RESTORE HETCH HETCHY
WWW.HETCHHETCHY.ORG
P.O. Box 3538, Sonora, CA 95370 (209) 533 - 4481

SEPTEMBER 13, 2005 -10AM

Contacts:
Ron Good 209-533-4481, cell 415-987-9944
Dr. Gerald Meral 415-669-9883

NEW STUDY REVEALS THAT YOSEMITE'S HETCH HETCHY VALLEY CAN BE RESTORED AND WATER AND POWER SUPPLIES CAN BE REPLACED AT A REASONABLE COST

In a press conference held at the State Capitol today, the non-profit organization Restore Hetch Hetchy released a major new study, revealing that practical, reasonably priced solutions exist which can easily replace the water and energy that would otherwise be lost if O'Shaughnessy Dam were removed and Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley were restored.

Hetch Hetchy Valley was inundated by San Francisco's O'Shaughnessy Dam early in the last century, creating a water and power supply for San Francisco and Southeast, South and West Bay Area communities. In the new study, Restore Hetch Hetchy finds the dam could be removed and the Valley restored, providing visitors to Yosemite National Park the chance to see a "second, wilder, Yosemite Valley".

For the first time, the study reveals that by diverting water from the Tuolumne River and a tributary (Cherry Creek) into existing pipelines, 95% of the water and 73% of the energy that would be lost if the dam were removed could be retained. Additional measures such as water and energy conservation, raising Don Pedro Dam, and groundwater storage could easily and economically replace the decreased water and energy.

The study provides the first detailed analysis of the actual removal of O'Shaughnessy Dam and ecological restoration of Hetch Hetchy Valley. Removal of the dam can be done using existing roads and a new conveyor system to minimize disruption to the park and the surrounding communities. Removal would take 5 years. During that time, ecological restoration would begin. The National Park Service, with the assistance of many volunteers, would plant thousands of trees and other native plants in the restored valley, and the Valley would appear substantially restored to visitors in less than ten years.

San Francisco presently does not filter water from the Tuolumne. The report recommends that filtration begin immediately, greatly increasing the quality of water supplied to Bay Area residents. Filtration would be required when the dam is removed.

The total cost of dam removal, valley restoration, water filtration, and replacement of water and energy supplies with the lowest cost alternatives would be about one billion dollars. Recent projects of similar nature and cost include Headwaters Forest, restoration of San Francisco Bay salt ponds, restoration of Delta islands and other habitat in the Central Valley.

Removal of the dam would not interfere with the extensive repairs San Francisco is making to the rest of its water supply system, and would not slow down the pace of those repairs.

More than 170 dams have been removed in the United States in the last 5 years. Major dams on the Elwha River (Washington State), Matilija Creek (Ventura County), the Kennebeck River (Maine), Rappahonock River (Virginia) and many other rivers have either been removed, or are about to be removed.