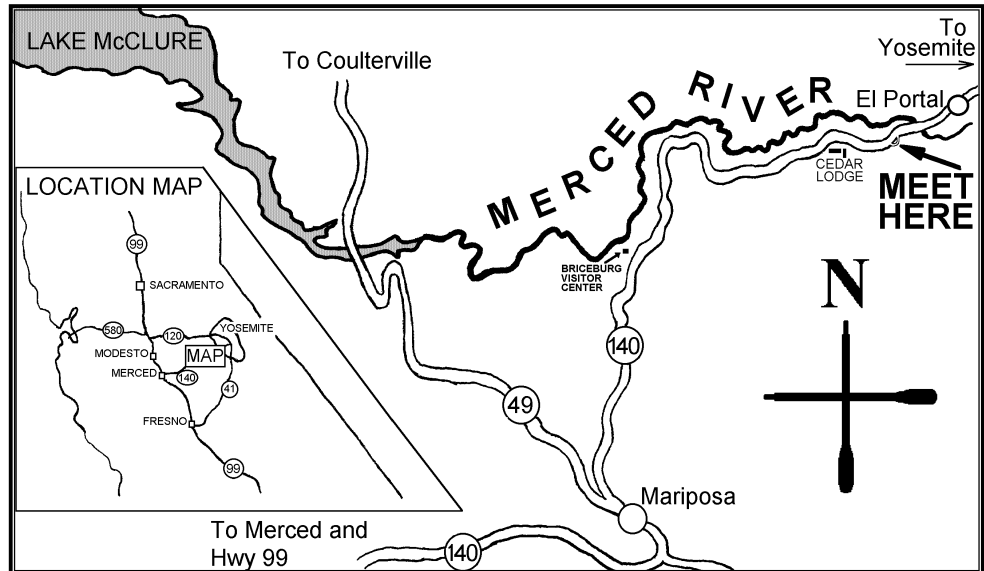


### Welcome!

The Merced River originates on the slopes of some of the highest peaks in Yosemite National Park and flows free and undammed until it reaches Lake McClure on the edge of the San Joaquin Valley. Our encounter with the river begins about 10 miles outside of the Park and continues for 14 miles through the Sierra foothills. Dropping at nearly 30 feet per mile, the Merced is a powerful river with wide fluctuations in its flow. At high water levels, usually late May to mid-June, it is very challenging and offers one of the best days of whitewater available anywhere. While the Tuolumne is known for its rocky, technical drops, the Merced is famous for large, roller-coaster waves and big crashing swells, perfect for veterans of the American and adventurous newcomers.

### Meeting Time and Place:

All trip members will meet the ARTA lead guide in the parking area near El Portal at 9:30 am on the morning of the trip. The parking area is a large dirt pullout on the south side of Highway 140; coming from Yosemite, it is on the left, 3.4 miles beyond the El Portal Market and 1.1 miles beyond the Red Bud Picnic Area. Coming from Mariposa, it is on the right, 25.1 miles beyond the Highway 49 junction in Mariposa and 1.5 miles beyond Cedar Lodge. Driving time from San Francisco is about 3½ hours; from Los Angeles it is about 5½ hours.



### Pre- and Post-trip Accommodations:

Accommodations in the El Portal area include Cedar Lodge (209/379-2612) and the Yosemite View Motel (209/379-2681). If you are coming via the Northern Yosemite entrance (Groveland), consider Evergreen Lodge (800/935-6343). Camping is available along the river at "first-come, first-served" Forest Service and BLM campgrounds and at Indian Flat RV Campground (209/379-2339).

Camping inside Yosemite National Park can be reserved in advance (209/372-0200).

### Personal Equipment List

#### On all trips you will need:

- Sandals with heel strap or tennis shoes  
**NO SLIP-ONS OR FLIP-FLOPS!**
- Swimsuit or shorts, quick-drying
- Hat for under helmet (baseball style is best)
- Sunglasses with strap, (maybe not your best pair)
- Water bottle (an empty Gatorade bottle is fine)
- Lightweight fleece or synthetic top
- Sunblock and lip balm

#### During the high water period (usually trips before June 15<sup>th</sup>) you will also need:

- Full or "Farmer-John" type wetsuit\* **(required)**
- Waterproof (not repellent) rainshell or paddling jacket\* **(required)**
- Polypropylene pile or fleece pullover or jacket (Polartec, Polarfleece, etc.) **(required)**
- Second pair of shorts for over wetsuit
- Fleece cap, gloves, and socks, wetsuit booties (optional)

#### Being Prepared:

Come ready for a full day on the river which means you will be in the sun and getting wet. The river is always cold and wetsuits are required during the high water period. Additionally, on all trips before July 1st, everyone should have a thick, synthetic pile/fleece top (NOT COTTON) AND a waterproof shell (NOT JUST WATER-REPELLENT).

#### Included:

The trip fee covers shuttle service from the meeting place to the river and from the take-out point back to the meeting place as well as the use of the specialized river equipment. You must bring your

\*ARTA has 3mm Farmer-John wetsuits with Kokatat waterproof paddling jackets available for rent. The cost is \$10.00 per day. Our supply is limited and we cannot always accommodate late requests. Please reserve well in advance.

#### **The Cooperative Spirit:**

ARTA's Cooperative Trips, (formerly known as River Classrooms), are designed to provide low-cost, participation oriented, river centered experiences for groups who wish to take a more active role in their trip. Trips are run on a charter-only basis with the chartering group planning, purchasing, and preparing their own food, and assisting in logistics and trip organization.

Because of the group nature, level of involvement and cost, these trips are very popular with schools, Scout groups, Church groups, family reunions, athletic teams and other groups who are used to doing things together. Trip members are active in all phases of the trip, from paddling in the rafts to helping out in the kitchen. As a result, these trips are educational and unifying experiences for groups of all ages and have a unique and energetic spirit which provides great moments and lifelong memories.

#### **The Cooperative Rivers:**

**SOUTH FORK OF THE AMERICAN, Class III, 1 or 2 days:** *The South Fork is an active river with over 50 rapids in a twenty mile stretch. The outstanding historical importance of the river, (it was the site of James Marshall's Gold Discovery in 1848), and its ability to handle large groups, makes the South Fork our most popular Cooperative Trip. The 1 day trips cover 10 miles of river while the 2 day trips cover 20 miles and camp at car-accessible Camp Lotus on the banks of the river. Prices range from \$50 to \$80 per person per day.*

**MERCED, Class IV, 1 day:** *The Merced is a Spring runoff river which has challenging whitewater. Highlighted by large, roller-coaster like waves and big hydraulics, the Merced is a nice follow-up to the South Fork or a vigorous first-time excursion. The Merced is only a half hour's drive from Yosemite Valley and is a great addition to a trip to the Park. The 1 day trips cover 12 - 16 miles of river. Prices range from \$60 to \$80 per person per day.*

**TUOLUMNE, Class IV+, 1 day:** *The Tuolumne is the measuring stick against which all other rivers are compared. "Is it as hard as the Tuolumne?" "Is it as remote as the Tuolumne?" "Is it as pretty as the Tuolumne?" It has world class whitewater, exceptional scenery and offers a superb wilderness experience. Yosemite National Park is a short drive away and makes a nice destination for before or after the trip. The 1 day trip covers 18 miles of river. Prices range from \$90 to \$120 per person per day.*

#### **Other Rivers:**

*ARTA offers standard guided river trips on 14 different rivers in the West. While we don't have a formal Cooperative Program on each of these, custom trips can be arranged on almost all of them, (usually off-peak season). We have offered longer Cooperative Trips on the Lower Klamath in California, the Rogue in Oregon; the Main Salmon in Idaho; and the Green and Yampa in Utah. If you have a group that is experienced in organizing trips and purchasing and preparing food and you want a new adventure, give us a call.*

#### **Your responsibilities:**

It isn't hard to put together one of these trips (and it is easier the second time) but you do need to pay attention to some details.

1. You need to make sure that each person on the trip turns in a signed **Release of Liability and Acknowledgement of Risk Agreement** before they go rafting. We prefer to get these in advance to help us plan AND to make sure there are no disappointments at the launch site. **Youths under the age of 18 must have an Agreement signed by a parent or guardian, so it is vitally important to distribute, collect and return the forms well in advance of the trip.**
2. You need to bring food for your group **and** for our guides (one of us for every six of you).
3. You need to get everyone in your group to the meeting place on time and ready for a day on the river, (this is sometimes the biggest challenge). Use our maps and packing lists and double check.

That's it! Have Fun!

#### **Special Requests/Itineraries:**

We have done wedding receptions, birthday parties, merit badges, team-building and pretty much every other kind of event you can imagine. If you have a situation that calls for a little more customization, give us a call, we'll see what we can do.

**Meals:**

The chartering group is responsible for all meals from lunch on the first day of the trip through lunch on the last day of the trip. **Please keep in mind that you are responsible for feeding the guides as well as yourselves: for every six people in your group, please bring enough additional food for one more person.** Some of the food, especially the lunches, can get battered about, so buy firm bread and keep glass to a minimum. Our camp kitchen has some basic spices and condiments, but please bring your own beverages like coffee, hot cocoa, and drink mix.



For the most part, meals will be cooked over ARTA's camp stove (think: "2 burners") or barbequed over an open fire and your choice of meals should reflect this, (simpler is better). ARTA will provide a river commissary with a variety of pots and pans for your group to use during the trip as well as a firepit with grate and wood, (bring your own charcoal!). We also have a Dutch Oven which is an exciting way to bake and can be incorporated into your plans, (ie birthday cake). If you are not sure about something, please call our office - nothing is worse than a dinner disaster after a day on the river.

**Menu Suggestions:**

Here are some tried and true menu suggestions, simple but reliable.

**BREAKFAST**

- French Toast
- Pancakes
- Omelettes or scrambled eggs with cheese and vegetables
- Hot and cold cereal
- Bacon, sausage, ham
- Fresh fruit or melon
- Juice from concentrate
- Yogurt
- Milk, tea, coffee, cocoa

**LUNCH**

- Make-your-own sandwich deli, tuna, peanut butter and jelly, BLT, etc.
- Cold fried chicken
- Cheese, crackers, & salami
- Fruit, (apples and oranges)
- Cookies
- Powdered or concentrated juice drinks
- Trail mix

**DINNER**

- Barbequed hamburgers or chicken
- Spaghetti
- Burritos with refried beans, Mexican rice, etc.
- Stir-fry with rice
- Salad: green, pasta or potato
- Dessert: cake mix, brownies
- Marshmallows, chocolate bars, graham crackers

**Food Packing:**

ARTA will provide large waterproof containers, (coolers, rubber bags, etc.) for food that has to go on the river, (lunches). It should be sorted into zip-lock bags or other fairly watertight containers, (tupperware, large garbage bags, etc.) and should be reasonably durable. Glass should be kept to a minimum, (look for squeeze type condiments). We will have 3 gallon drink jugs and water for concentrated juices, (bring your own ice - blocks work best). Food that isn't going on the river, (dinner and breakfasts on overnight South Fork trips), should be packed in your own coolers or boxes and will be left in your vehicles in camp. Don't forget ice!

**More Information:**

The actual details for each specific Cooperative Trip, (where to meet, how to get there, what to bring, etc.) are contained in the Trip Details sheet for each trip. The Trip Details for the specific trip are sent with each reservation. If you have reserved a Cooperative Trip and have not received the Trip Details for that trip, please call our office immediately.

