

# South Fork Newsletter

County of El Dorado, Chief Administrative Office, Parks Division  
River Management Program February 2015

## River Management Plan Update

The County of El Dorado has contracted with Environmental Planning and Stewardship (ESP), to prepare an analysis of the current implementation 2001 River Management Plan (RMP) and provide a summary report which outlines specific recommendations for an update to the RMP. There will be opportunities in the future for public input on any proposed changes to the RMP. To sign up for River Management Plan updates use the link below: [https://service.govdelivery.com/service/subscribe.html?code=CAELDOR\\_1](https://service.govdelivery.com/service/subscribe.html?code=CAELDOR_1).

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## Flows on South Fork and Release Schedule

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s (FERC) new license of SMUD’s Upper American River Project and PG&E’s Chili Bar Dam will require that recreational flows are provided on the South Fork of the American River. Final approval by FERC was issued in July of 2014. The new FERC license designates a “Water Year” type based on snow surveys completed by the CA Department of Water Resources which will define a release schedule for flows below Chili Bar Dam. In 2014 the water year was designated as a “Super Dry Water Year” which has the least amount of recreation releases scheduled of any water year type. The current flow and release schedule can be found at the bottom of this page, at the [dreamflows.com](http://dreamflows.com) website and on the County River’s web page at [www.edcgov.us/Rivers/](http://www.edcgov.us/Rivers/). The release schedule for 2015 will not be designated until after the last snow survey for the year which is on May 1. The release schedule for the months of February, March and April are determined by snow surveys conducted at the beginning of each month but will most likely follow the Super Dry year designation considering the lack of precipitation in December and January. February was designated as a Super Dry Water Year. In addition to a designated flow schedule on the South Fork below Chili Bar Dam, there will also be required scheduled recreation releases on the South Fork of

the American River below Slab Creek Reservoir and on South Fork Silver Creek below Ice House Reservoir beginning in 2015 if the water year type is designated as “Below Normal” or greater. The dates for these recreational releases are not scheduled at this time but if they are they will be scheduled for weekends before Memorial Day and some weekends in October.

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## The River Management Advisory Committee

The River Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) provides a forum for the discussion of river use issues, ideas and conflicts. RMAC is a formal advisory body which 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. The County established RMAC to be representative of 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 meetings for 2015 are scheduled to meet on the second Monday night of each the month. 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](https://service.govdelivery.com/service/subscribe.html?code=CAELDOR_1). Monthly minutes can also be viewed on the web at <https://eldorado.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

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### South Fork American River Below Chili Bar Dam Minimum Recreational Flows - (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	

## What can riparian land owners do to prevent the amount of trash getting into waterways?

To help reduce the amount of debris that washes into the river during minor flood events or winter high water, you can do the following:

- 1) Locate the periodic high-water mark (2006 flood elevation) and put a stake (mark) at that location so you or the next tenant knows the flood elevation. If you would like help locating your high water mark, call County River Patrol for assistance at 530-621-6052.
- 2) Between the months of November to May, do not leave manufactured items unattended below the high-water mark. Examples of manufactured items include canoes, BBQ's, lawn furniture, shade tents, picnic tables, platforms, RV's, etc.

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### Safety and Crime Reporting

When embarking on a day of recreation on the river or hiking on the County trails, please remember to deter break-ins by not leaving valuables in your vehicle. It is best to recreate with a partner, dress appropriately, have a first-aid kit and rescue gear. Training and having a plan in the event that something goes wrong can greatly increase your chances of survival or rescue. If you see suspicious activity, observe a crime or are a victim of a crime, please call the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department at 530-621-6600, as well as the appropriate land management agency. Contact information for land-management agencies is listed at the end of this newsletter.

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### Stormwater Preparedness

Stormwater runoff from construction activities can have a significant impact on water quality. As stormwater flows over a construction site, it picks up pollutants like sediment, debris, and chemicals. Sedimentation can destroy aquatic habitat and high volumes of runoff can cause stream bank erosion.

Polluted stormwater runoff can also have many adverse effects on plants, fish, animals and people. Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow. Sediment also can destroy aquatic habitats. Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water called

eutrophication. Many fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels. Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards, often making beach closures necessary.

Debris like plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts washed into water bodies can choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic wildlife like fish, turtles, and birds. Debris can also clog waterways and potentially reach the ocean where they can kill marine wildlife and impact habitat.

Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water. Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs.

If you see any areas of potential erosion, sediment control and/or pollution issues, please call the Storm Water Coordinator at 530-621-7906 or for more information visit the County Storm Water website at:

[www.edcgov.us/Government/EMD/HazardousMaterials/StormWaterPollutionPrevention.aspx](http://www.edcgov.us/Government/EMD/HazardousMaterials/StormWaterPollutionPrevention.aspx)

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### 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. Please visit the County DOT planning website [www.edcgov.us/BridgeProjects](http://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.

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### El Dorado County River Patrol

#### Who are they and why do they "hide" on shore?

In 2014 over 100,000 people boated the 21 mile stretch of the South Fork American River between Chili Bar Dam and Folsom Reservoir. This number includes passengers of commercial and non-profit companies, as well as all private boaters. Usage of a natural recreation resource, such as the South Fork American River, needs monitoring and managing. The El Dorado County (EDC) River Patrol exists to help provide this as required by the EDC River Management Plan (RMP).

The EDC River Patrol consists of three seasonal staff (River Instructors) and the EDC River Recreation Supervisor. The seasonal help is brought on at the early stage of whitewater season and begins its preparations for

the season ahead. The patrol provides a manifold of functions throughout the season which include:

- Boater/river-user education
- River safety
- Boat density data collection
- Water quality monitoring
- Facility maintenance
- River clean-up coordination
- Quiet-zone monitoring

The EDC River Patrol focuses much of its energy on educating and reminding boaters of safe and ethical boating practices and behavior. Education also includes informing and reminding boaters of the rules and regulations pertaining to the river. The patrol staff also makes contacts with anglers, inner-tubers, and other recreation users. The purpose of these contacts is to provide friendly advice and reminders about river safety and problems such as litter, private property trespass issues and the quiet zone. Though the EDC River Patrol does not have law enforcement authority, the tools of education, persuasion and self-reproach are employed to facilitate compliance with the rules, regulations and ethical recreational practices.

EDC River Patrol is on the water monitoring for safety issues and mishaps. The patrol staff certainly cannot be everywhere at once but tries to keep a watchful eye on areas of common concern especially in the class III sections of river. On weekends, or times of heavy river usage, the patrol staff may be found at rapids such as: Meat-Grinder, Trouble-Maker, Fowler's-Rock, Satan's-Cesspool, or Hospital-Bar.

Patrollers might be perceived as "hiding" in the bushes commonly at Fowler's Rock and Trouble Maker because they are sitting in the shade collecting boat density data and data for permit compliance. Boat density counts are required by the RMP to ensure there are not too many people using the river at once. Staff counts all boats, their passengers and guides, as they pass a given point and they record the time of passage. All data is later tallied along with counts used from photographic records.

Throughout the year, and more frequently in the summer months, patrol staff collects water samples. These samples are collected following a strict protocol and are analyzed by the EDC Health Lab. The water is tested for E. coli and fecal coliform bacteria. This testing is to ensure that the river remains safe for human contact.

Another function of the River Patrol is basic facility maintenance. The patrol staff assists the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) River Patrol in the upkeep and cleaning of the three composting toilets along the river. EDC Patrol coordinates with the BLM to ensure that restroom facilities are functioning, clean, and stocked with toilet-paper and woodchips. Patrol staff also stock and maintain various information kiosks at access points along

the river with private boat registration tags, waterproof river maps and large group registration forms.

The EDC River Patrol staff organizes and conducts River cleanups of the South Fork at least twice a year to remove trash and dangerous debris from, in and along the river. One clean up is usually done on the Chili Bar run and the Gorge run. One sweep is sometimes done on the Coloma-Lotus section at "fish flow" to focus on the river bottom in that section. These river cleanups are accomplished with the participation of local businesses, river industry companies, rafting companies and conscientious volunteers.

River Patrol staff spend time along the unique quiet zone section of the South Fork to make a concerted effort to ensure that the County quiet zone ordinance is abided by. Violations are reported to the River Recreation Supervisor who has the authority to cite commercial outfitters. Violations by the public can only be cited by an El Dorado Sheriff. Often these incidents are corrected by friendly reminders.

Hopefully the synopsis above helps paint a picture of the functions performed by the River Patrol and why you see them "hiding" in the bushes. From working with the patrol, I can honestly say that the patrol is out there to protect the South Fork American River as a quality recreation resource and quality experience for all who visit and live by the river. Enjoy the river and be safe!

-Kyle Lloyd, River Patrol



River Patrol Educating Inner Tubers

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## **Invasive Species Alert!** **Prevent the transport of nuisance species!!** **Clean all boating and fishing equipment!!!!**

There is a **new invasive species** in California. The zebra and quagga mussels, originally from Ukraine, landed in the Great Lakes in the 1980s and have spread steadily throughout the Midwest and Mississippi River. The mussels have explosive reproductive rates and can quickly carpet the bottom of lakes and slow-moving rivers, disrupting the food chain (as filter feeders they deplete the phytoplankton from the water) and clog water works. In recent years the mussels have invaded Lake Mead and the lower Colorado River. They have moved through the Metropolitan Water District's Colorado Aqueduct and now

have infested about a dozen reservoirs in Southern California. The California Department of Fish and Game is responsible for stemming the tide and sequestering the mussels in Southern California. While the most common threat is mussels “hitch-hiking” on the hulls and in bilge water of trailered boats, there is also a threat they can be transported by whitewater craft or fishing equipment that move from river to river. The adult mussels can attach to the bottom of boats or in mud attached to the boat. More problematic to whitewater boating is larval mussels (called veligers), tiny organisms that drift down rivers and can live easily in splashed water inside the raft/kayak or live in the felt soles of fishing waders’. The most sure-fire way to avoid transporting them is to make sure boating or fishing equipment is clean (mud free) and dry from river to river. Adults die within about a week when out of the water and veligers can be eliminated by simply draining the boat of residual water. It is becoming a serious problem within Northern California so it’s a good idea to get in the habit of a cleaning and drying all boating and fishing equipment between put-ins on different lakes and rivers.



Mussel Shell on palm of human hand



Boat hull coated with Mussels

More information can be found at the following websites:

- <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/invasives/quaggamussel/>
- <http://www.100thmeridian.org/>

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## Events in the Coloma - Lotus Valley

- 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.
- American River Conservancy Events. Please see [arconservancy.org](http://arconservancy.org) for events (hikes, wildlife viewing, interpretation programs, etc.)

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### [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/](http://www.edcgov.us/Rivers/)