

The River Advocate

Friends of the River

The voice of California's Rivers
friendsoftheriver.org



In this Issue

- FOR News:
 - Rendezvous by the River - THANK YOU
 - 2023 Rafting Program
- Headwaters:
 - Dianne Feinstein: A complicated legacy for rivers
- Currents: Victories and Threats
 - Sites Reservoir Recent Events
- FOR in the News
 - Ron Stork in the LA Times
- Reflections and Directions - Hiring an Executive Director

FOR News

Rendezvous by the River - Thank you to the River Community!!



A table of FOR legends. From left to right, Linda Cloud, Alexander Gaguine, Gary Estes, Johnny Carlson, Ron Stork, Marty Booth, Mark Dubois. Credit: Larry Oman.

On September 30, over 275 people came together on the banks of the American River at Camp Lotus for the annual FOR Rendezvous by the River. Together we celebrated the joy, longevity and strength of the river community, and 50 years of Friends of the River. Many FOR supporters have a special relationship with the American River. Being there that night reminds us of the power of place and community, which is at the center of what keeps us all going. The many campaigns and fights for rivers over the last 50 years would have turned out differently without you, the river community...

[Read more](#)

2023 FOR Rafting Program a success, more to come in 2024

It was a sunny day on the banks of the South Fork American River when Mike Duncan, the founder and Executive Director of the Native Dad's Network, blessed our FOR river trip with his flute and song expressing gratitude to ancestors and asking they watch over the 35 participants. Our friends at Save California Salmon ("SCS") arranged this one day river trip in partnership with FOR to gather tribal youth and families together to connect with the river as a Relative. FOR supported two river trips for SCS this summer to remove accessibility barriers for the tribes. Many of the youths on the trips were from families with alcohol and drug issues, and perhaps food scarcity. The tribal leaders brought the groups together with grace and gentleness in an IMPACT program (Indigenous – Mentors – Protecting – Ancestry – Cultural – Team). FOR provided nutritious meals by the river, safety education, gear, river guiding expertise, and loads of fun. Thanks to volunteer guides Richard Weiss, Colton Johnson, Alex and Bill Kunesh, Ken Weiss, with shuttle support from Gabriel Baker.

When whitewater legend Sue Norman called, FOR answered! Answered YES to providing a South Fork American ½ day river trip for the Sierra Nevada Alliance SNAP 2023 graduates. Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership (SNAP) participants spend 11 months of national service working in environmental protection and resiliency for SNA member organizations. During those 11 months they are not allowed to advocate or be politically active. It was perfect timing to transition these experienced and enthused young people with degrees in Environmental Science into FOR River Activists. FOR gave a workshop on restoring river flows and multi-benefit flood management before the river trip. As part of the deal, FOR received a membership in SNA with benefits that include the ability to give action alerts to our members, educational workshops, and much more. Thanks to FOR volunteer guides Bill Kunesh, Chell Schembari, Dan Kanner, with support from Kevin Banister who rowed lunch, Coloma Shuttle and All Outdoors with shuttle support.



Trip participants from Native Dads Network and Save California Salmon with big smiles at the end of their day on the river. *Credit: Amy Stroud.*

Headwaters - FOR's Online Magazine



Dianne Feinstein speaks at the 2007 Delta Summit in LA. Credit: CA DWR.

Dianne Feinstein: A complicated legacy for rivers

By Ron Stork -- California's senior U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein recently passed away after 31 years in the U.S. Senate. To say that she was influential on California water matters would be an understatement. I've prepared some personal recollections for Friends of the River.

Hetch-Hetchy: Senator Feinstein's introduction to high-stake water and rivers games came when she was still the mayor of San Francisco. In 1987, the year that I joined the FOR staff, President Ronald Reagan's Secretary of the Interior Don Hodel floated the idea of restoring Hetch-Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park. She soon

paid her first visit Yosemite and was calling O’Shaughnessy Dam and Hetch-Hetchy Reservoir “San Francisco’s birthright.”

She proved to be an influential politician, soon convincing Bay Area congressional representatives to block funding for studies by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to develop Hodel’s idea into a working proposal.

[Read more](#)

Currents: Victories and Threats

Sites Reservoir Recent Events

By Keiko Mertz

Sites Project Authority Cuts Corners

FOR and a coalition of conservation organizations recently filed a letter objecting to the Sites Project Authority’s rushed application for regulatory streamlining. This application for acceptance into the SB 149 Infrastructure Streamlining Program would mean that this harmful project would receive a shortened judicial review period for litigation over their inadequate environmental documents.



Sites Reservoir proposed location. Credit: Sue Graue

Why it matters: (1) The State has not yet even issued guidelines yet for which to determine project eligibility, (2) Approval of SB 149 projects are at the sole discretion of Governor Newsom, who publicly supports Sites. Further, Sites does not meet the statutory criteria for an SB 149 project: (3) Sites is controversial and environmentally damaging, and has not prioritized water for ecological benefits, (4) Sites will have significant impacts to disadvantaged communities, and (5) Sites will set the state back on climate goals with excessive methane emissions.

Want to know more? Read the [letter](#) | Read the [press release](#)

In the News: Sites Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The LA Times recently published an exclusive story about how Sites Reservoir will emit significant amounts of greenhouse gases (GHG), especially methane. The groundbreaking research referenced by that report was done by a team of scientists at Tell the Dam Truth, in partnership with FOR and Patagonia.

Today, October 31, the Sacramento Bee published an OpEd written by Gary Wockner, Ph.D., one of the lead scientists who worked on the Sites GHG Report. In his OpEd he explains how man-made reservoirs contribute to the climate crisis, and implores the state to “make public policy that does not exacerbate the situation.”

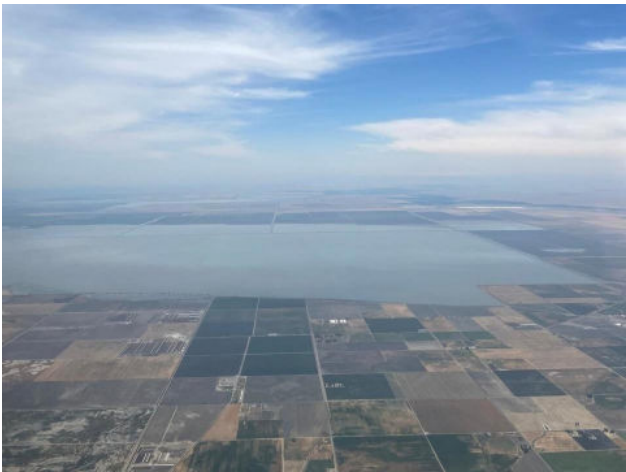
Want to know more? Read the [OpEd](#) | Read the [GHG Report](#) | Read the [LA Times Article](#)

FOR in the News

LA Times: How Powerful Land Barons Shaped the Epic Floods in California’s Heartland

Ron Stork, FOR’s Senior Policy Advocate, was recently quoted in an LA Times article about flood management (or, non-management) in the Tulare Lake Basin. The article describes chaos that ensued during the barrage of storms this winter, how some communities flooded while others were spared, and how the J.G. Boswell company, which holds 44% of the land in the Basin, largely controls where water flows through its vast private canal and levee infrastructure.

Read the article [here](#)



An aerial view of Tulare lake, which reappeared this year for the first time since 1997. Credit: Keiko Mertz

Reflections and Directions



Time to hire an Executive Director

Friends of the River is still recruiting for an Executive Director to lead the policy and advocacy work of restoring California rivers and fighting for a sustainable water future. As our threats and opportunities have expanded this year, our work and staffing need to expand also. FOR is looking for a passionate and experienced river advocate, a strategic water leader who can ensure FOR shows up effectively to influence the public processes so critical to shaping our river systems for the future.

Please share this opportunity widely within your professional contacts in the water world. [Please see the job description](#). Applicants please submit a cover letter and resume to amy@friendsoftheriver.org.

Please Donate

Please consider a generous gift to help ensure 2023 is a strong year for California rivers.



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt Out](#) using TrueRemove™
Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.
View this email [online](#).

3336 Bradshaw Rd. Suite 335 | Sacramento, CA 95827 US

This email was sent to .
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

emma®

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

