

SAVING THE FAIR OAKS BLUFF

Over the years, most of Riverside Park fell into private ownership, and homes were built along the Bluff.

It took the will of an entire community to preserve this last piece for future generations.

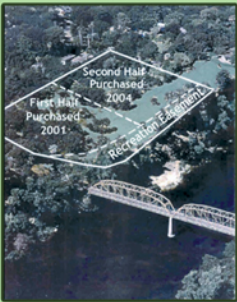
1890: Early Planner's Vision



Since the late 1800's, local residents have enjoyed the Fair Oaks Bluff because of the spectacular panoramic view that stretches from the Sierras to Mount Diablo.



As shown on this map above from 1900, the early planners of Fair Oaks envisioned "Riverside Park", a 100-foot-wide corridor of public open space stretching for almost a mile along the American River (tan color). (The new Fair Oaks Bluff is shown in green.)



Aerial view of the Bluff showing the two parcels purchased by CSB and the original public recreation easement.

1994-1999: The Lawsuit

In 1994, developers purchased three lots adjoining Riverside Park and petitioned for ownership of the entire Bluff property. In response, *Friends of the Fair Oaks Bluff* was formed. In 1996, along with the *Save The American River Association*, they sued to protect Riverside Park for the public.

In 1999, the Superior Court judge recognized the public's continuous use of the property for over a century and granted a 15 foot wide recreation easement along the edge of the Bluff. Neither the public nor the developers were satisfied. In March 2000 another approach was presented: What if a group of citizens could purchase the 4.5 acres? The developers agreed, for a price of \$1.2 million.

2000: The Fundraising Begins

Citizens to Save the Bluffs (CSB) was formed and succeeded in securing a \$250,000 grant from the Raley Foundation and a matching pledge from Sacramento County. CSB began the task of raising the remaining \$700,000. By the developers deadline, February 2001, the money had not been raised.

2001-2003: Partial Purchase and the Loan

CSB bought half the property for \$735,000 in June 2001. The other 2.25 acres remained in limbo. An urgent mailing in December 2001 generated \$20,000 within a week but it was not enough. CSB obtained a loan guaranteed by the *Fair Oaks Park and Recreation District* (FORPD), for \$326,000 to secure the second half of the land.

2004: Paid in Full!

The loan was paid off in December 2004 with the help of FORPD, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors and a major private donor. During the five year effort the community raised \$1.3 million from 1500 donors in contributions ranging from \$5 to \$50,000. The Bluff is now a protected area within the Sacramento County Regional Park system.

The combined effort has preserved the Bluff as a legacy for future generations.



Old Friends by Hugh Gorman



Bluff-scape by Dalia VisGirda

Local artists cherish the Bluff for its tranquil beauty.



'Fundraising Thermometer' leads the parade



Fundraising success



Ribbon cutting ceremony June 6, 2004

This sign was sponsored by Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District

For more information on the Bluff see www.araha.org/books/foabluff.html



American River Parkway

