From FOLFAN President
Linda McDonald

The last day of the year marks the beginning of reflection for FOLFAN. We turned 5 years old in 2014 and had many milestones you’ll read about in this report. Each year since FOLFAN was founded in 2009, we have added significant programs and value to Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (SRA).

I am very proud of our Board of Directors—volunteers who give back to this park in their free time. Our monthly meetings with Park Superintendent Rich Preston give us the opportunity to collaborate on mutual priorities, share our park experiences and have a little fun at the same time.

This year FOLFAN has made strides in professionalism. We have been through a strategic planning process, improved our membership renewal efforts and adopted a communications policy. We hope our members and fans enjoy receiving short monthly e-newsletters with a consistent format.

To review FOLFAN’s financials for 2014, I must provide some background. Our first and most significant income is from Adopt-the-Parkway Financial Sponsorships. Those funds are designated for a variety of purposes including bike trail repairs, tools, supplies and clean-ups. Funds have been building up, allowing us to make a $20,000 contribution to repair the bike trail at Negro Bar in 2014.

The next major category in our funding is Earth Day. In the past, we have received a $5000 grant from the California State Park Foundation for Earth Day projects coordinated with State Parks. In 2014 the Foundation did not provide this grant program.

Comparing 2014 with 2013, FOLFAN’s general donations have held steady and our membership income has increased a wonderful 54%! We hope to continue growing steadily in the future. One of the difficulties a new nonprofit faces is the minimum cost of overhead—in the form of insurance—that is required to do business. So the greater our membership and general donation support, the less we spend on insurance as a percentage of our budget. And, more importantly, the more effective we can be in working toward our mission.

On behalf of everyone at FOLFAN, we hope you enjoy reviewing our accomplishments in this 2014 Annual Report!
Facebook Page

During the past year, FOLFAN kept its members, fans and friends informed of events and happenings affecting the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area through regular posts on its Facebook page. We posted status reports on the Negro Bar trail repairs, announced clean-up events and guided hikes, reported on salmon spawning habitat restoration at Nimbus Shoals, offered information about Folsom Lake water levels, and highlighted our participation in educational events, among other things.

Several of our posts were picked up and shared by other organizations and individuals, resulting in exposure of our organization to many hundreds of people. We are committed to expanding our use of social media to reach the widest possible audience.

Who We Are

Friends of Lakes Folsom and Natoma (FOLFAN) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization affiliated with Folsom Lake SRA, (which includes Lake Natoma) a unit of the California State Park System.

FOLFAN is managed by a volunteer board of directors whose mission is to enhance education and recreation opportunities for the public and protect the wonders and resources of Lakes Folsom and Natoma.

Additional information about FOLFAN, including its strategic plan, calendar of events and membership is available at:

www.FOLFAN.org
P.O. Box 257  Orangevale, CA 95662

Sacramento Environmental Commission Award

On April 21st, Crystal Tobias and Linda McDonald attended a meeting at the Sacramento Board of Supervisors Chambers to accept an award for FOLFAN’s accomplishments in 2013. FOLFAN won the award for “Providing Leadership Toward The Protection and Enhancement Of The Environment In Sacramento County” from the Sacramento Environmental Commission (SEC). Our nomination featured the Adopt-the-Parkway program, clean-up events and watershed education provided at the Electricity Fair and at the Summer Learning Program for at-risk youth.

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As part of its outreach efforts, on Saturday mornings FOLFAN staffed an information booth at Beals Point in an effort to make contact with bike riders and other users of the bike trail. We posted maps and drawings of pending trail projects and interacted directly with trail users to inform them of FOLFAN’s involvement in the planning and funding of those projects. We also answered questions about our organization, the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area and State Parks. It was an effective way to reach prospective members and fans who might not otherwise know about us. We plan to continue those efforts during 2015.

Folsom Chamber of Commerce

In September 2014, FOLFAN joined the Folsom Chamber of Commerce with the intention of raising our profile within the community. President Linda McDonnell attended several Chamber events including monthly Power Lunches, which offer great networking opportunities with other chambers including El Dorado Hills and Rancho Cordova. Linda also attended a new member orientation and member mixers. FOLFAN continues to make local business contacts, getting word out about our events and our mission. Brochures are available at the Folsom Chamber office at the Historic Depot in Old Folsom.

Trail Signs & Stenciling

As one of its projects, FOLFAN installs and maintains safety and courtesy signs on the bike trail. In 2014, we completed stenciling of safety signs along the pavement on the south side of Lake Natoma from Hazel Avenue to Negro Bar reminding walkers and joggers to stay left.
In 2014, FOLFAN had the pleasure of participating in the Folsom Historic District Farmer’s Market, a relatively new addition to the year-round farmers’ markets in the greater Sacramento area. This market began a number of years ago with 4-5 booths and took place only during late spring through early fall (and for a while on Thursday nights). However, the Historic District’s makeover completed several years ago made for a much more inviting location for such a market. For the past couple of years it has been expanded to a year-round event enjoyed by both locals and out-of-towners. One of the nice features of the Market is a community booth area, which is where FOLFAN set up shop in June and in October. Many area residents visited our booth and took away free copies of a nature coloring book, information on how they can help improve our environment, and State Park maps and brochures. We had fun talking with the visitors to our booth, and will be back at the Market in 2015!

FOLSOM Farmer’s Market

Big Day of Giving

FOLFAN participated in the Big Day of Giving May 6th 2014. This was a huge effort by the Sacramento Regional Foundation, in partnership with GiveLocalNow, Placer Community Foundation, Yolo Community Foundation, and other partners. Our community came together for 24 hours to support the work of nonprofits — through a coordinated social media campaign. All donations were made through a special portal, which links to our Giving Edge profile. Our region's BIG Day of Giving raised over $3 million for 394 participating nonprofits and ranked #2 in the nation. President Linda McDonald attended webinars and a boot camp to prepare for this effort. Despite being short-handed on that date, FOLFAN received 10 donations and a lot of inspiration to participate again in 2015.

PARTNERSHIPS

The American River Parkway Coalition is a group of individuals affiliated with Parkway stakeholder groups, neighborhood associations and interested members of the public who meet monthly to discuss issues concerning the Parkway. The group’s mission is to provide a forum for continuing communication, collaboration, and coordination in order to protect and preserve the natural and recreational resources of the American River Parkway and to monitor and implement the American River Parkway Plan. One of our Board members regularly participates in the Coalition as a representative of FOLFAN. Although the Coalition’s sphere of interest does not directly include Lakes Folsom and Natoma, we share many issues and concerns with the Lower American River, including resource protection, illegal camping, recreational use and misuse, and law enforcement activities. This “upstream” representation provides State Parks and FOLFAN with useful regional information.
Road and Trail Management Plan

FOLFAN Board members have been participating in an effort by California State Parks to develop a Road and Trail Management Plan for the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area. State Parks staff conducted a series of workshops with different "user groups" to solicit input. The planning team members are now developing the plan, which will include a number of new trail initiatives. Look for an outline of the plan in an upcoming issue of FOLFAN’s monthly newsletter.

Wildflower Nature Hike

Nothing says spring like wildflowers, and wildflowers are in abundance around Lake Natoma. From the California Pipevine (which hosts the Pipevine Swallowtail Butterfly caterpillar) to blue Larkspur, California poppies to sticky monkey flower—wildflowers begin making their appearance at Lake Natoma in late winter.

FOLFAN sponsored a nature hike on May 3rd, that took participants along Lake Natoma’s south shore, from the historic district to the fallen rope swing tree that finally cried “uncle” this past year and toppled into the lake (sadly, this was caused by humans who eventually eroded the bank where the tree stood for decades).

FOLFAN Board Member Crystal Tobias led the hike and provided commentary on the blooming flora. Hike participants had great fun and asked good questions. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing drought, the wildflower show at Lake Natoma was less than stellar in 2014. Some of the more unusual flowers that were not on the hike included the globe lily (found on the north side of the lake near Nimbus Dam), mimulus cardinalis (found in the south side of the lake near the water between the Historic Truss Bridge and the prison property), and Chinese Houses (collinsia heterophylla), found on the south side of the lake, west of China Wall. When you are out and about, keep your eyes open and look for the many different flowers along the paths—you’ll be amazed at what you see!
In January 2014, as the ongoing drought caused the Folsom Lake water level to recede to historic lows, the ruins of the Gold Rush community of Red Bank became accessible for the first time in decades. The old pioneer community had been flooded in the early 1950s when Folsom Dam and Folsom Lake were built. Local news stations broadcast reports about the site, erroneously identifying the community as “Mormon Island,” drawing thousands of people to the ruins. Mormon Island is located in deeper water closer to the dam and is unlikely to ever be seen again.

Unfortunately, most of those park visitors did not understand that the historic sites within Folsom Lake State Recreation Area are protected by Federal laws and regulations, including the Archaeological Resources Protection Act. Many park visitors were illegally removing, defacing, or disturbing the architectural features, artifacts, and historic objects. Some came with metal detectors, others with shovels, illegally taking artifacts, leaving trash, climbing on fragile rock foundations, and causing irreparable damage to this historic treasure.

State Parks rushed to pass emergency regulations prohibiting metal detectors and designating the site as a protected archeological resource, but easy public access from two entrances and the remoteness of the site prevented park staff from being able to adequately monitor the human activity.

FOLFAN began working with State Parks on an education plan for the Red Bank/Mormon Island area so that park visitors, including those who entered the park without actually going through a park entrance, would be given information that would help them understand how to enjoy and appreciate the historic sites during times of low water levels—without breaking any laws or doing any damage. Several individuals—including one FOLFAN Board member—trained as volunteer Docents at the site and began sharing information with visitors, helping to ensure protection of the resource.

FOLFAN also purchased tables and canopies, printed informational flyers, and made plans to staff information tables with volunteers at the two entrances in order to inform the public of the rules and the need to protect the site. Fortunately, the February rains raised the lake level enough to once again cover the ruins, but FOLFAN is now fully prepared to step in at a moment’s notice to help State Parks should the waters again recede enough to expose Red Bank.
AMGEN Tour of California

On May 12, 2014, the City of Folsom hosted the Second Stage men's and women's time trials of the AMGEN Tour of California bicycle race. It was a big event for the city, with food, entertainment and a variety of vendors. FOLFAN co-hosted an information booth with California State Parks affording us the opportunity to meet many visitors. We handed out maps and brochures about State Parks and Folsom State Recreation Area, shared information about FOLFAN, and passed out free goodies to the kids, including Junior Ranger badges and stickers. We also featured a natural history exhibit and photographs depicting the flora and fauna found in our area. This event attracted a lot of interest from local people who were previously unaware of FOLFAN and it gave us an opportunity to meet and greet them.

FOLFAN

2014 ATP Expenditures

- Stenciling paint—$5.69
- Negro Bar trail repairs—$20,000.00
- Picnic table repair supplies—$38.48
- Signage—$118.25
- Pogeys—$194.18
- Total—$20,356.60

Adopt-the-Parkway

The Adopt-the-Parkway program has been underway at Folsom Lake SRA for about six years. One of the primary, original reasons that FOLFAN was formed in 2009 was to serve as the fiduciary for the program. Several FOLFAN Board members are Adopt-the-Parkway Volunteer Stewards. This year, after a couple of years on the waiting list, FOLFAN Secretary Peggy Dalton, along with her husband Chet Pelton, adopted a mile. Currently, there are 15 Volunteer Stewards who donate 20 hours per quarter—80 hours per year—mostly picking up litter along their mile of the parkway.

In 2014, the program raised $6100 through seven Financial Sponsors. Over the years, the program has supported many efforts. Feedback from our members made it clear that bike trail repairs are a top priority. So, after careful review and planning with State Parks, FOLFAN partnered to support a project to make major drainage improvements at Negro Bar.

2014 Adopt-the-Parkway Financial Sponsors

- Aerojet/GenCorp Foundation
- Michael and Sandra Holman
- 3QC Enlightened Buildings
- Jeff Schmidt and Deric Treon/The Prudential
- The Tailgaters
- Shoemaker Podiatry and Ankle Care
- McDonald Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning, Inc.
FOLFAN Annual Member Mixer

The 2014 Member Mixer featured An Aerial Tour of California State Parks slide show presented by Jim Woodward. The amazing program began with aerial views of California’s northernmost parks and then headed south covering our diverse state’s beaches, lakes, mountains and deserts.

About 30 FOLFAN members gathered at the Powerhouse Visitor Center on March 22nd to listen to FOLFAN President Linda McDonald talk about FOLFAN’s accomplishments during 2013 and plans for 2014. Ranger Barry Smith stopped by to welcome the group, thanked them for their support, and gave a brief forecast for what would be happening in the park in 2014. Members enjoyed refreshments and appetizers and a chance to peruse the visitor center exhibits.

Photo Workshop

In October, FOLFAN held its first photography workshop. A dozen photo enthusiasts met with FOLFAN board member and long-time travel writer/photographer Ken McKowen at the Folsom Powerhouse visitor center. The participants were a mixed group with a couple having a fair amount of photo experience, but most knowing little about photography beyond being able to turn their cameras on and take snapshots.

Ken condensed 40-plus years of experience into an hour-long PowerPoint program explaining everything from the relationship between focus and depth-of-field to how to control image size and resolution. Then it was off to put into practice what was learned.

The group spent the remainder of the morning shooting photos around the historic Folsom powerhouse and the adjacent oak woodland and Lake Natoma. Ken wandered among the participants answering questions and offering tips to improve their photography.

FOLFAN will be offering another photo workshop during 2015. Look for the announcement in future newsletters and on the website: www.FOLFAN.org.
Great American River Clean-up

FOLFAN and the visitors who use Lake Natoma are fortunate to have a dedicated group of folks who volunteer time and time again to help with our yearly clean-up events.

In September, FOLFAN partnered with the American River Parkway Foundation and provided a host site for their Great American River Clean-up, which is part of a larger international effort sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy. In California alone, 66,292 awesome volunteers picked up 1,030,571 pounds of trash and 98,761 pounds of recyclable materials. FOLFAN contributed about 50 volunteers to the total number, and we picked up approximately 400 pounds of trash. And since nothing works up an appetite like picking up garbage, FOLFAN hosted a BBQ funded by Crystal and Eric Tobias to feed our hungry volunteers.

Our newest Board member Michael Fox secured donated prizes that were awarded in a drawing to GARCU participants.

Earth Day Kayak Klean-up

The Annual Earth Day Kayak Cleanup Saturday held on April 19th, brought out 30 enthusiastic volunteers. Unlike previous years, the weather was cool and breezy, so several folks decided to stay on land rather than borrow tandem kayaks offered by the CSUS Aquatic Center. Despite the weather, we hauled in a lot of trash from the west end of Lake Natoma. Through this annual event, we honor Earth Day and feel that we’re getting the summer recreation season off to a good, clean start.

Electricity Fair

FOLFAN has been a regular partner in sponsoring the annual Electricity Fair at the Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park. The event draws hundreds of people of all ages, but especially kids who love our hands-on watershed education exhibit. Also popular are the docent-guided tours of the historic powerhouse that was the first ever to transmit long-distance hydroelectric power (from Folsom to Sacramento). The Electricity Fair is held annually on the first or second Saturday of September.
In 2014, FOLFAN began work on its Strategic Plan. The purpose of a Strategic Plan for a nonprofit organization like FOLFAN is to identify and prioritize its goals, objectives and strategies. Our strategic plan development process, which included reaching out to FOLFAN members and other key stakeholders, included an initial 2-page strategic plan, which is available on our website at www.FOLFAN.org.

FOLFAN will use the plan to guide us as we make decisions on resources, projects and new initiatives, and as we assess our progress on our stated goals and objectives.

FOLFAN Strategic Plan Development

Kids Don’t Float

FOLFAN is an ongoing financial sponsor of the popular *Kids Don’t Float* free loaner lifejacket program. During 2014 FOLFAN purchased 120 lifejackets for beaches at Granite Bay, Beals Point and Lake Natoma. The cost? Well worth the young lives they may have saved—$869.34.

This is an annual program, as many of the loaner lifejackets disappear during the swimming season (hopefully put to good use) and others simply wear out from lots of use and from constant exposure to the hot summer sun.
2015 FOLFAN Board of Directors

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