

# World Class River

The American River Parkway

By Glenn G. ... Photos by ...

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# the American River Parkway



Left: Joggers and bicyclists exercise along the American River Parkway near the Nimbus Fish Hatchery in Rancho Cordova.



Below: A great egret on a marshy island near Sailor Bar in Fair Oaks.

WARREN - PLEASE CALL ME RE: AM. RIVER PARKWAY NOMINATION. DEBBY WALKER 439-3374



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October 7, 2011

**Awards Ceremony**

Spring 2012

**Award Categories**

- Professional Leadership
- Legacy
- Regional Treasure

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# Save the American River Association

4441 Auburn Blvd., Suite H • Sacramento, CA 95841-4139

916-482-2551 • E-mail: [info@SARAriverwatch.org](mailto:info@SARAriverwatch.org) • [www.SARAriverwatch.org](http://www.SARAriverwatch.org)

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October 7, 2011

CPRS District 2 Hall of Honor Committee Members  
c/o Barbara Wackford  
5618 Delcliff Circle  
Sacramento, California 95822

Re: 2012 Hall of Honor Regional Treasure Nomination for The American River Parkway

Dear Ms. Wackford,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this application for recognition of The American River Parkway's immeasurable influence on all aspects of people's lives in the Sacramento region. The Parkway is indeed the quintessential example of a Regional Treasure, rich in history, and serving the recreational, health, educational, economic and spiritual needs of three generations living, working, and playing in the Sacramento region. In fact, the Parkway's reputation extends far beyond the region's borders and is also well known and appreciated by the citizens of California, the nation and the world. Recreation use today is estimated at 8 million visitor days per year - more even than Yosemite.

Save The American River Association was founded in 1961 to establish the American River Parkway and has continued these past 50 years as the advocate for the protection and preservation of what is often referred to as "the crown jewel" of Sacramento. The American River Natural History Association was formed in 1981 to support the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Today, ARNHA is the non-profit operating the Nature Center. In our distinct roles as "watchdog" and educator - "bringing nature to people and people to nature" - respectively, we are involved 365 days a year with the people, plants and animals who call the Parkway home. We are uniquely positioned to witness each and every day the beneficial and inspirational affects her lands and water exert on people, young, old, black, white, yellow, red, able bodied or not, rich or poor, living in a world filled with daily pressures and too often disconnected from nature's gifts. The American River Parkway's legacy cannot be measured, it can hardly be described. It is, however, profoundly apparent when experienced. SARA and ARNHA hope that the further recognition the American River Parkway receives, if awarded the Regional Treasure honor, will help ensure her place for many years to come.

The American River Parkway's history and numerous benefits are explained in the accompanying Hall of Honor application. Additionally, we have included supporting documentation.

Your consideration honoring the American River Parkway as a Regional Treasure is greatly appreciated. For further information please contact me at 987-0171.

Sincerely,

Warren Truitt, *President*  
Save the American River Association

*Guardians of the American River and Parkway since 1961*

# Warren Truitt leads the effort to protect, maintain and expand the American River Parkway

Edited by Art Ellis  
Co-op Reporter Staff Writer

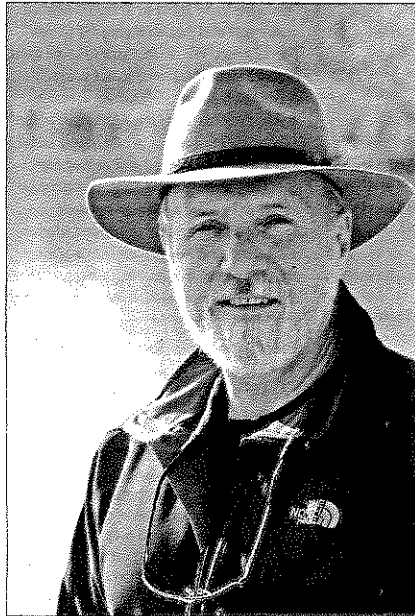
Warren Truitt's natural progression took him to where he is today: from a business career in sales and sales management, to watching the growth of the American River Bike Trail as an avid cyclist constantly using that trail, to the presidency of the Save the American River Association.

SARA, a grass-roots organization established in 1961 to spearhead establishment of the American River Parkway, is a non-profit organization with a volunteer base of several hundred dedicated members. SARA continually monitors and participates in the parkway governance process by ensuring that the Parkway Plan is enforced and updated.

*Please describe your childhood and education.*

Born in Oakland in 1942, I then moved to Albany where I attended elementary school. I attended junior and senior high school at Harry Ellis High School in Richmond, graduating in 1960. I was an athlete in high school, playing football and baseball, and was on the yearbook and newspaper staff. I received a STAR Journalism Award and \$1,000 scholarship upon graduation.

I attended and graduated from San Francisco State University in 1965, earning a BA in Business. I also had enough units to graduate with a degree in Creative Writing (English), but I thought a business degree would be more financially rewarding.



Warren Truitt

Photo/Pamela Iapinski

*Tell us about your career.*

My first "real" job was with Zellerbach Paper Company, where I worked for 23 years, from 1965-1987. Beginning in sales, I eventually became a Business Unit Manager for Crown Zellerbach Distribution Group for the Central Valley. Promotions included moving, and we had the good fortune to be transferred to other northern California cities, San Diego and even Honolulu. We ended up in Fair Oaks where we have resided in the same neighborhood since 1981, and love it.

I was general manager of Calvey Packaging and the Box Store from 1987-1988.

I joined Bancroft-Whitney, the oldest legal publishing firm in the United States at the time, in 1989 and retired in 2000 as a regional manager.

*Have you received any personal or professional awards?*

- Zellerbach Paper Company Sales Rep of the Year, 1966.
- Dupont Packaging Films Product Manager of the Year, 1968. (Zellerbach was a distributor of DuPont packaging film products.)
- Received Award as the top Crown Zellerbach Distribution Group Business Unit, 1986.
- Received Bancroft-Whitney President's Award (top five performers in sales), 1990-1997.

*How did you become interested in the American River?*

Not long after we—my wife, Mary, and our two children—arrived in Fair Oaks in 1981, my son Buzz and I discovered the American River Bike Trail. In 1983, the trail was extended from Hazel Avenue to Beal's Point at Folsom Lake. We were probably the first two individuals to ride to Beal's Point from the Main Avenue access and back.

The ability to ride and train on the 31 miles (Beal's Point to Old Sacramento) of the American River Bike Trail changed my life. I went from being a casual cyclist to one riding 7,000 miles per year

and riding up to eight bicycle Centuries each year. Our son was hooked as well, joining a bike racing team and becoming an exceptional competitive cyclist. The American River Parkway was the catalyst.

I always knew that I would do volunteer work once I retired. Shortly after we moved to Fair Oaks in 1981, I saw an article in the Bee about the Save the American River Association and their (ultimately 20-year) battle to keep East Bay Municipal Utility District from taking water at the Folsom South Canal. I immediately joined SARA.

I attended my first SARA meeting in December 2003, after which then-president Alan Wade invited me to attend a subsequent board meeting. Within two months, I was invited to join the SARA board and within two more months, I was asked to assume the role of vice president. On January 1, 2007, I became president and will continue to serve in that capacity until mid-2011.

*Of the most serious issues you are faced with as president, which one consumes most of your time?*

The current Sacramento County budget deficit and related parks funding crisis is by far the most time-consuming activity I have experienced with SARA. What SARA accomplished during our first 50 years is now seriously threatened by potential budget cuts.

*What accomplishment during your tenure as president are you most proud of?*

The growth of SARA. Some examples: (1) When I became president, I increased the size of the SARA Board of Directors to 15 members. In addition, a SARA Advisory Council was formed, today consisting of 26 members with diverse backgrounds and skills. (2) I assisted SARA in achieving 501 (c) (3) non-profit status, enabling contributors to take tax deductions, and resulting in more frequent and larger contributions. (3) SARA received the 2009 Peter Behr Award, Friends of the River's annual award.

**The ability to ride and train on the 31 miles (Beal's Point to Old Sacramento) of the American River Bike Trail changed my life.**

*How has the economic downturn affected the work of SARA?*

Drastically. SARA's member count is down and so are contributions. County Regional Parks are seriously affected by the Sacramento County budget crisis. Not only is the Effie Yeaw Nature Center threatened with closure, the ranger staff may be reduced to as few as five rangers, and the maintenance staff to three.

The County Parks budget has been continuously reduced every year since the turn of the century, and Parks has adjusted. However, the 2010-2011 Budget Year proposed cuts will contribute to a dangerously less safe and degraded County Parks system. The real question is: What is the cost of not adequately funding County parks?

Warren Truitt has been a Co-op owner since 1991.

**Meet Warren Truitt at the Co-op's**

**"Think Globally, Act Locally, an Evening with Visionaries" at 6 p.m. Friday, July 30.**  
See page 16 for more information.

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MUST BE LOCATED WITHIN THE NINETEEN COUNTY CPRS DISTRICT 2 REGION

#### Location of the American River Parkway

The American River Parkway stretches 31 and one half miles from the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers to Beal's Point in Folsom Lake State Recreation Area. It preserves almost 5,000 acres of precious open space adjacent to the river through a largely metropolitan area with a population of more than 1.3 million people. It serves as a habitat for a great assortment of wildlife and a source of recreational opportunities for people with many interests – fishing, rafting, kayaking, bicycling, horse back riding, picnicking, bird watching, nature study, hiking, lying on the beach. It provides opportunities to volunteer, work and learn on an organic farm, at a local natives plant nursery, and a nationally recognized nature center.

RECOGNIZES SIGNIFICANT PROGRAMS, AREAS OR FACILITIES AND THE ORGANIZATIONS, COLLABORATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS, INDIVIDUALS AND/OR FOUNDATIONS THAT SPONSORS THE PROGRAMS, AREAS OR FACILITIES

The Effie Yeaw Nature Center located inside Ancil Hoffman Park on the American River Parkway

**MISSION**

The American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) and the Effie Yeaw Nature Center are dedicated to bringing awareness of the beauty and diversity of the natural world to children, families, and the community through education initiatives that foster appreciation, enjoyment, and stewardship of the unique natural and cultural resources of the Sacramento region.

The American River Parkway Foundation located inside William B. Pond Park on the American River Parkway

**MISSION**

The mission of the American River Parkway Foundation is to support the preservation, protection, enhancement, and appreciation of the American River Parkway by fostering environmental stewardship, facilitating volunteer opportunities, and funding and implementing Parkway projects and programs.

Soil Born Farms located on American River Ranch in the American River Parkway

**MISSION**

Soil Born Farms is all about the health of individuals, natural resources; and our community. We do this through organic food production, food and nutrition education and healthy food access for all.

The American River Parkway Plan Update Citizens Advisory Committee and Draft American River Parkway Plan 2006



## GREAT HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND TREMENDOUS MULTI-GENERATIONAL IMPACT ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE REGION

The American River has meant so much to so many....

First were the Southern Maidu or Nisenan whose villages were located throughout the 2,000 square mile American River Basin. Their men speared or dip-netted salmon that were eaten fresh or smoked and dried for the winter. The women used the fibers of nearby redbuds to make unsurpassed baskets with diagonal or zigzag designs. Their medicine men tried to rid pain with the aid of guardian spirits that inhabited the river.

In 1808 Spanish explorer Lt. Gabriel Moraga and a party of soldiers and padres became the first white men to see the river. He saw the snowcapped Sierra in the distance and watched the river waters churn through a rocky gorge and was reminded of the sufferings of Jesus during the Crucifixion. He named the river Las Llagas (the wounds).

The years passed and Jedediah Smith and his mountain man beaver trappers camped alongside the river; then John Sutter erected his famous fort on a rise overlooking it. He named the river the American.

John Fremont and westering settlers followed the American out of the mountains. And James Marshall found gold nuggets in its sands on a cold January morning in 1848, thereby transforming the American into one of the most important rivers in the world.

Today the gold is mostly gone, but the snow-fed waters of the American continue to bestow riches to Californians. There is water to nourish the fields, electricity to light the homes, and brawling rapids and placid sweeps and fishing holes to refresh minds and bodies.

And always its song: Keep it clear, keep it clean, keep it flowing.

Author Unknown  
August 23, 1981

This snapshot but telling history of the American River sets the stage for the story of the American River Parkway itself. The river and land together bless us with abundant life and beauty, offering the many opportunities to learn, play, and renew we often take for granted. The river is the central focus of the Parkway. The lower American River has been designated as a Wild and Scenic River under both the State and Federal Wild and Scenic River Acts (the State Act in 1972, the Federal Act in 1981). One of the Parkway's greatest accomplishments is the focus it has continually placed these past 50 years on the critical importance of the American River waters to the economic strength and quality of life in our region. The formation of the Water Forum in 1993 brought together normally adversarial interest groups, more accustomed to confronting each other at public meetings or taking each other to court, who, eventually, were all able to commit to two co-equal objectives ---- preserving the lower American River and providing a safe and reliable water supply.

A park along the American River has been recognized as a valuable resource for its recreational and natural attributes since the turn of the last century. Remarkably, the Sacramento city planner, John Nolen, in 1915, drew a map for the American River Parkway that resembles much the same Parkway we

visiting Sacramento, recognized these special values in reports both in 1929 and 1947. He urged all agencies with jurisdiction along the American River to cooperate in the establishment of a parkway. Around 1949-1950 the Audubon Society, led by Elmer Aldrich, submitted a long range plan to survey the land and establish a River Recreation Park District for the sole purpose of a parkway. Unfortunately the plan languished in bureaucracy and it was not until the late 50's that the idea of a parkway once again surfaced and gained wide community attention as people began to comprehend that if something was not done, the city and county would surely expand and dash any hope to set aside the land that is now often referred to as our "Crown Jewel."

In March 1959 the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance establishing a County Department of Parks and Recreation and development of the park system began. The first development director, William B. Pond, a seasoned Pacific Northwest parks and recreation manager, was hired that same year. He soon discovered there was strong public support for a plan to open up recreational opportunities along the lower American River. He was later to recall:

"The horsemen dreamed of a capital-to-capital---Sacramento to Carson City. The bicyclists wanted a paved path from the confluence to Nimbus Dam, hikers wanted the same, and the Audubon Society and the environmentalists wanted access to all of the natural elements, and the fishermen and canoeists and kayakers wanted access to the river."

The Supervisors liked the idea of a master plan for the 23 miles of river front from Nimbus Dam to the confluence of the Sacramento River. (The 8 1/2 miles of parkway from Nimbus Dam to Folsom Lake is federal Bureau of Reclamation land managed by the State Parks Department.) Land acquisition began. But initial purchases were expensive and progress was slow. With most of the river still inaccessible to the public, many residents---especially newcomers---did not realize its recreational potential. When resistance to further county spending developed, the project lagged.

#### THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZES

In February, 1961 the County Planning Commission approved plans for a subdivision within 125 feet of the river. This was the act that rallied parkway forces. Within a few days a small group of civic leaders and representatives of conservation and youth groups met to lay the groundwork for the Save The American River Association (SARA). Among these leaders were Effie Yeaw and Jim Mullaney. (Today a nature center in the Parkway recognizes Effie Yeaw's role, while an oak grove on the river's edge at Rossmoor Bar honors Jim Mullaney.)

SARA speakers covered the community, recruited members, distributed pamphlets and commissioned a film from well known local filmmaker, Jewell Dawson, titled Operation STAR --- Save The American River. Their enthusiasm and hard work rallied the support necessary to convince the supervisors that the community was behind the preservation of the river and its bordering wild lands. In January, 1962 the board officially adopted the Parkway plan, a declaration of the County's intent to preserve an open space greenbelt along the length of the American River in Sacramento County, and committed more funds for acquisition.

Under the direction of parks director Bill Pond, the county acquired rights to land from many sources. Several private land owners turned down offers from developers and sold to the county at reasonable prices; others granted easements. More funds came from the California Wildlife Conservation Board, a state agency, and the Urban Renewal Administration, a federal agency. SARA, too, raised funds by

selling "Elbow Room," square yards of land to which the buyer received a "certificate of ownership;" the county received title.

In 1964 the official American River Parkway was dedicated. Sunset magazine sent a reporter to town to record the Parkway wide celebration. He said "This three-year campaign to preserve the natural landscape and create recreation opportunities and "open space" in the midst of a rapidly expanding urban area is a success story full of suggestions for the many other Western communities with similar problems."

Recognizes significant programs, areas or facilities and the organizations, collaborations, partnerships, individuals and/or foundations that sponsor the programs, areas or facilities

#### SUB-CRITERIA

Has contributed to the quality of the development and growth of individual and group education, life fulfillment and leisure pursuit

Has received recognition, awards, honors from the greater public

#### EFFIE YEAW NATURE CENTER

The Nature Center stands in tribute the Effie Yeaw, a teacher, conservantionist and environmental educator/activist who began leading natural and cultural history walks along the American River in 1955. She was instrumental in convincing William B. Pond, the first Director of the Sacramento County Parks Department, that the concept of a "Parkway" along the river must be turned into a reality.

The construction of the Nature Center was completed in June, 1976 and was dedicated in memory of the teacher (Effie Yeaw died in 1970) whose dedication to and love for nature and children still guide the Nature Center today. In 2005, a new 3,000 square foot multi-purpose building was added to the Nature Center to provide more space for educational programs.

The Nature Center includes a 77-acre nature preserve, hands-on exhibits relating to the natural and cultural history of the Sacramento region, live animals that were injured and cannot be released, a Maidu Cultural demonstration area, and classes, programs and services for approximately 100,000 to 130,000 visitors and school children per year.

Volunteers provide thousands of hours of service to the Nature Center each year. They cover all aspects of the Nature Center's work – Reception, Animal Care, Clerical, School Tours, Landscaping, Habitat Improvement, Jack Hiehle Programs, Special Programs such as Summer Fun Days, and fundraisers like the annual art gala, "Painting Where the Wild Things Are."

Since July of 2011 the Effie Yeaw Nature Center is managed and operation by the all volunteer American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) Board.

Recognizes significant programs, areas or facilities and the organizations, collaborations, partnerships, individuals and/or foundations that sponsor the programs, areas or facilities

**SUB-CRITERIA**

Has contributed to the quality of development and growth of individuals, quality of life, causes or movements

**The American River Parkway Foundation**

Founded in 1983 by Jim Jones, Al Dreyfuss, Ray Butler and Lois Wright, the Parkway Foundation's operation is housed in the Streng Volunteer Center which also provides a conference room to accommodate American River Parkway related meetings and trainings.

Probably best recognized for sponsoring the yearly Great American River Clean-Up, the Foundation also funds special projects like the handicapped-accessible fishing pier at Arden Bar, tree planting, the addition of park benches, school tours at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, the Gregory Kondos art project, public information brochures, installation of emergency call boxes along the bike trail, flood damage repair and bird nesting boxes.

Significant facility with programs and organizations, collaborations, partnerships, individuals and foundations that sponsor the facility and programs

Great historical significance and tremendous multi-generational impact on the quality of life in our region

#### SUB-CRITERIA

Has contributed to the quality of the development and growth of individuals, quality of life, causes or movements

Has contributed to the quality of the development and growth of individual or group training or education, life fulfillment or leisure pursuit

Contributes to the economic vitality of the region

#### SOIL BORN FARMS

The historic American River Ranch is the last working farm on the lower American River and is the permanent home of Soil Born Farms, a non-profit Urban Agriculture and Education Project. Approximately 40 acres in size, the American River Ranch offers a rare combination of resources and activities that help successfully interpret the dynamic interplay between the way food is grown, personal health and the health of the environment. Though completely surrounded by urban development, the farm resides within the beautiful and permanently protected American River Parkway.

Soil Born Farms is a relatively young and moderately small urban agriculture and education program that has, over the past 6 years, tackled huge individual and community issues. We do this through organic food production, food and nutrition education and healthy food access for all.

The food issues we address are important in today's world. All the way up to the White House, the US has become aware of the public health crisis associated with obesity, lack of access to healthy food, and declining physical activity. Soil Born Farms and its partners have begun to create a whole new food system in Sacramento that is more sustainable and equitable for all, offering solutions to the problems of hunger, obesity, and other health challenges affecting our community and our economy. We do this through education and a commitment to putting locally grown, healthy food on every table.

Some of the organizations working with Soil Born Farms to achieve this vision include: the Sacramento Natural Food Co-op; Edible Sacramento Mutual Assistance Network; Health Education Council; Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services; Sacramento Tree Foundation; Sacramento County Parks; Sacramento Community Garden Coalition; Pesticide Watch; California Food and Justice Coalition; U.C. Davis; Sacramento State University; Sacramento City College; Farmlink; and Sacramento City Unified, Folsom Cordova, Twin Rivers, San Juan school districts.

Soil Born Farms and its partners have reached thousands of children, teens, and adults with our programs through grant funding and support from major foundations, local, state, and federal public agencies, and other organizations including The California Endowment, Sierra Health Foundation, The Glide Foundation, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kaiser Permanent, Sutter Health, Network for a Healthy California, United Way, and Sacramento Employment & Training Agency. We also rely on personal donations to strengthen our organization in order to meet the the challenges and opportunities we currently face and in the coming years.

One of the key elements of the American River Ranch is the Elderberry Farms Native Plant Nursery. Under the management of the California Native Plant Society an on-site plant nursery produces

American River Parkway plant stock for local habitat restoration projects and serves as an important interpretive/experiential resource for environmental stewardship activities at the farm. The Nursery also helps to design, plant and maintain the landscaped grounds that demonstrate edible, native, culinary and medicinal plantings for home gardens. The Nursery provides Parkway native plants and maintenance for the farm's hedgerows and will grow 1,000 Parkway native plants for the planned restoration of Cordova Creek. This restoration project, funded by a Prop 84 grant, will serve as an essential interperative feature for our environmental stewardship activities.

Recognizes significant programs, areas or facilities and the organizations, collaborations, partnerships, individuals and/or foundations that sponsor the programs, areas or facilities

SUB-CRITERIA

Has contributed to the quality of the development and growth of individuals, quality of life, causes or movements

Has received recognition, awards, honors from the greater public

Subject: CALIFORNIA CHAPTER AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION OUTSTANDING FOCUSED ISSUE PLANNING AWARD

Project: THE AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PLAN UPDATE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE & DRAFT AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PLAN 2006

Nothing as complex and significant as the American River and almost 5,000 acres of parkland combining developed and natural areas, can exist without a well developed plan, carefully constructed, sufficiently detailed, and most of all, embraced by the many stakeholders.

The American River Parkway's first plan in 1962 was a concept plan, a declaration of Sacramento County's intent to preserve an open space greenbelt along the length of the American River in Sacramento County. The plan was substantially revised in 1968 to include background information on the Parkway and policies for Parkway administration. Subsequent plans in 1976 and 1985 continued to refine and expand the guidelines and policies for the preservation, use, development and administration of the Parkway. Consideration for the update of the 1985 American River Parkway Plan began in June 2002 with a stakeholder assessment (the Convening Report) to determine what issues the Parkway stakeholders wanted to see addressed as part of the Update. In 2004 the Update Citizens Advisory Committee representing numerous Parkway interests went to work updating the plan. The Committee included representation of the Parkway's diverse recreational, environmental, business and community interests. Additional individual appointments were made by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, the Sacramento City Council and the Rancho Cordova City Council. Working with a project management team consisting of nine agencies with jurisdiction or management responsibility within the Parkway, the advisory committee developed consensus recommendations requiring great perseverance and dedication. Their recommendations resulted from 34 committee meetings open to the public, six tours and/or public workshops, staff input, technical presentations and public hearings. Their interest and love of the Parkway was the consistent common ground that sustained the process and ultimately resulted in the adoption of the updated American River Parkway Plan in 2008 by the State of California.



Recognizes significant programs, areas or facilities and the organizations, collaborations, partnerships, individuals and/or foundations that sponsor the programs, areas or facilities

#### SUB-CRITERIA

Profound or original influence on the recreation and leisure opportunities and/or quality of life within the region

Will continue for generations

Has contributed to the quality of the development and growth of individual or group training or education, life fulfillment or leisure pursuit

Contributes to the economic vitality of the region

The American River Parkway provides many opportunities for millions of local urbanites and distant visitors to recreate on and near a flowing river alive with fish such as steelhead, salmon, shad and trout, and adjacent natural landscapes showcasing some of the last remaining riparian habitat in the Central Valley. It's a special place to get out, away from the cement and noise of the urban environment and walk, run, bike, fish, kayak, canoe, raft, bird watch, take photos, ride horseback, discover wildflowers, experience oak and cottonwood forests, view deer, turkeys, coyotes, jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, river otters and beavers at play and work. The possibilities are endless.

\*Outdoor, California, January-February 1983, reported that in the mid-1970's counts were made in early June of people using the parkway. At Lower Sunrise Park, on a Sunday in early June, more than 4,000 recreationists were counted rafting, or canoeing the river, bicycling along the bike trail, riding horses, hiking, jogging or diving in the river.

\*In 2000, the California Department of Fish and Game estimated that 66,000 angler hours went into steelheading on the American.

\*Sacramento County's Regional Parks Department reports 82 miles of maintained trails in the American River Parkway, including bike, equestrian and others...roughly the same distance between Sacramento and Lake Tahoe, or the distance between Sacramento and San Francisco, as the crow flies.

\*In the March 2004 issue of the NWA World Traveler magazine listed the Top 10 Hiking and Biking Trails for 2003 and the 9<sup>th</sup> on the list was the American River Bike Path, California (The Top Ten Trails of 2003 were selected based on the analysis of more than 10 million votes via subscribers and visitors to [www.trails.com](http://www.trails.com)).

\*The Effie Yeaw Nature Center states that its 77-acre nature preserve is included as a "Watchable Wildlife" site in the California state guide because of its reliable wildlife viewing opportunities. Over the 25 years of wildlife counts on the lower American River by the American River Natural History Association, more than 100 bird species have been counted every year.

\*For 38 years competing bicyclists, kayakers and runners have trained on the American River Parkway for Eppie's Great Race, the world's oldest triathlon.



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AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION  
California Chapter

---

August 14, 2007

Sunny Williams  
Sacramento County Planning & CDD  
827 7th Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: California Chapter American Planning Association Outstanding Focused Issue Planning Award

Nomination/Project: American River Parkway Plan Update Advisory Committee Process & Draft American River Parkway Plan

Dear Sunny Williams,

On behalf of CCAPA and this year's Awards Jury, it gives me great pleasure to advise you that you have been selected as the winner of an Outstanding Focused Issue Planning Award. The Awards Jury, which met in late July, after much deliberation and review found your nomination worthy of this award. I would like to cordially invite you to attend the Annual State Conference to be held in San Jose, September 30-October 3, 2007. At the Awards Ceremony, which will be held as a luncheon on Tuesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, you will be recognized for your accomplishment as an Award Winner. In accordance with the Chapter policy, you will be provided with one complimentary ticket to the Awards Ceremony. Please advise me as to whether you will be accepting the Award in person or be represented by someone else at the State Awards Ceremony by Friday September 1<sup>st</sup>. You can either call me at (714) 961-7130 or email me at [Kchristiansen@Yorba-Linda.org](mailto:Kchristiansen@Yorba-Linda.org). Also, if you need additional tickets for the event, you may purchase them on-line at the conference registration site [www.calapa.org](http://www.calapa.org).

We also encourage you to work with your Section to submit your nomination to National APA for consideration for a national award by September 10, 2007. You can obtain the information for the National submittal from APA's website at [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org). The Chapter will support you with your submittal by providing a letter of recommendation and reimbursing you for the registration fee, if needed. Please let me know how we can support you with this process. You may also contact our State Awards Coordinator, Conni Pallini-Tipton at (213) 978-1196 or email her at [Conni.Pallini-Tipton@lacity.org](mailto:Conni.Pallini-Tipton@lacity.org) for additional assistance.

Additionally, while the winners will be announced at the Awards Luncheon, you are encouraged to share your good news with your friends and colleagues in your newsletters and local newspapers.

Again, congratulations on your Award. I look forward to congratulating you personally at the Awards Ceremony.

Sincerely,

*Kurt E. Christiansen*

Kurt E. Christiansen, AICP  
Vice President, Administration

## SUB-CRITERIA

Profound and original influence on the recreation and leisure opportunities and quality of life within the region

Will continue for generations

Has contributed to the quality of development and growth of individuals, causes and movements

Has contributed to the quality of the development and growth of individual and group training

Contributes to the economic vitality of the region

### The Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail

Although most folks simply know it as “the bike trail”, this two-lane blacktop alongside the American River from Discovery Park, near downtown Sacramento, to Beals Point at Folsom Lake, has delighted scores of cyclists, who share the trail with walkers, joggers, and the occasional wild turkey, deer, squirrels and rattlesnakes who love to bask in the warmth of the blacktop, for many years.

Specifically, in 1896, the Capital City Wheelmen Bicycle Club, the successor club to the first Wheelmen Club, laid the cinder base for what is today one of Sacramento’s proudest amenities. Stepping even farther back in time, the approximate site of the trail was used as the final stretch of the western segment of the Pony Express. Over the ensuing years, the trail was paved and more miles were added until finally on November 20, 1980, the Parkway’s bike trail was complete. In one form or another, this cyclists’ dream has been a part of our region’s history for 125 years+. Designated in 1974 as a National Recreation Trail, this paved trail makes for one of the best urban bicycling/running/multi-use trails in America, in large part because it feels like wilderness when you may be a block from the city. This path winding through an urban nature preserve, beside a river’s clear, running waters, provides millions with the opportunity to touch, feel and smell the wonders of living close to the plants and animals we share with our world. People come from all over to train for important races or simply to find refuge from the chaotic life we often live in this century. And the bike trail provides for people of all ages, abilities and stations in life. Just ask Triathlete Richard Hunter, who is legally blind, training along the familiar paths of the American River Parkway. Or Catherine McCormick, an over eighty cycling champion who says she just loves to be on the bike and especially loves the 32 mile trail next to the American River – the scenery, the people and the wide variety of wild creatures she gets to see. Or better still support the Mustard Seed Spin started in 2005 by pediatrician Victoria Atkins. As a pediatrician she sees every day the serious health effects in ever increasing numbers of fat and sedentary children. A cyclist herself, she wanted to get kids riding bikes, encourage exercise, and get the community involved in supporting the Mustard Seed School (pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade) for Sacramento’s homeless youth. And there is the Rex Ride started in 2003 by Peggy and Steve Rex. Even though the Support the Parkway bike ride has raised thousands of dollars for Parkway maintenance and preservation, it is not so much a traditional bike event as it is a celebration of the American River bike trail. Larry Robinson, volunteer coordinator for SABA and a longtime fixture on the local bicycling scene and volunteer for the Rex Ride believes “the parkway is like what the Eiffel Tower is to the French people. To me it’s a symbol of our community. It’s very important for us to preserve it, not just for cycling but for all users.”

As the region grapples with traffic congestion and mobility concerns, the bike trail has taken on a new role and significance. Today, the bike trail is seen as a transit jewel - an important commuter corridor. Walt Seifert, former Executive Director of the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, founded in 1991, as a non-profit group that promotes cycling as everyday transportation, says that the Amgen Tour of California “gets people thinking about cycling and about the possibility of riding for transportation.” The Tour of California is an eight day bicycle race that passes through Sacramento. It is a statewide event that gets national and international exposure. Mike Sayers, a Sacramento-area pro cyclist who rode the

first Tour of California said "Sacramento is really lucky to have the American River bike trail."..... "I've ridden all over the world, and I've never seen a bike trail that well-maintained of that length." In November of 2004, Sacramento County voters passed Measure A, a half-cent transportation sales tax measure, earmarking one million dollars each year, for the next thirty years, for trail maintenance precisely because it provides such physical, mental and environmental benefits. And the influence of the bike trail does not stop at the Parkway's borders. It kindles the imagination of others who want to bring the benefits of the American River Parkway to their communities. Efforts such as the Ueda Parkway (this trail provides a significant leg to a proposed 60 mile regional trail loop that will extend to Placer County, through Roseville to Folsom Lake and to the American River Parkway), the Two Rivers Trail (offers beautiful and seldom seen views of the American River), the Sacramento Northern Bikeway (ultimate goal is to extend to Chico), the Sunrise Corridor Bikeway (provides a safe and direct connection to the Parkway), the Dry Creek Parkway (will one day link to the Ueda Parkway and the American River Parkway, a part of the proposed 60 mile trail loop), and the long held dream to connect the Parkway to the region's other river, the Sacramento, all take inspiration and heart from the enjoyment anglers, cyclists, equestrians, joggers, strollers, bird watchers and the birds themselves get from our urban oasis. The American River Parkway and its bike trail stand as more than a symbol of what a sustainable region must provide into the future.

#### SUB-CRITERIA

Profound or original influence on the recreation and leisure opportunities and quality of life in the region

Will continue for generations

Has contributed to the quality of the development and growth of individual and group training, life fulfillment and leisure pursuit

Contributes to the economic vitality of the region

#### EPIE'S GREAT RACE: "The World's Oldest Triathlon"

"The Great Race", founded in 1974 by Eppie Johnson, has become one of the most anticipated events of the year and a Sacramento summertime tradition. The first year the race started it began at Eppaminondas Restaurant in Rancho Cordova and finished at Eppie's on Watt Avenue. What kept the event going was the committee of volunteers who were involved. They enjoyed the event, they loved the venue and the American River Parkway. In 1980 the committee, including the Director Gary Rominger who worked for Sacramento County Parks, suggested moving the entire race to the American River Parkway – the start and finish – where it would be a safer course. Since that time the race has had a strong partnership with the County of Sacramento. The County Parks' Therapeutic Recreation Services program which provides skills training and recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities has been the beneficiary of race proceeds totaling close to one million dollars.

The benefits of Eppie's Great Race go far beyond the County Sacramento County and the Therapeutic Recreation Services program. The race is an activity for the whole family that promotes health and wellness, volunteerism and community involvement; showcases one of Sacramento's finest natural resources – the American River Parkway; promotes inclusion for people of all abilities; and provides economic boosts to area businesses.

Considered a bellweather of innovations, the race added, in 2006, the Kaiser Permanente Kids Duathlon in order to promote youth fitness and to encourage our youth to someday enter Eppie's Great Race. In 2003 three Czech republic citizens now living in California who have participated in the race for 25 years decided to put on a similar Great Race event in the Czech Republic. It is known as EPI VODACKY TRIATLON and Eppie Johnson attended that first race as the official starter.

Page through the attached Eppie's Great Race 38 magazine for a full sense of the community's involvement with this grand tradition made possible by The American River and Parkway.

#### SUB-CRITERIA

Will continue for generations

Has contributed to the quality of the development and growth of individuals, quality of life, causes or movements

Has contributed to the quality of the development and growth of individual or group training or education, life fulfillment or leisure pursuit

#### FRIENDS OF SUTTER'S LANDING/FRIENDS OF THE RIVERBANKS

Please read carefully the attached Pretty Book developed by Friends of Sutter's Landing in collaboration with the Friends of the Riverbanks (we have included a BEE article which highlights the purpose and work of this group). Here is a shining example of how experiencing the American River Parkway invites communities and their government to look at better ways to live in our urban environment, step forward, and take action to ensure that the world the Parkway has preserved for the past three generations will continue and improve.

#### GUY GALANTE AND SYLVIA RODRIGUEZ

Attached are stories of two educators, Guy Galante, former 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Gold River Discovery Center, an elementary school in Gold River and now the Youth Education Director at Soil Born Farms, and Sylvia Rodriguez, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Phoebe Hearst Elementary School in Sacramento. Please take the time to view Guy's Learning from the American River. Their stories give you a glimpse of the potential heights education can reach when resources like the American River Parkway are at their fingertips, free, and most importantly, available to challenge the range of human potential.

The above groups and individuals clearly demonstrate a commitment to and passion for the American River Parkway and the abiding values, lessons and benefits that it brings to not only their lives but most of all their children' as well as other's childrens' lives and assures us that the Parkway and River will prosper for years to come.

SUB-CRITERIA

Contributes to the economic vitality of the region

Direct Economic Benefits of the American River Parkway

In 2006, the estimated annual direct spending for all Parkway related goods and services in the greater Sacramento area was \$375,818,706, which includes annual Parkway visitor spending for recreation related activities (estimated at \$173,872,787 a year). The average spending rate for all recreational activities was estimated at \$19 per visitor, per day.

The Dangermond Group, Sacramento, California (April 2006)  
2006 American River Parkway Financial Needs Study

Bill Mueller, the Sacramento-Metropolitan Chamber of Commerces's vice president for Regional Policy issues, adds that the Parkway is key to attracting and retaining employers. "It's a tremendous recreational asset for the community and for companies who are here or seeking to move here, he notes. The Parkway increases the value of surrounding properties as well as the quality of life for those who live in the entire region."

Sacramento's Treasure: The Great American River Parkway by  
Marilyn Pribus  
Comstock's Business, March 2000