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Coloma CA 95613
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July 25, 2017

Re: RMAC

To the members of the River Advisory Management Committee (RMAC), the Planning Committee, and the Board of Supervisors:

I have lived along the South Fork American River for over 14 years. I have worked, volunteered, recreated, and written a Master's Thesis on this river for 17 years. I am concerned that there are issues in protecting this vital, beautiful, natural, and highly used corridor that a citizen's advisory committee is essential in addressing. I know that there is thought that the RMAC format has done good work but is now outdated, and perhaps that is true. However, the work of an advisory committee is more important than ever since the press of development is closing in. Instead of tossing the advisory committee into the garbage, we need to expand its functions to be more with the times and more in service to the overall area. I advocate for its evolution to a River CORRIDOR Advisory Management Committee. The corridor is the land and water on the South Fork, and its boundry would need to be determined by consensus. The need for this advisory committee is demonstrated in the reasons below that have come to me in the past several days. I am sure others can add to the reasons that we need a robust advisory committee to preserve the quality of the river corridor.

1. Viewscape

Hundreds of thousands of people come from around the world to enjoy this river every year, on foot, horse, boat, and at the historic park in Coloma. It is essential to their enjoyment, and for the economic benefits they bring our County, that the natural beauty of the river corridor be maintained. We need an advisory committee to make sure the viewscape is preserved – how would it be to raft down a river and see glaring billboards? We also need to make sure that light pollution is regulated, and other visual blights are avoided.

2. Sound

We need an advisory committee to make sure there is no undue sound pollution in the corridor, for visitors and residents. Here are two examples. Most businesses keep a handle on the noise, but some do not, and the bouncing acoustics of the river corridor multiplies this nuisance. Also, because of our acoustics, we can hear for miles sounds along the river such as responding vehicles' sirens on Hwy 49 in the middle of the night

and early morning hours. An advisory committee could propose to the hard-working sheriffs and other law enforcement a sound regulation along the river corridor that would take acoustics into account, public safety circumstances allowing. I am sure there are other sound mitigation situations.

3. Air quality

I like many others was harmed by the poor air quality during the time of the King's Fire and even the recent Mariposa Fire. Visitors, however, will come to campgrounds and burn campfires in the midst of these events. An advisory committee could work with campgrounds to set regulations for smoke creation based on air quality levels.

4. Traffic and Safety

There is increasing development in the County, and river corridor traffic congestion is bound to increase. We need an advisory committee to review any plans that would put more cars on the narrow roads in the river corridor, both to prevent gridlock and to maintain public safety in case of emergency and large events.

5. Plant and Wildlife

We need to preserve the precious ecosystem of the river corridor. For example, I and many Coloma-Lotus residents are deeply distressed that recently people moved into the heart of Coloma and cut down almost all the oak trees on their property, including very old ones even 134 years of age. They bulldozed the land so that the water run-off negatively harms their neighbors. Then they put up a strong fence all around their entire parcel so the deer cannot access the land as they used to. All of this is apparently legal because they have planted grapes and are part of an agricultural exemption.

The River Corridor's increasingly rare ecosystem is of increasing importance to wildlife and the human spirit, as surrounding areas are paved and built on. An advisory committee could work on protecting this rare and beautiful ecological resource from rampant destruction, while allowing harmonious human co-existence with it.

6. Funding

The County is in economic hardship. An advisory committee can work on getting new funding for river corridor projects, such as TOT or SMUD money. We need all the help we can get at this time.

I am sure there are many other reasons to support a River CORRIDOR Management Advisory Committee. Some people may disagree with my concerns, but they come out of lived experience and a deep love of the river corridor which needs protection now more than ever.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'A. W. M.', is written in black ink.

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 - d. Consider including in the RMP a new Element that requires the RMAC to issue semi-annual reports summarizing river-related Code compliance and law enforcement complaints to the County Code Enforcement Unit and Sheriff's Office, respectively. (Note that code enforcement complaints cannot be anonymous.)

For the RMAC River Management Plan (RMP) Cover Letter:

1. The RMAC worked well as a conflict resolution venue when it was located in the Lotus Coloma Valley. There has been no river related litigation since the RMAC was empowered by the BOS Resolution in 2002. Ongoing cooperative RMAC communications with State Parks has improved parking, access and safety for SFA boaters. Informal communications between private boaters, landowners, and commercial outfitters have resolved a variety of conflicts and problems. RMAC's powers and standing have been instrumental in facilitating conflict resolution.
2. However, conflicts are increasing, due to the emergence new types of river users (tubers, paddle boarders, boogie boarders and surfers) and increasing river and residential congestion in the Lotus Coloma valley. The forced move of RMAC meetings away from its area of jurisdiction has been especially disruptive to the RMP update process and the ability of RMAC to perform its duties.
3. The RMAC has not worked well for river-related capital improvement projects, because there is no provision in the RMP for identifying such projects, funding such projects with available monies, or pursuing and receiving outside funding for such activities in the River Trust Fund (RTF).
4. The RMAC has not worked well for river-related code compliance or law enforcement complaints, over which it has no jurisdiction or reporting powers.
5. Recommendations:
 - a. Include in the RMP a provision that, in accordance with section 54954(a) and (b) of the California Government Code, RMAC meetings shall be held in the Lotus Coloma Valley;
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