



# COUNTY OF EL DORADO

CAO, Parks Division

*River Management Program*

330 Fair Lane, Bldg. A

Placerville, Ca 95667

## El Dorado County River Management Plan 2013 Annual Report



Photos Copyright © Hotshot Imaging, Inc.

Prepared by Noah R. Triplett  
River Recreation Supervisor

# El Dorado County River Management Plan 2013 Annual Report

## Table of Contents

---

	Page
Introduction and Report Purpose.....	3
2013 River Use and Carrying Capacity Monitoring .....	8
Implementation of Plan Elements.....	15
Element 1 – Educational Programs.....	15
Element 2 – Safety Programs.....	17
Element 3 – Transportation Programs.....	19
Element 4 – Monitoring and Reporting Programs.....	24
Element 5 – Agency and Community Coordination Programs.....	31
Element 6 – Permits and Requirements.....	33
Element 7 – Carrying Capacity Exceedance Actions and Implementation.....	36
Element 8 – Regulations and Ordinances.....	36
Element 9 – Facilities and Lands Management.....	37
Element 10 – Funding .....	38
Element 11 – Data Availability.....	40

---

### List of Tables

Table 1.	Peak Use Days by User Type and River Section.....	3
Table 2.	2013 Two Hour Peak Boating Density by craft and user group.....	13
Table 3.	2013 Daily traffic volumes on County roads in project area.....	22
Table 4.	Caltrans 2012 traffic data for state highways.....	24
Table 5.	SMUD UARP Flow Schedule Below Chili Bar Dam by Water Year Type...	27
Table 6.	Middle Section Counts from 2013 (July 4, 2013 and September 1, 2013)....	28
Table 7.	Summary of commercial river use permit violations in 2013 .....	29
Table 8.	River Trust Fund balance and fiscal year 2013-2014 budget summary.....	39

---



# El Dorado County River Management Plan 2013 Annual Report

## Table of Contents continued

### List of Figures

Figure 1.	Annual River Use 1992-2013 .....	6
Figure 2.	Type of water craft used on the South Fork in 2013.....	6
Figure 3.	Noncommercial and Commercial choice of runs on Saturdays.....	5
Figure 4.	Noncommercial and Commercial choice of runs on Sundays.....	7
Figure 5.	Noncommercial and Commercial combined use choice of runs on weekends...8	
Figure 6.	2013 Daily Boater Totals – Chili Bar run .....	10
Figure 7.	2013 Daily Boater Totals – Gorge run .....	10
Figure 8.	Boat Density Gorge run in 2013 .....	12
Figure 9.	Gorge Run on Saturdays – trends in daily boater totals .....	13
Figure 10.	Chili Bar Run on Sundays – trends in daily boater totals .....	14
Figure 11.	Summer weekday DOT average traffic volumes.....	23
Figure 12.	Summer weekend DOT average traffic volumes.....	23
Figure 13.	Institutional Use 2002-2013.....	35

---

Appendix A Mitigation Monitoring Plan

Appendix B Water Quality Monitoring Program and Testing Results

Appendix C El Dorado County Sheriff's Department Boating and Safety Unit Summary

Appendix D El Dorado County River Management Advisory Committee Comments

Appendix E Public Comments on 2013 River Season

Appendix F Five Year Summary Report 2002-2006

Appendix G Five Year Summary Report 2007-2011

Appendix H Five Year Summary Report Recommended Modifications with memo from Planning Director

Appendix I River Management Advisory Committee Recommended changes to the Institutional Group Requirements in the River Management Plan

# El Dorado County River Management Plan 2013 Annual Report

## Introduction

Paragraph 7.2.2 of the River Management Plan (RMP) directs the County River Manager to compile RMP annual reports to provide evaluation and commentary on the County’s River Program. This is the 13th Annual Report since the adoption of the updated River Management Plan in November 2001.

The South Fork of the American River continues to be the most rafted and kayaked river in the State of California, averaging well over 100,000 people annually rafting or kayaking down one of the two class III sections of the 21 mile section of river between Chili Bar Reservoir and Folsom Reservoir. The middle section (Coloma to Greenwood Creek) in the Coloma/Lotus valley section of the river appears to be increasing in popularity with class II recreationists who typically are beginning boaters, campground visitors or people who just like to float in inner tubes or small rafts.

The number and diversity of recreational facilities on the river combined with scheduled hydro electrical releases to make the South Fork of the American River a regional destination. There were flows six days a week from Memorial Day to Labor Day weekend in 2013.

Within the Coloma Lotus Valley there are four popular public campgrounds along the river, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, Henningsen Lotus County Park, Bureau of Land Management Parcels at either end of the valley and two within the valley along with State Highway 49 Bridge provide ample public access to the river. Additionally there are nine private properties with special use permits used by rafting outfitters along the river in the valley.

There were thirty three permitted outfitters in 2013 and the peak day for commercial guests on the class III section’s was July 20, 2013 which had approximately 1,558 guests in 259 rafts. July 20, 2013 was also the peak day with the total number of people on the river which was 2,524 people in 361 rafts, 121 kayaks and 25 inflatable kayaks. There were seven Institutional Groups registered in 2013 and Private use is not limited on the South Fork. Other Peak Days of use on the Class III runs are reflected in the *table 1* below..

Peak Private One Day Total	July 13, 2013	972 people	140 rafts
Peak Private Kayaks One Day Total	August 4, 2013		126 kayaks
Peak Private Inflatable Kayaks One Day Total	August 3, 2013		61 IK’s
Peak Private Use on the Gorge	July 13, 2013	611 people	92 rafts
Peak Private Use on Chili Bar	August 10, 2013	361 people	55 rafts
Peak Commercial Day on the Gorge	August 3, 2013	1,188 guests	197 rafts
Peak Commercial Day on Chili Bar	July 23, 2013	572 guests	96 rafts
Peak Institutional Group Use One Day	July 13, 2013	148 guests	23 rafts
Peak Institutional Group Use on the Gorge	August 30, 2013	87 guests	16 rafts
Peak Institutional Group Use on Chili Bar	July 13, 2013	96 guests	12 rafts

**Table 1. Peak Use Days on the South Fork of the American River**

There were no boating deaths in 2013 on the South Fork. Life vest compliance on the class III river sections is over 99% but there is much less compliance in the class II section with the County Ordinance requiring life vests for inner tubes (non-coast guard recognized vessels) has improved in recent years but frequent scofflaws or unaware floaters on the class II middle river section are still observed.

The results of water quality, traffic monitoring and boat density (carrying capacity) all were below their respective acceptable limits as prescribed in the RMP EIR.

Overall, the County River Programs South Fork American River management in coordination with the BLM, State Parks and El Dorado County Sheriffs Boating Unit proved successful in 2013. The budget for the River Program which is a non-general fund program has been experiencing challenges in recent years due to the increasing cost of “doing business”.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Annual Report is to provide the Planning Commission, River Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) and the public an opportunity to review the RMP and the County’s performance in implementing the Plan in 2013, to identify areas of concern regarding the RMP implementation and to recommend modifications to plan elements or implementation procedures.

Part of the RMP revision process is for the Annual Reports to be compiled every five years for the Planning Commissions review. The five-year summary reports were completed and submitted to the Planning Commission on March 28, 2013. Appendix F (2002-20006) and G (2007-2011) contain the Five-Year Summary Reports. Appendix H compiles the recommended minor modifications to the two reports for consideration to the RMP, with a memo from the Planning Director.

## I. River Use

This section summarizes the amount of whitewater recreation on the South Fork of the American River and provides information on river use trends in several categories:

- A. Annual river use since 1992;
- B. An assessment of river use in terms of the RMP's carrying capacity indicators; and
- C. Trends in weekend river use since the mid-1990s.

### A. Annual River Use

*Figure 1* below displays information on the annual number of commercial and non-commercial boaters from 1992 through 2013 along with the types of crafts used in 2013 in *figure 2*.

- Commercial use numbers do not include paid guides, non-paying guests and guide trainees. There were 33 River Use Permits issued in 2013.
- Non-commercial use numbers from years 1992-2001 and 2005 include non-profit institutionally permitted organizations.
- Use numbers do not include private use between October-April, although there is private use almost every day that there are flows (see page 22 of this report, *Table 4*) during this time period.
- 83.9% of the recorded use occurred between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends in 2013.
- Use numbers do not reflect use by private boaters, innertubers and other floaters who only run the Coloma to Greenwood section.
- Since the implementation of the 2001 (2002) RMP, the average number of Commercial Guests has been 68,400, along with an average of 27,155 Private Boaters.
- Since the SMUD UARP relicensing agreement (dam release schedule, 2006) the average number of Commercial Guests has been 70,512 and an average number of Private Boaters has been 28,839.

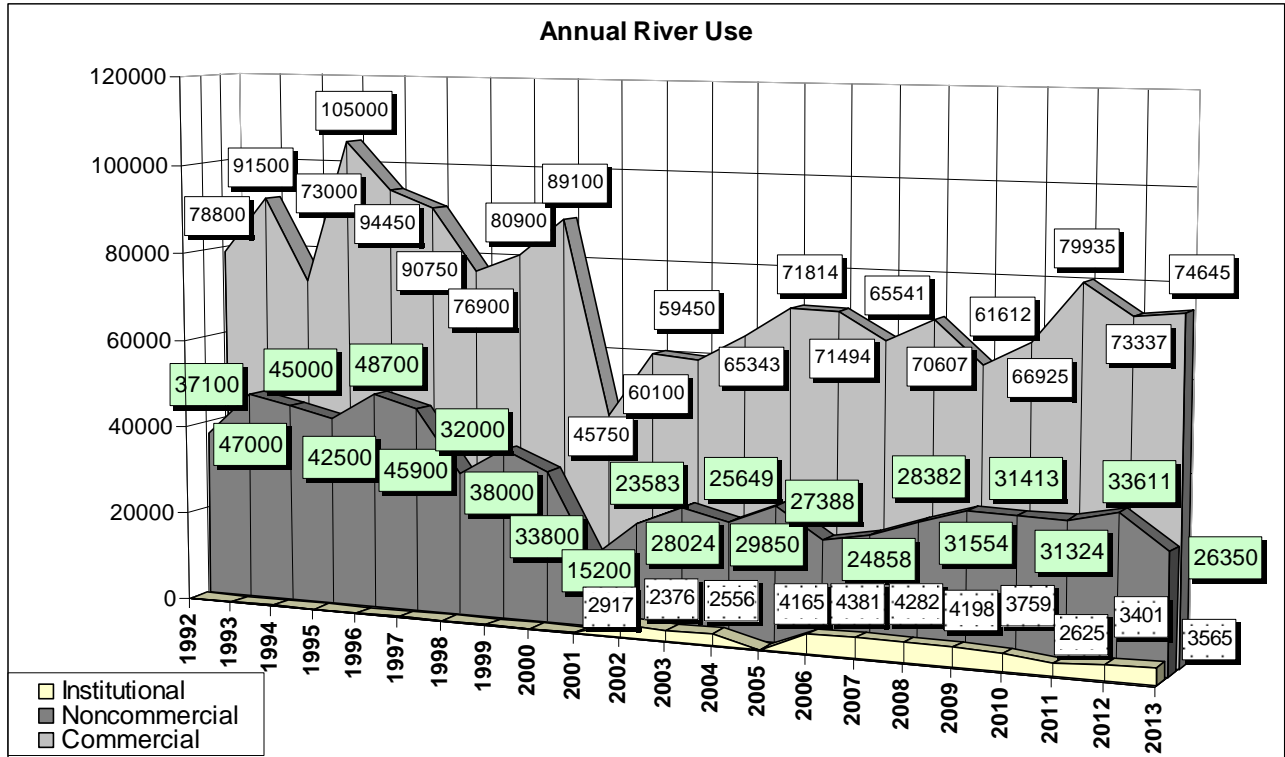


Figure 1. Annual River Use 1992 - 2013

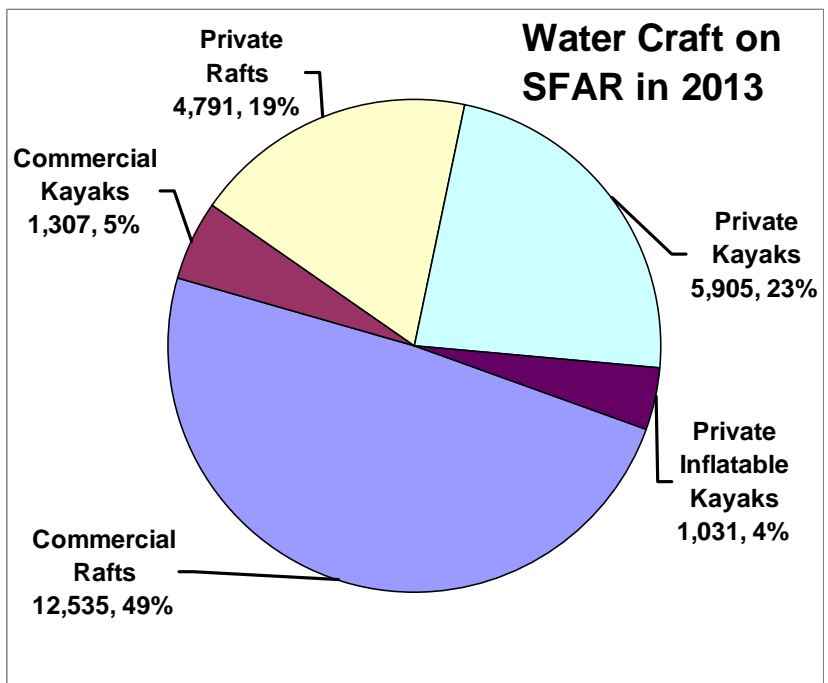


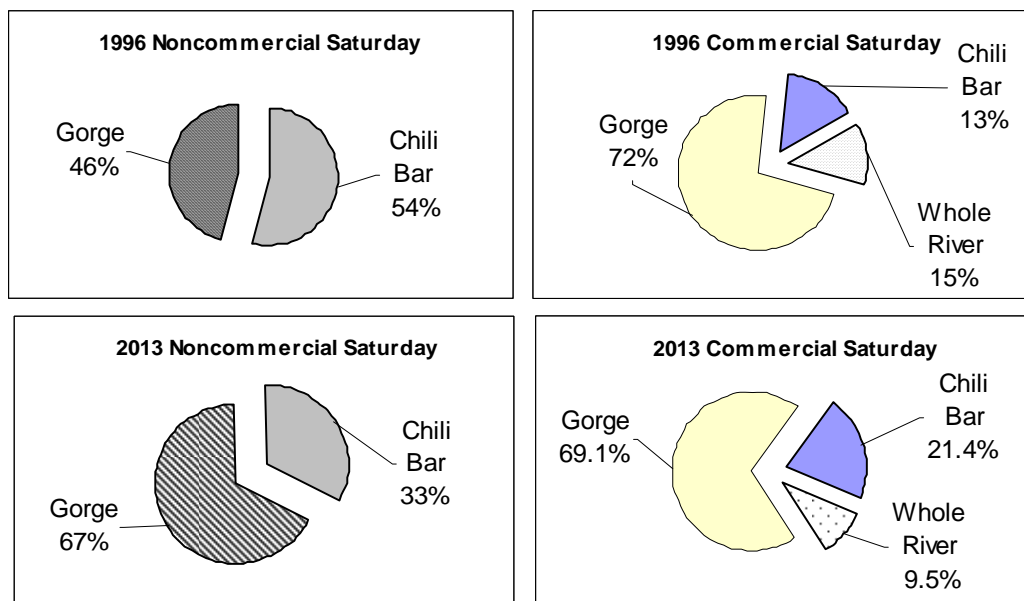
Figure 2. Type of Water Craft in 2013

### **Trends in choice of runs**

Over the coming years, the trends in choice of runs may guide County education efforts and track whether management actions related to the carrying capacity strategy are effective.

**Saturdays:** Between 1996 and 2002, noncommercial boaters exhibited a pronounced shift away from running the Chili Bar Run and increasingly chose the Gorge Run on Saturdays (see *Figure 3*). This pattern continued in 2013 which had an increase from 2012 of about 7%. The percentages in the following pie charts are based on the average river use by commercial and noncommercial boaters during the Memorial Day to Labor Day period. The total private use on Saturdays was 5,723 people on the Gorge Run and 2,825 people on the Chili Bar Run.

Strong preference is exhibited by commercial clients and outfitters for Saturday Gorge trips. *Figure 3* also displays the downward trend in the proportion of whole-river trips since the mid-1990s. In 2011 there was a significant increase in commercial whole-rivers trips which may have been a reflection of the higher flows and continuous releases generated by the snow pack. Years with better snow pack and a longer runoff seem to reflect this trend. The relative lower flows from scheduled releases do not appear to support a preference toward whole-river trips which stayed level in 2012 and 2013. There has been an increase in Chili Bar-only trips over the last few years, which may be a reflection of social media marketing, people not wanting to spend as much time on the water and the higher costs charged by outfitters for longer trips. The total Commercial Use on Saturdays was 12,028 guests on the Gorge Run, 3,724 guests on the Chili Bar Run and 1,656 guests on whole river trips.



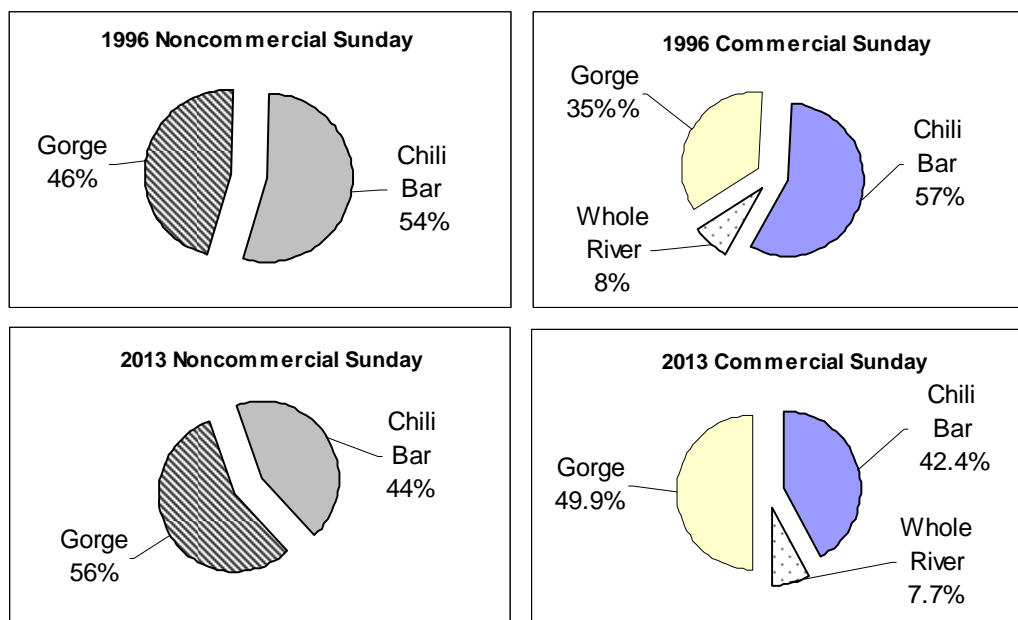
**Figure 3. Noncommercial and Commercial choice of runs on Saturdays**

**Sundays:** Since 1996, river use on the Chili Bar Run has decreased more than river use on the Gorge Run. Through 2002, noncommercial boaters increasingly favored the Chili Bar Run over the Gorge Run on Sundays. In 2004, however, noncommercial boaters preferred the Chili Bar Run which was similar to the noncommercial use pattern in 1996. From 2006-2013 the pattern has



shown a preference for the Gorge Run as reflected in *Figure 4*. The total private use on Sundays was 3,383 people on the Gorge Run and 2,616 people on the Chili Bar Run.

*Figure 4* displays the increasing percentage of commercial customers choosing the Gorge Run over the Chili Bar Run for Sunday trips from 1996 as compared to 2013. This trend started in 2006. In 2007 and 2011 there was a significant increase in the number of commercial whole-river trips which was attributed to the higher flows and longer (continuous) releases which resulted in fewer commercial Gorge-only trips. Whole-river trips in 2012 and 2013 have been back down to under 8% which has been historically normal. The total Commercial Use on Sundays was 6,463 guests on the Gorge Run, 5,496 guests on the Chili Bar Run and 1,002 guests on whole river trips.



**Figure 4. Noncommercial and Commercial choice of runs on Sundays**

## B. Carrying Capacity Indicators

The River Management Plan (RMP) established a carrying capacity (daily boater capacity) system with a dual focus. The system has two **indicators**, or ways the number of daily boaters are measured. For each indicator, there is a **standard** or **threshold**. If river use exceeds either threshold twice in one season, the RMP requires the County to institute appropriate measures so that river use no longer exceeds the thresholds. This section provides a synopsis of the monitoring of the two indicators required by the RMP and its mitigation monitoring plan. Additional information on carrying capacity monitoring during 2013 can be found in the RMP’s Element 4-Monitoring and Reporting Programs on page 16. A detailed description of the carrying capacity system can be found in the RMP document in Section 5, *South Fork Carrying Capacity* (pgs. 5-3 and 5-4), and in Element 7, *Carrying Capacity Exceedance Actions and Implementation* (pgs. 6-28 to 6-31).

### Sources of data and methods for estimating river use:

The primary sources of river use data that were used in the preparation of this summary include:

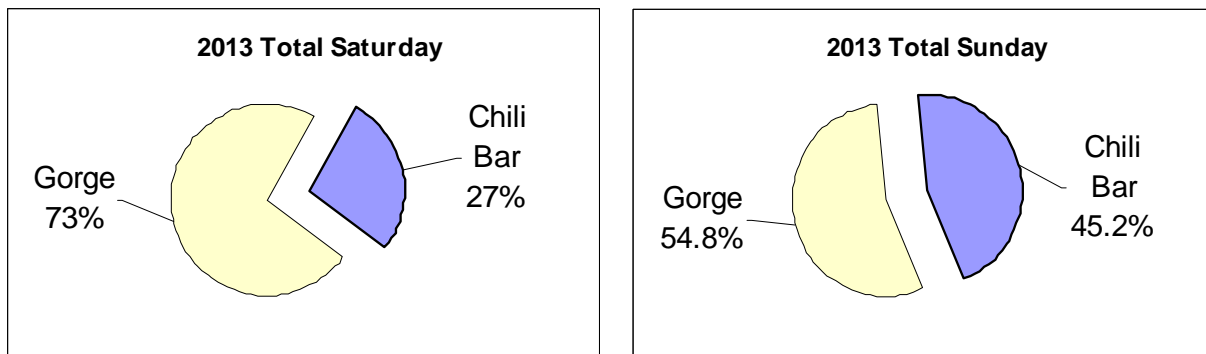
1. Outfitter monthly operating reports (which are audited by County River Program using boat

2. River Patrol on-river observations - Weekend days from June through August, 2013;
3. Hotshot Imaging Photo data of noncommercial river use on the Chili Bar and Gorge Runs from April 13, 2013 through October 6, 2013.

**Total daily boaters**

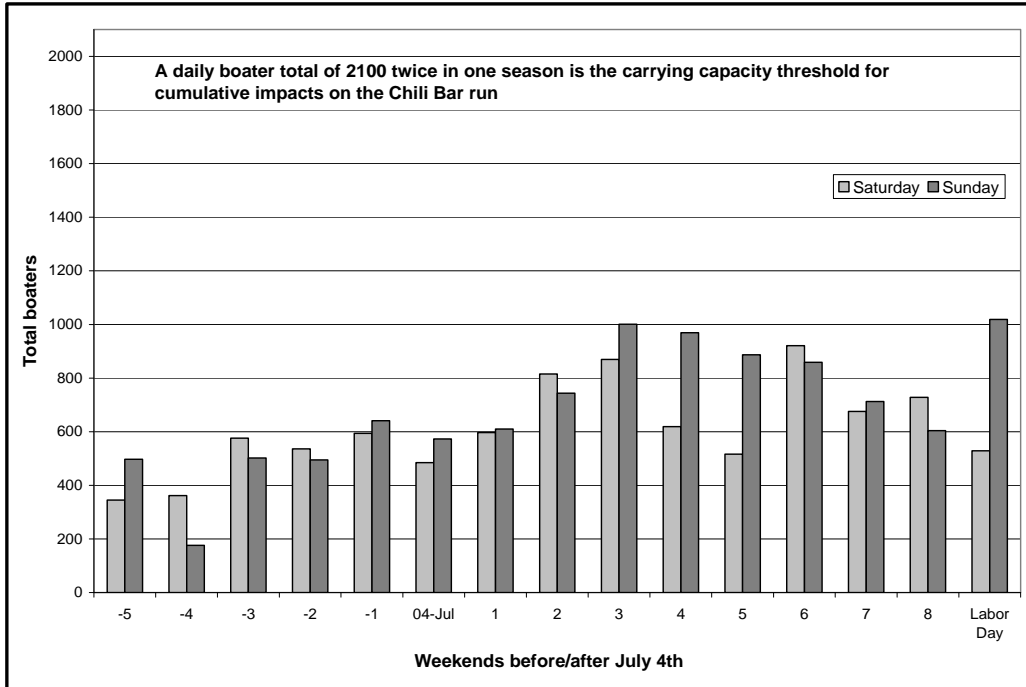
The first indicator, total daily boaters, is the RMP’s means for measuring cumulative impacts. The environmental analysis for the RMP concluded that if the number of total daily boaters exceeded the threshold of historic peak levels experienced in 1996, unacceptable impacts on the infrastructure could occur. The number of boaters is expressed in “user days” (more commonly referred to as “recreation visits”). Total daily boaters are the sum of all commercial and non-commercial boaters on one of two designated sections of the river in one day. One user day or recreation visit is one person on a section of the river during one day. This measure includes the outfitters guides, trainees, paying and non-paying guests in the commercial river use data. There is a weekend limit to commercial use that is set at 2,750. There is no limit to the private use. There were a total of 17,751 boaters on the Gorge Run and 6,549 boaters on the Chili Bar Run on Saturdays in 2013. There were a total of 9,846 boaters on the Gorge Run and 8,112 boaters on the Chili Bar Run on Sundays in 2013.

Due to the requirements of the RMP’s carrying capacity strategy, total daily boater counts are obtained for each section of the river. As figures 3 and 4 above show, a percentage of the commercial trips are running whole-river trips from Chili Bar to Salmon Falls. Survey data from the planning process also established that, depending on the river’s flow, a varying percentage of noncommercial boaters also run whole-river trips. Figure 5 below shows the combined percentage of user days on Saturdays and Sundays Memorial Day through Labor Day.



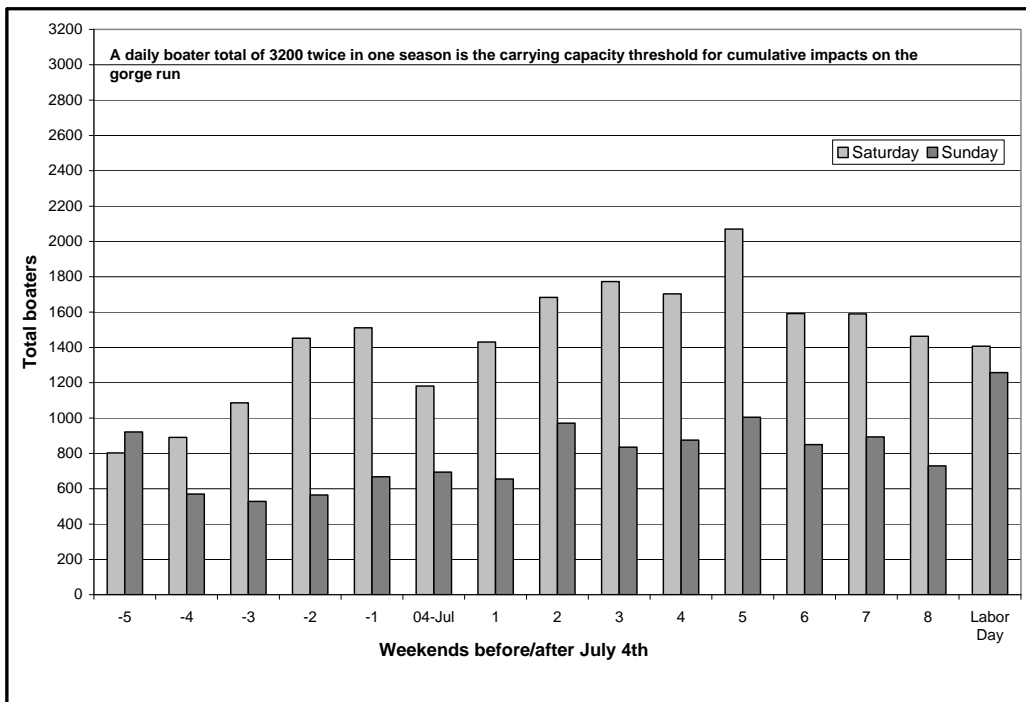
**Figure 5. Noncommercial and Commercial Combined use choice of runs on Weekends**

Figure 6 on the following page displays the total daily boaters for the Chili Bar Run on weekend days from Memorial Day to Labor Day in 2013. The total daily boater threshold on the Chili Bar Run (Chili Bar to Coloma) is 2100 boaters, which is the maximum value on the figure’s y-axis.



**Figure 6. 2013 Daily Boater Totals - Chili Bar Run**

Figure 7 below displays the total daily boaters on the Gorge Run during weekend days from Memorial Day to Labor Day in 2013. The total daily boater threshold on the Gorge Run (Coloma to Salmon Falls) is 3200 boaters, which is the maximum value on the y-axis.



**Figure 7. 2013 Daily Boater Totals - Gorge Run**

## Synopsis of 2013 monitoring for total daily boaters

- River use in 2013 on weekend days was below the total daily boater thresholds on both runs.
- The County will not be required to implement any additional carrying capacity management actions for this indicator in 2014 because the thresholds on both runs were not exceeded.

### Chili Bar and Gorge Run data compilation methods:

- Commercial use numbers are complete data compiled from outfitter monthly operating reports.
- Noncommercial use numbers data (week days and weekends) was compiled from Hot Shot Imaging photos.

### Boat Density

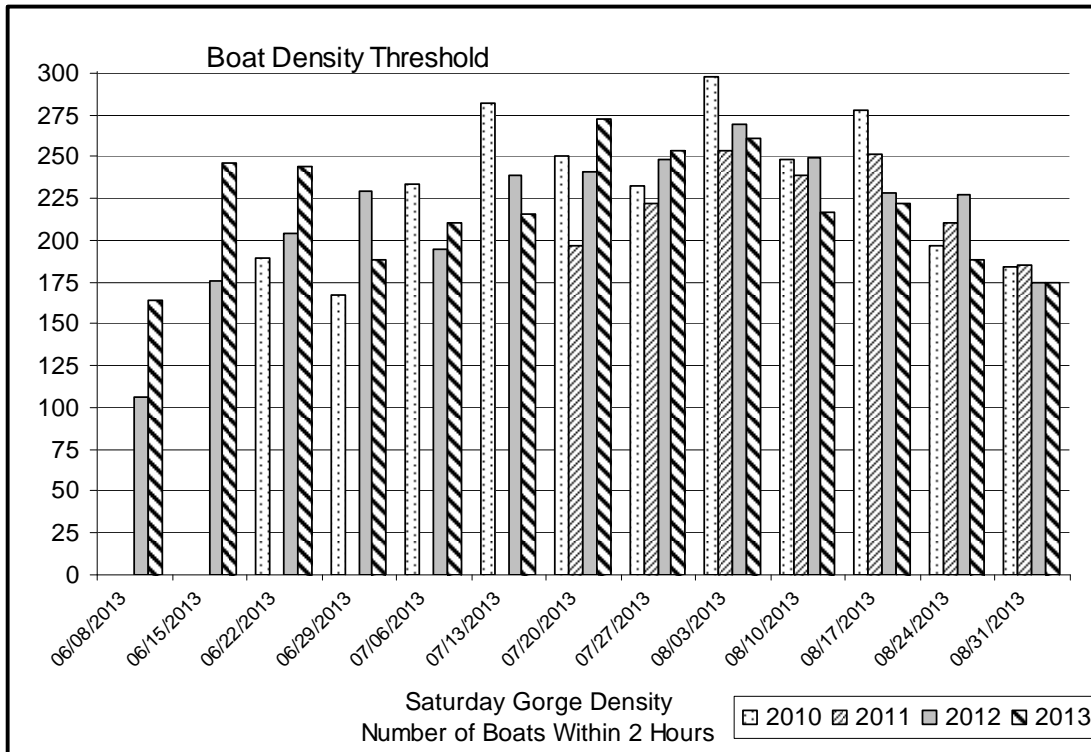
The second indicator, boat density, is a safety measure designed to prevent boating safety hazards from occurring due to boat congestion on weekends. Boat density is the total number of boats passing a prescribed point on the river in a two-hour period.

The RMP planning analysis concluded that if the number of boats passing through several key rapids in a two-hour period exceeded 300, there may be potential impacts on boaters' safety. If river use exceeds this threshold at one of these rapids more than twice in one season, a set of incremental management actions will be implemented with the objective of regaining those thresholds. There is a "low flow" exception to this indicator's threshold which is discussed in the RMP's Section 7.3.

The former County Parks Department had previously gathered data on boat density levels during the years 1995 through 1999. This monitoring effort showed:

- 1) Boat density levels on the Gorge Run on Saturdays had exceeded the plan's eventual carrying capacity threshold during the late 1990s;
- 2) Boat density levels on the Chili Bar Run had remained well below the plan's carrying capacity threshold.

That analysis and the results of monitoring during 2002 through 2011 formed the basis for the decision to focus boat density monitoring on the Gorge Run in 2013. *Figure 8* displays the results of the monitoring on the Gorge Run which began on the first weekend after Labor Day. In some prior years, the counts began when scheduled releases started, which has been as late as after July 4.



**Figure 8. Boat Density Gorge Run 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013**

Boat counting was not done on the Chili Bar section in 2013 because previous years’ counts and general observations have shown boat densities to be well below the plan’s carrying capacity. There was an increase in use on the upper section in 2013 from 2012 so counts in 2014 will be done on the upper section to confirm that the use is still well below the 300 boats within two hours.

Boat counting below Marshall Gold Discovery State Historical Park, Coloma to Greenwood Creek section, was conducted on July 4, 2013 and Sunday, September 1, 2013. The results of those counts are found in *Table 5* on page 23 of this report. Prior year counts have shown levels well below the plan’s carrying capacity. The peak density between the two days counts was 217.5 boats on September 1, 2013. Use in the middle section has increased in part due to the BLM parking lot at Greenwood Creek, it being classified as a Class II beginner section and the appeal to inner-tubers (river floaters). There is concern that use on the middle section will increase on Holiday weekends when alcohol is banned on the lower American River and Truckee River. This concern has been voiced by land owners and the County River Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) Members and is reflected in this year’s and prior years, comments collected at RMAC meetings.

- Boat densities on the Gorge Run did not exceed the carrying capacity indicator of 300 boats per two hours in 2013.
- Peak boat densities in 2013, 272.5 boats in two hours, were higher than the peak densities during 2012 (approximately 269). The breakdown of use by craft and user type from 1:33 – 3:33 PM on July 20, 2013 is reflected in *table 2* below.



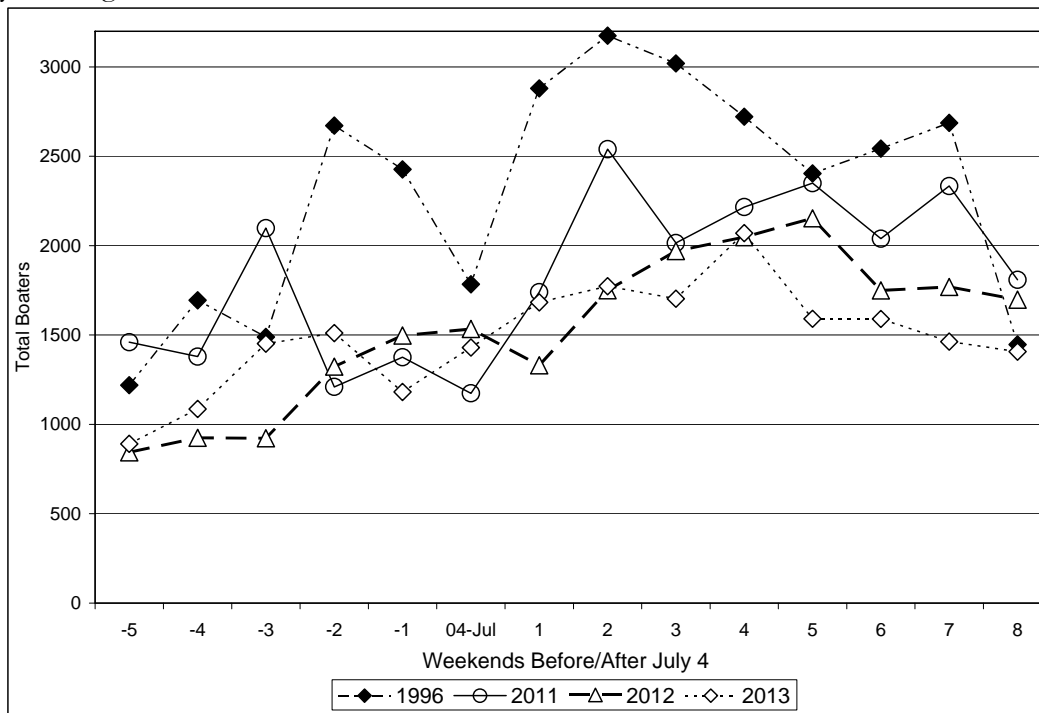
2 Hour Peak Density	People	Total Boats	Rafts	Kayaks	Inflatables	Tubes	Other	Percent of Boats
<b>Total</b>	1488	272.5	247	40	10	0	1	
<b>Private</b>	429	93.5	68	40	10	0	1	28.83%
<b>Commercial</b>	1041	175	175	0	0	0	0	69.96%
<b>Institutional</b>	18	4	4	0	0	0	0	1.21%

**Table 2. Two Hour Peak Boating Density by craft and user group**

### C. Trends in River Use on Weekend Days

Figures 9 and 10 compare the recent number of total daily boaters with river use in 1996. Record high numbers of total daily boaters were recorded in 1996, and those records eventually established the thresholds for the carrying capacity indicator. The top values on the y-axis in figures 5 and 6 are set at the threshold for total daily boaters on the Gorge Run, 3,200 boaters, and Chili Bar Run, 2,100 boaters.

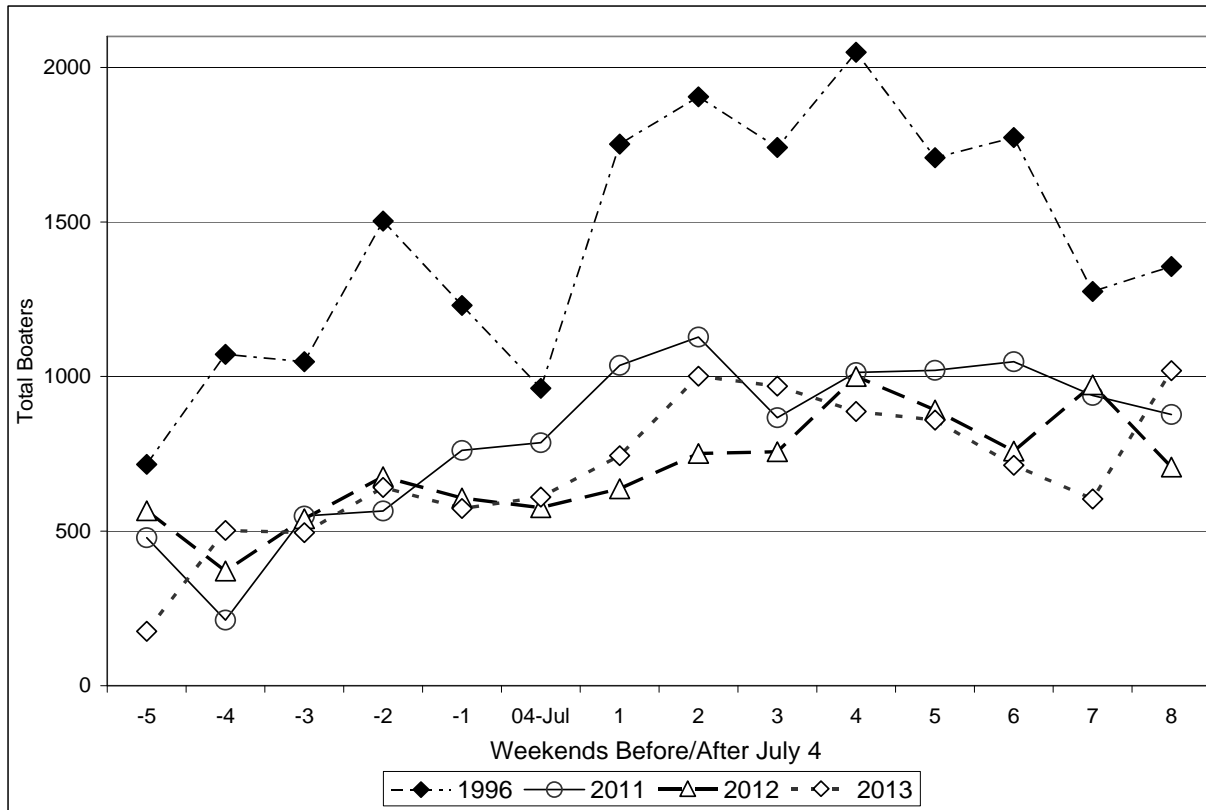
#### Saturdays - Gorge Run:



**Figure 9. Gorge Run on Saturdays - Trends in Total Daily Boaters**

- In 2013, the average number of boaters on the Gorge Run was 35% lower than in 1996.
- In 2012, the average number of boaters on the Gorge Run was 33% lower than in 1996.
- In 2011, the average number of boaters on the Gorge Run was 20% lower than in 1996.
- The daily boater total of 3175 in 1996 is the historic peak number of boaters for the Gorge Run.

Sundays- Chili Bar Run:



**Figure 10. Chili Bar Run on Sundays - Trends in Total Daily Boaters**

- In 2013, the average number of boaters on the Chili Bar Run was 51% lower than in 1996
- In 2012, the average number of boaters on the Chili Bar Run was 51% lower than in 1996.
- In 2011, the average number of boaters on the Chili Bar Run was 44% lower than in 1996.
- The daily boater total of 2,049 in 1996 is the historic peak number of boaters for the Gorge Run.

## **I. Implementation of River Management Plan Elements**

This section follows the organization of the Elements found in Section 6 of the RMP document. The County River Program has outlined the progress made in 2013 towards full implementation of each element.

The numbered bullets that follow correspond with the numbered bullets in the 2001 River Management Plan.

The descriptions fall into four categories:

1. Elements that have been implemented in 2013;
2. Elements that include a trigger or threshold (for example construction-related or carrying capacity-related) to require implementation and the trigger or threshold was not reached in 2013;
3. Elements that will require further coordination with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California State Parks, private land owner or another County department.
4. Elements that staff believes were not adequately implemented in 2013 and which should be more closely addressed in 2014.

### **Element 1 – Educational Programs**

#### 1.1 Newsletter

- A bi-annual newsletter was printed in the summer of 2013 and winter of 2013. They were distributed in the middle of May and the middle of November. These publications can be found on the County River Program website: (<http://edcgov.us/Rivers>).

#### 1.2 Signage

- In 2013, signage at river access points was consistent with signage during 2013. Land Status Maps and minimum age requirement for life vests were updated to reflect the age increase from 12 old to 13 years old per State Law.
- A sign at Chili Bar is needed to inform the public of that location. The California Transportation Department installed signs on Highway 193 ¼ mile before Chili Bar in either direction identifying river access at Chili Bar is ahead.

#### 1.2.3 Middle-run signage

- A sign was installed by BLM public lands at Greenwood Creek informing boaters of the take-out and downstream Class III whitewater. Signs informing the public of the quiet zone, public land beginnings and endings were installed and removed for the season by staff.

### 1.3 Kiosks

- No additional kiosks or changes were made in 2013
- All kiosks have river maps, private boater tags, comment cards and large group registration forms available.
- Educational graphic panels on swimming in river hydraulics, hypothermia prevention, proper river apparel and rope rescue were added to the kiosk at Henningsen Lotus Park in the spring of 2008. There has been positive response to this by the public and it has been suggested by the RMAC and the public that this information be added to other kiosks where appropriate.
- An additional goal under Element 1.3 that River Program staff believes should be considered is the addition of kiosks at private riverside campgrounds, in addition to Camp Lotus which is currently identified. The private campgrounds offer put-in and take-out locations where educational kiosks could teach the public about river safety and boating regulations. The El Dorado County Planning Commission concurred with this recommendation as was reported in the five-year summary reports. This goal will be fulfilled as funding becomes available.

### 1.4 Flow Phone

In 2013, County River Program staff continued to manually update the flow phone system with the release schedule for the year as designated by SMUD and PG&E. That number is (530) 621-6616.

### 1.5 County Internet

The County Rivers website [www.edcgov.us/Rivers/](http://www.edcgov.us/Rivers/) provides current river information through links to the American River web page and other links: [www.theamericanriver.com](http://www.theamericanriver.com), [www.DreamFlows.com](http://www.DreamFlows.com) and [www.Coloma.com](http://www.Coloma.com). Information concerning the River Management Advisory Committee, approved outfitter services, and shuttle services are updated as needed.

### 1.6 Resource/Habitat Education

- There was no Annual Headwaters Institute Guide Workshop, which includes segments with resource and habitat focus in 2013. Individual educational opportunities were utilized by staff during river patrols, at put-in's, campgrounds and at River Clean Ups.
- "Leave No Trace" river practices are taught by patrol staff during visitor contacts.

### 1.7 Quiet Zone Education: see Element 2.4

### 1.8 Toilet Location Education

See Element 1.9, public access education below.

#### 1.9 Public Access Education

- Public Access Education continues to rely on the boater self registration system, river maps, brochures, kiosks, and boater education efforts at river access sites were implemented in 2002 and continue to provide maps with the locations for restrooms, put-ins and take-out locations, quiet zone locations and required private boater tags, which identify the requirements for sanitation and safety for boating on the South Fork.

#### 1.10 Commercial Guide Education

See Element 1.11, guide workshops below.

#### 1.11 Guide Workshops

- The annual South Fork guide meeting was held in May 2013 at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.
- County Parks held additional meetings with individual outfitters guides to provide information on: swiftwater rescue training standards; the carrying-capacity system, etiquette and safety measures outfitters should take to prevent river use from exceeding the carrying capacity threshold for boat density.

### **Element 2 – Safety Programs**

#### 2.1 River Safety Committee

- There was no activity by the committee in 2013. During high water years the County has had volunteers help with patrols and education at put-in's. The RMP goal of the River Safety Committee may be unnecessary due to the increased evolution of the El Dorado County Search and Rescue and should be reevaluated.

#### 2.2 Agency Safety and Rescue Training

- Sheriff's Boat Patrol
  - During the summer season of 2013, County River Patrol coordinated with the Sheriff's Boating Safety Unit, BLM staff and California State Parks on river safety patrols.
- County Parks River Patrol
  - River Patrol staff attended a swiftwater rescue recertification class in 2013.



## 2.3 Boating Safety

- Sheriff's Department and County River Patrol provided boating safety education through the guide meetings described above, workshops with user groups, and the activities in Element 2.4.

## 2.4 County River Program Staff Activities

The river patrol was staffed by three people in 2013, the river recreation supervisor and two seasonal river patrol staff. The river patrol's daily activities typically included boater education at the river access points, river safety patrol, quiet zone patrol, and river use monitoring. The emphasis among these four activities varied with the season, day of week and river section a patroller was working. On Saturdays, two patrollers usually worked on the Gorge Run, combining aspects from each of these activities during the work day. One patrol staff monitored river use at Chili Bar and performed a patrol on the Chili Bar Run. On Sundays, two patrollers usually worked on the Chili Bar section, while one person patrolled and monitored river use on the Gorge Run section. They also helped maintain the three BLM composting toilets during patrols. Having a third seasonal river patroller on weekends is desired in order to provide more patrolling opportunities on the middle section (Coloma and Greenwood Cr.), to work in partnerships on the class III sections and allow for patrolling on a more consistent basis.

The components of the river patrol activities are outlined below:

### **Provide boater education for non-commercial boaters:**

- Provides boating safety, boater responsibilities, river etiquette and river flow information provided to boaters at river accesses and on river patrols.
- Implements private boater registration system.
- Implements large group and institutional group registration system.
- The County River Program interprets the California State Law that requires a life vest on every boat and readily accessible for each person and requiring that life vests must be worn in moving water. It is the River Programs opinion that in moving water you do not have time to put on your life vest when there is an accident making it is easy to become separated from your boat and equipment (life vest) in moving water.

### **River safety patrol:**

- Aided boaters (i.e. wrapped boats and swimmers) on weekends at key rapids while monitoring river use.
- Provided a safety/sweep function by running the Class III sections late in the day.
- Placed a backboard, c-collar and head stabilizers below Meat Grinder, Satan's Cesspool and Fowlers Rock rapids for the regular boating season.

**Quiet Zone patrol:**

- On-river Patrol provides both education and enforcement through the Coloma to Greenwood section.
- Emphasis on controlling quiet zone noise, use of public lands, litter education and use of lifejackets by all boaters and inner-tubers.
- Provide safety information and aid to people floating/boating on the class II section.

**River use monitoring:**

- Conducted monitoring on weekends for the carrying capacity system.
- Audited commercial river use.
- Tracked non-commercial river use levels.

2.5 Element 2.5 through 2.7 direct Sheriff's Department and Fire District Protection responsibilities

**Element 3 – Transportation programs**

## 3.1 River Shuttle Service

- The Coloma River Shuttle received a grant from AQMD to operate a shuttle on the South Fork American River. One van and one trailer provided shuttles to the public through October 2013. There are two privately-owned businesses that offer shuttle services on the river. River Transportation offers passenger shuttles for larger groups and many of the permitted outfitters guests. North Fork Shuttle's services are primarily aimed at kayakers. These businesses are on the County website (<http://edcgov.us/Rivers>).

## 3.2 Off-River Parking and Staging Area

This element was not required in 2013. It will be implemented if either:

1. Whitewater recreation use grows to a level that exceeds the total parking capacity of the South Fork's river access points. The RMP establishes the threshold of total daily boaters as a trigger for this element; or
2. Boating use at the Henningsen Lotus County Park increases to a level that creates conflicts with other park uses that cannot be effectively managed through other measures.

## 3.3 Illegal Parking

This element specifies action that will be taken by the County in response to illegal parking:

- An ordinance establishing double-fine zones has not yet been developed for Board of Supervisors action. As part of its review of the five-year summary report, the Planning Commission concurred that the Department of Transportation's (now the Community Development Agency, Transportation Division) Traffic Advisory Committee should be

asked to review the possibility or necessity of establishing double-fine zones through a County ordinance, to fulfill Program Element 3.3.2.

- In the spring of 2012, Cal Trans installed “no parking” signs at the turn out on Hwy 49 near North Beach river access at Marshall Gold Discovery State Park. This location had been the subject of parking complaints in previous years.

### 3.4 Mt. Murphy Bridge Policy

This element specifies that the Mt. Murphy Bridge is off limits for commercial boating activities. The County of El Dorado Transportation Division is planning to retrofit or replace this bridge within the next few years. More information on this project can be found at <http://www.edcgov.us/BridgeProjects/>.

### 3.5 Traffic Studies

The Mitigation Monitoring Plan requires that a detailed traffic study be done if any of the following three RMP elements are implemented:

- Applications for new Special Use Permits or revised Special Use Permits in 2012 that include public river access in the proposed project area;
- The “interim shuttle” parking area is developed (this was not developed in 2013);
- Applications for additional public access to the middle run through river access facilities near Highway Rapid.

None of these three RMP elements were implemented in 2013.

### **2013 Traffic Counts**

In 2012, the County Transportation Division began performing its annual monitoring of traffic volumes on RMP area roads during the fall, which historically has occurred in the summer. This resulted in much lower traffic counts in 2012 than previous years, in part because the monitoring occurred after the regular boating season. The majority of monitoring in 2013 occurred in the summer, with only the segment from Cold Springs south of Gold Hill Road monitored in the fall. Daily traffic volumes were monitored at the same locations that were analyzed in the RMP’s Environmental Impact Report (see *Table 2*). *Figures 11 and 12* show traffic trends on these road segments as well.

- Note that traffic counts at each location occur over a one-week period and, as such, can be influenced by unpredictable events (special events/construction/etc.). Also, bicycles are counted as vehicles and included in the counts.
- Traffic volumes at the monitored locations remain within the Level of Service standards described in the EIR.

- The 2013 traffic counts support the 2012 traffic counts: both counts indicate an increase in midweek traffic levels on all road segments in the project area since the 1997 EIR analysis.
- The lower traffic Counts in 2012 can most likely be attributed to the fact that the counts were conducted after the peak of the boating and tourism season. Counts in 2013 support this theory. The higher weekday traffic counts on Cold Springs Rd. in 2013 can likely be attributed to the traffic counts being done in September when Gold Trail Elementary school is in session, whereas counts in prior years occurred during the in July during the school's summer vacation.

Because no trip-generation estimates were developed for the RMP EIR, it is difficult to ascribe the proportion of whitewater recreation-related use on these roadways especially given there are more businesses (Bed and Breakfast's etc.) in the area with more going on in general (wedding venues, wineries, special events, increase in trails, etc.) that generate weekend traffic. Trip generation estimates may prove to be of importance if Level of Service thresholds are exceeded in the future, as the RMP "project" may be responsible for a proportion of the mitigation needed to bring project area roadways within Level of Service standards.

Segment	1997* summer weekday average	2012 summer weekday average	2013 summer weekday average	1997 summer weekend traffic volumes	2012 summer weekend traffic volumes (avg. Sat + Sun)	2013summ er weekend traffic volumes (avg. Sat + Sun)	Traffic count dates
Bassi Road	800	No Count	1025	1800	No Count	1378	No Count in 2012 July 31 - August 6 2013
Cold Springs S of Gold Hill Rd	3000	No Count	3327	2500	No Count	2280	No Count in 2012 September 20 – 29 2013
Lotus Rd, S of Thompson Hill	4800	4579	5214	4800	4455	5429	October 12-18 2012 July 26 – August 1 2013
Marshall Rd near Hwy 49	3100	3135	No Count	2900	2671	No Count	October 12-18 2012 No Count in 2013
Salmon Falls Rd North of river	1300	1309	1500	1700	1132	1688	October 26 - Nov. 1 2012 July 26 – August 1 2013
Salmon Falls Rd South of river	1800	2239	2231	1900	1982	2202	October 26 - November 12 2012 July 26 – August 1 2013

**Table 3. Daily traffic volumes on county roads in the project area**

- Traffic volumes reported in the RMP's EIR (1997 column) rounded data to the nearest 100



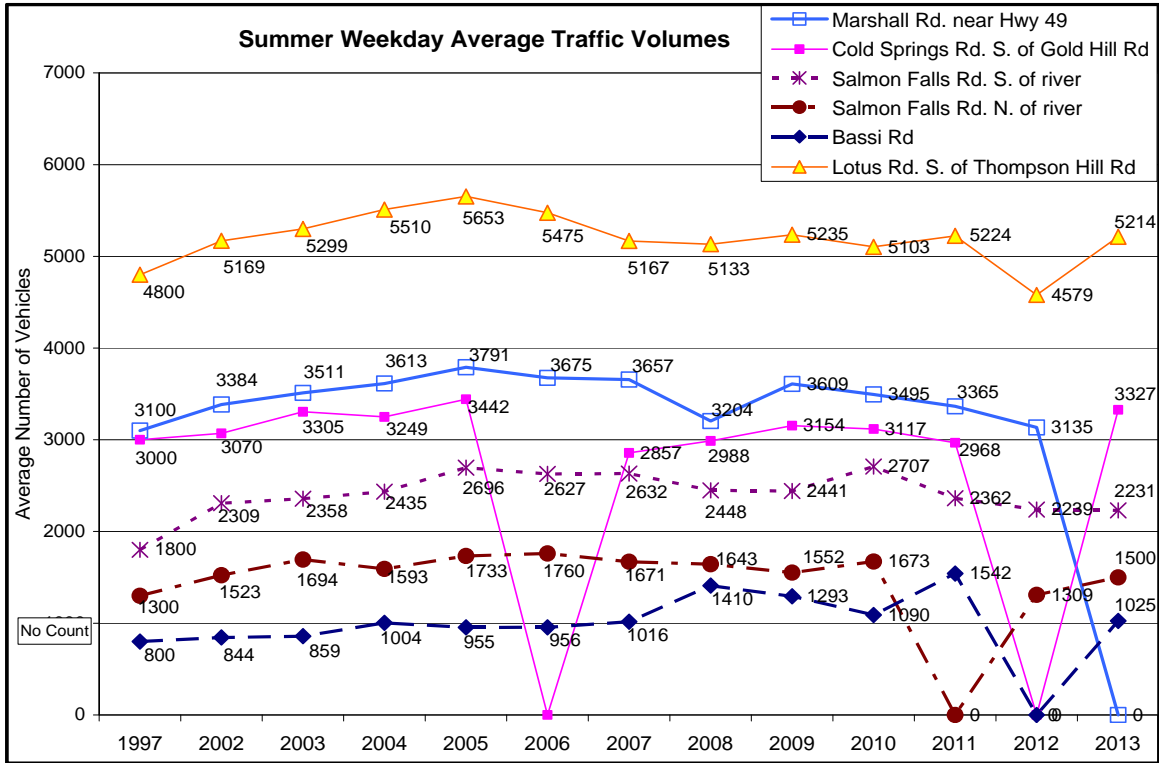


Figure 11. County DOT Weekday Traffic Counts on Road Segments within the Project Area

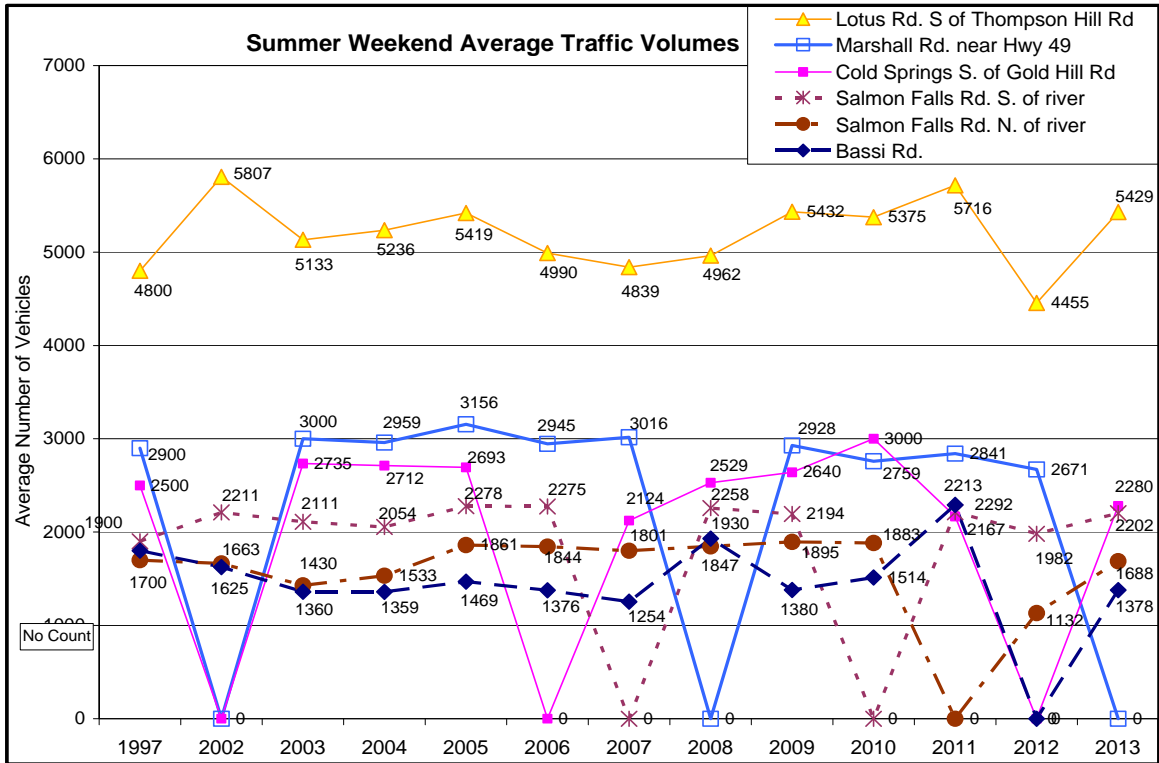


Figure 12. El Dorado County DOT weekend traffic counts on road segments within the project area.

Traffic volumes on California State Highways in the project area were obtained from the Caltrans Traffic and Vehicle Data Systems Unit website (see *Table 4*). According to the Caltrans data, traffic did not increase in 2012 from 2011. The RMP EIR reported 1997 traffic volumes for mid-summer weekdays and mid-summer weekends. Current Caltrans data reports peak-month average daily traffic volumes and average annual daily traffic volumes, so direct comparisons to the EIR volumes are not included in the *table* below. To allow general comparisons, the EIR reported the following 1997 weekend daily traffic volumes:

- 4600 on Route 49 north of the junction with RTE 153 (Cold Springs Road)
- 5600 on Route 49 south of the junction with Lotus Road
- 2500 on Route 193 north of the junction with RTE 49

Count Location				South of count station			North of count station		
Route	County	Mile	Description	Peak Hr	Peak Month	AADT	Peak Hr	Peak Month	AADT
49	ED	22.87	COLOMA, JCT. RTE. 153 WEST	230	2750	2250	500	6500	5400
49	ED	24.48	MARSHALL GRADE ROAD (TO GEORGETOWN)	500	6500	5400	540	4100	3500
49	ED	28.19	HASTINGS CREEK BRIDGE	540	4100	3500	540	4100	3500
193	ED	26.95	JCT. RTE. 49; PLACERVILLE, NORTH	300	3350	3000			

Peak Month = average daily traffic for the month of heaviest traffic flow (month not listed)  
 AADT = average annual daily traffic is the total volume for the year divided by 365 days.

**Table 4. Caltrans 2012 Traffic Data for State Highways**

## Element 4 – Monitoring and Reporting Programs

### 4.1 Carrying Capacity Monitoring

The updated RMP includes two carrying capacity indicators, boat density and total daily boaters, which are described in the RMP document’s Element 7. Carrying Capacity Monitoring was conducted during the 2013 season as one of the requirements for the EIR mitigation measures 13-2 and 16-5. Monitoring results are summarized above in Section II River Use.

#### Monitoring System

- During the RMP planning process, data were collected that established the boat density on the Gorge Run on Saturdays in 1996 through 1999. Boat density on the Gorge Run occasionally exceeded 300 boats in a two-hour period. Because of this history, River Patrol staff monitored river use and boat density levels on the Gorge Run every Saturday from June through August of 2012.
  - On the Gorge Run, staff most often recorded river use at Fowler’s Rock Rapid on Saturdays. Fowler’s Rock has had more incidents of boat wraps and rescues than

Satan's Cesspool Rapid and is the first class III rapid on the Gorge Run section; Therefore Fowler's Rock is a higher priority location for river safety activities on Saturdays when boat density and use are highest. This use of Fowler's Rock as an acceptable location for monitoring boat density as recommended in the five-year summary reports was recommended by the Planning Commission.

- Appendix D of the RMP should be amended to include the definition "two kayaks are equal to one boat" for the purposes of determining boat density as identified in the mitigation monitoring plan for the RMP and reflected in the Mitigation Monitoring Plan for the RMP. This change was recommended by the Planning Commission based on the five-year summary reports.

### **2013 Flows and Carrying Capacity –**

CA Department of Water Resources, Bulletin 120, May 1, 2013, data is reflected in this section.

After a wet start in November and December 2012, the four months of January through April were the driest such period of record, exceeding the previous low amount in 1977. The small snowpack (15% of average on May 1, 2013) is the third driest in 60 years, with less snowpack on the same date occurring only in 1977 and 1990. After a buildup to about 65% in mid-March, melting started early with about 40% of average remaining on April 1, 2013. Reservoir storage overall as of May 1, 2013 was near normal and will be used to augment reduced runoff statewide. It is projected that adequate amounts of water from storage and runoff are available to accommodate most water demands in 2013 on the South Fork American River.

Forecasts of median statewide April through July runoff were reduced to 45% of average as compared to 70% in 2012. Water runoff is projected to be 60% of normal.

In 2013, snowpack water content measured at 15% of historic averages for May 1 and measured at 30% of historic averages for April 1, which is normally the date of maximum accumulation. The snowpack for this same period in 2012 was 40% of average.

Precipitation from October 2012 through March 2013 was about 75% of average, which was unchanged for the same period in 2011 through 2012. Average precipitation ranged from about 85% in the North Eastern Regions to 40% in the South Lahontan Region

Runoff during April 2013 was 60% of average. Estimated runoff of the eight major rivers of the Sacramento and San Joaquin watershed regions during April was 2.0 million acre-feet as compared to 3.7 million acre-feet in 2012.

Reservoir storage in the state was at 95% of average on May 1, about 20% less than last year.

Flows on the South Fork American River were regulated by scheduled dam releases based on the California Department of Water Resources snow surveys which resulted in good flows for boating with no high water period (5,000-6,000 cfs). Summer flows were guaranteed in 2013 by Pacific Gas and Electric and the Sacramento Municipal Utility District six days a week with no water guaranteed on Wednesdays. In summer, Saturday flows began ramping up early in the morning and typically reached a peak of 1,500 cfs by 8:00 a.m. Peak flow was maintained until approximately 1:00 p.m., when the flow was ramped downwards. Sunday flows followed the same pattern as Saturday flows with regard to ramping rates, flow volume, and the timing of peak flows. Peak flows were typically maintained for three to five hours. Weekday flows were 1,300 cfs for a three-hour period, with peak flow typically being reached at 9:00 a.m. and lasting for three hours.

The volume of 1,300 to 1,500 cfs flows provided a quality whitewater experience for commercial and private boaters. The relatively long duration of weekend peak flows may have reduced boat density, resulting in safer boating conditions during the summer boating season. Boat density did not come close to exceeding the threshold provided in the RMP of 200 boats in a 2-hour period on Saturdays on the lower (Gorge Run section). It is theorized that longer release schedule, provided more opportunity to spread out boating use.

In 2013, Sacramento Municipal Utility District and Pacific Gas and Electric provided reliable and predictable post-Labor Day flows on the weekends, which resulted in flows that mirrored the summer release pattern. Commercial and private use continued to mirror the scheduled releases, with more commercial use occurring in the fall and spring and more private use occurring in the fall, winter and spring (year-around when a release was scheduled).

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District and Pacific Gas and Electric re-licensing agreements were completed in 2007 and are pending approval by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the Upper American River Project which is expected to be approved in 2014. This 50-year license will guarantee flows on the South Fork and continued operation of the hydroelectric facilities located upstream of Chili Bar on the South Fork American River watershed. The flow schedule in 2013 was similar to a Dry Year flow schedule as designated in the license. (See *table 5* below.) The water year type in 2012 was “Dry” as well.

South Fork American River Below Chili Bar Reservoir Dam Minimum Recreational Flow by Water Year (cfs)								
WATER YEAR								
TYPE	PERIOD	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Super Dry	April - Memorial Day	3 Hrs @ 1300					3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300
	Memorial Day - Labor Day	3 Hrs @ 1300			3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	5 Hrs @ 1300	5 Hrs @ 1300
	Labor Day - September						3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300
	October - March						3 Hrs @ 1300	
Critically Dry	March - Memorial Day	3 Hrs @ 1300					3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300
	Memorial Day - Labor Day	3 Hrs @ 1300			3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	5 Hrs @ 1500	5 Hrs @ 1500
	Labor Day - September					3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300
	October - February						3 Hrs @ 1300	
Dry	March - Memorial Day	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300			3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
	Memorial Day - Labor Day	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300		3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	5 Hrs @ 1500	5 Hrs @ 1500
	Labor Day - September					3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300
	October - February						3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300
Below Normal	March - Memorial Day	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300		3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
	Memorial Day - Labor Day	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300		3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	6 Hrs @ 1500	6 Hrs @ 1500
	Labor Day - September				3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
	October	3 Hrs @ 1300				3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
	November - February						3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300
Above Normal	March - Memorial Day	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1300	4 Hrs @ 1750	4 Hrs @ 1750
	Memorial Day - Labor Day	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	6 Hrs @ 1750	6 Hrs @ 1750
	Labor Day - September				3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
	October	3 Hrs @ 1300				3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
	November - February						3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
Wet	March - Memorial Day	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	6 Hrs @ 1750	6 Hrs @ 1750
	Memorial Day - Labor Day	4 Hrs @ 1500	4 Hrs @ 1500	4 Hrs @ 1500	4 Hrs @ 1500	4 Hrs @ 1500	6 Hrs @ 1750	6 Hrs @ 1750
	Labor Day - September				3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
	October	3 Hrs @ 1300				3 Hrs @ 1300	3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500
	November - February						3 Hrs @ 1500	3 Hrs @ 1500

**Table 5. Sacramento Municipal Utility District Upper American River Project Flow Schedule Below Chili Bar Dam by Water Year Type.**

### River Use on the Coloma to Greenwood Section

A number of elements and mitigation measures were integrated into the RMP to mitigate potential impacts related to increases in river use on the Coloma to Greenwood section of the river.

- The public river access at Greenwood Creek changed in 2005 from previous years, when the BLM constructed a parking lot and restroom. The construction created a formal access to the river through the public lands downstream of Greenwood Creek and reduced dangerous parking on the shoulder of Hwy 49, except for peak weekend-use days when parking still occurs along Hwy 49.
- A second parking area, built by BLM in 2009, is located one quarter mile North of Greenwood Creek on Hwy 49 and has eliminated shoulder parking on Hwy 49. It is still legal to park on the highway shoulder in this area and there is no connecting trail between the two parking lots. Boating counts in 2013 on the section of river between



Coloma and Greenwood Creek did not show boat density issues, however compliance with personal flotation device (PFD) laws is an issue. The use of alcohol by inner-tubers on this section is also quite common and is reflected in the numerous beer cans collected from river clean ups in this section. Future monitoring coordinated with the BLM, to better understand the extent of use of the Greenwood Creek access, is being considered.

- No campground owners near Highway Rapid applied to the County for a revision to their Special Use Permit to allow public river access to their property in this stretch. This objective of the RMP was met with the opening of the Greenwood Creek river access by BLM. Therefore, it was recommended in the five-year summary reports to the Planning Commission that this objective be removed from the RMP. The Planning Commission concurred.
- The counts on the middle section on July 4, 2013 and on September 1, 2013 are reflected in the tables below. Comments have been received from the RMAC, private boaters and land owners that voice concerns over alcohol use, littering and trespassing on this section of river by inner-tubers.

<b>July 4, 2013 Complete Count Data</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Rafts</b>	<b>Kayaks</b>	<b>Inflatables</b>	<b>Tubes</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Alcohol (open containers)</b>	<b>PFD Violations Observed</b>
<b>Total</b>	580	67	35	38	110	8	30	16
<b>Private</b>	382	32	35	38	110	8	30	16
<b>Commercial</b>	198	35	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Institutional</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

<b>September 1, 2013 Complete Count Data</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Rafts</b>	<b>Kayaks</b>	<b>Inflatables</b>	<b>Tubes</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Alcohol (open containers)</b>	<b>PFD Violations Observed</b>
<b>Total</b>	1331	181	117	49	242	2	49	4
<b>Private</b>	782	82	106	49	242	2	49	4
<b>Commercial</b>	549	99	11	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Institutional</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 6. Middle Section Counts from 2013**

#### 4.2 Incident Reporting/Cooperating Agency Reports

The BLM and California State Parks provided information but no data for several sections of this report.

Sheriff's Department Report – See Appendix D

### County River Program

River Use Permit compliance issues are summarized in *Table 6*. County River Program staff also performs an annual audit of outfitter reports and resolves discrepancies between reported and observed commercial river use after the September operation reports are submitted. Most observed violations do not result in final violations due to a reasonable explanation usually having to do with newer employees.

Class I River Use Permit violation category	#violations/warnings issued	# final violations
Boat markings inadequate	5	0
Group size limits exceeded	2	0
Land use without authorization	0	0
Operating after sunset	0	0
Operating reports filed late	4	3
Permit/group allocations exceeded	0	0
Quiet Zone	3	0
Class II River Use Permit violations:		0

**Table 7. Summary of Commercial River Use Permit Violations in 2013**

#### 4.3 Public Comments/Complaints

Complaints in six river issue areas were received by the County River Program in 2013:

1. Thefts from vehicles at river access points: Greenwood Creek parking area.
2. Trash accumulated under the Highway 49 bridge and graffiti.
3. On river drinking, littering, glass bottles and trespassing associated with Coloma to Greenwood Creek river floaters.
4. Non-permitted commercial river use activity.
5. River channel modification to Barking Dog Rapid by Kayakers.
6. Quiet Zone violations by private boaters.

#### 4.4 Geographic Information System (GIS)

No GIS data was added to the County database through the County Parks/Rivers Programs.

#### 4.5 This report fulfills this element's requirement that the County will compile a summary of river use information.

#### 4.6 Water Quality Sampling and Analysis

The overall goal of the monitoring program is to collect data that provide defensible answers to two main questions: 1) is the river safe for contact recreation; 2) is whitewater recreation creating significant impacts to the water quality of the South Fork?

The RMP EIR identified three potential types of water quality degradation that could result from whitewater recreation. First, bacterial contamination of the river could result from either discharges from faulty septic systems or human defecation along the river banks.

Second, storm water runoff may carry vehicle-related contaminants from parking lots into the river. Third, erosion from campgrounds, access facilities and trails may increase the river's turbidity. The RMP's mitigation monitoring plan requires that a monitoring program be implemented for the first two water quality indicators, bacteria levels and storm water runoff. The third indicator, erosion and turbidity, are controlled through the County's grading permit and Special Use Permit inspection programs.

No exceedances were discovered based on the River Program's water testing results. The results from testing in 2013 are contained in the Water Quality Plan, Appendix C.

It is of the opinion of River Program staff that storm water testing is not productive. Testing results have not proved to show any significant impacts from vehicles parking near the river. California DMV and CHP vehicle inspections have reduced if not eliminated the age of leaky vehicles and buses. The parking lots tested by River Program staff are used by non-river users in addition to river users; therefore, if any exceedances were observed it would be hard to prove the source of said pollution. The majority of parking lots that are tested are not under the jurisdiction of the County, making restrictions difficult to enforce. Due to potential runoff from upstream properties, mitigation requirements would also be impossible to enforce. Further, there is no direct runoff from parking areas along the river. In keeping with typical BMP's for parking lot designs, runoff first travels across gravel or passes through vegetation before flows into the river.

Concerns have also been raised by the public regarding the number of resident Canada Geese and their possible affects to the water quality and enjoyment of riverside parks.

4.7 Zoning and Special Use Permit requirements policy statement. This is an ongoing policy.

4.8 Noise Monitoring

- The County Quite Zone is an effort to limit the noise impacts from people navigating the river to the residential properties along the river. County River Patrol currently monitors the Quite Zone for violations by river users.
- The County River Patrol has the ability to fine only commercially-permitted outfitters.
- The County Sheriff's Department and County Code Enforcement have the ability to fine and enforce County Code violations by public river users, private campgrounds and private land owners.

4.9 Recreation Impact Monitoring

Bureau of Land Management: BLM recreation staff did not indicate that monitoring conducted on their parcels in 2013 revealed any substantial conflicts between people using those lands for non-whitewater recreation and whitewater boaters. The BLM adopted a management plan for its South Fork public lands in 2005. This plan contains elements that allow new recreation uses in the river corridor (such as recreational mining and horseback riding) that may create conflicts with existing uses such as whitewater recreation. The middle

bathroom below Greenwood Creek is heavily used, popular for camping and lunch stops, and there has been discussion about putting in another composting toilet at that site and further downstream. The BLM lands are becoming more popular with non-boating river recreationist. There is a dredging moratorium currently in effect on California Rivers.

State Parks: Folsom State Parks personnel patrol the Salmon Falls Day Use Area of Folsom Lake State Recreation Area. In the past, State Park Rangers have indicated they are not aware of conflicts between non-whitewater recreation users and whitewater boaters at the Salmon Falls Area. State Parks has observed more alcohol-related violations related to inner-tubing in the past few years at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. The ban on glass within 100 feet of the river at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park has been successful in reducing the amount of broken glass, according to park staff.

At both Salmon Falls and Greenwood Creek there were numerous reports of vehicle break-ins during 2013.

Henningsen Lotus Park (HLP): The County did not survey park users regarding conflicts between non-whitewater recreation uses and whitewater recreation users in 2013. Rather, a survey was conducted of users on HLP to collect data regarding general input on park needs, park deficiencies, and opinions about a whitewater park. This input will be reflected in a HLP conceptual master plan, scheduled for release in 2014, to provide direction to the County for a possible build-out of HLP.

#### 4.10 River Program Staffing

- In 2013 the River Patrol was staffed by two seasonal employees plus the River Recreation Supervisor, unchanged from 2012. The fiscal year 2013/2014 budget allows for the hiring of two seasonal personnel and the River Recreation Supervisor. A third seasonal river patroller is desired for better implementation of the River Management Plan.

#### 4.11 Geographic Information System: this element is the same as Element 4.4.

### **Element 5 – Agency and Community Coordination Programs**

#### 5.1 Pre- and Post-Season RMAC meetings

The 2013 post-season RMAC meeting was held November 19, 2013 in Coloma. Pre-season meetings occurred monthly, January through March 2013.

#### 5.2 Flow information

Through the coordination of PG&E and SMUD a summer and fall flow regime was developed (described on page 15) and timely forecasts of releases from Chili Bar Dam were available. South Fork flow forecasts are posted on the County website and the websites

www.theamericanriver.com, www.dreamflows.com, www.americanwhitewater.org. Forecast information can also be obtained on the County Flow Phone, (530) 621-6616.

### 5.3 Volunteers

- Volunteers assisted County River Patrol staff on river patrols, work projects (including noxious weed pulling at Henningsen Lotus Park), bathroom maintenance and improvement of the portage/scout trail at Trouble Maker Rapid.

### 5.4 River Festival

The 2013 American River Festival charitable event was not held in 2013.

### 5.5 CEQA Compliance Statement; no comments.

### 5.6 Litter Control

In coordination with the American River Conservancy, County River Program staff organized three river cleanups in 2013. A cleanup on the Chili Bar section was held in July. A low water cleanup was held on the middle section in August which was a low water cleanup. A cleanup on the lower section was also held in August. Volunteers from a number of commercial companies, local residents, private boaters, BLM and State Parks staff participated. Approximately 80 participants volunteered for the events. River Patrol staff conducted several other cleanup trips on all three sections of the river during the summer to remove various pieces of debris or hazards. Although the RMP goal of monthly cleanups is laudable, the limited number of volunteers for the existing cleanups and the small amount of debris that collects over a month-long period indicates that increasing to monthly cleanups is not practical or necessary.

### 5.7 Agency Coordination

Weekend river patrols and vehicle shuttles were coordinated between County River Patrol staff, BLM River Patrol staff and State Parks River Patrol staff.

#### 5.7.1 Recreation Conflicts: see Element 4.9.

#### 5.7.2 Habitat/Environmental Impacts

Bureau of Land Management: Folsom BLM staff implemented a statewide assessment program (utilizing their “Lotic Checklist Form”) on the public lands along the South Fork. Wildlife biologist, Kim Bunn, indicated that the BLM began collecting baseline data in 1993-1995. The BLM’s goal is to perform the assessment every five years in order to make general determinations on the health of the public lands.

On the South Fork, an assessment was compiled for the main stem of the river, along Weber Creek and along the Greenwood Creek riparian area in 2001 and 2002. The assessment concluded that there are impacts from recreation use in the Greenwood Creek riparian zone, including stream bank degradation and siltation of the creek. In 2013, this appeared to continue, according to observations by County River Patrol staff. The BLM's South Fork American River management plan addresses these impacts.

### 5.7.3 Agency Memoranda of Understanding

No formal Memoranda of Understanding were completed in 2013. With the completion of their South Fork American River Management Plan, BLM has indicated it is interested in entering into an MOU with the County. In 2013, the River Program continued its coordination and cooperation with both the BLM Folsom Area staff, California State Parks staff from Marshall Gold SHP and the Auburn Whitewater Recreation Office. The BLM River Patroller coordinated with County River Patrol on work projects, restroom maintenance, river patrols and river monitoring activities.

## Element 6 – Permits and Requirements

The Board of Supervisors adopted the RMP elements pertaining to commercial river use permits through Ordinance 4594, the Streams and Rivers Commercial Boating Ordinance Chapter 5.48, on January 15, 2002. The Board adopted the RMP elements pertaining to non-commercial boater registration through Ordinance 4596, the Specific Use Regulations Ordinance Chapter 5.50 on March 19, 2002.

### 6.1 User Group and Definitions

County Ordinance Chapter 5.48 defines commercial boating. County Ordinance Chapter 5.50 defines noncommercial river trips, institutional groups and large groups.

### 6.2 River Management Fees

The 2002 Annual Report related the Board of Supervisors' action on November 20, 2001, regarding the River Trust Fund and user day fees. The Board maintained the user day fee amount at \$2.00 per person, set in 1997, which is the primary funding source to the River Trust Fund, which in turn funds the implementation of the River Management Plan. Costs of implementing the County River Program have increased since 2002 which has limited the level of service in recent years yet RMP requirements are still being met.

#### 6.2.1 Commercial Guide Requirements

##### Swiftwater Rescue Course Standards:

At the conclusion of the 2002 season, the former County Parks Division staff reviewed the current County swiftwater rescue training standards with the County Risk Management Office. Since there is no adopted state or national standard for swiftwater training, the Risk

Management Office supported continuing the approach on training taken by County Parks in 2002:

- At least one guide per trip must have completed a swiftwater rescue training course.
- Outfitters may designate any guide as the swiftwater rescue trained person; he or she does not have to be the “trip leader.”
- In-house courses, taught by experienced outfitter employees are adequate, and to allow for lower cost courses, Rescue III or ACA cards of completion are not required. *The County River Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) recommended the County require that instructors be certified in river rescue instruction and that cards of completion be required to be issued to students.*
- Courses must teach at least the suite of skills found in an American Canoe Association (ACA) swiftwater rescue, Rescue III whitewater rescue technician, or equivalent course.
- Outfitters agreement to meet the County swiftwater rescue training standards within their permit application agreement.
- Based on the five-year summary reports, the Planning Commission concurred with the recommendation of Risk Management to adopt the Swiftwater Rescue Training requirements without the RMAC recommendation.

#### 6.2.9 Insurance, Business License and Water Flow Notice Requirements

There were no revisions to these requirements in 2013. The Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 033-2002 on January 29, 2002. The Resolution amends the liability insurance requirements for outfitters to one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence.

#### 6.3.6 Institutional Group Requirements

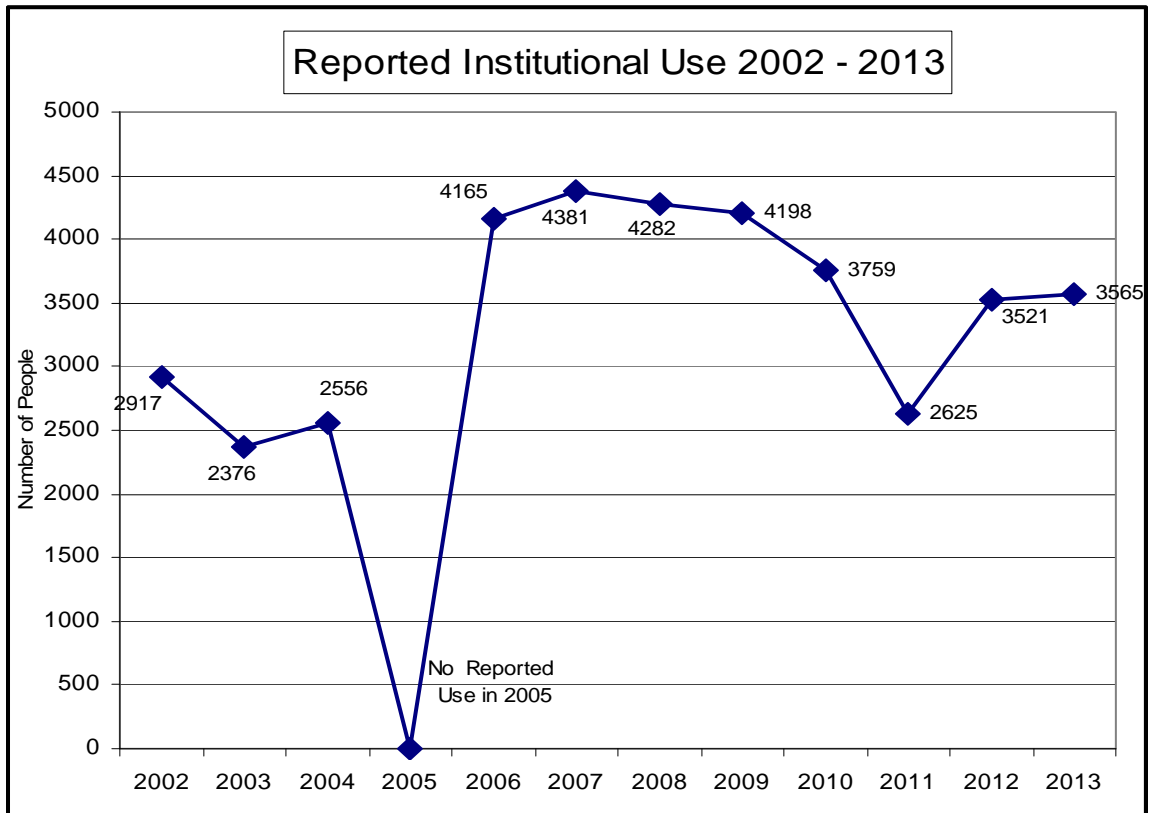
The registration process for both large and institutional groups was developed in conjunction with RMAC during its January and February 2002 meetings. For the last several years, RMAC has been working on a proposal for an update to the RMP for Institutional Group requirements. In 2013, RMAC recommended changes to the River Management Plan Institutional Group Requirements. The proposed RMAC changes can be viewed in Appendix I along with executive summary on the process and rationale behind the proposed changes. The County is reviewing the recommended changes to the RMP. The process for modification to the RMP first requires staff review and then approval by the EDC Planning Commission and EDC Board of Supervisors. The five-year summary reports which were approved by the Planning Commission should be considered in the timing of modifications to the RMP so as to properly review the cumulative recommended changes to the RMP.

County Staff and RMAC recommended limiting the institutional groups to seven, which was reflected in the five-year summary reports and concurred by the Planning Commission as a minor modification to the RMP.

The Board of Supervisors adopted the registration requirements through Ordinance Chapter 5.50 on March 19, 2002, with the ordinance becoming effective on April 19, 2002. The following organizations registered with the County in 2013:

- Calvary Chapel of Concord
- Friends of the River, a river conservation organization
- Inner City Outings, a community outreach program of the Sierra Club
- Healing Waters, a non-profit organization that provides outdoor recreation activities for HIV and cancer patients
- Project Great Outdoors, an organization offering experiential education programs to disadvantaged youth
- Travis Air Force Base outdoor recreation program
- Beale Air Force Base outdoor recreation program
- UC Santa Cruz

The Institutional Use Reflected in the chart below includes guides and guests.



**Figure 13. Institutional Use since adoption of the 2001 RMP**



### 6.3.7 Large Group Requirements

El Dorado County requires all non-commercial boaters running the South Fork in a group of four or more boats having three or more occupants, or a total of 18 or more people, to register their trip before launching. Large group registration forms along with deposit boxes have been available throughout the season at the major river access points along the river and at several campgrounds. Forms were also available on the County Parks website. One of the River Patrol staff's regular functions was to register large groups at Chili Bar and the Henningsen Lotus County Park. County River Patrol staff was able to monitor Camp Lotus for large groups only on a sporadic basis. Large group registration forms available at this location. The other three private campgrounds do not have registrations forms available to the public at this time.

### 6.4 Temporary Use Permit (TUP)

There was one Temporary Use Permit issued in 2013 for an event near or adjacent to the S. Fork of the American River.

### 6.5 Special Use Permits

RMAC review of Special Use Permit applications:

- No modifications or new SUP's were applied for in 2013.

Code Enforcement and Planning respond to individual Special Use Permit complaints or inspections on a case-by-case basis.

## **Element 7 – Carrying Capacity Exceedance Actions and Implementation**

- The monitoring program is discussed above in Element 4.1.
- There were no exceedances of either carrying capacity threshold in 2012.

## **Element 8 – Regulations and Ordinances**

### 8.1 Pirate Boater Ordinance Enforcement

The noncommercial boater registration system and large group registration process allow County Park staff the opportunity to both inform and question people about their non-commercial status. Those suspected of pirate boating (defined as a person or outfitter that conducts Commercial River trips without a permit) were identified for further investigation by the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department. County River Program River Patrol does not have law enforcement and citation authority to cite pirate boaters.

The Sheriff's Department Boating Unit recommended that the definition of "Commercial Outfitter" be revised in County Ordinance Chapter 5.58 to make it possible to prosecute for-profit rafters that advertise "cost-sharing." This recommendation was reflected in the five-year summary reports and the Planning Commission concurred.

## 8.2 Quiet Zone Regulations

Quiet Zone regulations were amended in 2002 to include non-commercial boaters through the revisions to Ordinance Chapter 5.50, which only the Sheriff's Department has authority to enforce. See the Sheriff's Annual Report at Appendix D for more information.

## 8.3 Trespass: see Sheriff's Annual Report, Appendix D.

## 8.4 Motorboats prohibited: County Ordinance 12.64.040 prohibits motorboats on the South Fork from Chili Bar Dam to Folsom Reservoir. No known violations occurred in 2013.

# Element 9 – Facilities and Lands Management

## 9.1 Memorandum of Understanding with the American River Conservancy

Because the County purchased the Chili Bar property in 2007, an MOU is no longer needed and the Element can be deleted. This was reflected in the five-year summary reports and the Planning Commission concurred.

## 9.2 Salmon Falls Parking

California State Parks is exploring options to expand parking at Skunk Hollow and Salmon Falls through a proposed Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement Measure (PM&E) in the relicensing of SMUD's Upper American River Project. Skunk Hollow has experienced exceedances and congestion that may be associated with large private and institutionally-permitted groups. State Parks has been requiring large Institutional Groups to take out at Salmon Falls. This has helped relieve some of the congestion at Skunk Hollow.

## 9.3 Public River Access in Coloma

State Parks began allowing boating take-outs at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historical Park in 2012.

No reduction in river access occurred in 2013.

## 9.4 Additional Restrooms

El Dorado County continued to provide a portable bathroom at American River Resort by Trouble Maker rapid for the public who scout and portage this rapid.

Use of the BLM Phoenix Composting toilet below Greenwood Creek may be close to capacity. Use by outfitters, private boaters and trail users has increased over the last 10 years. The opening of Greenwood Creek and Magnolia parking areas and the Cronan Ranch acquisition have most likely continued to the use. Discussions have occurred with BLM on adding another toilet at this location or at another BLM location further down the to help spread out the use.

9.5 Restroom Maintenance with BLM is Ongoing.

9.6 Public Access Near Highway Rapid

There were no applications for modifications of Special Use Permits to allow public river access to this section of the river in 2012. BLM has developed access at nearby Greenwood Creek fulfilling this element and the element can be removed from the RMP. This was reflected in the five-year summary reports and the Planning Commission concurred.

9.7 Trails

- The County applied in October 2005 for Habitat Conservation Grant Program funds which were used as part of a larger set of funds to purchase Cronan Ranch lands. BLM purchased 1,400 acres of Cronan Ranch. The County purchased 67. This has resulted in a new trail system along six miles of the river. Planning for the County parcel has not been initiated.
- The American River Conservancy received a grant to purchase 30 acres connecting Henningsen Lotus County Park and Marshall Gold Discovery State Park. This will provide an opportunity to link the State Park Monroe Ridge Trail to the HLP.
- BLM completed a trail which links Skunk Hollow via a trail to the Cronan Ranch parcel along river right and to Greenwood Creek. BLM is interested in providing a parking area for trail users off Salmon Falls Road, one-half mile north of the Skunk Hollow parking area.

9.8 No construction of new facilities or modifications.

9.9 No net loss of riparian habitat.

## **Element 10 – Funding**

10.1 River Trust Fund policies consistent with this element have continued under the updated RMP.

## 10.2 River Trust Fund Annual Budget

The River Program budget for fiscal year 2013/2014 has been adopted by the Board of Supervisors

- Projections were based on 70,000 user days annually (2013 commercial use was 74,645 user days).
- The CAO Parks Division River Management Program budget for fiscal year 2013-2014 is \$155,090.

## 10.3 Adequate funds for RMP implementation

A River Trust Fund with a balanced revenue and expenditure stream should have funds available to meet the following objectives:

- Implement RMP elements;
- Implement the mitigation monitoring plan;
- Maintain an adequate fund balance to meet any income shortfalls due to below average commercial river use;
- Build the fund balance over time to fund habitat restoration projects as described in mitigation measure 8-2.

There is continuing concern about the health of the fund. Costs of implementing the County River Program have increased since 2001 (RMP adoption) which will likely result in a reduced level of service unless there is an increase in revenue in the future. For the fiscal year 2012/2013 the cost to operate the program exceeded the revenue collected to run the program, with the difference coming from the River Management Special Revenue Fund (River Trust Fund, RTF) and reducing the fund balance. *Table 8* presents actual income and expenditure amounts for fiscal year 2012/2013. The fiscal year is from July 1 to June 30.

<b>Fiscal Year 2012/2013</b>	
Fund Balance as of July 1, 2012	\$198,420
Revenue ( <i>July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013</i> )	157,233
Expenditures (FY 2012/2013 approved budget was \$168,297)	
River Management Program →	(Transfer from RTF) \$11,065
Total →	\$168,297
<b>River Trust Fund balance as of June 30, 2013</b>	<b>\$187,356</b>
<b>2013/2014 Approved Budget</b>	<b>\$155,090</b>

**Table 8. River Trust Fund Balance and Budget Summary**

## **Element 11 – River Data Availability**

- The County website (<http://edcgov.us/Rivers/>) contains most of the information listed in *Table 6-1* of the RMP document.

Water quality data has been made available to El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Division and to the El Dorado County Storm Water Coordinator.

This concludes the 2013 Annual River Program Report.