

DRAFT Socio-Cultural Values

The unique combination of traditional cultural resources, prehistoric, historic, scenic, and recreational values of the Merced River and South Fork Merced River distinguishes them from other rivers in the Sierra Nevada and throughout the nation. From prehistoric through modern times, people have developed powerful and enduring relationships with these river corridors.

The socio-cultural values of the river corridors extend back at least 9,000 years. Visible evidence testifies to the river corridors' extraordinarily long continuum of use by American Indians. The corridors continue to have a significant role in maintaining cultural and religious traditions among American Indian peoples.

In a more modern context, the Merced River and South Fork Merced River corridors have become a destination for recreation and leisure, and a place to connect with nature. The corridors engender deep personal connections to the area, and figure prominently in the lives, stories, and traditions of generations of visitors.

The Merced River also played an important role in the birth of the American conservation movement, demonstrating that a symbiotic relationship can occur between conservation and tourism and serving as a proving ground for national park management practices.

Additionally, these socio-cultural values offer unique, rare, or exemplary opportunities to conduct scientific research that has regional or national significance.

CULTURAL ORV



Yosemite National Park museum collection, photo: Michael Dixon

Human use along the Merced and South Fork Merced rivers reflect trade, travel, settlement patterns, and spiritual use for thousands of years

SCENIC ORV



Yosemite National Park museum collections, Painting by w.w. Armstrong

The extraordinary scenery within the river corridors has inspired countless people to visit and attempt to capture the iconic vistas

RECREATION ORV



Jen Neregian

The Merced and South Fork Merced river corridors offer a diversity of activities within an exemplary landscape

"I feel the river should be for my family and for people like us to enjoy. I understand the environmental concerns, but 'enjoy' certainly does not mean 'destroy.' Maybe efforts could be focused on making sure people use the river responsibly."

1999 Merced River Plan public comment (#196)