

South Fork Newsletter

County of El Dorado, Chief Administrative Office, Parks Division

River Management Program

Summer 2014

Annual River Report

The 2013 Annual Report is posted on the County River Management web page at:

http://www.edcgov.us/Government/EMD/Rivers/Annual_River_Use_Report.aspx

Flows and Release Schedule

There are reliable boatable flows on the South Fork American River below Chili Bar with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commissions (FERC) relicensing of SMUD's Upper American River Project and PG&E's Chili Bar Dam. The new FERC licenses designate a Water Year based on snow surveys completed by the CA Department of Water Resources which then dictates a release schedule from Chili Bar Dam. 2014 is designated as a Super Dry Water Year. The current flow and release schedule can be found at the bottom of this page at dreamflows.com and on the [County's River Management web page](#). In addition to a designated flow schedule on the S. Fork American River below Chili Bar Dam there will also be scheduled flows on the S. Fork American River below Slab Creek Reservoir and on South Fork Silver Creek below Ice House Reservoir in future years.

El Dorado County Parks

Prepared by Vickie Sanders

The 2014 season for the Parks Division is full of new projects and improved services. The division is wrapping up the Henningsen Lotus Park Conceptual Plan, the South Lake Tahoe Parks Master Plan, the Sacramento Placerville Transportation Corridor Needs Assessment and the Adopt a Trail Program for the Rubicon and El Dorado Trail. Plan updates are posted on the County Parks web site www.edcgov.us/Parks/.

The drought conditions have an effect on the parks. The County Grounds Division does an outstanding job, maintaining our parks and county grounds. They are doing our part by not over watering. We will be following the EID water reduction schedule by water only two days a

week until June 15th at which time we will begin water three times a week. Here is a quote from Grounds Supervisor, Thomas DeLange, "This is a drought year and we want to show we are doing our part by not over watering. Most of the County lawns look like this due to twice a week watering, which is down from 5 days a week. We will get the all landscaping "greened" back up after the drought conditions have passed. It has been hard for the grounds crew to do this as we have babied and pampered the County lawns since planting and take pride in how our landscaping looks." We thank our park users for your understanding and we thank the Grounds Maintenance employees for their dedication.

The River Management Advisory Committee

The River Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) provides a forum for the discussion of river use issues and makes recommendations to both the County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors on matters related to whitewater recreation and campground development along the South Fork American River. RMAC members represent a broad base of interests concerning the river. There are seven members:

- a permitted commercial outfitter
- a non-commercial boater
- a local business representative
- a local resident
- two members-at-large
- a California State Parks representative

Currently, all RMAC positions are filled. RMAC meets monthly, January through November, with meetings usually held at the Lotus Fire Station. The public is invited to attend and participate at these monthly meetings.

If you would like to receive the minutes and agendas via email, please sign up on the County web site: https://service.govdelivery.com/service/subscribe.html?code=CAELDOR_1.

South Fork American Below Chili Bar Dam Minimum Recreational Flow By Water Year (cfs)

- Water Year Type Super Dry -

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
April - Memorial Day	3 Hrs @ 1300					3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300
Memorial Day – Labor Day	3 Hrs @ 1300			3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	5 Hrs @ 1300	5 Hrs @ 1300
Labor Day - September						3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300
October - March						3 Hrs @ 1300	

Agendas and Minutes can be viewed on the web at <https://eldorado.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

The RMAC meeting dates for the remainder 2014 are: June 17, July 15, August 19, September 16, October 21 and November 18.

Preparing for the Best Trip Possible on the South Fork of the American River

-Prepared by Alex Herr, EDC River Patrol

The South Fork of the American River is one of the busiest recreational river corridors in the country. Each summer, thousands of people travel to the South Fork to enjoy the classic rapids, inspirational scenery and to cool off in a relaxing atmosphere. The river hosts a variety of users; ranging from highly-experienced boaters to first-timers. Both groups can benefit from preparing properly for their river trip. The following three tips are here to help ensure that you and your fellow recreationists are ready to have the best trip possible on the river. If you are unsure or uneasy about following all of these steps, a trip with a commercial outfitter is the best way to ensure having an excellent experience on the South Fork of the American River.

Know where you are and where you are going.

As simple as it may sound, learning the layout of the river is crucial to having a safe trip. If you are unsure about take-out locations, or significant rapids, take a map from one of the numerous Boater Information Kiosks at the major put-ins. Be prepared to scout the significant rapids (“Meat Grinder” “Troublemaker”) if you are unsure of the routes or consequences. The River Information Kiosks also have Boater Tags, which are required for each craft, and contain essential information. Every user is responsible for knowing where private land is along the river, and for respecting the private property rights. Lunches or breaks along the river must take place on public land. Even if you are tubing or boating in the Class II section from Coloma to Greenwood, you should know where you are taking out!

Plan for the worst; hope for the best.

While we all set out to have a fantastic time on the river, it is important to remember that accidents happen and people get hurt. If you are embarking on a private trip with a group of friends, check in with your group about experience with first aid and individual medical concerns. Have a plan in case of injury. While boating in remote sections of the South Fork, you could be hours away from assistance and cell phone service can be limited. Consequently, carrying the proper equipment is critical to running a good trip. In addition to a basic first aid kit, essential tools such as a knife, throw bag, and whistle should be on every single river trip. Wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD), designed for whitewater use, insures significantly safer swims. Individuals tubing or floating must wear a PFD at all times while on the river. If

you are guiding a group of friends down the river, you are responsible for knowing what to do in an emergency. If you have not taken a River Rescue course, or attended a professional guide school, now is the time!

Promote a good experience for all .

The best river runners are ready to follow the rules and practices that enhance everyone’s river experience. Observing the “Quiet Zone,” respecting the up-stream boaters’ right of way, and keeping gear organized and clear of walkways at put-ins and take-outs all help improve river use. Additionally, a good boater is always thinking about preserving the habitat and environment of the river. Water bottles, beer cans, and flip flops are the most commonly lost items. Flip flops are not suitable footwear on the river, as they tend to fall off and become trash. If you and your family are tubing this summer, take the time to get a reusable mesh bag to contain your trash on the water. Finally, it never hurts to have a positive impact when you are out on the water – so pick up the trash you see out there!



Coloma River Shuttle

The South Fork American River and local community shuttle service will be back in service in 2014. It is funded by a grant from El Dorado County Air Quality Management District.

The Coloma River Shuttle is a program to transport river users, visitors and local residents between Salmon Falls, Chili Bar/Placerville and the Coloma Valley to reduce traffic, emissions and parking issues within that same geographic area. The shuttle will operate throughout the summer season into October or beyond.

A \$10.00 membership allows one shuttle pickup per member for that day. Reservations guarantee a seat. A full river pickup is \$15.00 and must be booked in advance. The Chili Bar put-in fee is included.

Information on reservations, schedules, routes, fees and passes is available at colomashuttle.com or by calling Liz at 530-303-2404.

The Coloma Shuttle would like to thank all of the folks and organizations who have contributed to the making of this shuttle service a reality including but not limited to: El Dorado County Air Quality Management District, American River Recreation Association, Coloma-Lotus Chamber of Commerce, El Dorado County Chief Administrative Office and community friends and supporters.

Safety and Crime Reporting

When recreating on the river or hiking for the day, please remember to deter break-ins, do not leave valuables in your vehicle. If you see suspicious activity, observe a crime or are a victim of a crime please call the El Dorado County Sheriff's Dept at 530-621-6600 and the appropriate land management agency. Their contact information is listed at the end of this newsletter.

Bridges to Be Retrofitted or Replaced

The El Dorado County Transportation Division (DOT) and CalTrans are currently in the planning phases of determining whether to retrofit or replace the Mount Murphy Bridge, Mosquito Rd. Bridge and the Hwy 49 Bridge across the South Fork of the American River. These bridges have been identified as needing major maintenance to them in addition to a general goal to increase vehicle and pedestrian safety. For further information on these projects and for public input opportunities, please visit the County DOT planning website at: www.edcgov.us/BridgeProjects and Caltrans planning website <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/Projects/> for further information on these projects and public input opportunities.

Invasive Species of the South Fork

What are they and why should I care?

-Prepared by Kevin Weddle, EDC River Patrol

Although plants and animals provide us with a bounty of pleasures and value they are not always found in places Mother Nature intended them. Invasive species is a term used to categorize a broad spectrum of animals, microbes, diseases or plants that are considered pests when they negatively effect the environment around them. Adaptive and persistent, invasive species work hard for their real-estate, often times to the exclusion of the native species. Their ability to invade a particular environment, and then establish strong populations within it, causes many complex issues both environmentally and economically.

Unfortunately, the Coloma-Lotus Valley, along with the many miles of river and shore has thriving populations of

invasive species. On average the state of California alone acquires around six invasive species per year. That is a new species every 60 days. Tree of Heaven and Didymo are two local invasive species I feel are of great concern in the area.

As you may have guessed, invasive species come from all parts of the globe. For thousands of years, people have purposely transported agriculture products to and from their native lands to others. The tree of Heaven, which is native to northeastern China, was brought to California



during the Gold Rush by Chinese immigrants. It was likely admired for its tropical looks, rapid growth and shade. It can be recognized by its smooth grey bark, large compound leaves that can have 10-40 leaflets along with a strong "nutty" aroma. Tree of Heaven is especially

fond of disturbed riparian zones, pushing out native plants and producing chemicals that prevent other plants from establishing nearby. Once this tree takes hold, it is extremely difficult to remove because it is so good at re-sprouting. The best method of removing mature specimens is by repeated use of an herbicide, which can introduce other problems. Because eradication is so difficult, taking preventative measures to control the growth of this tree is preferred. Landowners can choose not to plant the Tree of Heaven as an ornamental and keep on top of the existing growth through regular maintenance and removals. For a great native alternative plant a Big Leaf Maple tree (*Acer macrophyllum*).

Another major problematic invasive species is Didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*), aka "rock snot." Unfortunately, Didymo has found agreeable conditions in the South Fork



American River and is a problem that does not appear to be going anywhere. In fact there are no known methods for control or eradication. A highly invasive species of fresh water diatom, Didymo presents itself as thick mats of brown spongy snot along the river bottom. It was most transported on

boats and fishing gear from one body of water to another. Native to cool temperate climates in North America, its

distribution was historically small and patchy. In 2004 Didymo was found infesting rivers on the south island of New Zealand, marking its first confirmed sighting in the southern hemisphere. Didymo can cover entire streams and lake beds, sometimes reaching up to 8 inches thick and resulting in degraded aquatic habitat for native species such as stoneflies and caddis flies which affects the whole food chain negatively. Didymo creates a barrier for fish trying to eat aquatic insects. Plants are greatly reduced due to the lack of photosynthesis because sunlight is unable to penetrate to the river bed, resulting in a reduced food supply for aquatic insects.

Recreational experience is declined when infestations (snot) attaches itself to fishing and boating gear. The microscopic algae can cling-unseen-to waders, boots, clothing, flies/lures, boats, paddles and fishing line. As a river user, you can do your part to help slow the spread of Didymo by thoroughly cleaning all equipment after each use and letting it completely dry out. Fisherman can use rubber soled boots instead of the felt soled options that tend to absorb Didymo cells keeping them alive for prolonged periods of time. Try freezing your gear overnight or clean it with a good all purpose disinfectant before leaving it out to dry.

These are just a two invasive species that have affected the South Fork of the American River. Others such as Star Thistle, Scotch Broom, Canada Geese and the American Bull Frog are also of particular concern. According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife invasive species website (<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/invasives/>), prevention is the most effective strategy in managing invasive species. Planting native vegetation instead of non-native varieties, along with being diligent with removals and pruning can make a huge difference in managing invasives. Routine cleanings of gear by boaters, fisherman and miners after each use can help aquatic invasive from spreading. So get out there and do what you can, be safe and enjoy.

South Fork American River Clean Ups

The County River Program led three river clean-up events on the S. Fork in 2013: one clean-up on the upper, one on the lower, and one low-water river clean-up on the State Park to Greenwood Creek section. River clean-ups are coordinated by the County River Program and the American River Conservancy. If you are interested in participating in a river clean-up in 2014, please contact the County of El Dorado River Program at 530-621-6052 or the American River Conservancy at 530-621-1224. Dates for the 2014 River Clean Ups are in the events section at the end of this newsletter. El Dorado County River Program would like to thank the following entities for their contributions to these efforts in 2013:

All Outdoors Inc.	Marco's Cafe
Adventure Connections	Mariah Whitewater Exp.
American River Conservancy	Mother Lode River Trips
American River Recreation	NRS
American River Resort	O.A.R.S.
American Whitewater Exp.	Patagonia
Bureau of Land Management	PG&E
CA State Parks	Raley's
California Canoe and Kayak	River Shack Pub and Deli
Café Mahjaic	River Transport
Calvary Chapel, Concord	Sierra Disposal
Camp Lotus	Sierra Nevada House
Chaco	Sierra Rizing Bakery
Coloma Resort	SMUD
Coloma Shuttle	TEVA
DeReimer Kayaking	The Coloma Club
Env. Travel. Companions	The Cork and Fork
Friends of the River	The Forest Group
Kokatat	W.E.T. River Trips

Events in the Coloma - Lotus Valley

- July 28, 2014 – River Clean Up on the upper (Chili Bar)
- August 14, 2014 – River Clean Up on the lower (Gorge)
- August 20, 2014 – Low Water River Clean Up (C-G)
- Living History Days 2nd Sat of each month in Coloma at the Sutters Mill Site — Docents impart knowledge about the days of the Gold Rush.
- Coloma Gold Rush Live October 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 2014. See the town of Coloma come alive as it was in 1849.
- Historic Holiday Houses in Coloma December 5th&6th, 2014.
- ARC Events, Please see arconservancy.org for details

County of El Dorado, River Management Program

330 Fair Lane, Building "A"
Placerville, CA 95667
530-621-6052

Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park

PO Box 265
Coloma, CA 95613
530-622-3470

Bureau of Land Management, Mother Lode Field Office

5152 Hillsdale Circle
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762
916-941-3101

Auburn State Recreation Area

501 El Dorado Street
Auburn, CA 95604-3266
530-885-4527
Dispatch for On Duty Ranger: 916-358-1300

Folsom Lake State Recreation Area

7806 Folsom-Auburn Road
Folsom, CA 95630-1797
916-988-0205
Dispatch for On Duty Ranger: 916-358-1300

Note: You can find this newsletter on the El Dorado County Rivers web page, www.edcgov.us/Rivers/