

## Foreword

As Californians, we have a strong image of the seasonality of a river. It rages in the winter filled with run off rain. It flows year around fed by deep drifts of melting snow from high on the Sierras. We see it harnessed by dams like Shasta, New Melones and Pardee with reservoirs that are deep and cold. Those winter images create summer images of cool slow flowing summer rivers, filled with fish and recreational opportunity.

The story of the Calaveras River has really never been told. It is not one of the great rivers of California. Little noted and little studied, except by government engineers, it is a resource that many take for granted, and few really understand.

To miners, it was of interest in the era of gold rush and later was to be a source of gravel and rock. But the river was dry for most of the year.

To farmers a hundred plus years ago, it was not a dependable source of water but a constant potential source of winter floods that could destroy farms and their housing. You traversed in the summer by simply walking across it for there was no water.

To City residents in Stockton, it represented the danger of flooded streets, basements and businesses. Houses were often built high off the ground for added protection. City residents looked to levees to protect the City and then to a small dam, and after floods in the 1950's to a still larger one.

Over the years, my fellow board members and I have discovered that there is a great deal of misconception about the Calaveras River. Many take the mind's eye picture of a snow fed river and assume that applies here. Some envision a year round river teeming with a variety of fish within its banks. Certainly, that is historically not the case.

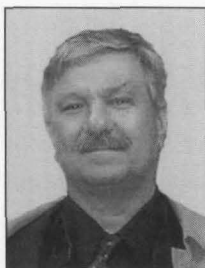
Added to all of this, are the real needs of our area. The Calaveras River via the Stockton East Water District Treatment facility supplies a great portion of the water consumed by Stockton area residents. Use of that treated water from New Hogan Dam allows us not to have to pump as much water from the underground aquifer, which has been seriously depleted by overdraft. We must be vigilant to protect this valuable source of water.

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The question for us as responsible public servants has become how to educate the public and provide something of lasting value to the community. To that end, the Stockton East Water District has produced this book, *High and Dry*. It is our hope to provide the reader with the true story of the Calaveras River. It is our desire that we might all understand from a historical perspective the asset and the limitation represented by this unique Calaveras River...a river that is fed by rain running across open fields and down foothill inclines.

Besides a well-researched and documented history of the Calaveras River by historian Leslie Crow, Stockton East Water District is looking to the future. The District's goals are many and varied for meeting future needs. These goals all revolve around the need to effectively manage the water in our area to the highest and best use. Water that is in the aquifer and water that is on the surface must be wisely used. This helps to insure the future of our region. Our dangerously overdraft underground aquifer must be stabilized and restored. The District is recharging the underground aquifer with programs such as the Farmington Recharge Project. We seek to enhance the Stockton East Water Treatment plant to more efficiently process water and expand capacity. We look to the future by developing systems to pipe more surface water to agriculture areas. All of this and more with the end goal of restoring our under groundwater table by alternatives to simply pumping.

As President of the Board of Directors, I invite you to read, enjoy and learn about our Calaveras River.



Paul Sanguinetti,  
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Stockton East Water District*