



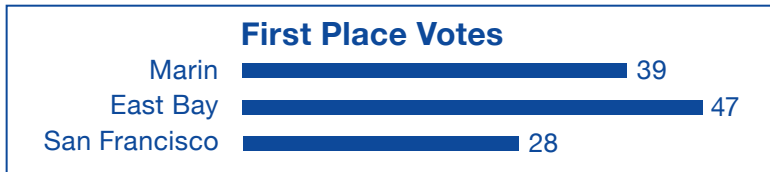
## The taste of water and why it matters

**Double-blind taste tests indicate preference for East Bay and Marin water over San Francisco’s “Hetch Hetchy” supply**

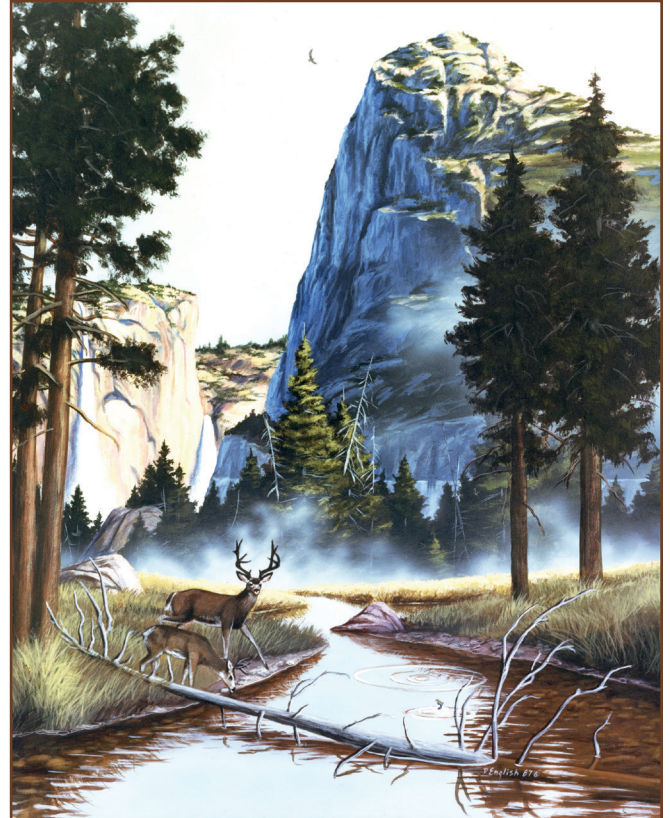
Officials in San Francisco have long touted the quality of its water as superior to that provided by other agencies. Is it really that good? The answer is no, it seems.

In a series of double-blind taste tests conducted between June and October, 75% of participants ranked water from the East Bay or Marin as superior to that from San Francisco.

Restoration opponents have frequently cited the alleged superior water quality of “Hetch Hetchy” water as a reason to maintain the status quo. Further, the National Park Service has used water quality as rationale to prohibit boating and fishing on the reservoir. The taste test results repudiate both these arguments.



The water taste test was designed and initiated by graduate students at the University of Colorado. Subsequent tests were administered by Restore Hetch Hetchy, all using double-blind methodology and other protocols. For more information, see [hetchhetchy.org/water-taste-test](http://hetchhetchy.org/water-taste-test).

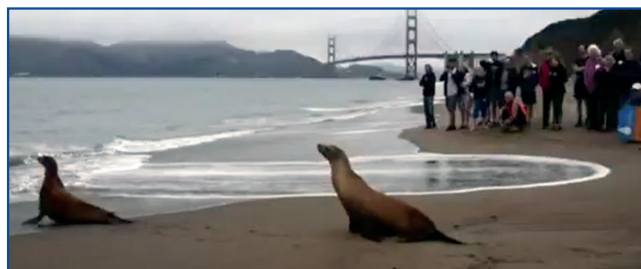


Kolana Rock by Daved English - Artwork commissioned by Secretary of Interior Don Hodel when he proposed restoration in 1987.

## Damming Hetch Hetchy and other transgressions

### The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission: an institution in need of reform

**Hetch Hetchy Valley:** Congress famously permitted San Francisco to dam and flood Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park in the early 20th century. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, which manages Hetch Hetchy Reservoir and eight others, has been unwilling to consider system improvements that would allow the valley’s return to its highest and best use as part of the Yosemite National Park.



During storms, billions of gallons of untreated effluent are released into the ocean and bay, resulting in harm to wildlife and beach closures.

Photo: Marine Mammal Center

**The Clean Water Act:** Rather than reduce spills of raw sewage into the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission has filed suit to challenge Environmental Protection Agency’s enforcement of the Clean Water Act. The lawsuit, opposed by 13 states (including California) and 8 out of 10 City Supervisors, has now been heard by United States Supreme Court. Should San Francisco prevail it will be allowed to continue dumping large amounts of sewage into the ocean and a ruling could set a precedent for other cities across the country to do the same.

(continued on page 2)

# The Visitor Experience at Hetch Hetchy: Improvements & Roadblocks



Potable water and other improvements are needed at the campground.

As long as the dam is in place, Restore Hetch Hetchy is committed to improving access and expanding recreation opportunities for visitors. As more people come to Hetch Hetchy, they will learn its story and will be encouraged to support the campaign for its restoration.

**Access:** The National Park Service has expanded the hours that the gate at Hetch Hetchy is “open” and is considering further increases. Restore Hetch Hetchy has asked that visitors be allowed 24-hour access as they are in the rest of Yosemite National Park.

**Drinkable water:** San Francisco has finally agreed to provide drinkable water to the campground at Hetch Hetchy, only 111 years after being required to do so by the Raker Act. The project may take place in 2025.

**Camping and Lodging:** Restore Hetch Hetchy has asked that all visitors be allowed to camp at Hetch Hetchy rather than limiting it to those departing for a backpacking trip. We are optimistic the National Park Service will make this change.

Special guests of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission are allowed to stay at cabins adjacent to the reservoir for recreational use. No explanation for this privilege has been provided to Restore Hetch Hetchy.

**Boating and Fishing:** Until this year, the National Park Service explained that it was necessary to prohibit boating and fishing at Hetch Hetchy due to San Francisco’s filtration exemption – a rare exception granted by the EPA.

Restore Hetch Hetchy explained to the National Park Service that the Raker Act specifically precludes any policymaking based on the filtration exemption. The NPS then changed its rationale, and now cites its discretion under the NPS Organic Act and the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act as rationale to prohibit boating and fishing.

Restore Hetch Hetchy will continue to work with the National Park Service. We hope to encourage them to eliminate these prohibitions. If the NPS is unwilling, we will ask the Department of Interior or Congress for help, and may consider going to court.



Hetch Hetchy reservoir is the largest reservoir in California that does not permit boating and fishing. Photo: Joe Braun

## Damming Hetch Hetchy and other transgressions (cont.)

**Groundwater recharge:** The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission has angered state officials as well as the public by declining to participate in studies to investigate the potential to recharge depleted groundwater basins when wet year flows are available. While water agencies across the state have embraced groundwater banking for the good of all, the Commission clings to the outdated notion of relying almost entirely on surface water.

**Recreation – Hetch Hetchy Reservoir** is managed by the National Park Service and allows hiking, but prohibits boating, fishing and camping. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission allows no access whatsoever to Crystal Springs, San Andreas, Pilarcitos, Calaveras and San Antonio Reservoirs. Other water agencies typically allow these activities.

**Returning the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park to its natural splendor will require fundamental change at the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.**

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View <https://hetchhetchy.org/visionaries-challenge-match/> or email [admin@hetchhetchy.org](mailto:admin@hetchhetchy.org)

## Restoration Supporters: *Stuart and Lisa Woolf*



*Stuart and Lisa Woolf in a field of agave – a crop only recently introduced in the San Joaquin Valley.*

*Stuart Woolf is President and CEO of Woolf Farming & Processing, a third-generation family business specializing in crops where California's climate and soil provides a global competitive advantage, including almonds, tomatoes, pistachios, garlic and, most recently, agave.*

**Yosemite National Park** is as spectacular a landscape as you'll find anywhere, understandably drawing visitors from across the country and around the world. As native Californians and especially as Fresnoans, it's a privilege to have Yosemite in our backyard.

Sadly, Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley was dammed in the early 20th century. Efforts to restore such a treasure must take place, especially now as the park is so popular that reservations are required to enter.

San Francisco's water rights and other storage reservoirs will be unaffected. To replace the storage in Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, San Francisco should follow the lead of cities and farmers throughout California by making strategic investments and adopting new practices. These changes require investments in surface and ground water storage, conservation and recycling. Restoring Hetch Hetchy is not a **zero sum** game. We can restore a national landmark while maintaining a secure & reliable source of water for the Bay Area.

We support making that happen.

- *Stuart Woolf*

## The Annual Restore Hetch Hetchy Annual Dinner



***"Restoration is the highest and best use of the valley".***  
- Pulitzer prize Winner Tom Philp



*Tom Philp (upper right), with former State Water Board Chair Felicia Marcus, captivated the audience, connecting his commitment to Hetch Hetchy to broader California water policy concerns. Salvador Lopez (lower right), shared his vibrant painting of a restored valley based on his comprehensive interpretation of original photographs.*

Photos: Alice Chung and Dennis Carty

**Restore Hetch Hetchy is grateful to the people and companies for supporting our 2024 dinner:**

**Around the Horn ♦ Dos Volcanes ♦ Environmental Defense Fund ♦ Evergreen Lodge**

**Hans Florine ♦ Kim Stanley Robinson ♦ Palisades Canyon Wines ♦ Patagonia**

**Rodney Strong Vineyards ♦ Ron Rick Design ♦ The Yosemite Conservancy ♦ Yosemite Outfitters**



### *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.**



## Restore Hetch Hetchy

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*From left, board members Mecia Serafino, Lucho Rivera, Lance Olson, Mark Palley & chair Roger Williams; Office Manager Julene Freitas, Executive Director Spreck Rosekrans, Sacramento Bee Editor Tom Philp, board members Ann Hayden, Craig Reynolds. Peter Van Kuran, Mark Cederborg, Virginia Johannessen & Jim Fousekis*

**Photo: Alice Chung**

I am writing these few comments Sunday, November 3. Our national election will take place in two days. Restore Hetch Hetchy continues to be resolutely nonpartisan and, as we always have, will continue to reach out to both sides to look for opportunities with elected and appointed officials in Washington DC, Sacramento and San Francisco. Our message continues to be pro Yosemite and pro water supply—values everybody can appreciate.

Research completed by the Capstone Team of University of Colorado graduate students has been invaluable. For some time, we have needed to debunk the unwarranted claims about the quality of Hetch Hetchy water. It's good, we concede, but it will still be good when restoration takes place and Tuolumne River supplies are stored in other reservoirs. The Capstone research has also shown that most water agencies allow and even encourage recreation at their reservoirs, especially larger facilities, while San Francisco does their utmost to keep people out. Its incumbent on us to make the National Park Service understand this and help effect change.

We are especially pleased that the circle of support for restoration is growing. Our 2024 Annual Dinner drew support from new areas as well as our dedicated following. With the prospect of a permanent reservation system, people understand more than ever the treasure that is Yosemite. We must make the most of our national park. Hetch Hetchy Valley can be restored without anyone losing a drop of water.

***Spreck Rosekrans, Executive Director***