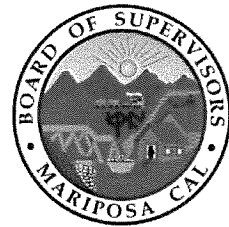




MARIPOSA COUNTY

Administration · 966-3222



RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2021-53

MEETING: February 2, 2021
TO: The Board of Supervisors
FROM: Dallin Kimble, County Administrative Officer
RE: Ratify a Letter of Support for WaterSmart Grant Application

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Ratify a Letter of Support for the Upper Merced River Watershed Council's (UMRWC) Grant Application for the WaterSmart Grant Program, Titled "Revive + Redefine".

UMRWC's application would facilitate a collaboration of stakeholders interested in preserving natural resources, mitigating the effects of disasters, enhancing recreational opportunities, and ensuring the wild and scenic Merced River will be enjoyed by many generations to come.

Given its alignment with the legislative platform and the short time frame, staff has already sent this letter of support and recommends approval of this request to ratify that action.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

The Board routinely approves or ratifies letters of support that it determines to be in the best interest of the county.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Do not approve. Staff would notify recipients of a retraction in that event.

ATTACHMENTS:

WaterSmart Grant Application Letter (PDF)

RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]

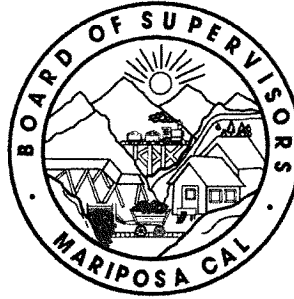
MOVER: Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor

SECONDER: Wayne Forsythe, District IV Supervisor

AYES: Smallcombe, Sweeney, Long, Forsythe, Menetrey

Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

District 1 ... ROSEMARIE SMALLCOMBE
District 2 TOM SWEENEY
District 3 MARSHALL LONG
District 4 WAYNE FORSYTHE
District 5 MILES MENETREY



DALLIN KIMBLE
County Administrative Officer

RENÉ LAROCHE
Clerk of the Board

P. O. Box 784
Mariposa, CA 95338
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(800) 736-1252
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www.mariposacounty.org/board

January 15, 2021

Bureau of Reclamation
Financial Assistance Operations
Attn: Mr. Edmund Weakland
P.O. Box 25007, MS 84-27815
Denver, CO 80225

Re: Upper Merced River Watershed Council's WaterSmart grant application

Dear Mr. Weakland,

On behalf of the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors, I urge you to approve the Upper Merced River Watershed Council's application for the WaterSmart grant program titled: "Revive + Redefine: Developing the Upper Merced River Watershed Council (UMRWC) and Facilitating a Restoration Plan for the Upper Merced Wild and Scenic River". UMRWC's application would facilitate a collaboration of stakeholders interested in preserving natural resources, mitigating the effects of disasters, enhancing recreational opportunities, and ensuring the Wild and Scenic Merced River will be enjoyed by many generations to come.

The Merced River meanders more than 145 miles with most of those miles traveling through Mariposa County. 122.5 miles are protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Except for small sections of privately owned land in the Merced River Canyon, the waters of the Merced flow over federal lands managed by Yosemite National Park, the Stanislaus National Forest (contracted for management purposes to the Sierra National Forest), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

In addition to being a delightful resource for Mariposans, the Merced River is enjoyed by the nearly five million annual visitors that come to recreate on public lands. Those visitors are essential to Mariposa County's economy. Further downstream, the Merced River supplies water for the San Joaquin Valley, called "the food basket of the world," which produces two-thirds of the nation's fruit and ninety percent of nuts grown in the United States.

In the last five years, Mariposa County has experienced an increase in both the frequency and scale of natural disasters. More than 82,000 acres burned adjacent to the Merced River in the 2017 Detwiler Fire. The river canyon was the focus of the 2018 Ferguson Fire, which burned more than 97,000 acres. Drought, tree mortality, floods, wildfires, rock falls and other disasters have impacted our landscape, our economy, and our quality of life. With disasters and related impacts far beyond the County's ability to mitigate, we continue to depend on nonprofit, state and federal partners for our success.

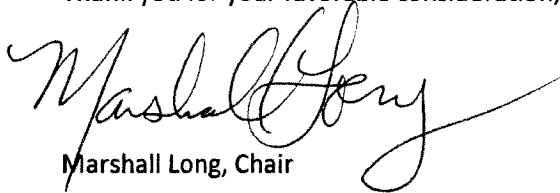
UMRWC has, for most of the last twenty years, focused on maintaining collaborative relationships with the U.S. Forest Service and BLM to protect and restore trails in and around the Merced River Canyon. Now, in the face of escalating disasters, those relationships are increasingly important for preservation and restoration of watersheds, forested lands and native flora and fauna. All available resources are needed to engage stakeholders and facilitate the identification and achievement of shared goals and objects.

UMRWC led many such conversations for two decades, enlisting hundreds of volunteers to remove invasive weeds, clear and maintain trails and remove trash from along the Merced River. While UMRWC has suffered setbacks, including funding cuts and a fire that destroyed most of their records, its members created a framework for collaboration that continues today and is vital to our shared future.

WaterSmart grant funds would permit the UMRWC to not only reestablish its role as convener of stakeholders focused on the health of the Merced River, but also to expand its reach to include other agencies, more community organizations and individual members and volunteers. The funding would support development of a shared vision and a strategic work plan focused on remediation of damages caused by recent fires and floods.

The UMRWC and the Strategic Work Plan can facilitate the preservation of the natural resources in the Merced River watershed for generations to come, thereby providing continued support of our economy and the health of our community. For these reasons, and for the benefit of our residents and the millions of Americans that benefit from the recreational and agricultural opportunities afforded by the Merced River, I urge your approval of the UMRWC grant application.

Thank you for your favorable consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marshall Long". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marshall Long, Chair