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From: stephen liles <liles.stephen@gmail.com>
To: Ron Briggs <bosfour@co.el-dorado.ca.us>
Date: Fri, 9 Dec 2011 11:34:15 -0800
Subject: Fee increases for South Fork American River Outfitters
Good Morning Supervisor Briggs,

For re-introduction purposes: I am the EDC/BOS-Appointed outfitter representative to the RMAC and I have been a member of RMAC since its inception in 1980 (with a 6 year break in the 90's). I have been an outfitter since 1979 when I founded W.E.T. River Trips.

In my position as the sole member of the outfitting industry with a single vote on RMAC (out of 7 members), I have expressed the South Fork outfitters' position, through a succession of RMAC meetings, that a fee increase at this time is unwarranted and shortfalls...if any...in the coming budget derived from the River Management Fund will be negligible and could prove detrimental to our viability as we (as most all) California businesses struggle to re-group and to simply survive the economic downturns and the inflation of costs for essential services. Our current budget pressure is a direct result of foolish spending: acquisition of Chili Bar (that remains a boondoggle), and the subsidization of the the River Store Van Shuttle...to name two expenditures that exceed \$90,000. Due to my singular vote, I (as the sole representative of the only contributing commercial or private group to the RMF) have no significant voice in the decisions of RMAC....it's a bad set-up.

As you may or not know (I expressed this fact) in a recent RMAC meeting in September (and others): the South Fork American river is the most expensive river to commercially run in the western United States due to our subjective regulations by three agencies (EDC, State Parks, and the BLM). We also (due to the uniqueness of the South Fork) must pay private vendors/landowners & concessionaires for the use of land (ingress, egress, parking, day-use, & camping) and for services (ergo: raft towing services on Folsom Lake). Compounding the high cost of doing business is the highly competitive nature of simply doing business on the South Fork in direct relation to the number of companies doing business and each company's relentless need to carve out a higher and higher market share through deep discounts. Simply put, we are now struggling as an industry to remain viable while providing safe, high-quality rafting trips to the outfitted public and in contributing a significant revenue to the Coloma-Lotus basin and to El Dorado County through employment, services, and goods purchased locally.

In the meantime, pirate outfitting goes un-checked and other users contribute nothing to the RMF.

It is confusing and disconcerting to now hear that fee increases are back on the table after you and the other supervisors heard comments similar to mine from Nate Rangel and others. Nate was able to report back to our community that you specifically would not proceed in asking for fee increases in this coming year.

I have stated my opinion and the opinion of my constituents.

We will have representation at the next BOS meeting to illuminate our position further.

Please feel free to contact me at any time to discuss this issue further.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,
Steve

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Stephen Liles, President: W.E.T. River Trips &
RMAC Commercial Outfitter Representative
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