

THE STANISLAUS CAMPAIGN

NEWS
no. 4

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HOPE FOR THE STANISLAUS IN NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM. The Bureau of Land Management has submitted the Stanislaus River Canyon as possibly eligible to be studied as a wilderness area and ultimately for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. THIS IS THE TOOL THAT CONGRESS COULD USE TO PRESERVE THE STANISLAUS ABOVE PARROTTS FERRY. Natural condition and unique appearance in terms of wilderness are the criteria the canyon must meet. At a series of meetings held March 19-29, river lovers spoke in favor of protecting this area's unique assets and outstanding opportunities by including it in the wilderness study of BLM lands. The current public comment period extends to May 29. Following that, potential Wilderness Study Areas will be identified, and there will be a subsequent 90-day comment period ending about September 30th.

Comments should be directed to the criteria of the Wilderness Act, 1964:

- 1) General naturalness of the area: ". . . appears to have been affected primarily by forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. . ."
- 2) "Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive unconfined type of recreation."

Please write: Bureau of Land Management, 63 Natoma, Folsom 95630. Help create the Stanislaus National Wilderness Area!

★ NEW F.O.R. CHAPTER. FOR Mother Lode Chapter, South (Calaveras and Tuolumne counties), formed and had its first meeting March 29. The chapter is launching its campaign to see the Stanislaus River Canyon included in the wilderness study of BLM lands. Call: 209-928-3640.

★ CORPS BLASTED AT MEETING. Federal and state officials agree that the water level of the New Melones Reservoir should be kept as low as possible to protect archeological and historical sites for further study. At a March 12 joint review committee meeting (President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Corps of Engineers, and State Office of Historic Preservation) the Corps was accused of improper mitigation of the cultural resources of the Stanislaus River Canyon. Archeologists Michael Moratto of Idaho and Roberta Greenwood (both with long Stanislaus Canyon histories), the Society for Professional Archaeologists, and Society of California Archeologists testified on the inadequacy of the present mitigation. A statement from the state-wide paleontologists association documented paleontological records in the caves which will be destroyed as the Corps has not begun to preserve this priceless record. FOR Washington representative Patty Schifferle also testified in the canyon's behalf. On the Corps' behalf? No Testimony!

★ REBUTTAL: "DEAR JOE. . ." Joe Nelson, project engineer for the Corps, apparently made inaccurate and disturbing claims to the Stockton Record. These fallacies were rebutted by FOR representative Alexander Gaguine in a letter to Secretary of the Army Clifford Alexander. Nelson is alleged to have said that California taxpayers will pay \$23 million this year alone for losses in hydroelectric power revenues because the state will not allow the reservoir to go above Parrotts Ferry. He calculates this cost at \$1100 per raft down the Stanislaus River. FACT: The Corps is limiting the filling to comply with federal historic preservation laws (nothing to do with rafts). FACT: The Western Area Power Administration estimate of foregone power revenues is much lower than \$23 million. Incidentally, Mr. Nelson, Huey Johnson is State Secretary for Resources, not "Huey Newton," as you were reported stating to the Record.

★ SPECIAL REVIEW OF ARCHEOLOGICAL MITIGATION. A Committee of Inter-agency Archaeological Service and State Historic Preservation Office representatives met March 19-23 to investigate the work of Corps contractor, Science Applications Inc., La Jolla. Committee members are concerned that Stanislaus River Canyon artifacts could be lost and question how the research is being conducted.

WITNESS AND ENCAMPMENT:

March 26--River lovers set up encampment along Stanislaus River.

April 1 --Beginning of the Stanislaus River Canyon burial. FOR will be there to express determination that the canyon above Old Parrotts Ferry Bridge be protected. A time capsule will be buried.

April 21--John Muir's birthday. Encampment will celebrate the man and reflect upon the philosophy.



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION TO RECONSIDER.

Consultants for Friends of the River poked holes Wednesday in a plan for filling New Melones Reservoir on the Stanislaus River to the 25 percent level, challenging flood control, irrigation and fish protection provisions. When they were through, a specialist with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation conceded the conservationists had made some points worth investigation and perhaps adopting.

Modesto Bee, March 8, 1979

Huzzah for Tom Burton! Burton, FOR research coordinator, orchestrated this study--as well as other research efforts. The Bureau's concession, however, came dear: FOR hired a professional hydrologist, an aquatic biologists, and expensive computer time--all at grass-roots-money expense. NOTE: Why not at Bureau of Reclamation expense? We are doing the work they should be doing.

However, despite this victory, the State Water Resources Control Board, in a Friday March 21 Meeting, gave the Corps and Bureau permission to fill the reservoir one-quarter mile beyond Parrotts Ferry even though an acceptable operations plan has not been submitted. SEE BELOW.



WATER RESOURCES OPERATIONS STUDY FOR NEW MELONES. A State Water Resources Control Board meeting on filling the New Melones found that the Bureau of Reclamation study was not in final form and could not be approved. The Bureau recommended that the board take no action against the Federal government's filling of the reservoir before the final operation study is approved IF the Bureau and Corps agree not to fill the reservoir past elevation 808 until the study is approved.

(The operations study is to determine how much water must be stored in New Melones to meet the conditions of 1422, which allows impoundment of water only for fisheries, water quality, and prior rights releases.)

FOR staff and consultants--Tom Burton, research coordinator, attorney Jim Thomson hydrologist Phil Williams, and fisheries consultant Don Kelly--stressed to the board that filling of the New Melones should be limited until an acceptable operations plan is submitted to the State Water Resources Board. The Board did not agree to this condition, but did agree to request letters from the Corps and Bureau specifying that they will not fill above elevation 808 before approval the operations study. The question of how far to fill New Melones Reservoir remains unresolved, pending meetings with the Board.



HAPPINESS IS SUPPORT! Governor Brown received 3,400 letters between September and January from people who care about preserving the Stanislaus River Canyon.

ROAD SITUATION: If you plan to visit the Stanislaus River, BEWARE! Parrotts Ferry Road is closed on the Calaveras side as of April 16th. For God! No crossing at Parrotts Ferry April 16-30. The new Parrotts Ferry Bridge may open May 1st. Old Highway 49 is open on the Tuolumne side, but the campground is closed.



EIS FOR NEW MELONES, ROUND TWO. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation called a "scoping" meeting to identify significant issues to be included in the supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. FOR called for a realistic water demand assessment including future higher costs. Also, FOR strongly urged evaluation of permanent protection of the canyon above Parrotts Ferry based on alternatives of water conservation and reclamation. Cave biologist Bill Elliott, Dave Cowan and Bruce Rogers spoke of the wealth of scientific information in the Stanislaus caves: rare and possibly endangered insect species, fossils which may provide invaluable geological, meteorological and historical information covering a three-million-year period, which may all be lost.

WRITE: RE: Supplemental Environmental Statement on New Melones Project, Calif.
TO: Regional Director, Mid-Pacific Region, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation,
2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento 95825

STRESS ALTERNATIVES: --Need to evaluate water conservation and reclamation.
--Need to assess water customers' ability and willingness to pay for delivery facilities.
★ ★ --And reiterate FOR's position: permanent protection for the Stanislaus River Canyon above Parrotts Ferry!



SMUD CONSIDERING PUTTING ON THE GLOVES. SMUD directors reached no decision regarding filling of the New Melones Reservoir. However, the board is considering entering a lawsuit to determine which and how high the reservoir is filled. At a March 15 SMUD meeting Richard Hammond, deputy State Resources Agency Secretary, suggested that in spite of the utility district's estimates of higher electric rates, other priorities must be considered--not only white water rafting, but also wildlife habitats, and "geological and archeological classrooms" would be destroyed by filling of the reservoir. Hammond was joined in his plea by FOR and the SMUD Ratepayers' Association.



OF SPECIAL INTEREST.

Political Action Seminars for River Guides. FOR is sponsoring a series of two-hour seminars for commercial river guides (or any other interested parties) on the current status of the Stanislaus Campaign.

April 20, Friday: Camp Lotus
April 22, Sunday: Columbia
April 23, Monday, San Francisco
(Fort Mason)

The College of Marins's outdoor education program, "Marin Adventures," is offering a weekend course entitled, "Tribute to the Stanislaus." It will include a Saturday hike in the lower canyon, participation in the encampment at Melones Townsite, and a raft trip from Camp Nine to Parrotts Ferry on Sunday. The Program is co-sponsored by FOR. For more information: Laurie McCann, Sacto office.

The Stanislaus River Slide Show is available to anyone wishing to share it with a community or school group. There is one copy in the Sacto office (contact Carol Nelson or Jessie Carr) and one copy at Fort Mason (contact Tom Huntington).

CONGRESSIONAL COORDINATION. FOR Congressional campaign is growing. But we continue to need coordinators in some key districts to organize letter writing and a meeting with the district's congressperson. CAN YOU HELP?

Help Wanted!