DEPARTMENT: Public Works  
By: Michael Edwards  
Phone: 966-5356

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION:  
(Policy Item: Yes ___ No ____)

Resolution authorizing staff to assist and participate with students from Mariposa County schools under the Annenberg Rural Challenge Program and to use Mariposa County park property between 6th and 8th Streets for class projects relating to the eventual development of the Mariposa Creek Parkway.

Staff has worked on a few preliminary ideas with Randy Bolt, the School District's coordinator for this program. The ideas include involvement in water quality monitoring projects at the County landfill, wastewater treatment plants and the Merced River (if the Prop 204 grant is approved.) Class work could include water quality sampling, laboratory analysis and report preparation. Samples of class involvement for the Creek Parkway could include work areas such as plant inventories, video cataloging of native and non-native plants, water quality, suggested circulation and use patterns, horticulture, landscape design and instruction on reading blue prints.

No County costs are anticipated beyond dedication of some staff time. Rich Begley, Recreation Planner, and Clif Price, Facilities Maintenance Manager, would be the County staff assigned to assist Mr. Bolt and teachers. Mr. Bolt will be present to provide background on the program and to help address questions.

Evidence of community support and involvement have been a portion of scoring or ranking in most grants available for parkway development and other projects. Cooperation with the Annenberg Grant would help provide more competitive grant applications. Many of the proposed class projects would eventually have to be completed by staff or not done.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

The Board has been supportive of youth oriented projects in the past. Mariposa County High School agriculture classes pre-fabricated benches located at the Mariposa Roadside Rest Area and the Mariposa Creek Park in 1992 (see Attachment).

LIST ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

1. If not approved, an opportunity to involve young citizens in their local government would be lost. Learning opportunities, not normally available in rural areas might also be lost. The creek project would not be a project where effects of vandalism, littering and proliferation of non-natural plant species could be communicated to students.

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Balance in Reserve Contingencies, If Approved: $  

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:  
List the attachments and number the pages consecutively:  

1. Article from the Mariposa Tribune (1992)  

Recommended:  

[Signature]

[Approved: 9/24/98]  
Auggie: 4th Grade Parker
Ag Students Build Benches For Community

Joe Watson (1992 graduate), Ag Teacher Kelly Weas, and Danny Lagutaris (senior) give the newly finished park bench its first use. Lagutaris and Watson together with the other MCHS Ag students built the redwood bench. Twenty inches of the bench legs will be below ground—planted in a bed of cement to make the structure permanent.

By Mary Good

Fourteen students at Mariposa High worked with the Parks and Recreation Department last semester in a project designed to provide Mariposa with park benches and picnic tables for the Creek Project and a new Rest Area. They have finished the first bench and the department has given them the green light to produce as many as they can during the next fall and spring semesters, which will be from 12 to 18 benches, according to MCHSAg teacher Kelly Weas.

Some of the areas to benefit from a number of the benches haven’t been constructed yet, and are only in phase one on the drawing board. The Creek Project is a long term plan. It would create a green belt area for jogging, biking, or sitting that would run from the CDF Building on Hwy 49 along side the creek, stretching as far as the Fairgrounds. Construction on a rest and recreation area, where the first benches will be placed, will begin sometime this year. The park will be located next to the History Center on the vacant lot across from the post office.

Kelly Weas, MCHS Ag Teacher, said the students are building the outdoor equipment through ROP, Regional Occupation Program, designed to retrain people 16 and over, in an effort to provide them with job skills. The students do all the work themselves, beginning with the blueprints, ordering the lumber and other supplies to build the products.

She said some of the students really enjoyed being involved in this effort. A couple of students worked after school and on weekends and were disappointed, she commented, when this semester ended because they would not be able to work on the furniture again until September.

Housing and Community Development Director Jim Evans, said the students’ efforts will result in a $400 savings for the county for every bench they build.

Weas said she felt this was a wonderful opportunity for the youth of Mariposa to give something to the community, while developing skills.
Monteith to hold mobile office hours in Mariposa

Senator Dick Monteith announced that his field representative, Mike Bogna, will be conducting mobile office hours in Mariposa, on Tuesday, Jan. 27, to assist constituents who may be experiencing difficulties with state agencies.

The mobile office will be located at Mariposa County Title at 5081 Bullion in Mariposa, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

"Mobile district office hours are one way of bringing my office and the services we provide to the public. I realize, some of my constituents are not able to come to district offices; if taking the office to them, these are the people we can help," Monteith said.

Monteith and his staff will be holding mobile offices throughout the district, which include seven county cities. For more information, please contact Monteith's Merced office at 772-4988.

Last chance for tic tic tickets

February 5, is the last day to purchase your tickets for the Cupid’s Rendezvous drawing sponsored by the Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce.

One ticket will win over $1,700 in gifts. Gifts include a night for two at Miners Inn, a night at Tenaya Lodge, a lunch at High Country Cafe, dinner at Charles Street Inn, Elvis Presley telephone, Golden Eagle Pass to all National Park Yosemite Lodge, the Mountain Roo and the Ahwahnee Hot Dog sleigh ride, and more!

The winning ticket will be drawn by Patti Redmond at the Mariposa County Supervisor’s office on February 6, at the Chamber office.

Students may join Parkway Project

New plans for the Mariposa Creek Parkway Project are being developed in conjunction with the Annenberg Rural Challenge Program. At a meeting last week, Randy Bolt, Rural Challenge Coordinator, met with volunteers from the Audubon Society, MERG, and representatives of Public Works, Parks and Recreation and Soil Conservation Departments to discuss plans for finally implementing ideas which have been germinating for years for the development of Mariposa Creek between 6th and 8th Streets.

The project, as envisioned, will include trails and paths, bridges, picnic tables, lighting and signing, bird feeding stations and plantings. Students who choose to work on it will receive credit, depending on their area of interest. Students will have input into the planning process. The community may benefit by having an area of enhanced appeal for tourists and residents. Students will be able to gain useful skills by forming partnerships with teachers and community professionals.
RURAL CHALLENGE NEWS ARTICLE

Big plans are in the works all over the county as a result of the Annenberg Rural Challenge Grant our community received last March. The primary purpose of the Rural Challenge program is to support and strengthen rural communities by supporting strong rural school systems. The Annenberg Foundation feels that education in rural areas should be rooted in place. Students who go through Mariposa schools should have a curriculum that teaches them about the area in which they live. There is a strong emphasis on environmental science, but activities that make students aware of the history, economic resources, human resources, vocational opportunities and political infrastructure of our community are also encouraged.

One key element of the grant is to develop a series of “Community Action Projects” that get the kids out into the community, working with local professionals. The idea is to form partnerships between community professionals or business people and teachers, in order to develop projects that help the community, teach the students useful skills and give them some insight into possible vocational opportunities. In addition, these partnerships foster understanding and cooperation between the schools and the rest of the community. Some examples of the projects being explored include; water quality monitoring, revegetation studies, studies of oak trees, organic gardening projects, development of historical resources for tourist and educational purposes, and job shadowing vocational awareness projects.

A wide variety of community people have been involved in the planning of these projects from the beginning, back in September of 1996, when the grant proposal was being developed. After we were awarded the grant in March of 1997, School Superintendent Bill Pettus became the official liaison with the Annenberg national office, Sue Overstreet became the project director, and Mr. Randy Bolt was hired as the Rural Challenge Coordinator in August. Since school started in September, Mr. Bolt has been visiting all of the school sites in the district to inform them of the possibilities for their students. In addition he has been contacting as many community professionals and organizations as possible to inform them of the grant goals and to start developing project ideas and support. So far, some of the groups Mr. Bolt has contacted include; Yosemite National Park, the Yosemite Association, Yosemite Institute, Sierra and Stanislaus National Forests, the Bureau of Land Management, Mariposa Public Utilities District, the Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Corporation, the Indian Tribal Council, Fresno Pacific University, Mother Lode Job Training, Rotary Club, Kiwanis and many others. Many of these groups have been involved in the project from the beginning and Mr. Bolt has still more contacts to make.

His goal is to set up partnerships between community experts and teachers to develop curriculum for Community Action Projects and train teachers in techniques to be used by students in the field. This year is generally the planning phase, but the district hopes to have a number of projects ready to go for the beginning of school next September.

Another aspect of the program involves improving the Science curriculum. Mr. Bolt has begun a series of meetings with elementary teachers to look at the science curriculum being taught. These meetings have several goals. The main one is to ensure
that students are getting a local environmental education component. Also, students are involved in hands-on activities that make them think, and that emphasis is on teaching concepts of broad importance rather than just unconnected facts. Efforts will also be made to ensure that the curriculum is articulated from K-12th grade, so that each year builds on the concepts learned previously. Another purpose of the meetings is to identify areas where teachers need more training and to make new curriculum ideas, methods, materials and activities available to the teachers.

During these meetings teachers will also be discussing how Community Action Projects will fit into the curriculum. It is hoped that these projects can be embedded in the science, math, history, social studies or other curriculum accepted in the district. Meetings have already begun at Mariposa Elementary School and should start soon at Woodland Elementary. Mrs. Joan Lynk, a teacher at M.E.S., has been assigned as a Rural Challenge Mentor to assist with these efforts.

The grant provides for up to $150,000 per year, for three years. The community and school district however, must match this amount with local funds or in kind donations of materials and services. This year the school district, as part of its contribution, has already purchased a new 28 ft., class A motor home that will be custom outfitted as a traveling research station that will be available to go to school or field sites to assist with the action projects.

In order for the Rural Challenge to be truly successful, we will have to sustain the projects and partnerships that these funds have helped to form long after the grant runs out. The primary requirement for being invited to apply for the Rural Challenge was the ability to prove that wide community commitment and support exists in order to provide this sustainability. Fortunately the Annenberg Foundation feels that Mariposa has such broad support and cooperation.

Obviously the Annenberg Rural Challenge is a major attempt at systemic change in the way our rural schools operate. In addition to the direct benefits of the Community Action Projects, this program has the potential to be much more than just a school initiative. It is a major attempt at improving the way schools and communities work together. If our community is successful in maintaining the programs and partnerships being developed now, the future citizens of Mariposa County will have a much better knowledge base for making decisions about the future of the area. Graduates who wish to stay in, or return to, Mariposa will have a realistic picture of the vocational opportunities that await them. The unusually broad spectrum of agencies and individuals being brought together for this project provide a forum for better understanding and cooperation among the various organizations that make up our community. It is up to the Mariposa to use this opportunity to institutionalize the idea, and secure the reality, that “We are rural, we are strong and we are proud of it, by design!”

For more information contact Randy Bolt at Mariposa County Unified School District office at 742-0240.
Mariposa Creek Parkway Project

The Mariposa Creek Parkway Project has been underway for a number of years. Blueprints for the entire distance from Stockton Creek to the jail were made in 1993, but not much has been completed except the small portion above the Best Western motel. On Jan. 7th I attended a meeting to plan the next steps in completing the parkway. Rich Begley, of County Parks & Recreation is in charge of the effort. The following people also attended; Gwen Foster of Public Works, Sarah Parrish of Soil Conservation, and Betty Boykin, Bob & Shirley Schmelzer of Audobon and MERG. They are looking at the segment of the creek between 6th Street and 8th Street. The county owns the land on both sides of the river here and the CYA recently cleared the area of thick brush. The county also has a $100,000 grant in the bank waiting to be spent on the project. Other grants are in the works. They are ready to move ahead and, ... do something? The existing blueprints are not “in stone” and the group decided that now would be a perfect time for student input. We would like to get teams of students out into the field with a map of the section of creek and have them draw up their ideas of what the parkway would look like. (Sound familiar Yosemite Integration Team). Gwen Foster with Dept. of Public Works would provide us with a rough list of costs for various improvements such as footbridges, walkways, picnic tables etc. so they could work with a rough budget. Rich Begley, Gwen Foster or Jerry Progner would accompany them on an initial walk through to point out certain factors they would have to deal with in their plans.

Once completed, these ideas would be used in another meeting to develop a specific plan for this section of the parkway. (Details of this meeting have not been worked out yet.) When it is time for work to start it would be widely publicized and volunteer work days could be planned. Students at all levels as well as community volunteers and management professionals could be involved in the various phases of construction, along with paid contractors where necessary. The group decided that the first actual construction step should be installing the main trail, bridges and physical stream bank improvements (such as culverts and rip-rap). Other improvements such as landscaping, picnic tables, lighting, signs, wildlife & educational improvements, etc. could be added in later phases. All present agreed that native plants and a more native riparian look should be adopted rather than a “city park” look. They are waiting to hear from me about student involvement before proceeding.

If students are going to be involved we will need to meet soon to discuss the following:

- How, and how soon, can we get a class down to the river to develop plans?
- What preparation will they need?
- What teachers/classes will be involved in this 1st stage? Future stages?
- How can we fit this into our curriculum?
- The mechanics and budget necessary to get students into the field.
- Student involvement in future stages.

This was prepared in January ’98 to introduce the project to teachers at Mariposa County High School + other interested teachers.
STATUS UPDATE ON MARIPOSA COUNTY PROJECTS
February 1998

The following projects are ongoing.

- The OAKS Project - at pond site at middle school
- Sierra Oaks Study - at Woodland Elementary
- The Yosemite Integration Project at the High School - This year the team is preparing a video for Yosemite National Park's Environmental Living Program and creating a web site highlighting teen activities in the Park.
- The Earth Club and Gem & Mineral Club at the High School continue to do well. Both are involved in field trips to learn about local resources and vocational opportunities.

Projects in planning – we hope to have students involved in these projects this spring or next fall.

- Star Thistle Eradication studies – Jerseydale, Bower Cave area, Yosemite National Park with Stanislaus National Forest, UC Cooperative Extension and Yosemite National Park.
- Oak Regeneration Studies – with UC Cooperative Extension
- Saxon Creek Re-vegetation Monitoring - with Mariposa Dept. of Public Works
- Project GLOBE at Mariposa Middle School and Lake Don Pedro School
- Project Feeder Watch at Cathey's Valley Elementary

In all of the above projects teachers are partnered with community professionals or national organizations and they seem to be progressing well. Teachers have received training or are working with community partners to plan project details.

One primary project we are concentrating on is the Mariposa Creek Parkway Project. We are working with Public Works and the Recreation Department to develop plans for a two-block section of the parkway. We hope to have student input into the final plans for the scenic parkway. The first phase will consist of major construction including bridges, lighting, paved pathways and erosion control improvements. In later phases we hope to have students participate in designing and installing landscaping, educational and recreational improvements. We would like to develop areas for study of native and culturally significant plants and wildlife as well as local history and geology surrounding the gold rush. Areas can also be developed for water quality, wildlife and vegetation studies. We hope to develop interpretive materials for use by local or visiting educational groups. Obviously the Parkway Project is rich in opportunities for Rural Challenge work.

Another project we are trying to get off the ground this year is our Local History Presentations. We are trying to get some students involved in activities planned in conjunction with California’s Sesquicentennial celebration of the discovery of gold. There is a Civil War Re-enactment planned in Mariposa this April and we would like to have students helping to educate the public about Mariposa’s rich history as part of these festivities. Some of the activities we are looking into are;

- Student docents giving tours of historic buildings and artifacts at the Pioneer History Center.
- Tours of Mariposa’s historic courthouse.
- Re-enactments of 1850s-70s Mariposa residents discussing famous personalities and events.
- Re-enactment of an 1850s placer mining camp near the Civil War site.

We hope to have some students researching these events and to have presentations ready to join in for this April’s festivities. If the Civil War Re-enactment becomes an annual event, we could grow the whole event into a local history festival. Possibilities abound in the area of developing local historical resources.
Projects Waiting For Action – We hope to work with various community partners to develop these projects in the future.

- Interpretive guides for a proposed Merced River Trail – with Bureau of Land Management
- Water quality testing projects in Mariposa Creek, Stockton Creek the Merced River and in wells near a new sewage system and below the landfill.
- Organic Gardening – Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Project at DeWitt Ranch

In support of all these projects, the Mobile Educational Research Lab is almost fully outfitted to serve as a base for a variety of projects. The Mobile Lab has been fitted with storage and workstations adaptable to a variety of scientific equipment. In addition to the water testing equipment purchased for the lab, other equipment will be acquired as needed for new projects.

The Rural Challenge Coordinator is also working with Mariposa County High School to create an independent study class for a few highly motivated students. These students would work with teachers and community partners on developing procedures and materials to advance projects in the planning stages and provide student input.

Science Curriculum and Inservice Work

The Rural Challenge Project Coordinator is working with the Rural Challenge Mentor Teacher to conduct a series of curriculum review meetings at the district’s two largest elementary schools. In these meetings we are trying to assist the teachers in assuring that the science curriculum is concept based, articulated and correlates with the California State Framework for Science. In addition we are trying to identify inservice needs and possible Community Action Projects the students might be involved with. We also hope to identify areas where teachers need support to ensure that ongoing projects and activities which support Rural Challenge goals will continue.

To further meet the inservice needs of the teachers, we are organizing a Summer Institute for teachers in conjunction with Fresno Pacific University. We plan to offer courses in local history and environmental studies, integrated technology literacy strategies and science teaching methods and materials.

We also strive to make teachers aware of workshops and curriculum training opportunities offered by outside agencies such as the Forestry Institute for Teachers and Macroinvertebrate Bioassessment Techniques workshop sponsored by the Department of Fish and Game and the American Fisheries Society.

We encourage and try to gain support for the ongoing efforts of teachers and community partners to develop new curriculum, activities and Community Action Projects relating to our local environment, resources, history and vocational opportunities. More ideas are relayed to the coordinator weekly.
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BUNDY, Holly, Assistant Superintendent, MCUSD, P.O. Box 8, Mariposa, CA 95338
BONDSHU, Bill, MPUD Fire, P.O. Box 494, Mariposa, CA 95338
BOOZER, Chris, Sierra Telephone, P.O. Box 219, Oakhurst, CA 93644
BRAZZELL, Chuck, Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 248, Midpines, CA 95345
C O L L I N S , Marguerite, MCUSD Board of Trustees/Education, P.O. Box 885, Mariposa, CA 95338
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DEWITT, Robert & Doreen, 4227 Oak Grove School Road, Mariposa, CA 95338
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FALL, Stephanie, Mariposa Middle School, 5171 Silva Road, Mariposa, CA 95338
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GOGER, Danny, Mariposa Middle School, 5171 Silva Road, Mariposa, CA 95338
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HOEKSTRA, Maurie, Mariposa County Library, P.O. Box 106, Mariposa, CA 95338
IUDICE, Ron & Carol, P.O. Box 1579, Mariposa, CA 95338 (Mpa. photo & girl scouts)
JOHNSON, Ed, Mariposa County Planning Department, P.O. Box 2039, Mariposa, CA 95338
JOHNSON, Wayne, Department of Agriculture, 5009 Fairgrounds Road, Mariposa, CA 95338
LAPIC, Dave, c/o Sierra Special T's, P.O. Box 1163, Mariposa, CA 95338
LEONARD, Bill, Chairman, American Indian Council, P.O. Box 153, Mariposa, CA 95338
LYNK, Joan, Mariposa Elementary School, P.O. Box 5002, Mariposa, CA 95338
MANOR, Kirk, Tavis Corporation, 3636 Hwy 49 S, Mariposa, CA 95338
MEDLEY, Steve, Yosemite Association, P.O. Box 230, El Portal, CA 95318
MENNIG, Jan, Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 1205, Mariposa, CA 95338
MICKEL, Kay & Gene, P.O. Box 1994, Mariposa, CA 95338 (Rotary & Real Estate)
MOSHER, Chuck, Department of Public Health, P.O. Box 5, Mariposa, CA 95338
NITTA, Gwen, Mother Lode Job Training, P.O. Box 1915, Mariposa, CA 95338
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VAN WAGENDONK, Dr. Jan, P.O. Box 42, El Portal, CA 95318
VEJAR, Matt, Lake Don Pedro Elementary School, 2411 Hidalgo Street, La Grange, CA 95329
WEAVER, Kary, Mariposa County Resource Conservation District, P.O. Box 746, Mariposa, CA 95338
WENDT, Bill & Barbara, P.O. Box 75, Mipdines, CA 95345
WILSON, Judy, CSIN, San Joaquin COE, P.O. Box 213030, Stockton, CA 95213
YOUNG, Lowell, Economic Development Corporation, P.O. Box 731, Mariposa, CA 95338

Water Quality Monitoring Projects:

Public water systems
Testing of clusters of private wells in partnership with the Public Health Department
Farm ponds
Jerseydale sewage system in partnership with the Dept. of Public Works
Stockton Creek and reservoir in partnership with Mariposa Resource Conservation
Upper watershed improvements in partnership with the Dept. of Public Works
Below the landfill
Mariposa Creek
Gathering baseline data on present water quality of key watersheds
Provide monitoring for landowners implementing rangeland management plans

Historical Projects:

Re-enactments
Melodramas
Building Restoration
Interpretive Guides
Tour Maps
Printed Biographies/Stories/Oral History
Native American Cultural Performances/Literature/Exhibits

OTHER PROJECTS

The Organic Farming Demonstration in partnership with the DeWitt Ranch
School gardens
Mariposa Creek Parkway Project in partnership with the Dept. of Parks and Recreation
Development of a Merced River Trail in partnership with the Bureau of Land Mgmt.
Bower Cave area Star Thistle Study in partnership with Stanislaus National Forest
Saxon Creek Revegetation and Monitoring Project in partnership with Mariposa
   Public Utilities District
Bower Cave area development in partnership with Stanislaus National Forest,
   Mariposa County, and the American Indian Council