

# American River Canyon Hikes

*Practical Guides to Trails  
in the Canyons of the  
North and Middle Forks American River*



**Jim Ferris  
Michael Lynch  
Sheila Toner**

**4th Edition  
Expanded & Revised  
33 Guides & Maps**

# **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Guides to Adventure**

### **Local Authors Lead the Way to Canyon Hiking**

A trio of talented local authors, their longstanding love of the outdoors, and their interest in sharing that love with the public has brought to us a new edition of the definitive hiking guide for our local American River Canyons. In 2005 the co-authors - Sheila Toner, Jim Ferris and Mike Lynch - published the original "American River Canyon Hikes". Since that time 13 new trails have appeared in the book. Two original trail descriptions have been removed and the new edition has updated maps, photos, descriptive information, and a more practical spiral binding for using the guide out on the trails.

Says Toner: "There are other hiking guides out there and some of them give you pretty pictures and flowery descriptions to give you the inspiration to get out into the canyons. That is certainly a good thing. But you need "American River Canyon Hikes" if you want the most specific and complete practical information of how to find the trailheads, where to park your car, and the distance, elevation changes and other conditions you will encounter on the trails."

#### **MEET THE AUTHORS - JIM FERRIS**

Jim Ferris is one of the original founders of Canyon Keepers and he was the primary organizing force that led to the book's original publication. "It was in 2001 or 2002 that Canyon Keepers was just getting started" says Ferris. "More and more people were coming to the Auburn State Recreation Area looking for opportunities to experience our beautiful river and canyons and there were few maps and no guides to help them find their way. The Visitor's Bureau was asking ASRA's then Superintendent Jill Dampier and us if we could prepare at least some basic trail guides. We formed a committee of volunteers and came up with ten guides, which we gave to the Visitor's Bureau. And that got the whole thing started."

Jim is probably best known today as an elected Board member for the Auburn Recreation District. But since his arrival in Auburn, 30 years ago, he has rolled up his sleeves and assisted numerous nonprofit and civic improvement organizations in our community. His attraction to the Auburn State Recreation Area was a natural fit for him, as he has had a long history of interest and involvement in multiple sports and outdoor adventures. His hobbies ranged from handball to squash, scuba diving to mountain climbing, trail running to skiing. He and his wife, Norma, went trekking with Sherpa guides in the mountains of Pakistan and Nepal.

As a successful marketing and business consultant in Southern California, he realized that he had the flexibility to carry his business with him and relocate to wherever he and Norma wished. It was a whitewater rafting excursion on the South Fork American River that introduced them to our local area and gave them the inspiration to move here.

As Jim explains "Early on, Norma got a job as the office manager for a local special education school run by Frank Olrich. Frank was an energetic activist and he was the one who actually got Canyon Keepers started. Jill Dampier was asking for volunteer help to settle down some of the Wild West rowdy behavior that was going on in ASRA at the time. Frank was the original instigator, but he was involved in too many other activities and he asked me if I could take over as the Canyon Keepers lead person. Sadly, Frank was killed soon after that, run over by a train while cross country skiing in the high country."

#### **SHEILA TONER**

One of the early CK volunteers was Sheila Toner. Newly retired from a 27 year career in the Army, Colonel Toner did a scientific study to determine the ideal place to relocate from her last work station in DC. The study involved maps and data on favorable weather and vicinity of airports, hospitals, and opportunities for skiing, horseback riding and hiking. Auburn won out over Taos, New Mexico, Reno and the Columbia River Gorge in Oregon.

Canyon Keepers was also a natural fit for Sheila. During her Army stint she spent nine years in Germany and while there was an enthusiastic participant in Volksmarching with the International Federation of Popular Sports (IVV). With IVV she joined hundreds of local and international hiking enthusiasts to explore many of the wild and colorful areas of Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Today she is a hike leader, with Canyon Keepers, Sierra Club Seniors, American River Conservancy and Road Scholar. With Road Scholar she leads groups on one week exploratory tours of the California Delta Region, Yosemite, Point Reyes, Monterey and the Channel Islands. Sharing California history and natural history is her passion.

That passion has also been channeled through the “American River Canyon Hikes”. She has written all of the trail guides, other than the original ten produced in 2002.

## **MIKE LYNCH**

Mike is an original – in more ways than one. In 1977, when the Auburn Dam was facing delays, State Parks agreed to assist the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in the management of canyon-land originally planned for inundation by the dam. Mike responded to the first advertisement for new rangers and joined the original ranger crew for what would eventually become the Auburn State Recreation Area. ASRA was good for Mike. He worked his way up to become its superintendent, a post he held for more than a decade until his retirement in 2014.

And along the way Mike occupied himself with a number of other Auburn community projects, including the local historical society and the Placer County Economic Development Commission. Today he is also an elected Board member for the Auburn Recreation District.

For the book project Mike was the third critical cog to get the wheel turning. Early in his Auburn career, Mike began writing books and editing journals. His first publication, in 1995, was “A History of California State Park Rangers”. He has subsequently authored and co-authored other books on the American River Canyons, History of Bowman, Mountain Quarries Mine, and others. As Mike puts it: “I was one of the ASRA rangers back then. When I saw that Canyon Keepers had produced ten trail guides and there was an interest to produce more, I told them ‘why don’t we turn this into a book?’ I was already editing a 50 page quarterly journal for the International Police Association and I had learned how to use different software for page layout. You can’t afford to make books like this if you have to hire someone to do that.”

Mike remains very active, both in Auburn and outside. His most recent adventure was a trip to Nepal and Bhutan to explore the ancient and sacred sites.

## **GET THE BOOK**

The new 4<sup>th</sup> edition is available for purchase at many local stores and, of course, at the Auburn Visitors Center. For more information about Canyon Keepers, go to: [www.canyonkeepers.org](http://www.canyonkeepers.org).



Sheila, Mike, and Jim F., co-authors of the guide.



Enjoying a great day outside.



Part of the Western States Trail heading towards Auburn from the Mountain Quarries Railroad Bridge.



Tamaroo Bar access.



Part of Olmstead Loop, an equestrian paradise.