



Effie Yeaw Nature Center

JEWEL OF THE AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY

ARTICLE PAMELA BAKER | PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED

Green heron. Photo by Thom Parrish



Effie Yeaw Nature Center, jewel of the American River Parkway, is a natural habitat of walking trails and abundant wildlife. A 100-acre preserve within Ancil Hoffman Park in Carmichael, the center offers a welcome relief from the hustle and bustle of the nearby city.

The interactive nature center is named after Effie Yeaw — a teacher, early

conservationist and visionary for the American River Parkway. In the 1950s and 1960s, Yeaw would often use the area, formerly known as Deterding Woods, to introduce children to nature and wildlife. Alarmed by the growing threat to open space available for nature study, wildlife and recreation, Yeaw and other conservationists worked diligently to get a county parks bond

measure passed to purchase land along the American River and establish the parkway. The lower portion of Deterding Ranch was part of that purchase and the Nature Center became part of the parkway plan, guaranteeing access to the river and nature's beauty for future generations.

Teachers can bring their classes to the center where students explore the interactive

Lone deer crossing a trail. Photo by Pamela Baker.



Coyote. Photo by Thom Parrish.



museum and meet some of the native raptors, reptiles and amphibians; walk the trails and discover native plants and wildlife in the preserve; wade into the American River or ponds to investigate creatures living below the water's surface; or learn more about the Maidu Indian culture in the replica of a native village.

The center also offers day camps during school breaks at a cost of \$20 for members or \$25 for non-members. Camps offer classes on outdoor skills, water and rain, exploring the river's edge, a variety of animals, and many other fun topics.

Every Saturday and Sunday, there are free programs for families, adults, and children. Visitors need only pay the park entry fee of \$5 per car, and arrive early to ensure a spot in that day's program. Topics range from Coyote Tales, Birding for Families, Nature's Art Box, Beavers vs. Otters, Salamander Story Time, a Kid's Christmas Bird Count in December, and many other fun and fascinating adventures. Once a month, there is a free family bird walk led by a member of the Sacramento Audubon Society.

But for those who just want to enjoy the center on their own, there are three self-guided trails with opportunities to see deer, wild turkeys, coyotes, owls, snakes, hawks and songbirds. On my last visit to the center, just a few steps into the Main Trail, I encountered two does and six fawns that were undaunted by my presence. The Main and Natoma Trails both lead down to the American River for an up close view of one of Sacramento's most treasured natural resources.

Paul Tebbel, the center's Executive Director, considers the center to be "one of the safest places in the Parkway. You don't have to worry about bikes speeding by because the bike trail is on the opposite side of the river." In fact, Tebbel said that many local residents use the trails on a regular basis for walking and running.

So the next time you feel the need to get away from confines of city life, visit Effie Yeaw Nature Center and experience this natural jewel in its wild, yet scenic, setting along the American River. To learn more, visit SacNatureCenter.net or call 916.489.4918.



A young girl catches a fish during the Nature Center's Outdoor Adventures summer camp. Photo by Kari Bauer.



Two young campers explore pond life during Nature Camp. Photo by Kari Bauer.