



Volume 8, Issue 1

## This issue includes:

- FOR News
  - River Advocacy Training School
  - Wild & Scenic River Protection for the Mokelumne
  - FOR Legal Fights
  - New board leadership!
- Get Involved!
  - Capital River Awards
  - Rafting & Canoeing
- River Currents

## FOR News

### River Advocacy Training School

by *Tobby Briggs,*  
*Engagement Coordinator*

We are excited to introduce 8 new River Advocates! At a 4-day intensive training at Camp Lotus, they learned more about the complex world of California water and the skills needed to advocate for rivers. They learned from 12 premier speakers, local experts and new trainers. Over the next 4 months leading up to

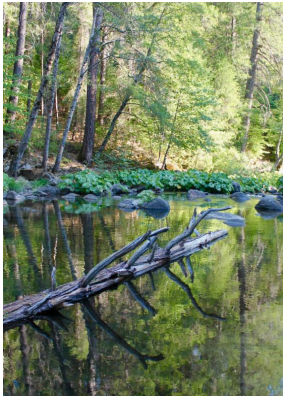
California Rivers Day (May 9), they are organizing volunteers in their communities. They are focusing on educating constituent in districts where dams are planned.

Many of our Advocates may live in your area. If so, you might receive an email invitation to get involved and get educated on current issues. We hope you will join them!

Interested in becoming a River Advocate? Our next cohort training begins May 17-21, 2018. Look for more info to apply in April!



**Meet the RATS!**



## Support Wild & Scenic River Protection for The Mokelumne!

by Steve Evans, *Wild & Scenic Program Consultant*

[Send public comments in support of Wild & Scenic protection for the Mokelumne!](#)

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) has released for public review and comment a draft *Mokelumne River Wild and Scenic River Study Report*. The release of the report kicks off a 30-day public comment period that ends February 28.

The draft study report finds 37 miles of the North Fork and main stem of Mokelumne River from Salt Springs Dam to Pardee Reservoir to be eligible for state protection as a Wild and Scenic River.

You can read the study report in full [HERE](#).

A final CNRA eligibility determination and recommendation will likely lead to the introduction of legislation to protect the Mokelumne in the state system. But local development interests who still dream of building a large dam on the Mokelumne or its major tributaries may dispute the CNRA's eligibility finding and recommendation and oppose any future legislation to protect the river. Which is why *the public needs to speak out TODAY in support of protecting the river*.

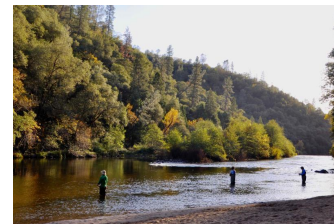
Public comments must be received Thursday, February 28, 2018 at 5pm.

- **mail** your comment letter to Joey Wall, California Natural Resources Agency, 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814
- **email** your comment by the 5PM deadline to [Joseph.Wall@resources.ca.gov](mailto:Joseph.Wall@resources.ca.gov). Feel free to copy and paste our note [here](#). If you have visited and enjoyed the Mokelumne River be sure to personalize your comments!

[Read the full article here!](#)

*Support Wild and Scenic River Protection for the Mokelumne!* by Steve Evans

Learn more background information and further details about the upcoming public hearing.



## FOR Legal Fights

by Bob Wright, *Senior Counsel*



The legal fights against the Delta Water Tunnels project, now known as the California

**WaterFix**, are a long war. Friends of the River has been fighting for several years now to require the government agencies to actually consider alternatives to the Water Tunnels project such as our Environmental Water Caucus alternative, *A Sustainable Water Plan for California* (2015), that would increase freshwater flows through the Delta by reducing reliance on the Delta as called for by State policy enacted in the Delta Reform Act of 2009.

We have experienced some success in defending against the Department of Water Resources (DWR) in the Validation action DWR filed last summer seeking to validate the issuance of billions of dollars of revenue bonds to pay for the Water Tunnels project. Sacramento Superior Court has so far agreed with our position that the bonds could only be validated if the approval of the bond resolutions complied with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Delta Reform Act as well as with the Central Valley Project Act of 1943. Since the bond resolutions do not comply with either of those laws, we have a strong case.

In the administrative State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) Hearing, DWR and the Bureau of Reclamation seek approval of the diversion change they would need to accommodate the Water Tunnels. At these hearings, we have raised issues that the Water Board and DWR have colluded in unlawful ex parte (secret) meetings contrary to the Water Board's public orders that there not be any ex parte communications.

In all forums we are either already contending or preparing to contend that the project change from two Tunnels to one Tunnel is yet another impediment to approval of the project.

---

## New Board Leadership!

By Eric Wesselman, *Executive Director*

FOR held our board election at the January meeting and we are pleased to announce our officers and one new board member.

We're thrilled to have [Bob Cushman](#) serving at the helm as FOR's board chair. Bob has been a member for more than forty years and joined the board in 2010. As our top fundraiser on the board, Bob brings a tremendous focus on building FOR's membership and overall capacity to save rivers in his new role. Residing on the American River in Lotus, California Bob and his entire family, has organized and hosted countless river trips and events for FOR. With a career in the private lending business he also brings expertise to ensure sound fiscal management and oversight of the organization.



Our new Vice Chair, [Jeff Depew](#), is a serial entrepreneur and outdoor adventurer who joined the board in 2012. Jeff also serves as a mentor for entrepreneurial student teams in new technologies at Stanford University. He is particularly interested in advancing climate-resilient water management through sustainable water solutions that reduce our dependence on surface and groundwater sources.

With more than twenty-five years of nonprofit management and development experience, [Marian Bender](#) is ideally suited for her new role as Treasurer. Born overlooking the mighty Mississippi, she has dedicated many years of her career to protecting rivers in both Minnesota and California. Marian also brings a wealth of knowledge from her time in the private sector as a Marketing

Director and consultant in the technology industry, and has been on the board since 2014.



[Richard Weiss](#) has been on FOR's board since 2008 and was re-elected as Secretary. Richard has been a volunteer and river guide with Friends of the River's rafting program for more than a decade while working in the technology sector where he currently serves as a cloud security engineer for a worldwide staffing firm headquartered in the Bay Area. Richard delights in introducing people to the beauty and joys of California's rivers and helping to train the next generation of river guides and activists.

[Donelle \(Donni\) Morgan](#) has been a member for thirty years and is FOR's latest addition to the board. She was motivated to get more involved after the 2016 election and went through FOR's River Advocacy Training School (RATS) in 2017. Donni serves clients' needs at her nine-member San Jose family law firm. She is an avid boater and pilot with a great love for the wild places of the world.



Please join me in welcoming FOR's new board member and officers!  
You can learn more about them [on our website](#)

---

## Get Involved!

---



**Join us for the 2018 Capital River Awards**

Save the date!

*Wednesday, May 9th*

[Read more & purchase tickets here](#)

Please join us for the **10th annual Capital River Awards on May 9th** in Sacramento at the Delta King Hotel on the beautiful Sacramento River. This festive evening is a great chance to re-connect with old friends and make some new ones all while supporting our treasured rivers and promoting their protection.

---

## Rafting

FOR is excited to offer a Basic Guide Training, a Rusty Guide Training and an Introduction to Head Guiding this season. Our goal is to train UP all our volunteers and increase the number of guides able to organize trips. What is your next level?

- **Rusty Guide Training**—May 12-13—The weekend training brushes the rust off guides and readies them for another amazing season supporting FOR.
- **Basic Guide Training**—June 9-17 (tentative)—Learn to advocate for rivers with a guide paddle in your hands. The 9-day training puts people on the path to proficiency in guiding and promoting FOR's conservation message.
- **Introduction to Head Guiding**—Each FOR trip is led by a Head Guide who is responsible for the safety of all the folks on a trip. To become a Head Guide is a process of building technical skills, risk management wisdom and a working knowledge of FOR's work. We are interested in having current FOR guides begin the process of stepping into this level of leadership. Contact [Scott Arrants](#), *FOR Head Guide*, to indicate your interest.
- **Gear Love** on (March 25<sup>th</sup> and September 9<sup>th</sup>) will open and close the season's gear care days.
- **Friends and Family Days** (volunteer appreciation days) are invited to join us rafting on June 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> and September 8<sup>th</sup>.



## Canoeing

There are 3 ways to get involved this season! Participate, learn, contribute.

1. Join us on an **Advocacy Outing** where paddling and learning meet. We invite expert speakers to teach on the American and Cosumnes Rivers. Paddlers of any level are welcome! (April 21st, June 24th, July 22nd)
2. Want to gain more skills? Our **Fundamentals of Canoeing** class is great for everyone. A Level 1 whitewater class will be taught depending on interest. (June 8-10, July 6-8)
3. Already a skilled paddler, but ready to use those skills to protect rivers? You can **become a FOR volunteer!** To learn more, contact [Toby Briggs](#), *Engagement Coordinator*.

Our Canoe Action Team is seeking 2-3 more motivated folks to support the inner working of the canoe events.

**[FOR Canoe Spring Paddle Party](#)**—Join us on March 17<sup>th</sup> to begin a great season of paddling. The event starts at 1 pm at Lake Solano with a paddle and finishes with a potluck. [Please register for this FREE event](#) to indicate your interest and attendance!

---

## Want to receive information about upcoming volunteer opportunities?

Join the FOR Get Involved Google Group to receive emails.

Contact [Toby Briggs](#), *Engagement Coordinator*, to express your interest to be added.

---

# River Currents

by Ron Stork, *Senior Policy Advocate*

[View Full River Current Article!](#)

## Some revelations at the Water Commission

The \$2.7 billion that the voters handed the California Water Commission to dole out to the dam builders came with a fig leaf — the assumption that the supplicants for the money could show off lots of “public” benefits for their projects.

We at Friends of the River could easily pierce that illusion without having to dig very deep, but now the first scoring efforts from the Commission staff have confirmed this disquieting truth — that finding and demonstrating public benefits (expressed as public benefit ratios) for these dam and storage projects ain’t easy. Nearly half the projects scored close to zero, two thirds scored below 0.5 to 1, and all scored below 1 to 1.

For the details on a project near you, click to view the supplicant and Commission staff scores:



As you can see, in effect the Commission staff was telling the world that the size of public subsidies that could be justified are far smaller than that being sought by the supplicants.

Of course, the Empire struck back quickly. A large group of legislators urged the Governor and the Commission to shower the supplicants with taxpayer money anyway. And the supplicants themselves are busy employing armies of consultants to spin stories how their projects can help dam California to Paradise. And spin they will since the Commission has the discretion to “adjust” the subsidies that staff believes are warranted.

(continue reading about the water commission in the full [River Currents](#) article)

---

## Full article includes...

### Some revelations at the Water Commission

The \$2.7 billion that the voters handed the California Water Commission to dole out to the dam builders came with a fig leaf...

### Time to testify - perhaps

For what seems like years, there’s been a lot of Sturm und Drang surrounding the State Water Resources Control Board’s hearing on adding a Sacramento River point of diversion for the state and federal water project’s canals leading south from the Delta...

### Oroville Dam

I’ve shown up regarding the dangers lurking around Oroville Dam for nearly two decades, so it was with considerable fascination that I read the Independent Forensic Team’s report on the whats and whys around the riveting spillway incident of just a short year ago...

### Some meditations on FERC licensing

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is the principal federal regulator of non-federal dams in the U.S. For a lot of dams in California, they're the ones that write the rules on how much water shows up below the dams. And they're supposed to get rewritten every half a century or so...

### What happens in Fresno should not stay in Fresno

The proposed Temperance Flat Dam is adopted as the local icon that will bring prosperity to a thirsty city and nearby fields...

[Click here](#) to read the February *River Currents* article by Ron Stork

---

Thank you for supporting rivers by staying informed. We can't wait to see you at our next event or talk!

Sincerely,  
the FOR Staff--Eric, Ron, Brittney, Bob, Toby, and Kelsey

[Website](#) [About](#) [Our Work](#) [Get Involved](#) [Donate](#) [Contact](#)

