Local Economic Benefits of Mokelumne Wild and Scenic River Designation

**Wild and Scenic designation boosts local recreation tourism marketing efforts**

- “Wild and Scenic” designation is a rare distinction that brands the Mokelumne River as a significant place worth visiting, much like a state park.
- The designation would boost efforts to brand Calaveras County and Angels Camp as must-see outdoor recreation destinations.

**River recreation is a growing industry**

- Nonmotorized recreational boating is a $1.7 billion industry in California.
- There are 24 million paddlers in the United States. The Mokelumne is suitable for beginning to expert paddlers. Kayakers and rafters return year after year as their skills improve.

**Local businesses benefit from river recreation**

- People who come to fish, camp, picnic, play, bird watch, rock climb and paddle on the Mokelumne spend money at local grocery stores, restaurants, gas stations and lodging establishments.
- A 1997 economic report for Amador County estimated that if the area developed 20 percent of the whitewater business of El Dorado County (including many private paddlers), we could add nearly $2 million to the local economy.
- River users often have higher levels of disposable income and they spend it in places they visit. In a 2001 study on the Farmington River, one-quarter of survey respondents had income of more than $100,000 a year. The Wild and Scenic Lower American River through Sacramento produces just over $48 per visitor per day in direct local economic impacts.
- Commercial boating on the Mokelumne will attract new people to our area and give visitors a reason to stay longer or return for a new activity. The 3-hour trips can easily be packaged with other local tourism activities such as wine tasting, hiking and theater-going.
- The 1997 Amador County economic report included whitewater boating as an important economic development opportunity. Since then, facilities have been improved, river flows are far more predictable with data available online, and more of the river (Middle Bar Reach) has been opened to the public.

**River recreation creates and supports jobs**

- River recreation supports jobs in local retail businesses. On the Farmington River, river users directly supported about 65 jobs, even though most visit only for the day.
- Commercial rafting and kayak classes employ paid guides, drivers, and support staff. Young people employed in the industry learn important customer service skills.

**River recreation increases local tax revenue**

- Paddle sports produce $4.8 billion in tax revenue nationally. Nonmotorized boating adds $121 million to state and local revenue.
- Spending in local businesses and then by their employees adds to local sales tax revenue.
- Wild and Scenic designation can increase property values of parcels along the river, leading to higher property tax revenue when those properties change hands. On the Farmington River, the Wild and Scenic designation added nearly $4 a square foot to the value of homes within a mile of the river.
Sources