



Happy Trails Ahead

The future looks bright for trails systems in our region

Text by Janet Baker, Sacramento County Regional Parks Director

Map (see page 3) by Guy Kolling, Sacramento County Regional Parks

Although the economic times are looking bleak in our region, Sacramento County Regional Park professionals are pursuing plans for multi-use trail systems that will meet the growing demand for outdoor trails and their connection to nature. The “jewel” of our region, the American River Parkway, demonstrates every day that people in this region love to walk, jog, bicycle, and generally get outdoors to enjoy nature in our own backyard. Our continuing challenge is to expand our trail system to keep pace with the population growth and people’s growing enthusiasm to exercise and enjoy nature.

One area with a great future is the Dry Creek Parkway. The Dry Creek Master Plan was developed by County Regional Parks in 2003 and lays out an open space and riparian corridor beginning at the Sacramento/Placer County line and extending southwesterly along the two forks of Dry Creek to the Sacramento City limits at Ascot Lane. Sacramento County staff is working to construct Phase I of the trail (a 2.9 mile stretch from Dry Creek Ranch just north of Curved Bridge Road to the Cherry Island Soccer Complex).

Working in concert with the Cities of Sacramento and Roseville, Placer County and the Rio Linda/Elverta Recreation and Park District, the Dry Creek Parkway and the Placer County Dry Creek Greenway (in Placer County and the City of Roseville) will eventually connect the Sacramento Northern and Ueda Parkway trails in the City of Sacramento through Sacramento County and Gibson Ranch to Placer County and Folsom Lake and eventually connecting to the American River Parkway, creating a 70-mile loop trail.

Staff looks for opportunities to

buy property from willing sellers along the creek and has partnered with the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency and the County Department of Water Resources to complete several key acquisitions with additional funding from State grants. Funding the construction of the trail also comes from federal transportation dollars. If you’re interested in finding out more about this trail system, check out the County’s Regional Park website: www.msa2.saccounty.net/parks. Click under Parks, then A-Z Regional Parks to The

see Happy Trails, page 3

Jo Smith, Environmental Champion

Naturalist, organizer, advocate, artist, editor, friend . . .



Such were a few of the ingredients of the legacy of ARNHA’s Jo Smith. She found nature as a girl exploring a creek behind her family’s home in Los Altos, led children on nature walks in the footsteps of her friend and mentor Effie Yeaw, and inspired countless teens and adults to follow her passion in pursuit of a higher stewardship of the land.

Jo, 83, died December 29 from complications of post-polio syndrome related to polio she had in her 20s. On January 17, family and friends – about 200 in all – gathered at the Effie

see Jo Smith, page 6

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The ACORN is published quarterly on partly-recycled paper by ARNHA, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Letters to the editor should be sent to the address above.

President's Message

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

—Margaret Mead

A Special Note:

Jo Smith, a co-founder of the American River Natural History Association passed away on Dec. 29, 2008. Jo Smith was an artist, writer, educator and a formidable environmental advocate. Some of Jo Smith's accomplishments include: Co-founder of the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council, board member of the Arcade Creek Recreation and Park District, as well as board member for the Sacramento Parks and Recreation Commission. EYNC Director Marilee Flannery wrote of her long time friend Jo Smith, "Her passion for the environment inspired others to get involved. She vigorously advocated formation of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center; and when the Center opened in 1976, Jo volunteered to develop and deliver programs to the public. Jo has left a legacy of good work, stewardship, and important publications that will encourage children and adults to take up the beneficial stewardship of our natural areas."

Upcoming Events:

- Bird and Breakfast: March 14th, there is still room available.
- Creek Week: April 17th-April 25, sponsored by the Sacramento Area Creeks Council and supported by ARNHA.
- See calendar on page 8 for more events.

Starting The New Year Right:

Even with the current economic situation we have reason for hope with a new president and a new beginning. "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."—President Barack Obama

Getting Things Done:

"This constant, unproductive preoccupation with all the things we have to do is the single largest consumer of time and energy."—Kerry Gleeson

We need to remember the importance of clearing the clutter from our thoughts and letting go of the stress and preoccupations that actually hinder production. Life is a balance, and it is important to replenish one's spirit and mind by enjoying natural surroundings. Go for a walk or hike by the river, or attend nature-oriented events like the Bird and Breakfast, and bring a friend to share in the healing powers of nature. We must also remember to band together and strengthen our commitment to supporting the Effie Yeaw Nature Center through ARNHA and our commitment to bringing people to nature and nature to people—because this is the time we've been waiting for and we ARE the change that we seek. It is also so very important to remember the great contributions from wonderful, inspiring people like Jo Smith.

Larry Washington, President, ARNHA



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Dry Creek Parkway and for the Placer County portion of the trail, www.dry-creekconservancy.org.

Other planned trails systems include efforts on the Laguna Creek corridor in cooperation with the City of Elk Grove, the Cosumnes Community Services District, and Southgate Recreation and Park District that will connect South County trails to the Sacramento River.

The Folsom South Canal in the eastern side of the County presents an opportunity to connect Folsom Lake State Recreation Area with Rancho Seco to the South. This trail will also be a part of Mather Regional Park recreation planning.

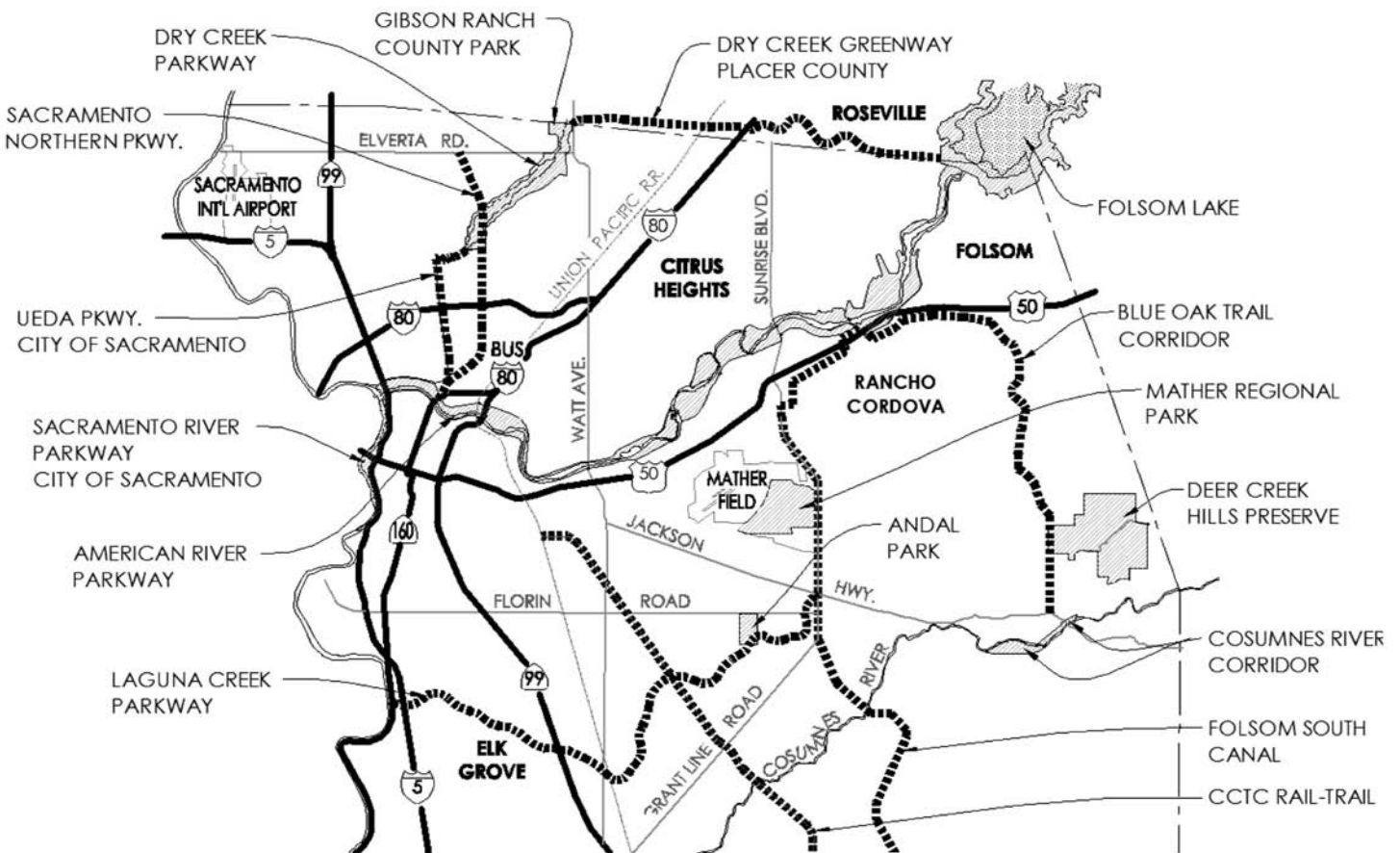
The national Rails to Trails program has a corridor that begins at the former

Sacramento Army Depot—now Depot Park—and ends in the city of Lodi. It's called the Central California Traction Co., and Rail-Trail readers can learn more about this long-term planning effort at www.cvtrf.org.

The County's Deer Creek Hills nature preserve (4,062 acres along the eastern boundary of Sacramento County south of Highway 50) also offers future opportunities for trails and recreation/nature interpretative programs that could connect to the city of Folsom and the American River Parkway. Docents from the Sacramento Valley Conservancy schedule guided hikes the fourth Saturday of the month from January through May. Visit www.sacramentovalleyconservancy.org to view their current schedule.

The Sacramento County Regional Parks staff is committed to planning, in coordination with many other agencies, for trail connectivity with all major new development projects throughout the County. Timetables for trail development depend on funding and other issues. But such projects as Cordova Hills and Easton present new opportunities to add open space and recreational trail amenities to enhance the quality of life for all residents. Just like the American River Parkway, these trails will involve a lengthy effort to plan, design, and complete; but the community will be rewarded by miles of connected trails for recreation, commuting, and enjoying nature. ■

Dotted lines are planned multi-use trails





EYNC Set for Spring Fun Days

By Linda Maurer, EYNC Staff

“May I borrow your book on frogs?” “Of course! Do you have any plastics bugs left from your Winter Fun Days Class?” Questions like these are flying around the Nature Center as the staff excitedly scurries around preparing for Spring Fun Days classes. Ideas abound, and staff is hard-pressed to find any free space for storing class materials.

This year our classes will be held the week of April 6-10. Programs for Nature Rovers (children enrolled in kindergarten) and Nature Detectives (children enrolled in grades 1-2) focus on insects, amphibians, plants, geology, birds, mammals and the ever popular, recycling. For children enrolled in grades 3-5 (Junior Rangers), we are offering 2 classes: Outdoor Journaling and Aquatic Investigations.

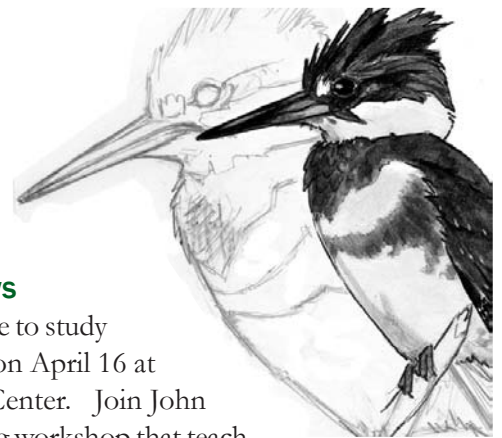
If you are an ARNHA member, Spring Fun Days brochures describing the classes and the dates they will be offered should have already arrived in the mail. As members, you enjoyed a two-week sign-up period before these popular classes were opened to the general public. As in years past, we expect waiting lists to be almost as long as enrollment lists for some classes. So if you’re still thinking about signing up your children in our programs, don’t wait too long.

Questions or concerns? Call 916, 489-4918.

Celebrate Spring with our Annual Bird and Breakfast

Is that a dirty sock hanging in that tree? No, it’s a bushtit nest! And that tiny cup the size of a quarter, built with lichen and spider webs? A hummingbird nest! Explore the miracles of spring in the beautiful oak woodland and meadows of the Effie Yeaw Nature Area, in small groups guided by Audubon experts. Return to a delicious breakfast prepared by your hosts, the American River Natural History Association. This event is a fund-raiser for educational programs on the American River Parkway.

It’s all happening on Saturday, March 14th, 2009, from 7:30 – 10:30 a.m. Come to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, inside Ancil Hoffman Park, California Avenue and Tarshes Drive, Carmichael. Reservations are required, \$30 per person, ages 12 and older please. Call 489-4918 for information and to reserve your place at this popular event by March 8. Don’t forget your binoculars!



Drawing Birds With John “Jack” Muir Laws

Don’t miss this chance to study drawing with an expert on April 16 at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Join John “Jack” Laws for a drawing workshop that teaches you how to capture the shape and proportion of land birds in a quick sketch and then fill in details with an improved understanding of bird anatomy. Your instruction will include proportion basics, drawing wings and feather tricks.

Jack Laws has worked as an environmental educator for over 25 years in California, Wyoming, and Alaska. He teaches classes in natural history, conservation biology, scientific illustration, and field sketching. He is trained as a wildlife biologist and is an associate of the California Academy of Sciences. His illustrations capture the feeling of the living plant or animal, while also including details critical for identification. In the summer of 2004, Laws published *Sierra Birds: a Hiker’s Guide* (available at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center). He is also a regular contributor to *Bay Nature* magazine with his *Naturalists Notebook* column.

The workshop fee is \$125 for ARNHA and Audubon members, \$135 for non-members. Pre-registration is required, and a materials list will be provided. The class will be held at the Nature Center April 16 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. The Nature Center is inside Ancil Hoffman County Park, Tarshes Drive and California Avenue, Carmichael. For registration information call (916) 489-4918. This class will fill quickly so make your reservation early.

Forum Features Swimming Mammals

If you've ever spied a mammal in the American River that you're not quite sure about, answers should be forthcoming at another in a series of ARNHA free public forums on Thursday, March 26, 7 p.m., at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

"American River Mammals: What's the Difference?" is the title of CSUS Prof. William (Bill) Avery's illustrated presentation on the River Otters, Beavers and Muskrats often seen in the Lower American or on the parkway. Besides describing the physical differences of the swimming mammals, he will discuss their habitat, diet and predators.

Prof. Avery, whose natural history articles and drawings have appeared often in the Acorn, has taught animal ecology at CSUS for 11 and a half years. He explored nearby forests and brooks while growing up in Connecticut and received his bachelor's and master's degrees at Humboldt State University and his doctorate at Utah State University.

EYNC Calls for Summer Volunteers

Do you, or someone you know, want to help children learn about nature and have fun this summer? The Effie Yeaw Nature Center is looking for volunteers -- especially teenagers 14 years old and older—for this year's Summer Fun Days, the center's day camps for children. The camps begin the week of June 8th and continue throughout the summer.

Volunteers may sign up for a minimum of one week or for as many as six weeks and assist naturalists in teaching children about nature through art, crafts, games, science activities, and nature walks. The hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Applicants may call the Jamie at Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 489-4918, ext. 224 for more information.

Yard Sale Fundraiser planned

Start saving your donations of furniture, household goods, children's toys and clothing, sporting equipment, tools, etc. for a fundraiser benefiting the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and the Gibson Ranch Living History Program this spring.

Bring donations to the large parking lot by the entry kiosk at Ancil Hoffman Park Friday, April 24, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The sale is set for the next day, April 25, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Historical displays and hands-on activities will be available for all ages during the sale. It's a chance to shop together, play and learn together.

Proceeds will help fund upkeep and improvement to the children's vegetable garden at Gibson Ranch, provide more historically accurate furniture and clothing for the 1890s-era program, replace items in the bunkhouse, kitchen, parlor, and sewing room, and generally support this one-of-a-kind program teaching school children about the agricultural history of Sacramento County.

Weeding Wednesdays Moves to Thursdays

Weeding Wednesdays, the The Habitat Restoration Project at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, is now on Thursdays, so obviously a new names is in order.

Come up with a suggestion for a new name for the project or for the tireless volunteers who come weekly to remove blackberry, hemlock, pokeweed and other non-native invasive plants, and who then replace them with natural grasses, sedges, flowers, vines, shrubs, and trees. If you would like to join the effort, even better. Most volunteers show up at 9 a.m. and some at 10, and they can stay as long as they like until 2 p.m. To make name suggestions or for more information on volunteering in habitat restoration, call or email Jamie at washingtonj@saccounty.net or 489-4918 ext. 224.

Effie Yeaw Nature Center Reaches Out

Effie Yeaw Nature Center not only is a beautiful place to visit, walk, and enjoy nature; it provides field trip opportunities for school children as well as programs that go to schools and libraries, and more. Many people do not realize that their programs are not just for kids. The Nature Center can provide programs both at the center and at other locations to any age or any group. Topics include owls, hawks, snakes, environmental stewardship, ethno-botany, and more. They provide nature education programs to assisted-living facilities, community service groups, and college classes. Programs can even be a gift to retirement centers, to after-school programs, and scout groups. These programs can also provide an educational and entertainment component to business retreats.

Unlike weekend programs at EYNC which are free, the outreach program costs about \$140, depending on its length and number of participants. Call the scheduling desk at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center for information on the wide variety of programs, fees, and availability 489-4918, ext. 229.

Jo Smith, from page 1

Yeaw Nature Center for a Celebration of Life of Jo Frances Glasson Smith. Minutes before, a rarely-seen Bald Eagle flew over the nature center in what might have been a salute to Jo, an avid birder in earlier years.

A native of San Jose, she graduated from Castilleja School (where she was student body president) and Stanford University in Palo Alto where she majored in art. She married Stanford classmate T. George Smith, an Army Air Corps navigator in World War II, and began her long career of environmental and civic activism.

In the mid-1960s, she joined Effie Yeaw, revered Carmichael kindergarten teacher, in leading youngsters on walks to discover the wonders of nature in what was then called Deterding Woods next to the American River and now the Effie Yeaw Nature Area.

As a Girls Scout leader, she led her troop into the area, and in a 1992 interview in a Tierra del Oro Girl Scout Council publication emphasized the importance of getting children outdoors so they can observe their environment.

"It's good to see young children learn an appreciation for the environment and wildlife," she said, "because if we don't start teaching them when they're young, we may not have adults who will care for our open spaces in the future."

Jo led tours of the Ancil Hoffman Park nature area as a County Parks employee for four years. After Effie Yeaw died in 1970 and the nature center named in her honor opened in 1976, Jo volunteered to develop and bring programs to the public.

Four years later, county budget problems threatened closure of the nature center, and Jo worked with the late

Fred Gunsky, Carol Doersch and others to start the non-profit American River Natural History Association to support the center. One of ARNHA's principal roles was publishing a series of natural history guides, including the *Outdoor World of the Sacramento Region*, a field guide originally published by Effie Yeaw and containing many of Jo's beautiful drawings of plants and animals.

She also inspired publication in 2001 of the *American River Almanac: Reflections on nature throughout the year*, a collection of essays by Peter Hayes written over several years for *The Sacramento Union*, with color photographs by Tom Myers and George Turner. Becky LaVally, then-ARNHA publications chair, served as editor of the volume, and recalled:

"Jo was the motivator, energy, and glue behind the *American River Almanac*, although with characteristic modesty she insisted that she was an onlooker in the cause to create a book of essays and photographs celebrating the American River. Although clearly dogged by physical pain, she practiced only optimism; and her sense of enthusiasm, commitment, and even adventure were inspiring. Jo was an optimist who believed in others, and her belief made things happen."

Her drawings were featured in *Nature's Window*, essays by her friend and American River College teacher Bruce Swinehart.

Jo was instrumental in the founding of the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council dedicated to enlisting citizens to take a proactive role in safeguarding the health of county streams. "I've cleaned a lot of creeks," said her husband George.

Jo's environmentalism extended to

participation in local governing bodies. The Board of Supervisors appointed her to the Recreation and Park Commission, and she served in an advisory capacity to the Supervisors and County parks director. Ron Suter, retired parks director, recalled, "Jo always expressed her feeling and love of the parkway with a smile, never in your face, but in a gentle, passionate way that made you listen and understand her view point. An extremely effective persuader."

Jo's and George's home backs up on Arcade Creek near American River College, so it was no surprise that she would be elected to the Arcade Creek Park District Board. In a tribute to her, the Board later designated the trail along the creek the Jo Smith Nature Trail. At the celebration, Nature Center Director Marilee Flannery read a tribute to Jo from Ed Harper, a friend and close neighbor, describing how, while hurrying along the trail to his teaching job at the college, he would often pause to chat with her about happenings along the creek.

"I'm richer in spirit for having known Jo, and each time I set foot on the Jo Smith Nature Trail it has even more meaning to me now," he said.

Besides her husband, Jo is survived by four children, Cindy J. Smith, and Susie Durant of Sacramento; Shelly Smith of Chico; and William F. Smith of Davis; and four grandchildren, Sagan and Will Smith of Chico and Kira and Jessie Durant of Santa Cruz.

County Parks purchased an 18-foot Valley Oak tree to be planted in the EYNC nature preserve in memory of Jo.

Jo's family said she would want to be remembered most for her contributions to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and the American River Natural History Association. Donations should be sent to ARNHA, P.O. Box 241, Carmichael, CA 95609, or online at www.ARNHA.org. ■



Creek Week Activities Set

Nature tours capped by a clean-up of Sacramento County creeks will be held April 17-25 in 18th annual Creek Week activities sponsored by the Sacramento Area Creeks Council. Adults and children will learn about the importance of the plants and animals that inhabit our creeks and creek corridors and their important roles in the ecosystem.

Creek Week will culminate on Saturday, April 25, with volunteers joining to clear trash from more than 50 different creek sites. Volunteers at some

sites, including the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, will participate in clean-up activities that help maintain or improve the riparian habitat along many stream and creek corridors, provide opportunities to connect people to their natural environment, and reduce flood risk. The clean-up event will be followed by a celebration—complete with food, music, interactive exhibits, and contests—at American River College.

For further information, check www.creekweek.net or call 454-4544. ■

New Species Found in Count

High point of ARNHA's Great American River Wildlife Count December 6 was discovery of Cattle Egrets for the first time in the 24-year history of the event. A flock of 75-100 of the handsome white birds noted for gleaning insects off cattle while standing on their backs was found in Glenbrook Park on La Riviera Drive between Watt and Howe avenues on the south side of the river. Cattle Egrets, originally from Europe, Africa, and South America, were first recorded in North America in 1941 and expanded their range to the West.

A record 113 bird species were listed in the count by Sacramento Audubon Society volunteers. Cinnamon Teal and Western Sandpiper were seen for only the second time; Peregrine Falcon and Red-breasted Nuthatch for the third.

Mammals also were recorded, including eight River Otters and three Coyotes. Coordinator Jack Hiehle said, "Some darn good birders from Sacramento Audubon" were among the record total of 64 observers who helped set the new bird species mark despite foggy conditions. "A lot of them could be blindfolded, and if the birds make a sound the birders know what the birds are," he said. ■

New Members

- Diane Abbey
- Astor & Ezra Bauers
- Takako Berard
- The Brown Family
- Cynthia Dakopolos
- The Dixon Family
- Brian Fletcher
- Steve Hodges
- Julie P. Lane
- Jinx Liberato
- Phyllis McGrath
- Michael McKittrick
- Gina Moller
- Ruth Rezos & Ken Nahigian
- Don Sibbett
- Maria Sullivan
- Gale Sunderland
- The Thompson Family
- Jim Waddell
- Bryan, Janet, & Ashley Wagner
- Melissa & Scott White
- Chanowk Yisrael

Thank you Donors!

In Memory of Jo Smith

- Ed & Susan Harper
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- Deborah Hauptert

In Memory of Dick Backus

- Carol Doersch

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In Memory of Lester Gabriel

- Bruce and Peggy Kennedy

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- Joyce Mihanovich
- M. Chorich
- Paula Baldi
- Deborah Brooks
- Boyce D. Cunningham
- Carl Stillman
- Larry Washington
- Carol Doersch



ARNHA Calendar of Events

- **Bird and Breakfast**
March 14, 7:30 a.m.- 10:30 a.m. at EYNC (see page 4)
- **FREE public Forum: Our Swimming Mammals**
March 26, 7 p.m. at EYNC (see page 5)
- **Spring Fun Days**
April 6 - 10 at EYNC (see page 4)
- **Drawing Birds with John "Jack" Muir Laws**
April 16, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at EYNC (see page 4)
- **Creek Week**
April 17-25 (see page 7)
- **Yard Sale Fundraiser**
April 24, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. (Bring Donations)
April 25, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Sale)
Ancil Hoffman Park (see page 5)
- **Habitat Restoration**
Thursdays, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at EYNC (see page 5)

CAR BURGLARIES UP AT EYNC. If you've visited the Effie Yeaw Nature Center recently, you may have noticed a bright yellow cone sitting in the middle of the sidewalk that leads to the center and bearing a sign that reads:

WARNING RECENT CAR BURGLARIES
Do not leave your valuables in your car

REPORT Any suspicious Activities
to Effie Yeaw Nature Center staff at 489-4918
or Park Rangers 875-6672

Do not leave Portable GPS units in your car
Several have been stolen

Nature Center Director Marilee Flannery says wood-cut signs posted permanently in the parking lot say:

Lock your car • Keep valuables with you

"We can not recommend that people lock their valuables in their trunk," Marilee said. "We've had people lock their purses in their car trunk while someone (a burglar) is sitting in their car watching them. As soon as the people leave and no one is looking, the burglar breaks the car window, pops the trunk from a button inside the car, and steals the valuables. This all just takes seconds."

"Pass this along to anyone you know who uses the EYNC or any park or mall or parks their car on the street. Car burglaries are on the rise. When a wallet or purse is stolen from a parked car, the credit card is often used within minutes."

"We frequently check our parking lot and write down license numbers and provide them to the rangers when appropriate."

"When staff talked to a lady who had her car broken into, she was asked if a certain suspicious person was sitting in their car watching her. She said, "yes," that she noticed him but did not report him to the staff. Had she done that, we might have caught him breaking into her car." ■

Foundation OKs grants for ARNHA. Thanks to grants from the American River Parkway Foundation, ARNHA will finance two projects benefiting the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and the Parkway. One will fund installation of outdoor video cameras at the Nature Center, permitting staff to monitor activities in the parking lot from the front desk and review and save footage for information on any unusual behavior. The second grant is seed money to print new mini-guides to birds of the Parkway. This, the first in a series of mini-guides, is for sale in the Nature Center Discovery Shop. Others in the series will be funded from the sale of previous mini-guides. We are grateful to the Foundation for helping deter crime on the Nature Center grounds, and for helping ARNHA advance nature education on the Parkway.