



KERN RIVER CONSERVANCY

August 15, 2022.

Attn: Teresa Benson, Sequoia National Forest Supervisor.
Re: Sequoia National Forests Plan Revision

Dear Supervisor Benson,

Kern River Conservancy would like to submit and express our concerns and recommendations for the upcoming Sequoia National Forest Revision Plan regarding adding new Wild & Scenic River designations and opposing newly proposed wilderness designations.

- **Lower Kern River:** The Lower Kern River is a world renowned whitewater river attracting nearly one million visitors yearly. The Lower Kern is home to several class 3-5 whitewater runs and the only whitewater river in Southern California. Some sections of this river hold exceptional W&SR ORV's beginning at historical Keyesville down to the Democrat Dam. This section of the river has been known to whitewater enthusiasts around the world as the "Cataracts of the Kern", with numerous videos produced by extreme sports documentaries.
- **Concerns:** In the current revision plan, the U.S. Forest Service states, "Recreation is not an outstandingly remarkable value". This statement is incorrect and this section of the Lower Kern actually has equally or more Recreation Value than the designated North Fork Kern River.
- **Solution:** We request Sequoia National Forest revisit this paragraph of the revision plan and re-assess the recreational ORV of the Lower Kern River.
- **Bull Run Creek, Salmon Creek, Brush Creek, Alder Creek and Peppermint Creek:** Kern River Conservancy recommends Sequoia National Forest recognize and propose designation for Wild & Scenic Rivers for the above tributaries of the North Fork Kern River. All mentioned creeks are wild and free flowing streams with historically and present documented wild and native Kern River Rainbow Trout and Golden Trout populations. Both species are currently listed on California Department of Fish and Wildlife website as "threatened species". Designating these creeks with added protection of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act provides further conservation protection to both native species.
- **Stormy Canyon Wilderness:** Kern River Conservancy opposes all new wilderness proposals for Stormy Canyon. The proposed area is home to the Whiskey Flat Trail, which is a very popular multi-use trail to both locals and visitors. Mountain biking is the most popular form of recreation in this area and having new wilderness added to this location would severely impact the quality of life of local residents who recreate this area everyday and impede on the Kern River Valley's recreation based economy that relies on mountain biking as a secondary economic benefit next to whitewater rafting.
- **Cannel Wilderness:** Kern River Conservancy opposes all new wilderness proposals for Cannel Wilderness. The proposed area is home to the "Cannel Plunge", a world famous mountain bike trail and experience. The area is used by tens of thousands of riders who travel from around the world to ride the trail. The trail is a very popular destination in the fall, winter and spring months during the offseason of whitewater rafting. Restricting multi-use recreation on this trail would have severe financial impacts on the Kern River Valley's recreation dependent economy.
- **Middle Fork Tule River:** Kern River Conservancy recommends the designation of Wild and Scenic status to the Middle Fork of the Tule River. The Tule River holds exceptional recreation and scenic values with its accessibility to underserved, BIPOC and Native American communities of California's Central Valley. The Tule River is known for its emerald green swimming holes, cascading waterfalls and amazing whitewater kayaking opportunities.