



Monthly Newsletter

September 2022

Supervisors ban camping on American River Parkway

The County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved two ordinances Aug. 23 addressing homeless encampments on the American River Parkway and other sensitive areas.



One of the ordinances prohibits camping on the entire stretch of the American River Parkway, as well as the Dry Creek Parkway. The other prohibits camping within 25 feet of critical infrastructure, such as levees and government buildings, wildfire and flood risk areas during severe weather, shelters for persons experiencing homelessness and youth-serving facilities.

The ordinances are expected to take effect in late September, barring any potential court action.

Officials asserted that the ordinances will not result in the wide-scale clearing of encampments but is aimed at balancing both the needs of campers and the wider community.

“These ordinances provide another tool for county staff and our outreach partners to engage with folks experiencing homelessness camping illegally, assess their needs and determine the best course of action to move them away from critical infrastructure,” said Board Chair Don Nottoli. “The time has come to balance the needs of our unsheltered population with the impacts that our communities and environment have been facing for years.”





Video of Aug. 23 Board of Supervisors meeting. Scroll to second half to watch hearing.

Four-hour hearing

The approval came after a contentious four-hour public hearing, during which homeless advocates and individuals blasted the measures as inhumane and misguided.

Mackenzie Wilson of the Decarcerate Sacramento and Sacramento Tenants Union and Nicki Jones of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee were part of a group that presented a Power Point presentation in opposition to the two ordinances.

They estimated that there are at least 9,300 homeless people in the county, but only 1,300 shelter beds. They called for more affordable housing, more robust social services and argued that a better alternative to the new ordinances would be to provide campers with portable restrooms, trash collection services and fire extinguishers.

Proponents of the ordinances, however, asserted the need to protect the fragile ecosystem and water resources that are impacted by encampments. Contamination of the county's waterways and water resources were underscored as a key concern.

"The American River Parkway is our region's most treasured recreational and ecological asset" said First District Supervisor Phil Serna earlier in August. "As the stewards responsible for its protection, we are obligated to see that it is a clean and safe place for everyone to enjoy while ensuring those who feel their only option is to reside on the Parkway, have housing opportunities and access to services elsewhere in the county."

Ordinance details

The American River Parkway camping ordinance prohibits igniting cooking fires, as well as camping and entering the parkway at night. [CLICK HERE](#) to read the ordinance text.

The critical infrastructure ordinance prohibits camping and encampments in the following priority areas:

- In, on or within 25 feet of critical infrastructure or the entrance/exit of critical infrastructure;
- Up to 1,000 feet of a location providing year-round overnight shelter to people experiencing homelessness and the entrance/exit to such locations;
- Inside of, or within 30 feet of wildfire and flood risk areas during severe weather; and
- Within 25 feet of a youth-serving facility, defined as public or private primary or secondary schools and public libraries.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the infrastructure ordinance.

Respect your local fire hydrant

Consider the fire hydrant: It is ubiquitous, seldom used and absolutely essential.

Unfortunately, some homeowners who have one in their yard find it unattractive and try to reduce its visual impact by planting trees and bushes around it. This is a mistake that can complicate things for firefighters.



“When there’s a fire, an engine crew may not be able to see the closest fire hydrant if it is hidden under shrubbery or behind a parked vehicle,” explained Chris Dargan, community relations coordinator for the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District. “When that happens, we may need to connect to the next closest hydrant more than 500 feet away and that can delay getting water on a fire by critical minutes,” he said.

Maintaining fire hydrants is the responsibility of water districts. For most of our area, that is Sacramento Suburban Water District (SSWD).

Three-foot clearance

Joe Crockett, distribution foreman for SSWD, urged homeowners who have hydrants on their properties to observe the three-foot rule. That is, keep a three-foot area all the way around the hydrant free of bushes, trees and other obstructions, such as fences.

“Failure to do that is the most frequent issue we see and it can be a real problem for firefighters,” he noted. If a fire hydrant is obstructed by bushes, trees or a fence, Metro Fire will issue a correction notice to the homeowner, requiring that the situation be corrected.

Crockett said SSWD maintains nearly 6,400 hydrants throughout the district and services each of them every five years. At the present time, SSWD workers are servicing hydrants in our neighborhood – ensuring that the caps are on and the works are greased up and functioning properly.

According to Crockett, SSWD paints its hydrants bright yellow so they stand out. However, some homeowners don’t like that color and decide to repaint their hydrants some other color to make them less visible in their landscape. This is not acceptable, he said.

“When we find a hydrant that has been painted by a homeowner, we repaint it,” he explained. “The reason we use bright yellow is to ensure that firefighters can easily find it. Please urge people not to paint their hydrant another color!”

Obey parking laws

To ensure accessibility to hydrants from the street, parking in front of a hydrant is illegal. Ticketing for doing so is the responsibility of the Sheriff’s Department Parking Enforcement Division, which can be contacted at (916) 876-6642.

Fortunately, said Dargan, parked cars are usually not a serious problem for fire crews. “We can usually get access to a hydrant without too much trouble, even if cars are parked there,” he said. “It is rare that we have to do anything drastic, like running hoses over the top of cars. But we still ask that drivers do their best to avoid blocking hydrants.”

For questions about fire hydrants, contact SSWD at (916) 972-7171.

Fire hydrant facts

- Fire hydrants are spaced approximately 500 feet apart in residential areas and are mapped out at the same time as street lights, sewer lines and utilities.
- Fire hydrants require a three-foot clearance. This means that a three-foot area all the way around the hydrant must be free of bushes, trees and other obstructions, such as fences.
- If a fire hydrant is obstructed by bushes, trees or a fence, Metro Fire will issue a correction notice to the homeowner, requiring that the situation be corrected.
- Where fire hydrants are adjacent to a street, vehicles are not permitted to parallel park within 15 feet on either side of the hydrant.

School hours

With classes back in session at our three local schools, it may be helpful to know the bell schedule in order to avoid getting caught in a traffic jam.

Following is the basic bell schedule for each school:

Rio Americano High School

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday - 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Thursday – 8:30 – 2:15 p.m.

Del Dayo Elementary School

Kindergarten – 8:55 a.m. – 12:55 p.m.

1st through 6th grades – 8:55 a.m. – 2:05 p.m.

<https://www.sanjuan.edu/domain/1978>

Jesuit High School

8:20 a.m. – 3 p.m.

For a more complete schedule, including special events, here are the links for each school:

- Rio Americano High School – <https://www.sanjuan.edu/domain/9480>
- Del Dayo Elementary – <https://www.sanjuan.edu/domain/1978>
- Jesuit High School – <https://www.jesuithighschool.org/pod/bell-schedule-collaborations-and-calendars>

Parkway clean-up Sept.17

The American River Parkway Foundation will hold the annual Great American River Clean-Up (GARCU) from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Sept. 17.

There will be 23 different locations along the parkway where volunteers will be removing debris. In past years, up to 2,100 volunteers have come out to help.

GARCU is the American River Parkway Foundation's largest annual clean-up event and is held on California Coastal Cleanup Day in concert with the California Coastal Commission.

To volunteer for one of the parkway sites, go to <https://arpf.org/events/garcu/>, click on

the location of your choice and fill out the form.

For more information, call (916) 486-2773 or email volunteer@arpf.org.

District Attorney Youth Academy

The Sacramento County District Attorney's office is once again offering a weekly youth academy for high school students interested in learning about the criminal justice system.

The academy will run from Sept. 29 to Dec. 15. Classes will be held via Zoom every Thursday from 6 to 8 p.m., with an in-person graduation ceremony on Thursday, Dec. 15.

Sessions will include presentations by representatives of a wide range of law enforcement agencies and students will be able to ask questions and share concerns with them.

Topics will include:

- Overview of the criminal justice system
- Social media and cybercrimes
- Mock trial
- Gangs
- Police oversight and accountability
- Dating violence and stalking
- CSI and the crime lab
- Human trafficking

The program is run in partnership with the Sheriff's Department, Sacramento Police Department, Sacramento County Probation Department, Sacramento County Public Defender's Office, Rancho Cordova Police Department, Elk Grove Police Department and Galt Police Department.

The deadline for students to apply is Sept. 16. Space in the program is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. For information and to download an application, go to <https://www.sacda.org/in-the-community/community-programs/youth-academy/>

Waste treatment plant tours

If you have ever wondered how waste is treated and recycled, Sacramento County's Regional Sanitation District is holding free tours of the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The free public educational tours offer a behind-the-scenes look at how waste water is processed, treated and returned to the Sacramento River. Space is limited on each tour, so you must fill out a tour reservation form.

For additional information or to schedule a tour, go to <https://www.regionalsan.com/tours> or call (916) 876-6120.

Member Q&A

Q: I notice that curbs around fire hydrants in our neighborhood are not painted red. Why is that?

A: The reason the county does not paint curbs red around fire hydrants is because it would be a massive maintenance job. If you look on our county fire hydrant locator map here <https://koordinates.com/layer/96197-sacramento-county-california-fire-hydrants/>, you will see that there are more than 88,000 fire hydrants in the county. Our county officials explain that painted curbs require maintenance as the paint fades. The county would need large crews that did nothing but maintain the paint and that would be extremely costly. It would divert county funds away from more critical services.

Experts in the field note that red paint on a curb is not very effective in deterring law breakers. So, there is a very big cost-benefit gap in maintaining painted curbs. Instead, Sacramento County asks that you report hydrant parkers to the Sheriff's Department's Parking Enforcement Division at (916) 876-6642.

HOW TO CALL FOR HELP

IN AN EMERGENCY

If you have an immediate emergency - if your life or property is in immediate danger, if you feel threatened by someone on or near your property, if you have just become the victim of a crime or if you are witnessing a crime in progress:

- CALL 911 from a land line.
- Or, if calling from a cell phone within Sacramento County, call (916) 874-5111.

TO REPORT A CRIME

There are two ways to report a crime to the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department:

1. Call the Sheriff's Department NON-EMERGENCY LINE at (916) 874-5115. To bypass the recorded messaging when you call, dial 0 after the line is answered.
2. File a report online through the Sheriff's Department website. Click on this link to begin the process: https://www.sacsheriff.com/pages/crime_report.php

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY (Not an emergency)

If you see someone engaged in suspicious activity but it is not an emergency, call 916-874-5115 (Sheriff's Department non-emergency line).

GENERAL CONCERNS, REPORTS OR QUESTIONS

If you have an issue that can be addressed later, you may contact our neighborhood patrol officers about it. The best way is via [EMAIL at wilhaggin4@sacsheriff.com](mailto:wilhaggin4@sacsheriff.com).

Wilhaggin Del Dayo Neighborhood Association | 761 Cortland Drive, Sacramento, CA 95864

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