

Opinion: Schoolchildren showing importance of state parks

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Slowly but surely, nonprofits and local communities are exploring what they can do to keep open the 70 state parks slated to close on July 1.

So far, 10 parks have been removed from the closure list. The latest is a gem in our region, the South Yuba River State Park, with a lovely canyon and covered bridge, near Grass Valley.

Elementary school students at the public Grass Valley Charter School were among those who lobbied local leaders and helped the South Yuba River Citizens League collect 10,000 petition signatures. The Nevada County Board of Supervisors, the Nevada City and Grass Valley city councils and Truckee Town Council signed a letter to the governor.

State Parks officials announced Wednesday that the park will remain open, with new parking fees at entry kiosks and self-serve devices at park entry sites. Nevada County agreed to "no parking" signs along the public road adjacent to the park, so visitors will use the park's lot and pay the fee.

The kids and the community still are trying get neighboring Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park off the closure list. That's the site of the largest hydraulic mining operation in California in the 1870s and early 1880s.

Other parks have gotten off the closure list with timely donations and active nonprofits.

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