



News Release

For Immediate Release

October 20, 2010

For more information, contact:

Chris Wright, 209-295-4900 or

chris@foothillconservancy.org

Supervisors support stakeholder discussions on Mokelumne legislation

On Tuesday, September 20, the Amador County Board of Supervisors voted to oppose designation of the Mokelumne River as a National Wild and Scenic River. But they also voted to sit down with all of the river stakeholders to discuss legislative options.

“We’re disappointed that the supervisors chose to oppose the designation, because it would really benefit the people and economy of the county,” said Foothill Conservancy Executive Director Chris Wright. “But we’re encouraged that they want to discuss legislative language with all of the river stakeholders. We’re confident that everyone’s concerns can be addressed, and we can all work together to save the Mokelumne for future generations.

“We have already contacted the chairman of the board regarding setting up a process to bring all of the stakeholders together, and we’re optimistic that the process will have positive results.”

More than 5,000 individuals, elected and appointed local officials, and more than 100 local businesses support the proposed Wild and Scenic River designation for the Mokelumne. The designation would protect the river from new dams and diversions. It would not have any legal effect on private property along the river, but instead works by restraining federal agencies and federal funding for dams.

Rivers as diverse as the Tuolumne River near Yosemite and the American River through Sacramento are included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

“If we want to control our local river, Wild and Scenic designation really is the only way,” said Wright. “Right now, the final say on any proposed Mokelumne dam will be made by appointed bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., not in Jackson by the county board of supervisors. We can change that with federal legislation that addresses everyone’s concerns.”

Wild and Scenic River designation would also protect private landowners along the river from the condemnation threat posed by new dam proposals, including the Pardee Expansion.

“Last year when the supervisors, local cities and thousands of local residents opposed the expansion of Pardee Reservoir, East Bay MUD included the new dam in its water plan anyway,” Wright said, “Wild and Scenic designation would put a stop to that kind of predatory attack on the Mokelumne and ensure we have a river in our future.

“Landowners along the river are not united on this issue. Some support the designation, others have concerns. We sponsored a workshop for landowners a couple of years ago, and we have always been willing and happy to work with them to protect the river in a way that also protects their interests. It’s possible to write the legislation to do just that. Meeting to discuss legislative options it will be a great step forward in our community’s effort to Save the Moke.”

For more information on the Mokelumne River Wild and Scenic proposal, contact Chris Wright at 209-295-4900, chris@foothillconservancy.org or see www.savethemoke.com. end