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Here's your moment of River Zen!



We may be physically separated, but we are not alone. We are part of a greater community of river lovers and outdoor enthusiasts. Wherever you are, please share a photo with us of nature that brings you joy. It can be a current photo from your daily walk, or a wonderful memory. We will share your photos on social media and member emails so we can all share in a moment of Zen.

Submit your photo to Kellie kellie@friendsoftheriver.org along with a description or caption.

News and Updates

The Storytelling Project

FOR has a deep history to celebrate and share as we approach our 50th anniversary!

The story of FOR is the story of the people who shaped it. **That's you!** The ones who started, the ones who carried on, the ones who supported our growth. Join us in collecting, sharing, and listening to the amazing stories from our community through the years.

We are seeking people to write short stories with an accompanying photo, short 3-5 minute video stories or participate in a storytelling workshop.

Our goal is to collect a timeline of stories (written, audio and video) ranging from 1973 to 2020 that tell the story of the first 50 years of Friends of the River's history – as we head into the next 50 years!

Keep an eye out for emails and social media alerts for new stories as they emerge.

[Learn more](#)

Featured Story

Prop 17: A Pathway to a Life on Rivers

by Ann Cassidy

In the early '70's, I had energy and time on my hands. With the dawning of the environmental movement across America, I decided to get politically involved. Through the Sierra Club I learned about saving a river I had never heard of. Having enjoyed fishing and playing in creeks as a kid and backpacking in the Sierra this seemed like a worthy cause. I soon found myself appointed Marin County Chairman for Prop 17 to 'Save the Stanislaus.'



As County Chairman, I, of course, had to see the Stanislaus! For my first river trip I joined a FOR fundraiser down the Stan run by OARS. I was immediately hooked by the scenery, the inner peace channeled by flowing water, and the contagious high spirits of my fellow river adventurers and our river guides.

Prop 17 was narrowly defeated, perhaps the result of ballot language deliberately meant to confuse the voters. One had to vote "No" to save the river from being buried beneath the reservoir rising behind the now even taller New Melones Dam. Prop 17 began and ended my political career, but it launched me on a continuing journey with rivers. Next came the Tuolumne River and then the Grand Canyon – first as an OARS passenger and then a trainee boatman. I guided on rivers for 20 years mostly in the Grand Canyon and the Southwest, made many lifetime friends, and learned so much about the values that free-flowing rivers offer to the environment and people.

Every trip was a remarkable adventure with its unique twists and highlights. Today, while not on rivers, I reflect on the everyday life lessons and inspirations from the Stanislaus

and other rivers. Who can forget the wonder of wandering in the maze of branches under the giant fig tree at Duck Bar, soaking in the gurgle of Rose Creek, or belly crawling under stalactites? I realize that natural landscapes and ecosystem functions all around the world must be treasured and advocated for, even if one hasn't had the chance to experience them. I owe this awareness to the Stanislaus and my impulsive decision to join FOR and support Prop 17. I am very proud to have been a charter member of FOR and to have been able to support it for all these years.

[Read other stories](#)

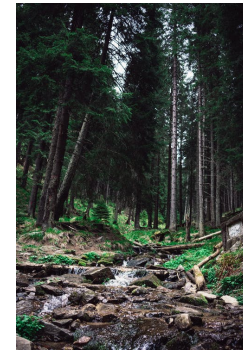
Congress Votes on the Protecting America's Wilderness Act

By Colton Johnson, River Program Coordinator

On the 12th of February 2020 the House of Representatives voted on the Protecting America's Wilderness Act.

This act combines five wilderness protection bills with three of them pertaining to California:

- The San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act
- The Central Coast Heritage Protection Act
- The Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act



These bills would protect over 500 miles of river through wild and scenic designation. Each bill has garnered the support of many environmental groups in and out of the state of California.

The act gained bipartisan support during the House Natural Resource committee hearing with Rep. John Curtis of Utah saying "Although there are things I would do differently, there are a number of things I was impressed with." Ringing similar to sentiments expressed on a similar bill that was signed into law last year.

In early 2019 the president signed S.47. An impressive public lands protection and conservation bill. S.47 reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund. S.47 passed both houses with bipartisan support and was signed into law in early March of 2019. S.47 also added over 600 miles to the national wild and scenic system. Of those 600, 77 of them were in California. S.47 demonstrated a phenomenal ability for bipartisan support for our public lands.

The Protecting America's Wilderness Act passed 231 yeas.

The act also includes wilderness bills from Washington and Colorado. Sen. Harris introduced Protecting Unique and Beautiful Landscapes by Investing in CA (PUBLIC) Lands Act. Which is the companion bill for the Senate.

Get Involved!

River Adventures in 2020

FOR hopes to offer events, trips and trainings on the American River this summer. We value keeping our volunteers and participants safe and healthy. While we anticipate offering the events below, we recognize that COVID-19 has created uncertainty for programming and may cause events to be cancelled for public health.

If you sign up for an event that is cancelled, FOR will offer a full refund. With that in mind, please register to show your interest in our offerings!

Canoe Trips—[Learn more](#)

[Canoe Adventures](#) on the Lower American River - July 12th & August 2nd
\$25/person (FOR members) |\$45/person (non-members or expired members)

[Canoe Classes](#) at Lake Natoma—Fundamentals of Canoeing – July 25th & 26th (both days)
\$175 for 2 days of instruction.

Rafting—[Learn more](#)

[Basic Guide Training](#) – July 11-19, 2020 – 9 day training for people interested in volunteering as a guide for FOR.
\$600 includes whitewater instruction, advocacy training, food and camping

River Currents

By Ron Stork, *Policy Director*

[View Full River Currents Article!](#)

Let's face it, the novel corona virus is changing lives all over the world. So this River Currents is going to let you know about how some aspiring dam builders and river diverters are taking advantage of these matters — or not.

FERC in this era

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has regulatory authority over non-federal dam projects with electricity production that hook into an interstate power grid among other things. That means they license and relicense and approve amendments to more than a hundred jurisdictional projects across the state. And this is one agency that does not seem to have been slowed down by some of its staff having to work from home..



River Recreation Season

One of the many things that get decided when FERC relicenses dams under its jurisdiction is the nature of dam releases to support recreation on rivers downstream of the dam. After all, the rivers are the people's rivers, and the right to dam and divert then through penstocks and powerhouses comes with some obligations back to the people. But since the people are supposed to be staying home, some powerhouse owners are asking FERC if they still need to provide flows for the enjoyment of folks who like to spend time on rivers...

Some good news?

You have to admit that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) Office of Dam Safety and Inspections based in San Francisco did not look that good as its licensee the California Department of Resources experienced one crisis after another at Oroville Dam in 2017. And it got worse as the reviews uncovered the causes of the incident and the failures to take seriously legitimate warnings (including Friends of the River's) that should have been heeded...

The Congress

Well, what can you say about the Congress. They are in recess more. That's something. But staff can work from home, and so can members.

There's three things we are watching out for: (1) The must-pass federal appropriations bills for FY 2021. Last year's appropriations "mini-bus" gave the Secretary of the Interior an extra \$134 million to spend as he pleased for storage projects. He is spending it, in part to rescue the Shasta Dam-raise preconstruction and design effort. The Secretary has his sights on the McCloud River, and he'll want a clear shot at construction funding this time...

The Legislature

The legislature has fled the capitol and is sheltering in place in their homes. However, with term limits, members are a lot younger than they used to be, so their risk tolerance is likely to be greater. Regardless, staff and members can work from home, and on top of their minds is getting the state's budget out and putting bond measures on the ballot...

Construction planning rolling ahead

A lot of projects have staff and consultants with powerful home computers, high-speed internet connections, and networks to plug in to. Let's take a look at the results.

The Delta Construction Authority, mostly an arm of the State Water Project contractors, is continuing to push ahead on its timeline to tee up the proposed Delta Tunnel.

The Sites Reservoir project is envisioned to be a major diversion to the Coast Range foothills west of the Sacramento River that could really hammer Sacramento River fisheries. Some of the major consultants to the Sites Project Authority have been told to work from home but continue either polishing the environmental impact report so it can go final or preparing and issuing a new supplemental draft environmental impact report since the project has evolved a fair amount since the draft was circulated and commented on. The Authority has \$40 million in state taxpayer money, so they can afford some extra expenses...

California green and golden

Little rain in January, no rain in February, but March produced some nice winter rains, particularly in Southern California, that have meant that many California landscapes are getting back their full winter green. Our spring wildflower season was rescued too. Still, particularly in the north state, rivers this summer are going to be mostly low-water affairs...

Click here to read the [April 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, Toby, Kellie and Colton

