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Volume 9, Issue 6 - June 11, 2019

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## News and Updates

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### Wild and Scenic update June 2019

By Colton Johnson, On River Program Associate and Wild & Scenic Liaison

Currently there are three bills relating to Wild and Scenic Rivers proposed by California representatives:

- **The San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 2215)** would add 45 miles of river to the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers system. This bill has been introduced and sent to committee where it will be debated upon.
- **The Central Coast Heritage Protection Act (H.R. 2199)** would add a proposed 230 miles of river to the Federal Wild and Scenic program! This bill has also been introduced and is awaiting a hearing in its respective committee.
- **The Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act (H.R. 2250)** proposes an astounding 475 miles of river to the Wild and Scenic system.

As of right now all of these bills have been introduced and referred to their respective committees. These committees will research, review, and revise each bill before determining if it should go on to the full chamber for a vote. So, what can you do? You can call your local representative and urge them to sign on and become a cosponsor of these bills.

Each cosponsored bill has shows more support and backing behind it! Look for some more news when an outcome is reached on each bill in committee.

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**2018 Annual Impact Report**

See what Friends of the River accomplished with your support! The Annual Impact Report features updates from our programs, policy actions and financial position in 2018. Printed copies are available upon request.

[View Annual Impact Report](#)



**2018** ANNUAL IMPACT  
REPORT

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## DWR Rescinds WaterFix Bond

By Robert Wright, Friends of the River Senior Legal Counsel

There have been more developments since the Governor's April 29, 2019, Executive Order applying to water issues in California, and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) May 2, 2019, rescission of the July 2017 approvals of the WaterFix Delta Tunnels project. Those developments were described in the last River Advocate edition.

On May 7, 2019, DWR rescinded its July 2017 Bond Resolutions that had authorized issuance of \$9 billion worth of bonds to commence construction of the WaterFix project. As a result, DWR requested dismissal of its Validation action seeking to validate bond issuance against any and all challenges. Pursuant to a Court order of June 3, 2019, DWR's Validation action has now been "dismissed in its entirety." (Superior Court, County of Sacramento.) Due to the defense of the Validation action by Friends of the River and others ongoing since September of 2017, DWR had not been able to actually issue any of the bonds which would have created more momentum toward constructing and operating the Delta twin tunnels project.

The Court also held on May 23, 2019, what may have been the last Case Management Conference for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) cases against DWR that had been filed by Friends of the River and others seeking to set aside the July 2017 approvals of the WaterFix project. In its May 24 Order following up from the conference, the Court ordered that the plaintiffs dispose of their cases by June 21, because of the rescission by DWR of its approval of the WaterFix project. In other words, the rescission of the project approvals constituted the relief sought by the plaintiffs in the cases. This litigation has been ongoing since August 2017 and has also been a factor in preventing the commencement of construction of the WaterFix project.

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## The Diversion Change Hearing Ends

By Robert Wright, Friends of the River Senior Legal Counsel

On May 16, 2019, the State Water Resources Control Board Hearing Officer ended the Hearing on the Petition by DWR and the Bureau of Reclamation to change the point of diversion to accommodate the WaterFix project. The Administrative Hearing process had ended because DWR and Reclamation withdrew their Petition on May 2, 2019.

- Friends of the River along with others took part in the Hearing as protestants objecting to approval of the Petition.

- The lengthy Hearing had gone on for more than three years. Protesting the diversion change was also a key factor in preventing commencement of construction of the twin tunnels project.
- The Delta Reform Act contains a provision prohibiting commencement of construction of a new conveyance unless and until a petition for diversion change is granted by the Water Board. Water Code § 85088.

It is reasonable to conclude that had Friends of the River as well as others not defended the Validation action, challenged the Water Fix project approval in CEQA litigation, and protested the change in the diversion point in the Water Board Hearing, that the \$9 billion in bonds may have been issued and construction started before Governor Newsom took office in January 2019. Sufficient momentum could have been created making it unlikely that the State would have withdrawn the project approvals. Now, Friends of the River is in position to seek a fair, accurate, and comprehensive process by the State to evaluate and compare no-tunnel project alternatives that would increase freshwater flows

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## Get Involved!

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### Canoeing

#### Classes - Fundamentals

July 13-14, 2019 | Lake Natoma, Sacramento

[Register here.](#)



#### Adventures - next one June 22nd!

[Register now!](#) [More dates.](#)

No experience needed. Speakers provided. Equipment is provided.

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### Rafting

#### Whitewater Rafting Guide School

Join us for a 9-day intensive whitewater raft guide and advocacy training. -- July 6-14, 2019

[Learn more.](#) [Apply.](#)

**Loved guiding with FOR?** Pass on the gift when you share this email with the next generation of guides!

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### Reflection: What it means to me to be a RATS Graduate

By Donelle Morgan, Cohort 3, January 2017

I am a graduate of the River Advocate Training School (RATS) from the January 2017 cohort. After the 2016 election, I volunteered for RATS to help fight back the powers that are threatening to destroy the places I love. I wanted to preserve and protect rivers that have always been the source of joy and energy—a sense of connection to the

universe. RATS taught me how to best serve rivers. After the four-month program finished, I knew, in order to make a radical impact, I needed to keep learning and volunteer more.

Being a RATS graduate has meant a continued willingness to serve the cause, however I can be most useful. When one commits to RATS, it is a long term commitment to serve the amazing work that FOR does on an ongoing basis. The RATS cohorts are members of an “honor guard” who can each lead the way for our volunteers in policy advocacy, legislation, administrative action, our boating programs, our guide programs, and our public education. When there is an “ASK”, the RATS should be the first to say “YES! What can I do?”

Being a RATS graduate means an ongoing commitment to service, an understanding of Point Positive and an active engagement in the work of Friends of the River. Friends of the River invests considerable time in RATS—as do they in FOR. Because of this, each RATS grad owes it to themselves to stay involved. I promise you that it is an energizing, satisfying, and productive engagement.

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## River Currents

By Ron Stork, *Policy Director*

[View Full River Currents Article!](#)

### **Shasta Dam raise, what do you do about it? Bring some lawsuits.**

Raising Shasta Dam has been illegal for thirty years. It’s still illegal. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Westlands Water District are partnering in an effort to raise the dam, which Reclamation claims will begin late this year. But now somebody is going to do something about it...



### **Westlands Shasta Dam Raise Project EIR (SDRP)**

The county’s largest water district, the Westlands Water District, holds contracts for a million acre-feet of federal Central Valley Project (CVP) water. The Shasta Dam contains the largest reservoir in California and is a CVP facility. One of Westlands’ former attorneys and lobbyists is the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, a cabinet secretary with responsibilities for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation...

### **Bay Area Water district going rogue with Westlands**

It’s sometimes easy for coastal Californians to feel superior to Central Valley water districts such as the Westlands Water District. Surely, so say coastal Californians, our locally elected water districts would not engage in actions that are so arrogant as to violate the California Wild & Scenic Rivers Act...

### **Financing the Shasta Dam raise**

After the failed attempt last year by then U.S. House of Representatives majority leader McCarthy (R-Bakersfield) to waive cost-sharing requirements for the Shasta Dam raise, Westlands has been hunting for a way to raise the money for its share of the dam raise. From keeping our noses to the ground, it appears that Westlands has taken a page from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). MWD is proposing to assume the cost of building the proposed Delta tunnel(s), control operations, and sell “its” water to other water users to help defray some of Westlands’ financing costs...

## **Congress (U.S. taxpayers) financing it?**

Of course not to be outdone, the remaining California House of Representative Republicans, Representatives Calvert, McCarthy, McClintock, Nunes, LaMalfa, Cook, and Hunter are all offering an amendment to the House Energy and Water Appropriations bill to make "funding available to the Shasta Dam and Reservoir Enlargement project, a water project recommended by the Administration under the WIIN Act."...

## **Amending the WIIN, will the Senate try to make the California and western-state dam push permanent?**

Conceived during the recent California drought and responding to the cries of the state's water buffalos, the federal Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN) was passed in the closing days of 2016 over the objections of retiring California Senator Barbara Boxer, the U.S. Senate even going to the trouble to cut off debate to end her filibuster...

## **Subsidizing the rich**

In spite of the defeat of Proposition 3, which floundered before California voters in part because of the inclusion of \$750 million dollars in state taxpayer funds for federal canals used by wealthy federal water contractors whose groundwater extractions had wrecked the canal they use, the California taxpayer is always in danger when the legislature is in session...

## **Hydroelectric dam relicensing — public interest influence circling the drain**

The states and federal land-management and natural resources agencies have traditionally counterbalanced the political powers of existing and aspiring non-federal dam owners. But with the federal Administration gaining ascendancy over the federal agencies, the states have been the sole remaining effective bulwark providing some degree of balance in licensing proceedings before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)...

## **Dams in National Wilderness Areas**

Premium Energy Holdings Company of Walnut Creek is continuing to create quite a kurfuffle by its preliminary permit applications to FERC for huge pumped storage hydroelectric projects in and around wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, areas of critical environmental concern, and roadless areas in and around the high Sierra Nevada east side, Owens Valley, and Inyo Mountains...

## **Merced River defense (redux)**

In spite of being one of the most famous national wild and scenic rivers, the House of Representatives has twice voted to prune back the 1992 wild & scenic river designation in order to accommodate an expanded Lake McClure Reservoir there. The designation effort has taken a detour for now, but the future of this protected and iconic river remains uncertain...

## **A look back**

The Union Democrat, Sonora's newspaper, published a sympathetic and surprisingly tender look back at the Friends of the River "Save the Stanislaus" campaign, covering an introductory meeting introducing the Stanislaus River Archive at a May meeting at the Tuolumne County Library. You might want to take a peek...

## **Making a difference**

In The Union Democrat article on the public meeting on the Stanislaus River Archive and requiem for the Stanislaus River, Larry Orman, one of the Stanislaus River Campaign veterans asked the question:

"So what now, moving forward?"

"What about activism?" came one of the first responses...

Click here to read the June [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, Kellie and Colton

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

