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Annual Christmas Party for Park Volunteers

The annual party for Park volunteers was held at the Empire Mine Clubhouse December 6. About 70 volunteers and staff shared a pot luck dinner with appetizers, salads, vegetables, entrees, bread, desserts, and beverages. Even a "wild" entree (venison) was provided by our own retired Ranger, Mike Smittle.

Following the meal the traditional gift exchange was held. Donated gifts, none valued over \$10, were passed around the circle of participants. The usual confusion reigned, but everyone was left holding a present. Some still wrapped gifts were claimed and exchanged (allegedly by persons with inside information).

Dave Anderson, SYRPA President, and Don Schmidt, Supervising Ranger, spoke to the group and furnished vague answers to impossible questions about possible park closure.

A good time was had by all.

Bridgeport News

South Yuba River State Park
South Yuba River Park Association

SYRPA Newsletter

January 2012

150th Anniversary of the Bridge and Barn! Birthday Party Planned for April 2012

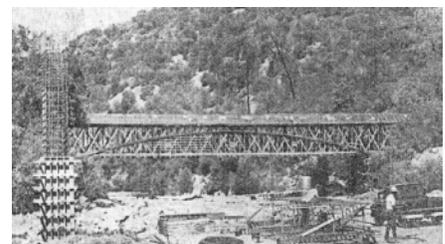
The historic Bridgeport covered bridge and the barn will be 150 years old this year. The South Yuba River Park Association and the South Yuba River State Park are planning a Sesquicentennial Birthday party. This celebration will include the entire community, park partners, schools, historians, property owner descendants and all the regional residents who love and enjoy Bridgeport and the South Yuba River.

An Advisory Committee composed of community leaders has met and provided input for the celebration. Some of the ideas under consideration are:

- Involve local schools with bridge and barn coloring activities plus an essay contest. A recognition ceremony will be held on Friday, April 27.
- Showcase the importance of Bridgeport to Nevada County
- Recognize the former owners who were the stewards of the bridge and barn over the past 150 years
- Partner with civic, historical and environmental groups to make this an inclusive and educational celebration
- Encourage displays of Bridgeport photographs and art in the community
- Produce a pageant for the April 29 Spring Festival that features the construction of the covered bridge and barn
- Host a special event for docents, SYRPA members, public officials and former Bridgeport owners on Saturday, April 28



1966



1972 Restoration

Independence Trail Update

Winter Notes

The trail is ready for your use this winter. On December 3rd a crew of about a dozen volunteers from Bear-Yuba Land Trust, SYRCL, and Sequoia Challenge did a cleaning job to almost the Rush Creek Overlook. Although everyone worked hard, a special thanks must go to Rob Sinnock of SYRCL who walked the whole trail with his leaf blower. Thanks, Rob. The workers were thanked by Alden Olmsted, (John Olmsted's son) when his group came by and he said: "I have never seen this trail look so good."

The next work party to be held by SYRPA on the trail will be at the Yuba River Overlook. This will be held towards the end of January. Looking forward to seeing you there. Thanks for helping. *Warren Wittich*

2012 Birdwalk Schedule

Bill Cortright will lead birdwalks at Bridgeport on Saturdays this year. Meet at 8am at the north parking lot across the river. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather.

Expected species include the American dipper, common merganser, white crowned sparrow, phainopepla, rock wren, Audubon warbler, wrenit and canyon wren.

The 2012 dates are:

January 28
February 18
March 17
April 21
May 19
June 9
July 14
September 15
October 20
December 8

The Ghosts of Bridgeport had a great time!

Fall Festival October 30, 2011

To start this past year's Halloween adventures, the Ghosts of Bridgeport came to our Fall Festival and treated everyone with stories and surprises. As they do each Halloween, all the good ghosts appeared and told stories of their former life at Bridgeport. A special highlight this year was when Victoria Kneebone (Docent Judy Nichols) emerged from her coffin and told about her life at Bridgeport. At the moment when she was telling the folks in the Barn that horse thief Yankee Jim (hung at Bridgeport in 1851) still hangs around, Jim dropped from the rafters of the barn with a hangmen's noose around his neck, startling the entire audience (shrieks and shouts could be heard throughout the Park) - a fitting end to the performance in the Barn.



There were enough activities to involve everyone for several hours. The events included music by "Ragged but Right," living history, wagon rides, barn tours, wildflower crafts, face painting, gold panning, pumpkin painting and games for kids of all ages. Local author and birder Carol Malnor signed her children's book "The Blues go Birding Across America". The Audubon Society had some special activities for the children and suet feeders for the asking. There was also great food and drink available; Penn Valley Chamber of Commerce sold hot dogs, baked potatoes and drinks, June's Deli's had a selection of baked treats, and Lazy Dog had their usual variety of ice cream.

A large part of the success of the day has to go to the 60 docents and volunteers that made visitors feel both welcome and part of the Bridgeport history. Nearly all the activities and events were organized and lead by the Docents of South Yuba River State Park. SYRPA President Dave Anderson expressed his compliments by saying "The Docents are special people who give their time, energy and personal knowledge to the Park and to the visitors. They really do make the park experience memorable!"

Janine Martin deserves special thanks for her dedication and leadership, making the day a success. Bev Morgan worked quietly, as co-chair, sent out over 30 letters to local schools, invited several of the conservation groups, assembled "Yankee Jim," and coordinated many of the day's activities. Thanks to Mickey Springer, the raffle was a hit and a successful fundraiser. The State Park Rangers and all the docents make Bridgeport history an important part of Nevada County, and they love to share it. *Glenn Fuller*

Hummingbird Rescued at Kneebone Beach

Well it seems we have a savior in our small group of volunteers here at Bridgeport. On July 17th Helen Albano was volunteering as a trail rover on the Kneebone Beach trail when she found a small hummingbird that seemingly fell out of its nest and broke its wing. Helen promptly packaged up the bird and came to get me in the Visitor Center to figure out what to do with the injured bird. Typically Rangers can do one of three things when finding an injured animal: package it up and take it in for rehabilitation, leave it for nature to take its course or, in extreme circumstances, dispatch the animal to put it out of its misery.

In this case Helen and I decided that she should take it to the Wildlife Rehabilitation and Release program in Penn Valley. There employee Beverly took the bird in and found that it apparently didn't have a broken wing after all but it did have a bruised wing. She cared for it until it was able and ready for release back into the wild. About a week later Helen and Beverly went back to the location where the bird was found and released it to nature. The little hummingbird flew off like it had never been injured in the first place.

It may seem like a small gesture of good stewardship for the park and its inhabitants, and it is, but it is also the caring and compassionate nature of docents like Helen that make our park system one of the best in the country. Thank you Helen!

Ranger Marc Wetherbee

Supervising Ranger's Report



It's been quite a wild ride the last couple of months concerning the possible closure of South Yuba River SP, and an interesting start to the New Year. Sometimes it's been difficult to figure out which direction we need to go because the

story tends to change frequently, and the issues with the bridge haven't helped. However, I think we have a better idea of where we're going and how to get there.

We have been actively working with our park staff, members and staff of the South Yuba River Citizen's League, local public officials, interested groups, and the SYRPA board to look for solutions to keep the park open. Following the public meeting sponsored by SYRCL, as well as a number of meetings with interested parties, I expect that within the next 60-90 days, we will be implementing a plan to collect fees in both the main and north parking lots. We will also be expanding the north lot to add an additional 50 to 60 spaces, which will make up for the areas along Pleasant Valley Road that will be posted "No Parking". This will be a big change for our visitors and for us, so we'll be working hard to get the word out quickly.

As many of you know, a preliminary engineering analysis of the bridge identified several structural areas of concern, and fences have been installed at each end to limit access. Funding was received recently for the detailed engineering study to identify the structural problems and find solutions to fix them. At the same time, we are applying for grant funding through Cal Trans for the restoration, but until the study is complete, we won't know what it will cost to reopen. There may be a need to raise a portion of the restoration money through donations, but we won't know that until later.

Since we're talking about our bridge, I'd like to mention that SYRPA and DPR will be sponsoring a 150th anniversary celebration the last weekend in April. This will be a huge event, so please be sure to read the lead article in this newsletter for more information.

Thank you for your support of our park and the South Yuba River Park Association. Ultimately, if we can keep the park open, it will be because of your efforts and support. Keep your fingers crossed!

Don Schmidt

President's Message



Happy New Year! I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday period and enjoyed the season with family and friends. As for the Park, we did receive the good news that funding has been made available to perform a detailed engineering analysis on our bridge. Once the analysis is complete we will have information as to what must be done to repair the bridge and have some idea as to the projected cost and time to perform that work.

We don't know what is happening with regard to closure of the park. As of now, SYRSP is still on the closure list but..., there are discussions at the DPR about the final outcome. I view that as a cup half-full situation, thinking that a more thorough analysis is going on regarding the meaning and real cost of closure and risk to our facilities, public safety, and all the other factors of which

we are well aware. Discussions of how some sort of revenue stream could be implemented are still ongoing and it appears that if successful, it would have a very positive impact on a decision to remain open. One big plus is our Association. I have been told that our Association is viewed as a model for others to follow. Our support for the park and our active membership is extremely well thought of. We must continue to be an active and vital part of our park. I encourage every member to promptly renew his or her membership and to actively recruit others who could contribute positively.

We are continuing to operate with the philosophy that the park will remain open. Planning for the Spring and Fall Festivals is underway. We are also planning another fundraiser for 2012 and looking to the Autumn Equinox as a date. The weather should be perfect at that time of year. Most exciting is our plan to have a sesquicentennial celebration for the bridge and the barn. Think of it! They have been a vital part of the history of the area for 150 years and remain unmistakable icons of the Bridgeport area. Don Denton is chairing the committee to plan the events and to involve community and state leaders. The celebration will be concurrent with our Spring Festival.

Several of our members have asked "what can I do to help keep the Parks open". There are three things you should do right away: 1. Continue being a member of SYRPA, and ask your friends to join. An organization with many members has a louder voice than a smaller organization. 2. Be active and visit your Parks. This shows both usage and support. 3. Write letters. Our elected representatives do listen to the people who put them into office. I know letter writing is extra work and a very personal decision, but it is also an effective way to be heard. Here are the addresses.

Assemblymen Dan Logue
1550 Humboldt Rd #4
Chico, CA 95928
530-895-4217

Senator Doug LaMalfa
5800 Stanford Ranch Rd #720
Rockland CA 95765
916-435-0744

I thank all SYRPA members for their strong support and thank our park volunteers for the wonderful work that they perform. Have a wonderful and prosperous New Year. See you at the Park.

Dave Anderson



South Yuba River Park Association – southyubariverstatepark.org

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