Interpretive Plan

for the
Sequoia National Forest
and
Giant Sequoia National Monument

Region 5, Pacific Southwest Region
February 2008

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Submitted by:

/s/ Mary V. Cole
Forest Landscape Architect/Interpretive Program Manager

Recommended by:

/s/ Nancy C. Ruthenbeck
Forest Recreation, Lands, and Minerals Officer

Approved by:

/s/ Tina J. Terrell 2/15/08
Forest Supervisor

Table of Contents

Part I: The Interpretive Strategy 1

Introduction 1
- What is Interpretation? 1

Background 2
- Existing Program and Program Challenges 2
- Direction and Expectations 3
- Funding and Financial Sustainability 4

Forest Setting 4

Interpretive Audience 5
- Existing Visitor Profiles 5
- User Groups 6
- Underrepresented Populations 8
- Future Visitors 9

Goals and Objectives 10
- Mission Statement 10
- Forestwide Interpretive Goals 10
- Management Objectives 10
- Interpretive Objectives 10

Central Forest Theme and Sub-Themes 11

Important Topics for Recreation Settings 11

Proposed Actions 14
- Coordinated Forestwide Program 14
- Interpretive Opportunities for Visitors 15
- Program Expansion to New Audiences 17

Part II: Forest Program and Recommendations 21

Roles and Responsibilities 21
- Forest Interpretive Team 21

Project Development Process 21
- Project Submittal 21
- Design and Fabrication 22

Recommendations for Services 22
- Guidelines for Selecting a Topic and Developing a Story 22
- Priorities for Recreation Settings 22
- Wayside Exhibits 23
- Self-Service Visitor Information Kiosks 24
- Visitor Information Boards 25
- Partners in Visitor Information 25
- Mobile Visitor Information Booth 25

Forestwide Visitor Guide 26
Self-Guided Tours 26
Web-Based Products and Services 26
Personal Contact Services 26
Other Helpful Information 27

Part III: Recreation Settings: Inventory, Products, and Services 29

Rivers and Lakes 29
The Kern River: The Forks, Upper Kern, and Lower Kern 29
Lake Isabella 32
Kings River 33
Hume Lake 34
Tule River 35

Kings Canyon Scenic Byway 36

Kern Plateau and Scenic Route 37
Sherman Pass Road 37

Great Western Divide and Scenic Route 38
Western Divide Highway 38

Lloyd Meadow 39

Hume High Elevation 41

Greenhorn 42

Wildlands 43
Kiavah Wilderness 44
South Sierra Wilderness 44
Dome Land Wilderness 44
Jennie Lakes Wilderness 44
Monarch Wilderness and Agnew Roadless Area 44
Golden Trout Wilderness 45
Kings River Special Management Area (Non-OHV) 45
Oat Mountain 45

Front Country 45

Breckenridge 46

Piutes 46

Kings River Special Management Area (OHV) 47

Part IV: Appendices 49

Appendix A: Program Direction 49

Appendix B: Recreation Niche Statement/Maps 51

Appendix C: Location Map of Sequoia National Forest 55

Appendix D: Location Map of the Giant Sequoia National Monument 57

Appendix E: Race/Ethnicity Tables for Counties 59
Appendix F: Storyline Development Tools 61
Appendix G: Maps 69
Recreation Setting: Rivers and Lakes 69
Recreation Setting: Kings Canyon Scenic Byway 70
Recreation Setting: Kern Plateau and Scenic Route 71
Recreation Setting: Great Western Divide and Scenic Route 72
Recreation Setting: Lloyd Meadow 73
Recreation Setting: Hume High Elevation 74
Recreation Setting: Greenhorn 75
Recreation Setting: Wildlands 76
Recreation Setting: Front Country, Breckenridge, Piutes, KRSMA OHV 77
Appendix H: Self-Service Visitor Information Locations 79
Appendix I: Interpretive Project Plan and Tracking Form 81
Appendix J: Wayside Exhibit Locations 83
Appendix K: Wayside Exhibit and Information Panel Fabrication Methods 85
Appendix L: Planning and Design Costs 87
Appendix M: Wayside Exhibit Stanchion Designs 89
Appendix N: Formats and Media Accessibility 91
Appendix O: Publications and Recreation Opportunity Guides 93
Appendix P: Helpful Websites 95
Appendix Q: Interpretive Contractors 97
Appendix R: Acknowledgements/Participants 99

PART I: The Interpretive Strategy

Introduction

The *Interpretive Plan for the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument* will guide the development and implementation of interpretive exhibits and services for this forest. This plan establishes interpretive goals, objectives, themes, topics, and important storylines for the 12 recreation settings; provides an action plan, media recommendations, design guidelines for interpretive efforts, and tools to help forest interpreters.

At the beginning of this interpretive planning process, participants were polled to determine what should be included in a plan to improve and expand interpretive services for the Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument. A distinction needed to be established between interpretation and other forms of public communication. The special characteristics and benefits of interpretation were becoming lost in the more familiar educational and informational communication styles of agency professionals.

The Sequoia has a strong conservation education program with many dedicated specialists and technicians participating in a variety of educational arenas. However, educational methods used with captive audiences in these important efforts do not always transfer well to the recreating public. This plan will speak to the Sequoia effort to reach this other audience, the non-captive, recreating public.

What is Interpretation?

"Interpretation is a communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource," as defined by the National Association for Interpretation. The *Interpretive Project Guide Book*, Region 6, offers the following definition:

> Interpretation is a form of communication that goes beyond facts to reveal what things mean, how they fit together and why they matter. Interpretive projects are the physical ways we go about interpreting: the books, brochures, signs, models, tapes, and pictures—whatever works.

Dr. Sam Ham of the University of Idaho identified the characteristics of interpretation as pleasurable and entertaining, relevant to the audience, organized, and having a theme.

Interpretation, environmental education, conservation education, and information services are often thought to be the same. Each provides useful and relevant information about natural resources conservation. However, technical differences exist, even though these communication processes are closely related.

Interpretation is informal, recreational, and nonacademic in tone or approach. The audience is voluntary, with no time commitment, and no need to pay attention. Interpretation captures the non-captive audience. Effective interpretation generates curiosity, intending to evoke a response from the audience toward the subject. Information transfer of facts and figures is not the driving force. Enhancing the audience's experience of the subject is. Because of interpretation's subjective nature, success is hard to measure.

Environmental education (EE), on the other hand, is usually formal and delivered to a captive audience. EE is specific, curriculum-based education, with learning objectives that can be measured. EE is generally directed toward primary, secondary, and post-secondary school systems. Academic approaches are used to transfer information, facts, and figures, with the intent of increasing the intellectual capacity of the audience to analyze and problem solve.

Conservation education (CE) is the term used by the Forest Service for environmental education in conservation. CE provides structured educational experiences and activities, targeted to varying age groups and populations, both in formal and informal educational settings. CE enables people to realize how natural resources and ecosystems affect each other and how resources can be used wisely. The program equips people to make their own intelligent, informed resource decisions.

Visitor information services aim to inform, orient, and increase awareness of Forest Service programs, activities, and services. Through these services the public is made aware of how they can make use of national forest lands, facilities, and services.

Interpretive techniques can be used across subject areas and venues, including environmental education and visitor information services.

Background

Existing Program and Program Challenges

Previous to this effort, a forestwide interpretive plan did not exist for the Sequoia National Forest. Interpretive efforts were most often combined with visitor information services and environmental education. Interpretation involved a few dedicated individuals, developing interpretive products and services at the district or project level. Interpretive products and services include:

- Visitor information stations (VIS), with staffed information desks at Forest Service offices, interpretive outlets, and some interpretive exhibits;
- Brochures and handouts, including Recreation Opportunity Guide (ROG) sheets and a guide to the Giant Sequoia National Monument;
- Campground programs and guided tours;
- Interpretive panels at features, trails, and along roadsides;
- Agency participation in community events, festivals, and county fairs.

Lacking an encompassing, forestwide strategy, the Sequoia interpretive efforts were opportunistic and not coordinated across districts or forest program areas. No method of prioritizing projects existed, nor were any standards or evaluation methods for quality control established. This lack of coordination led to missed opportunities to collaborate on projects and to build a sequence of opportunities for visitor experiences across the forest.

Reduced budgets and staffing levels severely impact the ability of agency personal to provide interpretive services. Most visitor information stations are closed on weekends and holidays when the majority of visitors are present. Personal contact services, such as campground programs and guided tours, are primarily provided by student interns and volunteers. Publications, such as the Recreation Opportunity Guides, are not consistently maintained. Many

existing interpretive sites have exhibits with outdated messages. Other interpretive projects are incomplete.

Interpretive products and services focus on visitors only. When visitor statistics and demographics are compared, lower income groups, persons of color, and ethnic groups are underrepresented in the visiting public, as well as participation in interpretive programs and services. Only a fraction of the population living within a 2½-hour drive of the Sequoia visits each year.

Research has shown that children are becoming less interested and less involved in outdoor activities. The challenge of the interpretive program is not only to reach the visiting public with quality products, but also to expand the influence of the interpretive program. The Sequoia interpretive program will need to outreach to the non-visiting public, especially children and underrepresented groups, in order to create future advocates for the forest.

Direction and Expectations

With the creation of the Giant Sequoia National Monument and the close proximity of the forest to two national parks, the public expectation for interpretive services is high.

The value and need for interpretive services were identified in the 1988 Sequoia National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, the 1990 Mediated Settlement Agreement, and the 1991 Kings River Special Management Area Management Plan. Each document provides some direction (see Appendix A).

The 2005 Regional Forester Review called for the Sequoia to develop an interpretive strategy for the recreation program. The review team reported that interpretive services could become a valuable tool to disseminate information to an increasing and demanding recreating public, as well as to communicate important forest program information to the public. Development of a forestwide interpretive plan was assigned in the FY06 recreation program of work.

A forestwide recreation niche, which identified 12 recreation settings, was developed in December 2005. The niche statement and maps of the recreation settings can be found in Appendix B. Interpretive products and services proposed in this plan will reflect this niche.

Direction from national and regional leadership includes:

- In March 2006, the regional heritage resource program identified providing interpretation, educational tours, and volunteer opportunities as goals in the heritage resources strategic and five-year action plans. Objective 1 is for Region 5 to become national leaders in providing high quality heritage interpretive experiences.
- In July 2006, the Executive Leadership Team approved “interpretive and educational plans” as a national performance measure for FY07 and FY08.
- In October 2006, the Chief of the Forest Service announced a new initiative, “More Kids in the Woods.” The Chief noted the need to reestablish the relevance of national forests and grasslands to all Americans, especially urban populations and youth, so that the Forest Service can continue “to provide great memories to this and future generations.”

Funding and Financial Sustainability

Interpretive Services (IS), historically, has seen little appropriated money. Providing interpretive services is not integrated across functional areas, as funding and accomplishments are only identified in the recreation and wildlife program areas.

The *Business Plan for the Sequoia National Forest*, published in September 2004, showed that during FY03, the Sequoia spent $775,821 and used 17.1 FTEs on public information, interpretation, and education. An additional 7.2 FTEs and $332,697 would have been needed to do the rest of the work at the desired level. These numbers are somewhat misleading, however. As defined in the business plan, this program area included much more than interpretation in those expenditures. The program involves contacts between forest personnel (or volunteers) and the public in a wide variety of settings, such as forest offices, schools, community fairs, and special events. Information is provided on a variety of subjects, including recreation opportunities, stewardship responsibilities, and natural/cultural resources education. The program area also included expenditures for National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM), which is a survey of forest visitors that was conducted in FY03. The actual expenditures for interpretation alone would have been substantially less, but the business plan did not itemize them.

The shortfalls will need to be met with funding opportunities outside of appropriations from Congress. Opportunities created in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) allow federal agencies to charge for services that generate funds to provide benefits to visitors. Interpretive products and services are candidates for expenditure of these funds. Partnerships and volunteer programs are other avenues to explore. Expanding existing partnerships, including maximizing the opportunities with nonprofit organizations, such as the Three Forests Interpretive Association (3FIA), will be pursued. For more information, see the business plan at: http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/business-plans/.

Forest Setting

The Sequoia National Forest encompasses almost 1.2 million acres in portions of three counties (Tulare, Kern, and Fresno), centrally located in California, at the southern end of the Sierra Nevada. The San Joaquin Valley, the largest agricultural producer in the world, abuts the western edge. To the south are the Tehachapi Mountains that separate the valley from the huge urban populations of southern California. East of the forest and the remainder of the Sierra Nevada is the vast Mojave Desert.

The forest is unique in its juxtaposition to the megalopolitan areas of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, San Francisco, and San Diego, and the metropolitan areas of Fresno, Sacramento, Bakersfield, and Las Vegas, Nevada. Over two million people live within an hour's drive of the forest, and over 28 million people live within a half day's drive. Recent school studies found the people in this area speak over 26 languages. A few of the cultures within the forest's zone of influence include Native American, Hmong, Laotian, Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, and numerous cultures related to Spanish speaking countries, ranging from Mexico to South America.

The Sequoia is both north and south of Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks (see Appendix C). Visitors to the Hume Lake District must drive through the national parks, in order to access much of the district. People frequently do not realize if they are in the park or the forest and are confused when confronted with the different policies and types of facilities found in each place.

Some people are attracted to the park, but camp in the forest, because they prefer the forest's facilities. The Sequoia is also adjacent to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, state forest lands, and the Tule River Indian Reservation, the second largest in California. The Sierra National Forest shares the Sequoia's northern boundary, and the Inyo National Forest shares the Sequoia's eastern boundary.

The Sequoia National Forest, named for the world's larges trees, is the only national forest named for a tree. The Sequoia celebrates the greatest concentration of giant sequoia groves in the world. The Sequoia's landscape is as spectacular as its trees, boasting soaring granite monoliths, glacier-carved canyons, caves, roaring world class whitewater, and scenic lakes and reservoirs. Elevations range from 1,000 feet in the lower canyons to peaks over 12,000 feet on the crest of the Sierra, providing visitors with spectacular views in a dramatic range of settings. These mountains stand in contrast to California's San Joaquin Valley, providing cool relief for families from the scorching heat of summer and welcome blue skies and sun during the cold fog of winter. These spectacular features provide an attractive overnight destination for visitors from far and near.

The forest includes five of California's ecological zones. Due to the wide variation in soils, elevation, and climate, the vegetation is highly diverse and complex. Plant communities range from lower elevation perennial grasslands, through chaparral and pinyon-juniper hillsides, to mixed conifer forests, aspen stands and true fir forests, and ultimately to alpine vegetation and the unique species found only above tree line on high Sierra peaks. The forest's namesake, the giant sequoia, is known worldwide as an awe-inspiring tree of immense size and longevity. The Sequoia National Forest has the largest known acreage of giant sequoia ecosystems in the world, with 38 of the 75 naturally occurring groves located within forest borders.

The Giant Sequoia National Monument covers approximately one-third of the forest (see Appendix D). It was established on April 15, 2000, to protect the objects of interest within its boundary, including the magnificent giant sequoias.

The Sequoia National Forest is a unique place, highly valued by its neighbors, visitors, and distant admirers. Giant sequoias are a symbolic vestige of the wild Sierra, evoking a deep emotional response, even from people who have never experienced their grandeur firsthand. From the dramatic Kings Canyon, through the ancient giant sequoias, down to the mighty Kern River, the Sequoia National Forest, including the Giant Sequoia National Monument, features diverse settings and special places, offering a wide range of opportunities for visitors year-round.

Interpretive Audience

Interpretation, by definition, is recreational and voluntary, having the goal of enhancing the audience's experience of the subject. Traditionally, the interpretive audience consists of the recreating public visiting the forest. With the internet and new digital media, the interpretive program may be expanded to reach new, underrepresented groups and virtual visitors that will never set foot in the forest.

Existing Visitor Profiles

Most visitors originate within California; 50% are of local origin, coming from Kern, Tulare, and Fresno counties and within 61 miles of their recreation destination. Seventy-five percent of all

visitors reside within 275 miles (2½-hour drive) of the forest, with the population centers of Sacramento, Bakersfield, Orange County, and Los Angeles contributing a large influx. The forest also receives a significant number of international visitors, because of the proximity to two national parks.

Family oriented overnight activities are in highest demand, even for local visitors. According to NVUM data, visitors to the Sequoia are in the above-average spending category and use the Sequoia as an oasis to escape summer heat and the stresses of urban life. Most visits to the Sequoia involve at least one stay overnight, and visitors prefer to use developed facilities. Overnight facilities are an excellent venue to engage the visiting public in interpretive activities or to market opportunities.

Visitors to the Sequoia are more active than the regional average, which suggests that visitors stay long enough and are likely to seek out and participate in interpretive experiences, such as guided and self-guided interpretive tours, programs, and interpretive trails. During their stays, most visitors pursue a variety of activities. Viewing scenery and driving for pleasure, hiking, hunting, group camping and picnicking, boating, fishing, and whitewater rafting are popular.

Visitor statistics suggest that the Sequoia has a strong family orientation, with a larger than average number of children under the age of 16 years and persons over the age of 61 visiting this forest. The large number of children under the age of 16 visit the Sequoia with parents and grandparents. Interpretive products and services designed for children need to be incorporated into the overall program. Activity oriented interpretation that provides for adult interaction could be especially effective. Use by nontraditional user groups, especially Hispanics and Asian, is prevalent and growing.

For more detail on visitor statistics, see the NVUM website:
http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/.

User Groups

Visitors pick their destinations according to the activities they prefer. The Sequoia's prevalent user groups could be classified according to the following descriptions.

Water Players: This user group crosses a wide variety of ethnic, age, income groups, and skill levels, sharing their attraction to water. They are drawn to the Rivers and Lakes setting. Their toys or preferred activity dictate which water body they visit.

Forest Experience Seekers: Generally attracted to the higher elevations to escape the heat of summer, the congestion of the city, or the complexities of daily life, this user group is looking for a forest setting to relax and unwind. They are attracted to developed sites, as well as dispersed camping areas.

Sightseeing Tourists: Kings Canyon, the giant sequoia groves, the scenery, and wildlife associated with natural areas attract this user group. These visitors are often overflow from the national parks and come with higher expectations for services and facilities.

Activity Oriented Adventure Seekers: These adventuresome recreationists include mountaineers, backpackers, stock users, OHV users, OSV users, rock climbers, whitewater rafters, kayakers, cross-country skiers, snow trekkers, and geocachers looking for new and

challenging experiences. These visitors usually have higher disposable incomes, are well educated, and tend to be in and value good health and physical condition. Outfitters and guides provide services to many of these visitors.

Most wilderness use is overnight by either stock users or backpackers. Backpackers are generally physically fit, younger, have enough income to acquire equipment, and are fairly well educated. Wilderness stock users generally have high disposable incomes. Some may ride horses as their preferred mode of travel. Others may have been backpackers in their youth, but as they age, are no longer able or willing to access their favorite wilderness destinations on foot. Although the Sequoia has six designated wildernesses, visitor demand is not high (compared to recreation at developed sites) and not a large focus of the recreation program.

Backcountry pack trips, whitewater rafting, fishing, and hunting excursions are popular outfitter-guide experiences available to visitors. These experiences can be once or twice in a lifetime adventures and are potentially life or attitude changing. Investments in interpretive products and services geared toward these audiences could be most effective in developing lifelong advocates. Outfitter-guides are potential partners in delivery of these products and services.

Activity oriented adventure seekers and other user groups with higher disposable income may be willing to pay for interpretive services through program fees. Some of these activities have a higher potential of impacting resources; conservation and low impact use messages could be especially effective delivered through interpretive products.

Social Gatherers: Attracted to areas and facilities large enough to support group activity, many are attracted to the Rivers and Lakes setting, with developed group sites that are easily accessible from the highway or dispersed camping opportunities. These visitors come to the forest to have a good time with friends or family. Church groups, fraternities, family reunions, informal social groups, and clubs are among this user group. Some of these groups have a long tradition of using particular sites.

Public demand for outdoor opportunities to accommodate larger social groups presents forest managers with challenges, including impacts from human waste, littering, soil compaction and erosion, and vegetation disturbance. Larger groups can mean concentrated resource impacts, especially in riparian areas and other environmentally sensitive areas. Many of these users are urbanites, lower income groups, and nontraditional user groups, unfamiliar or unconcerned with the dangers and vulnerabilities of the natural environment they have come to enjoy. This situation is especially true of lakes and rivers within a one-hour drive of urban centers. Interpretive programs that increase agency presence, use peers to deliver the messages, and provide audience-valued resource information, incorporating low impact use messages, could be effective ways to increase outreach to nontraditional users, while mitigating resource impacts.

Hunter/Gatherers: This user group includes anglers, hunters, and those visiting to collect forest products, such as berries, foliage, rocks, or gold. Some of these groups have a long tradition of use at particular sites (e.g., traditional hunting camps).

Students/Enthusiasts: They often come in groups, when visiting the forest, from elder hostels, special interest organizations, and schools. These groups are looking for information and education rich experiences.

Virtual Visitor: As the Sequoia is steward of the largest concentration of giant sequoia groves in the world, the forest has a great number of committed admirers and interest groups, some of whom want to learn more about these awe-inspiring trees. Books, television, websites, and school programs are all avenues for these persons to experience the resources of the Sequoia.

The internet has introduced many persons to the Sequoia, turning many non-visitors into virtual visitors. Many of these people may visit the forest after viewing the forest website, and others use the website to get information to plan their visits.

Most people that benefit from resources originating on the Sequoia, such as water and electrical power, may never visit. All are potential advocates. Interpretive products and services that outreach to these audiences need to be developed, in order to reveal the connection between their lives, their personal decisions, and the forest's natural resources. Especially important is the need to reach children in urban areas, to create future advocates for national forest resources.

Recent studies document that children are gravitating away from outdoor experiences and toward a virtual indoor reality. Interpretive products and services need to be researched and developed to rebuild the connection between children and the Sequoia's natural and cultural resources.

Neighbors: Neighbors include residents of small communities, such as Kernville, Lake Isabella, Pinehurst, and Camp Nelson, who live within or adjacent to the forest boundary. Some depend on the national forest for their livelihood. These communities are increasing in size, as retirees escape urban life and seek lower costs of living by moving into these rural areas. Many of these new residents have little or no experience with more natural landscapes. Partnerships with long-term community residents and agencies, in order to provide information rich interpretive programs and materials, could help residents become aware of important resource conservation issues.

Agency neighbors include the Tule River Indian Reservation, Bureau of Land Management, Mountain Home State Demonstration Forest, and Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks. They are all existing partners, with potential for delivering interpretive services (or already do).

Traditional Users: This user group includes people who belong to groups or families with a long history of using a particular area of the forest. Some of these uses began prior to the establishment of the Forest Service. These people care deeply about the area and about maintaining access rights to continue their use of these areas. Many are older and requesting vehicle access to areas they may have previously accessed by foot. This group includes generational use by Native Americans, ranchers with grazing allotments, recreation residence permittees, and people with family traditions in hunting, fishing, and other activities.

Underrepresented Populations

Only a small portion of the population within a 2½-hour drive of the Sequoia visits the forest each year. The portion that does visit is not representative of the diverse population in that area. Underrepresented ethnic groups are Hispanic, African American, and Asian, with the greatest disparity in the groups claiming to be Hispanic or Latino and African American. (See Appendix E.) Lower income groups, especially children from inner city or urban populations, are also underrepresented among forest visitors. Barriers to visiting the Sequoia for underrepresented groups include:

- **No tradition of use:** Populations new to the United States or lacking social traditions in wildland settings are less likely to be aware of the recreational opportunities and benefits offered on national forest lands.
- **Language and communication styles:** The Forest Service traditionally uses static, written formats to communicate with the public, in the form of brochures and signs. In many homes, English is not the primary language. However, most groups traveling to the forest will have at least one child or member who speaks English and serves as interpreter for the group. In the case of the Hmong culture, their language has not been a written language until recently.
- **Travel distances:** Travel costs for lower income groups limit their ability to visit the forest. Most trips to the Sequoia involve at least one overnight stay, because of the time needed to travel to a forest destination. Developed recreation sites and dispersed recreation areas, especially those with a source of water (lake or stream) close to population centers, are popular with lower income groups.
- **Facilities and services outdated/designed for traditional visitors/in poor repair:** Areas that provide an opportunity for larger social gatherings for extended families are in demand with many nontraditional forest users.

New methods of interpretation and efforts to outreach to these groups need to be developed with careful attention to their special needs. In many cases, developing products and services to reach out into the communities where underrepresented groups live, in order to raise their awareness of opportunities available or to bring the resource to them, may be needed. In other cases, for the few who do visit, services need to be developed that meet their needs.

Future Visitors

In the next 25 years, the population in the Sequoia's market area is projected to increase 38%, and this increase will place more demands on the Sequoia's resources. Conservation and resource stewardship will be increasingly important, especially for more environmentally sensitive areas. Unmanaged recreation has the potential to damage forest resources when careless or uninformed visitors do not follow regulations for responsible use. Effective interpretive techniques and public information services can help to inform and motivate the public, both visitors and non-visitors, into becoming stewards of the forest.

The greatest growth is projected to be in Hispanic and Asian populations, and their use is projected to increase dramatically in the next 25 years. Interpretation methods designed to reach these nontraditional users need to communicate important resource issues, solicit commitment to conservation, and encourage appropriate behaviors. Interpretive services can play a major role in developing and soliciting advocates within these newer user groups, if successful.

Many of the younger, more traditional user groups get information or communicate in new, more innovative ways, such as the internet, text messaging, and other technology. In order to reach them effectively, interpretive products and services should also be provided through use of technology.

Another phenomenon to keep in mind is the aging of the population. The Sequoia attracts a greater number of visitors over the age of 61 than most forests in the region, and this trend is expected to increase with the aging of the baby boom generation. Demand for services that are accessible for individuals with disabilities, as well as the demands of a more active and

physically fit senior population, will impact the types of interpretive products and services that need to be provided.

Goals and Objectives

Mission Statement

The Sequoia interpretive program will provide customer-focused products and services that build public appreciation of forest resources and support for management within the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument.

Forestwide Interpretive Goals

The Sequoia program will provide interpretive products and services that:

- Promote public understanding of their responsibility in protecting forest ecosystems, cultural resources, and public facilities while visiting the forest;
- Stimulate local economies of communities that depend on tourism, through increased visitation, return visits, and longer visitor stays in or near the Sequoia;
- Increase public support for forest stewardship of all forest resources;
- Increase visitor/public satisfaction by enhancing their visitor experiences;
- Inform and interpret to the public the objects of interest within and the management of the Giant Sequoia National Monument;
- Reach out to underrepresented populations and youth to reestablish the relevance of national forests and grasslands to all Americans, especially urban populations, so that the Forest Service can continue “to provide great memories to this and future generations.”

Management Objectives

This interpretive plan will outline a coordinated forest program and interpretive strategy to:

- Incorporate current agency messages and emerging emphasis areas into interpretive products and services;
- Ensure the delivery of Forest Service messages to target markets through a variety of high quality venues and products;
- Identify priorities to ensure that limited funds for interpretation are used in the most cost effective way;
- Build a forestwide, interdisciplinary team to support the development of high quality interpretive services and products.

Interpretive Objectives

Visitors/publics will understand:

- The living things and elements of the forest ecosystem are interconnected;
- Humans are members of the ecosystem, and they have personal responsibility for conservation of natural resources;
- Disturbances, such as fire and flood, are essential to forest ecosystem health;
- Many valid demands for forest resources exist;
- Landscape management practices are based on scientific study, congressional perception of people’s needs and desires, and judicial rulings, and, therefore, change over time.

Visitors/publics will feel:

- Inspired by the power, beauty, and complexity of natural ecosystems;
- Appreciation and respect for the Sequoia's resources and its ecosystems;
- Support and trust for Forest Service management of resources and ecosystems;
- Responsible for contributing to the conservation of public lands.

Visitors/publics will:

- Behave in an environmentally responsible manner while visiting the forest;
- Return to the forest for another visit and participate in other interpretive programs;
- Share with their family, friends, and neighbors the importance of conservation of natural resources and stewardship of public lands;
- Contribute time and support funding opportunities for forest projects and/or participate in forest activities and programs.

Central Forest Theme and Sub-Themes

The Sequoia National Forest, a public treasure, cared for and enjoyed by people, sustains and enriches lives today and in the future. A magnificent landscape, the Sequoia is a beautiful, living tapestry, woven with high mountain peaks and meadows, cut by steep river canyons, carved from roaring whitewater, glaciers, and earthquakes, and accented by granite monoliths and forests rich in diverse and unique species.

- Giant sequoias are a world renowned, public treasure to be protected and enjoyed. The giant sequoia rise above the rest of the forest as one of the largest and most ancient living things on this planet, providing witness and record to ecological and cultural change, continually evoking public emotion, opinion, and action.
- Water is a valued resource enjoyed by the public through recreation opportunities and then collected and harnessed to provide drinking water, irrigation, and power to the Central Valley and desert communities. Rivers run wild from high mountains, ripple and tumble through mid-elevation conifer forests and meadows, rage through steep-walled canyons, and are contained and diverted at lower elevations.
- A remarkable mix of habitats supports a wide variety of plants, animals, and people, creating interwoven communities of life. Multiple bioregions from alpine to desert converge within the boundaries, making the Sequoia unique.
- Ecosystems in the Sequoia are dynamic and shaped by disturbance processes, such as fire, flood, and geologic forces. Landforms, fossils, fire scars, and tree rings provide clues to the story of ecological and cultural change.

Important Topics for Recreation Settings

The Sequoia's recreation settings are listed in this section, and each setting has a list of preferred topics for storylines. Refer to Appendix F, Storyline Development Tools, which has reference materials to aid in the development of each topic.

The rivers and lakes setting is divided into "places," because of the unique characteristics of the landscapes and visitors attracted to each of these areas. All but one scenic route is attached to the recreation setting it travels through. The Kings Canyon Scenic Byway travels through a

number of recreation settings and is described as a separate setting. The recreation setting maps are in Appendix G. The recreation settings and topics in the following list are further developed in Part III of this plan.

Rivers and Lakes
Place: **Kern River**
Administrative: Wild and scenic river, gateway to the Giant Sequoia National Monument;
Heritage: Hydroelectric power plants, gold mining, early settlers, historic resorts;
Fire: Fire danger, wildfire history (McNally, 2002);
Resources: Wildlife, native fisheries, threatened and endangered species, planted fish, healthy ecosystems, water resources;
Geology: Kern Canyon fault;
Recreation: World class whitewater, fishing;
Land Uses: Recreation, ranching, mining.

Place: **Lake Isabella**
Administrative: Gateway to the monument, South Fork Wildlife Area, NatureWatch site;
Heritage: Native Americans, Tubatulabal, early settlers;
Resources: Wildlife, birding and fisheries, unique high desert location where multiple life zones converge, water resources;
Land Uses: Recreation (motorized boating, wind surfing, fishing), ranching and grazing, mining.

Place: **Kings River**
Administrative: Wild and scenic river, Giant Sequoia National Monument, Kings River Special Management Area (KRSMA);
Geology: Glaciers and the formation of Kings Canyon, outstanding geologic features, caves;
Heritage: Longest lumber flume from Millwood, Hume Lake;
Recreation: World class whitewater, fly-fishing;
Resources: Fisheries and special regulations.

Place: **Hume Lake**
Administrative: Giant Sequoia National Monument;
Heritage: Historic logging operations, Hume Bennett Mill, the flume, Hume Lake Dam;
Resources: Mixed conifer forest, riparian habitat.

Place: **Tule River**
Administrative: Wilderness, Giant Sequoia National Monument, Four Threats;
Heritage: Yokuts, Tule River Indian Reservation, Wishon;
Fire: Wildland urban interface, healthy forests initiative;
Resources: Giant sequoia groves, healthy ecosystems, water resources, fisheries.

Kings Canyon Scenic Byway
Administrative: Giant Sequoia National Monument, Kings Canyon Scenic Byway, wilderness, wild and scenic river, Kings River Special Management Area, national parks interface, recreation fee program;
Heritage: Historic timber harvesting, convict labor for road building, Native American use;
Fire: Wildfire history (McGee);
Resources: Healthy ecosystems, multiple life zones (chaparral to mixed conifer), giant sequoia;
Geology: Kings Canyon, caves.

Kern Plateau
Administrative: Botanical areas, wilderness, Four Threats;
Heritage: Grazing, prehistoric use, guard stations and lookouts (Bald Mountain Lookout);
Fire: Wildfire history (McNally, Manter), wildland fire use;
Resources: Healthy ecosystems, mixed conifer forests, desert influence, botanical areas;
Geology: Sierra crest, granite domes;
Land Use: Grazing, recreation, including OHV, equestrian, wilderness access.

Great Western Divide
Administrative: Giant Sequoia National Monument, wilderness;
Heritage: Historic trails, birth of a monument, fire lookouts and guard stations;
Resources: Giant sequoia groves, mixed conifer forests, threatened and endangered species, Slate Mountain Botanical Area;
Geology: Granite monoliths (Needles and Dome Rock), watersheds and the divide;
Land Uses: Recreation, including snow play, summer adventure, wilderness access.

Lloyd Meadow
Administration: Giant Sequoia National Monument, wilderness, wild and scenic river, President Bush visit;
Fire: Wildfire history (McNally), wildland fire use, views into wilderness;
Resources: Giant sequoia groves, Bush Tree, Freeman Creek Grove, healthy ecosystems, east-side mixed conifer forest, threatened and endangered species;
Geology: Granite, Kern Canyon, Kern Plateau;
Land Use: Recreation, including dispersed, wilderness access, Forks of the Kern river access.

Hume High Elevation
Administrative: Giant Sequoia National Monument, wilderness;
Heritage: Historic timber harvesting, Millwood, hoist, fire lookouts and guard stations, Big Meadow, Converse Grove;
Resources: Giant sequoia groves, mixed conifer forests, meadows;
Land Uses: Recreation, including winter snow play, summer adventure, wilderness access.

The following recreation settings have **moderate conformance** to the Sequoia's recreation niche.

Greenhorn
Administrative: Four Threats;
Heritage: Guard stations, fire lookouts;
Fire: Wildfire history (Stormy);
Resources: Grazing, threatened and endangered species, healthy ecosystems, mixed conifer forests.

Wildlands
Administrative: Value of wilderness, Leave No Trace.

The following recreation settings have **low conformance** to the Sequoia's recreation niche and will have minimal interpretation.

Front Country
Fire: Wildland urban interface.

Breckenridge
Resources: Wildlife island.

Puites
Administrative: Tread Lightly!;
Land Uses: Mining history, recreation, including OHV, dispersed.

KRSMA (OHV)
Administrative: Tread Lightly!;
Land Uses: Ranching history, OHV.

Proposed Actions

Coordinated Forestwide Program

Develop a coordinated forestwide interpretive program capable of expanding services and products.

Item 1. Continue an interdisciplinary approach to coordinate a forest interpretive program that will support the development of quality interpretive services and products. Establish a project review process to ensure that all interpretive projects receive professional, interdisciplinary support from resource and interpretive specialists. Improve the interpretive communication network to provide project and program support, accountability, and annual reporting.

Item 2. Expand existing partnerships and develop new ones for delivering interpretive services. This item would include research in funding alternatives and developing grant writing capabilities for interpretive services and projects.

- Continue the relationship with 3FIA. Expand its partnerships with forest cooperators to provide interpretive products and services, increase emphasis on grant writing to leverage available funds, continue to improve the existing retail outlets, and expanding retail sales through partners in visitor information.
- Expand the partnership with Buck Rock Foundation and other interested partners to interpret fire lookouts and historic cabins and structures. Coordinate with the heritage resources, recreation, and fire program areas for funding and program and project development.
- Use student intern programs at a graduate level to research and develop new interpretive methods, products, and services, utilizing new activities and technologies (e.g., GPS units, geocaching, portable media players [PMPs], and new cell phone technology).
- Continue and expand existing Student Conservation Association (SCA) and volunteer programs to provide personal contact services, through interpretive programs, wilderness and river programs, and trail crews/patrols.
- Coordinate partnerships with outfitter-guides and concessionaires to deliver interpretive programs at facilities during high use seasons, to provide visitor information services, and to incorporate resource conservation messages into their contacts with the public.
- Coordinate partnerships with organizational camps to develop interpretive programs addressing wilderness ethics and other appropriate conservation programs.

- Expand the partnership opportunities with Nuui Cunni Center to provide programs and panels for an interpretive trail at the native plant garden.
- Continue and expand volunteer programs with groups, such as the Backcountry Horsemen and OHV users, for personal contact services.

Item 3. Develop and maintain a tool box to aid interpreters. This tool box may include a list of contractors, a library of images, photos and PowerPoint presentations, and a source of computer projectors and other technical equipment. A forest team would provide interpretive training to communicate annual high priority messages for fire prevention technicians (FPTs), front desk personnel, fire lookouts, partners, volunteers, and SCA interns.

Item 4. Put into action a plan to expand the influence of the interpretive program to non-visitors and visitors in underrepresented groups and youth in nontraditional ways. Actions may include outreach activities to community organizations, churches, and schools and participation in research projects to develop new products and activities that encourage underrepresented groups to explore the Sequoia.

Interpretive Opportunities for Visitors

Provide Interpretive Opportunities for Visitors.

Item 1. Finish ongoing interpretive projects.

- Hume High Elevation/Indian Basin Trail: Finalize the design, and fabricate four more panels for the interpretive trail.
- Kern Plateau/Sherman Pass Road: Finalize the design for two new panels at Sherman Pass on the geology of the Kern Plateau, including a schematic identifying peaks and information on wildland fire use.
- Rivers and Lakes/Johnsondale Bridge: Install two existing panels, developed by the California Department of Fish and Game, that identify bird and wildlife found in the area.
- Scenic Route/Kings Canyon Scenic Byway: Finalize the design, and fabricate three remaining panels.

Item 2. Expand, redesign, or refurbish existing interpretive sites.

- Kern Plateau/Troy Meadow Campground: Replace the existing vertical format routed sign with a low profile, horizontal format interpretive panel with artwork featuring the rare plant species and resource conservation.
- Kern Plateau/Bald Mountain Lookout: Replace the Bald Mountain Botanical Area sign with a low profile, horizontal format interpretive panel with artwork featuring the rare plant species and resource conservation.
- Great Western Divide/Trail of 100 Giants: Finish the project plan, and prepare a prospectus to take to potential partners. Explore grants and partnerships for interpretive development with 3FIA, Whitewater Voyages, Springville Chamber of Commerce, and Kern River Valley Revitalization, who have expressed interest in partnering to interpret this site.
- Rivers and Lakes/Kern River/Johnsondale Bridge: Prepare a project plan for interpretive expansion at this site. Revisit the design of the existing panels (developed by the California Department of Fish and Game) and evaluate the interpretive theme. Determine if the existing story might be better utilized at a different location. Redesign existing panels, as necessary.

Develop a six-panel self-service visitor information station to provide orientation information and interpretation appropriate for visitor needs at this location. Develop new panels that feature the North Fork of the Kern Wild and Scenic River and the special features inherent and unique to this area. Information kiosk panels will need to be coordinated with the panels in the interpretive stanchions along the rock wall.

- Rivers and Lakes/Wishon Interpretive Trail: Review the existing signs, rework the theme and storyline, as needed, and redesign the media.
- Rivers and Lakes/Lake Isabella/Hungry Gulch/Coso Mine Interpretive Trail: Review the existing work, rework the themes and storylines, as needed, and redesign the media.
- Rivers and Lakes/Kings River: Review and replace KRSMA sign at the Bailly bridge.
- Wildlands/Jennie Lakes Wilderness: Review and replace trailhead signs.

Item 3. Develop new interpretive sites.

- Western Divide Highway: Develop wayside exhibits and other interpretive media along the highway. This work would include the development of highway pullouts at prime vista locations (the district has located some potential vista locations) and the development of appropriate media at Dome Rock and the trailhead to Needles Lookout.
- Great Western Divide/Quaking Aspen Campground: Develop a visitor information kiosk about the Western Divide Highway that does not interfere with the campground concession operation. Expand interpretation and visitor services to include winter use. Revisit the existing wilderness exhibits, evaluate the condition and exhibit needs, and retrofit, as needed, maintaining accessibility for persons with disabilities and wilderness outreach. Develop a new accessible interpretive trail, highlighting the meadow ecosystem, relating trail features in the Giant Sequoia National Monument and management of the giant sequoia groves. Continue and/or expand personal contact programs on Saturday night during the high use recreation season.
- Lloyd Meadow/The Needles Interpretive Site: Develop the rock climbers' access point along the Lloyd Road to mitigate resource damage from recreation use. Develop a trail and observation platform with telescope and interpretive panels, discussing rock climbing, appropriate use of resources, peregrine falcons, and other objects of interest. A visitor information board/kiosk would provide orientation and regulatory and safety information.
- Lloyd Meadow/Freeman Creek Trail: Develop an interpretive trail to the Bush Tree with interpretive panels and an information station, featuring the giant sequoia ecosystem and the unique wild characteristics of the Freeman Grove.
- Hume High Elevation/Converse Basin: Develop an interpretive trail that connects points of interest in Converse Basin.
- Rivers and Lakes/Lake Isabella/South Fork Wildlife Area: Explore opportunities to expand interpretive programs and services in partnership with the California Audubon Society and outfitter-guides.

Item 4. Develop self-guided tours for scenic routes, Converse Basin, giant sequoia groves, and historic features, including fire lookouts and guard stations.

Item 5. Develop programs to engage Forest Service patrols, crews, and volunteers from user groups to make visitor contacts in high impact areas and to deliver interpretive messages.

Participants would provide visitor information and encourage proper use of the resources. The Forest Service would provide oversight, interpretive training, and support materials for:

- Volunteer trail patrols;
- Fire lookouts;
- Fire prevention technicians (FPTs);
- Front office personnel;
- Volunteer or student intern river patrols;
- Volunteer or student intern wilderness rangers;
- Forest Service cooperators (concessionaires, outfitter-guides).

Item 6. Provide interpretive programs and presentations on-site.

- Expand the Celebrate Sequoias Festival.
- Tillie Creek Campground: For presentations on summer Saturday nights, expand concessionaire participation and responsibilities, and continue use of volunteers.
- Quaking Aspen Campground: For presentations on summer Saturday nights, expand concessionaire participation and responsibilities, and continue use of volunteers and SCA interns.
- Hume Lake Campground: Expand concessionaire participation and responsibilities, and continue use of SCA interns.
- Princess Campground: SCA interns lead campfire programs on Saturday nights. Expand concessionaire participation and responsibilities.
- Stony Creek Campground, Big Meadows Campground, and Eshom Campground: Provide interpretive programs.
- Trail of 100 Giants: SCA interns lead guided tours on summer Saturdays and Sundays.
- South Fork Wildlife Refuge: Continue guided tours with kayak outfitter-guide. Expand opportunities for visitors utilizing Audubon volunteers and Forest Service resource specialists.
- Buck Rock Lookout: Continue various summer presentations on Friday nights and the July 4th celebration. Volunteers are managed by the Buck Rock Foundation.
- Blackrock Heliport: Continue China Lake Astrological Society and star gazing programs (two per year).
- Guided Botanical Hikes: These hikes are open to the public, conducted in partnership with the forest botanist and the California Native Plant Society (three per year).
- Organizational Camps: Develop partnerships with organizational camp managers to provide wilderness and conservation programs for participants at camp, including the Pythian Youth Camp, Camp San Joaquin, Far Horizons, Bearskin, Pyles Boys Camp, and Camp Whitsett.
- Resorts: Develop partnerships to provide interpretive programs at Montecito Lake Resort and Stony Creek Resort.

Program Expansion to New Audiences

Expand the influence of the forest interpretive program to new audiences, incorporating interpretive messages in public information and education venues.

Item 1. Maintain web-based interpretive products, including:

- Intranet site that includes program information and support materials, such as interpretive plans, reports, an interpretive tool box, including PowerPoint presentations, and links to helpful websites.
- Public internet site with interpretive media, such as a virtual tour of Trail of 100 Giants, Kings Canyon Scenic Byway, and Forks of the Kern; downloadable files for portable media players (PMPs) and audio CDs for auto tours and forest geocaching experiences; links to web cams with interactive activities; event schedules with participation materials; and recreation opportunity guides (ROGs) and forest visitors guide (in development) in PDF format and downloadable media files.

Item 2. Self-service Visitor Information Kiosks: Develop a forestwide system of visitor information stations and orientation locations (see Appendix H).

Item 3. Partners in Visitor Information: Develop partnerships with businesses, volunteer groups, and agencies to help provide visitor information services that incorporate interpretive messages. Locations and potential partners include:

- Kern Plateau/ Kennedy Meadows: Bureau of Land Management and Kennedy Meadows Store;
- Mountain Home State Demonstration Forest;
- Balch Park, Tulare County Parks and Recreation;
- Ponderosa Lodge;
- Pierpoint Springs Resort;
- Hot Springs Resort, California Hot Springs;
- Gifford's Market, Springville;
- Camp Nelson General Store;
- Asilomar Management Corporation: Stony Creek Resort, Montecito Lake Resort, and Wuksachi Lodge;
- Hume Lake Christian Camps: Expand partnership to include visitor information station and sales outlet for interpretive products at lakeshore facility;
- Tule River Indian Reservation Eagle Mountain Casino;
- CalTrans: Rest stops along Highway 395 at Coso Junction, Highway 99 at Tipton, Interstate 5 near Lebec;
- Kern Valley Historical Society;
- California State Parks: Fort Tejon California State Historical Park, Tule Elk State Preserve;
- California Living Museum (CALM) in Bakersfield;
- Maturango Museum of Cultural and Natural History in Ridgecrest;
- Manzanar National Historic Site Interpretive Center on Highway 395;
- Eastern California Museum, Independence;
- Buck Rock Foundation.

Item 4. Improve the forest ROG program with an annual updating process. Review existing ROGs for duplication, consistency, and quality. Incorporate resource conservation messages supporting the central forest theme, and post ROGs on the forest website (pdf files).

Item 5. Complete the development of a Sequoia visitor guide in partnership with 3FIA. The publication will be designed and paid for through 3FIA funds, with an estimated cost for

production of $5,000 (paper, layout, printing costs). The Forest Service contribution will include providing storylines, recreation information, map, and text editing. Provide a link to an electronic version of the document on the Sequoia website.

Item 6. Develop a mobile visitor information trailer to be used on holiday weekends in high use areas and at special events. This trailer would provide free visitor information, and the staff could issue permits for wilderness travel or campfires. The trailer would be self-contained for easy storage and quick set-up. A retail interpretive outlet would provide visitors with materials that would enhance their enjoyment of the Sequoia and generate funds for the forest interpretive program.

Item 7. Community Outreach: Provide personal contact services to non-visitors at community festivals, fairs, and events by providing a staffed booth with exhibits and activities.

- Kern River Valley Spring Festival (Wofford Heights);
- Annual Kern River Valley Turkey Vulture Festival (South Fork Wildlife Area);
- Squaw Valley Rodeo;
- Hume Lake Christian Camp Country Fair (Hume Lake);
- Butterfield Stage Days (Porterville);
- Whiskey Flat Day (Kern Valley);
- Backcountry Horsemen Rendezvous (various places);
- Springville Rodeo;
- Kern County Fair (Bakersfield);
- Tulare County Fair (Visalia);
- Porterville Fair;
- Springville Apple Festival;
- Turkey Testicle Festival (Dunlap);
- Mountain Festival (Upper Tule Association);
- Job fairs;
- Squaw Valley Plant and Craft Fair.

PART II: Forest Program and Recommendations

Roles and Responsibilities

Forest Interpretive Team

This team will be a loosely formed group made up of the interpretive lead from each district and the Forest Supervisor's office (SO). The purpose of this team is to support the development of interpretive products and services and make recommendations for program direction. Tasks and responsibilities of the team will be:

- Report annual interpretive accomplishments;
- Bring forward new interpretive project proposals;
- Discuss and recommend projects for development, based on goals and objectives;
- Report project progress;
- Provide constructive feedback on projects and designs;
- Review program direction and key messages;
- Determine annual emphasis messages, based on management needs;
- Coordinate annual training programs.

The **district lead**, assigned by the District Ranger, will:

- Develop and submit project proposals to the forest interpretive program manager;
- Participate in interpretive discussions;
- Manage interpretive training, products, and services on the district;
- Coordinate the development of district projects;
- Provide the forest program manager with annual accomplishments;
- Serve as interpretive services liaison with outfitters-guides, concessionaires, and other local partners.

The **forest interpretive program manager**, assigned by the forest recreation staff officer, will:

- Assist district and SO personnel and partners in developing project proposals;
- Facilitate forest discussions on changes to the forest interpretive program;
- Write an annual report for interpretive program accomplishments;
- Research and network grant opportunities for projects, and assist with writing grant proposals;
- Disseminate information from Regional Office (e.g., e-mail, publications);
- Review, provide feedback, and make recommendations during project development phase;
- Help coordinate interpretive training needs with the district leads;
- Act as liaison with the Three Forests Interpretive Association (3FIA).

Project Development Process

Project Submittal

A filled out project plan and tracking form (Appendix I) will be submitted to the forest interpretive program manager for all interpretive projects. The program manager will bring the project forward to appropriate persons to review and make recommendations. Information

provided on this form will give reviewers necessary project background, as well as help in recording accomplishments.

Design and Fabrication

After a project plan and tracking form has been the submitted and reviewed by the forest interpretive program manager, the project leader will be responsible for the design, development, and fabrication.

Site specific themes will be identified in the project proposal. These themes will be tied back to the central forest theme.

A final design will be submitted to the forest interpretive program manager for review before fabrication begins.

Recommendations for Services

Guidelines for Selecting a Topic and Developing a Story

Critical to effective interpretation is the selection of a topic and the subsequent development of a story around that topic. Together these deliver the theme (message) to the audience. Tell a story that can reveal what is special and unique about the subject, and relate the story to what the audience is experiencing on the site. Remember that the audience is voluntary, so select a topic and tell a story capable of engaging their attention. Hold their attention by relating the topic to a common experience of the audience.

Important topics have been identified for each recreation setting and place to focus interpretive efforts. Refer to pages 11-14 when selecting a topic. Keeping the interpretive focus on these assigned topics will help sequence interpretive experiences across the forest, prevent redundancy, and ensure that stories are told at the most appropriate locations. The adjacent national parks and Mountain Home State Demonstration Forest also have giant sequoias, similar landscapes, and natural resource stories. Interpretive efforts need to be coordinated to complement and not compete with these efforts.

For more information, see the storyline development tools in Appendix F and the important storylines for each place or setting in Part III.

Priorities for Recreation Settings

Recreation settings that highly conform to the Sequoia's recreation niche and those that receive the greatest amount of visitation will be the focus of interpretive efforts, in order to ensure that limited funds are used most effectively.

RECREATION SETTING	PRIORITY
Rivers and Lakes	High
Scenic Routes	High
Kern Plateau	High
Great Western Divide	High
Lloyd Meadow	High
Hume High Elevation	High
Greenhorn	Moderate

RECREATION SETTING	PRIORITY
Wildlands	Moderate
Front Country	Low
Breckenridge	Low
Piutes	Low
Kings River Special Management Area (OHV)	Low

Available funding currently limits interpretive services delivery and product production. Consequently, self-service interpretive products are the most logical choice and will be the emphasis of the Sequoia interpretive program. Self-service media include wayside exhibits and information panels in kiosks and information boards. These on-site media will be appropriate to the setting and harmonize with the natural surroundings. Media chosen will be cost effective, so that if damaged, vandalized, or the message changes, the cost of replacement will not be prohibitive.

Other self-service media include printed materials, web-based products, and electronic media. A forestwide visitor guide is being developed, and self-guided tours will be developed. Ways to involve new audiences through new technologies will be researched.

Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits and interpretive panels will be developed and maintained in recreation settings that are ranked as high priority and at sites that receive high visitation:

- Along scenic routes;
- On interpretive trails at destination locations; and
- At outstanding points of interest.

Appendix J identifies locations for the development of wayside exhibits and interpretive panels.

Recommended materials for wayside exhibits and interpretive panels are listed in Appendix K. Fiberglass embedment and high-pressure laminates are the preferred materials for most applications on the Sequoia. The cost of fabrication is included in the table. Design costs can range between $2,000-$3,000 per panel (2008 costs), depending on how much of the work can be done in house. For more information on the costs for planning an interpretive exhibit, see Appendix L.

The panels will be a low profile format and unobtrusive in size and presentation (see Appendix M). Colors will blend into the surrounding natural environment, and the design of the stanchions and site amenities will reflect the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classification of the site. Industry standard sizes, such as 18” x 24” or 36,” 24” x 36,” and 24” x 42,” will be used if stanchions are used. These standard and conventional sizes fit easily into prefabricated stanchions or frames.

Mounting structures and exhibit bases vary widely, depending on site characteristics, the ROS class, maintenance level desired, budget, accessibility for persons with disabilities, and other factors. Costs can range from several thousand dollars for a custom design to a few hundred dollars for a simple frame base. High-pressure laminates of ½-inch or greater thickness do not need frames, which can cut project costs considerably.

An example of a simple exhibit base is the "Hopewell" base that is easy to install and relatively inexpensive. A standard 3' x 2' frame and pedestal (stanchion) costs approximately $400-$600. This frame is used for porcelain enamel and imbedded fiberglass panels. Digital laminate panels ½-inch and greater in thickness require pedestals only (no frame). See Appendix M for details. Be sure that pedestal and sign materials can withstand environmental conditions at the site (e.g., vandal prone areas, areas with high snow loads).

Most wayside exhibits will be mounted in a horizontal format at a 30-45 degree angle with the horizon. The base of the exhibit panel will begin at approximately 30"-36" above ground level, so that a person in a wheelchair can view the information. For more information on accessibility, see Appendix N. Or look at Tool #7 on the following website for more in-depth information on exhibit bases: http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/cdi/interp_plan_tools/index.shtml

Text size on an interpretive panel is selected relative to the size of the panel, the number of levels of information, viewing distance, and visual accessibility. The larger the panel, the larger the text can be. The text on a 12" x 24" panel can be smaller and appear balanced with the graphics. A panel with five levels of information content will have more type sizes than one with three levels. A panel must have larger point type sizes if it:

- Is viewed from a greater distance;
- Uses light or white text on dark background (use a sans serif font);
- Uses graphics or textures in the background.

The text and background must have high contrast, in order to be accessible for visitors with visual impairments. Dark text on a light background is easier to read than light text on a dark background.

Other text guidelines:

- Body text can be no smaller than 24 points in size; 36 to 48 points is recommended for a 24" x 36" panel;
- Avoid "all caps";
- Subtitles: 48 to 72 points;
- Titles: 90-120+ points;
- Captions: 18-point minimum.

For a more extensive discussion of design guidelines for interpretive panels, see EM 7100 sign manual, Chapter 10A, available on the following website:
http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/eng/roads_trails/signs_05/pdf/chap_10a.pdf

Self-Service Visitor Information Kiosks

A system of self-service units will be used to provide visitor information and forest orientation at key locations and facilities. Interpretive techniques, themes, and storylines will be incorporated into the information delivery. These units will serve visitors during hours that local visitor information stations are closed and in remote recreation settings that receive a significant volume of visitor traffic with no other convenient source for visitor information. The map in Appendix H identifies locations for these visitor information services. Appendix K compares methods of printing information panels.

- **Visitor Information Stations** are staffed Forest Service facilities in locations that receive a high volume of visitor traffic. Most have interpretive outlets, and some have interpretive exhibits. Self-service kiosks located at these locations may follow the standard design selected for the Sequoia, or they may be designed to reflect and blend with existing architecture on the site.
- **Orientation Locations**: Major routes providing visitor access to popular forest recreation areas include highways 180, 190, 198 and 178, Tenmile Road, mountain route 99, and Sherman Pass Road. Intersections with access routes to popular recreation complexes, such as Hume Lake, Big Meadow, Lloyd Meadow, and the Kern Plateau, are important locations for visitor orientation. Self-service information kiosks could provide needed orientation information and interpretive messages. These structures will follow the standard design selected for the Sequoia, which will be developed.

The information in these self-service information kiosks will be presented in a professional and standardized format. A forest template with editable files will be developed, so that information can easily be updated and economically replaced, as needed.

Visitor Information Boards

Visitor information boards (not identified on the map in Appendix H) will be simpler versions of the self-service kiosks, generally one to three panels, and located at recreation facilities, administrative sites with low visitor traffic, and concentrated use areas. Site information, such as rules, regulations and fee information, user ethics, and safety will be key components. For more information on the design and development of these visitor information signs, see EM 7100 sign manual, Chapter 10B, available on the following website:
http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/eng/roads_trails/signs_05/pdf/chap_10b.pdf

Partners in Visitor Information

When Forest Service offices are closed, suitable partners in the business community and public services could be sought to help the Sequoia provide visitor information services to the public. Exterior, self-service structures could be located in highly visible and accessible locations. The service provider could partner with 3FIA to sell forest maps and may include an outlet for other interpretive products. A limited number of free brochures could be made available. Proper highway identification signage would identify the facility as a visitor information location.

An example of a successful agency partnership exists between the National Park Service (NPS) and the Hume Lake District. Using funding available through the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, a Forest Service employee helps staff the Kings Canyon Visitor Center and the Big Stump Entrance Station, alongside park service employees, providing interpretation and visitor information services.

Mobile Visitor Information Booth

The Kern River District operates a temporary information booth at the Riverkern Beach parking area on holiday weekends. The development of a portable booth with an interpretive outlet and visitor information would be a valuable asset. Use of this booth could be expanded to include special recreation events, festivals, and fairs. Partnership opportunities with 3FIA and other recreation providers could be explored to cover the costs of design, fabrication, and staffing.

Forestwide Visitor Guide

An annual forestwide visitor guide is being developed in partnership with 3FIA, modeled after guides produced for the Stanislaus and Sierra national forests. This publication will incorporate recreation information on campgrounds, day use sites, concentrated use areas, interpretive programs, and trails, interwoven with interpretive messages. The publication will be designed and paid for with 3FIA funds. The estimated cost for production is $ 4,000-$5,000 for layout, paper, and printing.

Self-Guided Tours

Tours enrich the experience of visitors exploring the forest. Self-guided tours are a valuable tool to reach audiences, including those with special interests. History, life zones, biological, and geological tours are a few special interest subjects that benefit from an information rich format. A recreation opportunity guide (ROG) is a pre-approved format that is available. Other alternative methods, using DVDs or CDs, GPS PDA players, portable media players (PMPs), or low frequency radio stations could be explored. Tour topics would include:

- Forestwide tours: Giant sequoia groves, scenic vistas across the forest, botanical areas, wildlife, wildflowers, and historic buildings;
- Specific tour examples: Points of special interest along scenic routes, bird watching at the South Fork Wildlife Area.

Web-Based Products and Services

The internet and intranet will be used to provide the public and Forest Service personnel with valuable interpretive tools and information.

- An internet media network will be developed on the forest website, so that managers, front desk personnel, and the public can access printer friendly publications and alternative electronic format audio interpretive programs for CD players and PMPs.
- Virtual tours, developed around the attractions and natural resources unique to the Sequoia, will motivate web viewers to become advocates for the forest and/or plan a trip to visit the forest. Trail of 100 Giants, Kings Canyon, and whitewater rafting on the Kern would be candidates to introduce the unique natural resources to forest virtual visitors.
- Interpretive program information will be available on the intranet. An interpretive toolkit will include interpretive plans, project progress reports, helpful websites, PowerPoint presentations, and interpretive program schedules.

Personal Contact Services

Personal contact services will be provided at moderate levels, through campfire programs, guided walks, and community events. Personal services where visitors have contact with a uniformed Forest Service employee are most effective. However, with limitations on resources and personnel, these forms of interpretation are not always feasible.

Personal contact programs will be held at facilities with the highest visitation and during heavy use seasons. Recruits from Forest Service program areas will be sought to provide programs. Partnerships and volunteers will also be recruited to provide these services.

These partners and volunteers should be adequately trained and supervised. The need for training is even more important when recruiting non-agency representatives. The National Association of Interpreters (NAI) certified trainer or equivalent could be used for this interpretive training.

Avenues for personal contact services include:

- **Concessionaires and outfitter-guides:** These businesses have firsthand contact with and are in the business of providing opportunities and services for visitors. By providing and requiring interpretive training, the Forest Service has the opportunity to empower these permit holders to deliver important natural and cultural resource messages.
- **Forest Service volunteers and internship programs:** Partnerships with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) have been successful, and expansion of this program is recommended. Advocates for an outdoor activity or sport can be passionate natural resource conservationists and be most effective interpreters to their fellow sportsmen and activists, with adequate agency support and supervision (e.g., Backcountry Horsemen, Buck Rock Foundation, High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew, Kaweah Fly Fishermen).
- **Fire prevention technicians (FPTs), fire lookout staff, and front office staff:** These employees are frequently the only contact many Sequoia visitors have with a uniformed representative of the agency. FPTs spend the majority of their time in the field, contacting the public in high visitor use areas, contractors, and local homeowners. FPTs are often responsible for the placement and maintenance of public information signs and posters. Front office staff greet the visiting public, answering their questions and providing recreation and resource information. Both positions share the same mission: obtain compliance with rules and regulations, and educate and exchange information with the public. Their positions call for a broad knowledge of all forest regulations and current facility and road conditions. Fire lookout staff are seasonal Forest Service employees that live at the lookouts, detect fires, relay radio messages to dispatchers, and meet and greet visitors.

Other Helpful Information

Appendix O contains information on recreation opportunity guide (ROG) sheets and other publications. Appendix P lists helpful websites. Appendix Q lists interpretive contractors.

Part III: Recreation Settings: Inventory, Products, and Services

Recreation setting maps are in Appendix G.

Rivers and Lakes

This recreation setting is interspersed across the forest and includes the following places: Kern River, Kings River, Tule River, Hume Lake, and Lake Isabella. Because of program and geographic differences, the Kern River is divided into smaller units for interpretive methods and storylines.

In the Rivers and Lakes recreation setting, water is the magnet, attracting family-oriented, water-based recreation. Safety is a key message. Non-motorized boating opportunities are popular. Motorized boating opportunities are available on Lake Isabella only. The desired condition within this setting is to maintain a mix of development levels; implement use quotas, as needed; expand to accommodate groups where developed facilities are located; and address overuse in concentrated use areas (CUAs). The audience and user group characteristics are diverse and reflect the unique opportunities each water body offers.

The Kern River: The Forks, Upper Kern, and Lower Kern

Three distinct sections of the Kern River are identified in the Rivers and Lakes recreation setting: the Forks of the Kern, the Upper Kern, and the Lower Kern. In these three sections, water runs year-round over huge boulders and through precipitous gorges. Together they offer a variety of recreation opportunities, from primitive with no facilities to developed recreation sites. Whitewater activities include rafting and kayaking. Private boaters and commercial outfitter-guides are regulated by permit systems. Water play and swimming are discouraged, because of swift, overpowering currents. Hot springs are an attraction to the public, but are considered an attractive nuisance by managers.

Forks of the Kern

From the Forks (where the North Fork of the Kern and the Little Kern come together) to the Johnsondale Bridge on mountain route 99, the North Fork of the Kern is not accessible by vehicle. Kayaks and rafts must be packed or carried three miles down a rocky, steep trail to the put-in location. From Johnsondale Bridge to the Rincon Trail, a three-mile trail travels upstream 1/3 of the length of the Forks run. To maintain the wilderness experience, no developed recreation facilities exist, and overnight campsites change from year to year, dictated by changing environmental conditions and management policy. Dispersed camping, rafting, kayaking, hiking, and fishing are popular activities. Special management concerns include maintenance of the primitive, wilderness experience, administering the private boater permit system, public safety, and conservation of the wild fishery.

Interpretive Audience: *Activity oriented adventure seekers* are experienced whitewater boaters, and *wilderness users* include equestrians, youth from several organizational camps, and backpackers accessing the backcountry or seeking primitive experiences and solitude along the river. The wild fishery draws a sophisticated class of *anglers*. The high level of difficulty and special equipment needs attract people with higher income and educational levels. The audience

could be extended to include *virtual visitors* who will never be able to visit this section of the river canyon, due to the limitations on access and physical demands on the users.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Wayside exhibits:** Johnsondale Bridge (two existing);
- **Self-service visitor information kiosk:** Johnsondale Bridge (proposed);
- **Publications:** ROGs (existing): Forks reservation application, Kern and Kings River whitewater outfitters, boating safety, Leave No Trace on the Kern River, river program evaluation;
- **Virtual tour:** The Forks highlights (proposed);
- **Personal contact services:** Partner with whitewater outfitter-guides to provide natural resource conservation interpretation to clients (proposed).

Important Storyline: The Forks of the Kern River is a "wild" experience worth protecting; Leave No Trace is an important message. This section of the wild and scenic river is managed as opportunity class "wild." River permits with quotas for private boaters protect the beauty of the primitive, wilderness experience and help promote public safety. The Forks is part of the longest stretch of river in the wild trout program, and fishing is restricted to barbless hooks, with catch limitations to protect the native and wild fish population of Kern River rainbow trout. Restrictive access and the almost continuous class IV-V whitewater rapids make this a trip for the experienced boater or angler only.

Upper Kern

From the Johnsondale Bridge to Kernville and Lake Isabella, the river is accessible by vehicle and is a popular recreation destination, overrun on holiday weekends. This section of the North Fork of the Kern is designated a wild and scenic river, managed as opportunity class "recreation." Major recreation activities are whitewater rafting and kayaking (private boaters are required to have a permit), fishing, hiking, mountain biking, picnicking, and overnight camping (developed and dispersed). Many campers are self-contained and prefer to utilize the many concentrated use areas, while others use the developed recreation facilities along the river's edge. Special management challenges are presented by providing a wide range of recreation opportunities, while maintaining crowd control; water safety; litter and water pollution; vandalism; and fire. A hydroelectric power project is located within the wild and scenic river corridor.

Interpretive Audience: The majority of visitors are *social gatherers*, *water players* (this activity is not recommended), *anglers* of every level, and *neighbors* (from local communities in the Kern River Valley). *Activity oriented adventure seekers* utilize the whitewater opportunities. Visitors exhibit a wide variety of ethnic groups, ages, and income levels.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Wayside exhibits:** Suspension bridge (by McNally's) (proposed), Roads End (existing);
- **Self-service visitor information kiosk:** Kernville office;
- **Information boards:** Developed sites and concentrated use areas along the river: Roads End, Chico Flat, Riverkern Beach, Corral Creek (campground and picnic area), Fairview, Brush Creek, Camp 3, Headquarters, Goldledge, Limestone, Hospital Flat;

- **Publications:** ROGs (existing): Upper Kern Canyon recreation area, Kern and Kings River whitewater outfitters, boating safety, Leave No Trace on the Kern River, river program evaluation.
- **Personal contact services:** Outfitter-guides to provide resource and conservation interpretation; concessionaires to provide campfire programs; fire prevention technicians (FPTs) and river patrols to provide visitor contacts.

Important Storyline: The Upper Kern provides water-based recreation and resource opportunities for a wide variety of publics. North of the Kern County line, in Tulare County, the Kern River is a designated wild and scenic river. The Upper Kern is managed primarily to provide many types of recreation experiences. Following a unique north to south path along the Kern Canyon Fault, this river drops at a steep rate that provides whitewater opportunities to the adventurous; a well-developed, stocked fishery; a cool and beautiful setting to enjoy social gatherings; and hydroelectric power for those who may never visit. Historically, this area was an important jumping-off location for backcountry hunting, fishing, and sightseeing expeditions, led by colorful mountain men and women.

Lower Kern

This stretch of the river falls 32 miles from Lake Isabella Dam, at 2,600-foot elevation, to the canyon mouth, at 800 feet in elevation. The promise of cool water and natural landscapes provides relief from summer heat and the stresses of urban living for residents of Bakersfield and other origins, including the Los Angeles area. The Kern River is the closest river to the Los Angeles basin with year-round flows. Areas large enough to accommodate groups make the river a popular recreation destination, overrun on summer weekends and holidays. A number of raft launch sites exist, from below the Isabella dam to Democrat take-out. Fishing, social gatherings, picnicking, camping, and viewing scenery are popular activities. Fishing is year-round for smallmouth bass, rainbow trout, largemouth bass, and crappie. Day use only is allowed in the lower half of this canyon. Three developed picnic areas are popular with local visitors from the Bakersfield area. Overnight camping facilities are limited in the upper reaches, below Lake Isabella; however, camping is allowed at Upper Richbar Overflow on holiday weekends only. Special management challenges include crowd control, boating permit administration, pollution, vandalism, fires, gangs, and trash.

Interpretive Audience: The majority of the visitors are *water players* (swimming is not recommended), *social gatherers*, and *anglers*—mostly local residents from the Bakersfield area. They come as individuals, couples, and families to enjoy the river. *Activity oriented adventure seekers* utilize the whitewater opportunities. A high percentage of use is by Hispanics and Asians and by underrepresented, lower income groups.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Information boards:** Developed recreation sites and concentrated use areas: Upper Richbar, Delonegha, Democrat, Hobo, Sandy Flat (campground and put-in/take-out), Lower Richbar, Live Oak picnic area, Miracle Hot Springs;
- **Publications:** ROGs (existing): Lower Kern whitewater run, Lower Kern Canyon recreation area, Richbar Flat area, Kern and Kings River whitewater outfitters, boating safety, Leave No Trace on the Kern River, river program evaluation;
- **Personal contact services:** Outfitter-guides to provide resource and conservation interpretation; concessionaire, FPTs, and river patrols to provide visitor contacts.

Important Storyline: The Lower Kern, a river harnessed by the Lake Isabella dams and hydroelectric facilities, provides year-round opportunities for whitewater adventures, fishing, water for irrigation, and electrical power. The Kern is controlled to provide resource benefits, but it can be dangerous, with boulders and swift, overpowering currents that have claimed many lives. Despite the inherent dangers, however, the river can be enjoyed by recreationists and is indeed considered a world class whitewater boating opportunity. Users should understand and respect the power of the river. As the primary source of gold in this area, miners were attracted to the Kern River Valley during the gold rush era; the economic value of the river shifted to power generation at the beginning of the 1900s.

Lake Isabella

This large reservoir in a high desert environment provides the forest's only motorized boating opportunities and has extensive fishing opportunities. With consistent high winds, especially in the afternoon, the lake is an ideal location for wind surfing. The limited number of lakes in southern California makes this area a popular destination. The retirement/resort communities of Kernville, Wofford Heights, and Lake Isabella depend economically on tourism from the lake and surrounding national forest. Special management challenges include crowd control, water and boating safety, OHV use, regulation of motorized watercraft, and fishing. The annual Kern River Valley Nature Festival (formally the Bioregions Festival) in the spring, Whiskey Flat Day, the annual fireworks show on the Fourth of July, and fishing tournaments are locally organized events for the public in which the Forest Service participates. A local historical association with a museum in Kernville, the Audubon Society's Kern River Preserve, and a Native American interpretive center, developed in partnership with the Forest Service, provide additional interpretive opportunities.

Interpretive Audience: *Water players*, especially those using boats, both motorized and non-motorized, use the reservoir and the surrounding recreation sites year-round. *Social gatherers* make use of group facilities. Every class of *angler*, from beginner to tournament level, makes use of the diverse fishery. Visitors originate from the Bakersfield and Los Angeles areas and *neighbors* (residents of the Kern River Valley), who camp along the shoreline to escape the summer heat. Fishing, wind surfing, jet skiing, waterskiing, all types of boating, OHV use, family and social gatherings, and camping are popular activities. Many visitors have expensive toys, including RVs and motorized recreation equipment. *Environmental students/enthusiasts* are drawn to the South Fork Wildlife Area for festivals and study.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Wayside exhibits**: South Fork Wildlife Area interpretive trail and lake overlooks, Hungry Gulch/Coso Mine (bat sign) interpretive trail (proposed); Native American interpretive center and native plant interpretive trail (existing);
- **Self-service visitor information kiosks:** Lake Isabella office and the Native American interpretive center (proposed);
- **Information boards:** Developed recreation sites and concentrated use areas (in order of priority): Lake Isabella High Impact Recreation Area (HIRA), Paradise Cove, Tillie Creek (launch ramp), Hungry Gulch, Tillie Creek (group campgrounds), Boulder Gulch, French Gulch, Tillie Creek (campground), Launch 19, Live Oak, Pioneer Point, Camp 9 (campground and group campgrounds), Kissack Cove, Stine Cove;

- **Partners in visitor information services:** Business or community service organizations (Kern Valley Museum, Native American interpretive center) to provide visitor information services on weekends and holidays;
- **Publications:** ROGs (existing): Lake Isabella developed campgrounds, private campgrounds and RV parks in Kernville and Lake Isabella, Cyrus Canyon OHV track, boating safety, water safety and regulations on Lake Isabella;
- **Personal contact services:** Tillie Creek Campground summer programs on Saturday evenings at the amphitheater; concessionaire to provide campfire programs during high use; FPTs to provide visitor contacts; program specialists to provide contacts and exhibits at community events and festivals (Spring Nature Fest, Turkey Vulture Festival, spring wildflower walks with California Native Plant Society and forest botanist).

Important Storyline: Five major bioregions converge near Lake Isabella, including the Great Basin, Mojave Desert, Sierra forest, coastal chaparral, and California grasslands. Along the South Fork of the Kern River, where the river joins the reservoir, is one of the most extensive riparian woodlands remaining in California, where birds are found in great abundance and diversity. The South Fork Wildlife Area is a NatureWatch viewing site. The Isabella dam corrals the two forks of the Kern River, converting them into constant sources for water, hydroelectric power, and recreation, while preventing devastating floods in heavy snow years. Human history includes the location of the Massacre of 1863 of the Tubatulabal Tribe, mining, the movie industry, and ranching. These topics are well covered by the Kern River Valley Historical Society in the local Kern Valley Museum and at the Paiute Nuui Cunni Native American interpretive center at French Gulch.

Kings River

The Kings River forms the boundary between the Sierra National Forest and the Sequoia National Forest. Portions of the river in both forests are designated as wild and scenic, and the Kings River Special Management Area (KRSMA), a congressionally designated area, also includes portions of both forests (the Sierra has the lead). The river formed the world-renowned Kings Canyon, which is over 8,000 feet deep, located both in the national forest and the adjacent Kings Canyon National Park. Both the Middle and South Forks begin in Kings Canyon National Park and flow down through portions of the Monarch Wilderness within the Sierra and Sequoia national forests. Highway 180, which is the Kings Canyon Scenic Byway, drops into the Kings River gorge along the South Fork and provides the only vehicle access to the Cedar Grove portion of Kings Canyon National Park.

The junction of the South and Middle Forks is also the eastern boundary of KRSMA, which extends west along the main stem of the Kings River to Mill Flat Campground, including the surrounding lands up to the main ridges of the Kings River gorge. This section of river has steep terrain and very limited access.

From Mill Flat Campground west to Pine Flat Reservoir, mountain road 2 and forest road 12S01 provide vehicle access to the river. Portions of the Kings River are famous for whitewater rafting and fly-fishing.

Interpretive Audience: Highway 180, which is the Kings Canyon Scenic Byway, provides access for *sightseeing tourists* along the South Fork of the Kings River or in route to Cedar Grove or wilderness trailheads. This area is also the prime fly-fishing area.

KRSMA (located below the junction of the Middle and South Fork) has little visitation, because of the steep terrain, and is visited mostly by *anglers* accessing the river by the Yucca Point or Mill Flat Creek Trails (forest trails 28E01 and 27E01, respectively).

The main stem of the Kings River (west of KRSMA) is popular with *activity oriented adventure seekers* (whitewater rafting, managed by the Sierra National Forest), *anglers*, *water players* (couples and families), and *social gatherers*.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Wayside exhibits**: Bailey bridge at the edge of KRSMA (three existing) (also see Kings Canyon Scenic Byway, p. 34);
- **Information boards:** Camp 4, Green Cabin Flat, and Mill Flat campgrounds, Yucca Point and Deer Cove trailheads (also see Kings Canyon Scenic Byway, p. 35);
- **Publications:** ROGS (existing): Kern and Kings River outfitter-guides (Kings River information coordinated with the Sierra);
- **Self-guided tour:** Include the South Fork of the Kings River in the Kings Canyon Scenic Byway auto tour (proposed).

Important Storyline: The upper portion of the Kings River that travels through the Sequoia is within the world-renowned Kings Canyon. This portion of the river canyon was carved from glaciers that extended downstream along the South Fork of the Kings River to Grizzly Falls. The glaciers formed a U-shaped valley with outstanding geologic features, including marble pendants, folded rocks, and limestone caves. In this area, the wild and scenic river and the scenic byway cut the Monarch Wilderness in two.

The main stem of the Kings River begins where the South Fork and Middle Fork join and flow west through KRSMA, emptying into Pine Flat Reservoir. The main stem once provided the route for the longest lumber flume, which carried lumber harvested from trees in the area and processed at the Millwood and Hume Lake facilities to Sanger. The flume tender and a Forest Service guard station were located at the 4½-mile marker along the flume. Today these locations are recreation areas, and the guard station is available for overnight rental by the public.

Hume Lake

This area includes Hume Lake Campground, multiple day use sites, a group camp, and a recreation residence tract. The lake was once a mill pond created by the Hume Bennett lumber operations during the historic logging period. Now the lake draws a huge crowd during the summer months. The campground is often full. Persons staying overnight in other areas often use the facilities here during the day. At 6,000 feet in elevation, the reservoir is located in mixed conifer forest within the Giant Sequoia National Monument. The Hume Lake Dam, designed by John Eastwood in 1908, is the first concrete reinforced multiple arch dam to be constructed in the United States. The dam has been nominated as a National Historic Landmark; if designated, it would become one of the few National Historic Landmarks on National Forest System lands nationwide. An interpretive trail was developed around the lake and is accessible for persons with disabilities along part of its length. The Hume Lake Christian Conference, which is highly developed and nationally known, is located on private land at one end of the lake and is open year-round.

Interpretive Audience: *Forest experience seekers*, *anglers*, *water players*, and *social gatherers* use the area. *Sightseeing tourists* overflow from the national parks and the Hume Lake Christian Conference. Because of the national park and the Christian camp influence on visitation, the audience tends to be family oriented and very interested in learning. Overnight camping, non-motorized boating, picnicking, fishing, water play, and hiking are popular activities.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Wayside exhibits:** Hume Lake interpretive trail (eight existing);
- **Information boards:** Hume Lake (campground and day use), Sandy Cove, Powder Can Picnic Area, Aspen Hollow;
- **Publications**: ROG (existing): Logs to the mill;
- **Personal contact services:** Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns to provide campfire programs; FPTs to provide visitor contacts;
- **Partners in visitor information services:** Expand partnership with Hume Lake Christian Camps to provide visitor information services at the Lakeshore Station if the fire engine is moved to Quail Flat; this cabin could be then converted to a small museum in partnership with Hume Lake Christian Camps.

Important Storyline*:* Hume Lake was built in 1908-1909 as a log pond for the historic Hume Bennett Mill. Hume Lake Dam was nominated as a National Historic Landmark and is significant as the first concrete reinforced multiple arch dam built in the United States. The timber operation harvested pine, fir, cedar, and giant sequoia from 1908-1917. The longest flume began at the lake and transported lumber milled there to the Kings River, via Tenmile Creek, and on to Sanger. Today the lake is a popular recreation destination and provides riparian habitat for wildlife in a mixed conifer forest.

Tule River

Originating at high elevation alpine meadows, the three branches of the Tule River flow through the Giant Sequoia National Monument. Steep canyons escort the three forks as they drop in elevation and meet in Lake Success reservoir. The rural community of Springville, located at the 1,000-foot elevation, is developing quickly and serves as a gateway to the monument. The Tule River Indian Reservation, the second largest in California, is located around the South Fork of the Tule River. Special management challenges include fire, hydroelectric power projects, Native American values, tribal relations, urban interface, crowd and traffic control, litter, graffiti, and gang related problems.

Interpretive Audience: The Tule River corridor is a year-round refuge for recreation, providing relaxation for *neighbors* (communities of Porterville, Springville, Pierpoint Springs, Camp Nelson, Sequoia Crest, Ponderosa), *anglers and hunters*, *social gatherers*, and *water players* (residents of the Central Valley), and *sightseeing tourists* to the Giant Sequoia National Monument. The close access allows lower income groups to frequently use the river corridor. The audience has a high youth, Hispanic, and Asian component. The rapidly developing community of Springville is attracting retirees and families from the urban areas of California, many of whom have little experience with the urban/wildland issues of a foothill community.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Wayside exhibits:** Pullouts on the road at outstanding vistas (proposed), Wishon interpretive trail (proposed redevelopment);
- **Self-service visitor information kiosk:** Tule River office;
- **Information boards:** Developed recreation sites and concentrated use areas: Wishon, Lower Coffee Camp, Upper Coffee Camp, the Stairs;
- **Partners in visitor information services:** Develop partnerships to provide visitor information on weekends and holidays (e.g., Gifford's Market, proposed);
- **Publications:** ROGs: Wishon Campground (existing); Tule River, to include safety and Leave No Trace messages, English and Spanish (proposed);
- **Self-guided tour:** Include in Great Western Divide auto tour (in development);
- **Personal contact services:** Concessionaire to provide campfire programs; FPTs, SCA interns, and volunteers to patrol river and provide visitor contacts and interpretive information in multiple languages (English, Spanish, Hmong); Kaweah Fly Fishermen, Wild Places, and the Tule River Conservancy to work with ranchers and local residents.

Important Storyline: The Tule River is a relatively small river, but with a large impact. The river originates in wilderness and travels through a wide variety of fire evolved life zones, as it descends steep slopes to the Central Valley floor. In most years, all of the water in this river is used and reused before it can reach its historic destination in Tulare Lake. The Tule River corridor is a product of the loss of open space, one of the forest's best illustrations of the impact of urbanization on wildlands along a major recreation route. Ranches are being subdivided into smaller single-family residences in the fire evolved plant communities of this steep canyon, and new residents need information and interpretation on living "eco-friendly" and "fire safe." The entire Tule River drainage was once home to the Yokuts. Today their home is the Tule River Indian Reservation, located on the South Fork of the Tule River.

Kings Canyon Scenic Byway

This scenic route transects a number of recreation settings: Front Country, Hume High Elevation, and Rivers and Lakes. This scenic route is the only designated national forest scenic byway in the Sequoia, and it provides the only vehicle access into the world-renowned Kings Canyon. This area of the forest is strongly influenced by visitation at Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks. Grant Grove, the Kings River, Monarch Wilderness, Grizzly Falls, and Boyden Cavern are popular attractions along the route. Elevations range from 2,000 feet to 8,000 feet.

Interpretive Audience: *Sightseeing tourists* (accessing the national parks) and *forest experience seekers* (Central Valley residents escaping the summer heat) use the route to access favorite recreation destinations. Some *wilderness users* travel through to access backcountry and wilderness. *Environmental students/enthusiasts* in geology are drawn to the rare folded rock formations along the highway, as well as the other outstanding geologic characteristics.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Wayside exhibits:** Dunlap Vista, Happy Gap, Grant Grove (NPS), McGee, Cherry Gap, Princess Campground, Redwood Creek, Boyden Cave, Grizzly Falls, Deer Cove (seven existing, three proposed);
- **Self-service visitor information kiosk:** Hume Lake office (existing);

- **Information boards:** District office, Princess Campground, Yucca Point and Deer Cove trailheads, Redwood Creek, Convict Flat, Grizzly Falls;
- **Partners in visitor information services:** Partnership with NPS provides funding for a Forest Service employee to work with NPS employees at the Kings Canyon Visitor Center and the Big Stump Entrance Station (existing);
- **Self-guided tour:** Auto tour (in development);
- **Personal contact services:** Boyden Cavern special use permittee provides guided tours (existing).

Important Storyline: The Kings Canyon Scenic Byway takes the visitor to world class natural wonders and through many of the Southern Sierra life zones. Visitors travel through grasslands, oak woodlands, chaparral, mixed conifer forests, giant sequoia groves, red fir forests, and riparian woodlands along the Kings River. On the way into the canyon, the route passes through the Big Stump Grove and General Grant Grove in Kings Canyon National Park. As the route descends, views into Cherry Gap, Converse Basin, and Indian Basin reveal ancient stumps remaining from the historic logging period, and panoramic vistas of Kings Canyon delight the traveler. Unusual displays of folded rocks and marble roof pendants can be viewed from the road cut by prison convicts through the Kings River gorge, one of the deepest canyons in North America. The road splits the Monarch Wilderness in two before it delivers the traveler to Kings Canyon National Park, where the road ends, past Cedar Grove.

Kern Plateau and Scenic Route

Sherman Pass Road

This remote, high elevation plateau offers visitors a high country retreat from the heat of summer and opportunities for their favorite outdoor activities. Sherman Pass Road closes for the winter to automobiles, and the road, along with trails, are groomed for some of the best snowmobile (over snow vehicle or OSV) opportunities on the forest. The desired condition is to keep the area at the current development levels, ranging from dispersed recreation opportunities to developed recreation sites with overnight facilities. Trailheads provide access to three wildernesses. Special management challenges include restoring areas burned in the McNally and Manter fires.

Interpretive Audience: *Activity oriented adventure seekers, anglers and hunters*, and *forest experience seekers* with expensive recreation equipment, such as RVs and toy-haulers, trailers, OHVs, OSVs, and stock, are drawn to this area. Most visitors are interested in family oriented activities, and they are predominantly white. Equestrian use is popular on the south side of Sherman Pass Road, with OHV use (mostly motorcycle) concentrated in the north. *Wilderness users* access three wildernesses and the Pacific Crest Trail. Some *sightseeing tourists* venture this way, traveling from Highway 395. *Neighbors* (from the Kern River Valley) come for fishing and hunting, as well as OHV and snowmobile opportunities. *Traditional users* include ranchers.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Wayside exhibits:** Troy Meadow Campground, Bald Mountain Lookout, botanical area (existing); Sherman Pass Overlook (one existing, one proposed); Fish Creek overlook, Dome Land overlook, wilderness overlook (proposed);

- **Self-service visitor information kiosks:** Blackrock Station, Cherry Hill Road, bridge at South Fork of the Kern;
- **Information boards:** Horse Meadow, Troy Meadow (campground and overflow), Fish Creek (campground and overflow), Kennedy Meadows, South Fork of the Kern day use;
- **Partners in visitor information services:** BLM and Kennedy Meadows General Store;
- **Publications:** ROGs (existing): Kern Plateau public pastures, winter sports, recreation area, mountain bike trail guide, designated routes map, McNally Fire of 2002;
- **Self-guided tour:** Sherman Pass auto tour (proposed);
- **Personal contact services:** FPTs, Bald Mountain fire lookout staff, OHV trail crew for visitor contacts along trails, SCA internship program for interpretive programs (proposed), Blackrock visitor information station during high use season (open Wednesday through Sunday), volunteer programs with Backcountry Horsemen and OHV user groups.

Important Storyline: Sherman Pass Road traverses the Kern Plateau, traveling through a wide mix of life zones with desert influence, from chaparral, oak woodland with gray pine to mixed conifer, fir, eastside (ponderosa) pine, to pure pinyon forests. These fire evolved landscapes show damage and recovery of forest ecosystems from the largest fires in the Sequoia's history, the Manter Fire of 2000 and the McNally Fire of 2002. Landscape features include spectacular granite domes and beautiful layered metamorphic rocks called meta-sediments and meta-volcanics (quartzite). Expansive vistas from ridge tops open views of high country wilderness with fleeting glimpses of the highest peak, Mt. Whitney, in the contiguous, lower 48 states. Mt. Whitney and nearby peaks form the extremely steep eastern boundary of the Sierra Nevada. High country meadows have historically been an important source of summer range for cattle ranchers and Basque sheepherders. The Tubatulabal Indians once lived here in the summer, and numerous archaeological sites are located on the Kern Plateau. Golden trout, the state fish, is native to the South Fork of the Kern, a designated wild and scenic river.

Great Western Divide and Scenic Route

Western Divide Highway

Steep mountains with granite outcrops rising from 4,500 feet to 10,000 feet in elevation, mixed conifer forests with multiple giant sequoia groves, and mountain meadows characterize this area. This setting is in the Giant Sequoia National Monument and shares boundaries with the Tule River Indian Reservation. Several small residential communities, recreation rental cabins, and recreation residences are incorporated within this setting. The desired condition is to raise the development scale to level 4 for developed recreation sites; accommodate groups and larger vehicles; and draw use from the Tule River Canyon to this area. Special management challenges include giant sequoia health, fisher habitat, OHV and OSV use, tribal relations, use and the need for patrol, wildland urban interface, and proximity to the state forest. OHVs and OSVs are restricted to designated roads only (no trails). Mechanized use (mountain bikes) are limited to designated roads and trails.

Interpretive Audience: The audience includes *sightseeing tourists* visiting the national monument (including international visitors, especially from European and Asian countries), *forest experience seekers* escaping the heat of summer with families, and individuals from all market zones. Hispanic and Southeast Asian participation is increasing. *Hunters*, *anglers*, and *traditional users* utilize developed and dispersed camping opportunities. *Activity oriented*

adventure seekers are attracted to outstanding rock climbing opportunities, stock use, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and some OHV and OSV use.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Wayside exhibits:** Pullouts along the road and at points of interest, including Dome Rock vista (interpretation incorporated in a very low profile, native rock structure), vista point south of Dome Rock (where Needles and Dome Rock can be seen), Quaking Aspen meadow interpretive trail (proposed); Trail of 100 Giants (replace signs with new ones), Needles Lookout;
- **Self-service visitor information kiosk:** North Road intersection at Quaking Aspen Campground (proposed);
- **Information boards:** Quaking Aspen, Trail of 100 Giants, Belknap, Upper Peppermint; North Road near Highway 190 (proposed); winter use information at Quaking Aspen, Holby Meadow for OSV;
- **Partners in visitor information services:** California Hot Springs Resort, businesses at Pierpoint Springs and Camp Nelson, including local realtors for lodging options;
- **Publications:** ROGs (existing): Belknap, Quaking Aspen, Trail of 100 Giants, Slate Mountain Botanical Area;
- **Self-guided tour:** Great Western Divide auto tour (in development);
- **Personal contact services:** Concessionaire for campfire programs; SCA interns and outfitter-guides (Golden Trout Wilderness Pack Station) for resource and conservation interpretation; fire lookout staff, FPTs, SCAs for visitor contacts.

Important Storyline: The Great Western Divide is the ridgeline that breaks the Sierra Nevada range into two watersheds, that of the Kern River, flowing into Buena Vista Lake, and the watershed for Tulare Lake. President Clinton visited the Long Meadow Grove and established the Giant Sequoia National Monument by presidential proclamation on April 15, 2000. This area has 19 recorded giant sequoia groves. Old growth forests provide habitat for rare wildlife species, such as the Pacific fisher. The last California condor chick found living in the wild was removed from a nest in a giant sequoia in the Starvation Grove in 1982. Goshawks and California spotted owls live in the mixed conifer forest which includes the giant sequoia groves. Needles and Dome Rock are spectacular, high profile granite monoliths seen from the highway. Peregrine falcons nest at Needles Hermit spire, a popular rock climbing destination, closed to climbing when the falcons are nesting. Slate Mountain is an unusual and prominent landmark with a botanical area hosting rare plants. Jordan, Mule Peak, and Needles lookouts are still in operation as fire lookouts, and they are open to the public.

Lloyd Meadow

This high mountain shelf located between the Western Divide and the Kern Plateau has an average elevation of 5,500 feet. The area is located within the Giant Sequoia National Monument. The southern 1/3 was burned in the McNally Fire of 2002. Granite formations and expansive vistas of the Kern River and Kern Plateau are enjoyed from many areas. The desired condition is to upgrade Lower Peppermint Campground and increase the diversity of recreation opportunities to make the area a destination location, respond to overuse of concentrated use areas, and develop loop trails for non-motorized activities, such as hiking, horseback riding, and

mountain biking. Special management challenges include lost visitors, visitor safety, patrolling, and litter.

Interpretive Audience: *Activity oriented adventure seekers (rock climbers, equestrians), social gatherers, forest experience seekers, traditional users, hunters, anglers,* and *wilderness users* (accessing trailheads or coming from organizational camps) are predominantly white and local. This area is a generational destination location and family use area. Native American, international, and out-of-state use is increasing. Organizational camps contribute a youth component in the summer. Popular activities are dispersed camping, water play at the "tubs and slides," equestrian use, developed camping, group use (non-commercial), rafting and kayaking the Forks of the Kern, hunting, fishing, rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking, and viewing the George Bush Tree. Outfitter-guides provide services for some of these activities. The area includes the only access point for boaters starting the Forks of the Kern run and also provides early season access to wilderness.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Wayside exhibits and interpretive panels:** Trail with interpretive panels, pavilion with a telescope at the Needles access for rock climbers (proposed);
- **Self-service visitor information kiosk:** Johnsondale fire station (proposed);
- **Information boards:** Lower Peppermint, Forks of the Kern Trailhead, Jerkey (existing); concentrated use areas (proposed);
- **Partners in visitor information services:** Circle R Store (proposed);
- **Publications:** ROG: Lloyd Meadow recreation area (proposed);
- **Personal contact services:** FPTs for visitor contacts; wilderness ethics course and forest resource conservation at Pyles Boys Camp and Camp Whitsett (proposed).

Important Storyline: Eastside pine (ponderosa) forests with giant sequoia and gray pine are a transition between the drier forests of the Kern Plateau and moister forests of the Great Western Divide, with excellent, birds-eye views of the Kern River Canyon. The McNally Fire burned about 1/3 of this area, and some areas can be used to tell the regeneration after disturbance story. The nature of visitor use in the area (mostly dispersed) and the remote location of Lloyd Meadow make self-policing and personal responsibility important messages to be interpreted to the public. The Freeman Creek Grove is the most eastern grove of giant sequoias; ancient monarchs include the Great Goshawk Tree (the second largest on the Sequoia) and the George Bush Tree. President Bush visited the Freeman Creek Grove on July 14, 1992 and signed a presidential proclamation to preserve, protect, and restore the giant sequoias in perpetuity, as unique objects of beauty and antiquity for the benefit and enjoyment of all people. The Freeman Creek Grove is possibly the largest grove in wilderness condition, never logged, and without a road through it. The Forks of the Kern and Jerkey trailheads provide access to the Golden Trout Wilderness. This area provides the earliest wilderness access in spring or early summer when other access is still under snow. Jerkey Trailhead is recommended for those entering the wilderness. A bridge provides safe passage across the Little Kern, which can be very dangerous during times of high water. Those using the Forks of the Kern Trailhead are advised to hike up the Little Kern to the bridge to cross the river. The Forks of the Kern Trailhead is the only access point for the class V Forks whitewater run. Wilderness permits are needed for overnight stays in the Golden Trout Wilderness and for wildernesses in other national forests and the national parks.

Hume High Elevation

Located in the northern section of the forest in the Hume Lake District and within the Giant Sequoia National Monument, this area is strongly influenced by the national parks and the Hume Lake Christian Camps. Elevations range from 4,000 feet to 8,000 feet in mixed conifer forest with one of the largest concentrations of giant sequoia groves. Visitors have many opportunities to discover and explore these groves in their natural, wild condition, while enjoying outstanding scenery, including vistas of the Sierra high country and into Kings Canyon. Maintaining access to giant sequoias for "discovery" in a natural setting is the desired condition. Special management challenges include coordination of the fee program with the National Park Service.

Interpretive Audience: Year-round use is by *sightseeing tourists* (many are out-of-state and international), *traditional users* with long-standing family traditions, *forest experience seekers* (mostly Central Valley residents, with nontraditional user groups of Hispanic and Hmong), some *activity oriented adventure seekers* (equestrian camp), *wilderness users*, and *environmental students/enthusiasts* visiting the national monument (sequoia groves). Popular activities include camping in developed sites, day use, social gatherings, dispersed camping, hiking, equestrian camping, hunting, fishing, rock climbing, and OHV and OSV use (designated roads only). The area provides wilderness access, two resorts, a recreation rental cabin, and organizational camps. The national park entrance fee may discourage lower income groups from visiting.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Wayside exhibits:** Millwood Staging Area, Buck Rock Lookout, Big Meadow (existing); Indian Basin Interpretive Trail (four existing, eight proposed); Converse Basin (three existing, trail proposed);
- **Self-service visitor information kiosks:** Hume Lake office (existing); Quail Flat, Big Meadow, Converse Basin (proposed);
- **Information boards:** Millwood Staging Area, Chicago Stump Trailhead, Indian Basin Trailhead, Logger Flat, Landslide, Tenmile, Quail Flat, Kennedy Meadow Trailhead, Big Meadow (campground, trailhead and winter trailhead), Buck Rock, Horse Camp, Stony Creek, Upper Stony Creek, Cove, Fir, Eshom;
- **Partners in visitor information services:** Partnership with National Park Service to provide visitor information services on weekends and holidays at the Kings Canyon Visitor Center;
- **Publications:** ROGs (existing): Exploring Evans Grove, an open textbook on Bearskin Grove, Stump Meadow land grab remnant, be a wildlife detective, Hume Lake ledger, comparing cones, Jennie Lakes and Monarch wildernesses, rental cabins;
- **Self-guided tour:** Converse Basin tour with a trail system connecting points of interest, include in a forestwide grove tour (proposed); 180-Tenmile loop tour (in draft form);
- **Personal contact services:** Develop partnership for interpretive services with concessionaires with interpretive training; continue partnership with concessionaire to help fund interpretive opportunities; interpretive training for FPTs if they can provide interpretive programs; continue SCA intern and temporary hire programs to provide interpretive programs at campgrounds; continue to support volunteers with Buck Rock Foundation to provide programs and staff the tower; program specialists to provide contacts and exhibits at community events and festivals; continue hosting the Celebrate Sequoias Festival, and expand it into a community wide event.

Important Storyline: Thirteen giant sequoia groves are located on the district, including the two largest in acreage, with associated mixed conifer to red fir forests and granite and basalt outcrops. The historic logging of giant sequoias is a story unique to this area of the forest. Converse Basin, the largest grove, was host to the most extensive giant sequoia logging operation. Giant specimen stumps remain after 100 years, presenting the best opportunities in the forest to tell the historic logging story. Although the sequoias are very large and have very spongy, thick bark, the trees are very brittle, and they would shatter when they were felled. Consequently, the wood was used mostly for grape stakes and shingles. Another story is the tree ring studies that began in 1935, tying climate change to fire history. Buck Rock Lookout, which is staffed with volunteers from the Buck Rock Foundation, functions as a fire lookout and is open to the public. In the Big Meadow area, the traditional grazing, guard station, and family history of Sam and Jennie Ellis are significant stories. Big Meadow guard station is available as a recreation rental cabin.

Greenhorn

This setting is 3,000 feet to 8,000 feet in elevation, often sits in a cloudbank, and, on clear days, showcases views of Lake Isabella and the Sierra crest. The desired condition is status quo, with development scale 3. Route designation for motorized wheeled vehicles is to be completed in 2008. The range of vegetation includes chaparral to mixed conifer with oak woodlands, and the soils are characterized by decomposing granite. Recreation residences, a county park, a private community, electronic sites, Summit fire station, a downhill ski area, grazing, mining, and fire lookouts are located within this setting. Special management challenges include user conflicts, patrolling, wildland urban interface and defensible space, ski area, OSV grooming, and fisher habitat issues. Snow play and rock hounding are popular, and recreation rentals include Frog Meadow Cabin and Oak Flat Lookout.

Interpretive Audience: *Traditional users* of recreation residences, *forest experience seekers*, *hunters*, and *neighbors* from Alta Sierra use developed and dispersed recreation opportunities. *Activity oriented adventure seekers* are attracted to opportunities for OHVs and OSVs, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, and trail riding on horseback. Mostly Central Valley residents who are predominantly white use the area.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Self-service visitor information kiosk:** Summit Station;
- **Information boards:** Developed campgrounds, ski area, concentrated use areas, Sugarloaf Winter Trailhead;
- **Publications:** ROGs.

Important Storyline: The mountains were named for emigrants struck with gold fever during the gold rush in 1849. The “greenhorns” were mostly men, eager, but unprepared; they were often lawyers, doctors, and young businessmen, without any experience of the hazards and life on the trail. This area offers spectacular views of the Sierra crest and great night skies for astronomy. Grouse are prevalent here, as well as habitat for Pacific fisher, goshawk, and California spotted owl. After the Stormy Fire in 1990, plantations containing some giant sequoia were planted, but no naturally growing giant sequoias occur here. Cattle grazing is an important traditional use. Oak Flat Lookout is a NatureWatch viewing site, as well as a recreation rental.

Wildlands

Wildlands include both designated wilderness and a few other areas with limited access. The following places are included: Kiavah Wilderness, South Sierra Wilderness, Dome Land Wilderness, Golden Trout Wilderness, Monarch Wilderness, Jennie Lakes Wilderness, Agnew Roadless Area, part of KRSMA (non-OHV area), and Oat Mountain.

This setting offers the best opportunities for solitude and recreation experiences centered on self-reliance. No developed facilities and very, very steep slopes characterize these lands. Elevations range from 1,000 feet to 12,000 feet. Many areas have significant geological formations. The desired condition is to maintain the natural conditions in these areas, but improve trail maintenance, address administrative cabins, and continue wildland fire use. Historic cabins and trails, the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), and the wide range of settings and physical challenges draw visitors who desire experiences in these remote locations; wilderness does not attract a large number of visitors to the Sequoia. Special management challenges include shared management and needed coordination for some of these areas (the Monarch is shared with the Sierra, the Golden Trout and South Sierra are shared with the Inyo, and the Kiavah is shared with BLM), wildland fire use (WFU), grazing, private inholdings, administrative facilities, trail maintenance, group use management, feral pigs, threatened and endangered species, OHV trespass/ encroachment, permits, marijuana cultivation, and archaeological site protection. All of the designated wildernesses have a party size limit of 15 people and 25 head of stock.

Interpretive Audience: *Wilderness users* consist of individuals and small groups of hikers (usually younger and mostly white) and stock users (usually older and white). Day users are more diverse. Visitors are generally tough, adventurous types, and the predominant use is in the summer months. Outfitter-guides operate in these areas, bringing in anglers, hunters, and sightseers.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Information boards:** At trailheads entering the areas;
- **Publications:** ROGs: One for each designated wilderness;
- **Website:** Information on each wilderness;
- **Personal contact services:** Develop partnerships for interpretive services with outfitter-guides and SCA interns; expand partnerships with Backcountry Horsemen Wilderness Riders and Sierra Nevada Volunteer Trail Association for personal contacts while patrolling and maintaining trails; Impact Monster skit, usually done in non-wilderness settings.

Access Points:

- Monarch Wilderness and Agnew Roadless Area: Deer Cove, Yucca Point, Kanawyer, Deer Meadow, Kennedy;
- Jennie Lakes Wilderness: Rowell, Big Meadow, Marvin Pass, Poop Out, Fox Meadow;
- South Sierra Wilderness: Kennedy Meadows, Jackass;
- Dome Land Wilderness: trails 34E14, 34E37;
- Golden Trout Wilderness: Jerkey, Lewis Camp, Clicks Creek, Summit, Blackrock, road 20S31, Forks of the Kern;
- KRSMA (non-OHV): Boole Tree;
- Oat Mountain: Roads 12S19, 13S91.

Important Storylines: Leave No Trace, the value of wilderness, wilderness prohibitions.

Kiavah Wilderness

Designated in 1994, totaling 80,580 acres, BLM and the Forest Service share management. The wilderness boundaries encompass the Scodie Mountains, where these eroded hills, canyons, and bajadas are at the southernmost reaches of the Sierra Nevada range, transitioning to the Mojave Desert. The desert influence offers an unusual mix of plants and animals, including Joshua trees, burro bush, and shadscale, growing near pinyon pine, juniper, canyon oak, and gray pine. Yellow-eared pocket mice and lizards watch the skies for raptors. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) enters on the northeast from Walker Pass and crosses the area for 16 miles, exiting over Bird Spring Pass to the south.

South Sierra Wilderness

Designated in 1984, totaling 60,084 acres, the eastern half is in the Inyo National Forest, and the western half is in the Sequoia. Found in relative abundance, the golden trout is a protected species, and special restrictions apply to anglers. Catch and release fishing is encouraged. At the southern end of the Sierra Nevada, this wilderness claims Olancha Peak, at 12,123 feet in elevation, along the crest of the range. Fragile meadows, forested ridges, rolling hills, and craggy peaks characterize the landscapes found here. The Sequoia side, forested with fir and pine, has the gentler terrain, providing for easy travel. The PCT crosses about 11 miles of the wilderness in a north-south direction.

Dome Land Wilderness

Designated in 1964, totaling 130,081 acres, the Sequoia manages the bulk of the area, with BLM managing Dome Land Wilderness additions. Found in relative abundance, the golden trout is a protected species. Special restrictions apply to anglers, and catch and release fishing is encouraged. This extremely rugged country with sparse vegetation is generously decorated with granite domes and unique rock outcrops. Mixed conifers and wet meadows in the north give way to thick pinyon covered mountains that dwindle to low desert land. The South Fork of the Kern River, a wild and scenic river, drains this wilderness. The PCT crosses the area north-south and follows the river for about nine miles.

Jennie Lakes Wilderness

Designated in 1984, totaling 10,289 acres, the wilderness is named for Jennie Ellis, pioneer wife of the first ranger, Sam Ellis. They homesteaded at Big Meadow, and Sam worked for the Forest Reserve, later the state department of Fish and Game. She was a quintessential pioneer woman and entertained the likes of John Muir and various other renowned people. Most of the area is above 7,000 feet in elevation in red fir, lodgepole pine, and western white pine forests. The wilderness includes Jennie Ellis Lake and Weaver Lake, which is a popular day hike destination from Big Meadow. On the east is the Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks backcountry, where visitors need a permit.

Monarch Wilderness and Agnew Roadless Area

The Monarch Wilderness was designated in 1984, totaling 44,896 acres. The Sierra National Forest manages the northwest portion and the rest is managed by the Sequoia. The only access is from the Sequoia side. The wilderness is adjacent to Kings Canyon National Park. From 2,000

feet in elevation at the South Fork of the Kings River to 11,077 feet on Hogback Peak, this land is steep and rugged with magnificent views from high ridges into deep canyons. Riparian areas to brush lands to conifer forests to meadows to giant sequoia groves, the wild and scenic South Fork of the Kings River and Highway 180 bisect the area. The Kanawyer Trail traverses the Monarch and provides magnificent views into Kings Canyon. The Deer Cove Trail leads up to Grizzly Lakes and Wildman Meadow, popular only with the hardiest of hikers, hunters, and stock users. At the higher elevations are the Monarch, Deer Meadow, Agnew, and part of Evans giant sequoia groves. Agnew Roadless Area, like the adjacent Monarch Wilderness, is generally steep terrain, broken by rock outcrops and streams, with mixed conifer forest.

Golden Trout Wilderness

The Backcountry Horsemen have volunteers staffing Hossack and Grey Meadow cabins on weekends during the summer. Designated in 1978, totaling 303,511 acres, the Inyo manages the eastern two-thirds, and the western third is managed by the Sequoia. The wilderness is adjacent to Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks. The heritage trout stream, located from the confluence of the Little Kern River upstream to Tyndall Creek, is entirely within the Golden Trout Wilderness and Sequoia National Park boundaries and is the "stronghold" of the Little Kern golden trout. The North Fork of the Kern runs through this wilderness; this part of the wild and scenic Kern is remote and reached only by hiking or horseback. The North Fork is a premier whitewater river for only the most expert boaters. A large drainage basin, partially on the Kern Plateau, includes pinyon pine woodlands, Jeffrey pine forest, meadow, red fire, lodgepole pine, foxtail pine, and alpine communities. The PCT travels through the eastern edge of the wilderness, beginning near Olancha Peak. This area has exceptionally scenic trails for backpacking and horse packing.

Kings River Special Management Area (Non-OHV)

Extremely steep terrain limits access in this area of KRSMA. The Boole Tree is located on the southern boundary of this area, which can be reached by dirt road, then a two-mile loop trail. Plant communities range from riparian along the Kings River, forming the northern boundary, through grassland and chaparral, to giant sequoia groves at the top of the drainage of Converse Creek. Prehistoric and historic use by Native Americans and ranchers occurred in this area. The Converse Fire was a significant burn in the 1920s.

Oat Mountain

Immediately southeast of Pine Flat Reservoir, the Oat Mountain area is generally steep terrain, dominated by dense foothill woodland and chaparral communities. Forest roads 12S01, 12S03, and 12S19 provide very limited access on the south and east. All of these routes are either gated closed in the vicinity of Oat Mountain or do not provide direct access to the area (road 12S01). Recreation use is primarily fishing in the Kings River or Pine Flat Reservoir and hunting wild pigs, with permission granted from surrounding landowners to cross their land. The area serves as winter range for the Hume deer herd, and bald eagles are known to overwinter here. Three cattle grazing allotments are located here.

Front Country

This setting is a desirable destination for visitors in spring and fall, when temperatures are moderate and snow prevents access to higher elevations, and undesirable in the summer, due to

heat. During the spring, the hillsides are dressed in spectacular displays of wildflowers. Often referred to as the foothills, the landscape progresses uphill, from grasslands, chaparral, and oak woodland to mixed conifer forest. Elevations range from 1,000 feet to 4,500 feet, with decomposed granite and erosive soils. These areas are subject to fire, by nature, and the urban interface increases that risk. The desired condition is to develop a horse camping facility in the Blue Ridge area and to manage OHVs with little or no change in the development level. Special management challenges include the control of marijuana cultivation, OHV trespass, tribal relations, lack of Forest Service presence in the field, grazing, wildland urban interface, and fire control.

Interpretive Audience: *Activity oriented adventure seekers* include equestrians during the cool months, hang gliders, hunters, hikers, OHV users, and dog trainers. A diverse group, most are day using *neighbors*. Spring wildflower displays attract visitors driving for pleasure.

Recommended Interpretive Methods:

- **Personal contact services:** Program specialists to provide contacts at Delilah fire lookout and exhibits at community events and festivals; possible partnership with California Hot Springs Resort.

Important Storyline: This area is the wildland urban interface, and the areas are generally steep and prone to fire. Critical habitat for the California condor is found here and includes a rock outcrop known as the condor bathtubs. These rock pools would fill with water after storms, and, when condors were more numerous, they would bathe in them. Delilah Lookout is operational as a fire lookout and open to the public. Poso guard station is now a recreation rental cabin.

Breckenridge

This mountain island, reaching 7,000 feet in elevation with good road access, is close to Bakersfield. Mixed conifers, oak woodlands, and grass cover the mountain, creating a wildlife retreat.

Interpretive Audience: *Forest experience seekers*, consisting predominantly of white males, local residents, and young couples, come to enjoy the forest and participate in non-motorized wildlife-oriented activity, such bird watching, driving for pleasure, or riding bicycles. *Hunters* and *gatherer types*, many of whom are Hmong, gather forest products and hunt small animals and deer.

Recommended Interpretive Methods: None.

Piutes

Located at the southernmost portion of the forest, this isolated granite plateau is covered with desert type vegetation, including a very dry, mixed conifer forest of Joshua trees, pinyon pine, Piute cypress, and gray pine, with elevations that range from 2,000 feet to 6,000 feet. Some private development is located in the area, but the Piutes have no developed recreation facilities, although the area is very popular for OHV use, primarily by motorcycles. This area has mining history, with both active and abandoned mine lands, and another traditional use is grazing. The area is valued for Native American heritage resources, such as pictographs. Some roadless areas are adjacent to BLM wilderness. The desired condition is to have more agency presence and

managed OHV use, by designating routes for wheeled motorized vehicle travel, scheduled to be completed in 2008. Very little to no development is planned for the future.

Interpretive Audience: *Activity oriented adventure seekers* use the area. They are often local residents, seeking a rustic experience, include expert OHV riders, individuals, and miners, and are mostly white and male.

Recommended Interpretive Methods: None.

Kings River Special Management Area (OHV)

Located in the Giant Sequoia National Monument, this area, which is bounded on the north by the Kings River, has the only OHV trails in the monument, as they were authorized by the legislation that created KRSMA. This area is generally steep, with brush and grass covered canyons, 1,000 feet to 5,000 feet in elevation, not very accessible, and provides great opportunities for solitude. Native American use and needs may preclude some interpretation. Millwood staging area and Mill Flat Campground are the access points to this area, via the Davis Road (12S01). The existing OHV routes are currently impassable, even for a dirt bike.

Interpretive Audience: OHV users and male, local hunters.

Recommended Interpretive Methods*:*

- **Wayside exhibits:** Bailey bridge (existing);
- **Information boards:** At Millwood staging, provide pack it in, pack it out message and Tread Lightly! materials, with information on the value and protected status of prehistoric and historic properties; at campgrounds along Kings River (Camp 4, Green Cabin Flat, Mill Flat), post special angling regulations that pertain to the Kings River; if existing OHV routes are maintained and passable, provide information at Verplank, Sampson, and Davis Flat trailheads (proposed);
- **Personal contact services:** Uniformed Forest Service employees to be available during specified use periods.

Important Storyline: This area has the only OHV trails in the monument. The terrain is very steep, limiting access to a few trails for advanced and expert riders. During the historic logging period, a flume was maintained along Mill Flat Creek to the Kings River, originating at the town of Millwood. Sampson Flat is the location where outlaws Evans and Sontag hid and were involved in a gunfight with a sheriff's posse. Mill Flat Creek is a critical aquatic refuge. Grazing, wildlife, and prehistoric use are potentially important stories.