typically takes 3-4 hours, but walkers can forge ahead to return to the parking lot at will.

Walkers are advised to bring Drinking Water, Sunscreen, and a Hat.

State Parks Parking fee is $5.

For more information contact SYRSP at (530) 432-2546
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HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR SYRPA MEMBERSHIP?

Would you like to become a member of SYRPA?

It’s easy and you will be helping support the many activities at the Parks.

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 and mail 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
ANNUAL VISITOR CENTER VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION “COFFEE”

On Wednesday April 4, 2018 the annual Appreciation Visitor Center “Coffee” was held to thank all of the many volunteers who help staff the Visitor Center and Store (V.C.) at the South Yuba River State Park all year long. The event is sponsored by the South Yuba River Park Association (SYRPA) and put on by the V.C. Committee.

V.C. Committee members Sharon Anderson and Bev Morgan made sure the many volunteers were welcomed, appreciated and had the opportunity to partake in some scrumptious goodies provided. There was also ample time for everyone to be able to visit with their fellow volunteers and share fun stories with each other. The main event at the coffee was the introduction of the new cash register. Ardie Obert did a wonderful job with the demonstration and training. Everyone had the opportunity to test drive the machine and seemed to agree that it is not vastly different from the old machine and will be mastered in no time.

Carol Berry refreshed everyone’s knowledge about the videos that can be used on the TV, with thanks again to all the “behind the scenes” volunteers who have helped create the videos and music.

Shirley Moon, who also serves on the Save Our Bridge Campaign Committee, gave an update on the Bridgeport Bridge renovation project. With help from SYRPA President Robert Coats, the various nuances of the Project were explained in more detail and questions were answered as well as possible. The main news regarding the construction of the bridge is that the permitting process is near completion and there are high hopes the project will stay on schedule; commencing in the fall of this year.

The VC Committee was also pleased to introduce the new DPR Park Aide Elliott Bringman who is scheduled to work in the kiosk in the north parking lot on Saturdays and Sundays and to staff the Visitor Center and Store Monday through Wednesday. This is a big development to be able to have the VC now open 7 days a week! Welcome Elliott! And a big THANK YOU to all of the Volunteers who work the Visitor Center and Store!

If you are a V.C. volunteer and need any training or a refresher course, feel free to contact any of the VC Committee. Just call the Bridgeport Visitor Center; 530-432-2546 for contact information.

Sharon Anderson
Wildflower Beauty at South Yuba River State Park

If you haven’t yet noticed, Spring has most definitely arrived in our beautiful Nevada County. There is a wonder-filled area to witness the beauty and colors of the season; the wildflowers on our very own Buttermilk Bend trail. South Yuba River State Park is lucky to have a group of Volunteer Docents to lead walks on this path every Saturday and Sunday until Mother’s Day. Prior to the weekend, a dedicated few Docents go on this trail and update informational cards to help educate our hikers about the variety of wildflowers, plants and trees they are walking near. If you cannot make it to the Docent lead wildflower walks on the weekend, you can stroll at your own pace and read about the flora. Also, in the Visitor Center, there are a number of books and brochures to take with you as you walk, or read after your walk to enhance your next hike. The State brochures are free, and the books range from $5 to $20. The schedule for the wildflower walks is: Every Saturday and Sunday through May 13th, starting at 11:00. Meet at the North Parking lot. Be sure to bring water, wear sunscreen, hats, and bring your camera! (Rain may cancel.)

JOIN US FOR SPRING BIRD WALKS AT SOUTH YUBA RIVER STATE PARK

Spring at SYRSP is the time of the year when a large number of birds arrive to nest and raise their young or, in some cases to just rest and then continue their migration. Some of the more notable arrivals include: Bullock’s Oriole, Yellow-breasted Chat, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Black-headed Grosbeak, Yellow Warbler and several varieties of Swallows. Resident Western Bluebirds, Spotted Towhee, California Quail, and several species of Woodpeckers are also often seen this time of year. It may also be possible to see our annual pair of nesting Bald Eagles and their young as well as the elusive American Dipper, John Muir's favorite bird.

Bird walks with park docents are offered at SYRSP's Bridgeport location the second Saturday of each month (April 14, May 19 and June 9). There is also a walk at the same location on Friday May 4. Typically, we should see 20 to 30 species. All of the walks will begin at 8 AM except for June which will begin at 7:30 AM. The walks last about two hours over mostly flat terrain. Typically, we see 20 to 30 bird species. Meet at the Bridgeport north parking lot (where the Buttermilk Bend trail starts). Bring binoculars and good walking shoes. For more information contact South Yuba River State Park at (530) 432-2546.

Visit the website http://www.southyubariverstatepark.org/ for more information and brochures.

By Robert Slyker
SCIENCE IS OBSERVATION

Or, why does an hour make a difference to a lizard on a wall?

The SYRSP offers school tours during the year of Gold Panning, Barn Tours, and a Nature walk. The class is divided into three groups and we rotate, doing the same tour three times to three groups. One warm day last fall I took a group of 3rd and 4th graders along the river to Kentucky Creek, past the cemetery to the road back to the Visitor Center. I asked them questions about what they thought a toll was, since this was the Virginia Turnpike and you had to pay a toll to cross the bridge. Answer: “A cookie?” I said, “A toll is money you pay to cross the bridge. The caretaker at the house at the bridge might give you a Toll House Cookie.” I then pulled out my chocolate chip packaging which shows the little house and the recipe for the cookie. One way to teach a concept, I guess.

We walked the Virginia Turnpike toward the Visitor Center counting the lizards on the wall as we went. My rule: Any lizard you see must be seen by at least one other, making it a verifiable sighting. We said, “Observe, but verify.” They did. The results were surprising to us. The 9:30 AM group counted 8 lizards. The 10:30 group counted 22 lizards. At 12:30 they counted 6 lizards. Why was this discrepancy since we all considered ourselves better lizard spotters than the last group? After a lot of “scientific discussion” we decided that lizards prefer a 93° to 97° temperature range as we later read. Our Virginia Turnpike wall was too cold at 9:30 AM then too hot at 12:30 PM and just right at 10:30. We all learned something new that day. We did not name the lizard species nor count the one rattlesnake in the wall.

Student question at the end: “What’s a turnpike?”

Sue Graf, Wildflower Docent

Work Party at Independence Trail

On April 4th, a group of South Yuba River Park Association Volunteers, State Park Staff and Bear Yuba Land Trust Volunteers worked on the Independence Trail. They cut back overgrowth and worked on drainage issues. Warren Wittich, SYRPA Director, along with Shaun Clarke, BYLT organized and led the event. All of the materials used to repair the trail were purchased by SYRPA. For more information on how you can help preserve this important trail, please contact any SYRPA Board Member. See page 10 in this newsletter for contact information.

Mary Ann Coleman, Docent
AN EASTER SUNDAY EXPERIENCE ON THE BUTTERMILK BEND TRAIL

The Buttermilk Bend Trail is very popular for seeing wildflowers, getting exercise, enjoying Nature and that's especially true this year.

My husband and I decided to take an early walk on Easter. We were especially enjoying the soft lighting and relative quiet while taking photos and being on a favorite trail. About half way to the French Corral Bridge, we (independently) noticed a woman curiously placing eggs in spots along the trail. We both thought a “do-gooder” was placing them for folks who'd be out for an Easter walk. But then came a boy with a basket heaping with eggs, then another, the younger brother also sporting a basket with his egg collection. The eggs were intended for them! Their parents, following behind revealed a wonderful and interesting family tradition. Since the boys were little, the family, ”the Edwards”, walk to the end of the trail at sunrise and have a Family Meditation Ceremony and Blessing. The boys' aunt comes too and along the return trip places the eggs for the boys to find. They used to live on Buttermilk Bend Road also... how lucky that they had this treasure so close to home!

As we continued, we met and spoke with many other interesting folks; one gentleman mentioned that he would walk the Trail with his wife who had been a Bridgeport Docent, Judy McAuliff. I had taken a Pine needle basket making class from Judy when I was a newer Docent 13 years ago . Judy and Docent Steve Pauly were responsible for creating the Self-Guide to Trees and Shrubs of the Buttermilk Bend Trail, and placing 24 markers at points along the trail. Both Judy and Steve were very generous of their time and knowledge contributing greatly to enhancing the Park and the Visitor experience.

As the morning evolved, we met up with several groups of friends whom we know from the community: hiking friends, dance friends, birding friends, festival friends (think Worldfest). All were commenting on how much they were enjoying the beauty all around and the gorgeous day.

The Easter spirit was alive when two gals sporting bunny ears came trotting along. They were smiling broadly.

We stopped briefly taking in the River view from one of the strategically placed benches and along came the Bridgeport Wildflower Docents. They were guiding the tour for the group of folks who arrived for the Easter Sunday Wildflower walk. Smiling faces reflected the experience they were having.

I came away feeling full and nourished with vivid memories... of colorful flowers, bright blue sky, budding trees, the sound of the South Yuba river, the clarity of the water ....... The beautiful and plentiful Pipevine Swallowtail butterflies that have been profusely hatching out, flitting and feeding on nectar of the following flowers: Blue Dicks, Fiddlenecks, Redbud, Larkspur, Bird's Eye Gilia, Dudleya, Pretty Face, Red Maids, Poppies, Phacelia and others created a metaphor of soaring over any troubles I thought I had. I believe I witnessed a glimpse of the true value of this Gem of a place we called the South Yuba River State Park.

Karen Loro, SYRPA member and SYRSP Docent
MEET YOUR SYRPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Below is a list of the current South Yuba River Park Association Board of Directors. If you have any suggestions, questions or concerns, please feel free to contact one of your Board Members. This is a highly dedicated group of volunteers who put in many hours each month to preserve, protect, support and promote the South Yuba River State Park and Malakoff Diggins Historical State Park. They can always use more help. Please consider becoming more active in Park activities, helping staff events and the Visitor Centers. New Coordinators are needed for programs such as Gold Panning, Wildflower Walks, and Beautification of Park grounds. Please contact any Board member or Park Interpretive Specialist Allyssa Borich 530-432-2546, email Allyssa.Borich@parks.ca.gov to volunteer.

SOUTH YUBA RIVER PARK ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS 2017
(Term Limits Dates) Three 2 year terms, 6 years total (Jan 1 to Dec 31)

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Start/End</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Coats, President</td>
<td>264-7092</td>
<td>14803 Echo Ridge Dr.</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rtcoats@comcast.net">rtcoats@comcast.net</a> (cell) 847 975-7308</td>
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<td>Bill Stamatis, Treasurer</td>
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<td>Nevada City, CA 95959</td>
<td>2014-2019</td>
<td>Penn Valley, CA 95946</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol Berry, Vice President</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Penn Valley, CA 95946</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Penn Valley, CA 95946</td>
<td>2017-2022</td>
<td>Fair Oaks, CA 95628</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doug Moon, Director</td>
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<td>11889 Kingbird Court</td>
<td><a href="mailto:moon.henry1@gmail.com">moon.henry1@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>Robert Slyker. Director</td>
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<td>12320 Fallen Leaf Lane</td>
<td><a href="mailto:BGSLY@aol.com">BGSLY@aol.com</a> (cell) 925 285-8445</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhea Williamson, Director</td>
<td>292-4205</td>
<td>North San Juan, CA 95960</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rhea55williamson@gmail.com">rhea55williamson@gmail.com</a> (cell) 707 672 3832</td>
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS
WINTER/SPRING 2018
South Yuba River and
Malakoff Diggins Historic State Parks

◊ BIRD WALKS: Saturdays, April 14, Friday May 4, Saturdays May 19, June 9, July 14, Sept 8, Oct 13, Dec 8; All walks start at 8:00am *Except for June, July & Sept, which start @ 7:30am ~Meet at the Bridgeport North parking lot.
◊ Discover Malakoff! Historic Cemetery Tour: Saturday April 14th 1:30-3:00 and 3:15-4:45
◊ Mother’s Day Springtime Event: May 13th ~ 11:00am-4:00pm Empire Mine State Park
◊ Wild flower Walks: Saturdays and Sundays through Mother’s Day, May 13th:11:00am
◊ Humbug Day: Saturday June 9; 11:00am - 4:00pm Malakoff Diggins
◊ Ice Cream Social: September 2: Malakoff Diggins
◊ Malakoff’s French Connection II: Saturday, September 8: Malakoff Diggins

Reoccurring events
◊ VISITOR CENTER Open Daily 11:00am-3:00pm
◊ GOLD PANNING: Memorial Day-Labor Day Sat & Sun Noon-2:00pm~ Bridgeport; donation $1
◊ SYRPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS Meetings: 4th Tuesday of each month; 9:00am~ Bridgeport
◊ FNB/MD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Meetings: First Friday of each month

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**For more information on any of these events, please visit the SYRPA webpage at www.southyubariverstatepark.org
Or call the Visitor Center: 530-432-2546

For information regarding Malakoff Diggins and Friends of North Bloomfield, please visit:
http://malakoffdigginsstatepark.org/