



NEWS RELEASE

Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument

1839 S. Newcomb Street, Porterville, CA 93257

Date: September 30, 2009

Contacts: Mary Chislock, Public Affairs Officer

Op-Ed – *Monumental Outlook Over the Horizon*

Phone: 559-784-1500

By Tina Terrell, Forest Supervisor

The Apprentice: Marketing the Kern River

Have you ever heard of “*The Apprentice*”? If you have, then you are probably aware of Donald Trump’s show, *The Apprentice* on NBC. The TV show is about people who compete as program managers each week against each other solving problems, developing new marketing ideas, raising funds for foundations, or creating a new strategy for selling products to consumers. The result of “*The Apprentice*” is for the winner to become the new apprentice for Donald Trump and manage one of his many conglomerations.

Well, I mention, “*The Apprentice*” as the Forest Service this summer joined with others in a local rendition of “*The Apprentice*” that was hosted by the Bakersfield Black Chamber of Commerce. In a new partnership we formed, the Sequoia National Forest offered the competitors in “*The Apprentice*” an opportunity to develop a marketing strategy for the lower Kern River. The Forest would use the winning marketing strategy to promote the health, beauty, safety, and complexity of the Lower Kern River on posters and information boards located throughout the forest.

What makes sections of the Kern River unique?

For those who have traveled along Highway 178 from Bakersfield west toward Lake Isabella, you will find a section of the river that flows through your beautiful Sequoia National Forest. This river flows rapidly along rocks and through the slender Kern River canyon. The majestic beauty of the Kern River can be mesmerizing, but it also can be very dangerous and ugly due to the trash.

Why does the river hold such promise but deception?

Mostly because a person does not see the trash along the road or in the river because they are in a car driving and not looking down. When you do exit your vehicle along the river, you will see the trash and graffiti, and the areas that are hazardous for swimming. Each summer people do not realize how dangerous sections of the Lower Kern River can be for wading or swimming in the water, and at least 2-3 people jump into the river without a safety vest and drown.

So, our dilemma is how do we market the beauty and health of the river to the recreating public, while education visitors on how to take care of the river and respect the river instead of abusing this beautiful treasure?

The Bakersfield Black Chamber of Commerce Apprentice Program began in May with five contestants. The Sequoia was one of six other sponsors who participated in the program. Our opportunity to present our proposal to the contestants requesting a marketing strategy came the third week in June. By the time our turn rolled around, there were only three contestants remaining. The forest presented our theme and

objectives for what we wanted the marketing strategy to focus on.

The contestants had four days to develop their proposal, which the Forest was able to see at a formal presentation on a Saturday.

It was exciting to see all three talented contestants present their marketing strategies and creative ideas for the Kern River. The judges selected the winning strategy which focused on all four aspects for depicting the beauty and safety of the Kern River. The Forest will soon produce a new poster and information boards with some of the slogans from this marketing strategy.

The Forest appreciates the Bakersfield Black Chamber of Commerce approaching the Sequoia to participate in this great endeavor. We have benefited from this new partnership and will use the marketing scenarios presented to us to educate the recreating public on how we all can be *stewards of the land*.

Citizen stewardship starts with each of us and, is a belief we can support to sustain our waterways for the enjoyment of all.

###