From Comets to Conservation:
It’s All Relative, It’s All Connected
By Elena DeLacy

Man’s heart, away from nature, becomes hard; [the Lakota] knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to a lack of respect for humans too.

-- Luther Standing Bear (c. 1868-1939)

It is late July in California, the peak of the dry season in our Mediterranean climate. In the past few weeks I have learned that due to the recent surge in cases of Covid-19, ARC will once again close its Nature Center in Coloma and that my three children will attend school via online classes using distance learning methods this August. Suffice it to say, adaptation is a key word in our lives right now. In the last week my family and I also witnessed a comet that will not be seen from Earth for another 6,800 years. The last time Comet NEOWISE was visible (2480 BCE, give or take) the Assyrian Empire was just getting underway. The Great Pyramid of Giza was brand new, and the construction of Stonehenge had not yet even begun. Around this time, in what is now the Pacific coast of Peru and Ecuador, improvements in farming and the invention of loom weaving led to increases in population. The dawn of Ancient Greek philosophy in the 5th century BCE would still be around 2,000 years in the future at that point, with the dawn of Christianity some 500 years after that.

It’s incredible how much human civilization has changed in that relatively short time span, at least when seen from the celestial perspective of Comet NEOWISE, in the revolution of a single cometary orbit around the sun. In the United States, our society has been going through some monumental changes in the last four months. Some of these changes are positive, such as companies encouraging people to work from home, thereby decreasing carbon-intensive commutes in exchange for video calls and online meetings. Another positive shift has been the recognition that systemic racism needs to be addressed in all parts of our society (finally!). Other changes are not encouraging, such as the 4 million U.S. youth that have missed the opportunity to engage in critical outdoor environmental and science education since March 2020. The Lawrence Hall of Science in Berkeley notes that “this number could rise to 11 million by December 2020.” This loss will be felt disproportionately by historically marginalized groups, particularly students of color and students from low-income families. A growing body of research has linked our mental, physical, and spiritual health directly to our association with nature – in positive ways. The health of the Earth is at stake as well. How our youth respond to nature, how they raise their own children, will shape land use configurations and conditions of future generations’ daily lives. A “pandemic recovery plan” for our society needs to include robust support for outdoor science and environmental education (among many other things) so that we can make up for lost time.

Continued on page 2...
The American River Conservancy, navigating through constantly evolving pandemic guidelines, shifting grant deadlines and uncertain funding sources while also planning for an unknown future is a difficult task requiring creativity and adaptation. Luckily, ARC is no stranger to change, and has adjusted accordingly. You, our supporters, continue to recognize the important work that we do through donations of time, money and skills. A recent conversation I had with ARC Lifetime/Legacy Circle Member Rod Williams was a joyful reminder of just how important it is to have a shared vision. Mr. Williams recognizes that these places we love so much will remain only if people allow them to and only if appreciation guides their destiny. His recognition of the importance of land conservation, education and land stewardship is what motivates his decision to leave a legacy to future generations in the form of a donation of land to ARC.

I wonder what this legacy will look like in 6,800 years - when comet NEOWISE graces our night sky once again. What will future humans think of our efforts to preserve ecosystems, restore habitat and ensure access to nature for all? I can’t time travel, and since I can’t talk with those future humans directly, I can at least attempt to commune with them in spirit 6,800 years in the future. Perhaps they, along with those ancient humans who noticed the then-unnamed Comet in the sky 4,500 years ago, will be sharing in the universal hopes and dreams of humanity. I can only hope that once we lower our gaze from the heavens and find ourselves thrust back into the present that we come away with a renewed appreciation for nature (and our place in it), what it means to be alive, and the human experience.

During this unpredictable year, we appreciate all the generous donations from our supporters listed on page 15. Your inspiring support helps Staff carry on ARC’s critical mission during these uncertain times.
For 31 years, ARC has worked with private landowners, public agencies and funding partners to preserve native habitat, agricultural lands, recreational access and riparian corridors. Since 1989, ARC has protected over 27,500 acres through conservation easement and fee-title acquisition. As the human population grows, conservation of large open spaces is critical to allow systems to adapt and maintain resiliency in the face of changing ecological processes produced by climate change. By preventing loss and fragmentation of habitat and by protecting intact riparian corridors and working agricultural lands, the Conservancy seeks to support a more resilient landscape and preserve the capacity of land managers to address the consequences of climate change in the region through adaptive management.

**Lewis Ranch**  ARC is working to raise $4,470,000 in private donations and grants to acquire this 972-acre ranch located near the town of Greenwood. In March 2020, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy awarded ARC with a $1 Million grant to support the acquisition of this property. Lewis Ranch is situated on Greenwood Creek, an important tributary to the South Fork American River. More than 3 miles of riparian frontage, varying topography and a mosaic of vegetation types make the Lewis Ranch an extremely diverse habitat. Check out the virtual tour of Lewis Ranch here: [https://youtu.be/XGdoHJWdydU](https://youtu.be/XGdoHJWdydU)

**Wells Preserve**  The Frost-Hurzel Family will become ARC Lifetime Members and Legacy Circle members by fulfilling their intent to donate the 150-acre Wells Preserve to American River Conservancy. The Wells family was stewards of this forest land for several decades before entrusting it to the Frost-Hurzel family. Mixed conifer-hardwood forest and a considerable stretch of the North Fork Cosumnes River will be protected in perpetuity through the fee-title donation of this property to American River Conservancy this year. Thank you to Rick, Melinda and Teran Frost-Hurzel for leaving a legacy for future generations. If you are interested in learning more about Planned Giving or the Legacy Circle, please contact Elena DeLacy ([elena@ARConservancy.org](mailto:elena@ARConservancy.org)) or Melissa Lobach ([melissa@ARConservancy.org](mailto:melissa@ARConservancy.org)).

**Chapman Canyon**  The 543-acre Chapman Canyon project will be considered for $435,000 in purchase funding at the August Wildlife Conservation Board meeting. Located in the Middle Fork American River watershed in Placer County, this project will protect 2.5 miles of the unimpaired North Fork of the Middle Fork American River, as well as intact conifer/hardwood forest adjacent to a Designated Roadless Area. During a recent visit to the property, ARC staff observed several Giant sequoia (Sequoia sempervirens) thriving on the cooler north-facing slopes of the property. This project will protect important riverine stretches that provide cold water climate refugia for native species at an intergrade between conifer and hardwood forest types. Vegetation “transitional zones” such as these are important to protect in order to maintain habitat diversity in the face of climate change.

*From wonder into wonder existence opens. —Lao-tzu*
Volunteer Spotlight

Why I Volunteer as an American River Conservancy Board Member
By Kyle Pogue, ARC Vice President

Why am I an ARC Board Member? I contemplate this question sometimes before attending a Wednesday evening Board Meeting at the American River Nature Center, after meeting up with my wife and daughter in Coloma, and consuming my dinner akonda-style in 10 minutes after a long day at the office. Why do my Board member colleagues do something similar after days filled with trail construction, participating in search and rescue activities, helping raise grandchildren, or you name it? The answer that always comes back to me is there before me in my family—our lives would not be the same without the many joys that ARC-preserved open space provides. Whether that is meeting at the trailhead for a bike ride and run, taking a walk with our extended families and friends to celebrate a special event or just the most recent sunset, seeing bobcat cubs scurry after mom, or asking my beautiful wife to marry me at the river after a downhill descent. My apologies if I drifted away there in thought, but those memories and opportunities to make our lives better is what keeps me coming back to Board meetings. I know you have your own reasons for supporting ARC through membership and volunteerism and only you can decide the best way to do that. If you do find that being a Board member may be of interest to you, I’d be happy to share my thoughts with you—just send an email to: arc@ARConservancy.org. I’d be interested to hear from you about what makes ARC so important in your life and then we can discuss the types of skills that we are seeking in potential Board Members. Now, off to the trail...

ARC Wish List
For Full list visit https://bit.ly/3eT0VN4

- Surge protectors
- Kegerator
- Blender or food processor
- Telescoping paintbrush pole
- Animation designer expertise
- Photos of ARC properties (with rights of use)
- Photo button-making machine
- Golf cart or other terrain vehicle
- 12-passenger van
- Snack bars
- Grocery gift cards
- Potting Soil
- Small step stool or ladder
- 20 matching round tablecloths
- 160 matching napkins
- 160 matching water glasses/goblets
- Lawn games
- Microphone Stand
- Dual axle trailer
- 50-gallon trash bags
- Toolbox with basic tools

Interested in Volunteering?
Go to ARConservancy.org/join-us
Use the VOLUNTEER FORM to sign up for your specific volunteer interests.
American River Headwaters Restoration Project
Greyhorse Valley

Before and After Thinning Treatments 2018 (mastication)

At ARC’s American River Headwaters Restoration Project near Granite Chief Wilderness (Placer County), our staff have documented anywhere from 800 to 1,200 trees per acre...
(Excerpt from article on page 6)

ARC has treated 973 acres of dense forest, and changed the structure to a range of 40-150 trees per acre.
American River Headwaters Restoration Project – Creating a More Resilient Sierra Nevada

By Autumn Gronborg

California’s wild ecosystems have evolved over the course of thousands of years to achieve balance and refine function. In the Sierra Nevada forests, for example, this means a system driven by fire. The past 100+ years of human activity, including recreation, timber harvest and expansion of communities into the “Wildland Interface” have influenced a policy of fire suppression and exclusion. The resultant “Mega-Fires” can be described as fast moving, extremely hot, erratic, crown-based fires that are difficult to contain, terrifying to witness, and decimate ecosystems and communities in their path. These scorching fires are hot enough to melt cars and leave behind sterilized/dead soil. This soil is devoid of a mycelium network, has a non-existent bacterial profile and contains a charred mess of roots and seeds. The dead soil then erodes into the nearest waterway destroying water quality, clogging infrastructure, and choking aquatic ecosystems. These Mega Fires have tornado-like convection winds that release many tons of carbon, and typically result in 90% tree mortality. Historically, wildfires and fires promoted through cultural burning by indigenous people were typically smaller, slower moving, cooler, surface/ground-based fires that burned in a patch pattern with areas of hotter, higher intensity fire with a 5-10% tree mortality rate. These smaller, more frequent fires allowed for surface fuels to burn off, killed insects/pests and caused dying and diseased trees to release their reserves. The resulting ash/black carbon created an incredibly rich soil with greater water holding capacity. Thus, fire-adapted species thrived, and released their seeds to produce new generations.

Historic forest structure was also vastly different than most forests we see today in the Sierra Nevada. Forest structure changed in large part due to economic-based logging practices that include removing the largest trees, along with the exclusion of fire. Researchers have estimated that historic Sierra forest stands (pre-1850) had approximately 40-60 trees per acre with adequate open spacing between them and smaller amounts of ladder and understory species. At ARC’s American River Headwaters Restoration Project near Granite Chief Wilderness (Placer County), our staff have documented anywhere from 800 to 1,200 trees per acre, the majority of them being small trees (approximately 0-12 inches in diameter). ARC is currently using mechanical thinning and selective logging practices to thin the smaller ladder fuels across the 6,800-acre property, and remove the diseased, dead, and dying individuals from the stand while preserving the healthiest and most climate-resilient species. Over the past three seasons ARC has treated 973 acres of dense forest, and changed the structure from approximately 800-1200 trees per acre to a range of 40-150 trees per acre. In the future ARC will use prescribed fire to further manage the stand and reintroduce this critical ecological process. This project is an integral part of the 28,000-acre French Meadows Project and is the result of a multi-year collaborative partnership between American River Conservancy, Tahoe National Forest, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, UC Merced, Placer County, and Placer County Water Agency. By supporting ARC you are supporting a healthy watershed that is fire and climate resilient. Additional information regarding the excellent work being done at the American River Headwaters site can be found in the insert in your newsletter. It outlines the change in stand structure and the plans for prescribed fire application.
Mention ARC at the register, or use account #499 to donate your WOW points to ARC

Can’t believe it’s August already? December is just around the corner! So is Winter Dinner.

Please save the date to join us on Thursday. December 10th when we plan to celebrate our supporters.
**Programs Plus**

All Programs are TENTATIVE due to rapidly changing State guidelines for social gatherings. See our website calendar for updates, full descriptions, and to sign up.

ARConservancy.org/events

No dogs allowed unless otherwise stated julie@ARConservancy.org

**Outdoor Discovery Days**

**Thursdays, September 3rd & 17th and Oct 1st, 15th & 29th 9am-1:30pm**

(more dates may be added based on interest)

Join us for a day of discovery at Wakamatsu Farm. Your Outdoor Discoverer will get to connect with nature by exploring along the nature trail, tuning into their senses in the Giving Garden and letting their imaginations go wild in the Nature Play Space. For grades 1-5. Cost: $20. To sign up contact briegan@ARConservancy.org

**Historic Luce Ditch Flume (aka “Red Shack”) Trail Hike**

*Saturday, October 3rd 9-11:30am*

This historic flume and ditch system brought water to mining, ranching, & farm operations in the Gold Hill area. Remnants can be seen from the trail, along with fall foliage, as hikers descend to a lovely spot on the American River just downstream of Racehorse Bend.

**Training Hill (Pointed Rock) Hike**

*Saturday, October 3rd 2-5:30pm*

This steep trail offers great, bird’s eye views of the confluence and American River, the Sacramento Valley to the west and the Sierras to the east. Its steep gradient offers a good aerobic workout, climbing 1,000 ft. in 1.2 miles. It follows a buried telephone cable on its ascent from the confluence area to the ridge and the Olmstead Loop.

**Geologic History Hike of the Sierra Nevada**

*Sunday, October 4th 8am-3pm*

Enjoy a day at Wright’s Lake where you will explore different geologic environments, including meadows, forests, glacial and water features with spectacular views of Crystal Basin. This hike, led by ARC volunteer Barbara Houghton, a California Professional Geologist and Certified Hydrogeologist, will include an overview of the region’s geologic history. This is moderate hike of about four miles w/1200 ft. elevation change. Ages 12+ welcome. Well-behaved dog on-leash welcome. Contact ARC to sign up and for carpool meeting location (Pollock Pines area). Suggested donation: $5/members or $10/non-members. julie@ARConservancy.org or 530-621-1224.

**Fall Bird Walk at Knickerbocker Creek**

*Sunday, November 22nd 7:30am-12pm*

Tim and Angela Jackson typically lead a bird walk here in the spring. We’ll return to the same location in the fall to see what songbirds, raptors, and water birds are there now. Tim maintains a website (eldoradobirds.com) on bird-watching in El Dorado County.

**Plant and History Hike Around El Dorado Ranch**

*Date and time TBD*

**Monroe Ridge Trail Hike**

*Date and time TBD*
Many thanks to the volunteers who led a hike, taught a workshop, or offered/gave a presentation this summer. We can only offer these programs because of your commitment to our community. If you would like to become a volunteer, complete the Volunteer Interest form at ARConservancy.org/join-us.
This summer, we have been offering safe programs while adhering to California State guidelines for public gatherings. Beginning September 5, we are also planning to offer Open Farm Days every first and third Saturday from September through November. These dates are subject to cancellation as CA State mandates may dictate. Sign up for Open Farm days at https://app.donorview.com/o4Kz9.

Also during our first Open Farm Day on September 5, we plan to host a small plaque-mounting ceremony for supporters who donated at least $1,000 specifically to Wakamatsu Farm during the past year. If all goes as planned on September 5, we will also be honored by a visit from the newly appointed Consul General of Japan in San Francisco, Mr. Toru Maeda. Aji Japanese Bistro will offer pre-packaged bento boxes for purchase. FogDog Farm will also have organic produce and freshly baked bread for sale. How exciting!

As usual, volunteers and docents will help the public during Open Farm days. Until further notice, volunteers will also monitor additional safety protocols, as follows:

- Up to 50 people can visit the Farm at the same time.
- While near others, visitors are required to wear face masks. We will provide free face masks.
- Exceptions to face masks applies to children and visitors who have health conditions that prevent them from wearing face masks. Hearing impaired visitors and their companions are not required to wear face masks. Families and people who share the same households are not required to wear masks when only near each other.
- As long as museums are required to remain closed, the Graner farmhouse will also remain closed to the public.
- Hand sanitizer will be available for visitor use. Bathrooms will be regularly sanitized.
- Docents will help visitors with any other requirements to ensure the health and safety of Farm visitors.

ARC continues to closely follow California State guidelines for public gatherings, which are continuously evolving. Find these guidelines at www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/Health-Care-General-Industry.html. We hope to see you soon during one of our safe Open Farm Days!

VENUE RENTALS
Are now available for event dates after January 1, 2020

Create your own memorable experiences at Wakamatsu Farm
Contact ARC for details
Wakamatsu@ARConservancy.org or call 530-621-1224

Grandmother Oak

I am protected here, in the shade of the Great Blue Oak on top of the windy hill. Watched by Spirit of the Grandmother in a high branch, nearby the grave of Okie-San, young governess. The white headstone faces East and West, honoring the land she came from and the new land she came to love. Past and present mingle in dappled shade. The sound of wilderness — wind and birdsong, humming insects and rapping woodpeckers — provide background for meditation. Time slips away here. Earth and air. Youth and Age — just words. Quiet time at Wakamatsu lingers in the memory. The spirits of this land remain with me long after I walk down the star-thistle hill. The Grandmother Spirit watches over me, wherever I travel.

(Wakamatsu Farm inspires meditation and visions that remain after the workshop ends.)

— Katy Brown
**Education Update**

**Introducing Our Newest Staff Member — Briegan Aguilar**

Briegan is the American River Conservancy’s new Education & Stewardship Coordinator. She has worked seasonally for ARC since 2018 coordinating Nature Camp. Briegan has lived in Placerville most of her life and has been educating in the Coloma Valley and surrounding areas for the last six years as an outdoor educator at Coloma Outdoor Discovery School and as an American Sign Language Aide at Sutter’s Mill and Gold Trail Schools. She graduated from Sacramento State with a B.S. in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration focusing on outdoor education and programming. In Briegan’s free time you may see her paddling down the South Fork American River, or running and biking alongside it. Briegan is very passionate about the natural and cultural history of the Coloma Valley and looks forward to continuing to share her love with people of all ages in her new position at ARC.

**ARC — Bringing Children Outside**

**Outdoor Discovery Days**

September 3rd & 17th and October 1st, 15th & 29th, 9am-1:30pm
(more dates may be added based on interest)

Join us for a day of discovery at Wakamatsu Farm. Your Outdoor Discoverer will get to connect with nature by exploring along the nature trail, tuning into their senses in the Giving Garden and letting their imaginations go wild in the Nature Play Space. Grades 1st through 5th.

Cost: $20. To sign up: Contact Briegan Aguilar-briegan@ARConservancy.org

We care about the safety of all participants and our staff. All participants and visitors are required to wear a face mask upon arrival and while in close proximity to other participants and group leaders at Wakamatsu farm. Physical distancing of at least 6 feet will be encouraged throughout the program and will be required when participants are not wearing a mask (i.e., eating, drinking). Educators will carry sanitizer for participants’ use. Restroom facilities are cleaned and sanitized daily. Due to limitations on number of participants, parents are encouraged to drop off their child at 9:00am and return for pick-up at 1:30pm.

I sincerely believe that for the child, and for the parent seeking to guide him, it is not half so important to 'know' as to 'feel'.” —Rachel Carson
American River Conservancy is pleased to announce the following Lifetime Members. For this highest category of ARC membership, we honor individuals and businesses who have substantially contributed to the fulfillment of ARC’s mission. These special supporters who value the preservation of rivers and land for life will receive the benefits of ARC membership plus exclusive opportunities for the rest of their lives.

Find out more about the qualifications and benefits of ARC’s Lifetime Membership by contacting melissa@ARConservancy.org.
Volunteer Opportunities

Those interested in attending one of these opportunities, please visit related links for details. Due to social distancing guidelines each site will have a maximum of 10 volunteers. We encourage participation from El Dorado County community members.

River Cleanups: September 26 & 27
Locations will be along the South Fork American River, Hangtown Creek and the Cosumnes River.
To sign up, visit https://app.donorview.com/L8P7g or contact briegan@ARConservancy.org.

Wakamatsu Farm Workdays: Sept. 2, 16, 30 October 14, 28 and November 4 & 18
join ARC staff for volunteer work days at Wakamatsu Farm.
Volunteer work days will be centered around site improvement projects that may include: weeding, native plant cultivation, orchard care and trail maintenance.
Sign up online at https://app.donorview.com/Z6L7m or contact briegan@ARConservancy.org.

This spring and summer stewardship opportunities were minimal, but the work was mighty. Thank you to everyone who helped at Wakamatsu Farm including the gardens, barn, and Bluebird monitoring. And those that helped finish work on the Salmon Falls Ranch connector trail which is expected to open in August.
Eddies… Volunteering April-June 2020

During this challenging time ARC has operated with an abundance of caution for our community members by cancelling many volunteer opportunities. Some dedicated volunteers have continued to work independently in order to assist ARC with various tasks. Whether through the interest of new volunteers or the perseverance of others, ARC is constantly grateful for the desire of individuals to give back to their community. We thank you all and hope to work alongside you in the near future.

Albert, Heinrich
Archuleta, Lew
Bean, Mike
Bertram, Susan
Bertram, Tracy
Bly, Gretchen
Borth, Suzanne
Brooks, Barry
Brown, Katy
Carlson, Greg
Christensen, Cinda
Ciofalo, Cathy
Clark, Steve
Close, Lisa
Coe, Nancy
Collins-Parker, Lucinda
Collins, Clint
Crews, Hayley
Crowder, Jim & Kelly
Curran, Linda
Derr, Michael
Deseaux, Ivy
Dodson, Tom
Doty, George
Evans, Loyd & Pam
Finch, Martin
Frost-Hurzel, Rick, Teran & Melinda
Giles, John
Graham, Taylor
Hamlin, Rene
Hanebutt, Marcia
Hayes, Janet
Hieronimus, Jamie
Houtchens, Kathy
Hock, Bob
Houghton, Barbara
Jackson, Tim & Angela
Jensen, Bill
Johnstone, CP
Kilbourne, Rob
Krueger, Don
Lealuez, Annie
Leffler, Trish
Lind, Andrew
Malone, Kevin
Martin, Beverly
Mazzera, Rick (Rollin)
McDowell, Jennifer
Mengelkoch, Joan
Minton, Jonas
Mone, Catherine
Nelson, Chris
Nolan, Erich
Orth, Donna
Page, Karen
Parker, Steve
Petersen, Tom
Petree, Kimberly
Petrocchi, Paul
Petite, Judi
Pogue, Kyle
Robert-Cornell, John
Rosa, Vicki
Rossi, Janet
Rothman, Tracy
Quirk, Michael
Salomon, Christina
Smith, Bill & Teri
Soracco, Carla
Speck, Joseph
Staley, Clint
Standeven, Elizabeth
Still Rock’n & Friends (band)
Stroud, Ami
Tanimoto, Herb
Thomas, Chris
Tze-yue Hu, Gigi
Vail, Scott & Vicky
Van Dam, Claire
Van Pelt, Lee
Virlouvet, Asha
Vittore, Carol
Walrond, Ceci
Wyels, Wendy
To become a supporter see page 16, or visit us at ARConservancy.org.
PRESERVING RIVERS AND LAND FOR LIFE

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE THE AMERICAN RIVER CONSERVANCY’S VISION OF TOMORROW.

NOURISH THE LEGACY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE GIVING

VISIT ARCONSERVANCY.ORG TO MAKE A SECURE ONLINE DONATION

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○ Please contact me about planned giving/Legacy Circle
○ Make my gift anonymous

Donations of $45 or more will receive a 1-year membership. Your gifts to ARC are tax deductible.

Please make your check payable to the AMERICAN RIVER CONSERVANCY
348 Highway 49 • PO Box 562 • Coloma, CA 95613 • (530) 621-1224 • ARConservancy.org

American River Conservancy
P.O. Box 562
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