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Volume 9, Issue 3 - March 14, 2019

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## News and Updates

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~~~~~ **MAY 15<sup>TH</sup>** ~~~~~  
Sacramento, California

## **A day of action for sustainable water solutions at the Capitol!**

Join us to build a more climate resilient water future for California.

## **TAKE PART - TAKE ACTION**

There are 3 ways to get involved:

**Meet Your Legislators**  
8 AM - 4 PM

**Sustainable Water Solutions Expo**  
10 AM - 3 PM

**Capitol River Awards**  
5:30 - 8 PM

Organized by Friends of the River

[Learn more](#)

[Register](#)

### **Point Positive: Capital River Awards** May 15, 2019 [California Museum](#)

Join us Wednesday, May 15, 2019, at the California Museum for the 11th annual Capital River Awards to celebrate our treasured rivers and promote their protection.

This event is a great chance to reconnect with old friends and make some new ones over delicious food and wine.

Our goal is to raise \$60,000 this year to help us protect sustainable water solutions that are cheaper and less destructive than dams and diversions. Point Positive provides a powerful opportunity for public education and engagement. We hope you will Friends of the River for this special day on May 15th.



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## Wild and Scenic Rivers won in a Federal Bill in February

On February 26th, 2019 Congress passed a sweeping public lands bill. The **Natural Resources Management Act** permanently reauthorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund and added over 350 miles of river to the Federal Wild and Scenic system. The largest conservation bill to pass in over a decade, it is not only bipartisan, but also combines over 100 public lands and water resource bills into one large conservancy package. Each state benefits from this legislation. The bill is a landmark in conversation, the likes of which have not been seen in over a decade. Included in this bill are over 620 miles of new federally protected rivers. The new protections prohibit dams and other modifications.

California gained 77 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers. The **Amargosa River, Surprise Canyon Creek, Deep Creek, and Whitewater River** are all gaining new wild or scenic miles or designation. These rivers all inhabit southern California, a region primarily known for its desire for diversions and foreign water sources. The new designations demonstrate a continuation of the trend towards conservancy. These watersheds are small but their designation marks a large step in protecting the relatively arid region's sparse rivers.

The Natural Resource Management Act also includes the **California Desert Protection and Preservation Act**. This Act does numerous things for California's southern desert. The Mojave Desert increases [by or to] 350,00 acres. The bill also allows for the creation of Wildlife Corridors and Habitat monitoring beyond those currently in place. These added acres, while not expansive, are important to creating wildlife corridors that connect Joshua Tree National Park to Death Valley National Park. These deserts receive very few inches of rain per year. As a result these ecosystems are incredibly dependent on what little water they receive. Each added acre helps protect the watershed within these preserves. In particular the Amargosa River rests within the Death Valley National Park. While already a Wild and Scenic River the additional miles added to its Wild and Scenic boundary will only help further protect this delicate and rare desert gem.

**The Natural Resources Management Act is the first such bill to pass both houses since 2009.** Given the current administration's push for anti environmental policy, it is of great value that a bill such as this has passed. This bill is outstanding in that each state has things to gain from it; Conservation and land protections for the politicians on the left. Hunting and Recreation access for the politicians on the right. Not to mention the bills included in the act that benefit the individual states.

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## Get Involved!

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- **Canoe Adventures and Classes**-Click the button to learn more!
  - **April 27th** - Canoe Adventure on Lower American
  - **June 8 & 9** - Canoe Fundamentals Class
- **Raft Basic Guide Training--July 6-14, 2019**
  - 9-day intensive training for guide-advocates on the South Fork American River
  - \$600 --email [Toby](#) to express your interest.

[Canoe Trips](#)

[Raft Basic Guide Training](#)

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## River Currents

By Ron Stork, *Policy Director*

[View Full River Currents Article!](#)

### Of time and nature flowing

This winter has been wet in a lot of California. As a consequence, some of the giant storage dams in the state will have to release some water, swelling some of the state's mighty rivers...



### SGMA blues

Reality sometimes breaks up the party. And some significant parts of California have had quite a party.

The party has been fostered by pulling millions of acre-feet of groundwater more from the ground than is returned — year after year, decade after decade. Eventually somebody called the cops, though. This time it was the California Legislature, which in 2014 passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), requiring formation of groundwater sustainability agencies that prepare and implement plans that achieve their aims by the early 2040s or ten years hence (if there is any water left by then)...

### Legislative follies

Well, the California legislature is back in town, and with it the annual parade of bad bills.

**SB 559:** Just to show you that pork shows no political party boundaries, State Senators Melissa Hurtado, (D-Sanger) and Andreas Borgeas (R-Fresno) with Devon Mathis (R-Visalia), Joaquin Arambula (D-Fresno), and Rudy Salas (D-Bakersfield) introduced Senate Bill 559. It would commandeer \$400 million from the state general fund for repairs to the Friant-Kern Canal — although it's not at all clear they will need that much...

### Westlands speaks

It's not often that the agency preparing and environmental impact report (EIR) responds to comments received before the draft EIR. But I guess the comments from the State Water Quality Control Board about Westlands' project with Reclamation to raise the height of Shasta Dam struck a nerve...

### It's all about the subsidies

A politician from Bakersfield can't go wrong trying to pull water subsidies out of the federal and state governments. Enter Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Bakersfield), minority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives. Responding to the freeway signs along San Joaquin Valley farm fence lines saying "Dams not Trains," McCarthy introduced H.R. 1600 to do just that...

## Lawyering for rivers

Friends of the River has found itself with a legal department thanks to Bob Wright and his crew of lawyers, law clerks, and paralegal students. As we've downsized the office, we don't have the space for such big teams anymore, but Bob keeps more than busy...

## Raising Don Pedro Dam?

According to Chris Shutes from the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), at least, does not intend that their draft voluntary settlement agreement for the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan to result in expanding the giant Don Pedro Reservoir into the national wild and scenic river only a little ways upstream...

## Reflections on saving rivers

The foothill shooting stars are in bloom, and a lot of manzanita have already bloomed. But the great bulk of the California spring wildflower season is in front of us.

I know you've heard this before, but images and videos can be powerful. And creating them doesn't require public speaking. ...

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

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

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

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