

ALERT!

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has a Huge American River ‘Erosion’ Project **Coming Our Way**—

ALERT!

2-2-2024

**** COMMENTS DUE to USACE FEB. 23!**

The Beauty....

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 established the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, protecting for future generations free-flowing waterways with extraordinary natural, cultural and recreational qualities.

<https://www.fws.gov/story/wild-and-scenic-rivers> . The Lower American River, from the confluence with the Sacramento River to the Nimbus Dam, was designated a **Wild and Scenic River** on January 19, 1981, for its fisheries and recreational values. Partnering with local entities (including Sacramento Regional Parks), the National Park Service (Pacific West Regional Office) was charged with overseeing consistency with the Wild and Scenic aspects of the Lower American River. <https://www.rivers.gov/river/american>

“Local residents and adjacent landowners are vital partners in protecting wild and scenic rivers. They may regularly visit a river and have firsthand knowledge of its value and extraordinary characteristics. Everyone can help care for rivers!”

The Peril...

(For more info and **actions**, please **visit** AmericanRiverTrees.org)

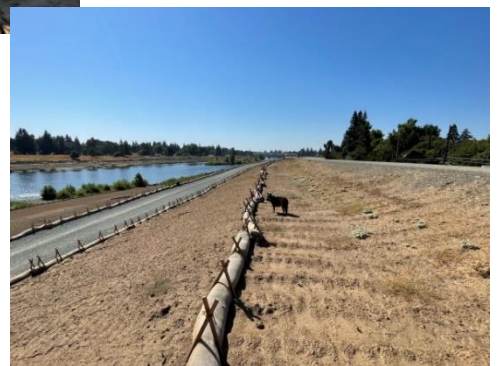
USACE has multiple projects in progress (photos show existing work near Sac State/Howe and H Street bridge), and **another huge part of the project is coming to pristine areas upstream of Howe and Watt beginning in 2024 and spanning two+ years**. The river bank projects involve **massive change** to the Parkway and natural river environment, including **removing nearly all riparian vegetation** including trees, and **bulldozing the landscape** including the bike trail and wildlife habitat, **deep trenching** at the river’s edge, and after scraping everything to dirt, filling the trenches with quarried rock and finally **backfilling lifeless subsoil** over the entire surface. Their stated intention is to perform some onsite mitigation, compensating for lost federally protected elderberry mostly, by replanting with native trees and shrubs. Offsite mitigation sites do not resemble the riparian habitat slated to be lost.

****NEW: The Draft SEIS/SEIR environmental documents are posted. *Comments are due to USACE Feb. 23!** (Two public meetings were held Jan. 10 &16). **Supervisor Desmond** said he will hold a community meeting. Look under “Current Project Updates”, then “American River Common Features (ARCF) SEIS/SEIR” from this link: <https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Sacramento-Levee-Upgrades/>



The left two views show recent bulldozing and trenching near Howe and Sac State on existing projects (Contracts “2” and “3A”).

Below is a ‘completed’ project downstream of the H Street Bridge, where planting began Fall 2023.

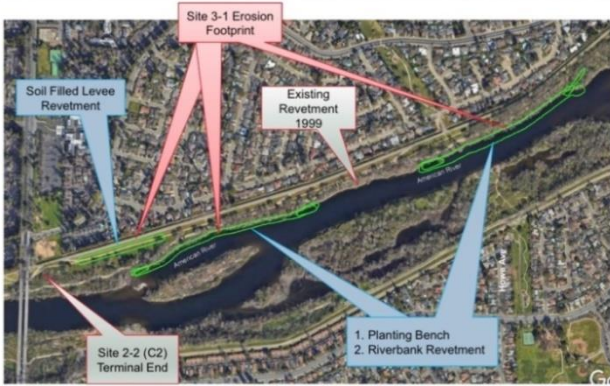


Currently these areas appear to have been transformed from wild-and-scenic to a bleak and broad bulldozed canal channel.

The upcoming Contract “3B” plans include **similar devastating methods**:

- Between the Howe Avenue bridge and Watt Ave bridge;
- Continuing a mile upstream from the Watt Avenue bridge to the vicinity of Mayhew/Rio Bravo Circle on the South bank (C-3B-south, site 4-1) and Estates Drive on the North bank (C-3B-north).
- **Access ramps** behind Rio Bravo; **equipment staging** in Larchmont Park.

Aside from a little past “revetment” work, these upper areas are currently **among the most pristine, wild and scenic areas on the lower American River**. This area is much loved by paddlers and wildlife enthusiasts as well as countless homeowners who need a few moments in nature. The current USACE plan will take that quality away – nearly back to levee construction days of last century.



C3B

- Left and right bank from Howe Ave upstream past Watt Ave.
- Approximately 14000 ft lineal feet of bank protection
- Launchable rock with planting benches
- Soiled Filled Bank revetment
- Soiled Filled Levee revetment
- Balance impacts to fish, riparian, upland woodlands and recreation

→ **New The C3B-south draft Environmental report is slated to bulldoze over 500 more trees!**



USACE claims the upcoming “erosion” project is necessary for protection in the event flows reach 160,000 cubic feet per second, cfs. Prior documents seem to imply their efforts are to prevent water penetrating under the recently constructed 60 ft deep slurry walls of the levees. But data on seepage risk show no seepage risk in this stretch. And any erosion concerns in these upper C-3B areas (e.g., Larchmont) should be evaluated for more **targeted spot** approaches, as well as nature-based and small equipment methods, instead of bulldozing huge zones of trees.

➤ **What Can You Do, If You Love the American River and Parkway?...**

Many people are concerned about these huge engineering projects. The east end is NOT direct levee work –

C3B STATUS UPDATE



C3B

- Onsite Greening
- Mitigation at Rossmore West
- Advancing design to 95%
 - Adjusting design to accommodate potential 2 season construction
- **** Construction**
 - Season 1 – Summer 2025
 - Season 2 – Summer 2026

****Vegetation clearing may begin fall 2024!**

that’s already complete! Prior work achieved the 160,000 cfs design goal. This is to address POTENTIAL erosion of the bank at water’s edge. But this is a relatively straight stretch of river, with a dense natural root network providing “natural armor”. There is not an urgent or compelling need or benefit in the upper stretches of C-3B. The “project” is overgeneralized. It **will result in massive degradation to the natural state of the American River Parkway.** (The disturbed barren areas may even create more vulnerability during high flows for many years to come). Prior “mitigation” areas have failed to deliver what was promised. (And how can you mitigate 200 year old oaks)?

****Please help spread the word** about this huge upcoming project, and insist on “**spot-fixes**” and evaluation of need/benefit and **alternative methods** for this sensitive Wild & Scenic American River. In these **pristine upper stretches** of 3B, the projects are not direct levee work and **should be revised or removed** from the project.

******* Visit AmericanRiverTrees.org to (a) write your official comments to USACE by Feb. 23 *******

The website has **Key Points** and **Requests to copy/paste into your own Email. Samples are available.** And **(b) use the “click-to-send” emails to your representatives and public officials.**

Ask your representatives and **Sac Regional Parks to insist on imposing “conditions” more consistent with the Wild and Scenic River, a recreational treasure, the “Jewel of Sacramento”.** **Much more targeted and less massively destructive approaches** should be employed in this sensitive natural area.

-- Dr. Ami Bera has a comment portal: bera.house.gov/contact.

-- CA Assemblyman Kevin McCarty has a portal.

-- **Official Comments are due to USACE by Feb. 23!**

Visit AmericanRiverTrees.org for samples to help.

Sign up for **Alerts** and/or to **help volunteer** at our pop-ups. THANK YOU!

*USACE website: <https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Sacramento-Levee-Upgrades/> Look under “Current Project Activities”; then “AmericanRiverCommon Features (ARCF) SEIS/SEIR”

