



2020  
*El Dorado County  
River Management  
Plan Annual Report*



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## **El Dorado County River Management Plan**

### **2020 Annual Report**

#### ***INTRODUCTION***

The El Dorado County River Management Plan (RMP) 2020 Annual Report provides information on the 2020 river season and ongoing RMP implementation. The RMP has been written to be an adaptive management plan and 2020 we have done just as everyone else has - we adapted to the changes. This 2020 Annual River Report documents the activities and changes in during the 2020 season.

#### ***ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT***

At the beginning of 2020, we expected a typical year with modest flows. But March changed the year when a COVID-19 pandemic was declared, and in subsequent days and weeks many businesses and activities were shut down or restricted. Some restrictions were lifted by mid summer, but the seasonal impact on commercial outfitters, and river operations, was severe. The Parks Division moved forward with issuing the Commercial River Permits, as we did not know how the season would unfold. Working with the commercial outfitters, it was estimated the season could be about 20% of normal during 2020. The Parks Division implemented an adaptive management plan to meet the projected revenue shortfall.

Commercial rafting opened in the middle of June. State Parks opened Marshall Gold and Salmon Falls in the middle of July. Chili Bar was open the entire season, but with commercial use restrictions, it was used mainly by private boaters. As a result, commercial use ended at 55% of normal; a large downturn, but much better than anticipated.

The county took action to meet the resulting revenue shortfall by reducing staffing. There were four Seasonal River Aides budgeted and at first, staff was proceeding with the hiring process. During the hiring process, however, the COVID-19 restrictions precluded commercial river use. As mentioned, at that time the commercial outfitters were estimating seasonal use could be as low as 20% of normal. To be responsible and responsive to the situation, the Parks Division reduced seasonal staff from four two River Aides, despite the budget authorization for four.

The two River Aides provided educational information at the put-in locations, take the water samples and ensured that the requirements of the RMP was being followed. Mid-way through the season, staff was reduced to one. To accommodate this reduction, the division used Henningsen Lotus Park staff, at a lower hourly rate, to provide shuttles and make boat counts. To ensure that the Parks Division maintained a constant presence for education, staff such as the Parks Manager and community volunteers accompanied the one remaining River Aide on the water to meet safety requirements.

During this pandemic year, many new users discovered Coloma and the South Fork of the American River for outdoor recreation. The large number of people enjoying the Coloma to Greenwood (“C2G”) river reach created a safety concern. Staff focused on the C2G reach during the 2020 season. A new lifejacket campaign was launched and staff worked with the campgrounds regarding safety concerns. We had good public compliance regarding life jackets in the 2020 season.

Another change in 2020 was the elimination of the vacant River Recreation Supervisor position. After an analysis of job duties, this position was replaced with an Administrative Technician. Many of the functions are administrative in nature, and staff bills its work time to specific Parks Division programs. Therefore, hours spent on the river program are the only charges the program will experience. Meanwhile, this position of Administrative Technician can support other Parks Division programs the river management program is not charged for tasks that are not river-related.

The division strives to have the annual river management report completed by November so that the community has an opportunity to comment and to allow any needed changes to be implemented in the spring before the commercial rafting season begins. This year’s report did not meet that timeline. This report was presented in draft to the ad hoc Coloma Lotus Advisory Committee (CLAC) on January 7, 2021. The draft report was also presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) on January 21 and to the full CLAC on January 28. The PRC is expected to review and approve the final report on February 18. This schedule still provides the public with time and opportunities for input and to discuss possible changes that may need to be made for the following year.

The river management program budget is included in each annual report, but past reports have not shown the actual expenses. This year, a chart has been added to show the year’s actual expenses. Note, however, that the budget and expense information is based on a fiscal year July 1 through June 30, while other information in the report is on a calendar-year basis.

Besides COVID-19 restrictions, the 2020 wildfire season and the smoke in the Coloma Lotus Valley impacted river use. Health officials were advising for individuals to stay inside during periods of heavy smoke, and river use was down during these times.

Looking forward to the 2021 season, the following changes are being discussed with the community.

Revised River Map. Information on the current map is dated and somewhat inappropriate. For example, the map identifies campgrounds and the services available, even though the campgrounds are private property providing services to customers, not the general public. The map also does not clearly distinguish private property from public lands, and seems to be confusing for user. We will be working with the CLAC on a revised map.

The Parks Division will also coordinate with the Sheriff’s Office to assist in the Sheriff’s river patrols. When the Sheriff’s Office needs a second person for safety, a River Aide can arrange to

run with the Sheriff's Deputy. Also, we will advise the Sheriff's Office on where the community and our River Aides see a need for additional patrols. Better communication between the two staffs will be a priority.

Currently we are preparing for a busy river season. We have budgeted and are moving forward with hiring four seasonal River Aides for 2021. We will continue using the park staff for shuttles, as this change proved very efficient and provided cost savings.

We have an intern interested in working with the Parks Division this summer. We are pursuing that opportunity. It may enable us to get an accurate user count on the C2G reach in 2021. Quantifying the use on this midsection of the river would be helpful for planning and management.

We will also make available additional educational information that was developed but not released in 2020. These materials are describe later in this report.

## ***RIVER VALLEY***

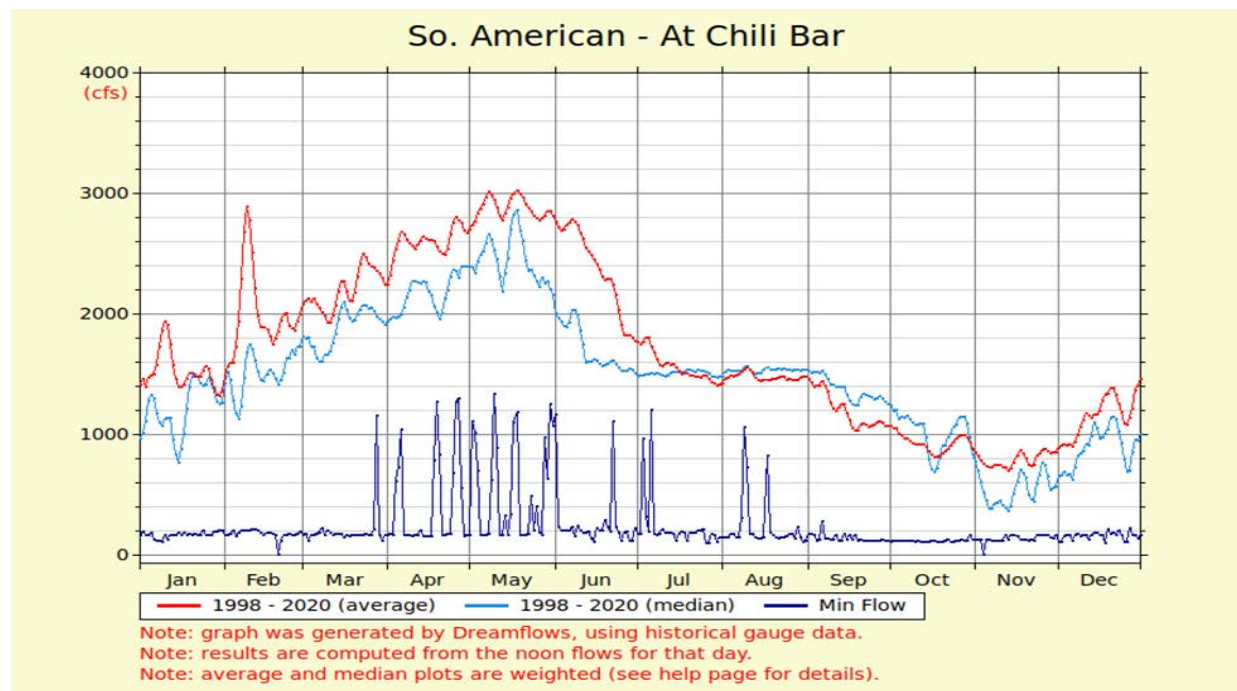
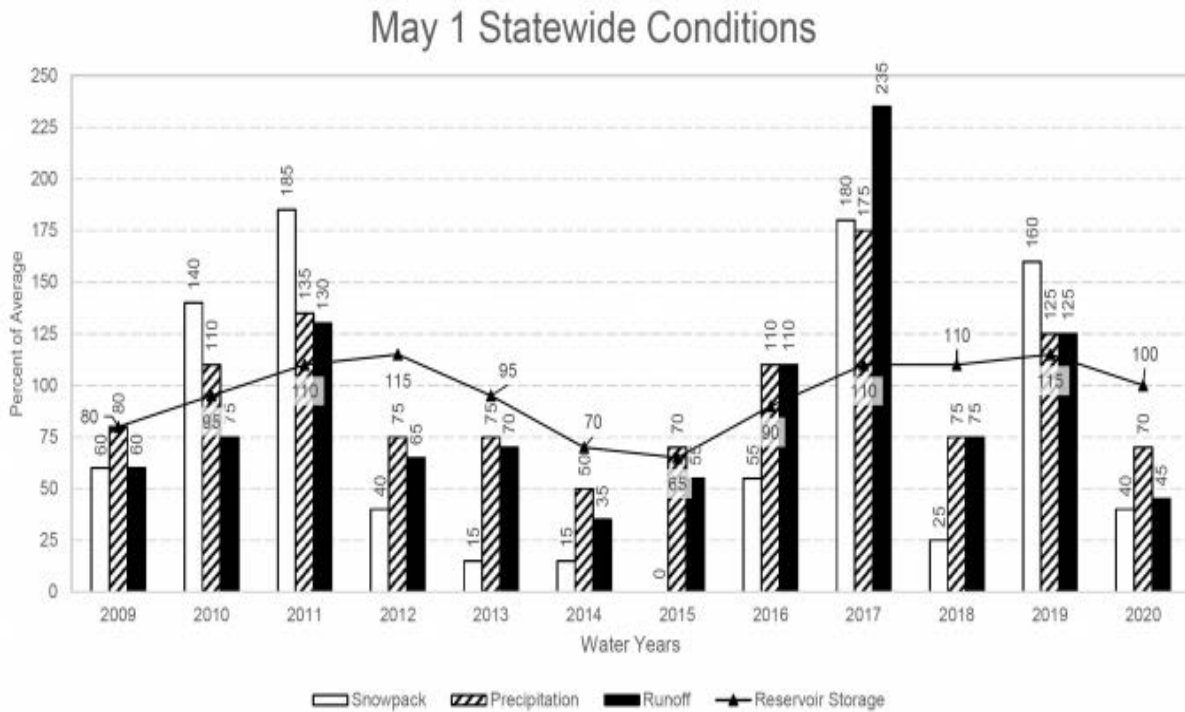
The 21-mile section of the South Fork of the American River from Chili Bar Dam to Folsom Reservoir continues to be one of the most rafted and kayaked rivers in the State of California, with annual use averaging well over 100,000 people. Due to COVID-19, this year's average numbers were down 45% from previous years.

Seven miles of this river flows through the Coloma Lotus Valley, a well-known historic and national recreational destination. There are four large public campgrounds in addition to the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, Henningsen Lotus County Park, and several Bureau of Land Management (BLM) parcels situated along the river. Public trails provide access to the river and, in some areas, run adjacent to the river at either end of the valley. Public access to the river is also available at the State Highway 49 Bridge, as well as at nine private properties with Special Use Permits. The number and diversity of recreational facilities and privately owned properties along the river, combined with the annually scheduled recreational water release flows, make the South Fork of the American River a globally recognized destination for class II-III boating and other forms of river recreation.

## ***WATER FLOWS***

The precipitation for 2020 ended up being below average for the water year. As of May 1<sup>st</sup>, the yearly precipitation was 70 percent of normal, a decrease from 125 percent at the same time last year. The snowpack water content on May 1, 2020, was about 40 percent of average for the date as compared to 160 percent on May 1, 2019. May 1 reservoir storage statewide was also 100 percent of average overall, which was a 15 percent decrease from the same point in 2019. The complete California Department of Water Resources Bulletin 120 (May 1, 2020) report is available at <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow/bulletin120/>.

Figure 1: California May 1 Statewide Conditions Comparison, 2009-2020



**Daily average and mean South Fork of the American River flow as recorded at Chili Bar 1998-2020**

The water year type in 2020 was designated as a “dry” year. The water year type designation prescribes the minimum release schedule out of Chili Bar Reservoir for river recreation. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licenses for Sacramento Municipal Utility District’s and Pacific Gas and Electric’s dams on the South Fork of the American River require regular recreational releases. The release volume averaged 1,300 cubic feet per second (cfs) on weekdays and 1,500 on the weekends.

The change in water year type from 2019 to 2020 resulted in lower releases.

The chart below explains the Water Year Type designations with corresponding minimum flow schedules out of Chili Bar Dam, per the FERC licenses.

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 1:** Chili Bar Dam Release Schedule by Water year Type (Note: 2020 was a “Dry” water year)

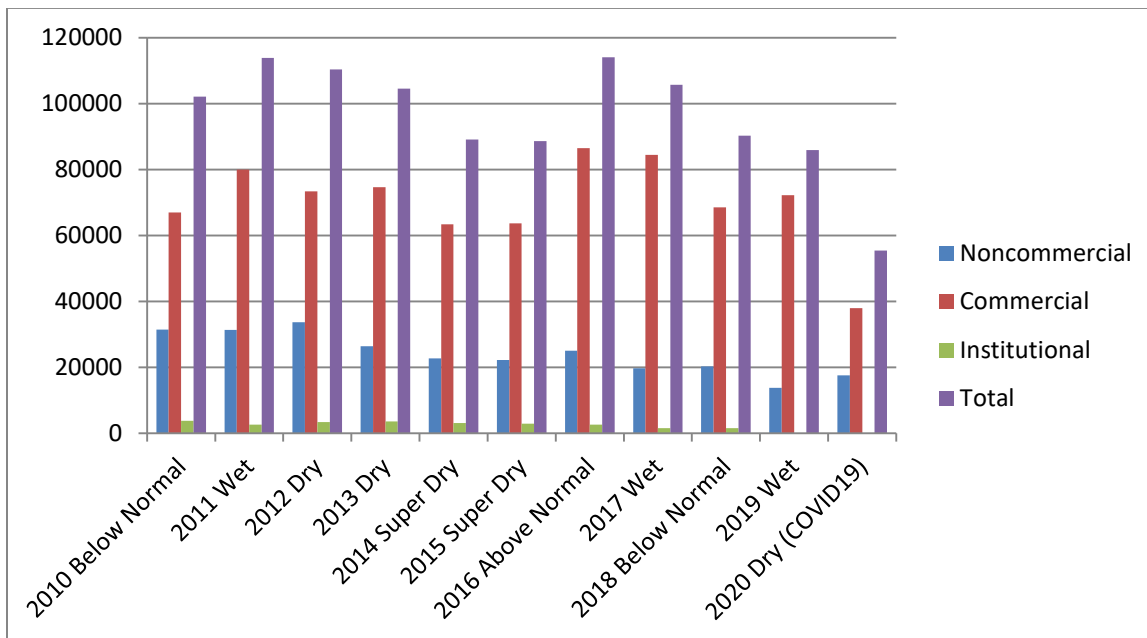
**RIVER USE**

Use in 2020 decreased drastically in comparison to 2019. The 2020 season began with COVID-19 closures. Commercial rafting companies working with the County were able to open whitewater rafting in the middle of June. State Parks did not open Skunk Hollow and Salmon Falls until the middle of July, however, which precluded use of the downriver “Gorge” section until then. These conditions increased use on the upper river section until July. As the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, commercial numbers started to rise but remained below normal and some companies did not apply for permits for the season. Total numbers were down 45 percent compared to 2019. Conversely, camping and river shore use was up sizeably due to the popularity of outdoor recreation in 2020. The increase in shore use in the Coloma Lotus area prompted our staff to concentrate many hours on education and life jacket safety in that area.

Spring runoff (snowmelt) behind dams that control the river level on the South Fork usually begins in May. The availability of whitewater on the river is consistent from year to year because of the FERC licenses’ minimum recreational water flow requirements. The figure below shows the river use totals for 2020. Use by commercial outfitters (39,458 guests) was down 45 percent from 2019. Estimated use by private boaters (17,500 people) rose XX percent compared to 2019.

This year was very difficult for Institutional groups and they are not included in these numbers.

\*Commercial Use Numbers do not include guides and guide trainees





The 5-mile C2G reach in the Coloma Lotus Valley continues to be a popular class II section of the river. There is a continued concern that alcohol bans on other regional rivers during holiday weekends will shift inner tube drinking/float party use to the South Fork, and the C2G reach in particular. However, in 2020 alcohol consumption remained constant and within responsible levels, and there has not been an increase in citations issued by the Sheriff's Department or State Parks. A glass ban on the river was implemented in 2017 with additional signage. This change appears to have reduced the number of glass containers brought on the river.

The seasonal use on the C2G reach has been difficult to quantify due to the many put-in and take-out locations along this section of the river. Adding to the complexity of capturing accurate use numbers for this reach is its accessibility for use during non-scheduled water release days, use at minimum flows, and use for multiple runs in a single day.

There are approximately 30 weekend days annually between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend. Based on prior year counts, a conservative estimate of use for the C2G reach could easily be 9,000 people, based on an estimated average of 300 people per weekend day. Users would include class II boaters, inner tubes, and other casual floaters who do not usually attempt to float the class III sections of the river.

The focus of the river staff in 2020 was on education and the new life jacket campaign, particularly in the C2G reach, where many tubers and other casual floats occur and life jacket compliance remains an issue.

### ***OUTFITTER USE***

Commercial outfitters are the primary source for public rafting excursions down the South Fork. There were 20 permitted outfitters in 2020; 17 permits were used. 24 permits were issued in 2019. Some outfitters did not operate due to COVID. The count for commercial use was 39,458, which is 55% of normal use.

The consolidation of outfitters on the South Fork and rivers nationwide has been an ongoing trend over the last 15 years, resulting in more companies having multiple trips on the water or more extended trips more frequently, impacting other river users when these companies' trips overlap. Overlapping typically occurs at lunch rest spots and at various locations on the river when one trip slows down for photos, groups join up for takeout, or when a full river trip catches up to a trip doing just the lower section. While density remains below RMP thresholds, there were still some congestion issues at popular spots for taking out and lunch/bathroom breaks.

The 2001 RMP requirement for keeping trips, defined as seven rafts, of the same company separate so "sufficient distance between groups should be maintained so that, if needed, other individual boats may fit in" was changed with the adoption of the 2018 RMP. The 2018 RMP calls for an initial spacing of five minutes between launches. Regrouping of trips below Hospital Bar Rapid is allowed, for trip consolidation of shuttles and improved efficiency at the Salmon Falls take-out.

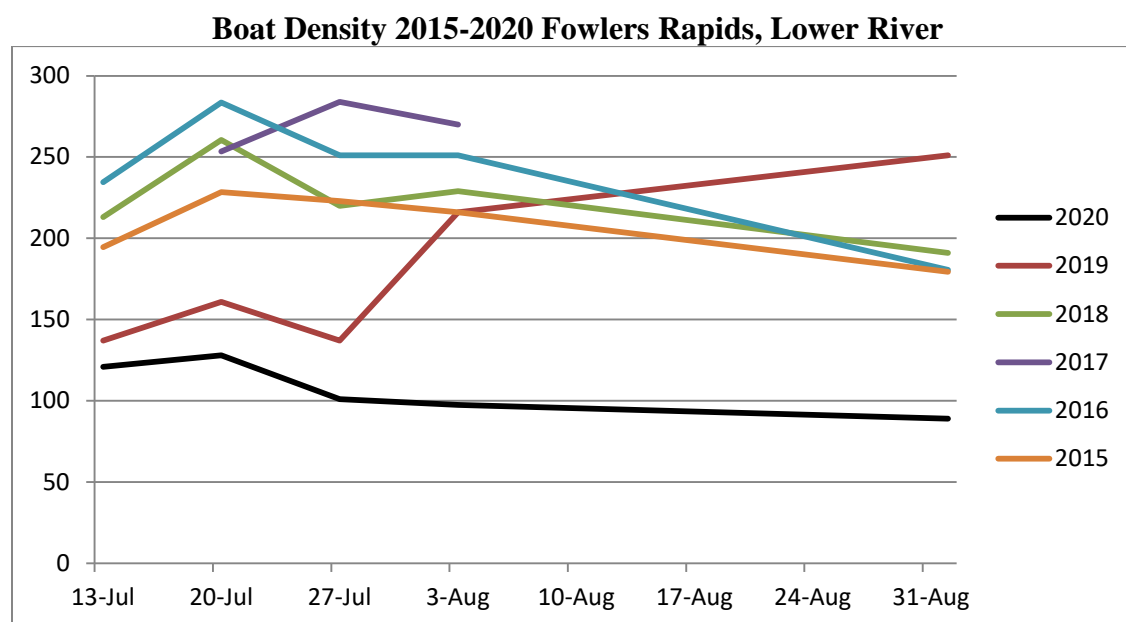
## ***INSTITUTIONAL GROUP USE***

Only organizations teaching accredited educational courses will be able to continue to register as Institutional Groups per the updated RMP. Staff has been working with the nonprofit groups previously identified as institutional groups, to meet the requirement for commercial use. With COVID, most of these groups had little to no use in 2020. The Parks Division requested a one-year extension from the Board of Supervisors, which was approved. This extension was to allow staff to work with the groups on the requirements and enable the institutional groups to work through their COVID issues.

## ***BOAT DENSITY***

The boat density safety measure aims to prevent boating safety hazards from occurring due to boat congestion on weekends. Boat density is the total number of boats passing a set point on the river within a two-hour window. In the event density passes three hundred boats twice in a season, the RMP prescribes austerity measures to manage overcrowding and regain allowable density levels.

Boat density measurement comes from taking an aggregate total of all rafts, kayaks, inflatable kayaks, and inner tubes, paddleboards, or similar flotation devices in a two-hour period in a designated location. There were no boat counts done on the lower section at the beginning of the season due to COVID-19 and the closure of takeouts at Folsom Lake. Boat counts on the upper section from Chili Bar were down due to COVID-19 but increased as the season went on. In July, State Parks opened up the lower section takeouts at Folsom Lake. Commercial outfitters and private boats took advantage of this change and started rafting the lower section from Lotus/Coloma to Folsom Lake. As the season went on, commercial numbers started to rise as outfitters made up lost time from the late start.

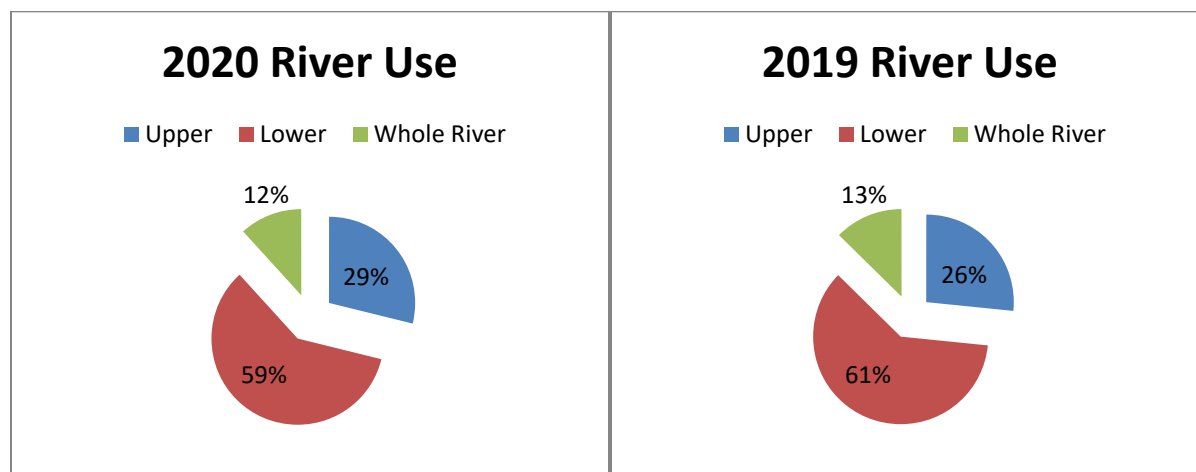


Carry capacity was not exceeded; therefore no mitigation measures to restrict boating use are necessary for 2021. The sources of data utilized for estimating river use were outfitters monthly operating reports and County Parks on-river observation.

### ***RIVER USE PREFERENCES***

The longstanding trend of river use for both private and commercial activity is increased use of the lower segment of the river. The County can track total use patterns with regards to financial reports and observations; however, as previously mentioned, the private user data does not represent a full accounting of use patterns. In previous years, the predominant use of the lower segment persisted throughout the season; however, in 2020 the lower section was not available until the middle of July, while the upper section river was open all season. Whole-river trips accounted for an average of 12% of the total use in 2020. The lower section is better equipped with put-in and take-out facilities, likely reflecting an efficient business decision with a more extended day trip for commercial passengers. Trips on the lower section were 59% of total 2020 use. Upper river trips remain relatively stable, at 29%. Total activity peaked in July and August before dropping back down by September. With commercial companies getting a late start, the season went a month longer with some companies running into November.

The proportion and number of whole river trips most likely reflect release levels, as higher flow rates increase speed, thus allowing for more trips to cover the entire length of the South Fork in a day. Lower, slower flows likely deter whole-river trips. The middle, C2G section of the river is the most accessible section for floating of inner tubes, paddleboards, and other inflatable crafts. Totals reflect commercial use, while private counts appear in the specified months; private use is not monitored at a sufficient level to extrapolate meaningful conclusions. In 2021, the Parks Division plans to conduct a more focused count of the C2G segment.



## **2020 COUNTY STAFF ACTIVITIES**

The County Parks River Program employed two personnel in 2020. Hiring was reduced, based on revenue initially projected to be 20% of normal. Midseason, staff was further reduced to one River Aide. Henningsen Lotus Park staff was used to assist with boat counts and shuttle driving. This seemed to be an efficient use of personnel and was a savings to the program as park staff salaries are lower.

The County intends to hire four River Aides in 2021. River Aides duties are to provide education at the access points, educate and monitor in the C2G section, monitor commercial use and permits, and implement the RMP.

The river staff's daily activities primarily included boater education on the river and at river access points, quiet zone monitoring, and river use monitoring. The emphasis among these four activities varies throughout the season, day of the week, river section and available staff. Most of the Class II use occurs between Marshall Gold State Park and Henningsen Lotus Park in the C2G reach.

A more detailed review of 2020 river staff activities follows.

### **Provided River and Boater Education to Private Boaters and Onshore Recreationists:**

- Made contact with more than 1000 river users during the 2020 season and monitored more than 21 miles of river per day, 4 days per week.
- Provided boating safety, boater responsibilities, private property education, river etiquette, leave no trace education, and river flow information at river accesses and on the river.
- Stocked kiosks with free waterproof river maps, that provide boaters with the locations of restrooms, put-ins and take-outs, quiet zone locations, names of rapids with GPS coordinates, public and private land designations, agency and campground phone numbers, and a boating safety checklist.

### **River Safety:**

- Completed approximately 112 on-river shifts covering 850 river miles.
- Provided a safety/sweep function by running the Class III sections late in the day.
- Removed hazardous trees that created obvious hard-to-avoid strainers. There were also several ropes and other smaller hazards that river staff removed during the season.
- Assisted law enforcement, upon request.
- Educated tubers on river safety and life jackets in the C2G section.

### **Quiet Zone:**

- Emphasized controlling quiet zone noise, use of public lands, litter education, and use of life jackets by all boaters and inner-tubers; dealt with ongoing concerns of the public.
- Provided safety information and aid to people floating/boating on the class II section.

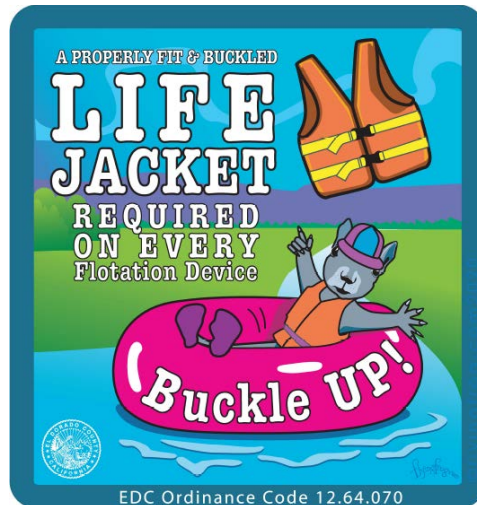
### **River Use Monitoring:**

- Conducted use monitoring on weekends for assessing carrying capacity compliance.
- Audited commercial outfitter river use for compliance.
- Tracked noncommercial/private river use levels

### Education and Outreach

Because of COVID-19, we were unable to have a planned river cleanup day since we could not have an organized group. River staff did daily river cleanup on the upper and lower sections to manage garbage in the river. Onshore and shoreline cleanup was done in and around Henningsen Lotus Park. Trash levels in and around the river were higher this year due, to more shore use and increase in population in the Coloma/Lotus area, making daily cleanups necessary.

In an effort to educate the private boater, a new educational campaign was developed. In 2020, we released the new life jacket signage. Staff also worked with campgrounds to inform users on life jacket laws.



Additional signage was developed and will be released in 2021. The idea was to start with the basics. Some of the previous signage was meant for a more experience user. The target audience for this educational campaign is the inexperienced boater.



**EL DORADO COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT**

*(Report provided by the El Dorado County Sheriff Marine and Boating Unit)*

In 2020, the Sheriff’s Boating Unit made both full and partial river trips throughout the season. The County Sheriff has the authority to issue citations for both State and County life jacket

violations along with other related County Ordinances, such as boater violations of the quiet zone and the use of glass beverage containers within 120 feet of the water.

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit used California Department of Boating and Waterway Grant monies to patrol waterways, including, but not limited to, the South Fork American River, within El Dorado County.

During 2020, the Marine Unit spent over 100 hours patrolling the South Fork American River. Deputies contacted no less than 600 local people and tourists utilizing the river for various recreational activities, such as picnicking, swimming, fishing, rafting, kayaking, paddle boarding, tubing, whitewater training, camping, and other events like birthday celebrations.

Due to the ongoing 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, many of the local businesses and commercial rafting companies were closed for the first half of the summer season, and there were strict limitations and restrictions for the second half of the season, which caused a significant decrease in usage from prior years. As with prior years, the primary focus was to educate the public about safety concerns, river characteristics, navigation, hazards, and on-going issues relating to quiet zones, lack of personal flotation devices (life jackets), and trespassing.

We responded to several calls for service which ranged from a several missing rafters/swimmers, arguments, and a drown subject, who was later found at Folsom Lake. Deputies issued 29 safety advisements/ warnings.

South Fork American River – 20.5 miles

Hours patrolled – 100+

Citations - 0

Safety advisements – 29

### ***STATE PARKS LAW ENFORCEMENT***

*(Report provided by Marshall Gold Discovery SHP ranger)*

The 2020 summer season and the South Fork of the American River usage was observed as a high use year. With COVID-19 closures of alternatives to outdoor recreation, we saw an increase in river usage and camping in the local area. Even though commercial rafting outfitter use was restricted, the general public came out in high numbers. Many of these individuals were first-time river users and lacked knowledge of river safety and proper etiquette (including private property access).

The primary area of concern along the South Fork of the American River for Marshall Gold Discovery SHP was from The American River Resort downriver to Henningsen Lotus Park. Even though those areas are outside of the State Park boundary, many times the Ranger Patrol could and would be the first unit to arrive at an incident. During the 2020 summer season I worked directly with the El Dorado County River Safety Patrol and specifically with Prescott

Nicholson. He would stage at Troublemaker, educating the large numbers of river tubers. He would also contact me directly when there were enforcement needs along the river. I responded multiple times to the North Beach put-in, Ponderosa Campground, Hwy 49 Bridge and Henningsen Lotus Park for assistance with citations or ejections from the waterway. I observed the Safety Patrol floating along the river throughout the summer and transferred information on usage along the entire stretch of the South Fork. I also observed the increase of educational signage along these areas and the dedication to work with the local campground resorts by handing out signage and locating personal flotation devices (PFD's) to loan out where needed.

I also observed a large increase in river access along both of the main parking lots within Marshall Gold Discovery SHP. As stated above many were first-time river users and lacked knowledge of water safety and proper equipment. I gave multiple warnings, educated on PFD's, advised proper flotation devices (pool tubes versus river tubes), ejected parties from the river for not following the safety rules, and issued multiple citations for EDCO 12.64.070 (PFD required). We also purchased many PFD's to be loaned out during the summer season, which were placed at the North Beach put-in and along the main day use area of North Beach.

Without the El Dorado River Safety Patrol I feel that there would have been more injuries or loss of life during the 2020 season. I look forward to the coming months and years working directly with the Safety Patrol. I do think that a multi-agency training day would be a good use of resources prior to the 2021 summer season.

### ***OUTFITTER VIOLATIONS***

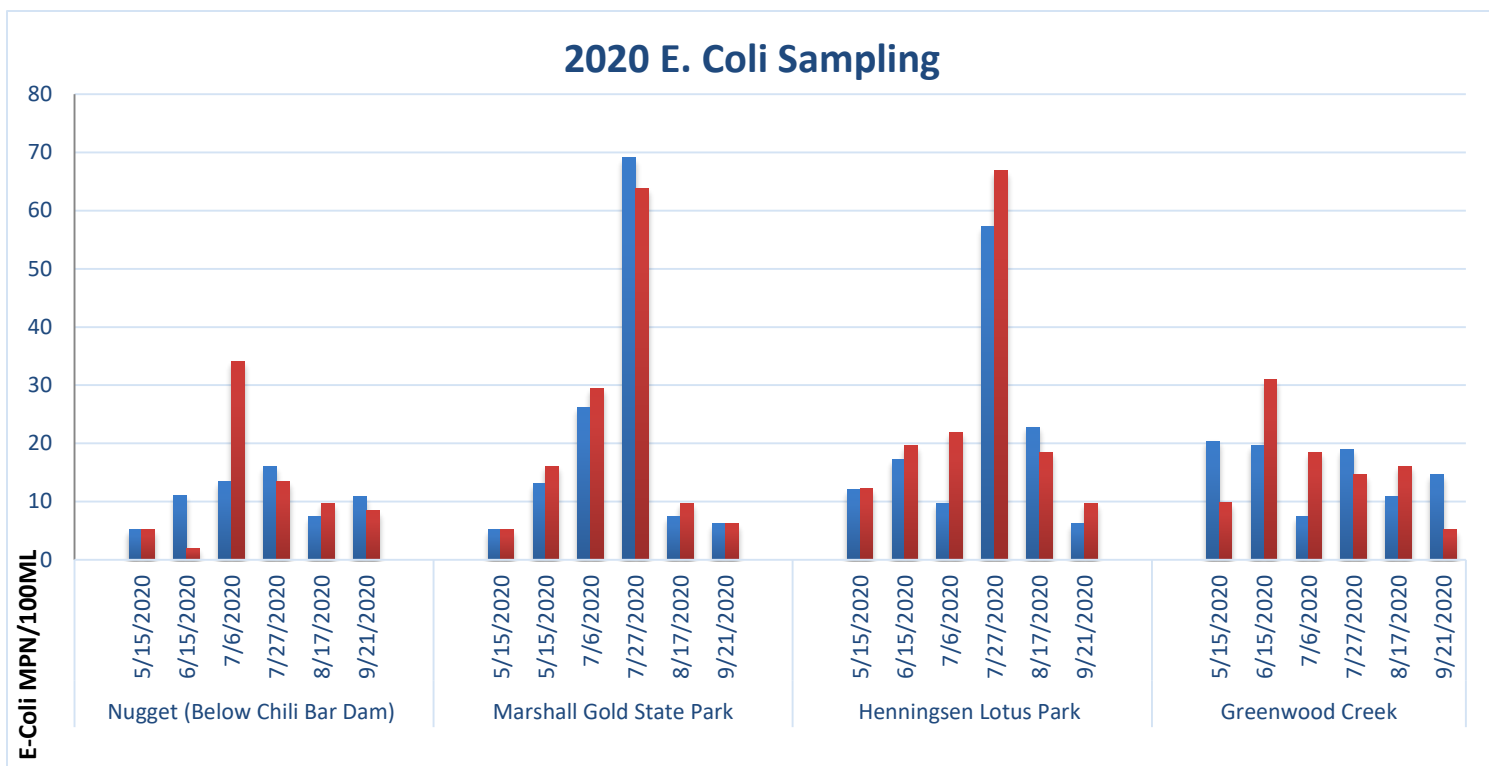
County Parks did not issue any permit violations in 2020. We received a few complains about commercial trips stopping on private property and loud noises in quiet zones. COVID made it difficult for guides from out of the area to return for the season. As outfitters were starting up late in the season, staff felt a reminder to all outfitters of the rules was appropriate instead of fines and there were no further issues.

### ***WATER QUALITY***

The water quality monitoring bacterial test results in 2020 had unacceptable readings in May of above 24,192 mpn, which dropped to 14,136 mpn a week later. With bacterial testing results showing high, Environmental Management had river staff post signs warning of high E-Coli levels and instructing the public to stay out of the water. The following month, levels had dropped to 30.1mpn, a healthy range safe for body contact. Signs were then removed. The data was not included in the chart below but is reflected in Appendix C.

There were no other days that had test results above normal, which would have resulted in a sampling retest per this program's protocols. County Parks conducted water testing from June through September 2020 the bacterial water testing results for 2020. The results are presented below in bar-chart form and in appendix C..





Shore=Blue                      Transect=Red

Bacteria coliform testing and other water quality measurements are being done by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) and Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) as prescribed in their new FERC licenses. SMUD posts result from the upper water shed at following site <https://www.smud.org/en/Corporate/Environmental-Leadership/Power-Sources/Upper-American-River-Project/Hydro-Relicensing-Compliance>. PG&E does not post their reports in a similar fashion. Once the Chili Bar project is transferred to SMUD, they will add all the Chili Bar documents in a similar fashion. The 2020 draft reports on the upper water shed will be made available to the Consultation Group in March as they are each year.

PG&E tests Chili Bar Reservoir and does not have the results posted. SMUD will be acquiring Chili Bar Reservoir in 2021 and will post the testing results in the future. The updated RMP continues bacterial coliform testing during the primary boating season only.

The County also has a comprehensive Stormwater Program that implements stormwater mitigation measures and best management practices (BMPs) as prescribed by the County Storm Water Management Plan and the Phase II Municipal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit.

**BUDGET**

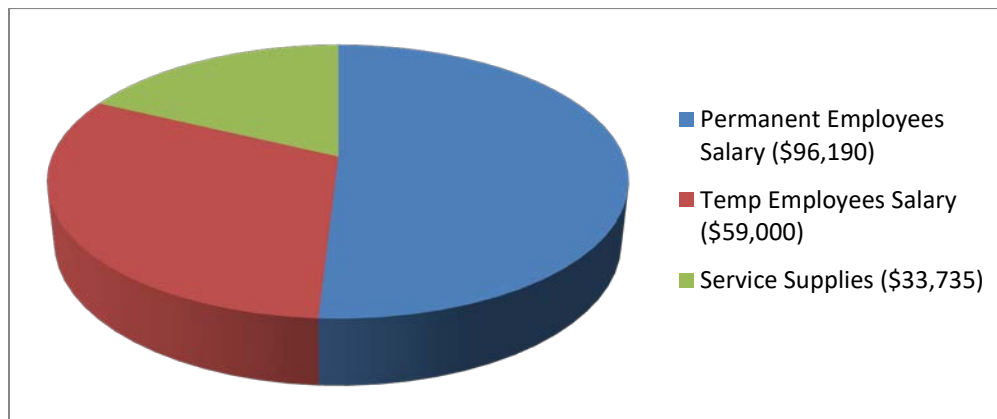
The budget for the Parks River Program is a non-general fund program. The primary source of funding since 1997 is a \$2.00 per guest user fee paid by permitted outfitters. If a fee change was

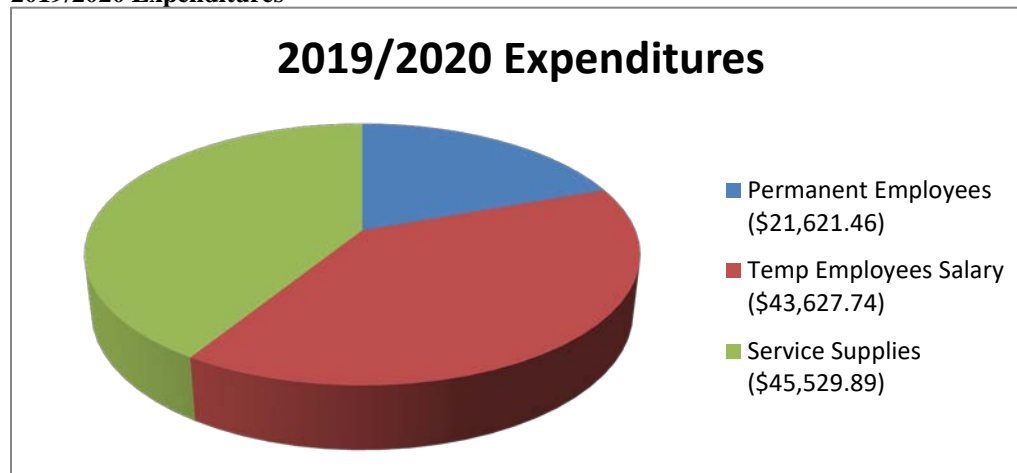
deemed necessary in the future, any fee change is subject to additional action by the Board of Supervisors. Any funding needs will take into consideration any changes which could increase or decrease the level of funding needed to implement the updated RMP. *Table 3* and *figure 6* The table and charts below provide a snapshot of the River Trust Fund balances, the 2020/2021 approved budget, and the 2019/2020 Parks River Program budgeted and actual expenditures.

#### River Trust Fund Balance and Budget Summary

<b>Fiscal Year 2019/2020</b>	
Fund Balance as of July 1, 2019	\$170,404
Revenue ( <i>July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020</i> )	\$157,607
Expenditures	\$110,679
River Trust Fund balance as of June 30, 2020	\$217,332
2020/2021 Approved Budget	\$189,165

#### 2019/2020 Approved River Program Budget



**2019/2020 Expenditures*****OTHER RMP OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS***

There are some goals identified in the updated RMP and in past annual reports that the County will be continuing to evaluate while also making efforts to implement. River staff will continue educational efforts in 2021. Educational activities include stocking kiosks, boating safety information, life jacket requirements, public river access, private property locations, different recreation permit requirements, sanitation requirements, bathroom locations, and lists of approved outfitters.

***PUBLIC COMMENTS***

The public had three public meetings to provide comments to the Parks Division on the draft report. This is a recap of those meetings:

***Adhoc Coloma/Lotus Advisory Committee***

On January 7, 2020 this report was reviewed by the ad hoc committee of the Coloma/Lotus Advisory Committee (CLAC). This was a very productive meeting and there were great comments. The committee provided written comments that have been incorporated into this report. The section of adaptive management was suggested by the committee to quickly identify to the public the changes that have been made and why. The committee also added discussion of wildfire impacts on river use in 2020. There was an active discussion regarding the proposed revised river maps. The CLAC will work with staff on developing a new map, working with the County GIS department so that the maps are in the county system. The CLAC also supported the intern proposal and performing user counts in the C2G section in 2021. We will work together to develop how those counts will be documented. There was also a comment regarding the Sheriff's report regarding the drowning. In the report information was conflicting as staff said there were no deaths. Staff requested further information from the Sheriff's Office and the drowning was not rafting related and occurred in May 2020.

***Parks and Recreation Commission***

On January 21<sup>st</sup>, the parks manager presented the draft report to the Parks and Recreation Commission with a very quick overview. Whereas there were no comments for changes at that time, Commissioner Tom Cumpston sent an email later offering to proof the document. This was a tremendous help. There were minor changes and Commissioner Cumpston found areas that were inconsistent or needed clarification.

*Coloma/Lotus Advisory Committee*

On January 28<sup>th</sup>, staff presented the report to full committee of the Coloma/Lotus Advisory Committee. There were no changes made from this meeting.

**CLOSING**

Overall, the County Park's River Program, in coordination with the BLM, State Parks, and El Dorado County Sheriff's Boating Units, was successful in managing the South Fork American River's whitewater recreation from Chili Bar Dam to Folsom Reservoir. The implementation of the County's 2018 revised River Management Plan met most of the goals and objectives laid out in the plan, even with COVID-19 protocols in place. In 2020, people found the outdoors again; the user population in the Coloma/Lotus area peaked in July/August. The County and State Parks were at capacity.

The Parks Division had complaints about incompatible uses at the boat ramp at Henningsen Lotus Park. Staff is looking at the boat launch area and isolating it off so it's more accessible for boaters putting in and taking out while still leaving beach access for park goers.

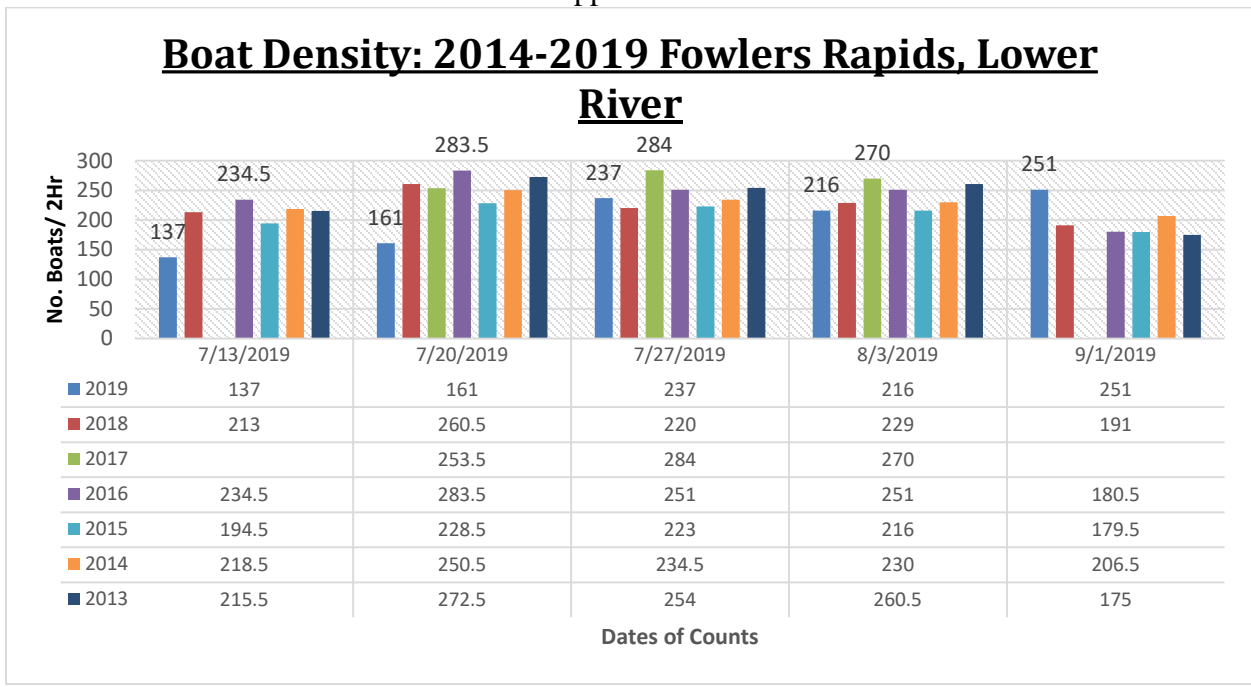
The River Recreation Supervisor position was vacated in 2019; the division had an opportunity to analyze ways to streamline process and staffing needs. The division hired an Administrative Technician in November that will assist in the river program administration. This position will have the ability to assist with other programs and functions while time studying ensures that the river is charged for only the time spent on the program. Many of the functions are administrative. During the river season, four seasonal River Aides will be hired to provide the educational and on-water support needed for the program.

River staff was able to utilize park staff to assist with boater counts and shuttles at a reduced rate. This allows the River Aides to spend time on the water and resolving river-related issues instead of setting shuttles. This also is a cost savings for the program.

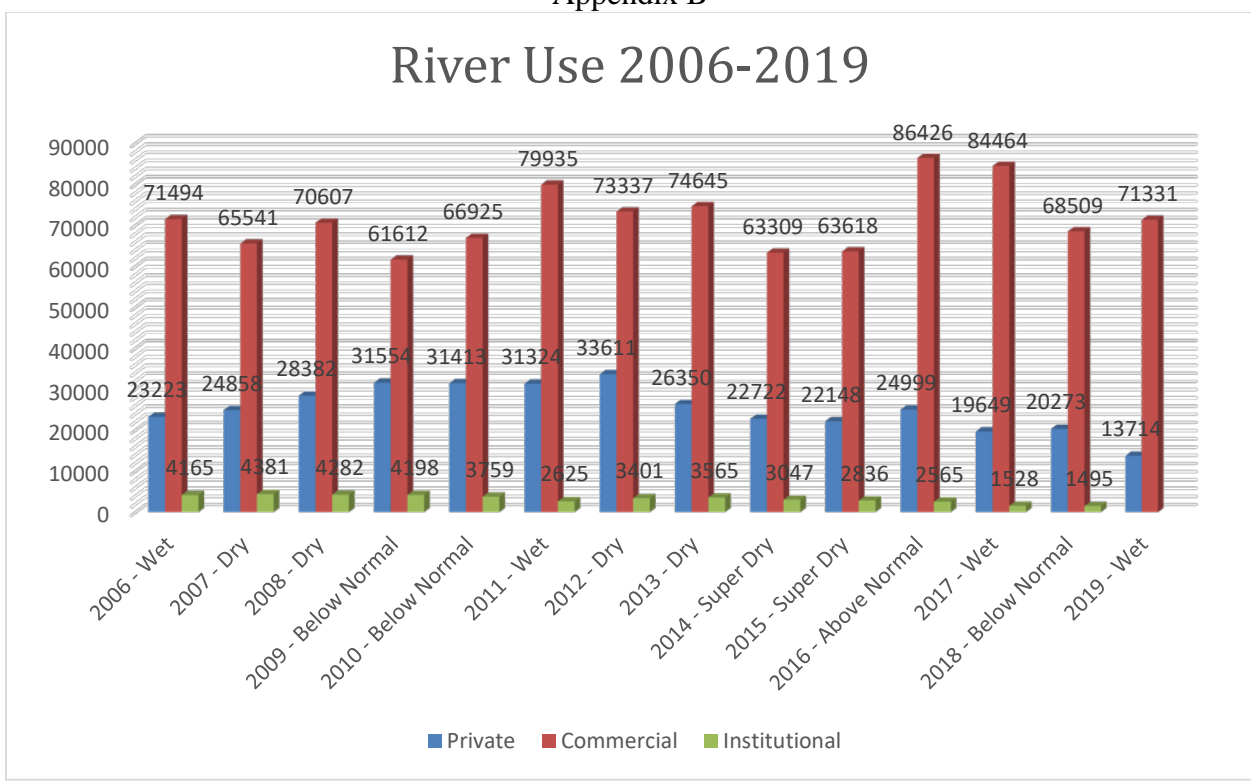
On November 10, 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved an item which entered El Dorado County and State Parks into a Joint Powers Agreement to manage the administrative function of the Salmon Falls and Marshall Gold State Park put-in and take-out facilities. This should make it easier for outfitters, as El Dorado County will issue their river permit and State Parks permit in one action. El Dorado County will retain .50 per person of the permit fee for performing this duty. This revenue should increase the River Trust Fund by an estimated \$25,000 annually. It is staff's opinion this was a win for everyone.

2020 was a complex year, and the Parks Division would like to thank the river community for a cooperative and successful season, despite COVID-19.

Appendix A



Appendix B



Appendix C

