



Restore Hetch Hetchy

IN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

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Summer 2005

PULITZER PRIZE AWARDED TO SACRAMENTO BEE EDITOR, TOM PHILP, FOR HETCH HETCHY EDITORIALS

(excerpted from *The Bee* article of 4/5/05 by staff writer Sam Stanton)

Tom Philp, an associate editor of *The Sacramento Bee's* editorial board, won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing Monday for a series urging the restoration of Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley. Philp, 43, choked back tears as he watched for Associated Press news bulletins announcing at 12:08 p.m. that he'd won American journalism's highest honor.

"I still have a hard time accepting this," Philp said as his colleagues and family surrounded him in *The Bee* newsroom, applauding loudly.

The award, which includes a \$10,000 prize, came for

"Hetch Hetchy Reclaimed," a package of what the Pulitzer board called "deeply researched editorials on reclaiming



Tom Philp at Hetch Hetchy Valley in 2004. RHH Executive Director, Ron Good, accompanied Tom Philp at Hetch Hetchy and tried to "let the great granite walls and booming waterfalls speak for themselves." Apparently they spoke the right language. Pyramid-shaped LeConte Point is in the center and Kolana Rock is on the right. Tueeulala Fall and Wapama Fall are outside the picture.

California's flooded Hetch Hetchy Valley that stirred action."

Philp's editorials eventually led to suggestions by key legislators [including

Assemblywoman Lois Wolk (D-Davis)] that the idea be studied, and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's administration has since agreed to assess the possibility of storing the water elsewhere.

Philp said he first contemplated writing about Hetch Hetchy on a plane flight as he looked out at the state's reservoirs and valleys below.

"I was aboard Southwest

Airlines heading to Southern California, and as the water writer you like to look at the reservoirs along the way," he said. "I just looked out at Yosemite and Hetch Hetchy and *Continued*



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thought, 'How beautiful.' " Hetch Hetchy, which has been dubbed "Yosemite's second great valley," was flooded after Congress approved legislation in 1913 to dam the Tuolumne River and flood the valley upstream. The measure provided San Francisco with a water supply it has relied upon since 1923.

Philp said he finally was spurred to tackle the project after reading a *Fresno Bee* story in December 2003 about a University of California, Davis, study on whether Hetch Hetchy could be drained and restored without damaging San Francisco's water supply.

A computer model crafted by UC Davis graduate student Sarah Null and faculty adviser Jay Lund provided evidence the dam could be breached and the water held downstream in other reservoirs without depriving San Francisco of any water. "That was kind of the turning point to think about taking it seriously," he said. "It just took a while to get up the courage to suggest it."

Editorial note: readers of this newsletter who are interested in more details about the UC Davis study can visit the Restoration Studies page of our website, www.hetchhetchy.org. 

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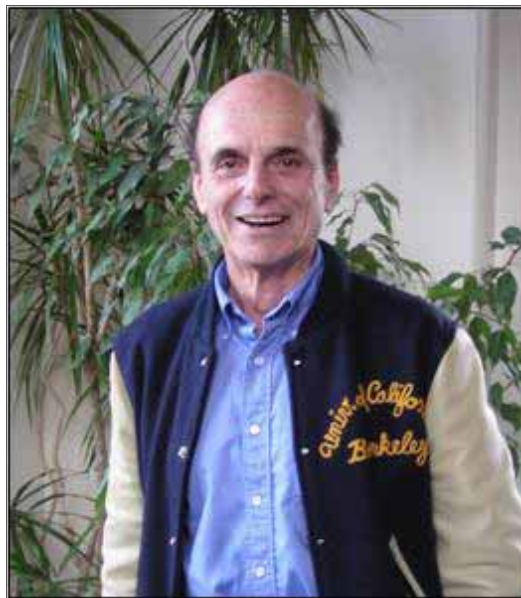
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MEET OUR BOARD – RICHARD RYPINSKI

Richard lives in San Francisco and has great hopes that his favorite city will soon actively start looking for feasible alternatives to using the Hetch Hetchy Valley to store water. Richard first saw Hetch Hetchy on a solo backpack trip down “the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne” in 1946 after completing a summer with the National Park Service. Since then, he has hiked most of the Eastern Sierra Crest including leading a national Sierra Club trip in Yosemite backcountry. Richard graduated from UC Berkeley and Boalt School of Law. He served on the board of the San Diego Chapter of the Sierra Club and was Chapter chair in 1970. He became involved in San Diego regional land-use politics serving as planning commissioner, council member, and finally as Mayor of the City of Del Mar and chair of the San Diego Council of Governments. In 1979, he accepted an

appointment as Chief Counsel of the State’s Department of Transportation during the



Richard Rypinski

Jerry Brown Administration. Rather than returning to San Diego with the change of administrations, he handled litigation for Caltrans in San Francisco.

Richard went into private practice in 1986, specializing in CEQA and NEPA issues and land valuation litigation. He is now winding up his practice with McDonough, Holland and Allen and describes himself as a “recovering lawyer.” He lives with his wife Mary, an ardent camper.

For the last three years, he has been auditing classes at UC Berkeley and San Francisco State in forest resources, wildfire science, silviculture, resource ecology, California forest policy, environmental economics, and geology. He has attended field classes over two summers in forest ecology and geology at the San Francisco State Sierra Nevada Field Campus.

Richard says:

“ Political decision makers made some very bad resource decisions early in the 1900s because few took into consideration how much California would grow—it was a time of seemingly unlimited resources and very few people. Hopefully, if public officials consider staggering future growth, we will not make the same mistake again with Hetch Hetchy. Tuolumne River water will always be there for domestic use--simply stored outside the National Park—and future populations will enjoy this ‘Second Yosemite.’”



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The Battle over Hetch Hetchy *America's Most Controversial Dam and the Birth of Modern* *Environmentalism*

by Dr. Robert W. Righter

In March, Dr. Robert Righter's new historical book on Hetch Hetchy was released by Oxford University Press. Dr. Righter grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area and is currently a Research Professor of History at Southern Methodist University. The book has already been reviewed in the *New Yorker*, the *Washington Post*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The book is available on our website, www.hetchhetchy.org or can be ordered using the form on page 7 of the newsletter for \$28, which includes postage and shipping.

The following description and reviews were released by Oxford University Press: "In the wake of the devastating 1906 earthquake and fire, the city of San Francisco desperately needed reliable supplies of water and electricity. Its mayor, James Phelan, pressed for the damming of the Tuolumne River in the newly created Yosemite National Park, setting off a firestorm of protest. For the first time in American history, a significant national opposition arose to defend and preserve nature, led by John Muir and the Sierra Club, who sought to

protect what they believed was the right of all Americans to experience natural beauty, particularly the magnificent mountains of the Yosemite region. "Yet the defenders of the valley, while opposing the creation of a dam and reservoir, did not intend for it to be maintained as wilderness. Instead they advocated a different kind of development--the building of roads, hotels, and an infrastructure to support recreational tourism. Using articles, pamphlets, and broadsides, they successfully whipped up public opinion against the dam. Letters from individuals began to pour into Congress by the thousands, and major newspapers published editorials condemning the dam.

"The fight went to the floor of Congress, where politicians debated the value of scenery and the costs of western development. Ultimately, passage of the passage of the Raker Act in 1913 by Congress granted San Francisco the right to flood the Hetch Hetchy Valley. A decade later the O'Shaughnessy Dam, the second largest civil engineering project of its day after the Panama Canal, was completed. Yet

conflict continued over the ownership of the watershed and the profits derived from hydroelectricity. To this day the reservoir provides San Francisco with a pure and reliable source of drinking water and an important source of power. Although the Sierra Club lost this battle, the controversy stirred the public into action on behalf of national parks. Future debates over dams and restoration clearly demonstrated the burgeoning strength of grassroots environmentalism. In a narrative peopled by politicians and business leaders, engineers and laborers, preservationists and ordinary citizens, Robert W. Righter tells the epic story of the first major environmental battle of the twentieth century, which reverberates to this day."

Reviews

"*The Battle over Hetch Hetchy* is something beyond merely the best book anyone has ever written on confluence of canyon, dam, and city that so shaped the story of the modern American West. It is both a well-argued history and a beautifully-written testimony of hubris and loss, even possible redemption. If our places and times really do shape

Continued on page 5


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us, Californian Bob Righter was born to write this book. He now joins Pinchot, Muir, Brower as part of its story."--Dan Flores, author of *The Natural West*

"This book is a masterful study of the major symbolic controversy of American environmental history, the clash between resource exploitation and preservation of wild nature. In his gracefully written, skillfully researched work, Robert Righter, one of our leading environmental historians, untangles the surprisingly complicated and contradictory debate over Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy, which has continued into the 21st century and remains as relevant today as it was a century ago when John Muir tried and failed to stop the city of San Francisco from damming the pristine Sierra valley for public water and electrical power. In the current climate, when the nation and world face the same vital larger issues,

and when forces are mounting to tear out what may have been an researched work, Robert Righter, one of our leading environmental historians, untangles the surprisingly complicated and contradictory debate over Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy, which has continued into the 21st century and remains as relevant today as it was a century ago when John Muir tried and failed to stop the city of San Francisco from damming the pristine Sierra valley for public water and electrical power. In the current climate, when the nation and world face the same vital larger issues, and when forces are mounting to tear out what may have been an unnecessary human defilement of nature, this wise and sensitive book could not have come at a better time."--Richard J. Orsi, California State University, Hayward
"Tragedy, the philosopher Hegel tells us, can come from the clash of competing goods. In this

thoroughly researched, elegantly written, and even-handed history, Robert Righter chronicles how alternative views of Americas future - urbanism versus the preservation of the environment -- collided at Hetch Hetchy Valley. The founding of cities inevitably involves a sacrifice of environment. In losing the Hetch Hetchy Valley, America more than paid its price to bring into being metropolitan San Francisco."--Kevin Starr, author of the Americans and the California Dream series

"Righter tells for the first time ever the full story of this famous wild valley in California and the battle that once raged, and is still raging today, over its fate. This is exemplary environmental history--well-researched, balanced and fair-minded, yet told with passion for the natural world."--Donald Worster, author of *A River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell* 

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Restore Hetch Hetchy in Action

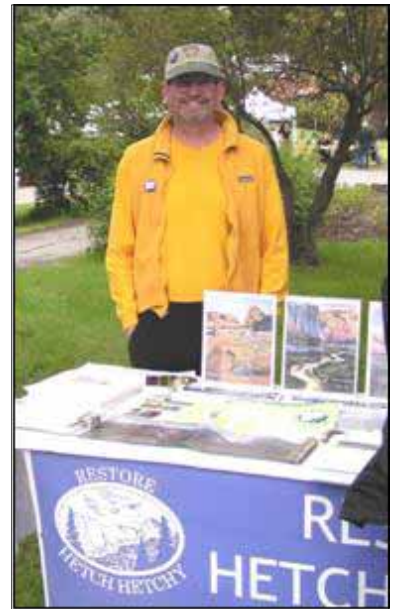


Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) (center) receives an Albert Bierstadt poster of Hetch Hetchy Valley from RHH representatives Jerry Meral, Board member (left) and Ron Good, Executive Director (right).



RHH volunteers (left to right) Gretchen Snyder, Ralph Wood, Terry Williams, and Ken Dawdy

Our
information
table at the
John Muir
National
Historic Site,
April 23, 2005



RHH volunteer Jim Ross



RHH volunteers Dan Lucas (left) and Sylvia Jordan (right)



RHH volunteers Rick Najarian (left) and Karen Najarian (right)

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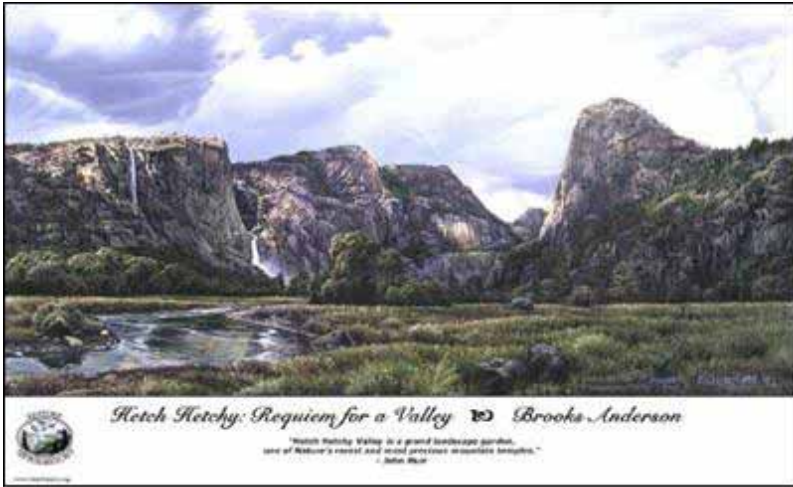
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These posters are shipped with a light gray matting, in a plastic sleeve with a foamboard backing. The poster itself is

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