

San Joaquin River Gorge Management Area





View of Squaw Leap from the San Joaquin River

Business Plan

For The

**San Joaquin River Gorge
Management Area**

**United States Department of The Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield (California) Field Office**

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San Joaquin River Gorge Management Area

Business Plan

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Through community collaboration and innovative partnerships, the BLM will maintain the character of the landscape, its diversity of settings and the overall health of public lands and watersheds, ensuring long-term ecological sustainability and preservation of heritage resources while providing public benefits through a diverse spectrum of recreational and tourism opportunities.

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Executive Summary

**San Joaquin River Gorge
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San Joaquin River Gorge Business Plan Executive Summary

Need for a Business Plan

Located in one of the fastest-growing areas of California where the demand for outdoor recreation, interpretive and educational programs is skyrocketing, the San Joaquin River Gorge Management Area (SJRG) is a hub of activity. Due to this increase in use and demand for services, the BLM is proposing to institute user fees at this area in order to sustain a level of management desired by the visiting public. This business plan outlines management goals and actions in conformance with national



and state-level management directives that will enhance recreational opportunity and increase visitor satisfaction. This plan relies heavily on local and regional partnerships and projected fee revenues to meet plan goals. There is currently one permanent full-time BLM employee on site, one TERM Park Ranger and one contract maintenance worker. There is a strong need to convert the TERM Park

Ranger and Contract Maintenance Worker positions to permanent full-time BLM staff to provide continuity of service and maintain a high level of quality so that visitors will return and be willing to pay fees for programs and services. Both the Park Ranger and Maintenance Worker positions require an investment in staff training. This training entails running the existing water system, technical skills to maintain trails and direct volunteer trail projects, and of course, interpretive/educational program skill development. Once developed, these skill sets are invaluable and staff with this high level of competency should be retained on a long-term basis to ensure quality of programs and services to the public, thereby justifying a fee system.

Background

The San Joaquin River Gorge Special Recreation Management Area is located in Central California, about 180 miles northeast of the Bakersfield Field Office, in eastern Fresno County near the town of Auberry, California. The management area is approximately 7,000 acres in size and is a mix of BLM lands and lands withdrawn to the Bureau of Reclamation. The BLM manages these withdrawn lands via an interagency

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management agreement with Reclamation. Most of the developed recreational facilities are located on Reclamation lands within the management area.

The BLM has a highly successful, nationally recognized interpretive and educational program at the Gorge and has been presenting programs to schools and groups within the central California region since 1996. These programs are part of the national network of public lands as outdoor classrooms and are operated under the umbrellas of “Hands on the Land” and “Project Archaeology”. SJRG programs serve an average of 6,000 students per year, with a projected demand of up to 12,500 students within the next ten years. The BLM proposes to charge fees for programs, at approximately \$15.00 per participant for half-day programs, and \$20 per participant for a full day program. This amounts to a potential revenue from interpretive programs of \$187,500 per year at full capacity. These fees would then be used for staff, supplies and material costs to sustain these programs. Fees would also be charged for camping and group site use with fees used to maintain these facilities.

The area is popular for hunting, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, equestrian uses, kayaking and prospecting for gold. Use has increased from 6,450 people reported in 2002 to over 86,577 in 2008. The dramatic increase is due in part to lack of knowledge of actual use as the BLM had little on-site management presence until late 2002, and also to increased opportunities with expanded interpretive programming and the connection of the San Joaquin River Trail to Millerton Lake State Recreation Area with the installation of the Big Sandy Trail Bridge. No actual marketing has been done by BLM to increase use. The BLM plans to develop and implement a marketing strategy once this business plan is approved to increase awareness of the SJRG.

Description of Management Area

The SJRG sits astride the San Joaquin River, one of the largest rivers in California, and is nestled between the Sierra National Forest to the east at Kerckhoff Reservoir, and is bounded by the Millerton Lake to the west. Millerton Lake is operated by the Bureau of Reclamation and the surrounding lands (a mix of withdrawn BLM lands and acquired lands) are managed by California Department of Parks and Recreation under contract with Reclamation.

Visitors access the Gorge by driving Smalley road, a two-lane paved road which provides easy year-round access, or by boating in from Millerton, kayaking down the river from Kerckhoff dam, or using the trail system that links the two areas. The BLM is working to acquire one remaining parcel to connect the San Joaquin River Trail from Millerton, through the Gorge to the Sierra National Forest. This is a regionally important trail which will be approximately 80 miles long, connecting the valley floor to the headwaters of the river near the Devil’s Postpile National Monument, near Mammoth Lakes, CA. on the eastern side of the Sierras. Currently the Gorge offers over 22 miles of non-motorized trails.



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Facilities

Developed facilities include a group campground with paved parking lot, accessible toilets, tables and fire rings, and has a capacity to serve 250-300 people. A day use picnic area is incorporated into the group site. A 5-site walk-in campground is just around the corner from the group camp and also has a paved parking lot, new accessible toilet, tables and fire rings. Two sites in this campground



have been made fully accessible, with the other sites having varying levels of accessibility. An equestrian campground is located near the nature trail and is used at least 10 months out of the year.

Interpretive facilities include the Nuck-a-Hee (mono for “Listen to me”) Learning Center, a visitor center, a ¼ mile nature trail focused on cultural uses of native plants, outdoor classroom areas including an authentic bedrock mortar, a replica Indian Village, and several ponds for aquatic investigations. The BLM presents hands-on, interactive interpretive and educational programs targeted at students in grades K-12. The BLM has an innovative partnership with the local school district to develop and present programs, and provide a summer work experience for students in grades 7-12. The summer program is a mix of education opportunities and field trips, and projects include trail maintenance and construction, facility maintenance and habitat enhancement projects. Begun as a pilot program in 2008 with 19 students, the 2009 program hosted 60 students.

Summary of Facility Improvements and Program Investments

Over the past 6 years, a variety of facility improvements were made including installation of a water well and distribution system, most of these costs were paid by our partners: PGE and Reclamation. Other improvements were funded by our deferred maintenance program and included resurfacing Smalley Road, installing new restrooms at campgrounds, building the shop and group site at the Nuck a Hee Learning Center, and making improvements at the BLM office to create a visitor center with hands-on exhibits and an on-site sales outlet, operated by a partner. These improvements combined resulted in an investment of over **\$1,335,000**.

Financial investments in interpretive and educational program have been minimal, but when combined with partnerships and volunteer contributions result in an investment of over **\$422,975 since 2003**. New partners are coming on board in 2008-2009 which will increase the level of these investments and improve customer satisfaction by expanding interpretive services and products.

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Financial Summary Estimate of Annual Operational Costs

Staffing	\$252,500
Supplies	\$25,000
Vehicles	\$12,200
Equipment	\$2,125
Contracts/Agreements	\$69,100
Total Annual Cost:	\$360,925

Summary of One-Time Costs

Infrastructure Improvements:	\$230,000
Acquisition for SJRT	\$606,000
SJRT construction	\$918,000
Hazmat site abatement	\$35,000
Fee Program Implementation	\$58,320
Total One-time Costs, Including Fee Program Implementation	\$1,849,170

Summary of Fee Revenue and Estimate of Contributed Funds

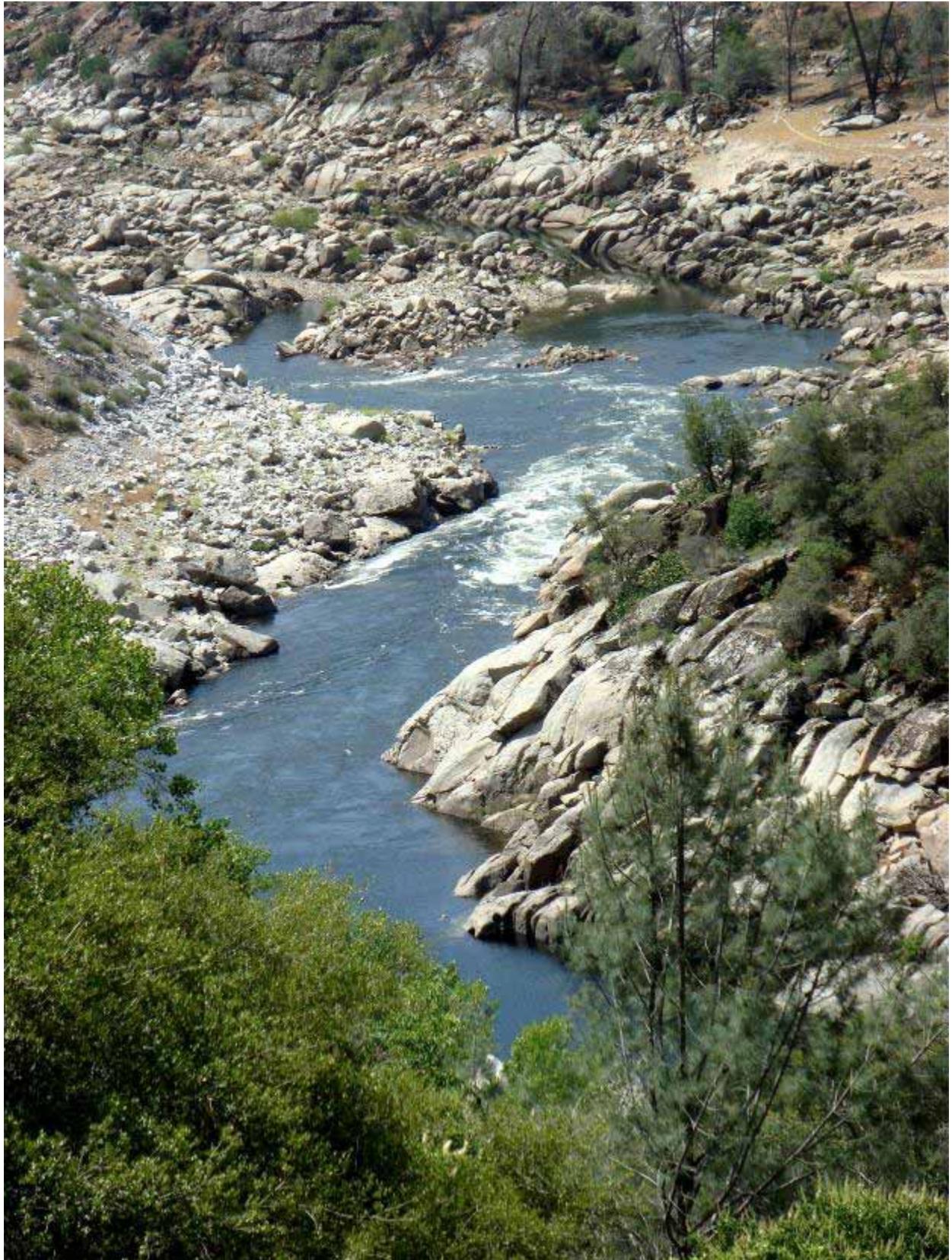
Contributed Funds	\$30,000
In-kind contributions	\$17,000
Estimated fee revenues	\$58,320
Total estimated revenues	\$105,320

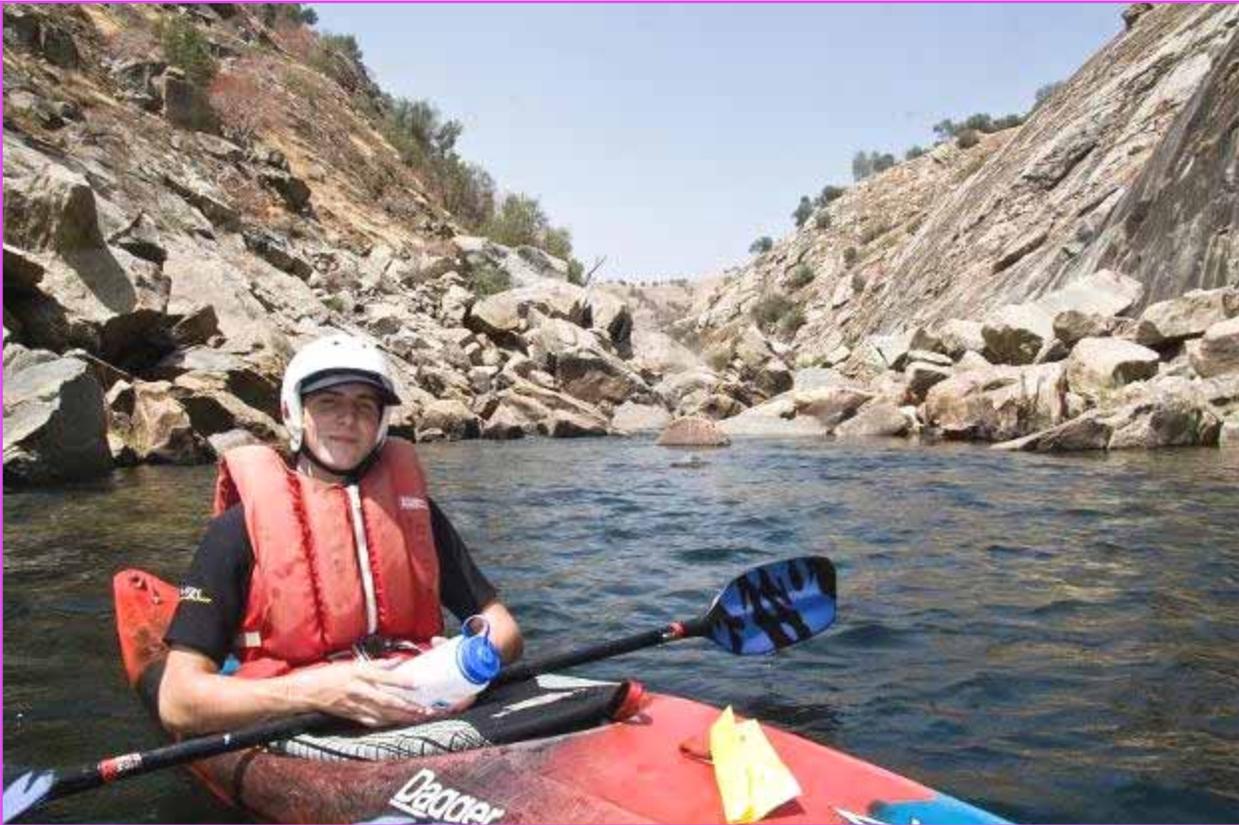
Conclusion

The SJRG is located in one of the fastest-growing areas of the State and with this increase in population, it is reasonable to expect increased demand for recreation. The SJRG has year-round access and year-round visitation, but highest use is in late winter-early spring. A marketing strategy will be implemented to increase awareness of the SJRG and draw more visitation, thus increasing fee revenues.

Economic conditions are forcing people to search for vacation and recreational opportunities closer to home and the SJRG is within a one-hour's drive of over 1 million people and also draws visitors from the San Francisco Bay Area. With completion of the San Joaquin River Trail Corridor, we expect use will dramatically increase over current levels.

By instituting a fee program and pursuing partnerships, the BLM estimates we can increase our revenue to provide a substantial savings in annual maintenance costs in the first five years. In the second five years, it is estimated that annual fee revenue would pay the larger portion of annual operating costs and potentially provide a source of income to be reinvested in facility improvements and expanded programs and services.





Introduction

This plan outlines direction for operation and maintenance of the Bureau of Land Management San Joaquin River Gorge Special Recreation Management Area (SJRG) located in central California in eastern Fresno and Madera counties. The plan conforms to state and national direction for recreation management and is built on partnerships and collaboration with local and regional communities. This plan outlines broad management goals, objectives and strategies for managing the area including establishment of user fees under the authorization of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), established in 2004.

By establishing a fee system, the public will benefit from enhanced services such as customized interpretive and educational programs, guided nature walks and talks, and other activities. Facilities at the San Joaquin River Gorge have been improved with new fully accessible restrooms and picnic tables, and a group facility that can be rented out for private parties. This facility includes flush toilets, lights, covered picnic tables and a full-service kitchen and barbeque pit as well as a group campfire area. All of the fees collected will remain at the Gorge and shall be used for operation, maintenance, and improvements to facilities and services. Fees may also be used to sustain interpretive and educational programs and products.

Under FLREA, a Standard Amenity Fee reflects a mix of societal and personal benefits where it is appropriate for users to share in some of the costs. These fees will be charged on a daily per vehicle rate within the SJRG Special Recreation Management Area for usage of trailheads, trails, parking areas, picnic tables, toilets, trash receptacles, interpretive signs and exhibits, and security services.

As stated in FLREA, persons under 16 years of age are exempt from the Standard Amenity Fee, those participating in outings conducted for non-commercial education purposes by schools or bona fide academic institutions, and any person engaged in a non-recreational activity authorized under a valid permit issued under any other Act, including a valid grazing permit.

Under FLREA, an Expanded Amenity Fee may be charged for a special service, use of a specific or specialized facility or equipment, or activities requiring special attention by agency staff. Examples of Expanded Amenity Fees include: developed campground, facility rental, group site use, enhanced interpretive programs, a reservation or other special amenities.

Recreation Use Permit (RUP). RUPs are issued for short-term recreational use of specialized sites, facilities, equipment or services furnished at Federal expense. The BLM most often uses RUPs to authorize individual and group recreational use of facilities such as campgrounds.

Special Recreation Permits (SRP). SRPs are issued to authorize specified and often time-restricted recreational uses of the public lands and waters. There are five types

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of activities for which special recreation permits are required: commercial use, competitive use, vending, special area use, and organized group activity and event use.

The BLM recreation permits are the basis for the fee program and are used to implement REA's Standard Amenity Fee, Expanded Amenity Fee, Special Area Use Fee and Special Recreation Permit Fees.

About the Bureau of Land Management

The United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management is a conservation agency responsible for the management of public lands and resources on



Patterson Bend area of the San Joaquin River

behalf of the American People. Our Mission is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Congressional direction is to manage public lands under the "principles of multiple use and sustained yield." The Bureau seeks to fulfill energy, forage, wildlife, recreation and other needs of the nation and the people of California through stewardship and collabora-

tion with advisory councils, elected officials, special interest, civic and industry groups, local communities, the public and many others.

BLM manages about 15 million acres of public lands in California. The Bakersfield Field Office manages approximately 6.5 million acres in Central California, which includes the San Joaquin River Gorge Management (SJRG) area of approximately 7,000 acres. The management area is a mix of BLM lands and lands withdrawn to the Bureau of Reclamation. The BLM manages these withdrawn lands via an interagency management agreement with Reclamation.

About the San Joaquin River Gorge Management Area

The San Joaquin River Gorge Management Area (SJRG) , a block of nearly 7,000 acres located near the rural town of Auberry, California, sits astride the San Joaquin River between Millerton Lake and Kerckhoff Reservoir and the Sierra National Forest in eastern Fresno and Madera counties, near the geographic center of the state. It was formerly known as the "*Squaw Leap Management Area* " and in 2002, the Bureau of Land Management, Bakersfield Field Office changed the name upon requests from

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members of the public who found the former name offensive. The BLM invited the public, through a series of press releases, news media (both television and print media) and individual public contacts, to suggest a new name. The “San Joaquin River Gorge” was chosen as it is descriptive of the geographic location of the management area, and conveyed a sense of the depth and breadth of the deep river canyon.

Approximately one-third of the management area is withdrawn to the Bureau of Reclamation or contains lands acquired by Reclamation as part of the Central Valley Project. These lands were turned back to the BLM for management under a Land Management Contract signed in 1969. This contract will expire in 2019. This management contract has been supplemented by an Interagency Agreement and it is the intent of both agencies to continue this cooperative relationship and maintain the BLM as the land management agency into the future.

Public Benefits

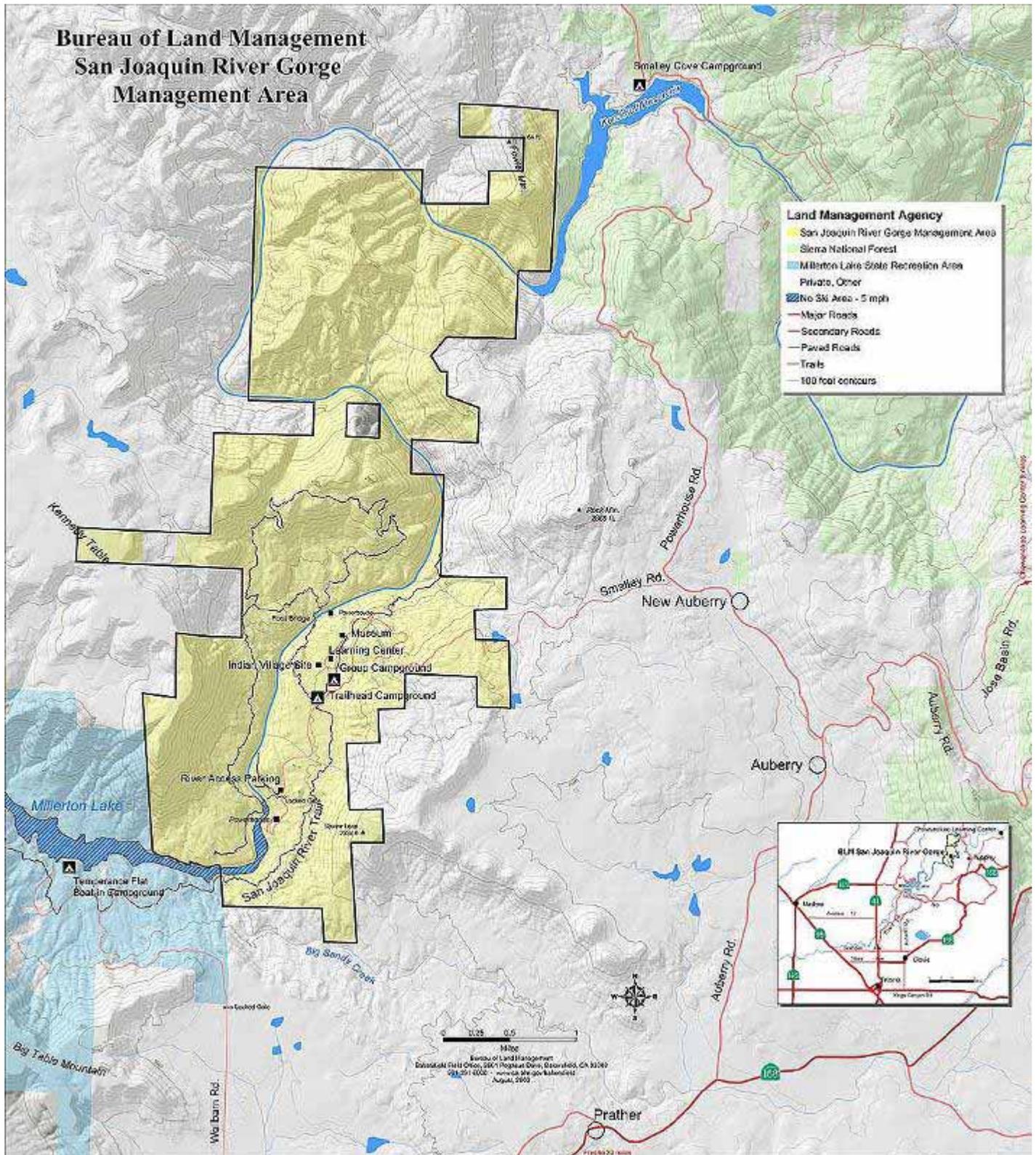
The SJRG serves as a “community backyard” for well over 1,000,000 people in the Fresno-Clovis-Madera area, as well as local rural communities and is readily available for spending time in nature and getting outdoor exercise, leading to increased levels of personal fitness and wellness; escaping workplace or school stress, and enjoying the closeness of friends and family. Active management of these public lands enhances the quality of life for the local and regional communities by protecting cultural and natural resources, including watersheds that supply a large portion of the state’s drinking water and offering easy access to recreation, health, fitness and open space opportunities. As market awareness of the SJRG is increased, additional visitation and economic benefits to local economies are likely to occur. Local and regional schools, homeschoolers, organized groups and the general public will benefit from increased visitor services and enhanced education and interpretive programming.

Existing Interpretive/Education Programs

The SJRG is nationally recognized for providing award-winning interpretive and educational programming under the national banners of “Hands on the Land” and “Project Archaeology”. Hands on the Land is a national network of field classrooms connecting students, teachers and parents to public lands all across America. Project Archaeology programs focus on teaching the science of archaeology and fostering connections across time and landscapes. A variety of cultural heritage and natural resource education/interpretive programs are offered at the Gorge which meet California education standards and provide hands-on learning experiences to students in grades K-12. The Gorge is also utilized



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by local colleges and universities as an outdoor laboratory and research center.

A unique partnership exists between the BLM and the Sierra Unified School District (SUSD) to support these educational goals. The BLM and SUSD have partnered for over six years in developing high-quality, hands-on, interactive, standards based educational programs that utilize public lands as an outdoor learning laboratory. SUSD will take the lead on planning and marketing these programs to schools in the central California region, and will schedule and present programs, in cooperation with BLM staff.

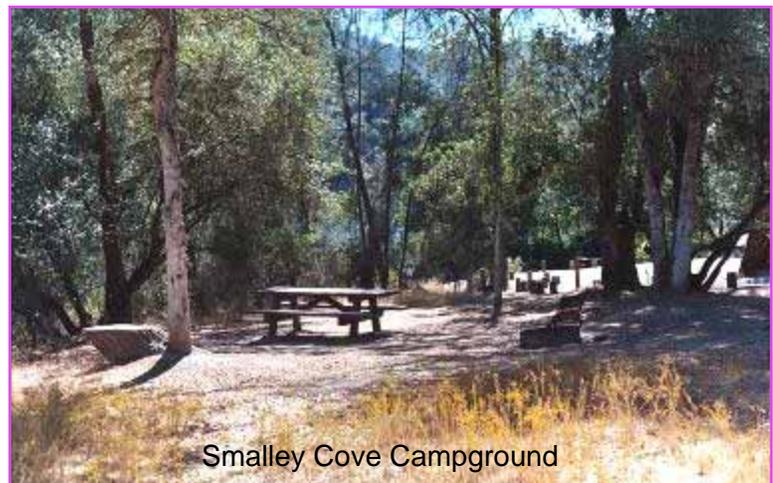
Location and SJRG Management Area Boundaries

The management area is located within the Millerton Lake East US Geological Survey (USGS) 1:100,000 quadrangle map. Located five miles northwest of the town of Auberry and about 35 miles northeast of Fresno/Clovis metropolitan area, the area is bounded by the Bureau of Reclamation/California State Park's *Millerton Lake State Recreation Area* to the west, and a mix of public and private lands including the *Sierra National Forest* to the east. Elevations range from 700 feet to over 2200 feet above sea level and the area is bisected by one of the State's largest rivers. The management area is a transition zone from the great Central Valley to the high country of the Sierra Nevada and serves as an important wildlife corridor.

The SJRG is located in the geographic center of California in a deep canyon along the scenic San Joaquin River in the foothills of Fresno and Madera Counties, and is administered by the BLM's Bakersfield Field office. The area is diverse geographically and geologically, resulting in a unique blend of plants, wildlife, habitats, and a rich legacy of prehistoric and historic cultural sites. It is within the wildland-urban interface, with many homes nestled near the rim of the canyon.

Nearby Recreation Destination Areas

Millerton Lake State Recreation Area is located on the western boundary of the SJRG and features lake-based recreation activities and camping, hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trails. Both entrance and use fees are charged and the area is open year-round. To the east of the SJRG lies the Sierra National Forest, with a broad range of recreational opportunity from river and lake-based activities, to wilderness and long-distance backcountry trail opportu-



Smalley Cove Campground

nities such as the John Muir Trail and Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. The forest has a downhill ski resort as well as cross-country and snowmobile areas, and a summer off-highway vehicle program. The majority of the campgrounds and recreation

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areas are in the high country above the snowline, and many facilities are closed during the fall/winter season. Pacific Gas and Electric Company operates Smalley Cove Campground and day use area, which is adjacent to the SJRG and the Sierra National Forest. It is similar in character to the campgrounds at

the SJRG, and is open all year, with a use fee. This area is popular with day users and jet skiers as it has access to Kerckhoff Reservoir.

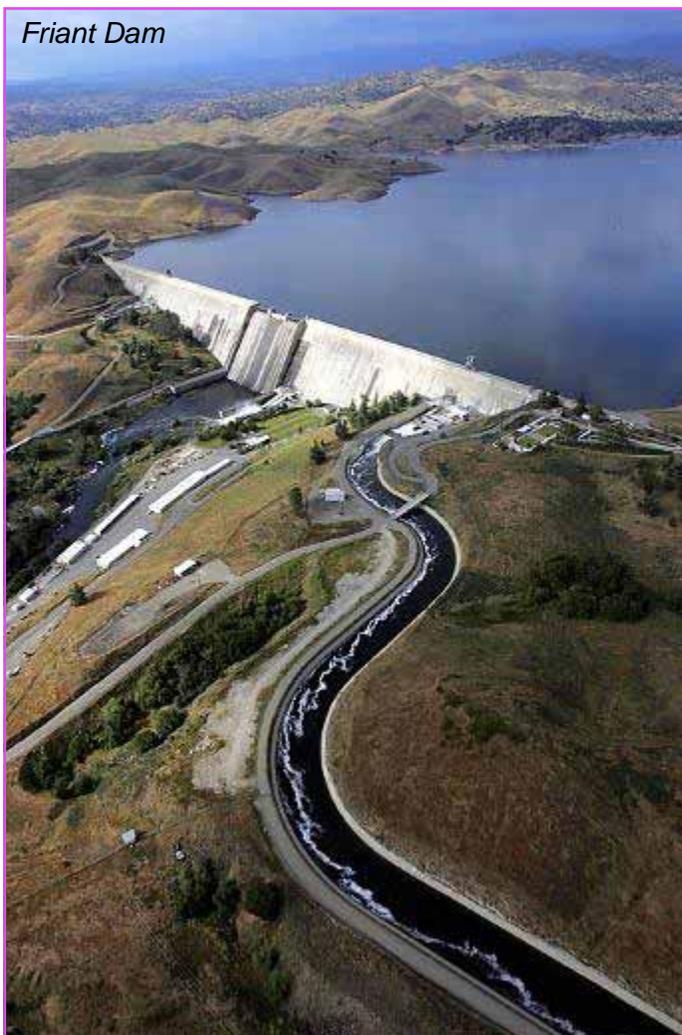
Within an hour's drive of the SJRG are two well-known national parks: Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon. International visitors to these parks sometimes find their way down to the SJRG, as they travel between the parks. These parks offer a full range of recreation opportunities from camping, hiking, and river-based activities such as swimming, fishing, kayaking and rafting, caves, and non-motorized trails, as well as back-country wilderness areas. Many of the park facilities are closed during the fall/winter season, due to snow and limited road access. Yosemite has a winter ski resort. Entrance fees are charged at the parks, and use fees for activities such as guided tours and camping are charged in addition to the entrance fees.

Management Area Description

The SJRG is accessible year-round by paved roads and is within a forty-five minute drive of the 1,000,000+ population of the Fresno/Clovis metropolitan area, and is within a four-hour drive of the major metropolitan areas of the Los Angeles basin and the San Francisco Bay. The SJRG is a destination recreation area and is especially popular when



the higher elevation areas within the parks and forest are closed in the fall, winter and early spring. The SJRG is well known for its showy spring display of native wildflowers and spring is the most popular time to visit the area.



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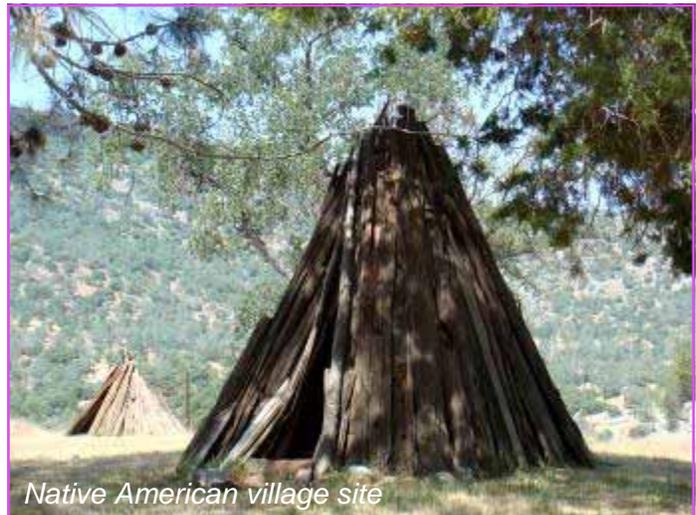
As one of California's largest and most embattled rivers, the San Joaquin River has quite a story to tell concerning historic and contemporary struggles over water and power. Two hydroelectric power plants, both operated by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PGE) as part of the Kerckhoff power project, lie within the management area. Kerckhoff (1) has been in operation since 1920, when it was run by the San Joaquin Power and Light Company. Kerckhoff-2 was built in 1984 and is constructed entirely underground next to the San Joaquin River at the easternmost end of Millerton Lake. In 1944, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation completed Friant Dam, creating Millerton Lake, which inundated parts of the management area.

Designation of the San Joaquin River Gorge as a Special Recreation Management Area

The management area is an ecologically, geologically, culturally and historically diverse area located in the foothills of the Central Sierra Nevada providing numerous opportunities for recreation, interpretation and education. Management of the area continues to focus on recreation and wildlife management. The area was designated as a BLM "Special Recreation Management Area" in the late 1960s, as a direct result of national lobbying efforts by local residents, ranchers, recreationists and sportsmen to preserve the lands for the public. The designation was largely due to the efforts of Ted Anderson and the Fresno County Sportsmen's Club. Club members continue to assist in various projects at the Gorge in a partnership that has spanned more than 30 years.

There are four active seasonal grazing leases within the area. Grazing is the primary tool in vegetation management. Brushing and fuel reduction projects have been implemented in areas of high use or high fire risk such as along the main roads, under the electrical powerline corridor and around facilities.

The SJRG offers a Cultural Heritage Learning Center which consists of a replica Native American village site, simulated archeological dig, authentic bedrock mortars, a nature trail focusing on plants and animals of cultural importance, a small museum, and several pond sites used for aquatic investigations. Educational programs are based on California educational standards for grades K-12, and emphasize "hands-on", interactive learning opportunities in a beautiful outdoor setting. The programs, in existence since 1996, received national recognition in 2006, and were awarded BLM's "Silver Award for Excellence in Interpretation and Environmental Education."



Native American village site

In addition to interpretive programs, visitors have access to over 22 miles of hiking and

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equestrian trails, including a National Recreation Trail. Other popular activities include hunting and fishing, family and group camping, kayaking, gold panning, caving, picnicking, and access to the San Joaquin River Trail (SJRT). The SJRT is a non-motorized regional hiking, biking and equestrian trail, which will be over 73 miles in length when completed. This trail will traverse the valley from state highway 99 along the river, eastward, into the Sierras to the headwaters of the San Joaquin River, near the Devil's Postpile National Monument. The trail, on the Fresno side of the river in the SJRG, connects BLM lands to Reclamation and State Park lands to the west, and will soon connect to the U.S. Forest Service trail system to the east, at Kerckhoff Reservoir, pending completion of land acquisition efforts. The San Joaquin River Trail Council is a consortium of trail users and environmental groups, working together with public & private land management agencies to plan, construct and maintain this regional trail.

Partnerships and Volunteers

Partnerships and volunteers are important tools in managing the San Joaquin River Gorge, as the BLM has one full-time Park Manager, but no support staff. The SJRG averages about 6,000 hours per year in volunteer contributions to various projects. The BLM utilizes students, scout groups and other organizations through service learning projects,



San Joaquin River Trail



Students helping with trail work

and shares the expertise of scientists and resource specialists from federal, state, tribal and local agencies and the community to enhance land management and connect students and the public to the land through hands-on cultural and scientific education. The management area is popular for wildlife viewing and also for hunting big game: deer, bear and wild pig; small game: cottontail, dove, quail and turkey. The BLM has partnerships with the Fresno County Sportsmen's Club

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(active since the early 1960's in the SJRG), and Quail Unlimited. These volunteers work to enhance habitats, install and maintain guzzlers, spring boxes, and fences to keep cattle away from sensitive habitat. The SJRG is one of the few easily accessible blocks of public land in this region yielding consistently successful hunts and is therefore quite important to sportsmen from all of Central California.

Approximately one-third of the management area is withdrawn to the Bureau of Reclamation or contains lands acquired by Reclamation as part of the Central Valley Project. These lands were turned back to the BLM for management under a Land Management Contract signed in 1969. In addition, the BLM has an interagency management agreement with Reclamation which assists in funding facility maintenance, education and interpretive programs. Road maintenance, water system management and engineering support is provided by the Sierra National Forest via an interagency agreement. The BLM also partners with Pacific Gas and Electric Company to perform annual maintenance and special projects within the management area. PGE has assisted with wildlife habitat enhancement, vegetation management and fuel reduction projects, and interpretive programs.



The multiple-use trail system within the management area connects to trails within the Millerton Lake State Recreation Area, and the BLM partners with State Parks to perform trail maintenance utilizing volunteers and Cal-Fire Conservation Camp crews. The BLM and Park staff partner on special events and interpretive/education programs where possible.

The BLM has an innovative partnership with the local Sierra Unified School District (SUSD) utilizing a Cooperative Agreement to partially fund a staff coordinator to develop and present education programs correlated to state education standards for students in grades K-12. SUSD and the BLM work together to present these programs. The BLM provides technical expertise in regards to natural and cultural resources and logistics.

Through this agreement the BLM utilized deferred maintenance funds to create a summer science "hands-on" education program, modeled after the Youth Conservation Corps. The program was open to students in 7-12th grades. Kids younger than 14 were signed up as volunteers, while the older kids were able to get a work permit and were paid minimum wage by the school district for their labor. Work projects included trail maintenance: cleaning water bars, clearing brush, building rock walls, armoring stream crossings and protecting riparian areas, as well as general cleanup of the facilities. In addition to the work projects, students participated in 60 hours of environmental education activities where they learned about plants, animals and habitats of the SJRG and local area, and investigated watersheds and water quality issues. The high school

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students received course credit for their participation. Through this partnership, the BLM was able to accomplish work that would not have been possible, otherwise.

Ninety percent of the students said they would like to participate in the program again. The program grew to 60 students in 2009. In 2010, the program will include projects on the Sierra National Forest and Edison International Company lands near Shaver Lake. This program is funded by agency contributions, grants, and corporate partnerships.



Group hike

The BLM also partners with non-profit organizations to accomplish special projects and to present education and interpretive programs. The BLM partners with local scouting organizations for habitat enhancement and interpretive projects. The BLM recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work with the Three Forests Interpretive Association to operate an on-site bookstore and sales outlet at the SJRG visitor center. The San Joaquin River Parkway Conservation Trust leads spring wildflower walks in the SJRG, and the High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew performs trail maintenance and assists with the summer student work program by providing training to crew leaders and technical assistance where needed. The San Joaquin River Trail Council performs volunteer trail maintenance on the SJRT within the management area, under a Group Volunteer Agreement. The BLM also receives some trail maintenance assistance from the Central California Off-Road Cyclists' Club. The BLM has a new partner, the National Energy and Education Development Group (NEED) for assistance in facility maintenance and interpretive/educational programming. NEED has an excellent track record in the field of energy education and

Summary of Volunteer and Hosted Worker Contributions from 2003-2008

Year	Facility Mtce	Trail Projects	Fuel/Hazard Reduction	Interp/Ed Programs	Habitat Enhancement	Tot. hours	Estimated Value @ \$20.25/hr
2003	3300	1000	0	200	350	4850	\$98,212
2004	2800	1450	150	400	500	5300	\$107,325
2005	3500	1450	1000	400	500	6850	\$138,712
2006	2200	1250	2000	300	300	6050	\$122,512
2007	1100	1260	2000	300	300	4950	\$100,237
2008	800	1300	2000	150	250	4500	\$91,125
2009	500	1629	1000	150	0	3279	\$66,400
Total hours contributed, total value:						35,779	\$724,523

outreach. Weekend staffing is key to maintaining a successful volunteer program, as volunteer projects often require project supervision and logistical support, both before and during the project. In 2005-2006, a term Park Ranger was on staff to assist in providing this support, consequently the number of volunteer hours was greater during this time. With the addition of a permanent, full-time Park Ranger, it is anticipated that we can increase our recruitment and retention of volunteers. In 2008, the Summer Science Program was initiated with Sierra Unified School District, with SUSD providing supervision of student volunteer crews.

Hands On The Land



Potential Partners

The BLM hopes to expand our partnerships to include local colleges and universities, and Tribal communities. Reedley College is a local two-year college offering degrees in forestry and parks and recreation management. California State University-Fresno offers degrees in education, anthropology, social science, physical, biological and agricultural sciences. Fresno Pacific University is a private school offering similar degrees. The BLM is exploring creation of a partnership for student teachers to gain hands-on experience in outdoor education and curriculum development. SJRG has provided service-learning projects for aquatic biology students at CSU-Fresno for the past two years. With the diverse ecology, geology and cultural history of the SJRG, the opportunities for research and field projects are many.

The BLM is working to attract the participation of local tribes in creating culturally-appropriate and accurate education/ interpretive programs, and to protect and enhance cultural resources within the SJRG. Since 1996 the BLM has led hands-on interactive interpretive programs led by a Native American docent. Efforts are underway to partner with the Sierra Mono Museum to increase the number of Native Americans to develop and lead such programs both on and off-site. Opportunities exist for enhancing native plant and animal populations and creating more accessible source materials for basketry and other traditional uses. There are four main tribal governments near the SJRG, Table Mountain (Yokuts), Big Sandy Rancheria (Mono), Northfork Band of Mono, and Chukchansi (Picayune-Yokuts). Three out of these four tribes currently operate gaming casinos and the fourth tribe is working to open a casino.

Recreation Use

Historic Use: The SJRG was not easily accessible until the early 1970s when Smalley road was improved, paved and some of the curves straightened out. Prior to this time, the area was mainly enjoyed by hearty sportsmen and local residents. During the late 1970s-early 1980s the current recreational facilities were developed. Improvements to these facilities were completed in 2005-2006 when new wheelchair-accessible vault

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toilets and fire rings were installed and the parking lots and roads were repaved. A potable water system was installed at the same time, providing drinking water to the administrative site, Learning Center and the public campgrounds for the first time. The following table shows recent use figures and the dramatic increase in use is due to increased visibility of the management area from the local news media, repeat visitation resulting from school or group trips to the area, and word of mouth among user groups, particularly mountain bikers. In reading the following table, know that Dispersed Area means the undeveloped areas or the bulk of the acres of the SJRG and includes the trail system. The Intensive Use Area refers to the developed sites, the campgrounds, trailhead, learning center and group use areas.

Year	Dispersed Area	Intensive Use Area	Total Visits
2002	5,200	1,250	6,450
2003	5,860	1,490	7,350
2004	7,045	1,695	8,740
2005	15,155	1,776	16,931
2006	53,769	4,822	58,591
2007	61,413	8,475	69,848
2008	78,302	8,275	86,577
2009	82,039	1,132	83,171

Figures are from BLM Recreation Information Management System (RMIS)

In late 2002, a part-time Park Manager was assigned to the SJRG. Beginning in 2003, daily records of observed visitation were kept and the Park Manager position was made full-time. These visitation figures were based on casual observations when staff was at the park and in a place where visitation could be observed. Beginning in 2005, and continuing through 2007, a full-time, temporary Park Ranger was on staff and worked every weekend, making visitor contacts and keeping records of observed use.

This additional position, plus the growth of the interpretive/educational programming (reservation system) allowed us to understand our visitation in more depth and to create more accurate records, which accounts for the dramatic increase in recorded visitation from 2005-2008..

Current Use: The SJRG is a popular destination for campers, swimmers, hunters, anglers, kayakers, cavers, hikers, mountain bikers, rock



Fishing on San Joaquin

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climbers, prospectors and equestrian users. Persons from all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds are attracted to the management area, and are from both rural and urban cities and communities, predominantly in the central California region.

The area is easily-accessible, open year-round and is within a four-hour drive of both Los Angeles and San Francisco and attracts visitors and groups from both metropolitan areas, as well as the occasional international tourist who is travelling between the local national parks.



Trail use has increased in the past year as a result of the new bridge at Big Sandy Creek which connects portions of the San Joaquin River Trail between the Millerton Lake State Recreation Area and the SJRG. The bridge was designed and installed by volunteers and involved mountain bikers, hikers, and equestrian users as well as the San Joaquin River Trail Council. Due to its remote site location and the length and weight of the three bridge segments, the segments were flown in to the site by the California Air National Guard, using a Blackhawk helicopter. The bridge was installed in June 2007 by volunteers with assistance from the BLM , Reclamation, State Parks and Cal-Fire. The installation was covered by local news media.

Recent news media coverage of the proposed Temperance Flat Dam that, if approved, would be built to the west of the management area boundary, and would inundate

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more of the management area, has resulted in increased trail use as well as increased kayaking and river paddling activity by both individuals and organized groups. This proposed project has also increased general awareness of the management area location and drawn more general use to the area.

Visitor Demographics

No formal visitor use surveys have been done at the SJRG, however some visitor characteristics have been observed by park staff, or discovered through conversations with visitors. These observations correlate to demographic information compiled for this area by the State of California Research Bureau. Most observed visitors tend to be Caucasian or of European descent, upper middle-class, with apparent disposable incomes as evidenced by the recreational vehicles, sport utility vehicles and expensive mountain bikes and name-brand outdoor gear observed.

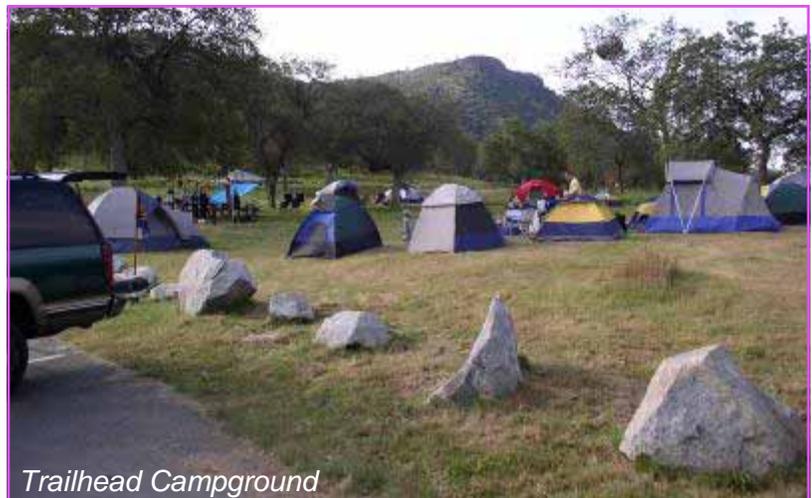
Estimated Ethnicity of Observed Visitation at San Joaquin River Gorge

Ethnicity	Estimated % of Visitor Total
Caucasian (white)	50%
Hispanic/Latino	41%
Native American	5%
Asian	3%
African-American	1%

Visitors range in age from toddlers to the elderly and both genders participate in most outdoor recreational opportunities and experiences available at the SJRG. Use is equally divided between individuals and groups.

Users consist of those with a long history of utilizing the area, through historic family use, or participation in groups such as the Fresno County Sportsmen's Club, local church groups, scouting, or school field trips. These visitors usually are local in origin, and are a mix of rural and urban/suburban residents from the Fresno-Clovis metropolitan area.

The management area is open to both fishing and hunting and attracts sportsmen from the local areas and as far away as the San Francisco Bay area. Hunters tend to visit as individuals or in groups of two to three at a time, with most hunters being day users from the local area. The SJRG is easily accessible and lends



Trailhead Campground

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itself to early morning hunts before work, or late afternoon hunts right after work, allowing hunters time to drive from Fresno and still having ample time to hunt before sunset.

Fishermen tend to visit in groups of three or more, mostly being local, rural visitors. However, there is a large proportion of these fishermen who are from the Fresno-Clovis area and tend to be families and men of Southeast Asian or Hispanic origin. Fresno has a large population of Southeast Asians and Hispanics.

The Oakhurst Senior Hiking Club visits the SJRG approximately 2-3 times per month during the spring, early summer and fall hiking seasons. Group size is usually around

30 participants and they day hike with hiking distances ranging from 4-11 miles each trip, depending upon which trail they use. Members of this group tend to be Caucasian, well-educated, and formerly urban residents, some of whom have recently retired and relocated to the foothill area. Ages of club participants range from 55 to as high as 84 years. They are interested in the environment, and often support



various environmentally-related groups and legislative initiatives, with both their time and financial resources. They enjoy studying and communing with nature as well as staying active and physically and mentally fit.

The SJRG is popular with organized groups such as Boy Scouts and churches for group camping experiences. The area is accessible year-round and offers access to developed and primitive experiences as well as long-distance trail opportunities, and river activities leading to a variety of merit badges that can be earned by scout participation in these activities. It is within a 60-minute drive of the Fresno-Clovis metropolitan areas and the surrounding smaller communities where scouting is active.

The SJRG is heavily used by the Fresno County Sheriff's Department and American Ambulance for frequent training for Search and Rescue (SAR) personnel. These training days involve a variety of exercises from map and compass/orienteering, "man-tracking", rappelling and swift water rescue from the river bridge, to caving/rock climbing skills training. These groups average 2-3 training exercises per month. SAR groups include K-9, equestrian, foot patrol, mountaineering & swift-water rescue units.

Trends: The San Joaquin Valley is one of the fastest-growing areas of California, and

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Visitor Center

with this increase in population, it is reasonable to expect increased demand for recreation and areas that are within commuting distance of these major population centers should see increased demand. Impacts of high gas prices and slowdowns in the economy seen in 2008 and 2009, resulted in more demand for local, commutable day use and short-term vacation opportunities. The SJRG fits this market niche.

With completion of SJRT corridor, trail use will dramatically increase,

due to creation of a new trail opportunity. As visibility of the area increases through participation in group events such as education/interpretive programs, special events, and focused marketing efforts by BLM and partners, use will also increase.

Demand for high-quality education and interpretive programs such as those offered at the SJRG is skyrocketing. If the management area was fully staffed to handle this demand, it is expected that programs would be filled approximately 3 days per week, 8 months out of the year. This estimate of demand is approximately 10,000-12,500 participants served each year. Within the next five years this demand is expected to exceed 15,000 participants per year.

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

San Joaquin River Gorge Management Area Mission

Through community collaboration and innovative partnerships, the BLM will maintain the character of the landscape, its diversity of settings and the overall health of public lands and watersheds, ensuring long-term ecological sustainability and preservation of heritage resources while providing public benefits through a diverse spectrum of recreational and tourism opportunities.

Management Objectives

The vision for the San Joaquin River Gorge is to:

Increase the local community and regional awareness of the SJRG and to involve these communities in the collaborative management of the public lands in line with national and state objectives, and the above-stated mission of the SJRG through Partnerships and Volunteerism, and thus improve the quality of life by managing the public's resources.

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Objectives have been established to help guide progress toward the vision:

1. Manage public lands for a variety of recreation experiences.
2. Improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities on Department of the Interior (DOI) managed or partnered lands and waters.
3. Ensure public safety and health through improved facility condition and accessibility.
4. Encourage sustainable travel and tourism by collaborating with Gateway Communities.
5. Ensure a quality experience and provide opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and cultural resources on DOI managed or partnered lands and waters, through quality interpretive and educational programs and products.
6. Provide fair value and fair return for recreation.
7. Protect heritage resources and promote opportunities for traditional lifeway practices.

FACILITY DEVELOPMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Description of existing facilities:

There are two campgrounds at the Gorge, featuring paved parking lots, water and accessible vault toilets. One is a walk-in campground with 6 sites. Several of these sites are double and triple-occupancy, so the estimated total site capacity is approximately 80 persons. The site features potable water, and an accessible double-vault toilet. There are two wheelchair-accessible campsites. The group camp is capable of handling up to 250 people and features one fully-accessible campsite, a large group site and a picnic area that can be either group or casual day-use.



Campground restroom

In addition, the Gorge has a Learning Center which features a covered outdoor classroom, bus parking, and full kitchen facility, water and flush toilets. In association with the Learning Center, the Gorge offers several outdoor classroom areas: a simulated

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archeological “dig” site, a stratigraphy model, authentic bedrock mortar for acorn processing; a replica Mono village; a visitor center/museum/BLM administrative site, with paved bus parking and outdoor classroom area; and a short

interpretive trail that features native plants and habitats and traditional cultural uses of these plants and animals by local Native American cultures.

The Visitor Center is an old Pacific Gas and Electric Company residence and is approximately 1600 square feet in size, and was built in the late 1950s-early 1960s. It has been remodeled to include central



Visitor Center

heat and air, energy-efficient doors and windows, an on-site bookstore, and interactive interpretive/educational displays and exhibits featuring the natural and cultural history of the area.

Adjacent to this second residential structure, a new Camp Host/Volunteer RV pad was installed in 2007. It has a gravel driveway and pad, water, septic, electrical and propane hookups.

WATER SYSTEM

A new well was installed in 2005 providing potable water for the BLM administrative site, educational facilities and the public campgrounds. Water is tested quarterly and the system is maintained by a partnership with the Sierra National Forest. The Forest Environmental Engineer supervises the operation and maintenance of this water system in compliance with state and federal law. Two 8,000 gallon water tanks were

installed to handle the increasing recreational use demands and to provide water for fire suppression activities as needed. The BLM funds were used to design and install the well and associated distribution system. Partnership funds from the Bureau of Reclamation and PGE paid for the two 8,000-gallon water tanks and their installation.

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Existing facilities will be retained and current use continued, with the exception of the residential structure located next to the RV site east of BLM's Visitor Center. This building will be removed and the site cleaned up. As funds become available, a new storage building for equipment, supplies and vehicles will be constructed in this general area. The building shall be similar to a standard 4-bay garage, and will be used for administrative purposes.

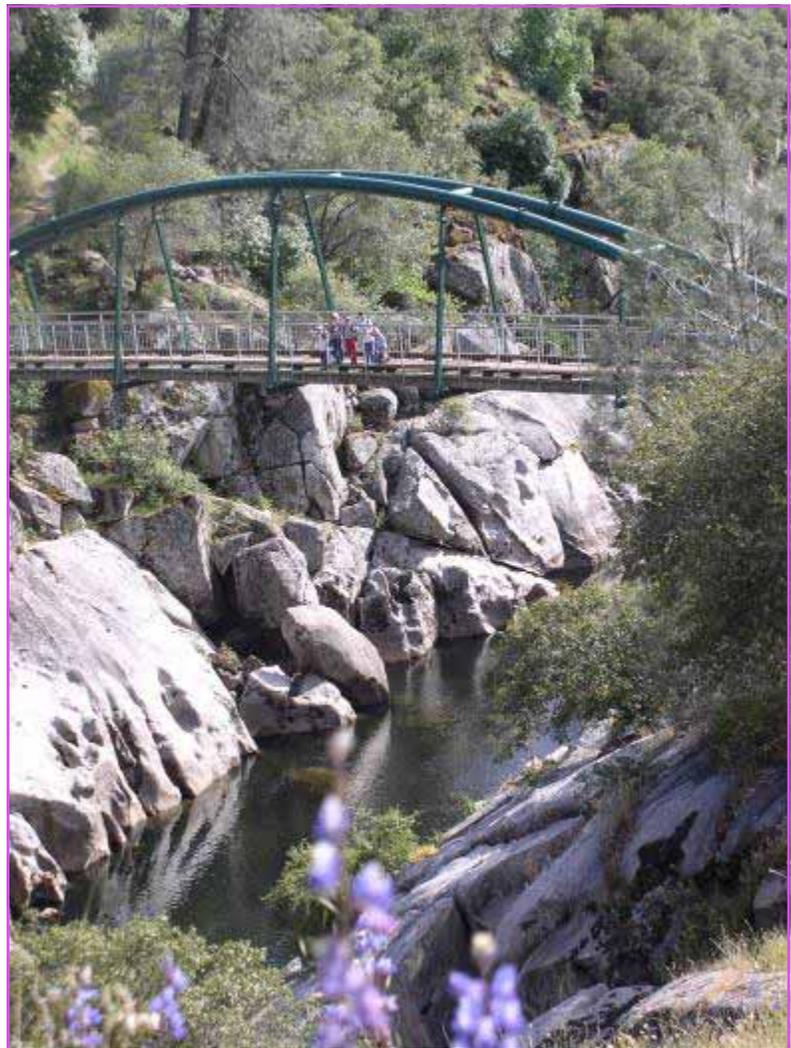
The actions listed below will implement statewide and national direction and if fully funded and implemented, will improve access, create greater community awareness of the management area and the BLM mission, nurture partnerships to provide sustainability, protect and conserve natural and cultural resource values by creating a stewardship ethic among visitors and increase customer satisfaction.

Objective 1

Manage public lands for a variety of recreation experiences.

The BLM manages approximately 7,000 acres in the SJRG in partnership with the Bureau of Reclamation. The BLM provides resource management to protect and enhance the unique natural and cultural resources in this area to maintain the diversity of landscape settings, as well as

meeting Reclamation goals of watershed protection. Within the SJRG, a diversity of recreation experiences can be enjoyed, and include but are not limited to: hiking, mountain biking and equestrian uses, camping, fishing, hunting, swimming, kayaking, rock climbing/bouldering, gold prospecting, nature study, photography, and caving.



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The BLM shall work to protect and preserve the variety of landscapes that support these activities by the following actions:

1. Continue current management to preserve a variety of recreation opportunities: hiking, mountain biking, equestrian, camping, caving, kayaking, picnicking, swimming, hunting, fishing, nature study, gold panning, educational and interpretive programming.

a. Madera County portion of management area will continue to be managed as a primitive, non-motorized area.

b. Continue to utilize Sierra National Forest trail crews and volunteer groups to maintain trails.

c. Work with community and partners to develop a cadre of volunteers to provide guided walks, talks and tours of the visitor center exhibits, on a reservation basis.

2. Implement best management practices to systematically address visitor information and travel management needs (e.g., signs, maps, maintenance, equipment, construction, reconstruction, field presence/patrol, law enforcement and education).

3. Minimize land use conflicts with adjacent property owners and among user groups.

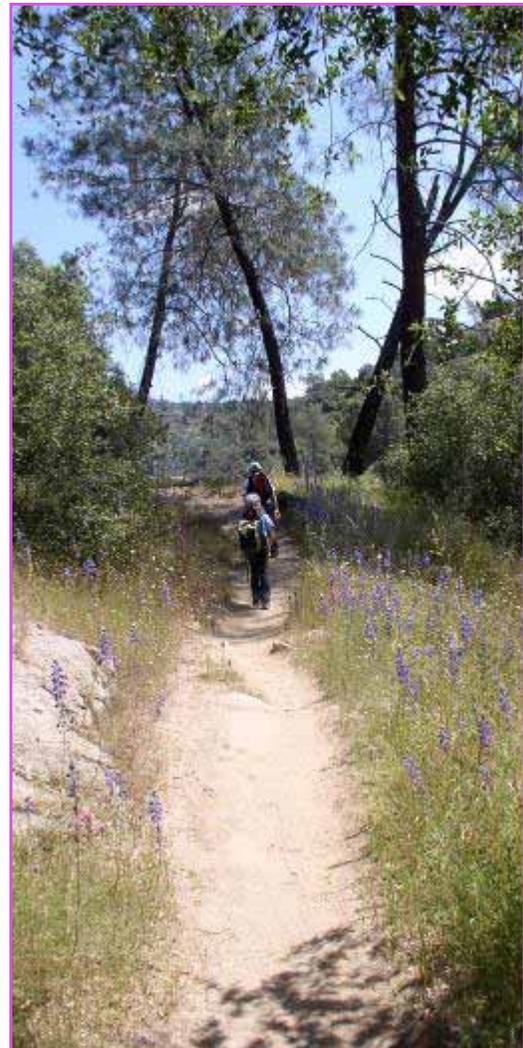
a. Install “Private property behind this sign” signage at areas of potential confusion or conflict, along trails and fence lines.

b. As new lands are acquired for San Joaquin River Trail, the BLM will work with landowners to fence the trail corridor where trespass has been identified as an issue of concern.

c. Utilize volunteers to patrol trail corridors and educate the public on private property issues as well as Leave No Trace land use ethics.

4. Maintain and enhance the scenic quality of the public lands, through active resource protection and visual resource management.

5. Monitor and evaluate social outcomes and environmental conditions on and along trails and associated areas influenced by trail-related visitation.



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6. Develop visitor and community user preference/feedback forms

a. Apply results to recreation management, marketing and monitoring, as appropriate.

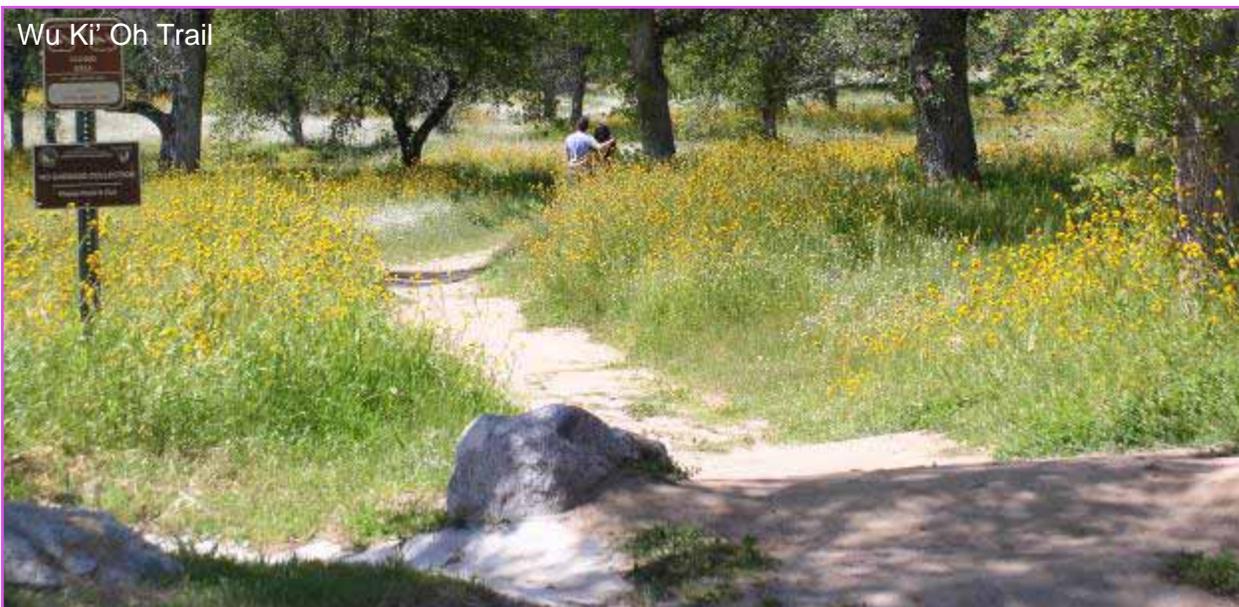
b. Partner with local community to highlight opportunities for health and fitness through media, marketing, and special events.

7. Identify and map essential landscape settings that meet public preferences and recreation-related experience expectations.

Objective 2

Improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities on DOI-managed or partnered lands and waters.

1. Pursue land acquisition efforts to complete San Joaquin River Trail corridor and provide public trail access to Patterson Bend lands.



2. Plan for, secure funding and construct remaining sections of SJRT to connect to Sierra National Forest.

3. Improve public access to SJR by planning and constructing loop trail opportunity for the Wu Ki' Oh trail, and providing improved trail access near Kerckhoff 2 (underground powerplant) in western portion of management area for fishing, and river access. These trails are user-defined and need reconstruction to meet management standards, protect resources and provide for public safety. All new trail projects will incorporate accessibility standards under the Americans with Disabilities Act to the fullest extent possible.

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4. Coordinate trail maintenance projects with Millerton Lake State Recreation Area to construct and maintain trail connections on both sides of SJR to increase trail opportunities and enhance visitor experiences.

5. Protect cultural resources, including contemporary hunting, gathering and ceremonial areas. Coordinate with tribal elders to locate areas and resources of concern and improve access to traditional gathering sites. Use vegetation management techniques to stimulate growth and create new gathering sites through on-site nursery and new plantings of culturally important native species in appropriate areas in the SJRG.

Objective 3

Ensure public safety and health through improved facility condition and accessibility

1. Maintain campgrounds, roads, trails, bridges and other facilities to BLM standards and conduct annual condition surveys.



a. Improve maintenance capabilities to reduce backlog of deferred maintenance projects by establishing Park Ranger/maintenance position, or utilizing partnerships to fill this need.

b. Using the BLM's capital investment facility planning process, submit proposal for new campground construction for a larger campground with pull-through spurs to accommodate RVs and camp trailers. Improve existing Aholul Group Camp by adding a shade structure over the picnic tables at the group camp site.

c. Correct identified maintenance issues promptly.

d. Ensure energy conservation requirements are incorporated into all new construction or facility retrofit projects.

e. Meet public health standards and maintain/improve critical public drinking water systems.

i. Establish a permanent maintenance worker at the SJRG to handle the SJRG, Fresno River and assist with other Field Office needs as available. This position requires training and certification as a water system operator.

ii. Conduct regular quarterly water testing to ensure public safety. Any identified deficiencies will be corrected immediately or water system will be closed to public use, as situation dictates. System will be operated to meet federal and state standards.

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2. Ensure public safety and protect resources by correcting identified deficiencies or safely rerouting travel until deficiencies can be corrected.

3. Complete accessibility evaluations at all facilities within the SJRG.

a.. Develop action plans, based on completed facility surveys, to set acceptable levels of access at all sites evaluated. Determine funding needs and a strategy for corrective actions, if needed, and a schedule for completion of such items.

b. Require accessible design review as a component of all new construction projects and facility retrofits.

c. Develop recommendations and implement a process to effectively integrate data and/or streamline coordination among ADMS, RMIS and other facility management systems.

6. Increase law enforcement presence to ensure public safety and security.

a. Explore other law enforcement options with Fresno County Sheriff's Dept. and investigate the feasibility of sharing a ranger with the Bureau of Reclamation to provide security for Friant Dam and associated Reclamation canals, as well as BLM public lands.

b. Increase visitor contacts through daily patrols, and provide better public information through signs, webpages and other media to increase visitor knowledge and improve voluntary compliance with rules and regulations to ensure resource protection.

c. Annually review issues to determine if additional supplemental rules or regulations are needed.

d. Provide safety training to employees, partners, and volunteers with field public contact responsibilities. Focus this training on risk management and hazard/safety awareness.

Objective 4

Encourage sustainable travel and tourism by collaborating with Gateway communities.

1. Develop collaborative relationships emphasizing sustainable practices with the tourism industry and gateway communities. For the purpose of this plan sustainable practices are defined as those which:

a. Contribute to conservation of biodiversity.

b. Nurture the well being of people.

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- c. Include an interpretive/learning experience.
 - d. Involve responsible action on the part of visitors and the tourism industry.
 - e. Stress local participation, ownership and business opportunities, particularly for rural populations.
 - f. Emphasize delivery of goods and services to small groups by small-scale business.
 - g. Focus on low consumption of non-renewable resources.
2. Expand relationships with local, state and national tourism organizations.
 3. Develop interdisciplinary plans focused on sustainable management practices which foster long-term tourism opportunities on the public lands, and implement actions to enhance the social and economic viability of local populations and gateway communities.
 4. Partner with recreation providers, local media, key local government agencies and service provider businesses to increase visibility, access and range of recreational services and opportunities on public lands.
 5. Develop collaborative projects with local communities and the tourism industry to protect, preserve, and restore important BLM public lands and attractions.
 6. Emphasize and expand BLM's unique role in protecting the character, custom, and culture of the American West.
 7. Collaborate with local governments, universities and partners to quantify and document socio-economic benefits derived from recreation and tourism, attributable to BLM lands and programs.

Objective 5

Ensure a quality experience and provide opportunities for the enjoyment of natural & cultural resources on DOI-managed or partnered lands and waters through quality interpretive and educational programs and products.

1. SJRG Staff will collaborate with other federal and state agencies, such as the Sierra National Forest,



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Bureau of Reclamation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Parks and Recreation (Millerton Lake State Recreation Area) and other organizations such as local Resource Conservation Districts, non-profits, such as: National Energy Education and Development Group (NEED), Sierra Unified School District (SUSD) and Three-Forests Interpretive Association(3-FIA); private land trusts, and the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust to provide regional education and interpretive programs, displays, exhibits, brochures and special events, and to improve customer service by providing “one-stop” service wherever possible.

2. Connect the visitor to natural and cultural resources, through enhanced interpretation, education and information.

a. Implement consistency in sign, map and brochures in accordance with the BLM identity strategy.

b. Develop and implement a brand logo for SJRG signs and print and electronic media.

c. Distribute SJRG visitor information, maps to the public through direct sales on site, web sales and partnership outlets (3-FIA outlets at local Forest Service offices), ensure quality and consistency of information, update web sites regularly.

d. Purchase and install new signs to direct travel into the area so that visitors can find points of interest, such as the new visitor center, post site signs, trail signs, etc., to direct use within the management area.

e. Design, purchase and install interpretive and informational wayside exhibits.

i). At park entrance to welcome and orient the visitor to the area.

ii). Halfway down the hill, establish a scenic overlook of Gorge with interpretive signing.

iii). Establish wayside exhibit at old PGE water tank site, interpret the hydropower history of the area .

3. Continue “Hands on the Land” and “Project Archaeology” interactive educational/interpretive programs targeted at students in grades K-12 and increase capability to meet greater demand for these programs through hiring BLM staff (2 new Park Rangers), recruiting and training volunteers, partners, etc.

4. Provide monthly “walks with the Ranger”, guided hikes and interpretive talks.

5. Provide quality interpretive opportunities through accessible, self-guided outdoor exhibits and signage.

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a. Develop backpacks with hands-on activities and tools that can be checked out for the day, to encourage families, groups and others to investigate the habitats and settings of the SJRG.

b. Rehabilitate Nature Trail: install interpretive signage, restore native plant communities/exhibits.

c. Remodel existing Visitor Center to provide theme-based, hands-on learning opportunities through tactile displays & exploration stations.

6. Provide web-based curriculum and hands-on activities, including pre and post-trip information and activities to equip visitors before they arrive with information, knowledge and tips on getting the most out of their visit.

7. Provide adequate training opportunities in recreation and visitor services for BLM staff, volunteers and partners.

a. Identify critical skill gaps, staffing needs and outsourcing opportunities/alternative workforce options.

b. Identify training needs for staff, volunteers and partners.

8. Emphasize and improve outdoor ethics and stewardship through education.

a. Encourage and support field staff, partners and volunteers to participate in outdoor ethics training: Leave No Trace; Tread Lightly!

b. Partner with the recreation and tourism industry to encourage support of the Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace programs.

c. Provide service-learning opportunities for local community groups, scouts and school groups to train individuals and to create a cadre of trainers within these organizations.

d. Support special outreach projects such as National Public Lands Day, National Trails Day, Reclamation's Catch A Special Thrill (C.A.S.T.) kids fishing day, and other similar public awareness-building efforts.

e. Incorporate outdoor ethics and stewardship principles into interpretation and educational materials, permit stipulations, brochures, maps and other media.



Visitor Center deck

Objective 6

Provide fair value and fair return for recreation



1. Provide fair value and return for recreation through user fees and commercial services.

2. 100% of the fees collected will remain at the SJRG for maintenance and site improvements. The benefits to the community include public lands that are maintained, with facilities available to them through a reservation system.

3. Follow special recreation permit (SRP) regulations to facilitate consistency.

a. SRP or Recreation Use Permit (RUP) fees can be used for rental of pole barn facility.

b. SRPs may be used to provide services such as outfitter-guide to enhance visitor services and provide new opportunities.

c. Monitor SRP for compliance.

4. Establish fee program for camping and group site use.

a. Be accountable to the public on fee program benefits and accomplishments. Develop, publicize and track accomplishments of fee program, projects completed, etc.

b. Work through External Affairs Division to develop messages and implement delivery methods related to the benefits and accomplishments of the fee program for public information (e.g., websites, brochures, etc.).

5. Follow national sign guidance on fee areas and collection stations.

6. Improve and expand partnerships and outsourcing to deliver recreation services through use of concessions, contracts and leases.

a. Develop assessment criteria that can be used during the land-use planning process to identify reasonable/realistic concessionaire and contracting opportunities.

b. Promote and set parameters for the use of outsourcing as a viable alternative to SRPs. Recognize that outsourcing is a business, facilities and workforce management tool.



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Before a fee program can be instituted, some minor facility improvements need to be completed. Improvements include installing site signs at the campgrounds and directional signs within the area, to installation of gates at group sites so a reservation system can be implemented.

These costs are included under the “one-time cost” table summary. The following tables provide an overview of recent financial investments in facility improvements at the SJRG, and an estimate of the annual operation and maintenance needs:

Recent Financial Investments in Infrastructure of SJRG

Fiscal Year	Project Name	Cost
2004	Road & Bridge Repair <i>(Completed by SNF)</i>	\$429,000
2005	Campground Rehab <i>(completed by SNF)</i>	\$138,000
2005	Pole Barn Shop <i>(BLM 8A contract)</i>	\$169,000
2004	Trail Maintenance <i>(SNF I.A.)</i>	\$528,000
2007	SJRG Energy retrofit	\$19,000
2008	SJRG Accessibility	\$10,000
2006	Well	\$18,000
	Storage tank 1 (8,000g paid for by PGE)	\$10,000
	Storage tank 2 (8,000g, paid by Reclamation)	\$10,000
2007	RV camp host pad	\$4,000
Total Investment		\$1,335,000



Pole Barn

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Financial Investments in Interpretive/Educational Programming (*Partnership funds only, does not include regular 1220 AL BLM program funds*)

Fiscal year	Fund Source	Amount \$
2003	Hands on the Land startup grant (WO-BLM funds)	\$25,000
2002	Challenge Cost Share	\$35,000
2003	Challenge Cost Share	\$25,000
2004	Challenge Cost Share	\$35,000
2005	Challenge Cost Share	\$30,000
2004	Bureau of Reclamation	\$20,000
2005	Bureau of Reclamation	\$24,500
2007	Bureau of Reclamation	\$30,000
2008	Bureau of Reclamation	\$40,000
2004	SUSD in-kind contribution	Est. value: \$10,000
2005	SUSD in-kind contribution	Est. value: \$10,000
2006	SUSD in-kind contribution	Est. value: \$20,000
2007	SUSD in-kind contribution	Est. value: \$30,000
2008	SUSD in-kind contribution	Est. value: \$50,000
2003-2008	Volunteer hours 1,900 X \$20.25/hr	Est. Value: \$38,475
Total		\$422,975



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Estimate of Annual Operation and Maintenance Expenses for SJRG

Staff	Annual Cost
Park Manager, GS-12/10	\$115,000
Park Ranger (Interp), GS-5/7/9*	\$60,000 <i>(new position needed)</i>
Park Ranger (Maintenance) GS-5/7/9*	\$60,000 <i>(new position needed)</i>
Volunteer/Student Intern support	\$6,000
Law Enforcement (SNF I.A.)	\$8,000
Training	\$3,500
Total staffing	\$252,500
Vehicle Costs:	
GSA Dodge Dakota pickup	\$6,000
Fleet Ford Escape	\$5,500
GEM (electric utility vehicle)	\$700
Total vehicle costs	\$12,200
Trail Maintenance	
USFS crew, 4 pay periods/yr (Interagency Agreement)	\$12,000
Trail supplies/materials	\$3,000
Volunteer trail crew support (2PPs)	\$5,000
SUSD trail crew (students) (2-3PPs)	\$25,000
Trail signs	\$500
Total Trail Maintenance	\$45,500
Supplies/Materials	
Maintenance	\$12,500
Interp/Education Program	\$12,500
Total supplies/materials	\$25,000
Equipment	
Lawnmower repair/mtce	\$800
Weedeater repair/mtce.	\$525
Power wheelbarrow (2)	\$300
Misc. tool parts & mtce	\$500
Total Equipment	\$2,125

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Water System	
Maintenance, parts, repairs	\$3,500
Testing, monitoring	\$2,000
Total water system	\$5,500
Contract Services	
Road mtce. (SNF interagency agrmt)	\$8,500
Septic	\$4,000
Garbage	\$5,600
Total contract services	\$18,100
TOTAL ANNUAL OPERATIONS	\$360,925



Pole Barn tables

San Joaquin River Gorge Business Plan

One-time Cost Summary

Infrastructure Development	Unit Costs	# Units	Estimated Cost
New site signs	\$600 each	5	\$3,000
Interpretive Wayside Exhibit	\$12,000 each	2	\$24,000
Visitor Center exhibits	\$8,000	1	\$8,000
Visitor Center Accessible Restroom (new construction)	\$50,000	1	\$50,000
Accessible double vault toilet for Horse Camp	\$40,000	1	\$40,000
Shade structure for Group CG	\$15,000	1	\$15,000
Single Vault toilet for fishermen's access	\$18,000	1	\$18,000
Repair visitor center roof	\$22,000	1	\$22,000
Removal of unoccupied residence	\$50,000	1	\$50,000***
Total infrastructure			\$230,000
San Joaquin River Trail (SJRT)			
Land Acquisition Phase 1	\$1,200/acre	250 acres	\$300,000 (connection to Sierra N.F.)
Land Acquisition Phase 2	\$1,200/acre	255 acres	\$306,000 (inholdings)
Total SJRT acquisition		505 acres	\$606,000
SJRT Construction			
SJRT Construction	\$80,000/mile	11 miles	\$880,000**
SJRT Planning	\$35,000	1	\$35,000***
Trail signs, gates			\$3,000
Total SJRT Constr.			\$918,000
Hazmat Site Abatement: existing conditions resulting from K-1 powerhouse operations since 1920. (CASHE Audit item) PGE & Bureau of Reclamation are responsible parties			
Project oversight	\$35,000	1	\$35,000/yr
Total CASHE item			\$35,000
TOTAL ONE-TIME ITEMS			\$1,788,000

Notes: *New Park Ranger positions are critical not only to day to day operations, visitor safety and satisfaction but also to ensuring employee safety. With three full-time employees, two people can be on duty 7 days/week. Seven day coverage is important as visitors recreate in the SJRG year-round, seven days/week. As visibility of the area grows, use will continue to increase and vandalism is also on the rise. Many recreation or site maintenance duties require the assistance of two people to ensure the job is done safely and correctly.

***Infrastructure costs: Removal of existing unoccupied residence building is estimated to cost \$150,000 and may even exceed that price due to asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint that may be present. **Repair of the building is estimated at \$17,000 which would allow this building to be used as either a residence or office space.** Repairs would include a new heating and air conditioning unit, plus replacement of kitchen cabinets and appliances if building is used for a residence.

SJRT Land acquisition costs: Phase 1 includes lands necessary to complete the trail corridor. This cost reflects acquisition of two parcels which if completed will allow for greatest trail flexibility and is our preferred alternative. If only one of these parcels is acquired the SJRT corridor can still be completed, but some flexibility in location and construction costs will be lost. Phase 2 lands are the remaining parcels of private lands adjacent to the SJR in the Patterson Bend areas. Acquisition of these parcels will protect scenic quality of the river corridor and protect wild and scenic river values and also allow for a loop trail that follows the course of the river. These parcels also would provide greater public access to the river for river-based recreation. These landowners have approached the BLM about selling their lands and appear to be willing sellers.

**\$80,000/mile construction cost figure is based on remoteness of area, plus large amount of blasting required to get through granite cliffs and outcrops. Cost/mile may be significantly less if all lands are acquired which will allow for greater flexibility in routing the trail, thus avoiding some of the outcrops, and if PGE allows trail along SJR near Kerckhoff dam structures, on existing old stream gauging station path. Then, large granite cliff could be avoided.

Please note that each year construction is delayed, cost of materials is likely to increase by 20%.

Note***: Planning costs include NEPA documentation as well as significant on-the-ground time by trail planners to investigate best routes for trail alignment, and protection of resources.

Anticipated Annual Revenues and Contributions from Outside Sources

Fund Source	Amount
Bureau of Reclamation	\$30,000
PGE	\$15,000 (in-kind)*
3FIA	\$2,000 (donation/in-kind services)

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Trail construction costs assume large contribution of volunteer construction crew labor. *PGE provides heavy equipment and an operator when projects require this assistance. In addition, PGE provides annual maintenance on weeds and fuel reduction projects along main roadways and recreation sites, through contributions of crew labor, brush chipper and other equipment as needed, at PGE's cost, which is leveraged with BLM funding for fuels projects.

SJRG staff will work with partners to actively seek outside funding for programs and projects through grants and new partnership opportunities. SJRG staff is working with local Sierra National Forest recreation staff to explore Hands on the Land program partnership opportunities through the BLM's "Take it Outside" and USFS's "More Kids in the Woods" grant programs. SNF submitted a proposal on SJRG's behalf in 2008 but was unsuccessful in obtaining funding.

Of critical importance is renegotiating the interagency management agreement with Reclamation to increase the amount of funding support provided to BLM to manage Reclamation-withdrawn lands within the SJRG. Reclamation is seeking "line-item" budget status for SJRG management. It is hoped that the annual appropriation for Reclamation's contribution will soon exceed \$80,000 per year. These funds would be used for staffing (Park Ranger/Interp and Law Enforcement) to manage lands and resources and present interpretive/educational programming.

FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT & FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING FEES AT THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER GORGE

Implementation of a fee program at the SJRG is based on the guiding principles of this Act. These principles state that any fee program will benefit the public by enhancing resources, facilities, activities, services and programs used by the visiting public. Fees must be fair, equitable, affordable and not significantly impact visitation levels. Fees must be collected in an efficient and cost-effective manner and be enforceable. Fees shall be set in collaboration with local communities and interested persons. In California, both the U.S. Forest Service and the BLM utilize the Pacific Southwest Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC) to facilitate setting of fees on public lands. Agencies are encouraged to collaborate on fee programs, points of sale for permits or reservation systems, and on collection and enforcement wherever possible. The BLM has a partnership agreement in place with the local Sierra National Forest which can be used to support the fee program. Agencies are required to safeguard fees collected and be accountable for these fees and provide information to the public on amount of fees collected and how these fees were used for the public benefit.

Agencies may enter into fee management agreements, including contracts that provide reasonable commissions, discounts or reimbursements, with any government or non-governmental organization, or private business to provide fee collection and processing services including visitor reservation services.

Visitors to the SJRG predominately utilize developed recreation facilities such as the

trailhead, paved parking area, restrooms, water and garbage services as a precursor to beginning their recreational activities. In consideration of the annual operating costs to keep these facilities maintained and to protect visitor safety, the BLM is proposing to charge a Standard Amenity Fee for all visitors to the area. These fees would be collected on site through use of an “iron ranger” fee station. As the fee program grows, the BLM may opt to work through a partner to collect fees via the internet, a reservation system, or off-site purchasing options, to maximize public convenience and efficiency of fee collection.

Standard Amenity Fees are appropriate where there has been substantial Federal investment, allows for efficient fee collection, and requires intensive management to enhance visitor experiences, address environmental needs, and manage conflicting uses. These areas must contain all of the following six amenities: 1. designated developed parking areas, 2. permanent toilet facility, 3. permanent trash receptacle, 4. interpretive signs, exhibits, or kiosks, 5. picnic tables, and 6. security services. The SJRG contains all of these amenities within its intensive use area. The BLM will make every effort to keep the fee as low as possible.

National passes such as the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Lands Recreation Pass, will be honored at the SJRG. This pass is available to the general public for \$80 and provides access to, and use of, Federal recreation sites that charge an Entrance or Standard Amenity Fee for a year, beginning from the date of sale. The pass admits the pass holders and passengers in a non-commercial vehicle at per vehicle fee areas and pass holder + 3 adults, not to exceed 4 adults, at per person fee areas. (children under 16 are admitted free). This pass can be obtained online, or in person at any national park, the Sierra National Forest Supervisor’s Office and District offices, or purchased at the SJRG visitor center. Visitors must still pay expanded amenity fees, as applicable. Existing Golden Age and Golden Access passports are still valid for the lifetime of the holder, and will be honored at SJRG.

As stated in FLREA, persons under 16 years of age are exempt from the Standard Amenity Fee, those participating in outings conducted for noncommercial education purposes by schools or bona fide academic institutions, and any person engaged in a non-recreational activity authorized under a valid permit issued under any other Act, including a valid grazing permit.

Expanded Amenity Fees are authorized under the Act and are collected for direct services such as use of a specific facility such as the Pole Barn or Group Campground; any activity that requires special attention or agency staff, partners or contractors such as permitted events or special interpretive programs or activities.

Special Recreation Permit (SRP) fees may be charged for organized group activities, commercial tours, including recreation events, competitive events, outfitter-guide services, or activities requiring an allocation of use or activities for which a permit is required to ensure public safety. SRPs will be issued following agency guidelines contained in the California Special Recreation Permit Booklet.

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PROPOSED FEE PROGRAM ANALYSIS: FAIR MARKET VALUE DETERMINATION FEE FOR SERVICE

Only campgrounds and facilities similar in character to the SJRG, or within the local commuting area were considered in this analysis.

Nearby Recreation Areas:

Millerton Lake State Recreation Area: operated by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, is located adjacent to the SJRG to the west, and offers picnicking, camping, hiking, equestrian and lake-based recreational activities such as swimming, fishing, boating, water skiing, etc. The park is closed to hunting. A hiking, mountain-biking and equestrian trail system connects the park to the SJRG, providing extended trail opportunities. Trails are located along the river on both the north and south sides, in Fresno and Madera counties.

Smalley Cove: (see photo on pg. 5), PGE campground and day use area, is located to the east of the SJRG and provides visitors with recreational access to Kerckhoff Reservoir and nearby trails on the Sierra National Forest. The small campground has a vault toilet, drive in sites, tables and tent pad, fire rings/grills. PGE lands border both the Sierra National Forest and BLM lands at Fowler Mountain and also provide access to BLM's Patterson Bend area, via Kerckhoff Reservoir. This campground will become an important access point to the San Joaquin River Trail once the BLM connects through to the Sierra National Forest.

Sierra National Forest: located adjacent to SJRG on eastern boundary encompasses more than 1.3 million acres on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, with elevations ranging from 900-13,986 feet. Camping is a popular activity on the forest and ranges from dispersed, undeveloped camping (no fee) to highly developed campsites

Comparison of Nearby Recreation Area Amenities and Fees

Name	Owner	Entrance Fee	Standard Site Fee	RV Site Fee	Group Site Fee	Group Site size	Other Amenity
Camp Edison	SCE	Included in site cost for up to 2 persons**	\$25-39	\$38	\$175-\$340	16-60	Showers Laundry Store WiFi
Smalley Cove	PGE		\$10				
Sierra NF	USFS		\$19/\$34-double site		\$35-\$89	60-100	
Millerton Lake	CA Parks	\$7.00/day/car	\$25 peak \$20 off peak	\$34 peak \$29 off peak	\$50 + \$7 Day per vehicle	100	Electricity @ group site, flush toilets

requiring reservations.

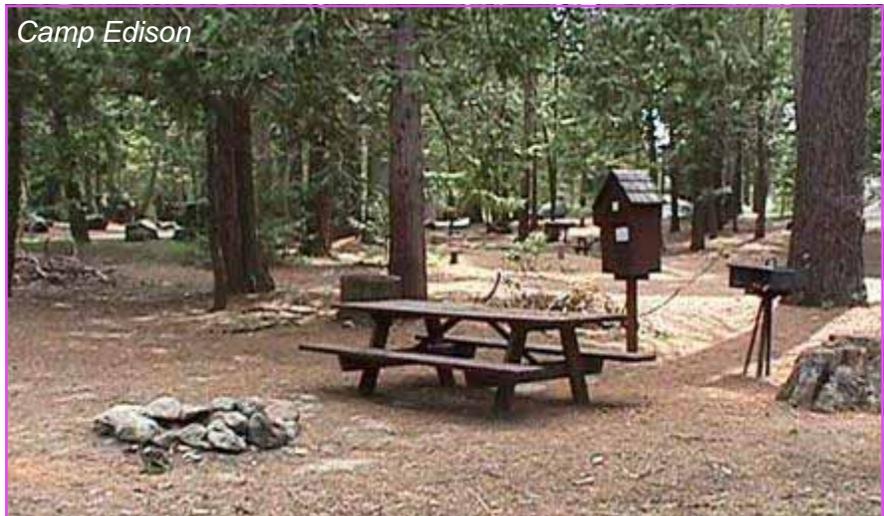
Camp Edison: operated by Edison International company, located at Shaver Lake, was built in 1963 and features electricity, cable TV and limited wifi internet connections. Some of the 252 campsites have lake views. Facilities include group sites, fish cleaning stations, boat ramps, heated showers (fee), laundromat and general store.

Market Analysis Discussion

Cost Comparison of overnight camping: The campgrounds at the SJRG are most similar in character to those at Smalley Cove and several campgrounds and group sites on the Sierra National Forest. SJRG campgrounds are walk-in sites, with standard features of wheelchair-accessible picnic tables, fire rings and tent pads, and the site has water, a paved parking area, trash service, bulletin board, and fully accessible double vault toilets.

The difference between the comparable sites and the SJRG is the elevation and vegetation type, and proximity to water. The campground features are comparable with the main difference being that the comparable sites provide drive-in parking spurs at each individual campsite and SJRG sites are walk-in from a central parking area.

Camp Edison is located on the shore of Shaver Lake and is a highly developed resort camping area. This area is not comparable for individual campsites, however for group sites, there is comparability. Group site features of large, centrally-located picnic tables, group-sized fire rings/grills and vault toilets are directly comparable. Group sites at Camp Edison are walk-in sites. Price ranges from \$75 for day use group sites (site size up to 200 persons) to



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a high end of \$340 per night for group camping, plus visitors must still pay for pets, boats, and extra people (more than 2 people per vehicle), and there is also an extra vehicle charge per night. The SJRG group site can hold up to 250 persons easily.

Based on the above information, it is reasonable to conclude that a daily campsite fee for the SJRG walk-in campground would be between \$10-19. Discounting for the walk-in aspect of the campgrounds and the distance to the river, it seems reasonable to charge between \$10-15 per night for single sites and between \$15-20 per night for the double sites.

Camping use will likely decrease the first year fees are implemented and due to inadequate staffing, compliance will be lower than actual use. If a permanent Park Ranger is hired, then compliance is expected to increase. The BLM staff has informally polled SJRG visitors in regards to fees. Most visitors expressed surprise that no fees are currently in place, and they expressed a willingness to pay fees for services, especially if the fees are retained in the area for management and increased services and opportunities. Some visitors will be displaced either through inability or unwillingness to pay a fee. This is expected to be a short term drop in visitation as overall use is increasing and as public awareness of the area grows, so will use.

For the Aholul group camp, it is reasonable to conclude that a daily fee range of \$150-200 is appropriate. In order to increase the attractiveness and marketability of this group site, it is recommended that a large awning be constructed to shade the 6 picnic tables and group area. This structure should have a solid roof to provide rain protection as well. This will make the area more attractive to off-season users such as scout groups and church groups who prefer fall and early spring camping when the weather is less reliable. The awning would also make the group site more useable as an outdoor classroom for interpretive and educational programs.

This group camp is designed in such a way as to host groups and still provide a day use picnic area at the same time. For large groups, the day use area can be utilized for extra camping space. In order to proceed with charging fees, a reservation system should be utilized and locked gates put in place to keep separation of group camp and picnic area users. A redesign of the picnic area to separate traffic and parking from group camp may be beneficial and would allow for better public service and eliminate confusion.

Group camping consists mainly of church and scout groups and as these are predominantly non-profit groups, fees may discourage some of these groups from visiting the SJRG. However, SJRG staff has mentioned the likelihood of fees to most of these visitors and the majority of them are willing to pay as long as fees are reasonable and stay in the area for operation and maintenance and improvements.

Cost Comparison for Pole Barn Group Site (“Nuck-a-Hee” Learning Center): No comparables were found for the Pole Barn group area (see photo on page 31) which features a large covered picnic area with lights and electrical outlets, access to flush

toilets, sinks and a full-service kitchen. Estimated value is \$300-\$350 per day. Capacity is estimated at 160-200 persons. All nearby group sites feature large picnic areas, some are covered and have electricity, water and flush toilets like SJRG's Pole Barn, but none of them provide a full kitchen like SJRG. The other sites range in price from \$75-\$340 per day. The Pole Barn may be used for day use or is suitable for short-term group camping such as weekends when use would not interfere with educational programs or other activities.

The Pole Barn is also the location of the BLM's shop and education/interpretation program storage area and is the focal point of the outdoor Learning Center. Because of the full kitchen and other amenities, the BLM has determined that renting this facility via Special Use Permit would be the most efficient and allow for groups to be responsible for kitchen supplies and equipment, replacing any damaged items. A permit fee of \$95 would be charged, plus an exclusive use fee of \$195 would be charged. A \$5.00 per person per day fee may be assessed in addition to the permit fees or bonds required.

The Pole Barn site has a long history of private gatherings and family parties, before the new shop building and kitchen was built. Since construction of the new facility, several community members have asked about reserving the site and expressed willingness to pay a fee, in exchange for exclusive use of the facility. The site is more suited to day use, but overnight use may be appropriate on a case by case basis. Scout groups and trail volunteers have camped there during times of inclement weather and during service projects. There are no other locally available group facilities like this within the local commuting area so this facility should be a positive revenue stream.

Cost Comparison for Equestrian Camp: A site fee of \$25/day is reasonable for the amenities provided. There are two separate campsites available for individuals or groups. Groups may be required to obtain a special use permit for this site if there is a sufficient number of participants and depending on the needs of the group for exclusive use of the facility, etc.

Cost Comparison for Interpretive/Educational Programs: Both the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust and the local Sierra Foothill Conservancy offer guided nature walks and programs. These are non-profit land trust organizations and they charge \$10 per person per day for these programs, most of which last 2-3 hours, and are usually focused on one topic. In our informal discussions with our school group visitors we have inquired as to what they would be willing to pay for interpretive or educational programs at the SJRG and \$10-\$15 per person per day is reasonable and what they are used to paying for field trips to local parks and museums. It is therefore reasonable for SJRG to charge an expanded amenity fee of \$15 per person per day for guided walks and half-day specialized interpretive/educational programs lasting 2-4 hours, and \$20 per person per day for all-day programs (6 hours or longer). SJRG school programs usually involve up to 6 different activities or topics for the full day program, so visitors would get up to 6 different programs and activities for the \$20/person/day fee, approximately \$3.33 per person per program.

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Potential Future Revenue: The equestrian camp could be used by an outfitter guide operation to hold pack clinics, trail ride clinics and events such as day rides or endurance rides. Once the corridor is acquired and new trail constructed to link the San Joaquin River Trail to the Sierra National Forest, visitation will increase both from equestrians and other trail users. The equestrian camp is suitable for staging permitted events and activities.

In the spring of 2008, the first Big Sandy Pro-Am Mountain Bike Race event was held to celebrate the long-awaited opening of the new Big Sandy trail bridge connecting the SJRG with Millerton Lake State Recreation Area. Over 90 riders staged at the SJRG and rode the San Joaquin River Trail to a picnic area near Sky Harbor, within Millerton SRA, a distance of approximately 18 miles over challenging terrain and single-track trail. The event was well attended with spectators and was well run by the local cycle club. This event was larger, with over 500 spectators in 2009 and the BLM has converted it to a 10-year special use permit. This event is expected to grow in popularity and bring in increasing amounts of revenue through permit fees, standard amenity and expanded amenity fees paid by event attendees.



Estimated Fee Revenue: The slow economy of 2009-2010 has impacted visitation at the SJRG, and this is expected to continue through the rest of 2010. In addition, once fees are implemented, visitation is expected to drop somewhat. It will probably take two to three years for visitors to get used to paying fees. Compliance is expected to be around 30% the first year or so, but with visitor contacts and enforcement, compliance rates should increase to the 60-80% level within five years. The BLM will also begin a proactive marketing strategy in the local and regional communities which will increase awareness of the SJRG and increase visitation to some degree. As the San Joaquin River Trail corridor is completed and opened to the public within the next ten years, it is anticipated that this will draw a large number of trail users over current visitation levels.

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Estimated Revenues From Fees for Service

Service	Fee/Unit Cost	Estimated Participation	Est Revenue @ 30% compliance	Est Revenue @ 60% compliance
Camping	\$10 single sites	150	\$450	\$900
Camping	\$15 double/triple	80	\$360	\$720
Group Camping	\$175/day	60	\$3,150	\$6,300
Horse Camp	\$25/night	110	\$825	\$1,650
Standard Amenity Fee	\$5/vehicle	16,250	\$24,375	\$48,750
Total			\$29,160	\$58,320

Once the BLM implements a marketing strategy to make the public and targeted groups such as schools aware of the range of interpretive and educational opportunities that exist at SJRG, it is expected that participation in interpretive programs will increase. The BLM will utilize partnerships and fee revenues to increase staffing which will enable the BLM to meet this increased demand for programs. Expected demand is approximately 6,000 participants within the first five years which would result in an estimated fee revenue of \$90,000. Based on the increased public interest in natural and cultural resource education program opportunities and the children and nature initiative, demand for these services is likely to increase to approximately 12,500 participants within ten years, provided adequate staffing is available to meet the demand. **This would result in an estimated future fee revenue of \$187,500 from interpretive programs.**

The following table of services are provided on a reservation basis, and fees are collected prior to delivery, by Special Recreation Permit, or fees through Recreation Use Permits, and it is expected that these services would have 100% compliance.

Service	Fee/Unit Cost	Estimated Participation	Estimated Revenue
Pole Barn rental	\$300/day	15	\$4,500
Interpretive/Educational Programs	\$15 half-day	1500	\$22,500
	\$20 full-day	30	\$600
Total		1,150	\$27,600

Costs of Implementing a Fee Program

Several costs must be considered before deciding to implement a fee program. First of all, personnel must be available for frequent collection of fees and to encourage

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compliance. Fees should be collected daily so as to encourage compliance & to discourage theft or vandalism of fee stations. A new permanent Park Ranger position would be needed to service this program effectively, with potentially additional law enforcement costs if compliance cannot be gained voluntarily from visitors.

Secondly, once fees are collected, they must be securely stored before being transported to the Bakersfield Field Office, or local bank for deposit. This will require purchase of a safe and training of personnel to be Collections officers. In addition, a fee collection box must be purchased and installed at all fee sites, and fee envelopes and signage must be purchased and installed as well.

Estimate of Fee Program Implementation Costs

Description of Item	Unit Cost est.	# Units	Total Cost
Fee station (site signs, iron ranger, etc)	\$3,000 each	2	\$6,000
Fee envelopes, webpage update, public information	\$0.45	3,000	\$1,350
Safe	\$320	2	\$640
Locks, keys, etc.	\$20.00	20	\$400
Gates for rec sites	\$3,000	3	\$9,000
Staffing: Fee collection	\$4,000	5	\$20,000
Law Enforcement	\$4,000/WM	4	\$16,000
Fire rings	\$350	10	\$3,500
Totals			\$56,890

CONCLUSION

The approximate 7,000 acres of public lands managed by the BLM at the San Joaquin River Gorge provide year-round recreational and educational opportunities to a segment of central California that are not otherwise readily available. Opportunities for cooperative management abound, due to the variety of existing and potential partners including the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Forest Service, California State Parks, several Native American groups, local schools, private energy companies, and other

Current recurring management costs for this area are approximately as follows:

	Current Costs	MLR Funding
Staffing	\$252,500	\$130,000
Vehicles	\$12,200	\$12,200
Maint & Ops	\$83,725	\$81,650
Visitor Services	\$12,500	\$12,500
TOTAL	\$360,925	\$236,350

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organizations. Inadequate staffing continues to be a safety concern for the BLM staff and volunteers and raises questions about our ability to provide a safe environment for the public. The recent addition of a term Park Ranger and a realignment of staff in the Bakersfield Field Office to provide for occasional maintenance support will alleviate these issues in the short-term.

Recent infrastructure improvements have targeted energy efficiency and remediation of outdated facilities. Future projects may include building removal or remediation and an emphasis on low maintenance improvements.

Due to the location of the management area in one of the fastest-growing regions in California and the year-round access it provides, use will increase over time as regional populations increase. Implementation of a marketing strategy and increased visibility of the area will also lead to increased visitation over time. Expanding partnerships and increasing services, programs and recreational opportunities such as new trails, including completion of the San Joaquin River Trail to the Sierra National Forest boundary, will lead to increased use over time. It is not expected that the SJRG can be managed without the help of agency MLR funding. However, through the use of expanded partnerships and the collection of standard and expanded amenity fees, we can increase our professional services, improve facilities and serve an ever increasing population while reducing MLR costs.

Estimated Annual Management Costs based on expected increases in visitation:

Recreation fees are expected to generate revenues of approximately \$58,320 annually in the first few years. It is assumed that the annual average contribution from Reclamation will continue to be around \$30,000 annually as it has been over the past five years. The BLM hopes to expand this partnership and increase Reclamation's contribution for land management and visitor services, as the bulk of public use takes place on Reclamation-withdrawn lands. In addition to the annual recurring costs, one-time costs for acquisitions, hazmat abatement and trail construction are expected to total \$1,835,000. One-time costs related to fee collection are expected to run \$56,890. As visibility of the management area increases, visitation is expected to increase over time and with daily on-site staffing, compliance should increase over time as well, resulting in more fees collected.

	<u>Projected Annual Costs</u>	MLR Funding	Other Funding Source
Staffing	\$260,000	\$150,000	BOR, Fees
Vehicles	\$13,700	\$13,700	
Maint & Ops	\$95,000	\$50,000	Fees
Visitor Services	\$15,500	\$7,000	Fees
TOTAL	\$384,200	\$220,700	

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Facilities

Learning Center (photos page 28, 29, & 31). The Learning Center (also known as Pole Barn) is the heart of the interpretive/ education programming at the Gorge. It consists of an outdoor covered classroom with picnic tables, bus parking, a simulated archeological dig site, group campfire area, a full kitchen facility and two flush toilets. This area can be rented out to groups, providing income. The BLM shop and storage building is part of this facility.

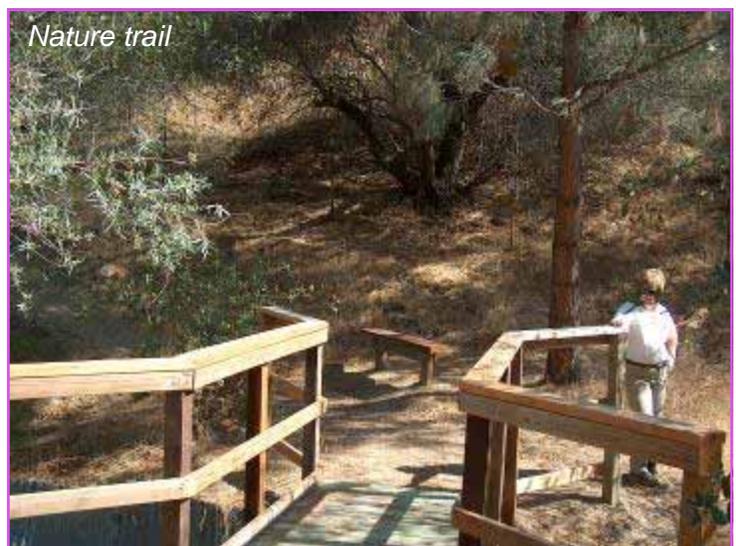
Bedrock Mortar Site. Located across the road adjacent to the Learning Center is an authentic bedrock mortar where participants learn about Native American food processing, in an interactive hands-on way.

Replica Mono Village (photo page 7). Located near the Learning Center, provides visitors with a glimpse of life in a traditional Mono village. Facilities include a group campfire site/, Native American house structures “Nobi” in Mono; and also a covered table area for demonstrations, display, and hands-on exploration station purposes.

“Playing Field” area. Serves as overflow parking on weekends, used as a demonstration area for program participants to play Native American games, or throw the atl-atl, and learn about hunting/ subsistence practices.

Corral Pond. One of many man-made ponds located within the Gorge, it is used primarily for educational purposes. Students explore pond life and learn about aquatic ecosystems and macro-invertebrates.

Nature Trail. Located near the corral



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pond and behind the equestrian camp corrals, the trail is approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ mile in length and is focused on ethnobotany, or Native American uses of plants. It includes a meadow area (upland plants and grasses), and the trail winds along and crosses a small stream, highlighting micro-habitats and riparian plant species.

Equestrian Camp. Consists of a large unpaved parking area, two campsites accessible by vehicle, water, garbage and a portable toilet, and a 4-stall pole corral.

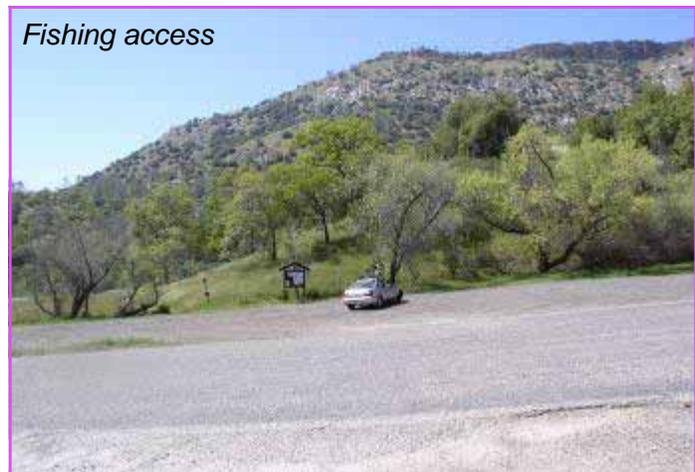


Aholul Group Campground and Day Use Area. (photo page 15) Located

along the main road, close to the horse camp and consists of a group site with an estimated capacity of 250 people, 6 large accessible picnic tables and two large fire rings, and a double-vault toilet and paved parking area.

Yeh-Gub-Weh-Tuh Campground (photos 14,17,21, & 22). The name means “Place of blue oaks” in Mono. This is a 6-site walk-in campground with two accessible, double campsites. There is also one triple site. The area has water, garbage and a double-vault toilet and paved parking area and also serves as the main trailhead facility for this area. There is also a paved Camp Host site with water and sewage hookups.

Fisherman’s Access. This site is a hard-surfaced parking lot with garbage service and portable toilets. It provides public access to the San Joaquin River via a short hiking trail.



BLM Visitor Center/Park Headquarters (photos 16, 18, & 26). Located about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east of the Pole Barn on the administrative paved road, the visitor center occupies an old residence built by PGE as part of the Kerckhoff power-house project. Houses the BLM staff office, a bookstore, exhibits focused on natural and cultural history, outdoor classroom, and short interpretive trail.

Residence. Located across from the Visitor Center, behind PGE historical structures in a building which is identical to the floorplan of the visitor center. This was also an old PGE residence built in the late 1950’s or early 1960s and was most recently occupied by a long-term volunteer caretaker. It has been vacant for one year, and needs a heating/air conditioning unit.

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Summary of Amenities

Site	Trash Removal	Fire Ring	Fee Collection	Tent Site	Drinking Water	Toilet	Visitor Protection	Access Roads	Picnic Tables
Expanded Amenity (Camping) & Standard Amenity for Day Use									
Camp ground	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Group camping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Horse camp	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Special Use									
Pole Barn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interp/Ed Programs	Special programs presented for a fee per person								

Camping areas are:

Yeh-Gub-Weh-Tuh Campground— Six campsites

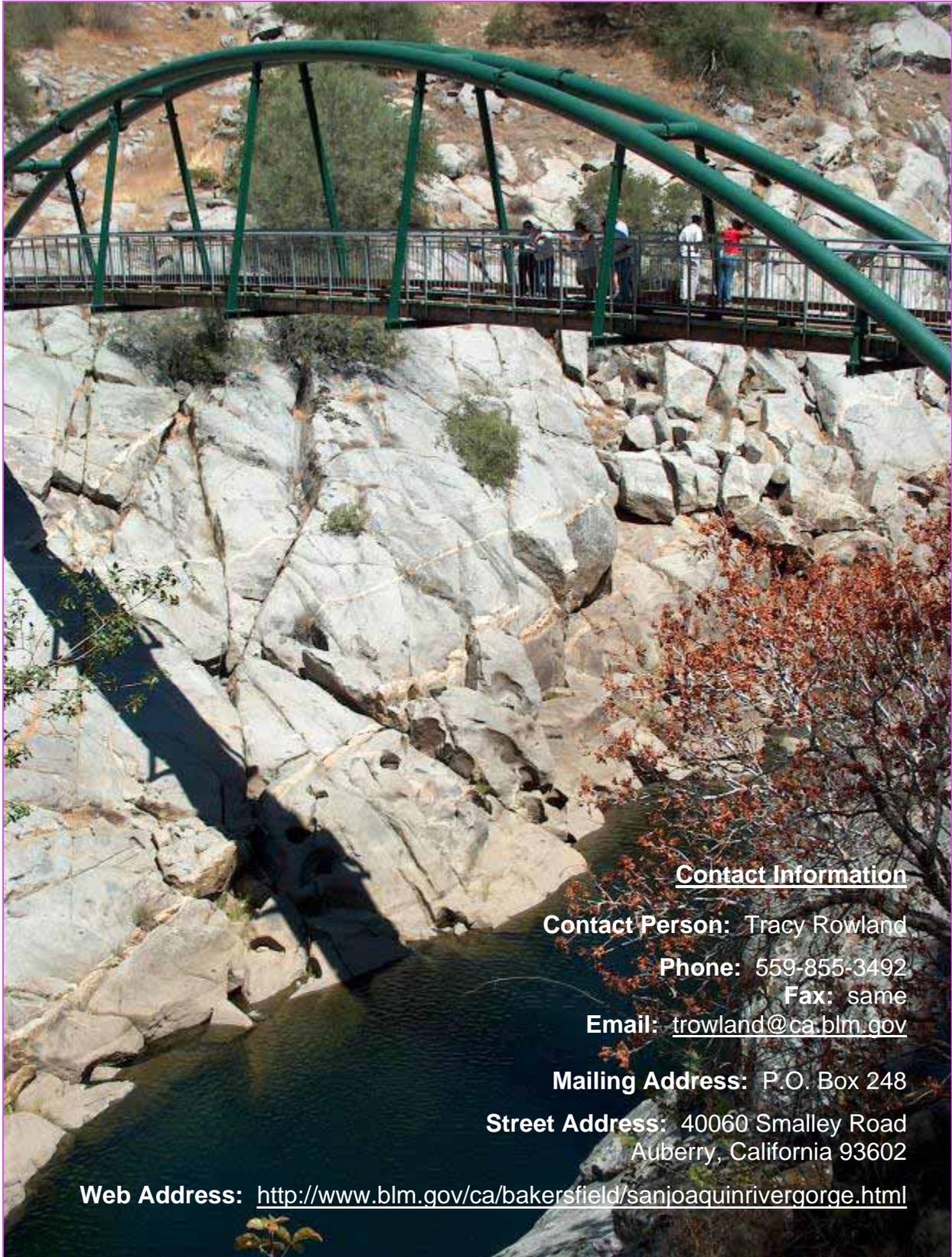
Aholul Group Campground and Day Use Area—Up to 250 people

Equestrian Camp –Two campsites

Pole Barn—Up to 200 people for day-use or short term camping



San Joaquin River Gorge Business Plan



Contact Information

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