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Federal holiday to mark end of slavery

It'll be Juneteenth across the nation at last once Biden signs rare bipartisan bill.

By SASHA HUPKA

WASHINGTON — The House on Wednesday passed legislation designating June 19 as a new federal holiday, just a day after the Senate voted unanimously to approve a mirror bill commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

The rare bipartisan legislation, which passed 415 to 14, will go to President Biden's desk just a day or two before the date arrives on Saturday.

"What I see here today is racial divide crumbling, being crushed this day under a momentous vote that brings together people who understand the value of freedom," said Democratic Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas. "And that is what Juneteenth is all about."

It is the first new federal holiday since Martin Luther King Jr. Day was created in 1983. Both campaigns encountered delay and controversy, but passage this time was relatively quick compared with the fight over King Day.

The Juneteenth bill, which was first introduced in June 2020 by Sen. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) following the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, was blocked from passing with unanimous consent last year by Republican Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin.

Johnson said he supported recognizing the significance of Juneteenth but objected to the cost of declaring a new federal [See Juneteenth, A9]



ANGEL PINEDO, director of education for the Arroyo Seco Foundation, with volunteers Steve Huntley, left, and Darrell Kunitomi, right, conducts a survey of rainbow trout in the Arroyo Seco creek.

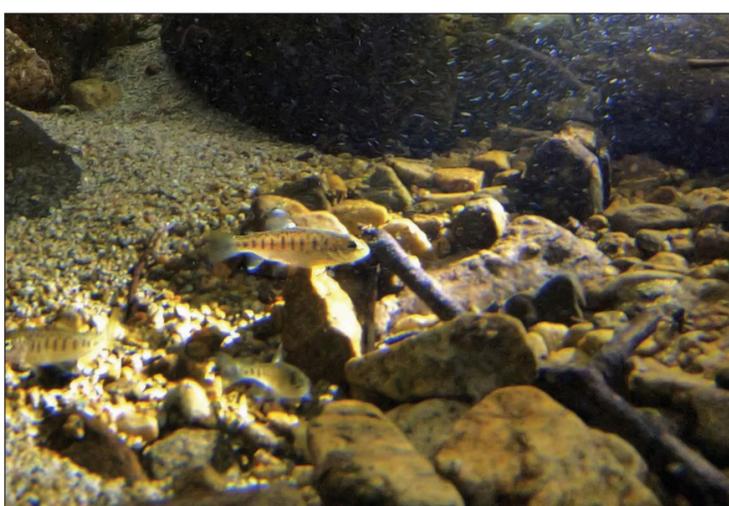
Quest to save rainbow trout fuels water war in Pasadena

The unexpected introduction of hundreds of fish muddies city's plan to take more supply from the Arroyo Seco creek

By LOUIS SAHAGÚN

In an era of increasing drought and nearly back-to-back wildfires, state conservationists have been working overtime in the San Gabriel Mountains to rescue frogs, fish and other species facing potential oblivion by rounding up populations of threatened animals and transporting them to safer areas.

While most of these efforts have occurred in obscurity, one recent mission to save hundreds of doomed rainbow trout has touched off a heated battle between humans and fish over the clear waters of Pasadena's Arroyo Seco. The controversy has also served to highlight the challenges [See Trout, A14]



BABY rainbow trout, just 2 inches long, swim last month in Pasadena's Arroyo Seco, a winding creek that snakes past the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

MUTUAL RESPECT FROM '2 GREAT POWERS'

Putin deflects blame over human rights, but he and Biden see chance to mend ties.

By ELI STOKOLS AND TRACY WILKINSON

GENEVA — President Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin both emerged from more than three hours of direct talks declaring their first meeting a success, despite making little tangible progress toward immediately improving the strained relationship between Washington and Moscow.

Noting the "hype" around the summit, Biden said his aim was "straightforward" — to be frank with Putin about the Kremlin's trampling of human rights, military adventurism in Ukraine and attacks on democracy, including interference in U.S. elections.

"I want President Putin to understand why I say what I say and why I do what I do and how I will respond to certain actions that harm American interests," said Biden, who said the summit was about establishing "some rules of the road."

If he drew any red lines with Putin, he was mostly vague in describing them during a 33-minute news conference with U.S. reporters after the talks.

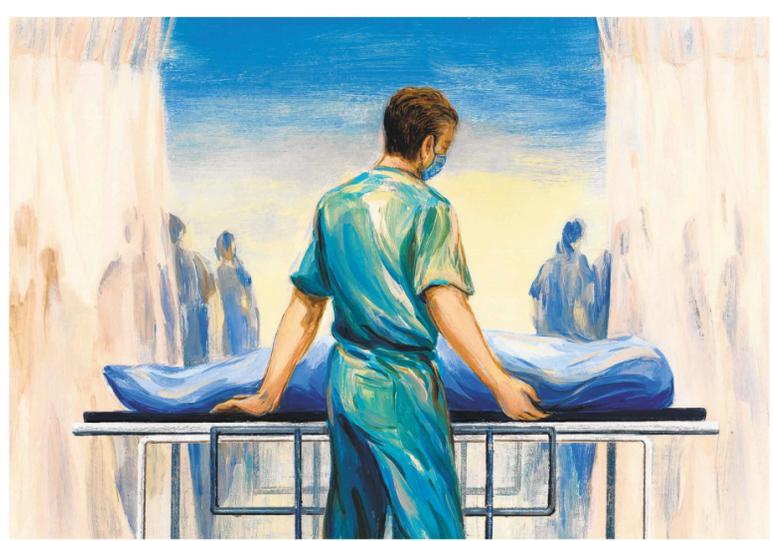
Biden said that the prospect of an American military response to Russia's actions was never broached. But he also suggested that America's cyber capabilities exceeded Moscow's, hinting that the U.S. could retaliate in kind to continued cyberattacks from within Russia.

And he said "the consequences ... would be devastating for Russia" if imprisoned Putin foe and opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who survived a poisoning last year, were to die in the state's hands.

Biden acknowledged that Wednesday's events did not constitute a "Kumbaya moment" but asserted that Putin, too, is interested in averting a new Cold War as he sees China on his borders, increasingly asserting economic and military power.

"I think there's a real prospect to genuinely improve the relations" between Russia and the U.S. without giving up fundamental values, Biden said at his news conference, which started after the Kremlin leader spoke to reporters for about an hour.

Biden repeatedly suggested that the potential success of this meeting on a picturesque hillside overlooking Lake Geneva wouldn't be measurable for [See Geneva, A4]



SALLY DENG For The Times

COLUMN ONE

That guy who collected the COVID dead? It was Karl

By Maria L. La Ganga

The winter surge of COVID-19 cases had — finally — begun to slow. Intensive care units across California were beginning to recover from unprecedented levels of disease and death. Hospital morgues were no longer quite so full. And yet. Dr. Courtney Martin lay in bed in her Redlands home, eyes wide open. The kids were safely tucked in down the hall. Her husband, Scott, snoozed quietly beside her. But sleep was a long way off for the 39-year-old obstetrician. She reached for her iPhone in the darkness. Opened the notes app to an empty

screen. And began to write. *I want to write about Karl. This is a long essay, but it's because I love to write. Perhaps it's my therapy, and perhaps it's because Karl deserves to be noticed. Every hospital has a Karl.* Martin is the head of maternity services at Loma Linda University Medical Center, an accomplished physician and surgeon, a dynamic presence, 6 feet 1 inch tall, bright blond hair, ready smile. Karl is an all-but-invisible man. He works in the massive medical center's dispatch department, wheeling patients from hospital rooms to radiology for MRIs and CT scans. He [See Karl, A8]

ANALYSIS

Newsom buoyed by state reopening

With the coronavirus on the wane, the bid to recall him may also fade, observers say.

By TARYN LUNA AND PHIL WILLON

SACRAMENTO — As Californians streamed into Universal Studios behind him, an unmasked and unusually jovial Gov. Gavin Newsom declared Tuesday that the state was reopened and finally ready to "turn the page" after a tough year.

And as he ends COVID-19 restrictions, Newsom is doing his best to shut the book on the recall months before the election.

Early in the pandemic, Newsom was praised for his health-first approach to governing. But muddled policies, school closures and his own damaging missteps, such as his dinner at the French Laundry during the state shutdown, frustrated even some of his staunchest supporters and inflamed an angry bloc of voters who had grown tired of his emergency use of executive powers. [See Newsom, A11]

Restrictions on asylum lifted

The end of two Trump-era policies will help Central Americans fleeing violence qualify to enter U.S. NATION, A5

Wetlands harmed by homelessness

Damage isn't a reason to lose compassion for the city's vulnerable, Erika D. Smith writes. CALIFORNIA, B1

Weather Mostly sunny, hot. L.A. Basin: 90/68. B6



ALEX GOODLETT Getty Images

STEPPING UP

With Kawhi Leonard out with a knee injury, Paul George (13) scored 37 points to carry the Clippers to a crucial Game 5 win over Utah. SPORTS, B10

Pasadena not hooked on trout introduction

[Trout, from A1]
wildlife biologists now face as they search for havens amid Southern California's patchwork of urban development, wildfire scars and seasonal mudslides.

After last summer's Bobcat fire burned more than 115,000 acres of wrinkled slopes and lush canyons, state biologists began to worry that a native population of rainbow trout living in the West Fork of the San Gabriel River could be wiped out if winter storms unleashed a muddy avalanche of slurry, sediment and fire debris into the waterway. They soon hatched a plan to translocate 469 rainbows to the Arroyo Seco, a winding creek that snakes past the Jet Propulsion Laboratory some 30 miles away.

Translocation occurs when animals are moved to areas that are not within their home range, whereas relocation describes moving animals to another area within their home range. In explaining its decision to translocate the trout, the state Department of Fish and Wildlife said doing so provided an opportunity to preserve valuable genetic stock and "potentially reestablish a native rainbow trout population" in the stream where fish had been decimated by the 2009 Station fire.

The trouble is, the city of Pasadena gets about 35% of its water supply from the Arroyo Seco, and the surprise dump of squirming trout has raised new criticism of its \$15-million plan to draw more water from the stream. That's largely because Pasadena Water and Power's environmental impact report on the Arroyo Seco Canyon Project claimed there were no fish in the creek.

The project would boost the city's ability to gather and store water by replacing a vintage 3-foot-tall dam, and by improving a diversion system that directs the arroyo's water to spreading basins that allow it to percolate into the underground aquifer known as Raymond Basin. It would also repair and replace water facilities damaged by the 2009 Station fire.

Conservationists have been fighting for several years to downscale the project proposal and would ultimately like the creek returned to its natural state. Doing so, they say, would allow it to better refill the aquifer, restore the environment and accommodate fish.

The sudden introduction of rainbow trout has added more weight to their cause, because the city can no longer argue there are no fish in the creek.

"I was overjoyed when I heard that rainbows were back in town," said Tim Brick, managing director of the nonprofit Arroyo Seco Foundation. "The fish added momentum to our efforts to force the city to revise the project that we believe will hurt habitat, wildlife and water resources in the Arroyo Seco."

The city now has "an obligation to ensure the survival of those fish, some of which,



Photographs by CAROLYN COLE Los Angeles Times

ANGEL PINEDO, center, director of education for the Arroyo Seco Foundation, conducts a survey of rainbow trout and other fish in May.



VOLUNTEERS Gary Sikkens, center, Steve Huntley, right, and Regan Hutson, left, help Pinedo in surveying the clear waters of Pasadena's Arroyo Seco creek.

experts tell us, are genetically primed to turn into federally endangered southern steelheads," Brick said.

Pasadena Water and Power, as well as the city attorney, say that leaving natural flows in the channel is not an option: Any significant changes in management of the municipal system would require a renegotiation of its 1944 adjudicated water right agreement, which could be a lengthy and difficult process, they say.

Pasadena's Arroyo Seco water facilities are "based upon a historic water right and proven efficacy," said Gurcharan Bawa, general manager of Pasadena Water and Power.

The proposed improvements, he added, allow for fish passage "should there be aquatic species in the future," in addition to improving groundwater supplies.

For Pasadena Water and Power, managing the bounty of the Arroyo Seco's flows is critical in a warming world, when whiplashing shifts between extremely wet and ex-

remely dry periods are challenging its ability to store and transport water for a population of about 141,000 people.

The utility owns the right to divert up to 25 cubic feet per second of surface water from the Arroyo Seco for direct use or to spread for percolation for groundwater pumping from the Raymond Basin.

Margie Otto, a spokeswoman for Pasadena, said the city was not notified by state wildlife authorities that they had translocated rainbows into the Arroyo Seco, but that their presence was not expected to require a revision of the environmental impact report.

Last week, however, the Arroyo Seco Foundation and the Pasadena Audubon Society announced that the city had agreed to discuss a settlement that might result in modifications of the project's development plans.

"If settlement negotiations are successful, the finalized agreement will be presented at a Pasadena

City Council hearing in July," Brick said.

Biologists say that finding clear streams suitable for native rainbows — cool, rocky pools devoid of predatory invasive species — is becoming increasingly difficult in a mountain range with one of the most dangerous wildfire environments in the United States.

But the rainbows that were moved to the Arroyo Seco are swimming in good company. The creek is teeming with caddis flies, a primary food for wild fish, as well as trout ranging in size from 1-inch fry to 10 inches.

The Arroyo Seco was running clear and cool, shaded by alders, willows and bay trees, on a recent morning when Angel Pinedo put on a snorkel and mask and dunked his head into a pool to assess the status of the canyon's trout population.

A beam from his handheld flashlight moved in continuous arcs as Pinedo, an education director and designated "trout scout" for the

Arroyo Seco Foundation, scanned the depths in search of the multihued fish with silvery white undersides, black spots along their backs, and a horizontal pink-red stripe running from the gills to the tail.

"Great news!" Pinedo, 35, said with a smile after lifting his head to the surface. "There are three baby rainbows right here, and they're doing great — 1 to 2 inches in length, healthy and frisky."

Over the next hour, Pinedo turned up several more rainbows in pools about 100 yards upstream.

Pinedo and other trout scouts began conducting informal weekly trout surveys in February to help orchestrate the species' preservation along the Arroyo Seco.

"The big question now," he said, "is whether these fish are the youngsters of the reintroduced rainbows or the descendants of historic populations that had been overlooked by the city's surveys."

"Either way," he added, "we have fish in the Arroyo Seco and they need our help."

For conservationists, the remote chance that some of the rainbow trout dumped into the stream could carry the genetic material to transform into a steelhead is thrilling.

Southern steelhead — a distant cousin of salmon — begin life as native rainbow trout. For reasons still unknown, some migrate to the ocean and become steelhead after undergoing physical changes that allow them to return to spawn in freshwater gravel beds.

Putting native rainbows in the creek, conservationists say, inadvertently complemented plans to modify the Los Angeles River so that steelhead can return to it.

Modifications to the concrete channel south of downtown include terraces, riffles

and pools that would allow southern steelhead to rest and bulk up during their migratory journeys north to ancestral spawning grounds that include such tributaries as the Arroyo Seco.

Steelhead have been prevented from making that journey since the 1930s, when frequent catastrophic flooding prompted civic leaders to transform the L.A. River into a flood-control channel. Nearly the entire 51-mile-long river bottom was concreted over except a few spots where the water table was too high.

The last steelhead recorded in the Los Angeles River was a 25-incher caught near a bridge in Glendale in 1940 — two years after that stretch was paved. Today, the region's ocean steelhead population hovers around 500 — 10% of what it was seven decades ago.

Awareness of the river as a natural resource began to grow in the 1980s when environmental groups put pressure on Los Angeles County and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Now, the waterway is slowly being transformed into a greenbelt of parks, trees, bike paths and kayaking opportunities that set the stage for proposals that would allow the few southern steelhead left on Earth to fulfill their life stages in a renovated L.A. River watershed.

"In this case, we're betting on the possible in the L.A. River," said Tom Tomlinson, an expert on the cultural history of the Southern California steelhead.

"The return of a steelhead thoroughfare reconnecting the Arroyo Seco and the Pacific Ocean would reinforce the idea of L.A. culture as healthy, vigorous and outdoor friendly," he said.

Those elements, he said, have caused the return of this fish to become "a precious quest."

Amid inflation worries, Fed signals earlier rate increase

As pent-up demand fuels a rise in prices, policymakers could act as soon as 2022.

BY DON LEE

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve signaled Wednesday that it would probably nudge up interest rates earlier than expected in response to sizzling economic growth and a surge in prices that has sparked inflation fears.

Fed officials, after their two-day meeting, left the central bank's main interest rate near zero and said it would continue to make massive purchases of Treasury and mortgage bonds to support financial conditions and the recovery.

But policymakers acknowledged the accelerated economic growth — likely to be the fastest in decades — and the recent jump in inflation. And their updated economic projections indicated that significantly more Fed officials now see a rate hike coming next year or in 2023. In March, most Fed officials expected no rate

change through 2023.

Stocks fell after the Fed announcement, with the Dow closing down 266 points.

The Fed's statement described the higher inflation as "largely reflecting transitory factors." And many private economists agree that the recent surge in prices for many goods and services is a temporary result of a pandemic-stifled economy suddenly free to go full-throttle.

"The process of reopening the economy is unprecedented," Fed Chair Jerome H. Powell said at a virtual news conference Wednesday afternoon. "Shifts in demand can be large and rapid, and bottlenecks, hiring difficulties and other constraints could continue to limit how quickly supply can adjust, raising the possibility that inflation could turn out to be higher and more persistent than we expect."

If inflation should stay high, Powell said, the Fed could always make adjustments in its easy-money policies, including its main lever, interest rates. But historically, central banks have had trouble getting the timing right. And some economists worry that Fed policy-

makers may be underestimating the danger of the current problem.

Chris Rupkey, chief economist at FwdBonds, a financial market research firm in New York, said, "This inflation looks as permanent as it is dangerous because higher prices have the ability to curb consumer purchases and shut the economy's spending right back down in a hurry."

After decades of almost no inflation, the surge has unsettled financial markets and spread alarm among some business and political leaders. Democrats in particular worry that Republicans will play on fears of runaway inflation to win control of Congress next year.

Consumer prices jumped 5% in May from a year ago, the fastest pace since August 2008.

Producers are paying more for supplies, and many workers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic are holding out for better pay, raising the prospect of higher wages adding to inflationary pressures.

"This is the reality. We're dealing with inflation," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton in

Chicago. "Most people haven't seen this kind of inflation, and it's startling. It's hot."

Beyond specific products and sectors, what's fueling inflation overall is booming pent-up demand. Many consumers have lots of cash and savings to go with it. Others have benefited from massive federal spending and a reopening of economies after many months of pandemic restrictions.

IHS Markit, a leading forecasting firm, predicts the U.S. economy will grow at a blistering annual rate of 11% in the current quarter, slowing only to a rapid 8.5% pace in the final three months of the year.

On top of that, Swonk and other economists worry that a shortage of semiconductors, which has disrupted auto production, and other supply bottlenecks pushing up prices could last for more than a few months. With home prices soaring, rents could soon follow. And imports of Chinese-made goods are costing more too.

"There are just a lot of different things out there that are pushing our costs up and pushing prices up, and therefore inflation," said

Gregory Hayes, chief executive at Raytheon Technologies and a leader at the Business Roundtable, an association of CEOs of major companies.

In their latest projections Wednesday, Fed officials said inflation would hit 3.4% this year, up a full point from their March forecast. Still, most Fed officials continue to believe that inflation will fall back to about their 2% target next year.

In March, most policymakers indicated that the Fed's benchmark interest rate would probably stay near zero through 2023. But their new projections show that 13 out of 18 Fed members expect some rate hikes occurring by 2023.

And this summer, Powell is expected to lay out a plan for scaling back the Fed's monthly program of buying \$120 billion of Treasury and mortgage bonds, which has held down long-term rates and supported the housing and stock markets.

Historically, inflation expectations have been a good indicator of where prices are heading. Economist Richard Curtin worries about a dangerous inflationary psychology taking hold.

In his monthly University of Michigan consumer sentiment index, Curtin said record numbers of consumers noted that rising prices were an issue. And importantly, they are by and large accepting them, he said, and that's made it easier for one company after another to raise prices.

Adding to pricing pressures is that more firms are competing for limited supplies — and workers.

The economy still has about 7.6 million fewer jobs today than before the pandemic, and the unemployment rate was 5.8% in May, well above the 3.5% level in early 2020. Yet many employers are having trouble filling jobs.

There were a record 9.3 million job openings in April, according to government data.

Powell said there are a lot of uncertainties about the path of the labor market as well as inflation. "This is an extraordinary, unusual time," he said. "We really don't have a template or any experience of a situation like this, and so I think we have to be humble about our ability to understand the data."