

# West Slope trail along American River leads to Folsom Lake

By Sam McManis, Sacramento Bee

Starting Friday, it will be possible to enjoy the American River's south fork from Folsom Lake to near Coloma and stay dry doing so.

The scenic stretch of (mostly) untouched nature has long been among the West's premier locations for whitewater rafting and kayaking. But for those on foot, horse or mountain bike, there hasn't been a way to traverse the full length of the winding south fork stretch that many say puts the "gorge" in gorgeous.

This morning, a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Salmon Falls trailhead will trumpet the opening of the 25-mile South Fork American River Trail, a multiuse path featuring seasonally wildflower-saturated grasslands, oak woodlands, riparian habitats, sage-covered ridges and views of the river below.

The trail's opening Friday morning for use by hikers, runners, mountain bikers and (for most of its length) equestrians will be the culmination of decades of grant-writing, fundraising, property negotiations, trail cutting and bridge building by the American River Conservancy and the federal Bureau of Land Management.

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