

# *Tuolumne River* **RECREATION ROUNDTABLE**

WITH SPECIAL GUEST CONGRESSMAN TOM MCCLINTOCK

**AUGUST 9, 2023**



# — A Hard Working River



The Tuolumne River begins as snowmelt on Mount Lyell – 13,000 feet above sea level – and drains the northern portion of Yosemite National Park. It flows 149 miles from the High Sierra, through rolling foothills into the San Joaquin Valley where it joins the San Joaquin River.

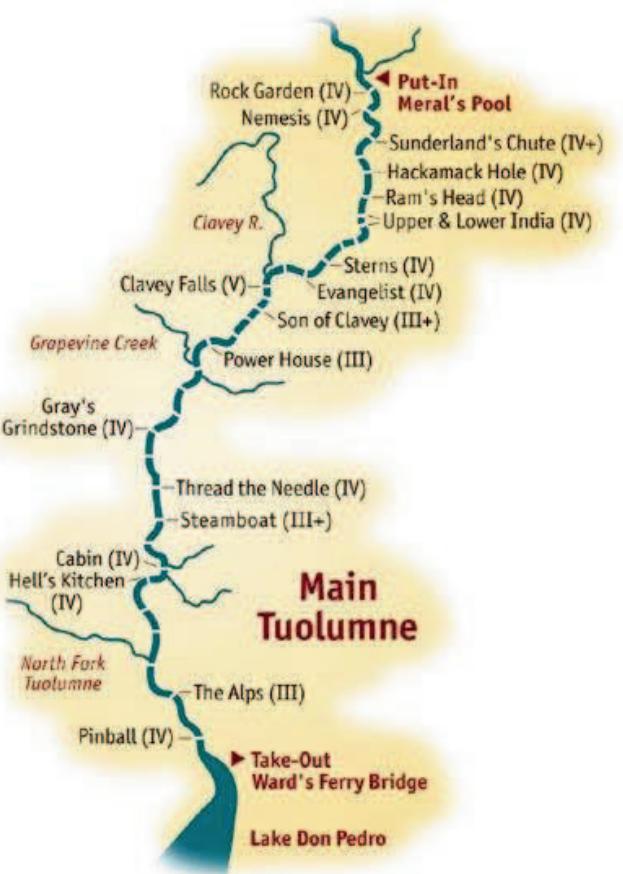
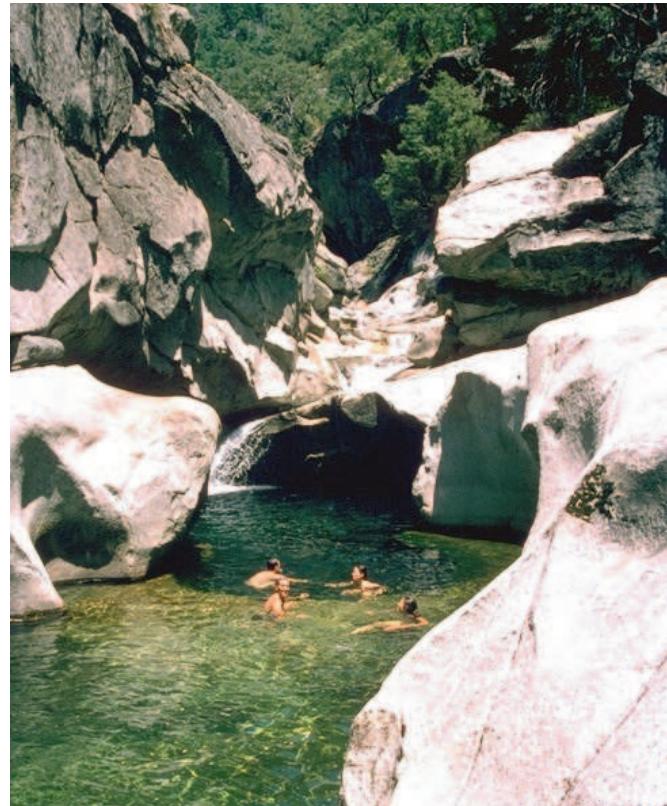


- Irrigation water for 200,000 acres** of prime farmland in the San Joaquin Valley.
- Water for 2.7 million people** in the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Hydropower** for the Modesto & Turlock Irrigation Districts and the SFPUC.
- Unparalleled recreation** opportunities that attract visitors from all over the world.

# — The Wild & Scenic Tuolumne River



Protection of the Tuolumne River was a key feature of the 1984 California Wilderness Act, which designated the upper 83 miles as a Federal Wild and Scenic River with **Whitewater Recreation as an Outstandingly Remarkable Value.**



The Tuolumne boasts world-class whitewater rafting, attracting visitors from across the country and around the world. Commercial rafting outfitters provide local jobs in Tuolumne County while attracting tourists to Groveland-area hotels, restaurants, stores and services.

# Rafting Attracts Tourists to Tuolumne County



## A Long History of Rafting

Early river pioneers first began rafting the Tuolumne in the 1960s. The first commercial permit was issued in 1973. Since then, Hetch Hetchy Water & Power has worked closely with the outfitters to time hydropower releases to enable rafting in the late spring, summer and early fall. Thank you, HHWP!



## Boosting the Local Economy

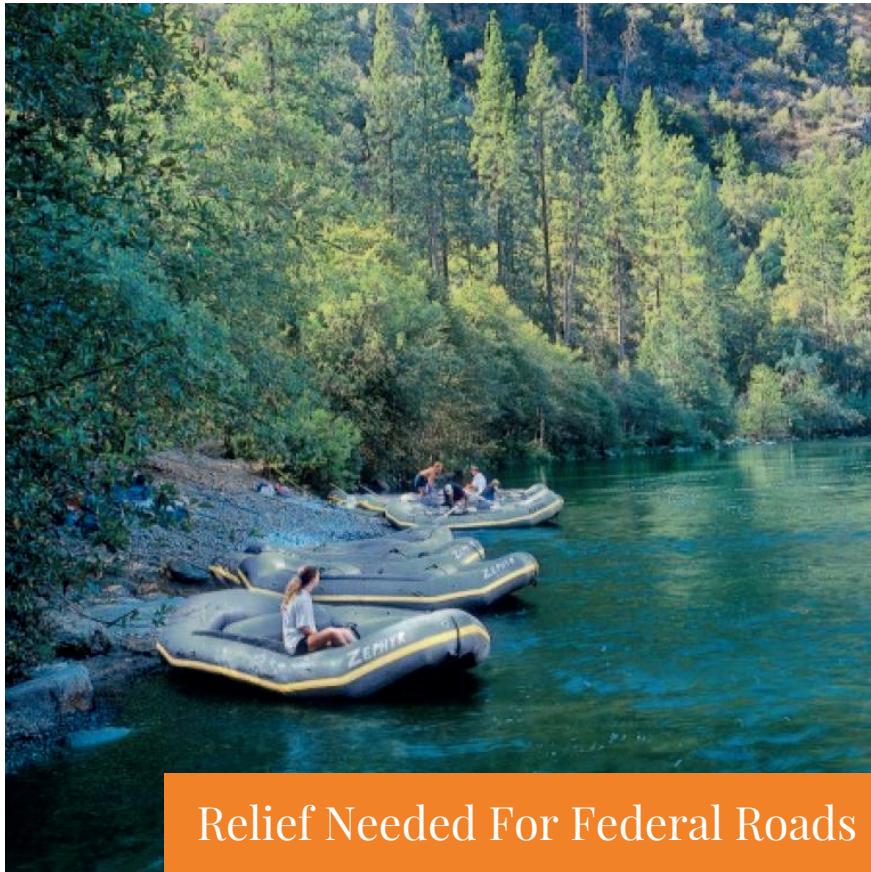
Rafting clients patronize local businesses, rather than just passing through the area on their way to Yosemite National Park. Visitors stop by Groveland — a historic Gold Country town for drinks at California's oldest saloon and to explore the Sierra foothills. Upwards of one million tourists visit Groveland each year, making it the second largest of Yosemite's gateway towns.



## An Unforeseen Challenge

The boom in solar energy and wind power has created an unexpected challenge for the rafting industry. As more renewables come online and produce electricity during the daylight hours, the value of hydropower generation is shifting to off-peak hours when rafting is not viable.



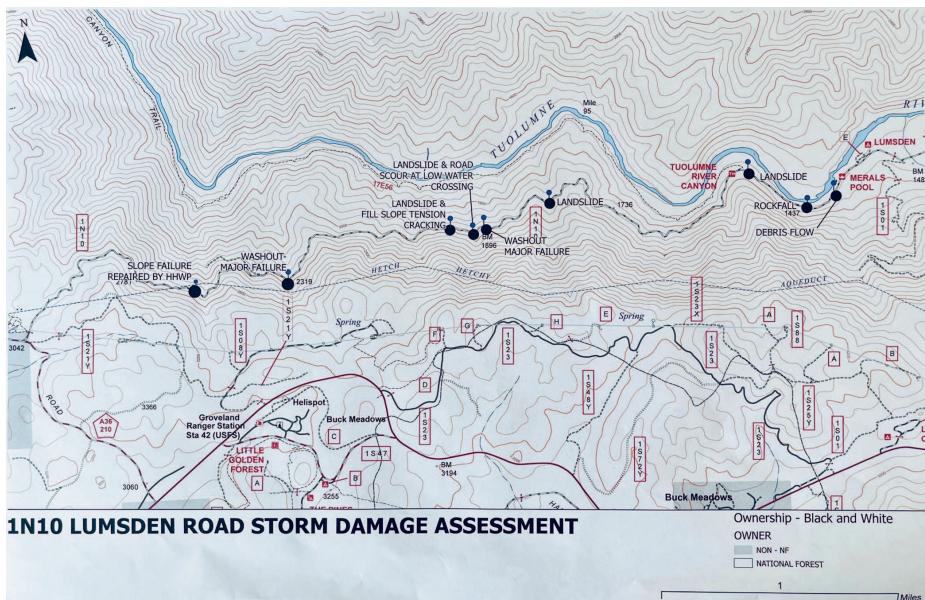


Relief Needed For Federal Roads



# Road Damage Has Caused Immediate Challenges

The intense storms of 2023 took a toll on the roads that provide access to and from the Tuolumne River. Lumsden Road (Federal) is the primary access to the put-in. The current closure of Lumsden Road requires rafting clients to hike for 40 minute down to the Meral's Pool put-in.



## Emergency Relief for Federally-Owned Roads

The ERFO Program, was established to assist federal agencies with the repair or reconstruction of federally-owned roads that are open to public travel, which are found to have suffered serious damage by a natural disaster over a wide area or by a catastrophic failure. Federal dollars are needed to expedite the repair of Lumsden Road.



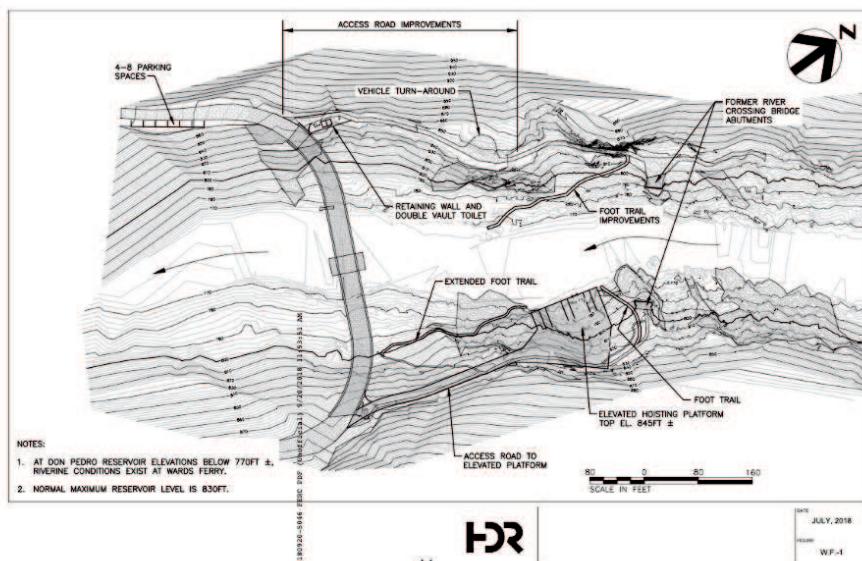
Ward's Ferry Road (County) provides egress from the takeout to Groveland. Its closure has forced rafters to paddle through log debris to Moccasin Point Marina on Lake Don Pedro. Don Pedro Recreation Area has done a good job at removing logs and allowing the alternative takeout, and the work continues.

Thank you, DPRA!



Tuolumne County is pursuing FEMA funding to repair Ward's Ferry Road.

Improvements to the Ward's Ferry takeout – a condition of the new Federal license for Don Pedro Dam – will increase interest in Tuolumne River rafting trips, bringing even more tourists to Tuolumne County. Reliable roads will be critical to the local economy.



Ward's Ferry (Tuolumne River)  
Whitewater Takeout  
Conceptual Design – Turlock &  
Modesto Irrigation Districts.

**Thank you, Congressman McClintock, for participating in the Tuolumne River Recreation Roundtable!**