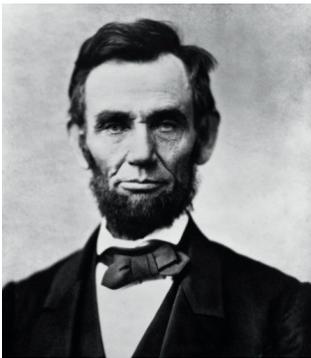


# Restore Hetch Hetchy in Yosemite National Park

Spring 2014



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*Abraham Lincoln ceded Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove to California to be protected in perpetuity for all citizens - the first such dedication of public lands in human history.*

## 2014: Yosemite's Sesquicentennial

**June 30, 2014 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of President Abraham Lincoln's signing of the Yosemite Grant. This was the first time anywhere in the world that a spectacular natural landscape was set aside and protected in perpetuity for all citizens. The Yosemite Sesquicentennial falls in between two other anniversaries—the Centennial of the infamous 1913 Raker Act, which allowed Yosemite's incomparable Hetch Hetchy Valley to be flooded, and the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916, which Congress passed in large part to insure that no debacle like the damming of Hetch Hetchy Valley would ever happen again in a national park.

So, while Yellowstone was designated the first national park in 1870, it was Yosemite where the first land was set aside for special protection. We are fortunate indeed that President Lincoln, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and others had the foresight and wisdom to protect Yosemite's giant sequoias from being clear-cut, its meadows from being overrun by grazing sheep, and the park itself from being suffocated by unchecked development.

This story is well told by author/narrator Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns in their new film "Yosemite: A Gathering of Spirit" (see *Restore Hetch Hetchy's* film review, page 3)

## DROUGHT AND FIRE

### What they mean for San Francisco's water system

When Yosemite's "Rim Fire" was burning out of control in the summer of 2013, Gov. Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency—not just in Tuolumne County but more than 100 miles away in San Francisco. The fear was real that ash from the fire would render water supplies stored in the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir unusable, because the city does not normally filter the water it stores in Yosemite and does not have capacity to do so.

For San Francisco, it was a crisis narrowly averted as well as a wake-up call. While Mayor Ed Lee assured citizens that San Francisco's Regional Water System had substantial supplies stored in the Bay Area and as well as interconnections to other agencies, there was fear among water agency officials that San Francisco, like some other water systems in the Bay Area, is overly dependent on a single remote source. Restoration aside, it would behoove San Francisco to diversify as other California cities have  
*(continued on page 2)*



*Cherry and Eleanor Reservoirs hold a bit less water than Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. San Francisco's water bank in Don Pedro Reservoir, downstream on the Tuolumne River, holds more than twice the volume of Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. San Francisco does not normally deliver the water it stores in these reservoirs to its customers.*

(from page 1)

**What they mean for San Francisco's water system**

done. The East Bay has built a new diversion facility on the Sacramento River. Contra Costa has built and expanded Los Vaqueros Reservoir. Santa Clara Valley Water District has invested in groundwater locally and in Kern County.

The current drought, which has rightly dominated the news in 2014, may have a silver lining for Restore Hetch Hetchy. In too many parts of the state nobody will invest in recharging groundwater, because their neighbor will simply pump that water out. In areas like Kern County where management agreements are in place, cities and farms alike store water for retrieval in dry years.

Politicians and water managers are finally realizing that all areas of California need to manage this precious resource sustainably. With the right incentives in place, there would be far more opportunities for San Francisco to replace its storage in Yosemite National Park with groundwater—to be operated together with its other eight surface reservoirs.

Fire and drought have both threatened San Francisco's water system over this past year. But the same solutions for diminishing these threats are also solutions for replacing Hetch Hetchy Reservoir so the valley can be returned to Yosemite National Park and the American people.



Yosemite's Big Meadow Fire. NASA/Pinterest photo

**Restore Hetch Hetchy is grateful for the following pro-bono and in kind contributions:**

- ★ Ron Rick Design
- ★ mWebb Communications
- ★ Hogan-Lovells
- ★ Load Bearing Creative
- ★ Calaveras Wines
- ★ Olson, Hagel & Fishburn LLP
- ★ Mighty-mC
- ★ Moving Portraits

# Other California Cities can do it—so can San Francisco!

Over the last 25 years, water agencies have invested substantially in system improvements to accommodate restoration of rivers and wetlands in California. Collectively, cities have developed projects in the four areas listed below that would replace the water supply provided by Hetch Hetchy Reservoir *more than 16 times over*. (An acre-foot is enough water to cover an acre to a depth of one foot)

- ◆ Surface Storage - 970,000 af
- ◆ Groundwater - 1,162,000 af
- ◆ Transfers - 514,000 af per year
- ◆ Recycling - 117,000 af per year



## Restore Hetch Hetchy needs your help.

**Please contribute today!**

**No donation is too small or too large.**



Use attached envelop, or <http://www.hetchhetchy.org/>



# Film Reviews

## Yosemite: A Gathering of Spirit (2013)

**Yosemite: A Gathering of Spirit** tells the story of Yosemite with a fresh perspective. The film includes Lincoln's 1864 Yosemite Grant to California and the 1903 meeting between John Muir and President Theodore Roosevelt which set the stage for the protection of 18 national parks and monuments, including the Grand Canyon and Muir Woods. The film concludes with a tribute to the sacrifice of Hetch Hetchy Valley—explaining how strong negative public reaction to the Raker Act strengthened America's resolve to better protect our national parks. Make plans to see



this extraordinary film on the big screen in the Yosemite Visitor Center—rather than only on your compact computer screen!

## Through the Eyes of the Buffalo Soldier (2014)

**There were no national park rangers until Congress**, responding to the outcry over the damming of Hetch Hetchy, passed the National Park Organic Act in 1916. Until that date, Yosemite was protected by U.S. Army regiments, many of whom were African-American. The "Buffalo Soldiers", as dubbed by the Plains Indians, were enlistees who came largely from the rural south where job opportunities were few. Pursuing illegal sheep grazers in Yosemite provided one of many challenges for the Buffalo Soldiers. The film stars Yosemite Ranger Shelton Johnson.



**Don't miss it!**

Both films can be seen at the Yosemite Visitor Center.



# Profile

**Roger Williams**

Restore Hetch Hetchy Board Chair

*I have spent a lot of time in the Sierra hiking, backpacking, fly-fishing and taking pictures. I got involved with the Sierra Club, where I became a trip leader and had the opportunity to explore other wonderful parts of California.*

*I remember thinking when I first saw Hetch Hetchy, "Wow, it's so wrong that such a unique and beautiful place is wasted as a reservoir." I became a member of Restore Hetch Hetchy, and after Mike Marshall became Executive Director I became more active, first as a volunteer and then as a board member.*

*I was immediately impressed with how much the other board members knew about California water policy and its politics. These were smart, committed and practical people. As a new member, I took the lead on revamping RHH's web-site and was elected Board Chair a few years later.*

*Lots of people are active in restoring our environment—cleaning up beaches, protecting endangered species etc.—but restoring Hetch Hetchy presents a challenge that really attracts me. This is a big idea and, when we reclaim the valley, it will be an inspirational accomplishment.*

*As Board Chair I want us to continue to excite people about restoration, while communicating that necessary water system reforms are totally viable. Through a combination of legislation, litigation and education—along with the support of a new generation of Californians—I believe that restoration of Hetch Hetchy Valley will become a reality.*

*Photo: nikkiritcher.com*

**Restore Hetch Hetchy will be hosting receptions throughout California in 2014.**

**Please join us, meet our board and staff, and bring your friends.**

**Information: Call 510-893-3400**

**or email [Julene@hetchhetchy.org](mailto:Julene@hetchhetchy.org)**

# 2014 CALENDAR

## RHH Events

- May 13— "Two Yosemite" (opera), San Francisco Conservatory of Music
- May 16— Lecture and discussion, *Hetch Hetchy: Can the Splendid Wild Return?*, Sierra College
- May 30-31— *John Muir Geotourism Festival*, Coulterville
- May-September—"Damnation" screenings, nationwide (see <http://damnationfilm.com/>)
- June 30— Restoration groundbreaking, Mariposa Grove
- September 25-28— *Muir's Ride in Blue* (Bay Area to Yosemite)

## Dinner/Reception dates:

- June 19— San Francisco
- June 22— Berkeley
- September 21— Los Angeles
- September 7— Portola Valley
- September 25— Sacramento
- TBA— Santa Barbara and Ventura

# Restore Hetch Hetchy

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The mission of Restore Hetch Hetchy is to return the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park to its natural splendor while continuing to meet the water and power needs of all communities that depend on the Tuolumne River.

## How to Win

**Restore Hetch Hetchy can achieve success in one of three places—  
San Francisco, Congress, or the State and Federal Courts.**

Restore Hetch Hetchy has retained local counsel to pursue litigation over San Francisco's ongoing violation of both State water law and the federal Raker Act that allowed Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley to be dammed a century ago. We look forward to our day in court when we can directly challenge the use of Hetch Hetchy as a reservoir in light of the plethora of water supply alternatives that are available.

We are already intervening in the relicensing of Don Pedro Reservoir, downstream of Hetch Hetchy on the Tuolumne River. San Francisco has asserted that proposed flow increases to help fisheries would have devastating economic impacts. With the assistance of counsel at Hogan Lovells, we have challenged San Francisco's refusal to evaluate water supply alternatives, which other major water agencies in California have implemented in recent years and which will be necessary to replace a modest portion of supply when Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley is restored.

Several members of Congress have keen interest in restoration. The uncommon influence that San Francisco presently retains in both houses will soon change and provide opportunities for legislation to heal this greatest blemish in any of America's national parks.

As we continue to educate the public and the media, we are also talking with Bay Area communities (beyond San Francisco) about regional water system investments that would improve local supply reliability while simultaneously making restoration of Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley possible.

With the help and support of our friends, we will apply pressure on these multiple fronts until the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park is returned to the American people.

***“Politicians are like weathervanes. Our job is to make the wind blow.”***  
***- David Brower***



**Spreck Rosekrans**  
Executive Director

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**RESTORE HETCH HETCHY**  
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK