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California Natural Resources Agency Recommends Adding Mokelumne River Segments to State's Wild and Scenic Rivers System

SACRAMENTO – The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) today released a final [report](#) that recommends adding 37 miles of the upper Mokelumne River to the California Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The report, delivered to the Legislature and Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., recommends adding five Mokelumne River segments to the system due to their extraordinary recreational and scenic resource values. It also recommends special provisions to address local concerns, including protecting existing water rights and allowing future local water development projects if they will avoid adverse impacts to the river segments.

AB 142 (Bigelow) of 2015 directed CNRA to evaluate the suitability of five segments of the upper Mokelumne River's main stem and North Fork for inclusion in the state system. The segments cover about 37 miles from below Salt Springs Dam to just upstream of the Pardee Reservoir flood surcharge pool near Jackson. CNRA released a draft study report in January 2018, held two public meetings, and received extensive public comment.

The process marks the first time a river has been assessed for addition to the California Wild and Scenic Rivers System since 1994. If approved by the Legislature and signed by the governor, legislation to designate the Mokelumne a California Wild and Scenic River would preserve the segments in their "free-flowing state" and prevent construction of new dams or impoundments on the designated segments. Current water and land uses would continue.

Local water agency managers and conservation groups expressed support for the report's recommendations.

"We're really happy to see the Mokelumne get the recognition it deserves as one of California's extraordinary rivers," said Katherine Evatt, president of the Jackson-based Foothill Conservancy. "We hope it will lead to legislation that will protect our beautiful river for future generations to use and enjoy."

"We have worked very hard to utilize the study process for its intended purpose to ensure that our local communities have continuous access to safe, reliable water supplies for human consumption and fire protection for years to come," said Dave Eggerton, general manager of the Calaveras County Water District. "Assembly Member Bigelow and the Natural Resources Agency are to be commended for their leadership and efforts that will benefit generations to come."

“The Mokelumne River study report presents valuable information on the river and Amador County water needs, and it recommends special provisions to protect local water rights and the river,” said Gene Mancebo, general manager of the Amador Water Agency. “We appreciate the leadership and efforts of the California Natural Resource Agency addressing the concerns of water agencies in the study.”

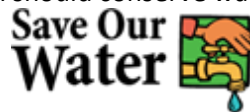
“The Mokelumne River is one of the hardest working rivers in the state, providing water supply, hydroelectricity, and flood protection for hundreds of thousands of Californians,” said Eric Wesselman, executive director of Friends of the River. “This report shows we can protect the extraordinary scenic and recreation values of the river while it continues to provide these valuable services.”

CNRA received over 1,700 letters and comments on the draft report, with the overwhelming majority supporting the report’s recommendations.

The final study report includes revisions based on public. The study report is available for review here: <http://resources.ca.gov/programs-projects/wildandscenic>

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