

The American River Touring Association

A non-profit educational association.

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Presentation to The Board of Supervisors on the
Values of the Stanislaus River to the Recreational
and Economic Development of Calaveras and
Tuolumne Counties.

David A. Kay, Public Affairs
American River Touring Association

The American River Touring Association is a non-profit river recreation and conservation organization, specializing in wilderness river raft trips. Our outing program represents the largest selection of white-water adventures available to the American people. We sponsor trips through the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River, on the canyon rivers of Utah, the Salmon River in Idaho, the Rogue in Oregon, the Rio Grande, and Alaska's Copper River. Our Association will conduct the Yellowstone Centennial River Expedition this summer. We even offer voyages on the Great Barrier Reef, Australia.

For the past six years, we have included the Stanislaus River in our schedule of river outings. We feel the Stanislaus River, between Camp 9 and the Parrot's Ferry Bridge, represents an irreplaceable recreational resource that contributes significantly to the wholesome use of leisure time in our state, to the educational and spiritual enhancement of men through wilderness experience, and to the economies of the counties of Tuolumne and Calaveras. Inasmuch as we operate raft trips on the Stanislaus along with nine commercial river outfitters, five of which were newly established this year, we express the views of the California river running industry as well.

Since the Stanislaus was first scouted for commercial rafting in 1962, it has become

PURPOSE: To teach the basic skills necessary to safely enjoy our wilderness waterways, our rivers, lakes and seacoasts; to teach people to protect adjacent shores; to publish information, describe routes, access areas, campsites, points of interest and facilities along the way; to conduct trips which demonstrate the pleasures of river touring and shore camping.

California's most popular white-water river. This is witnessed by ARTA's own growth on the Stanislaus these past several years: 1966 - 169 trip members; 1967 - 438; 1968 - 511; 1969 - 698; 1970 - 1568. This growth is proportional to that of other Stanislaus outfitters who together rafted about 3,500 passengers down the river. The big jump in 1970 is due to the national emphasis given to matters of ecology and to a growing national awareness of the spiritual and physical need for wilderness experience. The Stanislaus River was specifically cited as a dynamic introduction to white-water sport by Field & Stream Magazine; Sunset Magazine, and the Ladies Home Journal. The Los Angeles Times, San Jose Mercury News, San Francisco Chronicle, and Sacramento Union have all published feature articles on the Stanislaus River run. Extensive publicity is generated by the outfitters themselves through statewide mailing lists, and advertising in newspapers, magazines, radio, and on occasion by television - in the form of special documentaries. No other river in California attracts as much interest, nor accommodates such a variety of river related pursuits.

Commercial river trips on the Stanislaus account for only about 60% of the river scene. A host of private groups run the river by raft, canoe or kayak. Some even run it by air mattresses and inner tubes when the water level safely permits this sport. The Sierra Club, American White-Water Affiliation, American Canoe Association, among many others, frequently run the river by kayak and canoe. They contribute approximately 10,000 man-days (Sierra Club River Touring Section estimate) to the growing list of users each year. There are many smaller groups that look to the river for sport and vacation fun - the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, high school groups, YMCA's, various clubs and organizations like the Alameda Plus or the Kiwanis Club of San Fernando Valley, families or old friends reuniting on the river, and businesses like the Rand Corporation and IBM. We even know of a group of science professors from Bryn Mawr College of Pennsylvania, who will drive to the river this April following a convention in Los Angeles for the special white-water experience the river offers.

One use that is growing especially important on the Stanislaus is the operation of white-water schools that provide basic instruction on the skills of white-water navigation for the general public, and for men who hope to gain employment as professional river guides. The American White-Water School, sponsored by our Association is one of these. Other groups that conduct training programs for the public are Wilderness World and Adventures Unlimited. The purpose is to educate interested people on river running techniques and safety. The Stanislaus is especially well suited for this purpose because it offers such a variety of rapids and utilizes many different white-water techniques for kayaker and canoeist as well as the raftsman.

The people of our State look to the Stanislaus for many other kinds of recreation as well. There are the fishermen, who number about 15,000 man-days (Department of Fish & Game estimate) a year, and who especially enjoy the river's wild waters and natural environs. There are the campers with backpack or camper trailer, and the hikers who trek the shores of the river. The gold miners who probe the river for sport and/or profit, and the sight-seers. The river draws to the counties of Calaveras and Tuolumne. I recently heard of a group called The Stanislaus Speleological Society that explores the many interesting caves along the river. In all, they contribute another 15,000 man-days (Division of Parks & Recreation estimate) to recreation on the Stanislaus River.

The values provided the people of California by the Stanislaus River can be measured in terms of hard cash benefits to Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties. Commercial raft companies spent in excess of \$55,000.00 in these counties in 1970, or 1/3 the gross income was contributed to the local economy for food, gasoline, vehicle and warehouse rentals, equipment, and wages to local guides. About one in every five professional guides live in Calaveras or Tuolumne County, and just by working weekends, a single guide can earn \$1,600.00 during a regular season of 40 trips. As the river outfitters

schedule more week day trips, the guides can expect fulltime employment with resultant increases in earnings. Most California outfitters plan to hire and train more local boatmen for the coming year.

An even greater financial benefit to Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties is brought by the people who run the Stanislaus with the commercial outfitters. These trip members come from all parts of California. Most people, about 43% come from the San Francisco Bay Area, while 28% come from Southern California (the Stanislaus is the nearest wild river suitable for white-water sport and pleasure). The remaining 21% come from Sacramento and smaller towns and rural areas throughout the State, while 8% come from out of State. Our Association has received reservations for the Stanislaus trip from as far away as Illinois, New York, and New Jersey. The Stanislaus promise of white-water adventure, and the charm of early gold rush times that lingers along the river, accounts for this far ranging appeal.

And the people who come to the river bring money. In 1970 they contributed 7,000 man-days to river usage, and they spent in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties alone an average of \$20.00 per person per day for meals, lodging, gasoline, and equipment before or after the usual two day river trip, or about \$140,000. during the entire 1970 season. So the actual financial contribution this past year amounted to \$195,000. when you add the economic input from the commercial river companies. Of course, there are many trip members, about 31% or 1,000 people, who plan a longer vacation (two additional days on the average) in the Mother Lode country around their Stanislaus River trip, and this certainly increases the monetary benefits gained by Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties (an approximate \$40,000.). Furthermore, the popularity of commercial raft trips on the Stanislaus has grown considerably these past several years, and we estimate that, with good judgement and planning on the part of the river outfitters, there will easily be a 100% growth in 1971 over 1970, and an approximate \$470,000. financial input to the counties. The benefits will increase two-fold and continue to grow as river trips become a more desirable way to spend one's leisure time.

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As for the private groups of river runners, the fishermen, the hikers, motor campers, the gold miners, and the sight-seers - all the people who primarily relate to the wilderness resources of the Stanislaus River - we estimate their total visitor days in 1970 at 40,000 man-days, and their contribution to Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties at a minimal \$5.00 per day on the average for food, lodging, gasoline or equipment. This in turn means an overall investment of over \$200,000 for the year. Considering the growing popularity of wild river recreation in all its diverse forms, we anticipate a 25% growth in non commercial river-related activities. This expansion is also due to the fact that California has already lost many rivers to dams and reservoirs, so that the people of our State progressively concentrate on the few natural rivers that remain. This stands to benefit the economic base of counties like Calaveras and Tuolumne that do possess a wild, free-flowing river. The non-commercial cash value of the Stanislaus will likely exceed \$250,000 in 1971. And when combined with the money spent by commercial raft companies and their trip passengers, we show a 1971 gross annual revenue for Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties of over \$750,000.

The financial asset of the Stanislaus River to the local counties and the State is real and should be honored. The asset of any wild river like the Stanislaus that permits such a variety of recreational uses for all the people is real, only the Stanislaus is one of the few remaining rivers of its kind in the State. Our Association has sponsored a petition drive among the people of California to preserve the Stanislaus. To date we have collected over 10,000 signatures attesting to the need to maintain the stretch of river between Camp 9 and Parrot's Ferry in a wild, free-flowing state. What we find especially gratifying about this impressive record of public concern, is that many petitions were received from out of state - Michigan, New York, Iowa and many others.

These people join me now, along with all the river runners and friends of the Stanislaus, in requesting the Board of Supervisors to fully examine the values of the Stanislaus River to Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties, and to the people of California and the nation. We respectfully urge you to recommend a re-study of the entire New Melones Dam, as proposed by the Army Corp. of Engineers.

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APPENDIX A

INCOME TO TUOLUMNE AND CALAVERAS COUNTIES FROM RECREATION ON THE STANISLAUS
RIVER FROM CAMP NINE TO PARROT'S FERRY BRIDGE
(1970)

Income source	Annual man/days	\$value	Subtotal	Total
Professional Rafting				
Passengers	7000	20	140,000	
Added tourism	2000	20	40,000	
companies			55,000	235,000
Other				
private rafting and kayaking	10,000	5	50,000	
angling	15,000	5	75,000	
hiking, gold panning, picnic sightseeing	15,000	5	75,000	200,000
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				\$ 435,000

Information on Professional rafting provided by American River Touring Association and other companies. Information on angling from Dept of Fish and Game. Information on private rafting and kayaking, and misc. provided by River Touring Section, Sierra Club, and other sources; also on data from Dept of Parks and Recreation.

ESTIMATED INCOME TO COUNTIES IN 1971

Professional rafting	500,000
Other	250,000
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	\$ 750,000

Estimate based on reservations made with rafting companies, and on pattern of growth of river recreation in past several years.