

Merced Irrigation District Appoints New Director of Parks & Recreation

J Mills Brings More Than Two Decades of Recreation and Marina Experience

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MERCED, CA – Merced Irrigation District announced the appointment today of Mr. James “J” Mills as the new Director of Parks & Recreation. Mr. Mills has extensive background in the management, maintenance and promotion of marina and outdoor recreation that will be of significant benefit to MID, its ratepayers and those using the district’s recreation facilities.

In addition to providing electricity and irrigation water to Merced residents, MID operates recreation facilities on Lake McClure and Lake McSwain, including 600 campsites. The recreation areas provide vital access to fishing, boating, swimming, hiking and bicycling. Among the facilities are six boat launches and several floating marinas.

Under the direction of MID General Manager John Sweigard, Mr. Mills will perform a variety of tasks relating to the overall planning, budgeting, marketing, operation and maintenance of the Parks Department.

“MID and our community will significantly benefit from Mr. Mills experience, especially our outdoor recreation enthusiasts,” said MID’s Mr. Sweigard. “It is a pleasure to welcome him. His expertise will be a valued asset.”

Mr. Mills brings more than 20 years of development, management and consulting experience in the resort, hospitality and marina industries. Throughout his career he has developed a comprehensive expertise in operations management, strategic planning and best business practices.

His background includes eight years as a manager and consultant in the ski and resort industry, and six years as a Certified Financial Planner and Business Consultant with American Express. In 1998 he joined Westrec Marinas in Northern California as Regional Manager and Area Vice President. There he directed the operations and development of six lake, river and ocean based marinas with more than 3,500 wet and dry slips and a broad range of full-service marina resort operations.

Following his time with Westrec, he worked as a consultant and as General Manager of the California Recreation Company, LLC, a division of The Irvine Company in Newport Beach. He operated five premier ocean marina facilities in Newport Harbor and the Bair Island Marina in San Francisco Bay.

“I grew up in the Central Valley, hiking, fishing, and boating on its rivers, streams and lakes,” said Mr. Mills. “I’m looking forward to working with MID, and all of our stakeholders and visitors, to enhance the use and enjoyment of the park and lake resources.”

Mr. Mills is an avid outdoorsman, boater and sailor. He has been an active member of the California Association of Harbor Masters and Port Captains, The Urban Land Institute, The Association of Marina Industries, and the Marina Recreation Association

He will begin his position with MID on Feb. 2, 2011.