

**Featuring Water and Bridges—a great part of what makes the Capay Valley Special!**



***El Nino New Year!!  
Off to a Wet 2016!***

# TGCVHS NEWSLETTER

## *Save the Rumsey Bridge!*

—join us in a worthy cause! Built in 1930 and lengthened in 1949—due to washed out creek banks during one of our periodic flood years—it is located on County Road 41 off of State Route 16 in the town of Rumsey in Capay Valley, California. This bridge is unique in that it is one of the few remaining examples of tied arch bridges constructed in California. Its sister-bridge is the Stephenson Bridge spanning Putah Creek between Yolo and Solano Counties—which is slated for renovation by Solano County! Citizens unite—we can *DO* this!



At left: Elizabeth Monroe checks out the Rumsey Bridge from Cache Creek vantage point. Once it was known that there was federal funding to either renovate or to remove and replace this bridge, many locals contacted Elizabeth with fond memories of the bridge—and asked, “What are you going to do about saving it?” Well, let’s see what we can do...



Here is what we know so far:

**Yolo County hired Quincy Engineering, Inc., to evaluate feasible bridge alternatives.**

**They came back with 6 Alternatives. The most expensive is to Rehabilitate the existing bridge, which factors in the cost for a needed temporary bridge during the 2-3 year project.**

**The results were given to the Board of Supervisors, who voted to go with the less expensive and quicker Alternative 3 of a “cast-in-place concrete box girder” bridge further upstream—similar to the new bridge in Guinda—and removing the historic Rumsey Bridge.**

**The phase we are currently in is the mandatory exploration of the historic value of the bridge and its effect on the community, environment, etc. “JRP Historical Consulting, LLC has been retained to assist w Section 106 and CEQA compliance documentation...” which includes asking the public for comments and interest in this Historic Resource. They mailed a letter to 6 historic-related entities, including The Greater Capay Valley Historical Society, and we in turn contacted the community and the other historic-related entities to see whether the bridge could still be saved.**



It was suggested we do some research of our own and hold some Town Hall Meetings and address 2-3 main concerns not thoroughly considered by the Board of Supervisors:  
1) The Bridge’s cultural and historic “value” to the community, Capay Valley—and the county and state.

- 2) Compare it to its sister-bridge, the Stephenson Bridge, rather than the Guinda Bridge—as the Supervisors chose to do—thus comparing apples to apples, not apples to oranges, as it were.
- 3) Consider the impact of its removal and replacement on landowners whose land will be impacted by a new bridge encroaching on their property—possibly leading the county to face eminent domain proceedings—and the possibility of disturbances to important Tribal sites.

We will continue to do some research and work with the community, the county and JRP Historical Consulting, LLC, but we ask you to let us know how you feel about retaining or losing yet another one of our few

remaining historical treasures by contacting us at [emonroe@greatercapayvalley.org](mailto:emonroe@greatercapayvalley.org) — weigh in! Here’s your chance to “sign the petition” to Save Rumsey Bridge!



**Historical significance:** According to JRP Historical Consulting, LLC, “The Rumsey Bridge is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a significant example of a concrete tied arch bridge construction in California and is considered a historic property under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation act. The bridge is also considered a historical resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064-5.” Further, we are assured that being “eligible for listing” in the NRHP holds the same weight as being already listed.

**Cost factors to consider:** While the money for the project is available through Federal funds, essentially the county has to front the expenses and work through Caltrans as the conduit to get reimbursed. “If Caltrans approves the scope of the proposed work, the county’s costs for the project are reimbursed by Caltrans with Federal funds,” according to Taro Echiburu, Director of *Planning, Public Works, & Environmental Services for Yolo County*. It is a county bridge, so the county is responsible for either renovation or replacement, and will be responsible for further maintenance—which is expected to be less for a completely new bridge than a renovated historic bridge. All of which the Board of Supervisors took into consideration with their vote: “saving the taxpayers money” trumped saving this bit of our History. Of course, the county has always been responsible for maintaining this bridge—but a combination of neglect and the original concrete being of poor quality has allowed the bridge to fall into its present state of decay. The question seems to



be, How much do we “value” our historically and esthetically important resources? Make up your own minds, “Taxpayers”—but for us, we think the “value” is worth the “cost.”

*Above left: Rumsey Bridge*

*Below it: the new Guinda Bridge: Functional and less expensive alternative—you be the judge!*

For more information, visit: [www.yolocounty.org/community-services/planning-public-works/public-works-division/project-updates](http://www.yolocounty.org/community-services/planning-public-works/public-works-division/project-updates) and/or contact Jim Campbell, Principal Civil Engineer at [jim.campbell@yolocounty.org](mailto:jim.campbell@yolocounty.org)

## ***What's new in the Greater Capay Valley where Water Conservation is concerned? A lot is happening...***

In our last newsletter, we featured items taken from a booklet titled *Electric Power and Irrigation in California, Yolo Water and Power Co. Development in Lake and Yolo Counties, California, U.S.A.* and its old photos of the Capay Dam and the system of irrigation canals, starting with the Adams canal running NE through Hungey Hollow farmlands and the Capay-Winters canal, running SW of Esparto on its way toward Winters and Davis. *The Capay Dam* and the irrigation canals were built in 1912-13, diverting and delivering water to farmers throughout the county. *Yolo Water & Power Co.* originally built the diversion dam as a hydro-electric dam to provide power as far away as the San Francisco Bay's near-million residents—90 miles!

Below, the 1913 photos of our two main canals leading from the then-newly built Capay Dam show that the first section of the canals are lined, due to soil conditions. But for the most part, our extensive canal system covering much of Yolo County is unlined—an important feature we will look at later in this article.



According to this bulletin, *Cache Creek is called a 'creek' following the California custom of calling most waterways Creeks, whereas in winter it flows a huge stream of water which would be called a large river in most countries.*

**NOTE:** *"Weather conditions in California, winter 1912-13 were not unlike ours today—drought! Favorable for dam and canal construction, but a recurring problem for farmers and other residents of arid California.*

***Today, the Capay Valley (along with the rest of Yolo County and the State) is faced with the newly passed Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA—being pronounced "sigma"). According to our own "water expert," Tim O'Halloran from Yolo County Flood Control, Capay Valley has the opportunity to join the rest of Yolo County in coming up with a Groundwater Management Plan to demonstrate sustainable use of our water. Tim has been speaking throughout the county to explain the new Act and how he feels the county should respond—rather than wait for the State to take control.***



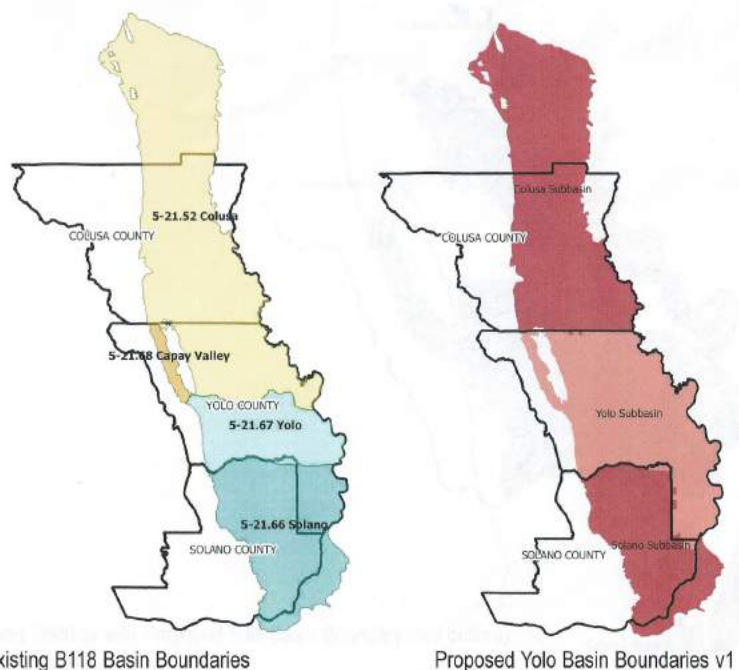
Left: Tim O'Halloran watches a raging Cache Creek over the Capay Dam in March of 2011—our last “flood year.” As we all know too well, we have been in an extended drought and until this year’s wet *El Nino*, we have joined the rest of the state in a *state of water emergency!*

The good news is that we have a pro-active county where water monitoring is concerned—thanks in great part to Tim O'Halloran. Much of the monitoring work the new SGMA requires is already in place and we are on our way to developing the required *Plan* to comply.



Tim and the county are proposing that Yolo County become one basin—combining the existing 4 that touch some portion of our county boundaries out of the over-300 basins in the state—and create one GSP - Groundwater Sustainability Plan - under the management of a new county-wide Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA). See the proposed boundary changes below: on the left we can see the four basins that currently touch Yolo County. On the right we can see the re-alignment for 1 Basin within Yolo County: ***Yolo Basin***

**Capay Valley** is seen on the left of these graphics as a long, narrow basin in its own right. Tim’s proposal is that the distinctly different former-basin areas would be separate sub-basins or *Management Zones* so that they can develop *local water advisory boards* to work with the larger 1-Basin management under the over-seeing GSP. The citizens of Capay Valley have met with Tim twice so far to become informed and to express concerns about the pros and cons of joining a larger group rather than simply “going it alone” —with the state as watchdog. It seems to be the consensus that there is more protection and power in being included in the 1-Basin proposal, while forming a local Capay Valley water advisory group concerned with our own *sub-basin* to work with the GSP managed by a county-wide Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA).



## What is meant by *Sustainable Groundwater Management*?

Simply defined by Tim O'Halloran, it is the same amount of water is allowed to recharge the groundwater tables as is removed for farming and human consumption in any given Basin. There are many innovative ways to do this and to *show* we are doing it—to comply with the state mandate. Some we are already doing and some have been practiced by water-conscious California farmers and residents for decades—even centuries. But having to tighten our water-consumption belts is always a great way to find even more ways to be innovative.

**Drip vs Field/Orchard Flooding:** One of the water-saving practices already growing in popularity [see Newsletter 4, 2015] The downside, of course, is that drip does not create the perk back into the groundwater that flooding does—but less water is used in the process—so is this more “sustainable”?

**Adding Reservoirs, Dams and Canals:** In 1913 we added Capay Dam and started an extensive, unlined canal system throughout Yolo County, and in 1975 an earthen dam was built to create Indian Valley Reservoir. These features were added not only to distribute water for irrigation, but also for flood control. Adding new, smaller reservoirs on private lands throughout the valley is a possibility being discussed.

**Recharging the Groundwater:** Cache Creek itself, of course, recharges our groundwater, but its curtailed flow in past decades has reduced its efficiency. The various reservoirs, such as the Indian Valley Reservoir, are able to help, obviously—about 25% of their held-water perks back into the groundwater reserves. But here is an even more interesting revelation: the majority of the extensive canal system is *unlined*—by design. Since 25% of the water finds its way back into the groundwater, at times such as these this vast spiderweb of long, narrow “reservoirs” can be filled with water let out of Clear Lake during low-irrigation times and allowed to simply recharge the groundwater! While the San Joaquin Valley is experimenting with flooding orchards with sitting-water to recharge their grossly depleted groundwater—and battle their alarming *Subsidence!*—we have had the good fortune of forward-thinking managers like Mr. O'Halloran, who not only put in place monitoring systems throughout the county, but also saw the wisdom of unlined canals.

**Water Exchanges and Credits:** This option is being explored. Similar to *carbon offsets*, basins or individuals may be able to purchase credits with their own resources and riparian water rights to use during severe dry spells and greatest irrigation needs.

— *These can be exciting times—if we just don't panic!*

Working in cooperation with our neighbors is certainly preferable to simply competing for our scarce water and creating panic and stress—leading to unnecessary *water wars* and local dissension...which is already being seen.

*Necessity, the mother of all —well, pretty much everything!*

## ***Time for a little Yolo County water history:***

[Culled from: [http://www.co.lake.ca.us/Government/Directory/Water\\_Resources/Clear\\_Lake\\_Information/How\\_Yolo\\_Obtained\\_Claim\\_to\\_Waters\\_of\\_Clear\\_Lake.htm#sthash.LZAaATdj.dpuf](http://www.co.lake.ca.us/Government/Directory/Water_Resources/Clear_Lake_Information/How_Yolo_Obtained_Claim_to_Waters_of_Clear_Lake.htm#sthash.LZAaATdj.dpuf)]:

Contrary to the belief of many, Lake County never owned the water of Clear Lake as it is held in the public trust by the State of California.

Persons owning land touching the lake or water courses have the littoral or riparian right to take water from these sources. Littoral and Riparian rights are a hold-over from English Law.

The appropriation law, under which the Yolo County people secured their claim, was enacted into law in **1873**, during the dispute between the hydraulic miners, establishing the right of the first to file for water. The history for the first to claim water from Cache Creek goes back to **1854** when the **Moore Ditch Co. in Yolo County** began preparations to take water from Cache Creek for irrigation purposes. Previous to this, William Gordon [earliest white settler in the now-Madison area]... had been given grant of two square leagues of land between Sonoma and Napa and the Sacramento River with many rights by Mexican Governor Micheltreno.

Moore had acquired Gordon's holdings and it was on this land he established his ditch. In **1871** suit was filed against Moore by the Cachville Ditch Co., disputing Moore's claim to all the water that did flow or could flow in Cache Creek.

On **Nov. 11, 1871**, the local court decided against Moore. Moore appealed to the California Supreme Court which reversed to lower court and established Moore's claim, the result being that the Cachville Co. went out of business.

[In about **1912**] when the Yolo County people were preparing to construct their present dam on Cache Creek, approached the Lake County Board of Supervisors, asking if Lake County was interested in the lake water...the answer was *No*. The Moore interests, which had been in the hands of the Moore family for nearly fifty years, during which time they had acquired several other ditch Companies, passed into the hands of the Yolo Water and Power Co. This latter company made application for 300,000 inches of water from Cache Creek, naming Clear Lake and all the streams flowing into the lake, this being recorded in the Lake County's Recorders office on **May 28, 1912**.

Through some oversight, Lake County never applied for water, thus the rights to the water passed to the Yolo County people.

### **HISTORY OF YOLO WATER RIGHTS**

In **1912** the Yolo Water and Power Company, a corporation, applied to the State to appropriate 300,000 miner's inches of water from Cache Creek. In appropriating this water it was necessary for the Yolo Water and Power Company to show that this water was available for appropriation and that it would be put to beneficial use, which in their case was the irrigation of lands in Yolo County.

The measure of this right to the water in Clear Lake Basin has now been defined and refined by... litigation, including:

**1927** - Yolo Water and Power Company was purchased by the Clear Lake Water Company.

**1967** - Clear Lake Water Company was purchased by Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.

**1978** - The [**1975**] construction of the Indian Valley Reservoir by Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District prompted litigation in 1978 between the County of Lake and Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, in Solano County Superior Court. The result of which, Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District shall operate Clear Lake in accordance with an Operating Criteria established hereby... [*go to the website for more detail*]

Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District's appropriated water right does not expire and cannot be revoked except for two reasons:

1. Improper exercise of right
2. Nonuse

***NOTE: Regarding Cache Creek Flows***

***The California Dept. of Water Resources monitors the level of water in Cache Creek at the bridge in Rumsey, California—yes, THAT Rumsey Bridge!***

**Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District**  
**34274 State Highway 16**  
**Woodland, CA 95695-9371**  
**Tel: (530) 662-0265**  
**Fax: (530) 662-4982**  
**Web: [www.ycfwcd.org](http://www.ycfwcd.org)**  
**Email: [info@ycfwcd.org](mailto:info@ycfwcd.org)**

***The historic Ditches of the Greater Capay Valley were designed to divert water primarily from Clear Lake and Cache Creek for irrigation, then allowing the flow back into the creek en route to the Delta:***

For instance, from Rumsey Ditch/Dam, the creek winds southeasterly about 16 miles to the Capay Dam, which was formerly built in 1912-14 and owned by Clear Lake Water Company, now owned by Yolo County Flood Control. This dam is used to divert the water, both natural flow and Clear Lake releases, to the company's customers in Yolo County both north and south of Cache Creek. The Company also diverted water at historic Moore Dam, about 12 miles downstream from Capay Dam. Water diverted at Moore Dam largely returned flow from Capay Dam diversions. Nearly all of the winter runoff discharging into Yolo By-Pass and continuing to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta ultimately "wastes" into Suisun Bay. To the extent that water wastes into Suisun Bay it is called "unappropriated."

—[http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/waterrights/board\\_decisions/adopted\\_orders/decisions/d0950\\_d0999/wrd991.pdf](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/waterrights/board_decisions/adopted_orders/decisions/d0950_d0999/wrd991.pdf)

—Also check out: [http://www.yolorcd.org/documents/cv\\_watershed\\_stewardship\\_plan.pdf](http://www.yolorcd.org/documents/cv_watershed_stewardship_plan.pdf)

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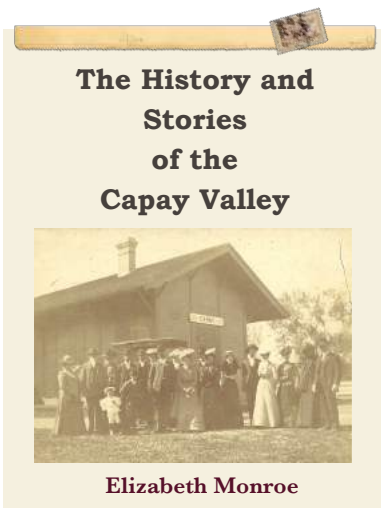
**Various Historic "Ditch Companies" developed in the area over the years—  
to be continued in Newsletter2; 2016**

**From: TGCVHS  
PO Box 442, Esparto, CA 95627**

**TO:**

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