

Happy  
Birthday,  
America!

# THE Kaweah Commonwealth

A JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO LABOR AND WHO THINK

50¢

PRESORTED STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
THREE RIVERS, CA  
PERMIT NO. 20

Volume 19, No. 27

www.kaweahcommonwealth.com

July 2 - 8, 2010

WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THREE RIVERS AND SEQUOIA~KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

## RIVER JOURNEY



On Tuesday, June 29, rafts school above some serious whitewater (photo left) to plot a downstream course. ABOVE PHOTO: Paddlers successfully shoot the rapids with teamwork and an experienced guide. The Kaweah River is currently running swift and cold, so visitors should not attempt to enter the water unless in the company of a professional.

## TRUS approves measure for November ballot

by KATHRYN KEELEY  
and JOHN ELLIOTT

Three Rivers Union School has always been a vital part of the community. It is central to not only students, staff, and parents, but to the locals who participate in the many events held on campus. However, due to current economic woes, citizens run the risk of losing something very special.

"You can lose a school, and that is what we are looking at," said Kristina Roper-Graber, TRUS board president, at a public hearing on Wednesday, June 30. "It could be fatal to our community."

Over the years, TRUS has seen fluctuations in attendance and the corresponding revenue of the school, as well as a general downturn. In 1991, attendance peaked at 289 students and has been declining since, with a projected 155 students in the 2010-2011 school year.

"The state is giving us less money and we are getting less kids," said Sue Sherwood, TRUS superintendent.

The Three Rivers board of trustees hopes to resolve this situation with a special assessment

—see TRUS, page 11

## In brief...

### HOLIDAY MANPOWER

Both the Tulare County Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol will be out in greater force this weekend making certain that all in Kaweah Country have a safe weekend. There will be three Sheriff's deputies patrolling day and night in and around Three Rivers.

Another deputy will be assigned to assist the boat patrol at Lake Kaweah. Three CHP officers will also be assigned to Kaweah Country roads throughout the weekend. One two-man unit will be working nights to target impaired drivers.

"We've had discussions about having a sobriety checkpoint somewhere up here but there's nothing definite yet," reported Lt. Gary Chambers.

### PRESCRIBED FIRE

Sequoia National Park fire crews began ignitions on the Bobcat Prescribed Fire on Tuesday, June 29. The 97-acre burn was conducted in a unit east of Moro Rock Road and south of the Crescent Meadow Road.

Ignitions were completed on Thursday, July 1, but smoke from the blaze is expected to remain the Middle Fork canyon

—see BRIEFS, page 11

## ROAD CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES ON GENERALS HIGHWAY

(AMPHITHEATER POINT TO ELEVEN RANGE)

One-hour delays Monday through Thursday from 7 am-5 pm from Amphitheater Point to Eleven Range. Half-hour delay from 5-5:30 pm. Pass through is at the top of the hour with lower (uphill bound) traffic released first (which could at the busiest times include more than 100 cars). During hours of construction, traffic will be led by a pilot vehicle. Traffic signals are in place during non-construction hours, which are timed at 20 minutes. **THIS WEEK:** Night work is tentatively scheduled from Tuesday, July 6-Friday, July 9, 9 pm to 5 am, with one pass-through each evening at 11:30 pm.

## 'River Watch' braces for busy weekend

by JOHN ELLIOTT

In cities, concerned citizens form neighborhood watch groups to keep an eye on their part of town. In the foothills community of Three Rivers, some business owners and concerned neighbors have formed "River Watch."

The organization is a quasi-official committee that was started after last month's Town Hall meeting. There, a packed house participated in a discussion led by Supervisor Allen Ishida about what constitutes a safe and respectful use of the Kaweah River.

A consensus was reached that

a group of concerned citizens should become proactive in contacting the public who annually converge on Three Rivers. The ultimate goal of the committee, led by Margaret Roberts, owner of Rio Sierra Riverhouse, is to educate visitors how to stay safe and legally access local swimming holes. The core committee realized this larger than average river runoff year would present some unique challenges.

So far this year, there have been three local drownings. River Watch is working to ensure there won't be more.

The higher than usual June




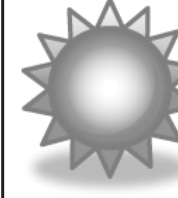
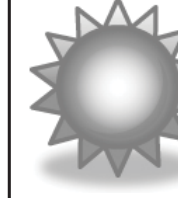
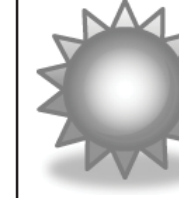
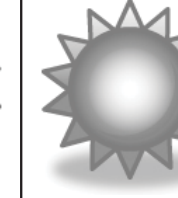
water that has been thundering down the canyon bought some time as the typical crowds who come to swim in the Kaweah have waited for the first extended run of hot weather. Now that the annual triple-digit summer heat is here so is the busy Fourth of July weekend, and that means even more visitors.

Here's what River Watch is doing to help. Last week, signs went up in local businesses and near the three main swimming holes warning of river danger.

River Watch members at Slicky

—see RIVER, page 10

## • KAWEAH COUNTRY OUTLOOK: three rivers • lemon cove • woodlake •

Saturday, July 3	Sunday, July 4	Monday, July 5	Tuesday, July 6	Wednesday, July 7	Thursday, July 8	Friday, July 9
						
Sunny Hi 96 • Lo 63	Sunny Hi 99 • Lo 63	Sunny Hi 100 • Lo 64	Sunny Hi 101 • Lo 65	Sunny Hi 97 • Lo 63	Sunny Hi 98 • Lo 65	Sunny Hi 99 • Lo 66

## WEATHER WATCH

### FIREWORKS ARE ILLEGAL

in Three Rivers and

Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks  
Snow continues to clog the high-country passes and north-facing Sierra slopes above 9,000 feet. Backcountry travelers are advised to pack ice axes and crampons. In addition, use extreme caution at water crossings, which are currently at unseasonably high levels.