



## News Release

**For Immediate Release:** October 13, 2015

**For more information, contact:**

Steve Evans, Friends of the River Wild Rivers Consultant, 916-708-3155, [sevans@friendsoftheriver.org](mailto:sevans@friendsoftheriver.org)

Cecily Smith, Foothill Conservancy, 209-223-3508, [Cecily@foothillconservancy.org](mailto:Cecily@foothillconservancy.org)

### **Gov. Brown signs AB 142, Mokelumne River Wild and Scenic study bill**

This morning, Gov. Jerry Brown signed AB 142 (Bigelow, R-O'Neals), which names 37 miles of the upper Mokelumne River as a potential addition to the state Wild and Scenic River system. The bill provides interim protections for the river while the state studies its suitability for permanent Wild and Scenic River protection. The bill passed the state Legislature on an overwhelming, bipartisan vote last month.

“We're excited that Gov. Brown signed AB 142,” said Foothill Conservancy President Katherine Evatt. “We're sure the study called for by the bill will demonstrate the many reasons the Mokelumne River should be protected for generations to come while it answers local water agencies' questions. We see this as a major milestone in our decades-long effort to protect the Mokelumne from new dams and diversions.”

As passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, AB 142:

- Names the Mokelumne from Salt Spring Dam to Pardee Reservoir as a potential addition to the state Wild and Scenic River System.
- Calls for a state study to analyze water supply, climate change and other issues of concern to local water purveyors, to be completed by the end of 2017.
- Requires that the study will provide for input from a broad range of stakeholders.
- Analyzes the effect of previous state Wild and Scenic designations on water rights applications and water rights granted after designation.
- Adds protections for the river, including a ban on construction of new dams and diversions on the river upstream of Pardee Reservoir and a ban on state funding for projects (with some exceptions), that could harm the free-flowing condition and natural character of the same river reaches. Those protections stay in place until the implementation of Wild and Scenic designation recommendations resulting from the study or the end of 2021, whichever occurs first.
- Requires local agencies to pay up to 50 percent of the study's cost.

“The upper Mokelumne is a hard-working river that provides 90 percent of the water supply for the East Bay in most years, said Steve Evans, Wild Rivers Consultant for Friends of the River. “Its remaining free-flowing segments include cultural, scenic, water quality and recreational values of statewide and national importance. AB 142 sets the stage for permanent protection of this beautiful river, and we will continue to work to bring that about.”

AB 142 was a compromise among stakeholders concerned with river conservation and those focused on Mokelumne River water supply and power generation. It was supported by Amador and Calaveras counties, foothill water agencies, the East Bay Municipal Utility District, the California Farm Bureau Federation and PG&E in addition to river conservation, recreation and fish organizations. A full designation bill for the Mokelumne, SB 1199, failed in the Legislature last year after passing the state Senate when foothill counties and water agencies complained about the lack of a state suitability study.

“We'd like to thank Assemblyman Bigelow for his leadership in shepherding this bill through with the agreement of diverse stakeholders,” said Evatt. “It's also important to note that passage of this bill will not affect watershed protection and restoration efforts following the Butte Fire.”

That recent fire burned nearly 71,000 acres in Amador and Calaveras counties, including some lands in the Mokelumne watershed.

For more information, contact Katherine Evatt, Foothill Conservancy, [209-296-5734](tel:209-296-5734), [katherine@mokeriver.com](mailto:katherine@mokeriver.com).