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☆☆ Happy New Year ☆☆

Water Bond Update

While we have seen some nice rain recently, it hasn't lessened California's need for a better way to store and protect our water resources. Two years ago, voters passed a historic water bond (Proposition 1) designed to fund development and construction of new, modern water infrastructure. Last year, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) developed criteria for analyzing projects submitted for grant money.

CDFW officials announced last week the selection of 24 projects that will receive funding. One of those projects is in the 8th Senate District. The Tuolumne River Conservancy will receive a \$453,618 for the [Tuolumne River Bobcat Flat Salmonid Habitat Restoration](#)-Duck Slough Side Channel Restoration.

"These projects achieve the spirit and intent of Proposition 1 to protect and restore important ecosystems around the state," CDFW Director Charlton H. Bonham said. "Investing in these projects is exciting. These projects prove we can conserve California's natural resources, while also contributing to other critical statewide needs, such as enhancing water supply reliability."

In addition, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced approximately \$232 million in grant funding for 26 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) projects that will leverage hundreds of millions of additional local and federal dollars.

Additional funds from a 2006 water bond will support projects and programs to meet California's long-term water management needs, including delivery of safe drinking water, enhanced use of recycled water, water conservation, flood risk reduction, watershed protection, ecosystem restoration, water quality protection, and groundwater management.

Congratulations to the Tuolumne River Conservancy. I hope that more worthy projects in our area are awarded grants in the future.

The next step... beginning the process of building Sites and Temperance Flats, two large above ground water storage projects.

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Butte Fire Update

The magnitude of the Butte fire has prevented a quick turnaround time on clearing debris and rebuilding. My office has been working with federal and state agencies and the impacted counties to ensure victims of the fires are receiving the assistance needed. While the governor has included financial relief for the impacted counties in the 2016-2017 budget, I will continue working with the counties to address other issues.

CalOES and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) are committed to ensuring people get the services and assistance needed. A direct telephone hotline is available to process any

requests from survivors who may need additional assistance.

(916) 381-0330
TTY CALL 711
Legal Services

Wildfire survivors in Calaveras who cannot afford an attorney and who need legal services due to the disaster may call the California Disaster Legal Services hotline. Disaster Legal Services can be reached at **(844) 657-0479**, 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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Senate Labor says “No” to flex-work week for CA Employees Flex-Work Week Legislation Killed in Senate Labor

[Senate Bill 368](#), my legislation that would have given employees and employers the ability to adopt mutually agreeable alternative workweek schedules, was defeated this month in the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations committee. It was defeated on a party line vote despite testimony from many employers and Human Resources experts who said the current system does not give employees and employers the ability to devise flexible work schedules.

The small change my bill would have made to the current law would have given employees more time with their families and a better balance between work and family life. Families are now left juggling time between two working parents, school schedules, and family obligations. More flexibility just makes sense.

Under federal law and laws in nearly every other state except California, it's simple for employers and employees to adopt “alternative workweeks,” such as 4-10s, or 3-12s. Working a four-day workweek can provide up to 50 extra days off each year for the average full-time employee. [In California, however, the system is complicated](#) and requires employers to jump through multiple hoops designed to stymie any flexibility. Ultimately, this process discourages any possibility of scheduling options, such as flextime, part-time, job sharing, telecommuting, and compressed workweeks.

I was disappointed the committee rejected the bill, but it is an important issue I will continue to work on.

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Heart of the Horse Therapy Ranch

The 8th Senate District is lucky to include the amazing [Heart of the Horse Therapy Ranch](#).

Shannon Major from my Fresno District Office has toured the facilities and is helping with its newest project, [Heart of the Horse's VET](#), which stands for Veterans Equine Therapy Services. The Heart of the Horse hopes to open a home for veterans in the Central Valley. Traditionally, Heart of the Horse has provided therapeutic riding for children and adults who have been injured or suffer from a disability. Now, it will expand those services to returning members of our Armed Services.

Gallo Wines has donated a home that will house ten veterans who will help other vets by using equine therapy. The home needs a lot of work, but it's a great opportunity for our community to do even more to help our returning servicemen and women.

The following links will give you a little more information about the Heart of the Horse Therapy Ranch and its latest endeavor:

[Heart of the Horse Therapy Ranch Helping Vets](#)

[The next step: Clovis horse therapy ranch looks to make a special place for veterans](#)

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Congratulations Emma Sumlin CA State Parks Foundation Youth Art Contest Winner



Congratulations to Emma Sumlin, a 7th grader at Logos Christian Conservatory in Clovis, California. She is the third place winner in the



California State Parks Foundation inaugural youth art contest. The theme, "California's State Parks are Great Places for You and Me!" drew 140 entries. Winners were selected by a panel of judges based on creativity, originality, and adherence to the theme. The winning artwork is currently featured on the

Foundation's website at calparks.org/youth art contest and will be published in the upcoming issue of Parklands magazine.

Emma's mom tells us: *"Emma...enjoys art and loves 'how people can see the beautiful things that God made.' Emma enjoys Santa Monica State Beach very much and knew she wanted to paint her love of nature, especially sunsets, as she's always enjoyed watching sunsets over the water."*

Congratulations Emma on a job well done!

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Know a local hero deserving of recognition?

Over the years I have been proud to sponsor and attend the American Red Cross of the Central Valley Heroes Event. Recognizing an ordinary person for doing something extraordinary is a gratifying experience. Some of the stories are truly amazing.

This annual fundraising event recognizes people who have touched lives of community members through their selfless acts of courage. These heroes may have helped save a life, performed an extraordinary act of compassion, or demonstrated an exceptional spirit of giving.

"These acts of courage, compassion, and leadership truly embody the spirit of the Red Cross," said Executive Director Barry Falke. "So this event gives us the opportunity to say thank you and honor these local heroes who serve our community."

The American Red Cross of the Central Valley is asking the community to nominate local heroes by January 31, 2016 and to join in its annual Heroes Event on Saturday, April 30, 2016. Visit [Heroes for the American Red Cross](#) to submit nominations online.

Hero categories include: Animal Rescue, Good Samaritan, Law Enforcement, Fire Rescue, Medical Professional, Military, Community Partner, and Youth.

To learn more about the event and how you can participate, please contact Amy Smith at amy.smith2@redcross.org or call the Central Valley Red Cross office at (559) 455-1000 x6501.

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