



Surfrider Foundation
Ventura County Chapter – Matilija Coalition
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May 5, 2008

Darryl Buxton
Project Manager
US Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

RE: Comments on Recreational Trail Component for Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project

Dear Mr Buxton:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Recreational Trail component of the final design for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project.

The trails component is an important aspect of the project. This will determine the future public access and use in the project area, and will provide restored recreation opportunities and, more importantly, access for future research and education programs.

We appreciate the extensive research and alternatives analysis provided by the consultant team. It is clear that geography and private property constrains the opportunities for trails and public access.

Our primary comment at this time is: *The alternatives should be carefully considered for compatibility with local residences and private property owners.*

Trails in reservoir project area:

The trails described provide good opportunities for public access and recreation. Having a variety of trails with different levels of difficulty is a good approach. The overlook trail up to the adjacent peak will be a highlight for many visitors to the area.

While it is difficult to plan trails before the final design of sediment storage sites and actual removal of the fine sediments has been completed, we want to ensure that the opportunity for creekside trails and access is not overlooked. Specifically, we have always envisioned the restoration of Hanging Rock as a destination:

Hanging Rock Trail: Removal of the dam and sediment may uncover the scenic geologic formation historically known as “Hanging Rock,” once a popular destination for local citizens and tourists. The initial plans included a “lower trail” along the stream bank that would provide access to the “Hanging Rock” depicted in historic photos. Future planning should include provisions for this lower trail and rest area as initially conceived.

Such a lower trail would connect the existing access road at the base of the dam upstream, past Hanging Rock, ultimately reconnecting with the upper trail to create a scenic loop. This would be a basic educational loop trail, which when combined with the overlook would provide an opportunity to become familiar with the project and the surrounding ecosystem values.

We hope these comments are helpful in addressing some of the ongoing issues and concerns, and look forward to working with the study team in the design and planning stages of this ecosystem restoration project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Paul Jenkin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

A. Paul Jenkin
Coordinator, Matilija Coalition
Environmental Director, Surfrider Foundation - Ventura County Chapter
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