



In this Issue

- California River Awards
- Welcoming Katie Schulte Joung
- Currents: Victories and Threats
 - Ron's updates on current happenings in California water
 - Action alert: White Sturgeon need your help!
 - Reuniting for the Stanislaus
- What We're Listening To
 - River Radius: The Emerald Mile Parts I & II
- Opportunities
 - Headwaters: Accepting Submissions
 - Search for an Executive Director Continues

California River Awards

Only five more days to buy tickets



ICYMI, Friends of the River has chosen to honor Chris "Maven" Austin at the upcoming California River Awards. Chris is a true luminary in the field of California water news and is the driving force behind [Maven's Notebook](#). Maven's Notebook serves as a go-to hub for clear, timely, and unbiased water news, earning praise from water leaders and readers alike. Chris's work bolsters informed dialogue among water stakeholders, and enriches public engagement on complex water issues. Chris and Maven's Notebook is essential to our efforts for California rivers. **Don't miss your chance to celebrate Chris Austin's remarkable contributions at the California River Awards. Get your tickets now!**

TICKET SALES CLOSE APRIL 19TH

Welcoming Katie Schulte Joung

By Jann Dorman

We are so excited to welcome Katie Schulte Joung as Policy Advocate for FOR. She has over 15 years of water policy and planning experience, including as Suisun Marsh Program Manager at the California Department of Water Resources and as Program Director at the California Urban Water Conservation Council. Katie's relationship with FOR began in 2020, when she graduated our River Advocacy Training school. She also joined our 2023 Guide Activist Training last summer. In addition to her policy experience, she is a fantastic group camper, paddle boater, and outdoor kitchen staffer. And, importantly, she is impervious to immersion in cold water. In the near future, her primary focus will be working with me to prepare testimony to challenge the proposed Sites Reservoir Project's water rights before the State Water Resources Control Board. Say "hi" to her the next time you are on the river!



Currents: Victories and Threats

By Ron Stork

An average water year

The end is in sight for California's water year. The result, pretty much average, although the south state got some memorable big rain storms.

Of course average is not exactly normal, the loosely applied term that is not as mathematically precise as average (arithmetic mean). Here in the golden state, "normal" is often rather dry and occasionally rather wet. Yes, there are a couple more months of potential rain before the Mediterranean-climate summer drought that hits most of the state begins in earnest.



Governor Newsom at a recent Department of Water Resources snow survey press event, which found that 2024 snowpack is solidly average. Credit: CA DWR.

But we don't expect much rainfall in April and May. And the water year ends on September 30. before

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rivers to enjoy. Of course at the same time the beneficiaries of the state's big taxpayer subsidized water systems will be complaining that the state's plumbing is not big enough to guarantee them all the water they desire.

There is nothing new under the sun.

[Read more](#). This month's *Currents* also features updates on the California Legislature, PG&E, the California Water Plan, and Sites Reservoir's water rights proceedings.

[Read All April Currents Articles](#)

Action Alert – Protect White Sturgeon Now!

Want to ensure White Sturgeon exist for future generations? [Ask the California Fish and Game Commission to act now!](#) The White Sturgeon, North America's largest freshwater fish species, was designated as "endangered" by the American Fisheries Society in 2008.



White Sturgeon. Credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

In California, the White Sturgeon's only reproducing population is in the San Francisco Bay-Delta watershed, but this population has been declining since the 1980s. Unsustainable water diversions, harmful reservoir operation, overharvest, and toxic algae blooms, and lack of river flow continues to jeopardize their survival. The California Fish and Game Commission has an opportunity to protect this iconic species by listing it as "threatened" under the California Endangered Species Act. [Ask them to act now!](#)

Reuniting for the Stanislaus



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By Jann Dorman

On Saturday, April 6 about 100 people came together to learn about the current situation in the Stanislaus watershed and the operations of its dams, including New Melones. Participants explored what it will take to redesign the watershed and the operations of New Melones Dam to restore the river and its tributaries to health. In the evening session, participants heard from Klamath River tribal and environmental representatives how they achieved the world's largest river renewal project, how they are bringing back the salmon, as well as their complex strategies for ensuring a successful restoration of their river.

Kevin Wolf, former Director of Organizing for Friends of the River and now President of Restoring the Stanislaus River, which put on the symposium, said "By restoring the ability of the Stanislaus watershed to store and release water in the face of climate change, all stakeholders can benefit, including the animals, plants, fish, tribes and water and power beneficiaries. New Melones Dam is overbuilt. By restoring the ability of meadows and forests to retain and slowly release water, plus the opportunity to increase the conjunctive use of dam operations and groundwater storage, we can mitigate the negative impacts of extreme drought and flood events."

Friends of the River is excited to collaborate on this exciting opportunity to help restore river and help the Stanislaus watershed better adapt to climate change.

What We're Listening To

The River Radius Podcast: The Emerald Mile Parts I & II

Our friend Samara Rosen, an FOR River Advocacy Training School graduate (2016), is a Contributing Host of the River Radius podcast. She produced two recent episodes on The Emerald Mile, Kevin Fadarko's book about the fastest ride through the Grand Canyon in a dory named the Emerald Mile. Fadarko's book dives into the backstory of the dam, the characters, and even the record-breaking journey, and yet leaves one question remaining: what is the backstory of the dory's namesake? These episodes explore the impact of words and imagery on natural places, with a focus on the Emerald Mile in California's Redwood National and State Parks. Was the Emerald Mile lost at the hand of mankind? What does conservation mean for landscapes encroached upon?

Listen to the episodes to find out: [Episode 1](#) | [Episode 2](#)



Opportunities

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.

Not sure what to submit? Let's work together. More info [here](#). Please email keiko@friendsoftheriver.org to discuss a submission.

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 fight the Triple Threat to Rivers. This will be a critical year

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