



Volume 11, Issue 2 - March 11, 2021

This issue includes:

- Director's Corner
 - FOR Welcomes New Program Associates
- News & Updates
 - Whitewater Guide & Activist Training
 - Yuba River Update
- River Currents

Director's Corner

Friends of the River Welcomes two new Program Associates!

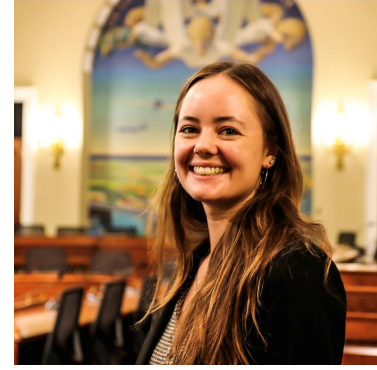


Friends of the River is thrilled to announce two additions to the team who will be focused on researching and developing a new program focused on urban rivers in California. Carlos Zambrano and Dakota Goodman both came to FOR through our River Advocacy Training School and each bring valuable work experience and knowledge to the organization.

Carlos recognizes that in these uncertain times it is vital that allies within the environmental movement cooperate and fight for a greener, more equitable future. He has worked in environmental justice since 2013, participating in grassroots efforts to democratize and de-carbonize California's energy systems. From 2016-2019, he worked as the Program Coordinator, then Program Co-director, of the New Voices are Rising program, teaching Oakland youth about environmental justice and guiding youth activists. Having completed FOR's whitewater rafting guide training in 2019, Carlos is poised to be a tremendous ambassador for rivers.

Dakota Rose Goodman holds dual degrees from the University of California, Berkeley. She received a B.A. in Environmental History, with a minor in Human Rights, and an emphasis in Psychology, as well as a B.S. in Society and Environment. Her concentration at UC Berkeley was in California water resources policy and management. She started the first campus chapter of Friends of the River at UC Berkeley since the organization's founding in 1973. After graduating with honors from Berkeley, Dakota went

to the University of Idaho College of Law to further her studies in the area of Western Water resource policy and management. She is currently pursuing a Water Resources Master of Science, in Law, Management and Policy.



About FOR's Urban Rivers Program

Friends of the River loves all California rivers, from the tumbling whitewater in the High Sierra to our urban creeks and rivers. Rivers connect us to each other and to nature. This program will foster those connections to improve the health of our urban rivers and the communities they flow through.

Too many urban rivers in California have become environmental wastelands and hot spots for environmental racism. However, more and more Californians are realizing the tremendous value urban rivers can bring to communities. There are dozens of efforts across the state to bring them back, from the American River in Sacramento to the Los Angeles River.

Carlos and Dakota will be working to develop this program focused on the intersection of environmental, social, economic, and racial justice. Their work begins with researching the background problems and the many efforts already underway to address those issues. Then, listening and learning from community-based organizations and leaders who are already working in this space, so that we can design and launch a strategic program this summer that supports their existing and new efforts.

News and Updates



The River is Calling You!

Join us for Whitewater Guide and Activist Training

Our whitewater guide school is back with a twist! This June we are offering an intense and exciting Guide and Activist Training to equip participants with the skills they need to safely take people down river *and* build FOR's base of grassroots activists. We're doing this by incorporating elements from our one-of-a-kind River Advocacy Training School (RATS). This means you will learn from a broad range of experts about grassroots organizing, advocacy, and river protection while also learning how to read the river, maneuver a paddle boat, and move and store gear.

FOR has a rich tradition of organizing whitewater rafting experiences that build grassroots support for river protection. Now you can join in the effort and help build the movement. By becoming a Whitewater Guide with FOR, you can be a part of organizing river trips and events focused on building community, education, river advocacy, and having fun!

This is a great opportunity to build and strengthen your leadership abilities, improve communication, and gain confidence all at the same time. No experience needed, but space is limited. Visit our [website](#) to learn more about this opportunity, how to apply, and who to contact for more information!

Learn
More

Yuba River Update



Bureaucratic gridlock has paralyzed the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Army Corps of Engineers, and while the agencies dither, the Yuba River's threatened salmon, steelhead, and green sturgeon slide further toward extinction. Friends of the River has been fighting in federal court for the past five years to make NMFS do its job to protect the Yuba's threatened fish species and reinstate mitigation measures it stripped out of a 2014 biological opinion regulating the Corps' Yuba River activities. However, even after Friends of the River scored an important victory in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, the agencies have continued to drag their feet.

Friends of the River has now partnered with the South Yuba River Citizens League in a campaign with 14 other environmental and fishing organizations to pressure NMFS to end the delay and issue a new biological opinion to the Corps that complies with the Endangered Species Act.

The Corps manages two dams on the Yuba River- Englebright Dam that completely blocks threatened salmon and steelhead from migrating to their historic upstream habitat, and Daguerre Point Dam that has broken-down fish ladders that impede threatened salmon and steelhead and prevent green sturgeon from migrating upstream. Legally, NMFS has two options. It can provide a better explanation for its inadequate 2014 decision that lets the Corps off the hook for all the harms caused by Englebright and Daguerre. Or, it can start afresh, do a new analysis and issue a completely new biological opinion.

There is only one right choice- NMFS must issue a new biological opinion to the Corps that requires fish passage improvements and other protections that will ensure that the Corps' dams do not drive the Yuba's threatened fish to extinction. Friends of the River and its coalition partners will continue to pressure NMFS and the Corps to do the right thing. If they don't, we'll see them back in court.

River Currents

By Ron Stork, *Policy Director*

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Extending the WIIN Act

The Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act of 2016 (WIIN) is intended to provide the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) with a new structure to resume its depression-era dam-building program in the United States. The bill was largely crafted by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) to take advantage of the pressure to do something about the 2011–17 California drought.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011%E2%80%932017_California_drought

The bill was passed over the objections of outgoing U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and included provisions to require Reclamation to prioritize making deliveries to its water customers (presumably by reducing environmental protections for Delta fisheries) as well as an aggressive federal dam building and loan program, the latter for dam projects proposed by others.

The obvious presumed federal beneficiaries of the program in California were to be the proposed Temperance Flat dam and the Shasta Dam raise. Today, however, both these projects are floundering, the former from financing problems, the later because it violates the California Wild & Scenic Rivers Act.

<https://www.friendsoftheriver.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/FOR-WIIN-CA-storage-provisions-memo-2-11-2021.pdf>

Squeezing out the Last Dimes from the California Water Bond

The California Water Bond of 2014 set aside \$2.7 billion for dams/storage projects. It's the state subsidy program to match the federal WIIN subsidies and under the control of the California Water Commission. And it has a problem. How to make sure they can dole out *all* the money.

The problem arose when the sponsors of the Temperance Flat dam withdrew their application for \$171 million in state funds for this now deferred proposed giant federal dam on the San Joaquin River. It took a while, but the Commission now has a plan. They provided full funding for the requests for the Kern Fan and Willow Springs groundwater storage projects, gave all the projects a 2.5% inflation adjustment, and sent out the word that the Commission might be willing to change their regulations to allow other projects to apply for the remaining \$64 million.

Click here to read the full January [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, Amy, Kelly, Carlos and Dakota

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