CALIFORNIA 140

FERGUSON SLIDE Restoration Project

Merced River's Wild and Scenic River Outstandingly Remarkable Values: Recreation

Recreation – the recreational outstandingly remarkable value consists of three primary recreational activities, which are whitewater boating, camping, and hiking. Whitewater boating is the most popuar activity, drawing 8 –10,000 boaters annually.

The following mitigation measures would be used to protect the natural and recreational values of the Merced River:

- A 2.5-mile-long section of Incline Road was improved with the emergency opening project during the summer of 2006. These improvements enhanced access for recreational use of the river.
- The three temporary bridges would be removed, and the surrounding disturbed areas would be restored. An erosion control plan approved by the U.S. Forest Service would be applied to all disturbed areas.
- The two proposed permanent bridges for Alternative S would be designed with a 350-foot-long center span to provide the maximum unobstructed opening between the bridge columns. The bridges for Alternatives C and T would be designed with a 274-foot-long center span.
- The shoulder transitions approaching the bridges from the existing State Route 140 would be modified from the standard design to minimize encroachment into the banks of the river. The modified transitions would also eliminate excavation into the south canyon wall.
- The minimum standard curving for the highway realignment would be used to minimize the bridge lengths.
- Retaining walls would be constructed at the bridge abutments and along the riverbank to avoid placing fill material into the river.
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas would be fenced to protect sensitive vegetation and rock outcroppings not in direct conflict with construction.
- Aesthetic treatments would be incorporated into the bridge design to lessen the visual impacts of the structures.
- Natural vegetation would be protected to the maximum extent possible and would be removed only within the limits of excavation and embankment construction.
- Newly graded slopes would be left with a rough appearance to create an aged look. Exposed rock cuts would be treated to give a weathered appearance.

Image provided by Juergen Hopermann of Caltrans

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