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Press Release
March 8, 1982
11:00 a.m.

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Today Only: 209-533-1235

STANISLAUS RIVER - BUREAU OF RECLAMATION/ARMY CORPS BEGIN
TO FLOOD LAST FOUR MILES -- MORE PEOPLE LINK THEMSELVES TO CANYON

In February, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a state-requested injunction for the federal government to stop filling the New Melones dam, in order to protect the upper Stanislaus River Canyon pending the court's decision on U.S. v. California. Since then, the reservoir level has gone up fifty feet and two more miles of river have been buried, up to a place called Duck Bar. Only four miles of river remain, yet filling has barely slowed. Flooding of the upper canyon continues today under the deceitful guise of downstream flood control. Rose Creek is imminently threatened.

We must again say NO to the destruction of this place. As of 11:00 a.m. today, people who care about the Stanislaus River will again place themselves by the edge of the rising reservoir, directly overlooking the buried site of Parrott's Ferry, Tuolumne County.

Linda Cloud, one of the organizers of this action, says:

"I am chaining myself to this tree, and linking my life to its threatened life, to protest the further killing of this place of special beauty which can continue to give so much joy to so many people. I have never done anything like this before, but I'm being forced to defend this canyon, my home. It's not just those of us here today that feel frustrated and angered."

"I insist," said Ms. Cloud, "that Director Catino of the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Army Corps of Engineers, be honest about what constitutes downstream flood control, and start making larger releases to slow or halt reservoir filling."

They are releasing less than 1,250 cfs (cubic feet per second) from the dam, and since the water is entering the dam much faster, the reservoir is still rising, and the upper canyon is being destroyed.

1,250 cfs is a small trickle, not a flood. The federal government say they must protect several farmers' fields of recently-planted sugar beets and walnut trees from possible seepage damage. But, those farmers knowingly

planted in an area which the dam cannot, in the long run, protect. The Army Corps itself projects that flows from the dam of 5,000 cfs will be necessary, on the average, one out of every two years. The Corps is supposed to be buying flood easements to allow flows of 8,000 cfs. Their operating plan sets flood control releases at 3,500 cfs. Reducing flows to 1,250 cfs (the Bureau's plan) is not downstream flood control - it's flooding the upper canyon against the intent of the court order. The appeals court's injunction listed flood control as the only permissible reason for enlarging the reservoir, which is already twenty miles long. (The Bureau operates the dam, but Congress left authority over flood control operations with the Army Corps)

Since Governor Reagan's administration, the State has been trying to protect the upper canyon, and set a strong precedent of state control over federal water projects in California. The State Water Resources Control Board and Attorney General are not doing enough to uphold this state's rights position. "If they allow the Army Corps and Bureau to make a mockery of the injunction, any state "victory" in the U.S. v. California case become just a bitter joke," said Alexander Gaguine. "We intend to make the public more aware of the current situation. People have been concerned about the Stanislaus for a long time. People must be told now that the Bureau and the Army Corps are pushing the reservoir into the very heart of the upper canyon, ruining a valuable public resource while using lies as justification.

QUOTES ABOUT FLOOD CONTROL AND THE STANISLAUS

The Bureau of Reclamation is "making a mockery of longstanding state water management policy. The Ninth Circuit Court granted the state's request for an injunction with the intent of protecting both the state's policy and legal rights, the Bureau is attempting to circumvent the intent of the decision by flooding the canyon."

Congressman Fortney H. Stark (letter to Governor Brown, February 17, 1982)

"Recent actions by the Bureau reveals that you may be circumventing California policy and their legal right to properly manage the resources of the Stanislaus River...The 9th Circuit Court has granted California his request for an injunction with the intent of protecting these rights. Congress only authorized 450,000 acre feet for flood storage at New Melones. Further, the authorization called for a 8,000 cubic feet per second floodway channel below Goodwin Dam... Under your release program, how will you stay within this 450,000 acre feet ceiling? Finally, at a time when the Administration is acting to turn more responsibility over the state governments, why have you called for a release schedule in direct contradiction to California resource management goals at New Melones?"

Congressman Don Edwards (letter to Robert Broadbent, Commissioner- Bureau of Reclamation February 22, 1982)

"The Board determined that the continued enjoyment of the 'white'water' stretches on the Stanislaus River above New Melones Dam is an existing beneficial use worth protecting until it can be demonstrated that there is a higher and better use of the water in terms of greater overall value to the people of California... I want you (Bureau of Reclamation) to know that I agree with the Board's decision whihc reflects California's desire for a balance between real water needs and environmental concerns."

Governor Ronald Reagan (letter to Bureau of Reclamation, June 28, 1974)

"I'm convinced it was proably a mistake to build this dam"...adding that not enough water can be produced to run the facility's power plant at full capacity on a year- round basis."

U.S. District Judge Edward Dean Price
(Sacramento Bee, January 27, 1982)