RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2020-101

MEETING: March 10, 2020

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Dallin Kimble, County Administrative Officer

RE: Ratify Letter Requesting Support for the Merced River Trail Project

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:
Ratify a Letter Requesting Support for the Merced River Trail Project.

Currently, Mariposa County is focusing on developing interagency and community consensus around a vision for a 10-mile segment of the trail within Stanislaus National Forest - although the variety of recreational amenities included therein are managed through an agreement by neighboring Sierra National Forest.

Working together to ensure federal support across departments is critical to realizing the community’s vision for the Merced River Trail, as it will fill a gap between existing areas of active recreational use. The project supports the development of a truly unique recreational amenity that will have immense public health, economic development, and environmental benefits for our disadvantaged community.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:
Do not ratify the letter, and direct staff to draft a letter withdrawing the letter requesting support.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
No financial impact

ATTACHMENTS:
Merced River Trail Project (PDF)

RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Marshall Long, District III Supervisor
SECONDER: Merlin Jones, District II Supervisor
AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Menetrey
February 24, 2020

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for the Merced River Trail Project

Dear Senator Feinstein:

On behalf of Mariposa County, I write to inform you about exciting new developments for the Merced River Trail, and ask your support for the ongoing project to establish and connect nearly 60 miles of continuous recreational trail along historic rail grade in one of the most beautiful parts of the country.

The Merced River Trail is a jewel in the crown of the greater Northern California/Yosemite National Park region. In its final version, the Merced River Trail will be a comprehensive, multi-use, non-motorized recreation resource on the historic Yosemite Valley Railroad grade. Those using the Trail will travel from UC Merced to El Portal, and then from El Portal to Yosemite National Park via Foresta.

Currently, Mariposa County is focusing on developing interagency and community consensus around a vision for a 10-mile segment of the trail within Stanislaus National Forest – although the variety of recreational amenities included therein are managed through an agreement by neighboring Sierra National Forest.

We are also identifying and making a plan to resolve issues with trail ownership – while the trail is owned and managed in different parts by the Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, and the National Park Service, there are also portions of the trail currently on private land. Our goal is to ensure that the entire trail, from start to finish, is accessible by the public, implemented in accordance with the community’s vision, and compliant with all applicable local, state, and federal laws. We aim to work with the various stakeholder agencies to ensure federal acquisition of these lands to connect the trail and preserve its use for generations to come.
Working together to ensure federal support across departments is critical to realizing the community's vision for the Merced River Trail, as it will fill a gap between existing areas of active recreational use. The project supports the development of a truly unique recreational amenity that will have immense public health, economic development, and environmental benefits for our disadvantaged community. We hope you will support the Merced River Trail, and help usher a smooth transition to long-lasting, synchronized trail management.

Sincerely,

Kevin Cann, Chair
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Kamala Harris
    The Honorable Tom McClintock