

Mud

By Suzy Hopkins

Because Folsom Lake was formed by damming the North Fork of the American River the lake gets low in the winter until the melted snow from the Sierra Nevada Mountains reaches the lake bed in March. During this dry time the winter rain makes the lake bed muddy. As a park ranger on horseback I was usually safe from getting trapped in the mud. Some men in and around Sacramento come to Folsom State Park every weekend and try to get stuck in the mud in their jeeps and four-wheel-drive trucks. These vehicles have been customized at great expense so the truck bodies are raised high up from the gigantic tires. The fun for them is to see who can get stuck, get themselves un-stuck and then whose truck is tough enough to pull the others out who are still stuck. Stupid? You have no idea. Sometimes as the daylight was fading I would have to call my friend who has two Shire draft horses, weighing one ton each, and he would drive his team to the slippery torn up lake bed and pull out the ones who couldn't get free of the mud. Does this 'fun' do damage to these customized vehicles? You bet. The owners repair them during the week to prepare for more muddy insanity.

After the State of California paid for the draft horses rescue service too many times they started charging the truck drivers the \$200 fee. Did that deter these men? Nope. Stupidity grew with every rainstorm.