

KRV Forest Service Partnership History 12-12-2006

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 Thursday, 19 April 2007
 Last Updated Thursday, 03 April 2008

Kern River Valley Revitalization Mission: To facilitate the social, natural, and financial health of the Kern River Valley for this and future generations.

Kern River Valley & the U.S. Forest Service Partnership History

Background

In late 1993, the Lake Isabella Chamber of Commerce formed the Micro-Enterprise Development Committee to promote non-tourism/recreation employment. In May 1994, they submitted a letter to Sequoia National Forest Supervisor, Sandra Key requesting assistance and information regarding Rural Community Assistance Programs. Also, in 1994 the Kernville Chamber of Commerce initiated dialog with several KRV organizations seeking ways to work together on Valley-wide issues. In the latter part of 1994, the Micro-Enterprise Development Committee formed a broad based advisory council. Over the course of several council meetings the need for a Valley-wide broad based action group became apparent. Thus, Kern River Valley Revitalization, Inc. (KRVR) was formed. It is composed of representatives of the chambers of commerce, private companies, government and private agencies (including the Forest Service) and interested citizens. Economic Recovery Community Assistance Program - In December of 1994, the Sequoia National Forest Supervisor, Sandra Key certified that the Kern River Valley was eligible to participate in the Economic Recovery Community Assistance Program.

Action Plan Grant - In August, 1995 the Forest Service approved a \$10,000 grant to prepare a broad based community Action Plan. Strategic Planning meetings were held, a SWOT analysis performed, opportunities & objectives identified, and project teams established. Out of this a draft Action plan was developed, public input received and the Kern River Valley 1995 Action Plan was published in January 1996.

Additional Forest Service Grants

- **Film Location Library** - August 1996 - \$4,000. The library was developed and housed in the Kernville Chamber building. Duplicate sets of the photographs were integrated with the Kern County Board of Trade Film Commission's Library and photos were provided for the State Film Commission's on-line database.

- **Ecotourism Plan for Kern River Valley** - October 1996 - \$9,000. An Ecotourism Marketing Plan was developed which included a trademark, "Valley Wild," as well as a logo. In addition, a brochure "Take a walk on the Wild Side" was published, which included a map locating and describing 16 ecotourism venues in the greater Kern River Valley area. Further implementation of the Plan faltered with the relocation of two key Team members.

- **Micro-Enterprise Recruitment Program** - September 1997 - \$7,400. This grant was never funded. KRVR was to contract for services from Kern Economic Development Corporation under a Memorandum of Understanding, then being finalized. However, the head of KernEDC departed and the interim head desired to delay action until a permanent head was recruited and the relationship withered.

- **Special Forest Products Demo Project** - September 1997 - \$12,000. This grant was never funded as the project lost its leadership with the relocation or transfer of three key Team members.

- **Develop a Technical Assistance Plan** - September 1997 - \$4,000. A consultant was hired, an organizational assessment performed, a draft plan designed, reviewed and a final plan written. The 1998 Technical Assistance Plan was delivered in the Fall of 1998 focusing on improving KRVR's capacity in two areas: 1- increasing technical assistance to the community, and 2- assuring adequate organizational structure and systems in place to support KRVR's mission.

- **Giant Sequoia National Monument Marketing Plan** - Fall 2001 - \$25,000. A consulting team was hired, public meetings were held, a draft plan prepared, reviewed and a final plan written. The Community-Inspired Tourism Marketing Plan strives to have the Kern River Valley known as the southern entrance to the Giant Sequoia National Monument.

- **Implementation of Giant Sequoia National Monument Plan** - June 2003 - \$30,000. This grant was leveraged with \$28,000 in Kern County Tourism Promotion grants and other funding. Among the accomplishments have been the initiation of guided bus tours from the Kern River Valley to the Monument, publishing of the Southern Sierra Adventure Guide, establishment of a KRV media website, and obtaining the part time services of a professional marketer to coordinate implementation of the Plan.

Other Partnerships - The Forest Service has partnered with KRV groups and organizations for a multitude of events and activities, such as, Whiskey Flat Days, Bioregions Festival, Turkey Vulture Festival, Christmas Parade and the like.

KRVR operates as a resource for existing and future organizations/agencies/projects, providing a Valleywide perspective, fostering Valleywide cooperation on common issues, assisting with access to external resources including funding, facilitating the establishment of action teams, acting as a fiscal agent and through various similar means.

Document date: 2/12/06