

April 28, 2016

Sally Jewell  
Secretary of the Interior  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Madam Secretary:

I am writing to urge you to support wild and scenic status for the San Joaquin River in the area known as the San Joaquin Gorge Special Recreation Management Area in central California.

This Bureau of Land Management property above Lake Millerton is one of the few public foothill recreation sites in this area. All but a tiny fraction of the Sierra foothills is private fenced land.

The San Joaquin Gorge is a wonderful area to visit in winter and spring, especially on those days when fog blankets the San Joaquin Valley while sunshine graces the foothills. It offers many miles of trails, used by hikers, bicycle riders and equestrians.

A proposed dam on the river at Temperance Flat will drown the vast majority of the public area, and will not provide any comparable replacement recreational activities.

While there is no denying the need for additional water for central California, this expensive and destructive project is not the right approach. It would be a decade or more from completion before the dam provided any significant amount of additional water. Greater efforts at conservation and efficient irrigation would do much to alleviate the problem.

Wild and scenic protection for the San Joaquin River would prevent a terrible loss of recreational opportunities, and encourage water users to increase conservation and use more efficient methods of irrigation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dick Estel