

# South Fork Newsletter

County of El Dorado, Chief Administrative Office, Parks Division  
River Management Program March 2016

## River Management Plan Update

In 2014 the County of El Dorado hired a consultant to prepare an analysis of the current implementation of the 2001 River Management Plan (RMP) and provide a summary report which would outline specific recommendations for an update to the RMP. This was completed in January of 2016 and documents can be found online at [http://www.edcgov.us/Government/EMD/Rivers/2016\\_RMP\\_Update.aspx](http://www.edcgov.us/Government/EMD/Rivers/2016_RMP_Update.aspx). Comments are being taken on this redlined draft of the RMP until April 15, 2016.

The RMP update process is ongoing and there are still opportunities to provide written comments to proposed changes to the plan along with participating in River Management Advisory Committee meetings, County Planning Commission meetings and County Board of Supervisors meetings.

To sign up for River Management Plan updates and announcement use the link below:  
[https://service.govdelivery.com/service/subscribe.html?code=CAELDOR\\_1](https://service.govdelivery.com/service/subscribe.html?code=CAELDOR_1).

## Flows on South Fork and Release Schedule

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s (FERC) license of SMUD’s Upper American River Project and PG&E’s Chili Bar Dam require that recreational flows are provided on the South Fork of the American River. The FERC license designates a “Water Year” type based on snow surveys completed by the CA Dept. of Water Resources. In 2015 the water year was designated as a “Super Dry” but as of February the water year type has been designated as “Below Normal”. For the months of February, March and April the water year type changes based on the monthly snow survey conducted at the beginning of each month. After the last snow survey of the year on May 1, the water year type will be designated for the rest of the year. The water year type and release schedule for a below normal water year can be found at the bottom of this page and at

the [dreamflows.com](http://dreamflows.com) website. In addition to a designated flow schedule on the South Fork below Chili Bar Dam, there will also be scheduled recreational releases on the South Fork of the American River below Slab Creek Reservoir and on South Fork Silver Creek below Ice House Reservoir if the water year type is designated as “Below Normal” or greater. The dates for these recreational releases are posted on [dreamflows.com](http://dreamflows.com) as well.

## 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 know the flood elevation. If you would like help locating your high water mark, call County River Patrol for assistance at 530-621-6052 or ask your neighbor who lived there in 2006.
- 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, trailers, wheelbarrows, etc.

## 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 standing 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 on the committee:

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

- Water Year Type Below Normal -

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
March -Memorial Day	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300		3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
Memorial Day – Labor Day	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300		3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	6 Hrs @ 1500	6 Hrs @ 1500
Labor Day - September				3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
October	3 Hrs @ 1300				3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
November - February						3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500

- 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 2016 are scheduled to meet on the second Monday night of each the month but occasionally get rescheduled. The March meeting is scheduled for the third Monday (21<sup>st</sup>) and the April meeting for second Monday (11<sup>th</sup>). 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). Agendas and Minutes can be viewed on the web at <https://eldorado.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

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**Prevent the transport of nuisance species!!!  
Clean all boating and fishing equipment!!!**

There are 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.



**Mussel Shell on palm of human hand**

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. More information can be found at the following websites:

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/Quagga-Mussels> and <http://www.100thmeridian.org/>



**Boat hull coated with Mussels**

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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. Having a plan if 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 County Sheriff's Dept. at 530-621-



6600 or fill out an online incident report at [www.edcgov.us/Government/Sheriff/Online\\_Services/File\\_an\\_Online\\_Report.aspx](http://www.edcgov.us/Government/Sheriff/Online_Services/File_an_Online_Report.aspx), 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 can also 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.edc.gov.us/Government/EMD/HazardousMaterials/StormWaterPollutionPrevention.aspx](http://www.edc.gov.us/Government/EMD/HazardousMaterials/StormWaterPollutionPrevention.aspx)

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## El Dorado County River Patrol

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

In 2015 close to 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 two seasonal staff (River Instructors) and the 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 contact 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 outfitter 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.



**Unloading River Cleanup trash before Trouble Maker Rapid**

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 permitted outfitters. Violations by the public can only be cited by El Dorado Co. Sheriff personnel. Often these incidents are corrected by friendly reminders, so spread the word.

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

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## Bridges to Be Retrofitted or Replaced

The El Dorado County Transportation Division (DOT) is in the planning phase of retrofitting or replacing the Mount Murphy Bridge and Mosquito Rd. Bridge over 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.

Cal Trans will begin the replacement of the Hwy 49 Bridge over the South Fork of the American River in Lotus in the spring of 2017.

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.

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## Events in the Coloma - Lotus Valley

### ➤ World Gold Panning Championships in Placerville!!!

There are a number of events that will coincide with the gold panning championships which will be held at the County of El Dorado Fairgrounds from September 14-18. Some of these other events at the Fairgrounds and in the County are live music, Wine and Beer tasting, Rock

and Gem show, Wheel Barrow races, Car Show, Chili Cook Off, American River Music Festival, Coloma Gold Rush Live and Divide Gold Rush Days. For a complete schedule of events see <http://www.eldorado2016.com/>.

- Divide Gold Rush Days – Georgetown, September 10&11 <http://eldoradoadventureloop.com/tour/gold-rush-days/>
- American River Music Festival, September 16, 17&18, <http://www.americanrivermusic.org/festival.php>
- Coloma Gold Rush Live, September 17&18 – See the town of Coloma come alive as it was in 1848 to 1852!
- 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.)



©TVB Rauris, Florian Bachmeier

**Manfred Maier from Rauris, 2x National Champion  
2014 Gold Panning Championships, Rauris Valley, Austria**

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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/)