

Hall of Honor – Legacy Category

Name of Nominee: **Effie Yeaw** May 5, 1900 – January 3, 1970

(The name Yeaw rhymes with “jaw” and is a name of Scottish origin.)

Name of Person Making Nomination: Marilee Flannery, Director, Effie Yeaw Nature Center

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Specific Projects or Programs candidate responsible for accomplishing:

Leadership Positions held:

As a member of the “Committee of Concern” Effie worked diligently to pressure the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors to establish the American River Parkway; she was also a founder and secretary of the all-volunteer Save the American River Association (SARA). SARA kept the newly formed County Department of Parks and Recreation focused on purchasing land for the Parkway.

Service to the Public:

She pioneered the nature study program in Deterding Woods (now called the Effie Yeaw Nature Area). Effie Yeaw took hundreds of children on their first nature hikes in these woods. She worked industriously to get the Board of Supervisors to adopt a tree control ordinance to protect native heritage oak trees; passed in 1957. She did her part to plant and protect many native trees.

Awards and Honors:

The only interpretive nature center in the American River Parkway and Sacramento County was named for Effie Yeaw. At Sacramento High School she was President of the Biological Honor Society. Her life and work were featured in many newspaper articles during the years she worked to teach children about the natural and cultural history of the American River. She was featured in a *Sunset Magazine* article in 1964 titled, *How the American River was “saved”*. In 1965 she received the American Motors Corporation Conservation Award.

Professional Publications:

Effie Yeaw wrote and illustrated the first edition of the popular field guide The Outdoor World of the Sacramento Region. Published for teachers in 1959 it has been revised and reprinted seven times, with thousands of copies sold. She also contributed to Oaks, Our Heritage Trees, Indoor-Outdoor Natural Learning Experiences and Cultural Summer School Science Unit (k-3).

Training and Education:

Effie Yeaw attended Sacramento High School and then went to the University of California at Berkeley where, in 1922, she received her Bachelor’s degree in Social Studies. In 1932 she received her Master’s Degree in Social Studies from the University of Hawaii.

Other Noteworthy Information:

Effie Yeaw was an elementary and junior high school teacher in Sacramento for seven years. She then moved to Hawaii where she taught junior high school for four years while earning her master's degree. She returned to Sacramento and married Mr. William Yeaw and lived in Carmichael on a 5 acre farm. She raised her three children and resumed her elementary teaching career in the Arden-Carmichael area in the early fifties. She retired in 1962 and began working full time to save the American River as a public parkway so that everyone would be able to enjoy this river jewel. In 1962 the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors adopted a plan for the development of an entire American River Parkway. The first Director of the County Parks Department said that Effie was, "very effective in a quiet, unassuming way" in gaining the support of the public and the Board of Supervisors.