

Colonel Donald O'Shei
Army Corps of Engineers
Sacramento CA

Sunday, May 20, 1979

Dear Colonel O'Shei

Thank you for your extremely rapid response to my letter of May 17 - I only wish you could have answered half as fast when I wrote or called you concerning violations or degradations being done to the Stanislaus canyon.

I would like to reiterate my note and phone call to you last Friday - my present actions are not part of Friends of the River. Rather this is a personal statement I had the need to make for some time. I have already compromised too far.

I appreciate your long list of justifications for your action - a very impressive list indeed if not taken in contest. We all seek to justify our actions especially when put in as difficult a position as you are. It is always difficult to admit that times are changing - especially if one's occupation is no longer an asset to society's long-term needs. Jimmy Carter ran on a platform of "Get the Corps out of the dam building business" because he recognized that all the best dam sites were taken some time ago, leaving only sites like Spewrell Bluff, Georgia and New Melones, and he had enough personal experience to know these last dams were only justified on paper using economic manipulations. Despite your best and most sincere effort, the Brown administration no longer supports your Marysville Dam Project for the same reasons, as well as knowing the real costs are just too high given today's information and understanding. Carter and Brown ran on environmental platforms not only because they know what the American people want, but because they know we can no longer afford to steal our precious resources from future generations. We would all like to turn over a healthy nation to our offspring, not one stripped and exploited for short term gain only.

You know as well as I do that the only reason New Melones has continued is because of the porkbarrel system in Congress. It is sad that a few old men

with concrete mentalities can rip-off the American public to have a pyramid built in their districts. Yes, of course these projects really looked valuable given our society's awareness 20 and 40 years ago when they were first authorized ... but times and values and information change. Society must change as it learns better ways or it shall perish.

Last year 40 state legislators and 15 California Congressmembers asked that the Stanislaus above Parrotts Ferry be protected. This year already 16 Congressmembers, Secretary Andrus and archeologists throughout California have suggested that the Corps is not properly mitigating the non-renewable archeological and historical treasures of the Stanislaus. And we have learned so much in recent years about the unique values of this canyon as well as what a priceless experience it offers every year to so many visitors.

You would rather we focus on energy needs. Both General Delbridge and you nodded in concurrence when I mentioned all the reports that document our nation wasting at least 50% of our energy, but of course you couldn't agree when I said there could be no reason to destroy this priceless canyon until we stop that waste and see what we really need. Who said " We are not yet so poor that we must burn our cathedrals for firewood" ? They were accurate.

I continually hope we can find a way to work together to find solutions to today's multitude of energy and water problems. We can have much more strength working together than against each other. I have great faith in America's creativity and know we can find ways to take care of our real needs without raping what is left of our precious land.

I apologize for saying Friday that I no longer trusted you. When I calmed down I realized that I now understand you better and realize how different our values are. Your position does not seem to allow you to do more than follow orders. I admire your ability to take charge, but regret that you don't implement laws protecting the resources as well as construction schedules.

Each one of us must do what we most believe is right. I have spent much of my energy during the last ten years trying to bring government up to current wisdom. I've always played on your turf - but you always have more economists, statisticians and money, and your bulldozers move much too fast. Because of this and because the values of the canyon are far too high to ever be demeaned by being placed in a cost/benefit ration analysis and because I know there are far more alternatives, I request you order a permanent stay of execution for the Stanislaus River above Parrotts Ferry.

While you have stated that you intend to try to not raise the water level above elevation 808, your errors in the past have always been to the detriment of the canyon resource, such as plugging the diversion tunnel forcing improper archeological mitigation and not forcing implementation of the environmental protection part of the Camp Nine bridge construction plan.

Because I fear you will not hear me once again, I will follow through on my previously stated plans. By tomorrow morning, Monday, my foot will be locked at an elevation of about 2 or 3 feet above the dam's water level (assuming that the water rose Sunday at the same rate as Saturday). I will be ^{hiding} in the canyon somewhere between the dam and Parrotts Ferry. I don't believe the canyon above Parrotts Ferry should be flooded. I hope you don't find me and that you opt to stop the filling.

Good luck on doing what you most believe is right.

For a healthy planet,

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