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Reflections and Directions



Hey, it's been a while, so I thought I'd give you a short update!

This year is shaping up to be a big one for California water policy. Two major proposed water projects – that, if built, would be the largest changes to our state's water system in decades – will likely meet their

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These projects (Sites Reservoir and the Delta Tunnel) were conceptualized during an era of extraction, where the focus of water management was to pour concrete and take as much water as possible from rivers.

This is no longer an acceptable paradigm for equity in water management. Instead, we are pushing our state leaders toward 21st century water solutions. We want healthy rivers.

We've been working day and night – literally! – to prevent these harmful projects. And, we know we're up for the challenge.

One way you can support our efforts is to join us at the California River Awards on April 26.

There, you will learn more about our current work while you enjoy an excellent dinner, libations, and a live auction. I promise you, it will be a fun time.

But hurry – we extended our early bird ticket pricing ***just for you***. Get your tickets by March 22 to take advantage of the discount. We are so excited to meet you.

Please join us.

[Buy Tickets](#)

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Currents: Victories and Threats

By Ron Stork

Dangerous ideas in the legislature

It's silly season in the California legislature. It's the time for spot bills (bills introduced with the intention of being amended later) to materialize — and some are pretty ugly.



Taxpayer subsidies for water interests are also known as "pork."

One of those is ACA 2. The Water Resiliency Act of 2024, introduced by Assemblyman Juan Alanis (R-

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This proposed constitutional ballot-box-budgeting amendment would annually set aside 1.5% of California's general fund budget for a variety of water projects, including "Expansion, repair, or replacement of existing surface reservoirs, and construction of new surface reservoirs" and "[w]ater conveyance development, maintenance, or expansion..." For those not counting, that could easily amount to \$3 billion in taxpayer subsidies per year (about the cost of one giant Temperance Flat Dam per year)...

[Read more](#)

Protecting the integrity of the California Wild & Scenic Rivers Act

U.S. Congressmen Valadao and McCarthy's latest effort to drown more of the McCloud River under Shasta Reservoir was enshrined in the House-passed Energy & Water Appropriations bill (H.R. 4394). It purports to federally pre-empt a portion of the California Wild & Scenic Rivers Act that prevents agencies of the state to "assist or cooperate with, whether by loan, grant, license, or otherwise, any agency of the federal, state, or local government in the planning or construction of any dam, reservoir, diversion, or other water impoundment facility that could have an adverse effect on the free-flowing condition of the McCloud River, or on its wild trout fishery."

[Read more](#)

[Read All March Currents Articles](#)

BONUS: Newsom's stealthy divide and conquer Delta tunnel campaign

Our colleague Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla at Restore the Delta wrote a scathing commentary on the State Administration's harmful and inequitable water policies.

"Gavin Newsom's stealthy divide and conquer tactics are pushing marginalized communities against each other in a war over water. Newsom, his administration and State Water Contractors are appropriating environmental justice language to sway public opinion in Southern California about the Delta Conveyance Project – also referred to as the Delta tunnel. They argue that the Delta tunnel is essential for Southern California's disadvantaged communities, yet misrepresent the harm the project continues to have on the tribal communities along California's major rivers and on communities in the Delta watershed."

[Read more](#)



Delta waterways. Credit: CA Dept. of Water Resources.

Opportunities

TOMORROW - Del Puerto Canyon Cleanup - March 16

Join local watershed group Save Del Puerto Canyon for a trash cleanup event to help take care of Del Puerto Canyon, meet new friends, and learn about efforts to protect the canyon from a proposed dam project. The event begins TOMORROW, March 16th, at 10am at 3300 Del Puerto Canyon Road, Patterson, CA 95363, and goes until noon or early afternoon. [More info here.](#)

Restoring the Stanislaus Watershed Symposium - April 6

We want to share the news from our friends at [Restoring the Stanislaus](#). FOR still holds the Stanislaus in a special place in our hearts. Restoring the Stanislaus Watershed Symposium will be held April 6, 2024 at the Sonora Elks Lodge, Sonora, California. [Register here.](#)

Headwaters - Accepting Submissions

Friends of the River's *Headwaters Magazine* is a beautiful repository of articles about rivers and river recreation, opinion pieces, policy analysis, river news, art, photographs, and more.

We welcome submissions of articles that speak to the six areas in which we work for the protection of California's rivers. These areas are hydropower reform, saving and storing water, restoring flows, flood management, legal and regulatory protections, and inspiring citizen action. We also welcome submissions of visual art, creative writing, poetry, and photos that are centered around rivers and nature more broadly.

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 janndorman@friendsoftheriver.org.

Please Donate

Please consider a generous gift to help FOR fighting the Triple Threat to Rivers. This will be a critical year to stop Sites Reservoir, the Delta Tunnel and the Voluntary Agreements.

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