



Restore Hetch Hetchy

IN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Vol 6, No.3

Fall 2007

Asian Heritage Street Celebration in San Francisco

By Tuan Nguyen,
RHH San Francisco Field Director



Restore Hetch Hetchy had one of the most diverse and energetic booths at the Asian Heritage Street Celebration! I was accompanied by nine other friends and RHH volunteers who took their time to conduct outreach at the festival throughout the day on Saturday, May 19th, 2007. Our main objective was to bring awareness in San Francisco to our restoration campaign by passing out pins, bumper stickers, membership brochures, and newsletters. This objective was met, and exceeded, through our petition signature drive, where we asked people to be proponents of restoring Hetch Hetchy Valley so long as San Francisco's water and energy needs were satisfied. We promptly set up the generator and sound system at

8am. Although the festival did not start until 11am, there was a lot of prep work that needed to be carried out. The booth exhibited RHH materials as well as information from Environmental Defense. I was fortunate to have a DJ create some buzz with lively dance music. The Asian Heritage Street Celebration was successful in the sense that we were able to bring Restore Hetch Hetchy's message to a broader audience right in San Francisco. The RHH volunteers were able to collect 189 signatures, which included School Board Commissioner Jane Kim.

Most individuals who spoke with us were unaware of Hetch Hetchy Valley. However, once they were informed of our "win-win" restoration philosophy, these individuals became genuinely receptive to the cause and subsequently signed our petition. People attending the festival were diverse in age and ethnicity. We were also able to get vital airtime with the local CW Network, where RHH volunteer Angela McClure and I had the opportunity to introduce ourselves on camera and to plug Restore Hetch Hetchy. This gave

Restore Hetch Hetchy a great opportunity to push our agenda with the popular media. Mayor Gavin Newsom quickly walked by our booth but he did not stop. We will make sure to have opportunities to converse with the Mayor in future. The crew packed up for the day at 5:30pm. In summary, I was thrilled with our efforts at the festival, and I



RHH San Francisco Field Director, Tuan Nguyen (center) and volunteers at the Asian Heritage Street Celebration

hope to gain a foothold in other neighborhood districts as well. I would like to thank our energetic and diverse group of volunteers: Marty Kirkwood, Ursula Arvand, Angela McClure, Ray McClure, Alex Santos, Jed Chan, Micah Allen, Michael Tsang, and Arjuna Twombly. Through their dedication, Restore Hetch Hetchy now has a strong voice right in San Francisco!



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Editor's note: The Summer edition of the RHH newsletter reprinted an op-ed piece, "Why do we let San Francisco keep a swamp in our back yard?" by RHH member Dick Hagerty that originally appeared in the Modesto Bee. In response, here's a letter to the editor by Dennis Latona, an RHH member from Sacramento.

Dear RHH,

I whole-heartedly agree with what Dick Haggerty says and I like his style!

However, when he makes the statement, "One wonders how San Franciscans would react if we all moved into their beloved Presidio, set up tents and campers and spent the season. Or better yet, an RV campout in Golden Gate Park. All free of charge, of course." it suggests to me, an avid supporter of RHH, that Mr. Haggerty is possibly suggesting that the people of San Francisco are the bad guys.

It has been my experience in volunteering for the RHH information tables at various events, that majority of the San Francisco and Bay Area residents are either uninformed of favorable conclusions from engineering studies (by UC Davis, Environmental Defense, Restore Hetch Hetchy, and Governor Schwarzenegger's Department of Water Resources), or are actually in favor of restor-

ing Hetch Hetchy and willing to sign our petition. The successes of RHH's new San Francisco Field Director, Tuan Nguyen, demonstrate this.

I feel it is only right and just, not to mention fair, to the good people of San Francisco to acknowledge their receptivity to our cause. There is a lot of political talk about San Francisco being an ecology-minded force to be reckoned with, and the folks that I've talked to who have signed our petitions are "Walking the Walk" not just "Talking the Talk!"

As we pursue our "win-win" solution to restoring Hetch Hetchy Valley, let's keep an open dialogue with all parties concerned to end John Muir's nightmare.



Dennis Latona

It Could Have Been Different

By Dr. Robert W. Righter

In early January 1903, San Francisco Mayor James Phelan and his City Engineer C.E. Grunsky were feeling pleased. The Hetch Hetchy Valley would soon be city property. They had purchased much of the valley and had filed the necessary water claims and paperwork. It was only necessary that Secretary of the Interior Ethan Hitchcock approve their request. It seemed like a sure thing. Both Phelan and Grunsky envisioned that soon sawyers would be cutting trees and bulldozers would be preparing the dam site.

But it was not to be. In a remarkable decision, Secretary Hitchcock denied the city's request. He rightly determined that his first obligation was to protect Yosemite National Park against invasion, which certainly included the Hetch Hetchy Valley. San Francisco City Attorney Franklin K. Lane appealed, but Hitchcock denied the appeal in December 1903. Soon after, Hitchcock wrote President Roosevelt, "If natural scenic attractions of the grade and character of Lake Eleanor and Hetch Hetchy Valley are not of the class which the law commands the Secretary to preserve and retain in their natural condition, it would seem difficult to find any in the Park that are unless it be the Yosemite Valley itself."

The city met its first major defeat. It was time to consider other

options. If damming the Hetch Hetchy Valley was Alternative A, Grunsky had an Alternative B. The city could, he suggested, damn Lake Eleanor, develop storage rights on Cherry Creek, and develop a free-flowing Tuolumne River. Adding the significant water re-

sources of the Spring Valley Water Company, the needs of San Francisco would be met for the foreseeable future. In fact, Grunsky stated that the Hetch Hetchy Valley could remain in abeyance, to be developed -- possibly -- sometime around the year 2000.

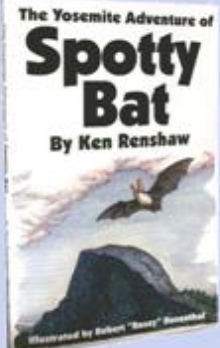
When Secretary Hitchcock refused the city a permit, it was an opportunity and the logical time for San Francisco to embrace Alternative B. But sometimes logic and reason are outweighed by stubbornness and political manipulation. In spite of its defeat, San Francisco held firm to the Hetch Hetchy idea. Unfortunately, the Earthquake and Fire of 1906 gave San Francisco the wedge it needed.



Dr. Robert Righter (left) meets with Yvon Chouinard (founder of Patagonia, and major supporter of Restore Hetch Hetchy), and Ron Good (Executive Director, RHH) near Jackson, Wyoming.

Thus was lost the first of a number of opportunities for compromise, which would have allowed the waters of the Tuolumne River to flow gently through the Hetch Hetchy Valley.

Dr. Righter is a Research Professor of History at Southern Methodist University, and author of *The Battle Over Hetch Hetchy, America's Most Controversial Dam and the Birth of Modern Environmentalism* (Oxford University Press), and *Crucible for Conservation, the Struggle for Grand Teton National Park* (Grand Teton Natural History Association).




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Restore Hetch Hetchy had its first meeting in June 1999 at the home of Marsh and Carol Pitman in Merced.

Front Row, left to right: Laura Lockwood, Susan Liebermann, Ron Good, Lee Stetson, Jonathan Fuhrer, Jeff Holt

Middle row, left to right: Harold Wood, Rick Farber, Bob Hackamack

Back Row, left to right: James Bush, Jerry Meral, Peter Jacobsen, Alan Cherrigan, Marsh Pitman, Spreck Rosekrans, Don Fuhrer

Restore Hetch Hetchy had its second meeting in September 1999 at the home of Marsh and Carol Pitman in Merced.

Front Row, left to right: Marsh Pitman, Ron Good, Susan Liebermann, Spreck Rosekrans, Bill Resneck.

Back Row, left to right: Jerry Meral, Laura Lockwood, Mark Cederborg, Harold Wood, Richard Wiebe, Bob Hackamack, James Bush



Thanks to Richard Wiebe for this trip down memory lane!



Wildnesswithin.com

was created in 1998 by environmentalist web designer Robert Brower in partnership with his father, conservationist David Brower. The website promotes the principles of conservation, preservation, and restoration of the Earth's natural resources. It is also a tribute to the late David and Robert Brower. Both David Brower and Robert Brower were avid supporters of the Restore Hetch Hetchy movement and were members of the Board of Directors.

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A Tribute to George Miller

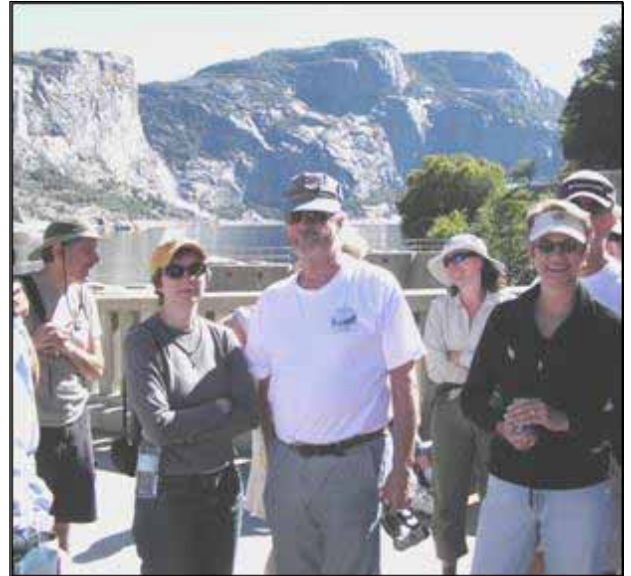
At our annual major donor appreciation dinner held at Sam's Restaurant in San Francisco on May 18, 2007, RHH Board member Don Fuhrer gave a fitting testimonial to George Miller:



Don Fuhrer

“I think George Miller defines the term ‘philanthropist,’ but a different breed of sorts. George’s caring for the Earth and for humanity is exemplified in his iconoclastic approach to dealing with the bureaucrats and politicians in San Francisco’s City Hall and water department, helping to jump start the effort to restore Yosemite’s Hetch Hetchy Valley by supporting Environmental Defense and our organization, and supplying water to the thirsty in Asia. I think the most important thing you can say about a person is that he has made a

difference, and this is certainly true of George, not only in his successful business career but also in his endeavor to share his wealth where it is needed in the world. Here’s to you, George!”



George Miller and, to his right, his wife, Janet McKinley, at Hetch Hetchy

Outings to Hetch Hetchy!

During the week of June 4-8, Restore Hetch Hetchy cooperated with the Yosemite-based outdoor adventure company, Y-explore, and Evergreen Lodge in providing outings at Hetch Hetchy. These outings were led by experienced naturalist-artist-photographer James McGrew and by Y-explore staff. For more information about Y-explore, please visit their website at: www.yexplore.com. For more information about Evergreen Lodge, please visit their website at: www.evergreenlodge.com. The purpose of these outings was to follow John Muir's example of helping people enjoy and explore Hetch Hetchy's charms (at least the ones above the water line!), and to learn about how they can help restore it. Please consider participating next year (probably in mid-May)!



Front row, left to right: Dan Daniels and Lindsay Trevino
Back row, left to right: Jeff Cuthbertson, Bob Kelso, Marcy Wheeler, and James McGrew



James McGrew (left) gives plein air art instruction to Marcy Wheeler (right)



Y-explore founder John DeGrazio

President's Budget Request Not Funded by Congress

In February, the President placed \$7 million in his National Park Service budget to study the restoration of Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley. This proposal resulted from the Schwarzenegger Administration's July 2006 report, which found it is "technically feasible" to restore the Valley and recommended that \$7 million be spent in cooperation with the federal government to study the concept in greater detail.

However, this summer, Con-



Congressman Dan Lungren

gress decided not to go along with the President's budget recommendation in its appropriations bill. This action came despite educational efforts by Restore Hetch Hetchy and other environmental organizations that signed a "group letter" of support to members of Congress. Those organizations included: Environmental Defense, Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, Clean Water Action, Tuolumne River Trust, Earthjustice, Friends of the Earth, Sierra Nevada Alliance, South Yuba River Citizens League, Planning & Conservation League, Northern California Council of the Fed-

eration of Fly Fishers, Natural Heritage Institute, The Bay Institute, and Mono Lake Committee. Thanks to all those organizations for their support.

In a dramatic effort to keep the President's budget recommendation in the Congressional appropriations bill, Congressman Dan Lungren (R-Gold River) made a thoughtful, impassioned, and heartfelt speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. To view the speech, go to Congressman Lungren's website, www.lungren.house.gov and type "Hetch Hetchy" in the search window. Here's an excerpt:

"[Hetch Hetchy] is one of the beautiful natural resources in this country . . . Restore this valley, and show that we can provide that water supply to the city of San Francisco so that we could give our children and our grandchildren this great natural resource. Can you imagine if we could give back to the American people another Yosemite Valley? . . . I am not saying stop the water from going to San Francisco. I'm saying



there are alternatives that would restore this beautiful, fantastic feature of nature . . ."

In response to Congressman Lungren's speech, Congressman Norm Dicks (D-WA), Chair of the House Appropriations Committee's Interior and Environment Subcommittee, stated on the House floor: "I am sensitive to what the gentleman has said in terms of the importance of this. And we will take this very seriously . . . and we'll continue to work with our friend from California who is a valued member of the House."

Commenting on Congress not funding the Hetch Hetchy restoration study, the *Sacramento Bee* editorialized: "We remain convinced that one day . . . the nation will realize the wisdom of restoring Yosemite -- our only national park with a valley plugged up by a municipal drinking water reservoir. With incremental investments over a generation, this 'twin' of the Yosemite Valley, as Muir put it, could regain its place as a part of our nation's heritage."

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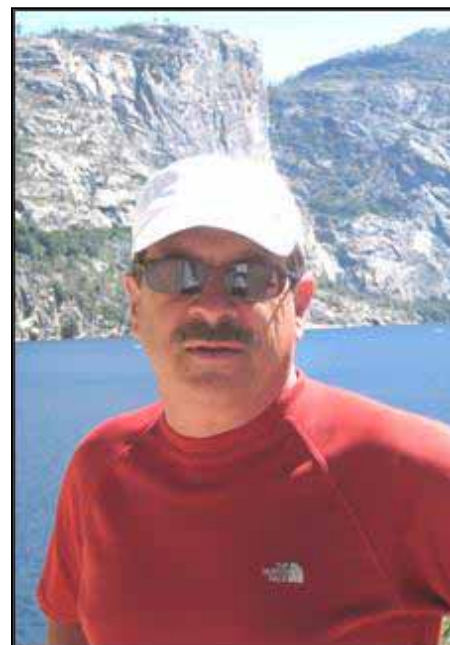
MEET OUR RHH BOARD - LANCE OLSON

Lance H. Olson is the senior law partner of Olson, Hagel & Fishburn, LLP, the firm he founded in 1977. Lance specializes in the practice of election and political law. He earned a B.A. degree in political science from California State University, Sacramento in 1972; and, he received his law degree from the University of the Pacific's McGeorge School of Law in 1977.

The law firm's clientele includes candidates, elected officials, PACs, ballot measure committees, lobbyists, lobbyist employers and major donors, as well as individuals, labor organizations, businesses and government agencies involved in the political process.

Lance is a devoted backpacker of nearly 40 years. He has hiked extensively throughout

the Sierra Nevada mountains and many other areas of California as well as in Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, and Peru. He first became acquainted with Hetch Hetchy while in college when he first backpacked out of the area. Lance has long believed that the Valley should be restored to its natural state. In recent years, he became aware of Restore Hetch Hetchy's efforts through fellow board member Jerry Meral. On several long backpack trips through the Sierra, Lance and Jerry strategized about how best politically to go about restoration of the Valley. Those conversations eventually led Lance to not only join RHH, but seek a position on the Board to which he was appointed in May, 2007. He has been a member of Restore Hetch Hetchy since 2002. Lance says, "I look forward to the day

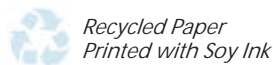


when I can hike through Hetch Hetchy Valley and not just around it."

Lance lives in Sacramento with his wife Suzette where they enjoy road cycling, gardening, and cooking. Lance and Suzette are the proud parents of three grown children.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO RESTORE HETCH HETCHY! The expiration date of your membership is located near your name and address at the bottom of this page. To renew, please use the form on page 7, or go to our website, www.hetchhetchy.org, and click on "Join or Renew" and use the secure Network for Good system. Thanks!

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