



## DAMS—the good, the bad and the in-between

There's no denying that dams devastate rivers and valleys, and disrupt fisheries around the globe. Dams, **none more so than O'Shaughnessy Dam in Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley**, have also destroyed some of the world's most spectacular landscapes.

It is impractical, however, to be against all dams. Dams store water for urban and agricultural use throughout the year and during droughts. Many dams also provide flood control and make hydroelectric power possible.

In California and elsewhere, some dams are being removed while new ones are being built. Here's a quick look at a few recent changes as well as a big project on the horizon.

**Dam removal:** The Klamath River—after a massive fish kill in 2002 and two decades of advocacy and negotiations, four dams on the Klamath River are being removed. Improvements in water quality as well as access to additional spawning habitat are expected to support a healthy salmon fishery upon which the Yurok, Karok and Hoopa Valley Tribes have depended for millennia.

Before removal began, the Klamath Dams generated 696 million kilowatt hours of electricity annually—roughly twice what will be lost when Hetch Hetchy Valley is restored and summertime generation at the Kirkwood powerhouse is no longer possible.

*(Continued on Page 3)*



*Panorama by Thomas B. Dunklin*

*Removal of 175 foot tall Iron Gate (above) and other Klamath dams will have zero affect on Klamath Basin farmers, whose lands lie upstream.*

### Improving the Visitor Experience

Restore Hetch Hetchy is continuing to work with the National Park Service to improve access and provide recreational activities at Hetch Hetchy in several areas, including:

- ◆ **Fishing** – We were pleased to submit a letter to the Superintendent on behalf of 24 other organizations and businesses (listed at right) requesting access to the reservoir for fishing while asserting that the current restriction has no basis in law.
- ◆ **Boating** – Our April 8 letter to the NPS asserts there is compelling rationale that non motorized vessels must be allowed on Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. We have asked the National Park Service to explain if there is any legally valid reason to continue the restriction.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

### Groups supporting fishing at Hetch Hetchy Reservoir

- ◆ Aspen Outdoor Management Services ◆ California Sportfishing Protection Alliance ◆ Echo Cooperative ◆ Evergreen Lodge, Rush Creek Lodge & Firefall Ranch ◆ Fly Fisherman Magazine ◆ Friends of the River ◆ Merced Fly Fishers ◆ Nesporado Fly Fishing ◆ Northern California Council, Fly Fishers International ◆ Pasadena Casting Club ◆ Restore Hetch Hetchy ◆ Santa Barbara Fly Fishers ◆ Santa Cruz Fly Fishing Club ◆ Sierra Nevada Alliance ◆ Sonora Fly Company ◆ Stanislaus Fly Fishers ◆ Tight Line Therapy ◆ Trout Unlimited ◆ Trout Unlimited ◆ Central Sierra Chapter ◆ Tuolumne River Trust ◆ Yosemite Fly Fishing ◆ Yosemite Fly Fishing Guides ◆ Yosemite Adventure Guides ◆ Yosemite Outfitters ◆

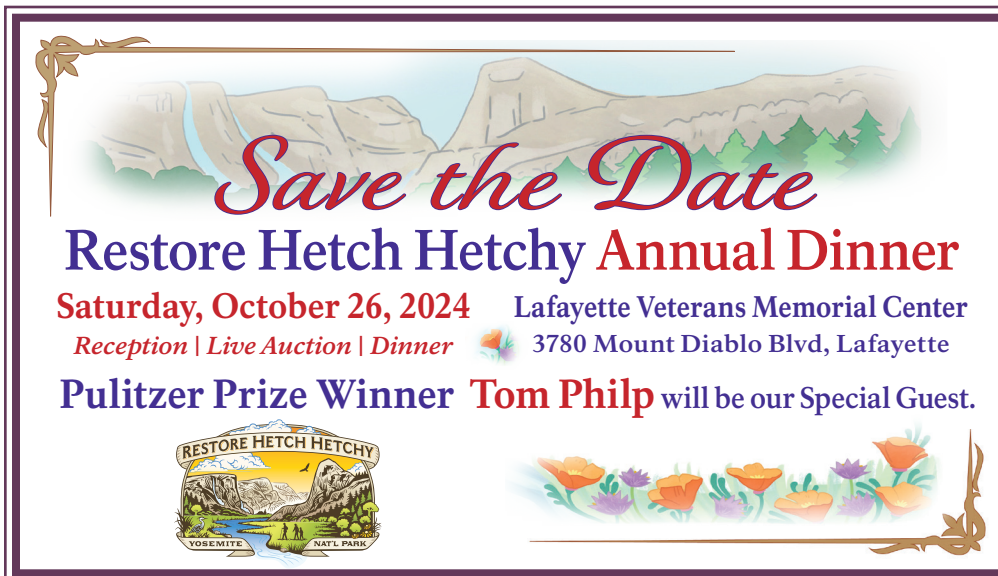
*While fish are plentiful, fishing is not possible as access below the reservoir's HIGH WATER MARK is prohibited. Support for changing this National Park Service policy is widespread.*

- ◆ **Camping** – San Francisco has agreed to provide both potable water and sanitation to the Hetch Hetchy Campground. The improvement is scheduled for completion in 2025, after which we hope the National Park Service will allow all visitors to use the campground.
- ◆ We have asked the National Park Service to better teach visitors about Hetch Hetchy's natural and human history, including both use of the valley by Indigenous peoples and the unprecedented decision to allow a dam in a national park.
- ◆ We are pleased gate hours have been extended. We would like to see Hetch Hetchy open 24 hours a day, similar to the rest of Yosemite National Park.

In the short run, these and other improvements will enhance the visitor experience. In the long run, we will build support for relocating the reservoir and restoring the valley to its natural splendor.

When Congress approved legislation to build a dam at Hetch Hetchy, members of both houses expected the area to be improved for park visitors. Ever since Superintendent Horace Albright tried and failed to allow boats on the reservoir in the 1920s, however, Hetch Hetchy has been neglected in favor of the many other pressing priorities in Yosemite. Restore Hetch Hetchy is committed to reversing this neglect as we build support for restoration.

Restore Hetch Hetchy seeks to partner with the National Park Service to make these improvements. We do believe, however, that the current prohibitions on boating and fishing contravene federal and state law. **These activities are not discretionary – they must be allowed.**



*Save the Date*  
**Restore Hetch Hetchy Annual Dinner**  
**Saturday, October 26, 2024** Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center  
*Reception | Live Auction | Dinner* 3780 Mount Diablo Blvd, Lafayette  
**Pulitzer Prize Winner Tom Philp** will be our Special Guest.

*Tom Philp of the Sacramento Bee won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for journalism after writing a deeply researched influential series advocating for the restoration of Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park. Please join Tom and Restore Hetch Hetchy at our Annual Dinner.*

# HETCH HETCHY VISIONARIES

## BEQUEST CHALLENGE MATCH

Include us in your future bequest. Tell us about it.

A matching donation of up to \$100,000 (equal to 10% of your planned gift's current value) will be made in 2024 by a generous supporter!

For more information visit [hetchhetchy.org/visionaries](https://hetchhetchy.org/visionaries) or email [admin@hetchhetchy.org](mailto:admin@hetchhetchy.org).

## DAMS

Continued

**Prospective dam removal** – Agreements are in place to allow the removal of Cape Van Horn and Scott (Lake Pillsbury) dams on the Eel River in Mendocino County. The removals will eliminate the disturbance of the river's natural flow and are expected to benefit populations of both salmon and steelhead. The Eel River's gain, however, will be a loss for Potter Valley farmers and others in Sonoma County of up to 58,000 acre-feet per year—roughly equivalent to what Hetch Hetchy Reservoir provides annually over a six-year drought.

**California's most recent large dam and reservoir** – Diamond Valley Reservoir in Riverside County was first filled to its capacity of 800,000 acre-feet in 2003. Construction generated little controversy. The reservoir stores water diverted from the Colorado River for urban southern California and doubles as a popular fishing spot.

**Proposed new reservoir** – Sites Reservoir, at a location on the west side of the Sacramento Valley, would hold 1,800,000 acre-feet of water—the largest reservoir built in California since New Melones was completed in 1980. It is “off-stream” and would be filled only when “excess” flows from the Sacramento River can be diverted to fill it. Due to the disruption of flows into the Bay-Delta, Sites Reservoir is actively opposed by environmental and fishing groups. Water agencies are particularly attracted to Sites Reservoir due to substantial cost-sharing commitments from State bonds and Federal appropriations.



*The narrow gap was an enticing place to build a dam, but water would not reach San Francisco for 21 years.*

**Under construction beyond the United States-** Egypt stands to lose much of its Blue Nile water supply as Ethiopia fills its Grand Renaissance Dam for hydro-power generation.



## Hetch Hetchy Reservoir was never a smart choice

San Francisco's obsession with damming Hetch Hetchy Valley in the early 20th century came about because former Mayor Phelan had acquired water rights to the Tuolumne River and because the narrow entrance to valley was an attractive dam site (photo at left). The project, however, required tunneling through the coast range at extremely high cost in lives, money and time. After Congress passed legislation, **it would be 21 years before water reached the Bay Area.**

Other sites were available. Engineer Taggart Aston, for example, had recommended San Francisco develop water on the Mokelumne River, just north of the Tuolumne. The San Francisco Examiner, in cahoots with City leaders, maliciously labeled Aston a criminal. By the time Taggart successfully sued the Examiner and its Publisher William Randolph Hearst for libel, the Raker Act been passed.

A few years later, East Bay cities turned their attention to the Mokelumne. Rather than tunneling through the Coast Range, they built their aqueduct around the north side of Mt. Diablo. **Water was successfully delivered water to Oakland and other communities just 5 years after the project began.**

There is no denying that the reservoir and dam provide water supply and hydropower benefits. As with dams on the Eel and Klamath, however, these services can be replaced—wthe Tuolumne River can again **run free** and Hetch Hetchy Valley can come back to life.

## Restore Hetch Hetchy

3286 Adeline Street, Suite 7  
Berkeley, CA 94703



*Gateway to Hetch Hetchy by Tom Coyle*

### ***An improved visitor experience, even with the DAM in place, is a means to an end***

The Hetch Hetchy story is well known among environmentalists, historians and aficionados of Yosemite National Park. Surprisingly, however, Hetch Hetchy is not well-known or understood among the general population—something we must change as we build support for restoration.

Some people know Hetch Hetchy as “near” Yosemite, rather than as part of it. Others think of Hetch Hetchy as synonymous with San Francisco’s water supply—rather than simply one of nine storage tanks for the City’s water.

There’s no better way to teach people about Hetch Hetchy—its history as well as the opportunity for its restoration, than to encourage them to visit.

We will be continuing to advocate for improved trails, low impact boating, public transportation, camping, fishing and other upgrades that will benefit all park visitors. We’ve also told the Park Service it’s important to tell the story of Hetch Hetchy to visitors—something that has inexcusably slipped between the cracks.



Spreck Rosekrans  
Executive Director

### **As more visitors come to Hetch Hetchy, they will learn its story and help build support for the campaign to restore the valley.**



## *Please Contribute.*

**Return Hetch Hetchy Valley to its natural splendor.**

**The vision of Restore Hetch Hetchy is to return to the people Yosemite Valley’s lost twin, Hetch Hetchy—a majestic glacier-carved valley with towering cliffs and waterfalls, an untamed place where river and wildlife run free, a new kind of national park.**



**Use attached envelope or contribute online.**