

American River Parkway Preservation Society
Annual Organizational Report
October 1, 2009- September 30, 2010

Mission

**Preserve, Protect, and Strengthen the American River Parkway,
Our Community's Natural Heart.**

Vision

**We want our Parkway, seven generations from now, to be a vibrant,
accessible, and serene sanctuary, nourishing and refreshing the spirit of all
who enter it.**

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**American River Parkway Preservation Society
Organizational Leadership**

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Dave Lydick, Deputy Director
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Rob Kerth, President
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Executive Summary

Our work over the past year has accomplished two things: **1)** Increased the focus on public safety in the Parkway by placing attention on the illegal camping of registered sex offenders in the Parkway, resulting in their removal; (p. 37) and **2)** continued the focus on a new governance and funding model for the Parkway resulting in further concrete work towards that eventuality, (p. 31)

We continue to keep attention on the formation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) for governance and the JPA's formation of a nonprofit organization for daily management and supplemental philanthropic fundraising for the Parkway—the model we use, the Central Park Conservancy, raises 85% of funding—and we will continue that focus also.

Our public educational work continues primarily through the written word, and public meetings when available. ARPPS President Michael Rushford and Senior Policy Director, David H. Lukenbill were able to speak at the April 7, 2010 Woodlake Neighborhood Association meeting, the neighborhood most impacted by illegal camping.

The Senior Policy Director, David H. Lukenbill was interviewed by Laura Brown of *YubaNet.com* for an article about the American River Parkway on January 11, 2010.

Inside Arden, a monthly news magazine distributed to neighborhoods along the Parkway, printed an interview with ARPPS President Michael Rushford in its July 2010 issue, nicely bookending the meeting in Woodlake.

As a policy development organization, our work consists in communicating ideas through available formats, and as this report will show, we have done that. Utilizing daily posting to the Parkway blog, sending open letters to public leaders and editors of local media, having articles published in local media, newsletters and e-letters to membership and community leaders, and the publication of public reports, we hope to enrich public dialogue seeking a comprehensive solution to the problems all agree burden the Parkway; funding, management, and preservation.

Introduction

About the American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS)

The American River Parkway Preservation Society is a 501 I (3) nonprofit corporation founded in 2003. The Society's role is to help inform public policy regarding the American River Parkway through the exploration and development of such concepts as:

- providing Parkway management through a Joint Powers Authority and a nonprofit conservancy,
- developing a financial endowment for funding support,
- building the Auburn Dam for stable water flow and temperature for year round recreation and protection of Parkway habitat and wildlife,
- designating the American River Watershed as a National Heritage Area encompassing the Parkway,
- dramatically enhancing the recreational, educational, and sanctuary resources of the Parkway.

We have published conceptual and policy primer reports annually on *World Rivers Day*—the last Sunday in September—and have now completed the publication series of four reports addressing our five guiding principles:

- September 25, 2005, focusing on the Lower Reach of the Parkway where crime and illegal camping have virtually destroyed the ability of the adjacent community to use their part of the Parkway.
- September 24, 2006 focusing on the Auburn Dam and the environment surrounding the minority community opposition to it.
- September 30, 2007 focusing on governance, eco-regionalism and heritage; calling for daily management of the Parkway by a nonprofit organization, thinking from an eco-regional perspective around environmental issues, and advocating for the establishment of a *Rivers of Gold National Heritage Area*

- September 28, 2008 focusing on recreation, education, and sanctuary, calling for increased public safety in the Lower Reach, financial stability, and adopting a regional vision.

Stimulating thinking about public policy is central to our approach and we will sustain a continued argument about the future of the Parkway in a thoughtful and scholarly manner, built upon the ideas introduced in the policy primer reports.

The Society's advocacy programs of public communication, providing research and policy information to leadership, and our annual research and organizational publications are designed to reach a broad and diverse audience.

Our work is focused on five critical issues, addressing each through public education congruent with our guiding principles:

1) Developing effective management with an ability to secure adequate funding for public safety, ongoing maintenance, facility repair, invasive plant management, and restore the beauty and safety once fully enjoyed in the sanctuary of the Parkway.

Our Approach: Years of ineffective management and deferred maintenance have deeply damaged the Parkway and without the development of alternative funding and management structures, it will continue to deteriorate. We propose management by a nonprofit conservancy, building an endowment fund for supplementary funding, and creating a National Heritage Area embracing the Parkway, acknowledging its national importance while attracting greater funding and oversight.

Our Guiding Principle: Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it's a necessity.

2) Relieving the continuing pressure on the river, whether through flooding, illegal sewage discharge, or taking water for new development; all of which hurts the salmon, other habitat and aquatic life, and ultimately our enjoyment of the Parkway experience.

Our Approach: The Sacramento region is becoming one of the most desirable places to live in the country, so it is not surprising that development continues at record levels. Each new city in our area brings new pressure for growth and more pressure on the optimal water conditions the American River salmon need to thrive. We support the construction of the Auburn Dam to address these issues and to protect the integrity of the Parkway and have authored a report concerning this available on our website.

Our Guiding Principle: What's good for the salmon is good for the river.

3) Restoring the Lower Reach of the Parkway from the habitat devastation, fires, and pollution caused by widespread illegal camping by the homeless; and helping restore a sense of dignity and responsibility within the homeless community.

Our Approach: The dignity of the human person, including the poor and distressed, must always be respected, as also must the dignity of the poor and distressed community. We have collaborated with homeless advocacy organizations, local government, businesses, chambers of commerce, and neighborhood associations to develop a plan providing Parkway maintenance jobs for the homeless. We have authored a report, on our website, on the Lower Reach of the Parkway describing policy options to restore the Parkway for the adjacent communities who have been unable to use it for the past several years.

Our Guiding Principle: (3) Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway: Social and environmental justice calls upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.

4) Bringing the community into a deeper understanding of the great value of the view space of the Parkway and how deeply destructive encroaching into the commons, by development, can be to the Parkway experience.

Our Approach: Given the stunning beauty of the Parkway, it is no wonder people want to build along its edges, even though their homes may visually intrude on the sanctuary of the commons, destroying the sense of being embraced by nature that is the essential Parkway experience. We will work to ensure that restrictions against visually intrusive construction, that are clear and irrevocable, are implemented and embraced.

Our Guiding Principle: If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.

5) Encouraging the inclusion of responsible usage by new Parkway user groups congruent with the spirit upon which public ownership of a natural resource is predicated.

Our Approach: The Parkway belongs to all of us. It is a community resource. Parkway management plans should contain no absolute restrictions on user activity, rather a process of study and decision-making. There are a variety of new usages that should be under consideration to become part of the Parkway experience, including full access for the disabled, an expanded network of picnic and sitting places, musical concerts, holiday celebrations, off-leash dog walking, mountain biking, inline skating, and additional nature centers.

Our Guiding Principle: Regarding new parkway usages, inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.

Public Communication & Education

Weblog

ARPPS maintains a daily weblog at <http://parkwayblog.blogspot.com/> and during our program year, from October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010 we posted 360 individual messages concerning articles, reports, news items, and event information connected to our mission.

Letters to Public

ARPPS mailed 800 letters to members of the public describing the work ARPPS does and inviting them to apply for membership.

Public Advocacy, Support Letters, Press Releases

Public Advocacy

Woodlake Neighborhood Association on April 7, 2010: ARPPS president Michael Rushford and Senior Policy Director, David H. Lukenbill spoke concerning the impact of the illegal camping and the subsequent increased traffic in their neighborhood: raiding of garage cans for recyclables, petty thefts from front and back yards and open garages; all of which contributes to a general sense of neighborhood unease.

Support Letters

1) October 26, 2009

Supervisor Susan Peters
Sacramento County, District 3
700 H Street, Suite 2450
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Supervisor Peters:

I want to thank you for taking the time to speak with me on October 21st concerning the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) for the American River Parkway.

As discussed, we feel the JPA would be enhanced by creating a nonprofit conservancy to provide daily management and supplemental philanthropic fund raising rather than relying on increasing taxes on an already over-taxed public.

The process of getting our beloved Parkway to the point that it has the funds to accomplish those things it needs to do to preserve, protect, and strengthen it for the sustained use of the public, is—especially in these perilous economic times—a process requiring adept and committed leadership.

It is obvious you bring those attributes to the ongoing process, and we look forward to your continued leadership on this vital public issue.

We all treasure the wonderful recreational and natural resources of the Parkway, and through the work of effective public leadership, effective advocacy organizations, and an informed public we can continue to do so.

Take care.

Sincerely,

David H. Lukenbill, Senior Policy Director
Cc: ARPPS Board

2) November 23, 2009

An Open Letter to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors and the Sacramento City Council

Dear Supervisors & Council Members:

The American River Parkway is the most important recreational area in our region and it has a serious problem of illegal camping in the North Sacramento/Midtown area of the Parkway—as you well know—which the current economic situation has made even worse.

As the county and most adjacent cities struggle with shrinking budgets, the reduction in public safety is moving into the serious threat area, especially in the Lower Reach area of the Parkway that has traditionally seen the most crime related to large-scale illegal camping by the homeless, which now—unfortunately—includes registered sex offenders.

During the September 8, 2009 Sacramento County Board of Supervisor’s meeting on Parkway funding problems, Parkway Ranger Tim McElheney—who is assigned to the illegal camping detail in the Lower Reach area of the Parkway—said that there were about 20 registered sex offenders illegally camping in the Parkway.

To simplify the process of accessing the video of the meeting online, and to hear other parts of what the ranger said that you might find disturbing, you would go to http://saccounty.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=4 and find the September 8, 2009 agenda item, click on View Video and Ranger Tim starts at 2:17 pm.

Illegal camping by the homeless in the Parkway has long been a public safety issue, but learning that registered sex offenders are also illegally camping there, raises the issue to one of great seriousness, and we call on public leadership to ensure public safety in the Parkway is a priority.

Sincerely,

Michael Rushford, President
Kristine Lea, Vice President

David H. Lukenbill, Treasurer/Senior Policy Director
Rebecca Garrison, Board Member

3) December 19, 2009

Ms. Janet R. Baker, Director
Department of Regional Parks

Transmitted by E-mail

Dear Ms. Baker:

Your December 8, 2009 letter of response to our November 23, 2009 Open Letter to the County Board of Supervisors and the Sacramento City Council, is much appreciated.

The increase in public safety in the Parkway from your news regarding the twenty registered sex offenders illegally camping in the Parkway, that: “All twenty have been cited or warned and removed from the Parkway.” Is welcome news to our organization and to all Parkway users.

Hopefully, a time will soon arrive when we can say this about all of the illegal camping in the Parkway.

There is much work remaining and we hope that through focused public leadership and continued organizational advocacy around the single most important issue for the users of the Parkway—public safety—that someday it will be safe to venture into the Parkway’s Lower Reach alone.

Thank you again for your response and for your work on behalf of the American River Parkway.

From all of us to all of you, have a Wonderful Holiday and a very Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Michael Rushford, President
Kristine Lea, Vice President
David H. Lukenbill, Treasurer/Senior Policy Director
Rebecca Garrison, Board Member

Cc: Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
Sacramento City Council

4) January 7, 2010

Open Letter to the American River Parkway “2 x 2” Committee

Susan Peters & Don Nottoli, Sacramento Board of Supervisors
Kevin Johnson, Mayor, Sacramento
Steve Cohn & Ray Tretheway, Sacramento City Council
Linda Budge & Robert McGarvey, Rancho Cordova City Council
Andy Morin & Kerri Howell, Folsom City Council
Janet Baker, Director, Sacramento County Regional Parks
Jim Combs, Director, Sacramento City Parks & Recreation
Joe Chinn, Assistant City Manger, Rancho Cordova
Robert Goss, Director, Folsom Parks & Recreation

Dear Committee Members:

As you continue your work to ensure the American River Parkway is sustained and enhanced for the future of all the communities that treasure and use it, we would like to offer you our suggestions concerning the Parkway Joint Powers Authority (JPA) your committee is tasked with considering, as it relates to Parkway management and funding.

We support the JPA idea your committee is working on, though not the tax increase currently coupled with it, and would ask you to consider the concept of creating a nonprofit organization to provide daily management and supplemental funding through dedicated philanthropy.

We support the JPA board composition—two (2) members from the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, two (2) members from the Sacramento City Council, one (1) member from the Rancho Cordova City Council, and one (1) member from the Folsom City Council.

We support the formation of a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), but would ask you to consider including a member of the CAC, chosen by the CAC, to sit on the JPA board.

We believe that the ability of dedicated management and raising supplemental funds philanthropically, which the managing nonprofit could do, is a much more effective way to develop the level of funding that is needed.

As an example, the Central Park Conservancy—the nonprofit that manages Central Park in New York City—raises 85% of the funding needed by Central Park, and I am sure we would all agree that the American River Parkway is as valued a resource to us as Central Park is to them.

The type of public safety, access, and vandalism problems adjacent neighborhoods have to deal with—illegal camping in the Lower Reach, late night carousing at Paradise Beach, Parkway users parking in neighborhoods impacting residents, and business encroachment issues—could all be much more effectively responded to through a nonprofit organization able to respond directly to these local issues.

The history of nonprofit organizations working to benefit the Parkway is a very positive one and this type of expansion would be congruent with that history.

With your leadership, and the deep love our many communities have for the Parkway, the development of a proactive and productive funding and management policy for the future can be assured.

Sincerely,

Michael Rushford, President
Kristine Lea, Vice President
David H. Lukenbill, Treasurer/Senior Policy Director
Rebecca Garrison, Board Member

Press Releases

1) November 18, 2009

Press Release

ARPPS ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE SACRAMENTO BEE

Another View: A nonprofit should run the parkway

By David H. Lukenbill

Special to The Bee

Published Sunday, Nov. 08, 2009

Two recent articles in The Bee tell us that funds for the American River Parkway will be reduced again, continuing the funding shortage the parkway has been dealing with for several years.

One is the The Bee's editorial: "Buy a yearly pass to help river parkway" from Oct. 28, and the other is the Public Eye column: "Bumpy trails ahead on American River Parkway" from Oct. 30.

The editorial's call to buy a pass isn't realistic considering most people feel they have already paid taxes to use the parkway, nor is the other article's reliance on public funding, given the recent drop in available money.

We support the proposed strategy under discussion by local leadership – also mentioned in the editorial – to form a "joint powers authority" of local governments to provide base funding, though we do not support the idea of creating a benefit assessment district to raise taxes on parkway-adjacent property, which is coupled with the plan.

Instead, we would prefer that the joint powers authority create a nonprofit organization for daily management, and develop and sustain substantial philanthropic funding for the parkway.

The separateness is crucial, as management and fundraising have to be solely dedicated to the parkway and be as accountable to donors and parkway users as they are to the public and local government.

The best example of this is the Central Park Conservancy, which raises 85 percent of the funding needed for Central Park in New York City.

While there may be little to compare between Sacramento and New York City, we can compare the significance of Central Park to New York City to the significance of the parkway to the Sacramento region.

A parkway-dedicated nonprofit would need to raise substantial amounts of money, requiring that the executive director be a nonprofit management professional adept at raising significant funding.

In the trying economic times our region has been dealing with, any discussion of increasing taxes or fees to help our parkway is counterproductive. However, philanthropy is still significant, with more than \$307 billion raised nationally in 2008.

With the love our community has for the parkway, plus professional leadership, a parkway-dedicated nonprofit could be relied on to rally that love around preserving, protecting and strengthening the parkway long into the future.

David H. Lukenbill was the founding president and is currently the senior policy director of the American River Parkway Preservation Society.

2) May 24, 2010

Press Release

AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY (ARPPS) REGIONAL PARKS TAX INCREASE PROPOSAL

A proposal was presented to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors this month by the regional parks department, with support from some Parkway advocacy groups, to consider adopting one of three strategies to provide money for regional parks.

Each strategy calls for an increase in taxes requiring a two-thirds vote for approval.

Each strategy uses the American River Parkway as the lead park for the marketing of the tax increase for all regional parks.

While appreciating the concern the supporters of this proposal have for the Parkway, this is a direction that could actually cause more harm than good. Potentially, this could divert resources and attention from strategies which have a chance of becoming reality and promise more long term funding sustainability. There is a better way.

Raising taxes to pay for parks is not an equitable approach, as those who do not use parks, or realize an adjacent property benefit, would be required to pay an additional tax for something they do not use or benefit from.

Those who live adjacent to the North Sacramento area of the Parkway are already burdened by neighborhood crime and habitat degradation caused by the illegal camping of the homeless. These citizens will see no value in having their taxes increased to continue failed policies.

There is a better way, and it can be found in the funding success of other signature parks, such as the Central Park Conservancy and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

Seek support for the American River Parkway through the non-coercive method of philanthropy tied to nonprofit daily management and Joint Powers Authority governance (see <http://parkwayblog.blogspot.com/2009/11/arpps-article-published.html>).

Based on the deep love the regional community has for the Parkway, a philanthropic strategy offers more promise than a tax increase.

Organizational Leadership
American River Parkway Preservation Society
Sacramento, California

Articles Published

1) Rancho Cordova Post, Viewpoints, May 25, 2010

<http://www.ranchocordovapost.com/2010/05/25/american-river-parkway-preservation-society-regional-parks-tax-increase-proposal/>

American River Parkway Preservation Society: Regional Parks Tax Increase Proposal

by David Lukenbill

A proposal was presented to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors this month by the regional parks department, with support from some Parkway advocacy groups, to consider adopting one of three strategies to provide money for regional parks.

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2) Inside Arden, July Issue 2010 Interview with ARPPS President, Michael Rushford

Change of Direction

Michael Rushford wants to create new conservancy for American River Parkway

By Susan DeMars

Growing up in Carmichael in the early 60s, Michael Rushford learned an important lesson from the nearby American River: change is inevitable.

“In the natural world, things are always changing,” he says, recalling how weather and releases from Folsom Dam dramatically impacted the river, its nature and everything along its banks.

“Every year the topography of the river bed would change a little. Each summer we would find new rapids, new lagoons, new islands. And, I remember that after one really wet winter, a big tree, which we considered invincible, fell into the river,” says Rushford, smiling at the notion that even massive trees can topple.

As president of the American River Parkway Preservation Society, he would like to topple the way the parkway is managed. Rushford and his group wants to get government out the Parkway management business.



Michael Rushford, ARPPS President

“We do not believe that local governments which share its management, or the special interest groups vying for influence over its future, represent the majority of people who visit and use the American River Parkway,” he explains. “We try to speak for the bulk of parkway users who want a well-managed, clean, safe and accessible place to enjoy the river and the beauty of the surrounding area.”

According to Rushford, there are too many cooks in the kitchen.

“No one entity is really in charge, but several share the responsibility,” he says. “Since the 1980s more and more people have become regular parkway visitors. The financial demands for maintenance and improvement have increased, while local governments seem to view the parkway as more of a problem than a priority.”

His group believes the parkway should be managed and maintained by a non-profit conservancy chartered solely for this purpose and beyond the influence of narrow interests or government budgets.

“The governing board should share a vision that recognizes the parkway belongs to everyone,” Rushford says.

The parkway preservation society supports the creation of an endowment to provide funding, utilizing volunteers and paid staff for maintenance and improvements, and to support cultural, recreational and educational programs.

While Rushford wants government to get out of parkway management, he does see a role for government: in the area of law enforcement.

“Today, parts of the river are a crime problem and off limits to most people,” he explains. “Some of this has to do with the times we live in, but I don’t believe that we should abandon the goal of making a public place that so many people enjoy a safe place as well.”

According to Sacramento Police records, from May through July of 2008, there were 24 incidents along the parkway within the city limits. Five were felony assaults, nine were burglaries or thefts, eight were drug or alcohol-related.

Says Rushford, “It is surprising that today, in a city and county of this size, with leaders who consider themselves quite important, that there are places a few blocks from City Hall and the county administration building, along one of the more beautiful urban waterways in America, where it is not safe for decent people to walk in broad daylight.”

He acknowledges that homeless camps along the river compromise the public’s perception of the parkway as a safe place.

In addition to heading the parkway reservation society, Rushford is president of the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation, a nonprofit, public-interest law organization dedicated to restoring a balance between the rights of crime victims and the accused. The foundation has helped win Supreme Court decisions upholding laws against illegal camping, aggressive panhandling and other public order crimes.

“A law enforcement presence and consistent enforcement of the city’s anti-camping ordinance are necessary,” he says.

In spite of his foundation’s work to curb illegal camping, Rushford believes there is a compassionate way to remove the homeless from the parkway. Local politicians, he says, must take the lead.

“In the 1980s, San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan cleaned up Golden Gate Park with his Matrix Program,” Rushford says. “And New York Mayor Rudy Guilianni cleaned up the subway with a similar approach.”

That approach involves setting aside funding for treatment and training programs to take care of those with physical or mental problems; to educate and train those who want to get off the streets; and to provide enough law enforcement to weed out the criminals and drive away those who refuse to live by the rules.

The city and county of Sacramento recently introduced a 10-year plan to end homelessness. Rushford says it’s too early to gauge its success.

“Much of the solution to the parkway’s problems involves politics,” he notes. “The homeless issue divides liberals and conservatives. So does the conflict caused by environmental groups, which want to make the parkway a nature preserve while most of the public want to use it for recreation.”

“Another divisive issue is the river itself,” admits Rushford, who acknowledges that the river is no longer just a place for “Huck Finns and a few sportsmen.” The river now runs through a more densely populated urban area with new cities, trails and parks. Thousands of cyclists and pedestrians use the parkway each day. Demands for water are unprecedented.

This had led to the controversy of the Auburn Dam, which Rushford’s group supports. “To preserve the parkway and its environment requires much better control of

river flows to prevent extreme high and low water levels,” Rushford says. “The only means to accomplish this is to create a much larger water storage area upstream of Folsom Dam.”

“As a 10-year-old boy, I always felt safe in the wild lands around the river,” recalls Rushford. “It was a different time, of course. Drugs and random violence were not everyday part of life in Sacramento then.”

But the experiences of a young boy, growing up in Carmichael near the American River in the 60s, still propels one of today’s loudest, most effective voices for the preservation of the American River Parkway.

David Lukenbill, director of the parkway preservation society, says Rushford is uniquely qualified to lead the parkway preservation effort. “He has a history with the river and a love for Sacramento, both of which fuel his passion for realizing the promise of the parkway,” Lukenbill notes.

For Rushford, it’s personal.

“The river is an essential part of my hometown. How it is maintained or not maintained and the kind of place it becomes will influence the quality of life here, just as it did when I was growing up,” says Rushford. “I feel like I should try to give back something to a place that gave so much to me.”

Inside Arden, July 2010, Meet Your Neighbors, (pp.24-25 & 29)

Letters Published

1) Published Sacramento Bee December 26, 2009 Letters to Editor

<http://www.sacbee.com/326/story/2420607.html>

Safety is a parkway priority

Re “Parkway values clash in Folsom” (Editorials, Dec. 21): We have long held that there needs to be more safe access to the parkway for the frail elderly and disabled. The proposed project in Folsom appears to meet those criteria, and the concept should be heartily supported.

The Bee editorial claiming lights and developed access intrude upon the naturalness of the parkway – while having some validity – should also consider the public safety issue of well-lighted access, especially for the frail elderly and disabled.

The dangerous access in the Lower Reach area of the parkway – from Discovery Park to Cal Expo – should serve as a model of “how not” to provide well-manicured and well-lighted access to our premier outdoor recreational area; while this new project in Folsom may provide a model of “how to.”

The proper public review is warranted, and one assumes an even better project will emerge to allow greater and safer access to the parkway for the frail elderly and disabled.

– David H. Lukenbill, senior policy director, American River Parkway Preservation Society

**2) Published Sacramento Bee
January 27, 2010
Letters to Editor**

<http://www.sacbee.com/326/story/2491922.html>

Arena plan could aid parkway

Re “Would-be arena financier is no stranger to big deals” (Page A1, Jan. 22) <http://www.sacbee.com/topstories/story/2480899.html>: Thank you for the great coverage of this very grand plan.

Though a very complicated deal with several moving parts, the beauty of it is how it can help solve one of the most intractable problems on the parkway.

For many years, parkway- adjacent neighborhoods in the area stretching from [Cal Expo](#) to [Discovery Park](#) have been burdened by the public safety issues arising from illegal camping by the homeless.

The residential and commercial development of Cal Expo – as a key part of this plan – will serve the same purpose as the Township 9 development will on the south bank of the [American River](#): bring more people to the area for legitimate reasons.

More people in the area will reduce the illegal camping and increase the public’s safety in accessing the most beautiful natural resource in our community.

– David H. Lukenbill, Sacramento, senior policy director, American River Parkway Preservation Society

**3) Published Sacramento Bee
March 1, 2010
Letters to Editor**

<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/03/01/2571846/letters-to-the-editor.html>

Parkway can be a nonprofit

Re “Parkway needs stable, long-term source of funds” (Editorial, Feb. 21) <http://www.sacbee.com/2010/02/21/2550938/parkway-needs-stable-long-term.html> :

The editorial about the American River Parkway was excellent, and calling for an arrangement that the Effie Yeaw Nature Center – threatened with closure – could enter into that might replicate the success of Fairytale Town is a great idea.

The larger issue of parkway funding is more complicated, but through governance by a Joint Powers Authority – currently being discussed by local governments – and for the JPA to then create a nonprofit organization to provide daily management and raise funds philanthropically, the funding problems for the parkway could someday become a distant memory.

We have seen the ability of nonprofit organizations – such as the Central Park Conservancy in New York City – to manage parks and raise funds on a substantial scale for beloved community resources and it could well happen with the parkway.

– David H. Lukenbill, Sacramento, senior policy director, American River Parkway Preservation Society

**4) Published Sacramento Bee
May 14, 2010
Letters to Editor**

<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/05/11/2741182/give-a-little-love-to-our-local.html>

<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/05/14/2749714/letters-to-the-editor.html>

Let nonprofit run parkway

Re “Give a little love to our local parks” (Editorial, May 11): While the idea of adequately funding the American River Parkway and other regional parks resonates with many in the region, the idea of increasing taxes, as called for in a Bee editorial, on an already overtaxed population does not.

There is a better way to raise money for the American River Parkway. What many jurisdictions have done to help their signature parks is convert to nonprofit daily management and philanthropic fundraising, under contract to local government park ownership. This model has worked very well in New York City and Pittsburgh.

The advantages are many, besides the obvious one of not raising taxes. The funds raised by the park nonprofit are safe from the type of government fund-shifting common during periods of economic stress. Philanthropic fundraising allows for parkway enhancements we have not seen in years as the county has been running a substantial shortfall for basic maintenance funding for the parkway.

The strategy we favor is to have the parkway-adjacent cities and the county form a joint powers authority for governance and core funding. The JPA would then create a nonprofit organization, which contracts with the JPA for daily management and supplemental fundraising for the parkway.

– David H. Lukenbill, Sacramento, senior policy director, American River Parkway Preservation Society

**5) Published Sacramento Bee
5, 2010**

**September
Letters to Editor**

<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/08/31/2993890/city-parks-goal-reality-or-miragesacramento.html>

<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/09/05/3004613/local-parks-reader-response.html>

Editorial: Sacramento has a standard for green space, but many neighborhoods fall short,
August 31, 2010

Collective strategy needed

Having enough resources to properly develop and maintain parks is an issue directly related to the mission of our organization: “Preserve, protect and strengthen the American River Parkway, our community’s natural heart.”

Parks are vital to a region’s well-being, and it is crucial that local leadership collectively develop a strategy to ensure parks are developed as needed and funded as appropriate.

David H. Lukenbill, senior policy director, American River Parkway Preservation Society

Financial Statement

AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

October 1 2009 to September 30, 2010

PART I Revenue, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets or Fund Balances

Revenue

1. Contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts received.....	\$3,440.60
2. Program service revenue including government fees and contracts.....	\$0
3. Membership dues and assessments.....	\$0
4. Investment income.....	\$0
5a. Gross amount from sale of assets other than inventory	\$0
b. Less: cost or other basis and sales expenses.....	\$0
c. Gain or (loss) from sales of assets other than inventory.....	\$0
6. Special events and activities.....	\$0
a. Gross revenue (not including contributions on line 1).....	\$0
b. Less: direct expenses other than fundraising expenses.....	\$0
c. Net income or (loss) from special events and activities.....	\$0
7a. Gross Sales of inventory, less returns and allowances.....	\$0
b. Less: cost of goods sold.....	\$0
c. Gross profit or (loss) from sales of inventory.....	\$0
8. Other revenue (describe).....	\$0
9. Total Revenue (Add 1, 2, 3, 4, 5c, 6c, 7c and 8).....	\$3,543.00

Expenses

10. Grants and similar amounts paid.....	\$0
11. Benefits paid to or for members.....	\$0
12. Salaries, other compensation, and employee benefits.....	\$0
13. Professional Fees and other payments to independent contractors.....	\$1,506.55 (\$1,205.00, Capacity Building Consultant) (\$301.55 Web Services)
14. Occupancy [web], rent, utilities, and [web] maintenance.....	\$68.19 (Nine years renewal org, domain name)
15. Printing, publications, postage, and shipping.....	\$1,267.61 (\$1,021.04 Postage) (\$15.57; Publications) (\$231.00 Printing)
16. Other expenses (describe) [Supplies, Meetings, Awards, Dues].....	\$662.06 (Printer Toner \$327.28) (Paper \$86.70) (Envelopes \$28.73) (Meetings with Board \$138.16) (Printhead \$56.19) (Membership, Woodlake Neighborhood Association, \$25.00)
17. Total Expenses (Add 10-16).....	\$3,504.41
18. Excess or (deficit) for the year (Subtract 17 from 9).....	\$38.59
19. Net assets or fund balances at beginning of year (from line 27, column A) must agree with end-of-year figure reported on prior year's return).....	\$6.13
20. Other changes in net assets or fund balances (attach explanation).....	\$0
21. Net assets or fund balances at end of year. Combine lines 18-20.....	\$44.67

PART II Balance Sheets

22. Cash, savings, and investments.....	\$44.67
23. Land and buildings.....	\$0
24. Other assets (describe).....	\$0
25. Total Assets.....	\$44.67
26. Total Liabilities (describe).....	\$0
27. Net assets or fund balances (line 27 of column B must agree with line 21)...	\$44.67

AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY BUDGET NARRATIVE

Revenue

1. Contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts received.....	\$3,543.00
2. Program service revenue including government fees and contracts.....	\$0
3. Membership dues and assessments.....	\$0
4. Investment income.....	\$0
5a. Gross amount from sale of assets other than inventory	\$0
b. Less: cost or other basis and sales expenses.....	\$0
c. Gain or (loss) from sales of assets other than inventory.....	\$0
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b. Less: costs of goods sold.....	\$0
c. Gross profit or (loss) from sales of inventory.....	\$0
8. Other revenue (describe).....	\$0
9. Total Revenue (Add 1, 2, 3, 4, 5c, 6c, 7c and 8).....	\$ 3,543.00

Expenses

10. Grants and similar amounts paid.....	\$0
11. Benefits paid to or for members.....	\$0
12. Salaries, other compensation, and employee benefits.....	\$0
13. Professional Fees and other payments to independent contractors....	\$1,506.55 (\$1,205.00, Capacity Building Consultant) (\$301.55 Web Services)
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26. Total Liabilities (describe).....	\$0
27. Net assets or fund balances (line 27 of column B must agree with line 21)...	\$44.67

Current Membership Status

FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING MEMBERS

The membership composed of students, individuals, families, businesses, nonprofit organizations, chambers of commerce, and foundations that provide financial support on an annual or one-time donation basis.

Subtotal **349 members**

Retention Rate **66%**

HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERS

Honorary memberships given to students, individuals, families, businesses, nonprofit organizations, chambers of commerce, and foundations that have provided extraordinary support to the organization.

Subtotal: **30 Members**

HONORARY LEADERSHIP MEMBERS

Memberships given to individuals in public leadership roles related to the Parkway.

Subtotal: **267 Members**

ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

The membership comprised of community members who have donated time and support working on one of several committees and/or advisory groups, or who are part of a community leadership group.

Subtotal: **37 members**

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP **683 members**

**American River Parkway Preservation Society
Strategy & Implementation Summary & Status Summary**

October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2014

Table of Contents

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The American River Parkway Preservation Society Strategy & Implementation

Preserve, Protect & Strengthen the American River Parkway *For As Long As The River Runs Through It* 2009 – 2014

Introduction

The leadership in our community has a responsibility to create a vision that preserves, protects and strengthens the treasured resource of the American River Parkway in perpetuity.

We have invested our first five years—since our organization was founded in 2003—pursuing a strategy of organizational capacity building and conducting research in the practical approaches, emanating from our guiding principles, we've determined can address the critical issues impacting the Parkway, and communicating with our members and the public those results.

Five Critical Issues & Corresponding Guiding Principle

1) Continuing depletion of public funding to provide vital ongoing maintenance, facility repair, law enforcement presence, invasive plant management, and fully restore a sense of safety for those using our priceless public resource.

Our Guiding Principle: Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it's a necessity.

2) Continuing pressure on the river, whether through flooding, illegal sewage discharge, or taking water for new development, hurts the salmon and other aquatic life.

Our Guiding Principle: What's good for the salmon is good for the river.

3) Continuing habitat devastation, fires, and pollution from widespread illegal camping by the homeless, primarily in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway.

Our Guiding Principle: Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway: Social and environmental justice calls upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.

4) Continuing development pressure to build large homes along the Parkway edges, intruding on the view space, and encroaching into the commons.

Our Guiding Principle: If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.

5) Continuing exclusion of responsible usage by new Parkway user groups is contrary to the spirit upon which public ownership of a natural resource is predicated.

Our Guiding Principle: Regarding new parkway usages: Inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.

This past five year period resulted in the creation of our first strategic plan—designed to guide our work from 2004 to 2009—a stable membership base of about 700, designation of an annual parkway advocate (five individuals were acknowledged), and regular communications (letters, articles, daily blogging, monthly e-letters, quarterly newsletters, annual organizational and research reports covering each of the five critical issues, and periodic planning position papers).

All of this information is available on our website.

Strategic Summary

We will be investing the next five years in two directions; one major, the other ongoing.

The major work will focus around trying to encourage local government to bring into reality the one idea from our research into approaches that can most significantly impact the major critical issues—funding and management—which is the creation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to govern the Parkway.

The ongoing work will focus on continuing to help build a community knowledge base around the results of our five research reports, buttressed by new information that becomes available.

The American River Parkway is the most valuable natural resource in our community and one of the most valuable in the nation.

Because of this singular nature, it has the potential to be governed through a singular process, a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), as other signature park areas in the country are governed.

This type of governance will give our Parkway the dedicated management and fund raising capability that are so necessary to retain and enhance its premier local and national status.

Implementation Summary

To help create an environment where the JPA policy concept we have presented become accepted public policy it is important to provide information about successful adaptations of the concept to other public park areas in the nation, to the public and public leadership through the following venues.

Community Information

- Daily blogging: The Parkway Blog at <http://parkwayblog.blogspot.com/> is part of the ongoing work of ARPPS public education and advocacy around public policy issues that may be related to the Parkway and the adjacent communities along the American River in Sacramento, California. (365 blog postings annually)

- Daily letters to members of the public: We will be sending information to members of the public, concerning the advisability of creating a JPA to govern the Parkway. (1,100 letters annually)
- Monthly e-letters to membership and public leadership: We will continue the monthly e letters, with a focus, when possible, on JPA governance. (12 annually)
- Quarterly newsletters to membership and public leadership: We will continue the quarterly newsletters with a focus, when possible, on JPA governance. (4 annually)
- Regular letters to the editor: We will seek opportunities to send letters that focus on JPA governance. (4-10 annually)
- Occasional articles in local publications: We will seek to have articles published that look at governance by a JPA and a nonprofit conservancy as a viable option for the Parkway. (1-3 annually)
- Occasional policy planning papers: We will, when possible, cover the viability of Parkway governance by a JPA. (1-3 annually)
- Organizational report (1 annually)

Public Forums

- Regular forums around Parkway issues: We will seek opportunities to conduct public forums around the issue of JPA governance. (1-2 annually)
- Presentations to local business and neighborhood organizations: We will seek the opportunity to present information about JPA governance. (1-2 annually)
- Meetings with public leadership: We will meet with public leadership to discuss the option of JPA governance. (4-6 annually)

Study Mission

- Advocate for a study mission to the San Dieguito River Park in San Diego, which is governed by a JPA.

Review & Update

This plan is subject to annual review and updating every five years.

Status Summary

Our Guiding Principles, Critical Issues & Suggested Solutions: Status of Progress

Guiding Principles

- 1) *Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it's a necessity.*
- 2) *What's good for the salmon is good for the river.*
- 3) *Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway: Social and environmental justice calls upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.*
- 4) *If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.*
- 5) *Regarding new parkway usages: Inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.*

Status: These guiding principles still animate our work, being prioritized as warranted.

Critical Issues/Solutions

We encourage policy discussions about the Parkway, addressing the five critical issues and our proposed solutions.

1) Continuing depletion of public funding to take care of the Parkway.

Solution: *Create a Joint Powers Authority and nonprofit organization for daily management and fundraising.*

Status: Being discussed by a designated committee with representation from Sacramento County and the cities of Sacramento, Folsom, & Rancho Cordova.

2) Continuing pressure on the river, whether through flooding, illegal sewage discharge, or taking water for new development, hurts the salmon and other aquatic life. **Solution:** *Build the Auburn Dam.*

Status: On hold, but still a congressionally approved dam site which could be revived by Congress.

3) Continuing habitat devastation, fires, and pollution from widespread illegal camping by the homeless in the Lower Reach.

Solution: *Strengthen and enforce laws against illegal camping.*

Status: While the legal argument—that has had some success—that sleeping in public is not illegal, has given some pause to some local jurisdictions in enforcement and strengthening laws against public camping in the Parkway, the increase in the aggressiveness of panhandlers congregating in struggling downtown areas, has caused other local areas to *increase* their efforts to restrict public camping.

4) Continuing development pressure to build large homes along the Parkway edges, intruding on the view space, and encroaching into the commons.

Solution: *Prohibit such new building.*

Status: The new Parkway Plan strengthened the restrictions.

5) Continuing exclusion of responsible usage by new Parkway user groups is contrary to the spirit upon which public ownership of a natural resource is predicated.

Solution: *Give such groups an opportunity to make their case.*

Status: New groups seeking access to the Parkway, such as dogs-without-leases groups, mountain-bike groups, disc-golf groups, mini-train groups, etc. are still finding little opportunity to present their proposals—which almost always includes doing the maintenance and initial set-up themselves—to the Parkway governing agency which has traditionally favored passive recreation over active.

SECTION TWO

Organizational Leadership: Roles & Duties

October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2014

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Act as Chief Executive Officer & Chair Board Meetings

Chief Financial Officer: Maintain Financial Records, Keep Meeting Agenda, Minutes & Corporate Records

Vice President: Act as Chief Executive Officer & Chair Board Meetings in President's Absence.

Director: Serve as at-large director.

POLICY DEPARTMENT

Senior Policy Director: Research, Policy Development, Communications, Knowledge Management

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: EMERITUS

Chair: Chair Emeritus Board

ENDOWMENT ADVISORY GROUP

Chair: Advise Board on Endowment Issues

SLOBE PARKWAY ADVOCATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Honorees: Represent Dedicated Parkway Advocacy



Conclusion

The continuing economic crisis and the impact it has on government, has created an environment where new ways of caring for public resources is being examined, and one recent result was the turnover of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center to a nonprofit organization for management and funding.

Though this particular strategy was done in haste—and the future program sustainability will require substantial effort from the staff and volunteers of the organization—it is a strategy that is becoming more common locally.

A grassroots group has been discussing strategies to fund regional parks in general—which includes the Parkway—and though we do not see much value in the discussion which calls for tax increases for virtually all of the strategies under discussion; one strategy being considered is a nonprofit conservancy, which we do support, though not if the formation of it involved any tax increases.

Here is an excerpt from their first progress report.

Options Analysis: The Grassroots Working Group has, since first meeting on June 7, 2010, been analyzing options for securing adequate, stable, long term funding for our regional parks and open space lands and facilities. A total of nine options were identified and five of the nine have been selected options for further study.

The description of each of the options and basis of the sorting of the options is provided in the attachment to this report, “Disposition of Options Considered by the Working Group”, August 26, 2010. A matrix summarizing the results of the Working Group analysis is included in the attachment.

Options for Further Study by TPL: The following options have been selected by the Grassroots Working Group. The selected options are not listed in any particular order or preference.

1. New INDEPENDENT Regional Parks and Open Space District
2. New DEPENDENT Regional Park and Open Space
3. Non-Profit Conservancy
4. Countywide Community Services District
5. Continue County Department of Regional Parks (“No Project Option”)

GRASS ROOTS WORKING GROUP: To Secure Adequate, Stable, Long Term Funding for Our Regional Parks and Open Space System (p. ii) Retrieved September 22, 2010 from http://www.sarariverwatch.org/progress_report_1-100p.doc

Sacramento County Regional Parks produced a funding strategy report in May of 2010 also calling for tax increases

<http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/Documents/Parks%20Strategic%20Workshop.pdf> ,

which we commented on in our blog <http://parkwayblog.blogspot.com/2010/05/regional-parks-tax-increase-proposal.html>

Sacramento County Regional Parks is also working as the technical advisor to the grassroots group, as reported in a recent report:

Secure Long Term Funding for Parks – Grass Roots Working Group

- Parks is working as technical advisors to the Grass Roots Working Group whose adopted purpose is to “secure stable, long term funding for the Regional Park and open space system.”
- The group is reviewing funding and governance structures
- The group raised \$37,500 to hire Trust for Public Lands to provide consulting services and a recommendation for funding and governance structure.
- The Board will be briefed in open session this fall on their efforts.

Sacramento County, Regional Parks Status Update, September 1, 2010 (p. 1)

Retrieved September 22, 2010 from

<http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/Documents/Parks-StatusUpdate%209.1.10.pdf>

Though this new effort follows another group that met for several years discussing Parkway funding, with little success, the economic turmoil can possibly render this effort—at the very least—as a positive development.

Crisis focuses the mind, and though the current discussion’s reliance on increasing taxes to help fund the regional parks is very possibly a dead-end; the discussion can be of some value if a conclusion is reached that the signature parks, primarily the Parkway, can benefit from following the success of other parks use of philanthropy and nonprofit management.

We were asked, in the very beginning formation of this group to become involved, but the insistence on having tax increases as the major priority precluded our involvement.

That being said, we wish the group all the best, and hope they reach the conclusions that will work.

Appendix I: E-Letters

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #89: October 6, 2009

Registered Sex Offenders Illegally Camping in the Parkway & Georgia

The ranger said that there were about 20 registered sex offenders camping in the Parkway and he talked to one of them who said his probation officer told him to camp there "Until the rangers kick you out".

While watching the rerun of the September 8, 2009 Sacramento County board meeting on the Parkway funding problems, I heard a startling comment from Parkway Ranger Tim McElheney, who is assigned to the illegal camping detail in the Lower Reach area of the Parkway.

This is the area which we have been advocating be cleaned up for years as the illegal camping there has been a real public safety issue for those families in the adjacent communities.

The ranger said that there were about 20 registered sex offenders camping in the Parkway and he talked to one of them who said his probation officer told him to camp there "Until the rangers kick you out".

The ranger said he got the impression, after talking to probation officers, that there is no other place to send them.

The video is at http://saccounty.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=4 , find the September 8, 2009 agenda item, click on view video and the exchange with Ranger Tim starts at 2:17 pm.

The Rancho Cordova Post has reported on this story at <http://www.ranchocordovapost.com/2009/09/30/camping-on-parkway-increases-after-tent-city-closure/comment-page-1/> .

It seems the issue of registered sex offenders illegally camping out near communities—though the major local media haven't yet covered those camping out in the Parkway—is also an issue in Georgia, as this article from the Washington Post notes.

An excerpt.

“MARIETTA, Ga. -- A small group of homeless sex offenders have set up camp in a densely wooded area behind a suburban Atlanta office park, directed there by probation officers who say it's a place of last resort for those with nowhere else to go.

“Nine sex offenders live in tents surrounding a makeshift fire pit in the trees behind a towering "no trespassing" sign, waiting out their probation sentences as they face numerous living restrictions under one of the nation's toughest sex offender policies.

"It's kind of like a mind-game, it's like 'Survivor,'" said William Hawkins, a 34-year-old who said he was directed to the campsite two weeks ago after being released from prison for violating probation by failing to register as a sex offender in Georgia.

“The muddy camp on the outskirts of prosperous Cobb County is an unintended consequence of Georgia law, which bans the state's 16,000 sex offenders from living, working or loitering within 1,000 feet of schools, churches, parks and other spots where children gather.

“It's not the only place in Cobb County where offenders can live - there are hundreds of other sex offenders throughout the county living in compliance with the law. But Ahmed Holt, manager of the state's sex offender administration unit, calls the camp a "last resort" for homeless offenders who can't find another place to live that complies with the law.”
(Retrieved September 28, 2009 from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/28/AR2009092800873.html>)

The next day, presumably as a result of the story in the *Washington Post*, the sex offenders illegally camping on private property have been told to leave, according to this report from *Cobb County News*.

An excerpt.

“A group of homeless sex offenders who had been living in tents in the woods behind an office park near Marietta were told they had to leave the land by Tuesday.

“We don't want to allow anyone to live on our property for liability issues,” said Mark McKinnon, a spokesman for the Georgia Department of Transportation, which owns the wooded land where the sex offenders had taken residence.

“Several men said their probation officers had told them about the encampment as a kind of last resort for homeless sex offenders trying to meet the strict residency requirements of their probation.

“Georgia's law prohibits the state's 16,000 sex offenders from living, working or loitering within 1,000 feet of schools, churches, child care facilities and other areas where children gather. It limits the locations where they can live.” (Retrieved September 29, 2009 from <http://www.ajc.com/news/cobb/homeless-sex-offenders-living-149945.html>)

David H. Lukenbill, CFO & Senior Policy Director
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Phone: 916-486-3856
Email: Dlukenbill@msn.com
Weblog: <http://parkwayblog.blogspot.com/>
Website: <http://www.arpps.org/>

American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #90: November 9, 2009

Parkway Funding Article Published in Sacramento Bee Yesterday

We support the proposed strategy under discussion by local leadership – also mentioned in the editorial – to form a "joint powers authority" of local governments to provide base funding, though we do not support the idea of creating a benefit assessment district to raise taxes on parkway-adjacent property, which is coupled with the plan.

Another View: A nonprofit should run the parkway

Special to The Bee

Published Sunday, Nov. 08, 2009

Two recent articles in The Bee tell us that funds for the American River Parkway will be reduced again, continuing the funding shortage the parkway has been dealing with for several years.

One is the The Bee's editorial: "Buy a yearly pass to help river parkway" from Oct. 28, <http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/story/2286588.html> and the other is the Public Eye column: "Bumpy trails ahead on American River Parkway" from Oct. 30, <http://www.sacbee.com/626/story/2290223.html>

The editorial's call to buy a pass isn't realistic considering most people feel they have already paid taxes to use the parkway, nor is the other article's reliance on public funding, given the recent drop in available money.

We support the proposed strategy under discussion by local leadership – also mentioned in the editorial – to form a "joint powers authority" of local governments to provide base funding, though we do not support the idea of creating a benefit assessment district to raise taxes on parkway-adjacent property, which is coupled with the plan.

Instead, we would prefer that the joint powers authority create a nonprofit organization for daily management, and develop and sustain substantial philanthropic funding for the parkway.

The separateness is crucial, as management and fundraising have to be solely dedicated to the parkway and be as accountable to donors and parkway users as they are to the public and local government.

The best example of this is the Central Park Conservancy, which raises 85 percent of the funding needed for Central Park in New York City.

While there may be little to compare between Sacramento and New York City, we can compare the significance of Central Park to New York City to the significance of the parkway to the Sacramento region.

A parkway-dedicated nonprofit would need to raise substantial amounts of money, requiring that the executive director be a nonprofit management professional adept at raising significant funding.

In the trying economic times our region has been dealing with, any discussion of increasing taxes or fees to help our parkway is counterproductive. However, philanthropy is still significant, with more than \$307 billion raised nationally in 2008.

With the love our community has for the parkway, plus professional leadership, a parkway-dedicated nonprofit could be relied on to rally that love around preserving, protecting and strengthening the parkway long into the future.

David H. Lukenbill was the founding president and is currently the senior policy director of the American River Parkway Preservation Society.

David H. Lukenbill, CFO & Senior Policy Director
American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS)

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #91: December 7, 2009

Open Letter to Sacramento County Supervisors & Sacramento City Council

(Sent November 23, 2009)

Illegal camping by the homeless in the Parkway has long been a public safety issue, but learning that registered sex offenders are also illegally camping there, raises the issue to one of great seriousness, and we call on public leadership to ensure public safety in the Parkway is a priority.

OPEN LETTER TO THE SACRAMENTO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS & THE SACRAMENTO CITY COUNCIL

November 23, 2009

Dear Supervisors & Council Members:

The American River Parkway is the most important recreational area in our region and it has a serious problem of illegal camping in the North Sacramento/Midtown area of the Parkway—as you well know—which the current economic situation has made even worse.

As the county and most adjacent cities struggle with shrinking budgets, the reduction in public safety is moving into the serious threat area, especially in the Lower Reach area of the Parkway that has traditionally seen the most crime related to large-scale illegal camping by the homeless, which now—unfortunately—includes registered sex offenders.

During the September 8, 2009 Sacramento County Board of Supervisor's meeting on Parkway funding problems, Parkway Ranger Tim McElheney—who is assigned to the illegal camping detail in the Lower Reach area of the Parkway—said that there were about 20 registered sex offenders illegally camping in the Parkway.

To simplify the process of accessing the video of the meeting online, and to hear other parts of what the ranger said that you might find disturbing, you would go to http://saccounty.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=4 and find the September 8, 2009 agenda item, click on View Video and Ranger Tim starts at 2:17 pm.

Illegal camping by the homeless in the Parkway has long been a public safety issue, but learning that registered sex offenders are also illegally camping there, raises the issue to one of great seriousness, and we call on public leadership to ensure public safety in the Parkway is a priority.

Sincerely,

Signed

Michael Rushford, President
Kristine Lea, Vice President
Rebecca Garrison, Board Member
David H. Lukenbill, Senior Policy Director

David H. Lukenbill, CFO & Senior Policy Director
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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #92: January 7, 2010

Open Letter to Parkway JPA Group

OPEN LETTER TO THE AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY “2 x 2” COMMITTEE

January 7, 2010

Susan Peters & Don Nottoli, Sacramento Board of Supervisors
Kevin Johnson, Mayor, Sacramento
Steve Cohn & Ray Tretheway, Sacramento City Council
Linda Budge & Robert McGarvey, Rancho Cordova City Council
Andy Morin & Ken Howell, Folsom City Council
Janet Baker, Director, Sacramento County Regional Parks
Jim Combs, Director, Sacramento City Parks & Recreation
Joe Chinn, Assistant City Manger, Folsom
Robert Goss, Director, Folsom Parks & Recreation

Dear Committee Members:

As you continue your work to ensure the American River Parkway is sustained and enhanced for the future of all the communities that treasure and use it, we would like to offer you our suggestions concerning the Parkway Joint Powers Authority (JPA) your committee is tasked with considering, as it relates to Parkway management and funding.

We support the JPA idea your committee is working on, though not the tax increase currently coupled with it, and would ask you to consider the concept of creating a nonprofit organization to provide daily management and supplemental funding through dedicated philanthropy.

We support the JPA board composition—two (2) members from the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, two (2) members from the Sacramento City Council, one (1) member from the Rancho Cordova City Council, and one (1) member from the Folsom City Council.

We support the formation of a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), but would ask you to consider including a member of the CAC, chosen by the CAC, to sit on the JPA board.

We believe that the ability of dedicated management and raising supplemental funds philanthropically, which the managing nonprofit could do, is a much more effective way to develop the level of funding that is needed.

As an example, the Central Park Conservancy—the nonprofit that manages Central Park in New York City—raises 85% of the funding needed by Central Park, and I am sure we would all agree that the American River Parkway is as valued a resource to us as Central Park is to them.

The type of public safety, access, and vandalism problems adjacent neighborhoods have to deal with—illegal camping in the Lower Reach, late night carousing at Paradise Beach, Parkway users parking in neighborhoods impacting residents, and business encroachment issues—could all be much more effectively responded to through a nonprofit organization able to respond directly to these local issues.

The history of nonprofit organizations working to benefit the Parkway is a very positive one and this type of expansion would be congruent with that history.

With your leadership, and the deep love our many communities have for the Parkway, the development of a proactive and productive funding and management policy for the future can be assured.

Sincerely,
Governing Board,

Signed

Michael Rushford, President
Kristine Lea, Vice President
David H. Lukenbill, CFO, Senior Policy Director
Rebecca Garrison, Director

David H. Lukenbill, CFO & Senior Policy Director
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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #93: February 6, 2010

San Francisco Exploring Public Private Partnership for Parks

This recent article from the San Francisco Chronicle reveals that we are not the only city examining the very successful model for parks management and funding established by the Central Park Conservancy in New York City, and you can read about it from their website at http://www.centralparknyc.org/site/PageNavigator/aboutcon_cpc

While the article reports that San Francisco is apparently considering the model for use across the board, we feel it is a model that will only work—most effectively—with signature parks, such as Central Park and the American River Parkway.

You can read about our idea for using the concept with the Parkway, in several postings on our website news page at <http://www.arpps.org/news.html> .

The Chronicle article also examines many of the concerns that will arise from consideration of this approach, some of which might be relevant in Sacramento.

Our hope is that everyone will keep focused on the real objective, how to effectively fund the American River Parkway, a true regional treasure slowly becoming very unsafe—especially in the Lower Reach—and a bit rough around the edges as basic maintenance funding troubles persist.

Here is the article from the San Francisco Chronicle.

Public-private pairing envisioned for S.F. parks

[Rachel Gordon, Chronicle Staff Writer](#)

Thursday, December 31, 2009

San Francisco may rely more on corporate and philanthropic sponsors and community volunteers to fund and maintain its parks and recreation centers as it struggles with a mounting budget deficit.

That is the hope of Phil Ginsburg, general manager of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, who recently returned from New York City and was wowed by the public-private partnership operating Central Park.

The Central Park Conservancy, relying heavily on money from sponsorships, has invested more than \$500 million in the showcase urban park in nearly three decades.

"Everything- everything - is named: every bench, every tree. And it's done very modestly, very tastefully," Ginsburg said.

Under his money-generating vision, more coffee kiosks and hot dog stands would be allowed to operate in San Francisco parks, and fields would be rented out more often for concerts and other special events. Longtime park concessionaires may be ousted by new leaseholders who offer more money.

Donors would be recognized by having a grove of trees, playground, golf course or recreation center named in their honor.

"We need to become much more entrepreneurial, much more self-sufficient," said Ginsburg, Mayor Gavin Newsom's onetime chief of staff who became the city's recreation and parks chief in July.

His ideas, however, will not be easy to implement.

Resistant to change

A plan to make the concession at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park more lucrative by replacing the modest snack bar with a more upscale cafe has met stiff opposition. Supporters of the current operation circulated a petition and recently packed a City Hall meeting pleading to leave the boathouse alone. The outcome is undecided.

The Recreation and Park Department, which oversees more than 200 city parks, recreation centers, playgrounds and golf courses, plus a camp near Yosemite, has a \$110 million operating budget. Less than a third of its budget comes from the city's general fund. It could lose as much as \$9 million in the fiscal year that starts July 1 to help close a projected \$522 million citywide deficit.

"I would much rather find creative ways to raise revenue than to have to lay off park gardeners and rec directors," Ginsburg said.

But Ginsburg may be stepping into dangerous territory.

Privatization concerns

The left-of-center Board of Supervisors often has bristled at even a hint of privatizing public resources, and voters have gone back and forth about adding a corporate name to Candlestick Park.

Ginsburg said he has no plans to privatize public assets but is intent on finding new sources of revenue, "and if that means putting up tasteful plaques" acknowledging donors, then so be it.

Golden Gate Bridge administrators, attempting a similar scheme, found that's easier said than done. A few years ago, public backlash forced them to drop plans to help close a budget gap with "low-key" corporate sponsorships of the span. The sustained economic downturn has since resurrected the idea. San Francisco Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi said he agrees with Ginsburg that the city could and should do a better job making money from park concessions in appropriate settings.

But, he added, relying on corporate and philanthropic sponsors to come to the rescue poses concerns, in part, because a two-tiered system could be created in which some parks and playgrounds get a cash infusion while others languish.

Mirkarimi, fearing a "creep toward privatization," would rather that taxpayers pick up the tab, perhaps through the creation of a new assessment district or parcel tax dedicated to parks and recreation programs.

Working partnerships

The department already has partnered with a nonprofit to operate the San Francisco Zoo and is working with several "Friends of" groups that volunteer time and money to aid neighborhood parks and playgrounds.

One such initiative involves a new playground for Dolores Park, on the western edge of the Mission District. Formed four years ago out of frustration over the condition of the

children's play area, Friends of Dolores Park Playground persuaded the city to form a public-private partnership to replace the old playground.

The group raised \$1.5 million in a private grant from the Mercer Fund. The city will provide another \$1.5 million in bond money. The new playground, set to open in 2011, will be named after philanthropist Helen Diller.

Control over spending

As part of the deal, the Friends group retains control over how the donated money is spent and has committed to raising \$15,000 a year for maintenance, provided the city kicks in \$15,000 the first year the playground is open.

"In a perfect world, we shouldn't have to do this. The city should get this done," said Nancy Gonzalez Madynski, who helped organize the group and is a mother of a 4-year-old. "But we want to have something for our children, other people's children and the generations to come."

E-mail Rachel Gordon at rgordon@sfgate.com.

Article retrieved January 15, 2010 from

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/12/31/MNGD1B8C54.DTL&>

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #94: March 8, 2010

Central Park Conservancy

This new article from *City Journal* (Winter 2010 Issue, vol. 20, no. 10) examines the Central Park Conservancy in New York City—the very successful model for parks management and funding—and mentions how Pittsburgh has adapted the model for their parks.

As you know, we feel it is a model that will also work for the American River Parkway.

You can read about our idea for using the concept with the Parkway, in several postings on our website news page at <http://www.arpps.org/news.html>.

We've also enclosed the ARPPS letter recently published by the Bee.

Here is the article from *City Journal*.

CONRAD KIECHEL

The Nonprofit That Saved Central Park

Thirty years after its founding, the Conservancy inspires other cities.

It's a beautiful day in New York's Central Park, and Isabella Rossellini is whispering in my ear. "Beneath the leafy canopy, you are surrounded by miracles of nature," she says of the scene that confronts me: the hilly, arboreal midsection of the park known as the Ramble. "Countless creatures call the Ramble home." Rossellini's is just one of about 30 famous voices that I can summon to describe the park by punching two digits on my phone. This cellular companionship is provided by the Central Park Conservancy, the innovative organization that, since 1980, has spearheaded the park's spectacular rejuvenation.

I remember a very different Central Park when I was a college student in Manhattan in the 1970s. I even recall passing through the Ramble. Countless creatures called it home then, too—most of whom you wouldn't want to run into, day or night. The park's lawns were dust bowls; its trees' limbs were broken, their roots exposed; graffiti and inoperative lights marred the once-manicured landscape designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. "It was so awful," recalls Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, an urban planner from Texas who became the park's administrator in 1979. "Central Park was under a unionized, civil-service workforce. They were demoralized. It would take three men to prune a tree because of the job titles."

The change began when Rogers formed an alliance with Parks Commissioner Gordon Davis. Davis started cutting deadwood in his department, a traditional dumping ground for patronage jobs. He also decentralized his department's operations—first down to the borough level, then to the park level. And Rogers championed the idea that private money and workers would play a key role in the park's restoration. The Central Park Conservancy was born in 1980—what current park administrator Douglas Blonsky calls a "revolutionary public/private partnership that would bring private monies and expertise, in partnership with the City of New York, to manage and restore Central Park."

In this partnership, the Conservancy manages Central Park under a contract with the city. It also raises money for the park. Over its 30-year existence, the Conservancy has overseen \$500 million of investment, nearly 80 percent of it from private sources. But the Conservancy owes its success less to its knack for holding soirées for wealthy donors than to its ability to tap into New Yorkers' love for Central Park. Today, nearly 300 volunteers donate some 30,000 hours of labor each year. A generation ago, public employees ran the park; today, more than three-quarters of the workforce is private, either volunteers or Conservancy employees.

On a fall Saturday morning, I joined a volunteer group raking leaves near the Great Lawn. Since Abe Denowitz retired from his desk job 20 years ago, he and his wife have pitched in almost every weekend, "loving it more as the years go by," he says. "When I'm not working here, I'm loafing here." Abe lives only a few blocks away, but his fellow volunteers come from afar to rake, mulch, and clean: from Queens, from lower Manhattan, from New Jersey. Thanks to the Conservancy, Central Park is more beautiful and beloved than ever, with landmarks like Bethesda Fountain and Belvedere Castle helping attract more than 30 million visitors a year.

The Conservancy counts its success in dollars as well as foot traffic. The "Central Park Effect"—the Conservancy's estimate of the market value that the park adds to nearby residential and commercial property—is more than \$17 billion, leading to \$535 million per year in additional property taxes for the city. The Conservancy reckons that the exercise opportunities that the park provides are good for some \$40 million in health-care savings annually. And the city government receives over \$10 million in concession and permit fees from park businesses each year.

From around the world, visitors flock to Blonsky's office to learn how the Conservancy's public/private partnership model can help them restore their own parks. Meg Cheever is president of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, [<https://www.pittsburghparks.org/>] founded in 1996 by citizens concerned by the Steel City's deteriorating green spaces. So far, her group has raised \$40 million and completed nine capital projects. "It was great for those of us in other cities to have a model," she says. "We could say, 'Hey, they brought Central Park back. If they could do it there, then we can do it in our town, too.'"

Conrad Kiechel is a writer and park lover in New York.

Retrieved February 18, 2010 from http://www.city-journal.org/2010/20_1_snd-central-park-conservancy.html

ARPPS Letter Published in the Sacramento Bee, March 1, 2010, Letters to Editor <http://www.sacbee.com/2010/03/01/2571846/letters-to-the-editor.html>

Parkway can be a nonprofit

Re "Parkway needs stable, long-term source of funds" (Editorial, Feb. 21)

<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/02/21/2550938/parkway-needs-stable-long-term.html> :

The editorial about the American River Parkway was excellent, and calling for an arrangement that the Effie Yeaw Nature Center – threatened with closure – could enter into that might replicate the success of Fairytale Town is a great idea.

The larger issue of parkway funding is more complicated, but through governance by a Joint Powers Authority – currently being discussed by local governments – and for the JPA to then create a nonprofit organization to provide daily management and raise funds philanthropically, the funding problems for the parkway could someday become a distant memory.

We have seen the ability of nonprofit organizations – such as the Central Park Conservancy in New York City – to manage parks and raise funds on a substantial scale for beloved community resources and it could well happen with the parkway.

– David H. Lukenbill, Sacramento, senior policy director, American River Parkway Preservation Society

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #95: April 6, 2010

The Parkway, Homelessness, Crime, & the Lower Reach

As Sacramento continues to struggle with developing a strategy to deal with the degradation of the American River Parkway caused by illegal camping by the homeless, it is fruitful to refresh our memories on the difficulty other areas have and some solutions they have developed.

The American River Parkway is a contiguous series of parks and open spaces bordering the American River on its north and south banks for 30 miles from the confluence with the Sacramento River to Folsom Lake.

While the Parkway is, in many ways, an “urban jewel”, the long-used description as the “Crown Jewel of the Region”, has largely been dropped due to the prevalence and degradation caused by illegal camping by the homeless in the Parkway—mostly concentrated in the Lower Reach area from the Confluence to Cal Expo—“In 2008, the illegal camping patrol removed approximately 40 tons of garbage from illegal camps on the American River Parkway.” Retrieved March 20, 2010 from <http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/parks/Pages/FastFacts.aspx>

Though the “jewel” designation is still noted in the 2008 Parkway Plan: “In fact, the American River Parkway is often referred to as “the jewel” of the Sacramento Region” (p. 9) Retrieved March 20, 2010 from http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/parks/Documents/ARPP06-021909_sm.pdf, it resembles nothing of the sort to the Woodlake neighborhood—ground zero in the ongoing battle against the illegal camping by the homeless in the Parkway—and the related crime in their neighborhood.

We believe that unless the Lower Reach area of the Parkway is cleaned up and made safe for family use by the adjacent neighborhoods, the entire Parkway enterprise is threatened, much as has happened with K Street, where the blighted lower few blocks have largely kept the entire street from fully realizing its potential.

What follows are excerpts from articles about homelessness from New York’s *City Journal* & the *Associated Press* about Atlanta and two about Sacramento’s Parkway, closing with excerpts from articles describing two solutions, in San Francisco in 1994 and Los Angeles in 2007.

New York

“Barbara Bradley, an editor with the Memphis Commercial Appeal, moved into the River City’s reviving downtown about a year and a half ago, loving its “energy and enthusiasm.” But a horde of invading panhandlers has cooled her enjoyment of city life. Earlier this year, she recalled in a recent column, as she showed some visitors around the neighborhood, “a big panhandler blocked the entrance to our parking area and demanded his toll.” Now a nervous Bradley avoids certain downtown areas, locks her car when fueling up at local gas stations, and parks strategically, so that she can see beggars coming before getting out of her car. “When I hear someone call out ‘ma’am, ma’am’ anywhere in downtown or midtown, I run.”

“She’s not alone. Cities have overcome myriad obstacles in revitalizing their downtowns, from lousy transportation systems to tough competition from suburban shopping malls. But nearly 15 years after New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani and his police chief, William Bratton, vanquished Gotham’s notorious squeegee men and brought aggressive panhandling under control, other cities are facing a new wave of “spangers” (that is, spare-

change artists) who threaten their newfound prosperity by harassing residents, tourists, and businesses. Unlike their predecessors in the seventies and eighties, many of these new beggars aren't helpless victims or even homeless. Rather, they belong to a diverse and swelling community of street people who have made panhandling their calling."

Malanga, S. (Summer 2008). The professional panhandling plague: A new generation of shakedown artists hampers America's urban revival. *City Journal*, retrieved March 17, 2010 from http://www.city-journal.org/2008/18_3_panhandling.html

Atlanta

"A small group of homeless sex offenders have set up camp in densely wooded area behind a suburban [Atlanta](#) office park, directed there by probation officers who say it's a place of last resort for those with nowhere else to go.

"The nine sex offenders live in tents surrounding a makeshift fire pit in the trees behind a towering "no trespassing" sign, waiting out their probation sentences as they face numerous living restrictions under one of the toughest sex offender policies in the [U.S.](#)

"It's kind of like a mind-game, it's like 'Survivor,'" said [William Hawkins](#), a 34-year-old who said he was directed to the campsite two weeks ago after being released from prison for violating probation for failing to register as a sex offender in Georgia.

"The muddy camp on the outskirts of prosperous [Cobb County](#) is an unintended consequence of Georgia's sex offender law, which bans the state's 16,000 sex offenders from living, working or loitering within 1,000 feet of schools, churches, parks and other spots where children gather.

"It's not the only place in Cobb County where offenders can live — there are hundreds of other sex offenders throughout the county living in compliance with the law. But [Ahmed Holt](#), manager of the state's sex offender administration unit, calls the camp a "last resort" for homeless offenders who can't find another place to live that complies with the law.

"He said probation officers direct them to the outpost if other options fail, such as transferring to another county or state or sending them to a relative's place that meets the requirements. Homeless shelters and halfway houses are often not an option, he said, because of the restrictions that bar them from being near children."

Associated Press. (September 28, 2009). Homeless sex offenders reside in makeshift campground to comply with tough Georgia law, *New York Daily News*. Retrieved March 20, 2010 from http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/2009/09/28/2009-09-28_sex_offenders.html#ixzzoiBqOQSh

Sacramento

“The old man wants nothing to do with the story. Not a thing. Can’t really blame him, considering what happened out here the other day. He’s talking about moving on, trying his luck in Las Vegas or Reno, getting the hell out of Tent Town.

“It’s a desolate place, a ragtag collection of tents, tarps and lean-tos pitched on a half-acre of burned and scalded scrub brush just north of Midtown, between 20th and 28th streets. Once, this patch of wasteland served as the Sacramento dump. When the Union Pacific roars by Tent Town, there’s no question which side of the tracks you’re on.

“The old man’s been out here three months. He’s a skilled craftsman, but there’s no work. There are other folks, men and women, who’ve been out here longer for the same reason. Then there are the ones who’ve been homeless for years, dragged down by drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness and disease, or just plain dumb luck.

“It makes for a volatile mix, and navigating through this no man’s land of poverty, depredation and occasional violence can be a daunting prospect. The old man knows the way, as do many of the people who inhabit this gritty tableau. Given the present economic downturn, the lessons they have learned are invaluable for those of us who may be joining their ranks sooner than we think. So, without further ado, here’s a list of survival tips from the denizens of Tent Town. May you never be in need of them...

“14. Stay away from the river

“It’s a half-mile from Tent Town to the American River, where the hard-core, chronically homeless hole up in the dense foliage leading up to its banks. The level of depravity increases the nearer you get to the water, which is why the American River Parkway is heavily patrolled by park rangers from Discovery Park to Cal Expo. “We heard screams coming from there last night,” says Kim. She’d be pretty if all of her front teeth hadn’t been knocked out. “They hauled another body out of there the other day, some mummified dude,” Ace adds. Kim shivers.”

Scheide, R.V. (November 6, 2008). Hell’s half-acre, Sacramento’s homeless weigh in: Tent Town’s top 25 tips for surviving the economic downturn, *Sacramento News & Review*, Retrieved November 8, 2008 from <http://www.newsreview.com/sacramento/Content?oid=877448>

Sacramento

“The homeless that camped at the now-closed tent city in Sacramento are returning to their original camping sites, said Park Ranger Tim McElheney during a Board of Supervisors meeting on Sept. 8.

“During the meeting, McElheney also indicated that parolees and probationers camping on the parkway are saying their corrections officers are telling them to “go and live down by the river until the rangers kick you out.” He stated that since tent city’s closure, the number of registered sex offenders camping on the parkway has increased 200 percent.

“Once tent city was closed, all those people had to go somewhere and the parkway has been one of those places they’ve gone back to,” McElheney said. “Since it has been removed we now have a huge impact. We have just finished cleaning up a large area of approximately 5 tons of material within the past two weeks.”

“McElheney said the parkway does not have enough resources to effectively deal with the growing number of illegal campers. “It is something we cannot deal with consistently enough except to move them along,” he said.

“Since April I’ve come across 20 different individuals; 19 were parolees and one was an active probationer,” he stated. “I have spoken to a few individual parole officers myself. They have not given me the feeling that they have anyplace else to send these people to.”

Lowe, A. (September 30, 2009). Illegal camping on parkway increases after tent city closure, *Rancho Cordova Post*, Retrieved March 17, 2010 from <http://www.ranchocordovapost.com/2009/09/30/camping-on-parkway-increases-after-tent-city-closure/comment-page-1/>

The Matrix Program

“Cities across the country are engaged in a great experiment: having lost control of their public spaces, can they reclaim them?”

“Over the last three decades, judicial rulings and changing social attitudes stripped governments of the legal and moral authority to enforce public order. Courts struck down loitering and vagrancy statutes—traditional tools for controlling antisocial behavior and even preventing crime. Elite opinion wrapped panhandling, graffiti, and public inebriation in the protective mantle of self-expression and political protest, branding attempts to penalize such conduct as oppressive and racist....

“No city, however, has waged the campaign to reclaim the streets more vigorously than San Francisco, and nowhere has the effort yielded more significant results. For in its twin efforts to restore order and help the homeless get off the street, San Francisco is discovering what many social workers have secretly known for years: you can lead the homeless to housing and services, but you can’t guarantee they will use them. Increasing the resources available to the homeless without also penalizing the failure to use them may have only a marginal effect on the condition of the streets....

“Mayor Jordan announced Matrix—a month-long program for enforcing in the downtown area 18 city and state ordinances that had fallen into disuse. Designed to ensure order in public places, they covered offenses such as public drunkenness, public urination and defecation, trespassing, street sales of narcotics, dumping of refuse, graffiti vandalism, camping and lodging in public parks, and obstructing sidewalks. Teams of 12 to 18 officers made regular tours through the Civic Center Plaza, a four-block stretch of Market Street, and Union Square—a once-posh shopping district that had succumbed to urban squalor.”

Mac Donald, H. (Autumn, 1994). San Francisco gets tough with the homeless: A cop-turned-mayor keeps his pledge to take back the streets--and teaches some important social policy lessons. *City Journal*. Retrieved March 20, 2010 from <http://www.city-journal.org/article01.php?aid=1368>

The Safer City Initiative

“Drive around Los Angeles’s Skid Row with Commander Andrew Smith and you can barely go a block without someone’s congratulating him on his recent promotion. Such enthusiasm is certainly in order. Over the last year, this tall, high-spirited policeman has achieved what for a long while seemed impossible: a radical reduction of Skid Row’s anarchy. What is surprising about Smith’s popularity, however, is that his fans are street-wized drug addicts, alcoholics, and mentally ill vagrants. And in that fact lies a resounding refutation of the untruths that the American Civil Liberties Union and the rest of the homeless industry have used to keep Skid Row in chaos—until now.

“For 25 years, the advocates used lawsuits and antipolice propaganda to beat back every effort to restore sanity to Skid Row. They concealed the real causes of homelessness under a false narrative about a callous, profit-mad society that abused the less fortunate. The result: a level of squalor that had no counterpart in the United States. Smith’s policing initiatives—grounded in the Broken Windows theory of order maintenance—ended that experiment in engineered anarchy, saving more lives in ten months than most homeless advocates have helped over their careers. The forces of lawlessness are regrouping, however, and Smith’s successes may wind up reversed in a renewed attack on the police.

“Before Smith’s Safer City Initiative began in September 2006, Skid Row’s 50 blocks had reached a level of depravity that stunned even longtime observers. Encampments composed of tents and cardboard boxes covered practically every inch of sidewalk. Their 1,500 or so occupants, stretched out in lawn chairs or sprawled on the pavement, injected heroin and smoked crack and marijuana in plain view, day and night. Feces, urine, and drug-resistant bacteria coated the ground. Even drug addicts were amazed at the scene. Fifty-year-old Vicki Williams arrived from Las Vegas in December 2005 with a heavy habit. “I couldn’t believe what I was seeing: people getting high on the streets like it was legal,” she says. “Down here was like a world of its own. Anything you can imagine I’ve seen: women walking down the street buck naked, people stabbed in front of me.”

Mac Donald, H., (Autumn, 2007). The reclamation of skid row: The LAPD’s efforts are reviving America’s most squalid neighborhood—and the homeless industry is hopping mad. *City Journal*. Retrieved March 17, 2010 from http://www.city-journal.org/html/17_4_skid_row.html

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #96: May 6, 2010

Nonprofits, Government, & Funding

“Thus the most democratic country on earth is found to be, above all, the one where men in our day have most perfected the art of pursuing the object of their common desires in common and have applied this new science to the most objects. Does this result from an accident or could it be that there in fact exists a necessary relation between associations and equality?” (Count Alexis de Tocqueville, (1830))

We were able to meet with local neighborhood and business associations this past month—in Woodlake and the River District respectively—to discuss the issues connected to the illegal camping by the homeless in the Parkway and the impact that has been having on adjacent residential and business areas.

As government struggles to address local issues due to their funding distress, we anticipate a stronger advocacy role from those nonprofit organizations that understand the importance of having a strategy to deal with this issue, and we hope emerging strategies parallel our third guiding principle:

“Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway: Social and environmental justice calls upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.”

All of our guiding principles are on our website at <http://www.arpps.org/>

One of the traditional roles that the nonprofit organization in America has played is that of advocacy for an issue a large number of people believe in.

It is a tendency built into the American soul from the beginning, as noted by Alexis De Tocqueville, who came to America in the early 1800's, met with many of the founders and wrote one of the most perceptive books ever written about America.

Here is a small part of what he said about voluntary associations—nonprofits.

“Americans of all ages, all conditions, all minds constantly unite. Not only do they have commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but they also have a thousand other kinds: religious, moral, grave, futile, very general and very particular, immense and very small; Americans use associations to give fetes, to found seminaries, to build inns, to raise churches, to distribute books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; in this manner they create hospitals, prisons, schools. Finally, if it is a question of bringing to light a truth or developing a sentiment with the support of a great example, they associate. Everywhere that, at the head of a new undertaking, you see the government in France and a great lord in England, count on it that you will perceive an association in the United States.

“I have since traveled through England, from which the Americans took some of their laws and many of their usages, and it appeared to me that there they were very far from making as constant and as skilled a use of association.

“It often happens that the English execute very great things in isolation, whereas there is scarcely an undertaking so small that Americans do not unite for it. It is evident that the former consider association as a powerful means of action; but the latter seem to see in it the sole means they have of acting.

“Thus the most democratic country on earth is found to be, above all, the one where men in our day have most perfected the art of pursuing the object of their common desires in common and have applied this new science to the most objects. Does this result from an accident or could it be that there in fact exists a necessary relation between associations and equality?”

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 2000 translation by H. C. Mansfield and D. Winthrop. pp. 489-490) http://www.amazon.com/Democracy-America-Alexis-Tocqueville/dp/0226805328/ref=ed_oe_h

There are three theory strands postulated regarding the role of nonprofits and government—supplementary, complimentary, or adversarial.

Young (2006) describes these:

“In the supplementary model, nonprofits are seen as fulfilling demand for public goods left unsatisfied by government. In this view, the private financing of public goods can be expected to have an inverse relationship with government expenditure. As government takes more responsibility for provision, less needs to be raised through voluntary collective means.

“In the complementary view, nonprofits are seen as partners to government, helping to deliver public goods, and are largely financed by government. In this perspective, nonprofit and government expenditures have a direct relationship with one another. As government expenditures increase, they help finance increasing levels of activity by nonprofits.

“In the adversarial view, nonprofits prod government to make changes in public policy and to maintain accountability to the public. Reciprocally, government attempts to influence the behavior of nonprofits by regulating their services and responding to advocacy

initiatives. The adversarial view does not posit any specific relationship between the levels of nonprofit and governmental activity. For example, nonprofits can advocate for smaller or more efficient government operations or they can advocate for new programs and regulations that would increase government activity.”

Young, D. (2006). Complementary, Supplemental, or Adversarial? Nonprofit-Government Relations. In Boris, E.T. & Steurle, C.E. (Eds.), *Nonprofits & Government: Collaboration & Conflict* (2nd Ed.). (pp. 37-79). Washington, D.C., Urban Institute Press.

http://www.amazon.com/Nonprofits-Government-Collaboration-Conflict/dp/0877667322/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1273021211&sr=8-1

During periods of funding crisis, a call for more resources are heard with difficulty, but it is also a time when the public’s voice is often heard most clearly when sound solutions are presented as part of the call.

P.S. The March 2010 Parkway Rangers Report is attached.

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #97: June 7, 2010

ARPPS Letter Published

Published in the Sacramento Bee, May 14, 2010, Letters to Editor
<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/05/14/2749714/letters-to-the-editor.html>

Let nonprofit run parkway

Re "Give a little love to our local parks" (Editorial, May 11):
<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/05/11/2741182/give-a-little-love-to-our-local.html>

While the idea of adequately funding the American River Parkway and other regional parks resonates with many in the region, the idea of increasing taxes, as called for in a Bee editorial, on an already overtaxed population does not.

There is a better way to raise money for the American River Parkway. What many jurisdictions have done to help their signature parks is convert to nonprofit daily management and philanthropic fundraising, under contract to local government park ownership. This model has worked very well in New York City <http://www.centralparknyc.org/about/> and Pittsburgh <http://www.pittsburghparks.org/the-conservancy> .

The advantages are many, besides the obvious one of not raising taxes. The funds raised by the park nonprofit are safe from the type of government fund-shifting common during periods of economic stress. Philanthropic fundraising allows for parkway enhancements we have not seen in years as the county has been running a substantial shortfall for basic maintenance funding for the parkway.

The strategy we favor is to have the parkway-adjacent cities and the county form a joint powers authority for governance and core funding. The JPA would then create a nonprofit organization, which contracts with the JPA for daily management and supplemental fundraising for the parkway.

– David H. Lukenbill, Sacramento, senior policy director, American River Parkway Preservation Society <http://www.arpps.org/>

For information on the proposal to form a regional parks district—requiring tax increases—note our May 24, 2010 press release at <http://www.arpps.org/news.html>

The April 2010 Parkway Rangers Report can be accessed here:
<http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/parks/Documents/Safety%20Coalition%20April%202010%20Newsletter.pdf>

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #98: July 6, 2010

Parks District Tax Increase Plan

As we noted in a press release of May 24, 2010, <http://www.arpps.org/news.html> the idea to create a regional parks district and increase taxes to pay for parks is being promoted by the County parks department and some nonprofit parkway organizations.

Their plans are outlined in the *Sacramento County Regional Parks Workshop* document <http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/Documents/Parks%20Strategic%20Workshop.pdf>

This is not a new idea. It was brought up several years ago and we were asked to become a supporter of it, but we have the same essential objection now as we did then; there is a better way than increasing taxes on an already over-taxed public.

The better way to develop and sustain long-term funding for the Parkway is to create the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and have the JPA create a nonprofit organization for daily management and philanthropic fundraising, as detailed in our strategy, <http://www.arpps.org/strategy.html>.

This will not be a strategy contradictory to current County practice, as there is a County history of public/private partnerships, as noted in the workshop document:

“More than half of Regional Parks 15,000 acres are leased to non-profits or other governmental agencies to operate.

• Examples include leases with Soil Born Farms, Rio Linda and Galt historical societies, and California Youth Soccer Association; and cooperative management agreements at Cosumnes River Preserve and Stone Lakes Wildlife Refuge.

“Leasing provides efficiencies and costs benefits to Regional Parks while enhancing facilities to the community.” (*Sacramento County Regional Parks Strategic Workshop*, p. 13)

It is a strategy also being used for the nonprofit American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) assuming control over the County facility, the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, as noted on the ARNHA website, <http://www.arnha.org/pkwynews.html>

Moving to nonprofit management of the entire Parkway is clearly a much larger enterprise than any of these efforts, but it is a strategy tough public funding times call for and with visionary leadership, can become the type of Parkway success the residents of the Sacramento region deserve.

P.S. The May 2010 Parkway Rangers Report can be accessed here:

<http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/parks/Documents/Safety%20Coalition%20May%202010%20Newsletter.pdf>

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #99: August 6, 2010

User Friendly Rivers

Two recent articles in the Sacramento Bee, one focusing on river development <http://www.sacbee.com/2010/07/04/2866592/editorial-a-cool-new-way-to-link.html> and the other on trail congestion <http://www.sacbee.com/2010/07/08/2874869/getting-along-with-other-users.html> remind us of similar issues involving the Parkway, that need to be addressed to create a more user friendly environment.

We researched some options to increase the enjoyment and reduce the danger on the American River Parkway Trail in our 2008 report, ***The American River Parkway: Recreation, Education & Sanctuary, A Vision & Policy Primer***, <http://www.arpps.org/Report4-RecreationEducation.pdf> beginning on page 15.

An excerpt from our report.

“Trails

“An issue that has long festered on the current trail arrangement in the Parkway is the lack of safe and enjoyable trail space for walkers and equestrians comparable to the paved trail used predominantly by bike riders, who naturally feel it is their trail.

“One good trail layout is that suggested by the *Rails to Trails* organization and it is a good place to start discussions for the Parkway.

“From their website at http://www.cvrftf.org/html/conceptual_plan.html here is what they have come up with.

“It is a trail space approximately 40 feet wide, with 12 feet for bikes, 3 feet of plantings, 10 feet for walkers, 3 feet of plantings, and 12 feet for horses....

“The great park along the mythic river can become so much more to all of us who long to recreate and contemplate along its trails, beaches, and paths; and here are some of the uses we could someday see in the Parkway:

- Separated wide trails for people walking, riding bikes and horses, able to enjoy the river at the particular traversing gait they prefer.
- Horse-drawn carriages that can trot people down the river trail, gondolas that can pole and oar people on the river, and trains that can haul sightseers along the Parkway.
- Bike rentals from downtown hotels for venturing out into the finally-cleaned-up and safely patrolled Parkway areas near downtown.
- Where all venturing into the Parkway can find rest and relaxation on a multitude of benches and tables, nestled in prime viewing spots.
- Where access at all the points, in all of the neighborhoods, is accessible to the frail elderly and the disabled.
- Where all Parkway access and parking is free.
- Where more nature centers are dotted around the neighborhoods, bringing that special educative joy to all of the areas children and families, with rangers staffing each to enhance the public’s safety.
- Rangers on horseback, in swift quiet motorized rafts, on bikes, walking, and all over the Parkway.
- More organic gardens and farms.
- Concerts and plays in outdoor riverside amphitheaters.

“All of these are being used, either already on the Parkway at some level, or at some of the many parks bordering waterways around the country which we have researched; as it has always been important to us that the ideas we present to the community have proven successful in other parks, and though they may not have a specific applicability here, they are food for thought.

“With horse-drawn carriages, bike rentals from downtown hotels and the increased public safety presence in the downtown and North Sacramento area of the Parkway long advocated for; we can envision people visiting Sacramento, staying in those downtown hotels, venturing out onto the Parkway to get to golf courses, outdoor concerts and plays in Discovery Park, Paradise Beach, Campus Commons, Sacramento State, Rancho Cordova, Ancil Hoffman Park, Gold River, Fair Oaks Village, Effie Yeaw and other Nature Centers, the Fish Hatchery, Nimbus Lake, Old Town Folsom, and links that are being established from new developments to the Parkway such as the proposed Folsom South Canal Corridor Plan.” (pp. 15-17)

Another great option for the Parkway trail realignment, though we didn't include it in our 2008 report, is to use the existing levee for the walking trail.

This would probably require less improvement than cutting a new pedestrian trail.

By adding better paving, benches and water fountains, and continuing the trail in the areas where there is no levee, you could create a very nice pedestrian trail, with great views and plenty of space.

P.S. The Parkway Rangers Report from June is available at
<http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/parks/Documents/Safety%20Coalition%20June%202010%20Newsletter.pdf>

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

E-Letter #100: September 6, 2010

Parks & the Parkway

An excellent series on parks was in the Sacramento Bee recently, which includes one editorial from September 5th <http://www.sacbee.com/2010/09/05/3004840/future-of-parks-rests-on-all-of.html> focusing on funding; a lovely reflection on McKinley Park <http://www.sacbee.com/2010/09/05/3004709/by-tending-to-our-parks-we-tend.html> and responses from readers and letters to editor, where our letter was published,

<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/09/05/3004613/local-parks-reader-response.html>

Here it is.

Collective strategy needed

Having enough resources to properly develop and maintain parks is an issue directly related to the mission of our organization: "Preserve, protect and strengthen the American River Parkway, our community's natural heart."

Parks are vital to a region's well-being, and it is crucial that local leadership collectively develop a strategy to ensure parks are developed as needed and funded as appropriate.

– David H. Lukenbill
Senior Policy Director,
American River Parkway Preservation Society

Parkway Editorial

The September 2nd editorial from the [Sacramento Bee](http://www.sacbee.com/2010/09/02/2999750/is-parkway-beloved-or-a-burdensagging.html) <http://www.sacbee.com/2010/09/02/2999750/is-parkway-beloved-or-a-burdensagging.html> was a good recapping of the problems facing the Parkway, but unfortunately, the only solution presented is to increase taxes, when there are much better ways to help parks.

Nonprofit management—like [Central Park](#) in New York City which raises 85 percent of the funding needed, and [Pittsburgh Parks](#)—which we suggest as [a strategy](#) for the Parkway, is a good solution for our over-strapped local government which is much more equitable than increasing taxes on an already over-taxed public.

The process we suggest—in detail on our website at <http://www.arpps.org/strategy.html> would be to form a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) of local governments, with at least one community member selected by the Community Advisory Committee to the JPA, to govern the Parkway.

The JPA would then create a nonprofit organization for daily management, and to develop and sustain supplemental philanthropic funding for the Parkway in addition to base funding provided by the JPA.

The implementation details are important, with one key element being a national search for the executive director of the nonprofit to find someone with experience befitting the leading role in managing the American River Parkway, a major national resource.

In the trying economic times our region has been dealing with, any discussion of increasing taxes or fees to help our Parkway is counterproductive, while continuing to reduce public safety presence and basic maintenance is corrosively destructive.

A collective strategy from public leadership is called for.

P.S. The June 2010 Parkway Rangers Report can be accessed here:

<http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/parks/Documents/Safety%20Coalition%20June%202010%20Newsletter.pdf> & the July 2010 here

<http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/parks/Documents/Safety%20Coalition%20July%202010%20Newsletter.pdf>

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Appendix II: Newsletters

American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter Issue 24 – Fall 2009

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Announcements

Parkway Ranger's Monthly Report Posting

These important monthly reports of activity including: Enforcement; Crimes Reported; Parkway Violations; and Other Incidents; are posted on the Parkway Rangers website at <http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/parks/Pages/AboutRangers.aspx>

Brief: Registered Sex Offenders Camping in the Parkway

As the county and most adjacent cities struggle with shrinking budgets and continue laying off staff, the reduction in public safety is moving into the serious threat area, especially in the lower end of the Parkway that has traditionally seen the most trouble, related to the illegal camping by the homeless, which now includes registered sex offenders.

As the Rancho Cordova Post reported in the September 30, 2009 issue:

The homeless that camped at the now-closed tent city in Sacramento are returning to their original camping sites, said Park Ranger Tim McElheney during a Board of Supervisors meeting on Sept. 8.

During the meeting, McElheney also indicated that parolees and probationers camping on the parkway are saying their corrections officers are telling them to "go and live down by the river until the rangers kick you out." He stated that since tent

city's closure, the number of registered sex offenders camping on the parkway has increased 200 percent. Retrieved October 4, 2009 from: <http://www.ranchocordovapost.com/2009/09/30/camping-on-parkway-increases-after-tent-city-closure/comment-page-1/>

And, on the other side of the country, from the Washington Post September 28, 2009 issue:

MARIETTA, Ga. -- A small group of homeless sex offenders have set up camp in a densely wooded area behind a suburban Atlanta office park, directed there by probation officers who say it's a place of last resort for those with nowhere else to go.

Nine sex offenders live in tents surrounding a makeshift fire pit in the trees behind a towering "no trespassing" sign, waiting out their probation sentences as they face numerous living restrictions under one of the nation's toughest sex offender policies. Retrieved October 4, 2009 from: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/28/AR2009092800873.html>

This is a serious public safety issue, particularly for families that may visit the Parkway not realizing the danger represented by some of the illegal homeless campers, and we call on public leadership to work to ensure that public safety in the Parkway is a priority.

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release July 14, 2009 Sacramento, California

AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY (ARPPS)

The Need for an American River Parkway Conservancy Via Approved Joint Powers Authority

Last month, the Sacramento County Recreation & Park Commission approved further discussion of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Agreement for consideration by the respective jurisdictions of Folsom, Rancho Cordova, Sacramento City, and Sacramento County.

ARPPS applauds the short-term purpose of this discussion which: "is to formalize the cooperative working relationship of each of these jurisdictions"; however, ARPPS does not approve the long-term goal which: "would be to impose a Benefit Assessment District for the American River Parkway" (Recreation & Parks Commission, June 25, 2009, Agenda Item 2, p. 2, Retrieved July 12, 2009 from <http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/parks/Pages/RecreationParkCommissionMeetings.aspx?y=2009>)

ARPPS noted in a January 18, 2008 press release, <http://www.arpps.org/news.html> that the concept of a benefit assessment district and subsequent property tax increase was not a

good idea for an already over-taxed public, and a better method is to raise funds philanthropically.

What would allow the JPA to raise substantial supplemental funding would be for the JPA to create a nonprofit conservancy, the American River Parkway Conservancy is our suggested name, dedicated to the management and funding of the Parkway.

The ability of nonprofit organizations to raise funds for worthy causes, even in a bad economy, is well proven.

Last year over \$300 billion was raised by nonprofit organizations nationally and 75% of that came from individual donors.

Creating a nonprofit organization and raising money philanthropically is the strategy taken by other signature parks, such as Central Park in New York City, where the Central Park Conservancy manages the park and raises funds, raising 85% of needed funding.

http://www.centralparknyc.org/site/PageNavigator/aboutcon_cpc .

While there may be little to compare between Sacramento and New York City, we can compare the significance of Central Park to New York City, to the significance of the Parkway to the Sacramento region, and from that perspective learn valuable innovations about sustaining and enhancing our beautiful resource.

In addition to learning from others, it is also crucial to ensure that the executive management of a future Parkway Conservancy is a nonprofit management professional adept at raising funds in all of the ways necessary to be of significant financial help to the Parkway.

In addition to the ongoing strategy of social enterprise, there are many methods of fundraising:

- Annual giving programs such as direct mail, events, internet-based new media/direct response, telemarketing, and volunteer-led solicitations.
- Major giving programs such as corporate support, cause-related marketing, grants from foundations and government, major gifts from individuals, planned giving, and capital campaigns.

The well managed nonprofit that needs substantial amounts of money, like a Parkway Conservancy certainly would, will need to conduct all of these efforts throughout the year, while keeping the ongoing fundraising creative and vibrant to ensure the continued interest and loyalty of funders.

In the trying economic times our region has been dealing with, any discussion of increasing taxes is counter-productive; but the love our community has for the Parkway is very evident and, given professional nonprofit management and fund raising leadership, an American River Parkway Conservancy could be relied on to rally that love around preserving, protecting, and strengthening the Parkway long into the future.

Conclusion

[Our annual organizational report has been posted to our website and here are the concluding remarks looking back on the work of our organization over the past year.]

It has been a tough year, and given the current economic situation which has the public and private sector focusing more on hunkering down than moving forward with any vigor, the lethargy hampering public leadership to act on the issues impacting the Parkway may continue for awhile.

However, our Californian nature is not well-suited to hunkering down for very long, and it is possible we may see a flurry of action at any point, maybe even sooner than later.

Water Supply

It appears we have lost—for the time being— the possibility of seeing the Auburn Dam built, and that is a huge setback for realizing an adequate water supply for the current and future human population, as well as providing the optimal water flow and temperature for the salmon.

As long as political leadership seems locked into a Luddite perspective on water infrastructure technology—destroying the possibility of it coming online—the wonderful progress with which the citizens of California have historically led the nation in water supply and transfer, remains stymied.

Fortunately, the nature of humanity is technology and progress oriented, so we can envision a future in which we will see this current period and the past few decades within which anti-technological fervor has bloomed, as a historical interlude soon forgotten as the claims of the deep ecology inspired environmentalists slowly crumbled and science rediscovered its true mission.

Governance

Though the water supply issue is currently on hold, there has been substantial progress on governance, as local public leadership has been involved in serious discussion about creating a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) for the Parkway.

We are very encouraged by these discussions and anticipate resolution sometime soon, and we will continue advocating for the most important piece of that governance package, a nonprofit organization for daily management and fundraising vis-à-vis the Central Park Conservancy, which raises 85% of its annual funding for Central Park in New York, http://www.centralparknyc.org/site/PageNavigator/aboutcon_cpc .

Public Safety

The major unresolved issue that has severely reduced public safety in the Parkway—particularly in the Lower Reach area between Discovery Park and Cal Expo—is that of the illegal camping by the homeless, which even under the most regulated of situations represents a crimeogenic environment.

Currently, there is a legal and public relations campaign by homelessness advocates, to create an environment allowing large scale homeless encampments as a community mandate.

This campaign, if successful—because of the proposed location close to the Parkway and existing homeless service sites—will place an additional burden upon the Parkway in the Lower Reach and the adjacent residential and commercial communities as they struggle to cope with the infusion of more homeless attracted by the aggressive hospitality of Sacramento.

One consequence that has been of some good for the Parkway, is that as the population in the homeless camps increases, adjacent area crime also increases, leading to more expressions of concern about legalizing the encampments.

Whether that will translate into action cannot yet be determined, as the narrative used by the legal camping advocates hasn't yet paralyzed local leadership, who've not yet abandoned the idea of applying a sense of individual responsibility to an individual's current homeless situation.

We all share in the feeling that we should help our fellow human beings who have fallen upon tough times, but we also generally assume those feelings will most positively lead to constructive action if there is a corresponding effort on the part of those suffering under adverse circumstances to do whatever they can to change their situation for the better.

Finally

This is all part and parcel of the difficulty of protecting a natural resource which all of us treasure, while at the same time all too many appear to be willing to allow its continued slow degradation by adopting policies that continue the degradation.

However, if the JPA can form and reach consensus on the viability of the nonprofit management model used so successfully by the Central Park Conservancy, then the cohesive and Parkway dedicated entity will have the resources and authority to begin to engage the destructiveness of the narrative relating to the public safety issues in the Lower Reach of the Parkway, regional water supply as it impacts the Parkway, and other Parkway related issues, at a level and vigor vitally needed by the Parkway and those of us who love and cherish it.

Society Information

The American River Parkway Preservation Society is a 501 (C)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. As a member, you will receive a monthly e-letter, quarterly newsletter, and periodic planning position papers.

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Our Mission

Preserve, Protect, & Strengthen the American River Parkway, Our Community's Natural Heart.

Our Vision

We want our Parkway, seven generations from now, to be a vibrant, accessible, and serene sanctuary, nourishing and refreshing the spirit of all who enter it.

Our Guiding Principles

- (1) Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it's a necessity.
- (2) What's good for the salmon is good for the river.
- (3) Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway, social and environmental justice call upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.
- (4) If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.
- (5) Regarding new Parkway usages, inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.

The Society depends solely on its membership to accomplish what needs to be done to preserve the Parkway in perpetuity, and we deeply appreciate any additional financial support you can provide, or by encouraging others to become members.

Thank You!

Copy service for our newsletter is generously donated by University Copy & Print on the web at www.universitycopyprint.com, in the University Village Courtyard, located at 446 Howe Avenue and owned by ARPPS Charter Member, Stan Goman, a Sacramento native and 37-year veteran of Tower Records when he retired as COO.

Thanks Stan!

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter

Issue 25 – Winter 2010

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Announcements

Parkway Ranger's Monthly Report Posting

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Essay

The Parkway & Executive Management

ARPPS has been discussing the viability of developing a nonprofit organization to contract with a future Joint Powers Authority (JPA) with members of the Parkway 2x2 Committee, whose focus is the formation of a JPA for the Parkway.

In meetings with Committee members, what became clear is that there is enthusiasm for the formation of a JPA, though there is skepticism that a property tax connected to the current JPA proposal would be approved by Parkway adjacent property owners.

We continue to provide policy suggestions around the issue, and in that regard, members of the 2x2 committee will be receiving material regularly—beginning with the Open Letter (enclosed) of January 7, 2010—about the advantages of pursuing the nonprofit organization approach as a companion to the JPA, instead of a property tax.

Another major result from these meetings was a reassurance that the public leadership involved in the JPA discussion bring a level of passion and commitment to their work on behalf of the Parkway with a deep understanding of how valuable a resource the Parkway is to the metropolitan area.

One of the connected issues our organization is attached to, is the realization that it will ultimately take experienced executive leadership, to not only guide this proposal down the floor, but also, the executive leadership of the proposed nonprofit organization will need a level of skill and experience to realize the management and fundraising required to create the kind of success this type of government/nonprofit partnership can have here, that it has had elsewhere.

When we realize that the nonprofit organization managing Central Park in New York City raises 85% of needed Central Park funding, and the love for our Parkway is surely as deep as that of New Yorkers for Central Park, great things can happen.

The current Parkway management structure, through a division of County government, while perhaps suitable during a period of flush government funding, is much less so in the rather lean period we are now in, and additionally, coming after the emergence of new cities in the County with a proper role to play in governance.

The role this envisioned Parkway nonprofit—governed by the JPA of local governments—would play would be a supplementary one.

Regarding which, Young (2006) notes:

The thesis that nonprofit organizations provide collective goods on a voluntary basis was first advanced by Burton Weisbrod in his seminal work on government failure (*The Voluntary Nonprofit Sector*, 1977). The basic premise is that citizens have individual preferences about the levels, qualities, and types of public goods they desire and how much they are willing to pay for them. Governments decide on the level of public goods provided based on citizen's preferences and are constrained by equity considerations and bureaucratic procedures to tax and to offer public goods in a uniform way. Given democratic voting and policymaking procedures, governments follow preferences of the median voter or of a dominant political coalition in choosing those uniform tax rates and levels, types, and qualities of services. If citizen preferences are not homogeneous, some citizens (e.g., those whose preferences vary substantially from the preferences of the median voter) will be left unsatisfied, either paying for and receiving more (of various) public goods than they want, or paying less and receiving less than they want. Citizens in the latter group are presumed willing to provide additional (supplementary) levels of public goods for themselves and others by mobilizing on a voluntary collective basis through the nonprofit sector. (Young, D. R. (2006). Complementary, Supplementary, or Adversarial? Nonprofit-Government Relations. In Boris & Steurle (Eds.) *Nonprofits & government: Collaboration & conflict* (pp. 37-79) pp. 41-42)

It is strategically important to do everything possible to ensure the effectiveness of the nonprofit organization providing the supplementary level of public goods for Parkway

visitors, a population that is projected to reach 12.4 million annually, as estimated by Dangermond (2006):

In the mid 1980's, Sacramento County hired Seymour W. Gold to write a Recreation Planning Report for the American River Parkway. One of the goals of Mr. Gold's report was to estimate the recreation visitation to the Parkway in 1985 as well as to forecast future demand through the year 2020. His work determined that there were approximately 5.5 million visitors in 1985 and that it would grow to 7.5 million in 2000 and 9.5 million in 2020. These conclusions were primarily based on projected population growth and assumed additional facilities would be developed when required. Combining Gold's population based methodology with updated population projections, we estimate the 2025 visitation should be over 12.4 million people annually. (*American River Parkway: 2006 Financial Needs Study Update*, The Dangermond Group, p. vi)

A key statement here is "assumed additional facilities would be developed when required." These additional facilities have not been developed, because there is not enough funding now—or in the foreseeable future—to develop them, and it is important that another avenue be created.

The proposed nonprofit organization serving as that avenue, because of the level of funding required, must be of the highest level and staffed with executive leadership drawn from a national search from the relatively small ranks of executive directors of parks and public recreation areas, who possess strong fundraising and management experience.

Whether it is legacy funding for public safety and/or a nature center in the Lower Reach; or an expanded trail system able to accommodate pedestrians, bikers, skaters, and horses safely and commodiously; additional acquisition of adjacent land to enlarge the Parkway; or the still unrealized potential of the Parkway as a primary regional commons; the resources are available within the larger community to bring to the task, if we can attract the skilled and passionate leadership for a future nonprofit organization supplementing the JPA, to unlock them.

Open Letter Sent November 23, 2009

OPEN LETTER TO THE SACRAMENTO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS & THE SACRAMENTO CITY COUNCIL

November 23, 2009

Dear Supervisors & Council Members:

The American River Parkway is the most important recreational area in our region and it has a serious problem of illegal camping in the North Sacramento/Midtown area of the Parkway—as you well know—which the current economic situation has made even worse.

As the county and most adjacent cities struggle with shrinking budgets, the reduction in public safety is moving into the serious threat area, especially in the Lower Reach area of the Parkway that has traditionally seen the most crime related to large-scale illegal camping by the homeless, which now—unfortunately—includes registered sex offenders.

During the September 8, 2009 Sacramento County Board of Supervisor’s meeting on Parkway funding problems, Parkway Ranger Tim McElheney—who is assigned to the illegal camping detail in the Lower Reach area of the Parkway—said that there were about 20 registered sex offenders illegally camping in the Parkway.

To simplify the process of accessing the video of the meeting online, and to hear other parts of what the ranger said that you might find disturbing, you would go to http://saccounty.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=4 and find the September 8, 2009 agenda item, click on View Video and Ranger Tim starts at 2:17 pm.

Illegal camping by the homeless in the Parkway has long been a public safety issue, but learning that registered sex offenders are also illegally camping there, raises the issue to one of great seriousness, and we call on public leadership to ensure public safety in the Parkway is a priority.

Sincerely,

Michael Rushford
President

Kristine Lea
Vice President

Rebecca Garrison
Board Member

David H. Lukenbill
Senior Policy Director

[We had a response to this letter—on December 8, 2009—which informed us that the 20 sex offenders that were illegally camping in the Parkway were removed.]

Open Letter Sent January 7, 2010

OPEN LETTER TO THE AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY “2 x 2” COMMITTEE

January 7, 2010

Susan Peters & Don Nottoli, Sacramento Board of Supervisors
Kevin Johnson, Mayor, Sacramento
Steve Cohn & Ray Tretheway, Sacramento City Council
Linda Budge & Robert McGarvey, Rancho Cordova City Council
Andy Morin & Kerri Howell, Folsom City Council
Janet Baker, Director, Sacramento County Regional Parks
Jim Combs, Director, Sacramento City Parks & Recreation
Joe Chinn, Assistant City Manger, Rancho Cordova
Robert Goss, Director, Folsom Parks & Recreation
Dear Committee Members:

As you continue your work to ensure the American River Parkway is sustained and enhanced for the future of all the communities that treasure and use it, we would like to

offer you our suggestions concerning the Parkway Joint Powers Authority (JPA) your committee is tasked with considering, as it relates to Parkway management and funding.

We support the JPA idea your committee is working on, though not the tax increase currently coupled with it, and would ask you to consider the concept of creating a nonprofit organization to provide daily management and supplemental funding through dedicated philanthropy.

We support the JPA board composition—two (2) members from the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, two (2) members from the Sacramento City Council, one (1) member from the Rancho Cordova City Council, and one (1) member from the Folsom City Council.

We support the formation of a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), but would ask you to consider including a member of the CAC, chosen by the CAC, to sit on the JPA board.

We believe that the ability of dedicated management and raising supplemental funds philanthropically, which the managing nonprofit could do, is a much more effective way to develop the level of funding that is needed.

As an example, the Central Park Conservancy—the nonprofit that manages Central Park in New York City—raises 85% of the funding needed by Central Park, and I am sure we would all agree that the American River Parkway is as valued a resource to us as Central Park is to them.

The type of public safety, access, and vandalism problems adjacent neighborhoods have to deal with—illegal camping in the Lower Reach, late night carousing at Paradise Beach, Parkway users parking in neighborhoods impacting residents, and business encroachment issues—could all be much more effectively responded to through a nonprofit organization able to respond directly to these local issues.

The history of nonprofit organizations working to benefit the Parkway is a very positive one and this type of expansion would be congruent with that history.

With your leadership, and the deep love our many communities have for the Parkway, the development of a proactive and productive funding and management policy for the future can be assured.

Sincerely,

Michael Rushford
President

Kristine Lea
Vice President

Rebecca Garrison
Board Member

David H. Lukenbill
Senior Policy Director

Society Information

The American River Parkway Preservation Society is a 501 (C)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. As a member, you will receive a monthly e-letter, quarterly newsletter, and periodic planning position papers.

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Our Mission

Preserve, Protect, & Strengthen the American River Parkway, Our Community's Natural Heart.

Our Vision

We want our Parkway, seven generations from now, to be a vibrant, accessible, and serene sanctuary, nourishing and refreshing the spirit of all who enter it.

Our Guiding Principles

- (1) Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it's a necessity.
- (2) What's good for the salmon is good for the river.
- (3) Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway, social and environmental justice call upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.
- (4) If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.
- (5) Regarding new Parkway usages, inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.

The Society depends solely on its membership to accomplish what needs to be done to preserve the Parkway in perpetuity, and we deeply appreciate any additional financial support you can provide, or by encouraging others to become members.

Thank You!

Copy service for our newsletter is generously donated by University Copy & Print (on the web at www.universitycopyprint.com) in the University Village Courtyard, located at 446 Howe Avenue and owned by ARPPS Charter Member, Stan Goman, a Sacramento native and 37-year veteran of Tower Records when he retired as COO.

Thanks Stan!

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American River Parkway Preservation Society

American River Parkway Preservation Society Newsletter

Issue 26 – Spring 2010

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Announcements

Parkway Ranger's Monthly Report Posting

These important monthly reports of Parkway law enforcement activity including: Enforcement, Crimes Reported, Parkway Violations, and Other Incidents, are posted on the Parkway Rangers website at <http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/parks/Pages/AboutRangers.aspx>

Essay

Change Can be Good

Osborne & Gaebler put it well in their seminal book:

In our study of public organizations, we have discovered a number of factors supportive of fundamental change. Not all need be present, but wherever we have seen wholesale reinvention, at least half have been in evidence:

A Crisis. Necessity is still the mother of invention. The most common form it takes in government is fiscal crisis, but economic crises, political crises, and even natural crises such as earthquakes can create demands for change. When no crisis is present, imaginative leaders sometimes create one. As Shakespeare wrote, "Sweet are the uses of adversity."

Osborne, D. & Gaebler, T. (1993). *Reinventing government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector*. New York: Penguin Books. (p. 325)

There are three developments recently—emanating from the current fiscal crisis of Sacramento County—enhancing the policy window for nonprofit administration of the Parkway.

1) The March 28, 2010 article in the *Sacramento Bee* reporting on the consideration of nonprofit management of the Parkway by the interim county administrator Steve Szalay:

At Tuesday's meeting, the supervisors approved transferring control of the Mather Community Campus – site of key area homeless programs – to Volunteers of America.

Szalay's list included a number of other programs where the county could consider a similar transfer, including the Effie Yeaw Program and maintenance of the American River Parkway.

Retrieved Marc, 29, 2010 from

<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/03/28/2638333/sacramento-county-looks-at-cost.html>

2) The March 29, 2010 *Sacramento Bee* editorial comments on the strategy:

Sacramento County workers have priced themselves so high that the public they serve is sometimes better off when county government bows out. The transitional housing program at the Mather Community Campus set to be taken over by Volunteers of America this week illustrates the phenomenon.

Retrieved March 30, 2010 from <http://www.sacbee.com/2010/03/29/2639412/editorial-nonprofit-helps-rescue.html>

3) The April 4, 2010 opinion piece from the editor of the *Sacramento Bee* continues the discussion.

I don't know if his ideas will work, but interim executive officer Steve Szalay impressed me last month with the way he approached Sacramento County's \$118 million budget deficit.

Instead of simply proposing cuts, borrowing or other financial moves, Szalay gave county supervisors ideas for providing core services in different ways.

He said the county "was in great need of reorganization or a fresh look at the way services are provided."

In other words, his message wasn't just the slash-or-tax choices we've heard in most government budget discussions, at least those held in public.

Whether or not his specific ideas prevail, Szalay's push to prioritize is becoming a common theme in organizations that want to do more than just survive this tenacious downturn.

Retrieved April 4, 2010 from <http://www.sacbee.com/2010/04/04/2652453/from-the-editor-tough-times-call.html>

In a strategy to reduce costs during a period of funding crisis, the ideas mentioned in these recent *Sacramento Bee* articles to consider different ways of funding county programs, with partnering with a nonprofit organization in the management of the American River Parkway as one, is an excellent strategic direction.

Often crisis leads to strategies that are better than what they replace, and this could very well be one of them.

The success of signature parks being managed by a nonprofit organization has been seen in New York, where Central Park has been managed by the Central Park Conservancy for many years, and in Pittsburgh where the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy contracted with the city in 1998 to manage Pittsburgh's four regional parks.

It is also a change being considered by San Francisco after council members visited the Central Park Conservancy, the national model for the strategy.

Our strategy suggestion is to develop the Joint Powers Authority (JPA)—currently being discussed—and have the JPA create the nonprofit; seeking executive leadership through a national search for an executive director experienced raising the millions of dollars needed to properly manage and enhance the Parkway.

It would also be crucial to include as part of the JPA, a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) whose members would select one of their group to a seat on the JPA, and we've posted a summary list of local groups we think have a legitimate stake in being part of the CAC in our strategy on our website.

Those groups are:

Community Groups: American Disability Act Representative, American River Natural History Association, American River Parkway Foundation, American River Parkway Preservation Society, American River Parkway Volunteer Equestrian Patrol, Buffalo Chips Running Club, Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association, Campus Commons Neighborhood Association, Carmichael Chamber of Commerce, Environmental Council of Sacramento, Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce, Folsom Chamber of Commerce, Gardenland/Northgate Neighborhoods Association, Gold River Neighborhood Association, Hagginwood Community Association, Midtown Business Association, North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce, Point West Transportation Management Association, Rancho Cordova Chamber of Commerce, Rosemount Community Association, Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, Sacramento Area Dog Owners Group, Sacramento Area Mountain Biking Association, Sacramento Horsemen's Association, Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce, Save the River Association, Sierra Oaks Neighborhood Association, Sunriver Neighborhood Association, Willhaggin Neighborhood Association, Woodlake Neighborhood Association. #VI at <http://www.arpps.org/strategy.html>

This balance of power—the JPA of Parkway adjacent governments for core funding and governance, a nonprofit organization for daily management and supplemental fundraising, with community organizations input reflected at the JPA level—brings virtually all of the important stakeholders to the task of caring for the most loved natural resource in our region, and will have a very good chance of restoring the luster to the currently degraded crown jewel of the region.

As we said in the executive summary of our first research report in 2005—on our website—*The American River Parkway Lower Reach Area: A Corroded Crown Jewel; Restoring the Luster:*

Background

The adjacent communities of the Lower Reach of the American River Parkway have been asking the Department of Regional Parks, Recreation and Open Space, County of Sacramento (County Parks) and Parkway advocacy organizations for help with the problems associated with illegal camping by the homeless for years, with virtually no response.

Planning for the formation of the American River Parkway Preservation Society (ARPPS) began in 2002 by a group aware of the growing problems facing the Parkway and in September of 2003 ARPPS was incorporated as a 501 c (3) nonprofit corporation.

ARPPS, understanding that the degradation of the Lower Reach affects the entire Parkway, addressed the issue in its founding guiding principles.

The Problem

The American River Parkway has long suffered from:

- ineffective management,
- lack of dedicated funding,
- degradation of natural resources, and,
- erosion of public safety.

The Strategy

The Lower Reach, representing the most visible evidence of these problems on the Parkway, is the focus of our report.

Our first guiding principle is: “Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it’s a necessity.”

Will Rogers, the President of the Trust for Public Lands said:

The emergence of America as an urban nation was anticipated by Fredrick Law Olmstead and other 19th century park visionaries, who gave us New York’s Central Park, San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park, and similar grand parks in cities across the nation. They were gardeners and designers—but also preachers for the power of parks, fired from within by the understanding that they were shaping the quality of American Lives for generations to come.

In the view of these park visionaries, parks were not “amenities.” They were necessities, providing recreation, inspiration, and essential respite from the city’s blare and bustle. And the visionaries were particularly concerned that parks be available to all of a city’s residents—especially those who did not have the resources to escape to the countryside.

Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space: Parks for People (2003)
Will Rogers, President, Trust for Public Lands.

The optimal strategy for our Parkway to be managed in this spirit is:

The Solution

- Management by a nonprofit 501 c (3) organization, the American River Parkway Conservancy, whose sole mission would be preserving, protecting, and strengthening the Parkway.

This will create management of singular purpose and the dedication public necessity demands, with the primary responsibility being public safety.

Public Safety Strategy

Though homelessness is presented as the issue underlying illegal camping and that perception will be addressed, the primary issue for the community suffering the effects of illegal camping is public safety.

- Greatly enlarge ranger patrols, use horse mounted patrols, and establish a public crime reporting website.
- Institute a safety with compassion program to address the chronic homeless and service resistant illegal campers in the Lower Reach.

Retrieved April 6, 2010 from <http://www.arpps.org/report.pdf> (pp. 4-5)

And as we concluded in that same report:

There are other arguments for preservation of the Parkway in addition to the environmental. There are the arguments of history, of the spirituality enfolding our beginnings, and the role of Sacramento on the world stage.

Joel Kotkin, in his recent book, *The City: A Global History*, suggests there are three factors of great cities, sacredness of open space; security and projection of power; and the stimulation of commerce.

Sacramento lies within the embrace of two major rivers and is the state capital of one of the largest economies in the world. The promise implicit in those could lay claim to the dreams of many for great city status.

The Parkway and the river running through it, is at the center of one of the greatest human dramas in history, the California Gold Rush.

The sacredness attached to the Parkway and the river flowing in its heart has roots reaching back thousands of years.

The tremendous stimulation to commercial value by a true understanding the deepest value of our rivers awaits future leadership.

Many agree that the Lower Reach is one of the most beautiful in the Parkway and reclaiming it for all of us will truly begin to refurbish our crown jewel to the deeply lustrous status so richly deserved.

Retrieved April 6, 2010 from <http://www.arpps.org/report.pdf> (p. 52)

Though the current changes we are witnessing could seem to render inappropriate the discussion about moving towards such an expansive direction, it can also be seen as the ideal time to bring some good strategies out of what have been some very bad events.

Society Information

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Thanks Stan!

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Issue 27 – Summer 2010

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Announcements

Parkway Ranger's Monthly Report Posting

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Change of Direction

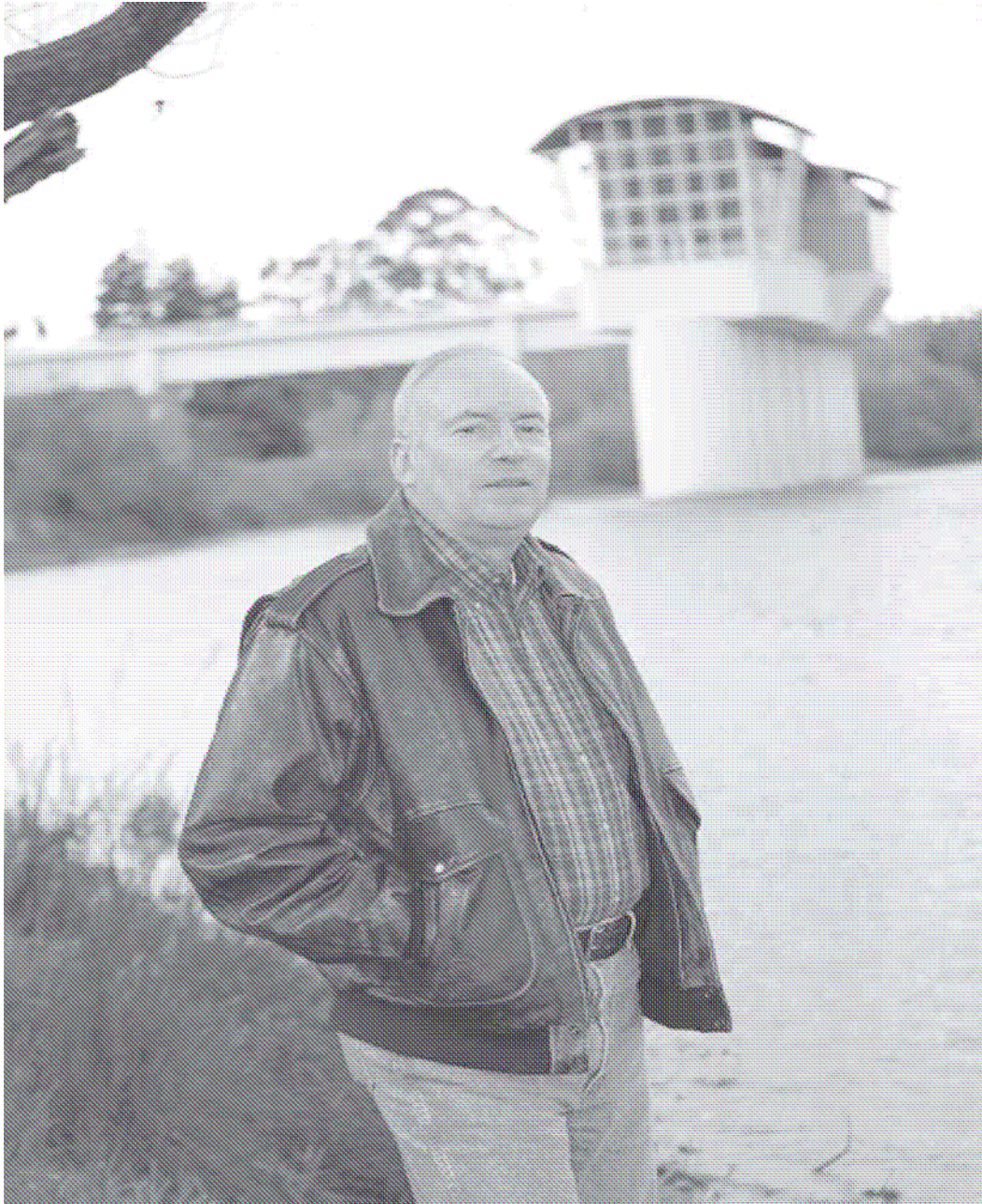
Michael Rushford wants to create new conservancy for American River Parkway

By Susan DeMars

Growing up in Carmichael in the early 60s, Michael Rushford learned an important lesson from the nearby American River: change is inevitable.

“In the natural world, things are always changing,” he says, recalling how weather and releases from Folsom Dam dramatically impacted the river, its nature and everything along its banks.

“Every year the topography of the river bed would change a little. Each summer we would find new rapids, new lagoons, new islands. And, I remember that after one really wet winter, a big tree, which we considered invincible, fell into the river,” says Rushford, smiling at the notion that even massive trees can topple.



Michael Rushford

As president of the American River Parkway Preservation Society, he would like to topple the way the parkway is managed. Rushford and his group wants to get government out the Parkway management business.

“We do not believe that local governments which share its management, or the special interest groups vying for influence over its future, represent the majority of

people who visit and use the American River Parkway,” he explains. “We try to speak for the bulk of parkway users who want a well-managed, clean, safe and accessible place to enjoy the river and the beauty of the surrounding area.”

According to Rushford, there are too many cooks in the kitchen.

“No one entity is really in charge, but several share the responsibility,” he says. “Since the 1980s more and more people have become regular parkway visitors. The financial demands for maintenance and improvement have increased, while local governments seem to view the parkway as more of a problem than a priority.”

His group believes the parkway should be managed and maintained by a non-profit conservancy chartered solely for this purpose and beyond the influence of narrow interests or government budgets.

“The governing board should share a vision that recognizes the parkway belongs to everyone,” Rushford says.

The parkway preservation society supports the creation of an endowment to provide funding, utilizing volunteers and paid staff for maintenance and improvements, and to support cultural, recreational and educational programs.

While Rushford wants government to get out of parkway management, he does see a role for government: in the area of law enforcement.

“Today, parts of the river are a crime problem and off limits to most people,” he explains. “Some of this has to do with the times we live in, but I don’t believe that we should abandon the goal of making a public place that so many people enjoy a safe place as well.”

According to Sacramento Police records, from May through July of 2008, there were 24 incidents along the parkway within the city limits. Five were felony assaults, nine were burglaries or thefts, eight were drug or alcohol-related.

Says Rushford, “It is surprising that today, in a city and county of this size, with leaders who consider themselves quite important, that there are places a few blocks from City Hall and the county administration building, along one of the more beautiful urban waterways in America, where it is not safe for decent people to walk in broad daylight.”

He acknowledges that homeless camps along the river compromise the public’s perception of the parkway as a safe place.

In addition to heading the parkway reservation society, Rushford is president of the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation, a nonprofit, public-interest law organization dedicated to restoring a balance between the rights of crime victims and the accused. The foundation has helped win Supreme Court decisions upholding laws against illegal camping, aggressive panhandling and other public order crimes.

“A law enforcement presence and consistent enforcement of the city’s anti-camping ordinance are necessary,” he says.

In spite of his foundation’s work to curb illegal camping, Rushford believes there is a compassionate way to remove the homeless from the parkway. Local politicians, he says, must take the lead.

“In the 1980s, San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan cleaned up Golden Gate Park with his Matrix Program,” Rushford says. “And New York Mayor Rudy Guilianni cleaned up the subway with a similar approach.”

That approach involves setting aside funding for treatment and training programs to take care of those with physical or mental problems; to educate and train

those who want to get off the streets; and to provide enough law enforcement to weed out the criminals and drive away those who refuse to live by the rules.

The city and county of Sacramento recently introduced a 10-year plan to end homelessness. Rushford says it's too early to gauge its success.

"Much of the solution to the parkway's problems involves politics," he notes. "The homeless issue divides liberals and conservatives. So does the conflict caused by environmental groups, which want to make the parkway a nature preserve while most of the public want to use it for recreation."

"Another divisive issue is the river itself," admits Rushford, who acknowledges that the river is no longer just a place for "Huck Finns and a few sportsmen." The river now runs through a more densely populated urban area with new cities, trails and parks. Thousands of cyclists and pedestrians use the parkway each day. Demands for water are unprecedented.

This had led to the controversy of the Auburn Dam, which Rushford's group supports. "To preserve the parkway and its environment requires much better control of river flows to prevent extreme high and low water levels," Rushford says. "The only means to accomplish this is to create a much larger water storage area upstream of Folsom Dam."

"As a 10-year-old boy, I always felt safe in the wild lands around the river," recalls Rushford. "It was a different time, of course. Drugs and random violence were not everyday part of life in Sacramento then."

But the experiences of a young boy, growing up in Carmichael near the American River in the 60s, still propels one of today's loudest, most effective voices for the preservation of the American River Parkway.

David Lukenbill, director of the parkway preservation society, says Rushford is uniquely qualified to lead the parkway preservation effort. "He has a history with the river and a love for Sacramento, both of which fuel his passion for realizing the promise of the parkway," Lukenbill notes.

For Rushford, it's personal.

"The river is an essential part of my hometown. How it is maintained or not maintained and the kind of place it becomes will influence the quality of life here, just as it did when I was growing up," says Rushford. "I feel like I should try to give back something to a place that gave so much to me."

Inside Arden, July 2010, *Meet Your Neighbors*,

[http://www.insidepublications.org/images/stories/Publications/2010%20Publications/0710%20\(Jul\)/IA_Jul_10_Book.pdf](http://www.insidepublications.org/images/stories/Publications/2010%20Publications/0710%20(Jul)/IA_Jul_10_Book.pdf) (pp.24-25 & 29)

Status Summary

Our Guiding Principles, Critical Issues & Suggested Solutions: Status of Progress

Guiding Principles

1) *Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it's a necessity.*

- 2) *What's good for the salmon is good for the river.*
 - 3) *Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway: Social and environmental justice calls upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.*
 - 4) *If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.*
 - 5) *Regarding new parkway usages: Inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.*
- Status:** These guiding principles still animate our work, being prioritized as warranted.

Critical Issues/Solutions

We encourage policy discussions about the Parkway, addressing the five critical issues and our proposed solutions.

- 1) Continuing depletion of public funding to take care of the Parkway.

Solution: *Create a Joint Powers Authority and nonprofit organization for daily management and fundraising.*

Status: Being discussed by a designated committee with representation from Sacramento County and the cities of Sacramento, Folsom, & Rancho Cordova.

- 2) Continuing pressure on the river, whether through flooding, illegal sewage discharge, or taking water for new development, hurts the salmon and other aquatic life.

Solution: *Build the Auburn Dam.*

Status: On hold, but still a congressionally approved dam site which could be revived by Congress.

- 3) Continuing habitat devastation, fires, and pollution from widespread illegal camping by the homeless in the Lower Reach.

Solution: *Strengthen and enforce laws against illegal camping.*

Status: While the legal argument—that has had some success—that sleeping in public is not illegal, has given some pause to some local jurisdictions in enforcement and strengthening laws against public camping in the Parkway, the increase in the aggressiveness of panhandlers congregating in struggling downtown areas, has caused other local areas to *increase* their efforts to restrict public camping.

- 4) Continuing development pressure to build large homes along the Parkway edges, intruding on the view space, and encroaching into the commons.

Solution: *Prohibit such new building.*

Status: The new Parkway Plan strengthened the restrictions.

- 5) Continuing exclusion of responsible usage by new Parkway user groups is contrary to the spirit upon which public ownership of a natural resource is predicated.

Solution: *Give such groups an opportunity to make their case.*

Status: New groups seeking access to the Parkway, such as dogs-without-leases groups, mountain-bike groups, disc-golf groups, mini-train groups, etc. are still finding little opportunity to present their proposals—which almost always includes doing the maintenance and initial set-up themselves—to the Parkway governing agency which has traditionally favored passive recreation over active.

Society Information

The American River Parkway Preservation Society is a 501 (C)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. As a member, you will receive a monthly e-letter, quarterly newsletter, and periodic planning position papers.

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Our Mission

Preserve, Protect, & Strengthen the American River Parkway, Our Community's Natural Heart.

Our Vision

We want our Parkway, seven generations from now, to be a vibrant, accessible, and serene sanctuary, nourishing and refreshing the spirit of all who enter it.

Our Guiding Principles

- (1) Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it's a necessity.
- (2) What's good for the salmon is good for the river.
- (3) Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway, social and environmental justice call upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.
- (4) If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.
- (5) Regarding new Parkway usages, inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.

Support Our Work

The Society depends solely on its membership to accomplish what needs to be done to preserve the Parkway in perpetuity, and we deeply appreciate any additional financial support you can provide, or by encouraging others to become members.

Thank You!

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