

Correspondence ID: 1 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I enjoy hiking in Yosemite. I enjoy the ability to spontaneously drive there and hike with out the need for a permit. If more people want to access the top of Half Dome, accomadate them. Place an up cable and a down cable and this would allow a better flow of hikers up & down.

Correspondence ID: 2 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,24,2012 18:19:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I believe that Alternative D, which allows 140 hikers per day, should be implemented. Climbing Half Dome is an absolutely exhilarating experience, and I hope to climb those cables one day. The access to this trail absolutely must be limited, however, after being informed of the environmental damage that the excess of visitors is causing to Yosemite and the threat to the Mt. Lyell Salamander. I believe that Alternative D is the best choice for the health of the wildlife and their habitat because it will cut the amount of visiors that hike on the trail by nearly 90%, and it will bring the wilderness experience back into the hike. Another provision that should be considered along with Alternative D are better wildlife-proof containers for trash, recyclables, and food products along the trail corridor. I believe that this is a reasonable compromise, because that experience shouldn't be taken away from aspiring visitors but the health of Yosemite should be our main priority.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 3 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,24,2012 21:50:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I was able to hike half dome this past summer. I support the plan to limit it to 300 permits per day.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 4 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: None

Topic Question 2: Additional iformation to help preserve Half Domes natural suroundings, from to to bottom.

Topic Question 3: Provide trail signs informing distances to goals of climbers with posted and carved out as to their location in relationship to the posted sign.

Topic Question 4: none

Topic Question 5: none

Topic Question 6: We have VW camper and this size camper is ideal for camping in the Valley. Help to reduce automobiles and larger than large busses should be held to as few as possible in the valley at the same time.

Comments: All the hard work that everyone has been putting out to help is truly appreciated all consened. THANKS.....

Correspondence ID: 5 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,24,2012 22:49:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Dear Sir:

I read the plan and I agree that either Alternative B or C would be the best for Half Dome. I am sorry to see that the NPS dismissed a version of the Multi Day Permit because of overcrowding on the Cables.

I personally think a window of opportunity should be given avoiding the heaviest use days of the week.

I think the park service shuold consider two day windows for permits issued on Sunday through Thrusday(Wednesday) of the hiking season. Excluding Friday and Saturday for the reasons stated in the report overcrowding on the Cables.

The main goal of the system is help ensure safety of hikers climbing to the top of Half Dome. Half Dome is unique feature and we all know in inclement weather that individuals who have a permit for that day will still attempt a Half Dome Summit no matter what the conditions maybe. They feel compelled, because of the assigned date, to go despite the safety concerns for

themselves or others.

By providing a two day window on the least crowded days at least give the permittee the opportunity to hike to the summit on a better weather day and not feel compelled to hike on the only day assigned.

Yes there may be times when the number of people will exceed 300 or 400 on a given day. But that in my opinion is far safer to have increased people on Half Dome in good weather rather than having people climb during bad weather. Which not only presents a danger to hikers but potentially the rescue personnel that may be involved to assist those that get into trouble.

Please reconsider the multi-day proposal for permits to help provide a safer environment for all involved. Hikers, park staff, rescue personnel and any other individual involved in keeping people climbing Half Dome as safe as possible.

Sincerely,

██████████

Correspondence ID: 6 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan_25_2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: none

Topic Question 2: Having done the hike in September 2011, I appreciated the smaller crowds that we encountered, compared to pictures that I have seen of the overcrowding on the cables.

Topic Question 3: none

Topic Question 4: none

Topic Question 5: none

Topic Question 6: I like plans B and C, I think either would be instrumental in alleviating crowding on the trail and cables.

Comments: My dad climbed Half Dome in the late 1930's. I was able to realize my dream of following in his footsteps (and hand holds on the cables) in 2011. It was the thrill of a lifetime to be able to accomplish this. I was overwhelmed with emotion at the top of the cables. I don't remember ever having cried tears of joy before this moment. I agree that there needs to be a stewardship of the cables so that others can enjoy the same feeling of accomplishment that I felt that day. To take the cables down would be an injustice and disservice to the park as a whole. Although Yosemite offers a myriad of other amazing natural wonders, Half Dome is unique. It is not an easy hike, that is a part of the challenge that separates the "Domers" from the rest of the visitors to the park. The argument has been made that the cables are not "natural". The fact that they have been on Half Dome for so many years almost makes them a part of it. Are the holes that are made by the rock wall climbers any less natural? How about the fences and bridges that are found along the trails to Nevada Fall and Vernal Fall? In order to fully enjoy one of the Earth's most amazing natural wonders, the park needs to initiate, and enforce, a permit system like they did in 2011. I believe that the proposed lottery for 2012 is a step in the right direction. Thank you for letting us voice our concerns. That this topic is so emotionally charged shows how very much we all care for the park. Sincerely, ██████████

Correspondence ID: 7 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan_25_2012 01:37:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I disagree with limiting the number of visitors to half dome. Having to compete with a slot to hike an 18 mile trail to half dome makes Yosemite feel like Disneyland, and not a park.

Topic Question 3: I've climbed to the peak twice leaving at 6am both times. I did not feel like I bumped into an excessively large number of people. There was also a strong bonding experience there. There are plenty of trails where you can walk with for hours without encountering anyone, and this one doesn't have to be one of them.

Topic Question 6: I'd like to come to the park with friends, and we'd like to hike half dome together. I already have to wake up early to book a camping spot. Waking up another day to book a ticket to hike is excessive and against the spirit of a national park.

Comments: I agree that having a long line of people at wires is dangerous, but that can easily be addressed by adding another rope to form an "up" and "down" lane. Taking ropes down and limiting the number of people is an overkill.

Correspondence ID: 8 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan_25_2012 02:09:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not familiar enough with all of the information given to provide adequate comment.

Topic Question 2: I don't like A or B, C seems to be the best alternative given the issues. Removing the cables would not stop what I see as uninformed urban people who think of the outdoors as a different kind of Disneyland from trying to go up to the top without the cables in place. I work in the outdoor industry and believe me, the questions we get from people wanting to go out into the woods are unbelievable....I truly feel for Park Rangers who work in our National Parks.

Topic Question 6: When I used to go to Yosemite Park, I camped and/or stayed in the park's accommodations, I bicycled, hiked some of the trails, and/or went rock-climbing. Over the years, I have gone less and less to Yosemite Valley proper and more up into the high country up along 120, mostly because I've grown to dislike the crowds of people. Yosemite Valley itself has become less like outdoors and more like an urban jungle with scenic views. :(The proposals for Half Dome would not affect me, but anything that would improve the safety of the average tourist and thus avoid lawsuits against the Park Service for lack of "protecting the public" from themselves, I am for.

Comments: Regarding the fact I work in the outdoor industry...I am concerned about the number of people who come in asking for harnesses and slings, etc. so they can clip themselves to the cables for safety. That tells me that there are people who want to make this trip that have no business being up on those cables in the first place. And consider if someone is clipped to the cables, with the correct gear, ie, climbing harness and a Via Ferrata...what happens if they do fall? They may be safe, but what about the other people on the cables near them? I would love to be able to go to the top of Half Dome, but I recognize that I am not capable of doing it physically and realize that attempting such a feat would endanger me, my fellow hikers and probably cause headaches for the Rescue People.....consider really getting the word out to people about safety, common sense, etc.

I vote for Alternative C....let folks have a true wilderness hike and summit...not some Disneyland like atmosphere that is also dangerous because of the overcrowding.

Correspondence ID: 9 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I'm good with it.

Topic Question 2: Option B,C is workable. I like C as commercial guides cannot gobble up all the permits. With the 400 permits per day system, many people never showed up, so limiting it to 300 will work.

Topic Question 3: N/A

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 10 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I believe Alternative Plan B is the best option. Limiting the use of the Half Dome Trail to 300 would provide plenty of hikers the ability to hike the Dome.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 11 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,25,2012 09:51:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Make Half-dome cables safer; replace old boards, secure poles better. Do this and also reduce number of daily hikers to 300. Increase fee for a permit by \$10 - \$20 dollars to reduce scalping.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 12 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,25,2012 09:56:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative C is the best option. I was involved with the Visitor Use and Social Science cable studies conducted in 2010. During the study period, I personally found that on days when permits were implemented, visitor attitudes and safety were at very high levels. However, on days where permits were not required, crowding on the trail to Half Dome coupled with crowding on the cables, made for very unpleasant visitors and unsafe visitor conduct when negotiating the cables.

Removing the cables would deal a sufficient blow to tourism numbers I believe. To many, Half Dome is their personal Mt. Everest. I believe the cables should be retained, with access being granted to permit holders and climbers.

300 people per day is a great number to limit the use to. It allows those 300 visitors the opportunity of solitude, as those 300 visitors will be dispersed throughout the day, as opposed to 300 people at a time during the morning, mid-morning, lunch and afternoon. On days where permits were not required, it was not uncommon to count 1,200+ visitors utilizing the trail, subdome and cables, on busy summer days.

Topic Question 3: While I agree with the permit system, I believe there is much work to be done on how the permits are distributed. During the summer of 2010, we noticed that on days permits were required, approximately 50% of permit holders would actually use their permits.

I suggest staggering the number of permits in favor of a first come, first serve basis. Meaning only 100 permits per day would be available for advance reservation, and 200 permits be held for those on a first come, first serve basis. Many of the permits last year were reserved by scalpers, in order to turn a profit. That is simply outrageous.

I also suggest a location where unused permits can be dropped in a box, and redistributed. For example, there are individuals who reserve permits, and end up not coming or using their permits for whatever reason. Perhaps for reserved permits, a check in system should be implemented as well, like the system airlines use. Visitors with reserved permits should be required to check in 24hrs prior to the date for which their permit is for. If they fail to check in, their permit is forfeited, and added to the first come, first serve number.

I also suggest a small number of permits be reserved for park employees.

Topic Question 6: For visitors like myself, I enjoy hiking Half Dome on nights when the moon is full. That way I can enjoy solitude, summit Half Dome for sunrise, and not be effected by the permit system.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 13 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan_25_2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I recommend adopting Recommendation A, removal of all restrictions to accessing Half Dome. This is the wilderness. Accidents happen, sometimes people even die.

Topic Question 3: I suggest adding a separate set of cables for the return route and modifying the cable system to make it easy to use safety harnesses. Suggest hikers use a harness for their safety.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 14 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan_25_2012 11:28:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I am a Northern California resident and have been within two to three hours of the Park for most of my adult life. I use the park in a variety of ways because of my close proximity. I try to visit the park at least once a season. I have a love for the National Parks in general, but because of my location Yosemite is my Park. I try to experience it to the fullest, enjoy all aspects and stay within the Park when I visit. For me this means everything from Visitor Center to backpacking. My affinity is most to the day hike experience. I found Half Dome to be one of the best day hike experiences for me and would hate to lose it as a possible way to experience Half Dome. Of course it would be easiest to have it remain as it has been with no changes but since it isn't being considered as an option and with some relatively good reasons, I would suggest my support of Option B or C, with a preference for B because, I believe this last year with the Permit system showed that most days the full number of permits allowed were not taken advantage of. That said, the reason I support the permit system with either 400 or 300 permits is that by its nature people must prepare for the hike, it can't be a last minute whim. It does keep the numbers at a reasonable range for both wilderness and safety. The nature of the Park and the way it is used today is that you need to make housing arrangements way in advance anyway, so it isn't problematic making this same effort for permits. And it keeps the Cables up while honoring the other purposes of the NPS. I would ask that in reviewing the Permit system in general, that permit requests be open when housing reservations are open so this can be planned accordingly. That Permits can be requested on an ongoing basis so if one becomes available it can still be obtained. That there be a process for cancellation in order to open them up to others who may wish permits. I want to thank the National Park for this plan and process. Thanks for not reacting with either extreme possible response to a Half Dome Plan. I value and honor that difficulty of balancing protection and access to the Park so that all can experience Yosemite to its fullest. Thanks, [REDACTED]

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 15 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan_25_2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Decisions on what constitutes a "negative" experience are purely subjective, and should not be represented as data.

Topic Question 2: Alternatives B-D limit taxpayer access to a federally-funded park, and besides - how will the NPS enforce this? Turnstyles in Little Yosemite Valley? Rangers writing tickets on the Half Dome Trail?

Topic Question 3: The problem is the stated goal - preserving the "wilderness". What do you see when you get to the summit - Hotels, swimming pools, cars, campgrounds, roads - that's not a wilderness setting, although it is within the legal boundaries.

Comments: The question is, "Why Should the NPS limit access to Half Dome", not, "How to limit access". The park is federally funded through taxpayers - all of the taxpayers - not just the ones who live nearby and consider it "their" mountain - because, after all - they go all the time and they think the mountain means more to them than to the rest of us - so it should be partitioned off so the "others" don't get it too dirty, too congested, too polluted with views with "them" in their view finders.

The park belongs to people in Iowa just as much as California. It belongs to multi-millionaires and NPS Rangers equally. John Muir called it a cathedral - he didn't assign ownership.

By limiting access, NPS is discriminating against families and taxpayers who do not live nearby and have limited visitation opportunities.

I am forwarding my concerns to my US Representative, Thad McCotter, who will address this onerous and blatantly discriminatory proposal at a Congressional level.

Correspondence ID: 16 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: During periods of inclement weather (thunderstorms or rain predicted), permit holders should be offered a chance to defer their permit to an alternate day. This will increase safety by discouraging use on days when it may be dangerous to climb, while allowing the user a choice.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 17 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,25,2012 14:03:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: From 3-37 "Cable removal would eliminate options for CUAs to offer guided hikes to summit of Half Dome." Incorrect. CUA's would still be able to guide clients to CLIMB half dome. Sure the CUA would have to make some changes but the opportunity is still there for them. Additionally, see my comments on question 6 for an argument that Alternative E actually opens up many more opportunities for guide services to show visitors other parts of the park.

Topic Question 2: I wonder how issuing permits changes the NPS's liability in regards to injuries and deaths. Suing the NPS is becoming more fashionable and successful. Certainly you are aware of the famous "mountain goat goring" death case against Olympic Nation Park? When you issue permits you make it even harder to conquer the inexperienced hikers belief systems around who is responsible for their personal safety and what it means to be in a wilderness setting. The HD permit is different than a wilderness trail permit. It's a permit to hike the last quarter mile of the HD trail that is a cable system installed each year and maintained by the NPS. It is for one day, not overnight. All these factors change expectations. If I am issued this permit I expect that the issuer is providing me with a safe trail and passage. If I am issued a permit I expect to be given all reasonable warnings and protections. If I am in danger on the cables I expect the NPS would require me to wear a harness and clip onto the cable. If this is not the case, and I am injured I may be inclined to sue the NPS.

I believe issuing permits further limits your ability to continue with your current policy of "once your cross this line (the not well marked wilderness boundary) you are responsible for your own safety".

Topic Question 3: This plans goal seems to be centered around finding the appropriate number of permits to issue for the cables as three of your five alternatives are centered around the permit system with the other two appearing to be extreme measures. Perhaps there is room for additional creativity. First you must acknowledge that your own chart shows that Alternative E has the most overall beneficial impacts of any plan proposed. If you account for my arguments in question 4 below, your chart would show beneficial for Alternative E across every single category measured. Why then is this not the plan you are promoting?

In fact, there is only one small argument against Alternative E in your entire document and that is that a small number of commercial hiking guides will lose the ability to guide trips there. Is this all? Is this the reason why we would not choose the most beneficial alternative? Is the pressure from concessionaires that intense and that short-sighted? Have we not put commercial interests before preservation for far too long in Yosemite?

How then can we choose Alternative E yet still make the commercial interests happy? Surely there must be somewhere else you can give after you take. Possible you can lower their fees or make it easier to get permits? Maybe another part of the park can be opened to their trips that is not currently open? Please get creative and find a way to keep your concessionaires happy but don't do it by missing this incredible opportunity you now have to choose Alternative E and put end to one of the last major symbols

of the exploitative history of YNP.

Topic Question 4: I disagree with your interpretation of the half dome cables as a "...important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage..." as described in section 2-26 addressing the NEPA. If you want to use that criteria to support a particular plan you should apply "...important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage..." to the valley itself, the JMT, and the Merced watershed all of which are affected by your choice. The cables are one of the last bastions of the time when white men came to the valley to conquer and exploit nature, not to connect and respect nature. It belongs in the category of the Glacier Point Firefall, the bear feedings, the zoo, the asphalt covered trails in the wilderness, and many other decision that have been made in the history of the valley that we must learn from and move on from. The cables are historical yes, but they do not belong in the wilderness and the environmental impact of having them there is too high. Yes, I understand the public will be disappointed and you may be concerned about public reaction and financial impact of this decision. Please do not let the short term financial interests of your concessionaires trump your long-term preservation goals. Please do not miss this opportunity to correct a bad decision made during different era of human relationship with YNP. Visitor numbers will be fine. Option E is the only viable solution that meets all your criteria in the long run.

Do to the above argument I also disagree that removal of the cables has adverse impact in terms of historical and cultural qualities as stated in section 3-28.

Topic Question 5: I see much discussion regarding the impact of hikers on the trail itself and the vegetation but lets not forget about the human waste and litter on the half-dome. Last time I hiked half dome (2007) there was not a tree or boulder that did not have multiple piles of unburied human waste and toilet paper behind it. Is this what we want for our park and the Merced water shed?

Topic Question 6: The first three times I came to Yosemite it was to climb Half Dome. That statement may seem to support the fear that visitors will stop coming to the park if the cables are removed but now that I have spend more time in Yosemite I now know that the allure of Half Dome creates a type of 'tunnel vision' for the visitor (which is odd because the view from half dome is one of the worst views in the park - because you can't see half dome from up there!). The park is vast and one of the most amazing places on earth with many many MANY trail accessible peaks and wonders. The allure (created by a century of marketing) of half dome not only creates unnecessary impact on that one part of the park it is cheating park visitors out of the knowledge/drive/ability to experience other parts of the park. Take down the cables and you will open up a world of possibilities to the park visitor. It could even be argued that Option E will, after a short period of change, increase park visitor numbers while reducing the impact on the environment as visitors become enamored with a multitude of other accessible wonders in Yosemite National Park.

Comments: Yosemite is often referred to as the "Disneyland of National Parks" and no one hike supports that negative public image more than the Half Dome cables hike. This image clearly demonstrates that, even in the public eye, the pendulum has swung too far in favor of the interests of commercial exploitation and away from conservation and protection of land, watersheds, and of public safety. Let's take this opportunity to shift our learned perspectives and align our values with our management practices. The most beneficial option, by your own research, for all stakeholders is Alternative E.

Correspondence ID: 18 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Camping at the base of Half Dome at day's end? You did not address it, but I reckon it does take place.

Topic Question 2: I am actually in favor of all the alternatives except for E. This alternative would restrict ones desire to hike to the top of Half Dome period. Some would try climbing on their own which would be extremely dangerous. Perhaps Alternative D would be best since it deals with only 140 hikers per day. I am unsure if Half Dome can be done in one day roundtrip. I remember a Huell Howser trip to Half Dome, and I believe they camped along the way. Reckoning perhaps 30-40% of the hikers camping overnight of any Alternatives would be cumbersome.

Topic Question 3: I believe you have covered the entire gamut nicely. I might advise having every camper who enters the Park on any given day to let the Ranger know that he plans to hike to Half Dome during his stay. Then he can sign a log perhaps at the Rangers station and then again at the beginning of the trail either at the Falls or just before that climb.

Topic Question 6: We used to come to Yosemite every 5 years. We are long overdue now. We just enjoy hiking around the Valley floor and taking an occasional hike to Nevada Falls and looking up from the bridge. My brother and I did hike to the top of Yosemite Falls once, but that was many a year ago now. After watching Huell Howser's California Gold where he and another plus his cameraman ventured along that trail and climbed to the top of Half Dome, I decided that the video would suffice for me! But I admire and respect any person who wants to hike to Half Dome and then further up that 45+ degree incline to its top. I just see the need to restrict large numbers of people hiking to Half Dome on a daily basis.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 19 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,25,2012 15:52:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I really like the idea of a 300 person limit for permits during the hiking season. i'm also in favor of a possible

increase in the number of permits issued during low-traffic times of the year. The important part is to keep traffic low. Also, it seems that it might be helpful to put a sign similar to those you might find at an amusement park ride, saying that people with significant physical problems or who are really overweight, faint of heart, have spinal problems, etc., should not attempt to climb the Half Dome cables. I always hear stories of people who get gassed out on the cables and stop midway up, holding up the giant line of people behind them. It sounds exclusive, but I believe that it will serve to help cut down traffic, and decrease the amount of rescue/first aid necessary by keeping those not capable from potential danger.

Correspondence ID: 20 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,25,2012 16:49:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments:

This Plan offers a reduction in permits from 400 to 300 per day. The 400 number is already 1/3 of the previously unlimited number of daily hikers on the trail. A further reduction of 100 permits/day is meaningless by comparison.

The current EA is also based on data for the period hikers were unrestricted and that recent changes (the introduction of the permitting system) have not been in place long enough to assess their benefit or detriment.

Yosemite National Park is indeed a special place and does warrant some additional measure of protection. However, there's a balance that must be achieved between these protections and the visitor experience. Many visitors to the park may only visit once in their lives and will potentially be denied the opportunity to hike to the summit of Half Dome. Because of this, I think it's reasonable to leave the limit at 400 permits/day.

In my opinion setting new limits on the number of visitors to Half Dome at this time seems both unnecessary and premature in light of the introduction of daily permits.

Correspondence ID: 21 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: 01/25/2012 06:44 AM To yose_web_manager@nps.gov cc Subject From NPS.gov: HALF DOME, EL CAP & HIGH CAMP

Email submitted from [REDACTED]yose/contacts.htm

Today's SF Chronicle reports that you are considering reducing the number of people allowed on Half Dome/Tissiak. I applaud this move. Article says you are accepting comments. My comment is that NPS consider removing cables altogether (with Sierra Club, which put them up). People can be directed to safer and higher Cloud's Rest in season, via Tioga Road trailhead. Skilled climbers would still be able to attempt H.D./Tissiak, with permit. H.D./Tissiak cables are a hold over from an earlier era that included the firefall and Glacier Point Hotel, both of which I remember, and both of which were removed. Reducing humans on H.D./Tissiak might also be a goodwill gesture to Native American community, and a prod to Australian gov't to consider the same at Ayers rock/Uhuru. People should consider walking around things instead of climbing them sometimes, as Hindus and Buddhists do with Mt. Kalas, one of the few never climbed. I do something similar as a volunteer on Angel Island State Park in SF Bay. I would also like to repeat my earlier request that you consider lottery permit type system for El Cap, if you have not already done so, to reduce human impact, especially the issue of human waste being thrown down by climbers. Further, I would like to repeat my even earlier request that a composting toilet be installed at Merced Lake High Camp, if that has not already been done, at a new location, farther away from the river. Moreover, the same thing should also be considered for Glen Aulin High Camp. The composting toilet I have in mind is like the ones already in place at Little Yosemite Valley and Sunrise High Camp. Actually, if cables are H.D./Tissiak are ever removed, composting toilet at L.Y.V. could perhaps be moved to one of the locations I have suggested. NMW

Correspondence ID: 22 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: 01/25/2012 06:34 AM To yose_web_manager@nps.gov cc Subject From NPS.gov: option b for half-dome hiking access

Email submitted from [REDACTED]/yose/contacts.htm

I would like the maximum number of hikers per day to be allowed to go up Half Dome with the chains remaining in place. Thanks!

Correspondence ID: 23 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: YOSE Web Manager Sent by: Marea Ortiz 01/25/2012 01:24 PM To YOSE Superintendent@NPS cc Subject Re: From NPS.gov: HALF DOME HIKE

This was received through the park's website.

Thank you - Marea

National Park Service Yosemite National Park <http://www.nps.gov/yose/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/YosemiteNPS> Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/YosemiteNPS>

[REDACTED] 01/25/2012 07:04 AM To yose_web_manager@nps.gov cc Subject From NPS.gov: HALF DOME HIKE

Email submitted from: [REDACTED] at /yose/contacts.htm

Mailing Address [REDACTED] USA

I'm writing in DISGUST about the problems regarding the Half Dome permits (or the thought of not allowing the cable hike). I've done this hike 5 times (once at night by myself) and the three years ago we were given "happy Face" stickers and told you were doing a "study". Which I told my hiking partner would equate to the "LIBERALS" making more regulations or eliminating the hike all together. OF COURSE, once again I was RIGHT. John Muir would / should be rolling in his grave to know that someone would not be allowed up to the top to enjoy the beauty. Last year I called in / (website also) at the EXACT time I needed to in order to get tickets. Needless to say, your "management system" worked perfectly.... No tickets for me unless I go on Craigslist. I can tell you how disgusted I am with my Federal Government. PERIOD>

Correspondence ID: 24 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan.25.2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: YOSE Web Manager Sent by: Marea Ortiz 01/18/2012 03:13 PM To backpackingary1@gmail.com cc Subject Re: From NPS.gov: Half Dome Permits, Minor Revision

Hello -

I will pass along your comment, but I encourage you to re-submit your comments when the Half Dome Environmental Assessment gets released (hopefully soon!) for public review and comment. This way your comments will be formally submitted and processed as part of that plan's alternatives. For more information on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan please visit our website: <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/hdp.htm>.

Thank you - Marea

National Park Service Yosemite National Park <http://www.nps.gov/yose/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/YosemiteNPS> Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/YosemiteNPS>

[REDACTED] 01/14/2012 04:07 PM To yose_web_manager@nps.gov cc Subject From NPS.gov: Half Dome Permits, Minor Revision

Email submitted from [REDACTED]@com at /yose/contacts.htm

Mailing Address [REDACTED]

Dear Sir: I read the Half Dome Lottery system and it is a good improvement over the past regulations. It will help prevent abuse. Only minor thing I would add is a Note that the permit is actually good for 2 days from day of issue. This gives the permittee the allowance to go on a day with better weather. Otherwise forcing use on a specific day may make some think they have to go on days of inclement weather. Yes it may increase usage on a given day but it may be worth it avoid hazerdous situations. If it helps, offering the two day window Sunday - Thursday. may help overcrowding. Thanks for listening. Sincerely [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 25 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan.15.2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: YOSE Web Manager Sent by: Marea Ortiz 01/19/2012 01:13 PM To YOSE Superintendent@NPS cc Subject Re: From NPS.gov: Lottery Half Dome

Hello -

I've been responding to anyone with comments to keep an eye out for the EA and submit their official comments then (along with information on how), but am wondering if I should also forward stuff like this to you??

Thanks - Marea

National Park Service Yosemite National Park <http://www.nps.gov/yose/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/YosemiteNPS> Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/YosemiteNPS>

01/15/2012 08:42 AM To yose_web_manager@nps.gov cc Subject From NPS.gov: Lottery Half Dome

Email submitted from [REDACTED] /yose/contacts.htm

Mailing Address [REDACTED]

I like your Lottery idea! The only suggestion I would make is to add a point system to it so that if you do not get drawn the first year you get a point and in the following years people with points get a higher chance of getting drawn. Just use the same system California Fish and Game have for Big Game Hunting drawing. That way you will eventually get to go up the Half Dome. Fair to everyone. Thanks for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 26 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: YOSE Web Manager Sent by: Marea Ortiz 01/19/2012 01:25 PM To YOSE Superintendent@NPS cc Subject Re: From NPS.gov: Half Dome

This was received through the park's website.

Thanks - Marea

National Park Service Yosemite National Park <http://www.nps.gov/yose/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/YosemiteNPS> Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/YosemiteNPS>

01/19/2012 09:27 AM To yose_web_manager@nps.gov cc Subject From NPS.gov: Half Dome

Email submitted from: [REDACTED] at /yose/contacts.htm

Mailing Address [REDACTED]

My name is [REDACTED] started hiking Half Dome in 2005 the first time i made it was a thrill the date was 9/17/2005 i fell in love with the place and have continued to hike since and the end of last hiking season i have now done the hike 70 times my goal is to make it to 100 in 10 years with the new permit system you are talking about may not work to well for me to reach my goal i was hoping that you would consider an exception for me i willing to meet with someone so you can see what kind of person that i'am i hope to hear from you shortly i can come up at any time if someone would like to meet me and talk to me i have truly enjoyed my journey in Yosemite respect it and hope to finish out my goal. Also over the last 7 years i have enjoyed encouraging people to make it but always tell people safty is first don't want to see us not be able to hike to the top. THANKS hope to hear from you

Correspondence ID: 27 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: [REDACTED] 01/19/2012 11:14 AM To yose_web_manager@nps.gov cc Subject From NPS.gov: Half done permits

Email submitted from [REDACTED] /yose/contacts.htm

To whom it may concern: I think this new half done policy is ridiculous and I don't understand it. \$5 for a permit to climb half dome and I am not guaranteed any of the days I want. I live locally in Oakhurst and try and go several times during the summer but can only go on the weekend. The people like me who live locally and appreciate the hike the most are fed up. There needs to

be some guarantee for "locals" to get permits. Can you please consider a special guarantee for the locals to get permits at a reasonable price. This new policy is going to increase scalps who are going to charge premiums. None of the new rules seem to help anybody local. Thank you [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 28 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,25,2012 17:50:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Information looks complete

Topic Question 2: Option E would forever end a legacy of having an iconic summit within reach of average americans. This should not be an option at all. Furthermore, 100 people/day on an unorganized climbing route is way more dangerous than 400 people/day on a well organized cable system. Option A should also not be considered as this was detrimental to the wilderness feel and was a safety issue. B,C, and D are all acceptable and have both pros and cons and likely matter little which is used.

Topic Question 3: We should consider leaving the cable down. This would save park service time and money by eliminating the twice yearly raising and lowering and the storage of the poles and boards. Leaving the cable on the face of the rock year round would ensure that the summit is still able to be reached and would highten the accomplishment of it. Indeed, isn't this the way it was first done by Anderson and Muir in 1875? The only drawback here is that the accident rate might go up as it seems there has been 3 accidents with the cables down, 2 of them fatal. I've been up with the cables down about 3 or 4 times and to me it seems safer as you automatically produce a counter weight against the rock by pulling on the cable. Furthermore any accident would be self inflicted as opposed to a result of overcrowding.

Topic Question 6: I hike and trail run in the park during the off season and on less used trails and routes. The only option that will affect me would be option E as that would end any chance of me standing on Half Dome's summit ever again.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 29 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,25,2012 18:02:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Plan C sounds good. I would like to see that these permits are available up to 24 weeks in advance just as with the current backpacking permit system,done by quota,not lottery. That way regular campers ,hotel guests etc. whom wish to include Half Dome hike as part of their itinerary,could have confirmation of permit at the same time as all their lodging reservations,and itinerary plans. For your consideration [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 30 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: add a third cable - a 'divided highway'. very little cost, eliminate bottleneck.

oh, and more of the Verneil part could use a simple cable handrail - isn't that at least as dangerous and more crowded than the actual dome ?

Topic Question 5: I'd think even building a wood platform / sidewalk in areas would be fine (I'm thinking the sandy part above Nevada.)

Topic Question 6: BOOO to restricting ANY of the national parks. You telling me in the size of Grand Canyon a couple more visitor viewpoints couldn't be constructed ?

as for Half dome trail - I flew to Cali from NJ where I used to live twice , the main plan being this hike. stopped once with cramps just staring up the back forest part. made it up a couple years ago -- I love wawona sequoias just as much. BOOO to restricting access. sure it was a little busy with folks . SO WHAT. I'd think a third cable could be put up with minimal cost, near double capacity , sort of an interstate, one side up, one down.

and anyway - isn't the Verneil part at least as dangerous - slippery when wet, no handrail on a lot of the section -- and much more crowded.

booo to limiting access for the folks. we know those with connections will have no problem 'jumping the line.'

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 31 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I wanted to say Half Dome should be available to all. Their is a risk and all should be aware but that is what

nature is about and this wonderful experience should be available to all even with extreme risk. do not put permits or restrictions on this.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 32 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I believe it should be left as pre 2009, with no permit required. We are all sick of government intervention in our lives and everyone that wants to climb half dome should be allowed to do so. I personally have made the trip twice in my life, once 20 years ago and once 2 years ago. Granted there were way more people on the trail this last time, but there was an amazing camaraderie amongst all the people on the trail and on the cables. I believe it is NOT the number of people on the trail that may cause an accident, accidents are just from stupid people. The permit does not weed out the stupid people that take stupid risks and make stupid mistakes.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 33 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Jan,26,2012 02:24:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: 1000-2000 people on the trail to Half Dome, and on the cables, is dangerous and not sustainable for the trail. Plan B, limit of 400, or Plan C, limit of 300, permits a day are the best way forwards. We have to trust NPS to select the right level, though Plan D, limit of 150, I feel is too low.

Thankfully I have never experienced the log jam of the number of people I have seen in photographs on the cables. Something had to be done and I applaud the NPS for doing so.

My only concern is for purchasing the permits. The online sale in 2010 did not work very well, it will be interesting to see how the lottery works this year. Hopefully this will make it difficult for unscrupulous people buying up multiple tickets and trying to sell them for a profit.

Hopefully the cables will never be removed, to keep this "star" attraction open for many years and generations to come. Even if I never manage to obtain a permit again, I will still keep up my bi-annual trip from the United Kingdom to the park. There are plenty trails to enjoy.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Stewardship Plan.

██████████

Correspondence ID: 34 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: NPS should be commended for undertaking such a complicated and comprehensive study. This is how the NPS evolves and gets better. However, I question why the area under study didn't include the entire trail from the valley floor. The immense flow of hikers certainly has the same potential for impact all along the trail.

Topic Question 2: As a native Californian I've been visiting the front and backcountry of Yosemite since 1967. I feel strongly that the cables on Half Dome are a vestige of an archaic era in the history of the NPS and should be removed under PLAN E. Watching the firefalls come down Glacier Pt., the feeding of bears to attract them for the entertainment of visitors, etc. The NPS mostly evolves for the better. Adding the events on Half Dome in 2011, it's obvious the NPS can't be expected to protect the public from itself. It's time to let the trampled trails and the visible scars heal, let the summer solitude return to this area. The total impact of the cables are inconsistent with wilderness designation and pose unacceptable safety and economic drag on the NPS and the public.

Topic Question 3: If Plan E is adopted the NPS should encourage people to climb Clouds Rest instead. Situated right next to Half Dome, it's way higher and safer. It offers similar thrilling views especially of Half Dome and can be accessed from either Yosemite Valley or Tenaya Lake.

Topic Question 4: The current cables are not the original cables. As such they have no inherent historical value. Today only the "idea" remains that you can put up cables and get up there.

Topic Question 5: As stated in Question #1.

Topic Question 6: I've avoided this area on my backpacking trips for 25 years because of the crowds. If the cables were gone I

would not hesitate using the trails again.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 35 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Limit to 400 but assign time slots to keep the traffic level at a minimum at any one time.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 36 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I'd like to see the tickets with your name and PHOTO, you have to be the one leading the hike and it would be non-transferrable. Charge me \$50 to \$100 for a permit (for up to 4 people) and that money would go to the park to use how would best suit the parks needs. This should cut the scalper out completely.

With the technology that is present today, a person could easily upload a photo that would appear on the permit. I think the money is something the diehards would easily pay (especially with the park directly benefitting) and it would slow the permit demands from others. I think package deals with lodging would be a great idea as well as lodging is almost as difficult to get inside the park. You could also schedule time slots for people to be at Half Dome.

Comments: Most of the past years accidents DID NOT occur on Half Dome. I went twice last year and experienced no overcrowding issues. I think 400 a day is a very reasonable amount to cap permits at.

Correspondence ID: 37 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Remove the cable. Man-made infrastructure violates the Federal Wilderness Act.

Topic Question 5: The notion of stewardship of the trail to Half Dome and surrounding areas is false. These areas are heavily impacted by use.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 38 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I would like to see alternative C implemented. Under no circumstances would I want to see the cables removed.

Topic Question 6: We stay at Housekeeping every year for about 7 days. We do a lot of hiking, biking, and river rafting. Half Dome is a favorite destination. We have stayed in the park every year for 35 years.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 39 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I am a rock climber. I would recommend a YOSAR employee be based at the cables either daily or at least on the weekends. Then if someone gets in trouble up there they could, hopefully and quickly descalate the crisis. Also if one of the boards breaks or shifts (like it was when one women was seriously injured) please fix it ASAP. It would not cost that much to have an YOSAR person there and would ensure there was a qualified person there to help if someone is having serious issues with the cables. For the YOSAR person it would be a nice up on half dome and little extra money and for Yosemite it would be really good insurance against another needless tragedy.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 40 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,26,2012 16:59:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am in favor of alternative E, removing the cables from Half Dome. I feel that the hike to Cloud's Rest offers visitors to Yosemite a wonderful experience and gorgeous view without the need for cables or other man-made intrusions. The cables have made Half Dome into an "attractive nuisance" resulting in overuse and degradation of that wonderful natural

feature.

Correspondence ID: 41 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I support plan C with a caveat. It should only apply to day hikers. Multi-day backpackers should not be constrained by capacity limits. Why? Because trailheads are already subject to capacity controls. So planning a trip that successfully acquires trailhead permits on a certain day and half-dome summit privileges on another day that works within a reasonable time frame would be extremely challenging.

Topic Question 6: Fatpacking is a commercial backpacking outfit that brings as many as 12 visitors into the park for 2 weeks. If Half-Dome were to be excluded from our offerings, business would suffer and chances are that we'd be unable to run trips in the park at all.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 42 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: MOST HALF DOME HIKERS ARRIVE AT THE CABLES BETWEEN 11 AM AND 2 PM. PERMITS SHOULD HAVE A TIME STIPULATION. FOR EXAMPLE YOUR PERMIT IS GOOD FOR 9-9:30 AM AT THE CABLES. PERSON CHECKING PERMITS COULD ALLOW PERSON TO CLIMB BASED ON NUMBER OF PEOPLE ON THE CABLES IF HIKERS WERE OUTSIDE THEIR ALLOTTED TIME SLOT.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 43 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: The danger is people going up and coming down at the same time. Have you considered having a traffic pattern. For example up the cables on top of the hour to mid hour, down the cable mid hour to top of hour. Or up on the even hours(12, 2, 4, 6, etc) and down on the odd (1, 3, 5, 7 etc). Enforcement by a seasonal ranger or aide and in place only at peak times. This way there is no plagiarism by people selling tickets or getting privileges because they are considered to be a VIP.

Topic Question 4: Your proposal will allow those with the means, either financial or influence, to obtain a right that should be available to all Americans. Having rules that we all follow is fair, equitable and will not cause abuse.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 44 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative E is the best choice in my opinion. The United States is full of sanitized, safe activities, many individuals visit nature and the National Parks to get away from this sanitized, inauthentic world. If someone wishes to climb to the top of Half Dome, they should do so on their own. Not only would this improve the experience for those visitors that are skilled and prepared, but this will cut down on accidents by discouraging those who are not. The National Parks are not an amusement park, by catering to the type of visitor seeking that type of coddling, you damage the parks.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 45 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,26,2012 19:35:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: In each section of the affected environment, the preferred action failed to analyze the effects on other areas of the park. If the NPS proposes to limit access to Half Dome through a permit process there is a possibility that potential users will be forced/decide to use other trails to accommodate for the quota. This could lead to an increase in crowding, user conflict, soil erosion, and SAR within other areas or trails of Yosemite NP.

Topic Question 2: The preferred alternative will be beneficial to Half Dome, but has potential to cause problems in other areas of the park.

Topic Question 3: If possible, analyze this impact or state in the document that this potential exists when you select the preferred alternative.

Topic Question 6: I choose lesser-known areas of National Parks when I visit mainly due to crowding/safety issues. This EA has the potential to distribute users who would have climbed Half Dome to lesser-used areas of the park, and this document should

state that.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 46 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,26,2012 20:23:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Take down the cables!

When there were fewer people climbing the cables was relatively safe. With overcrowding that was no longer the case. The park service has responded by temporarily regulating the traffic with permits and is now proposing to make those permits permanent. By issuing the permits you give the public the impression that climbing Half Dome is entirely safe. It is not, and when something bad happens the public will certainly come back to the park service and tell them so.

In fact, by regulating the Half Dome climb every accident becomes the park service's fault. Bad weather, rain and thunderstorms has been identified as making the climb hazardous. Can't you hear the accident victims, or worse yet, their families say: "Why were they even handing out those permits when the forecast called for afternoon thunderstorms?" "She had waited all year to do this climb, very lucky to get a permit she wasn't going to turn around just because of a little rain." "Why did the ranger stationed at the bottom of the cables let her climb when anyone could see that the storm was coming in?"

Correspondence ID: 47 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I believe Alternative C is a reasonable compromise. I enjoy climbing Half Dome and have done it several times. It is a classic climb. But the cables do get pretty crowded. The secret is to leave early and get on top by 8:00am. Spend an hour and get down before the cables get crowded.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 48 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support Alternative E: The Half Dome cables should be REMOVED. I have visited Yosemite N.P. for over fifty years and have climbed and explored all the summits and canyons. The cables create a hazardous condition and complicate the ability of the N.P.S. to insure a positive experience for visitors. It is like the fire fall that is anti productive to the well being of Yosemite N.P.

Topic Question 3: No other mountain or summit has cables. This should include Half Dome.

Topic Question 4: The hazardous condition created by the cables increases liability for Yosemite N.P.

Topic Question 5: Ecological impact on the top of Half Dome is self evident and well documented. The cables are an unnatural scar that promotes destruction to other natural scenes.

Topic Question 6: I have climbed,walked,and backpacked every part of Yosemite N.P. The safety of the Yosemite visitor is important while visiting and enjoying the fauna, flora, and grandeur while preserving as much of its Wildness as possible. Any true lover of Yosemite would want the cables down.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 49 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,27,2012 09:57:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: As a non-technical climber, I deeply value the opportunity to climb Half Dome. I visit the valley every year in May, and have planned to climb via the cables, but have been unable to because the cables were not yet up. I generally stay in a campsite in Upper Pines, which I reserve 5 months in advance. I have planned a trip on the weekend of June 22nd, which I will reserve on February 15th. Under the current permit system, I have to submit a permit request via lottery in March, which will provide possible permits in April, well after any ability to reserve a campsite in June or July. Logistically, this is very frustrating. Last year's permit system was very preferable, since motivated climbers could get permits on March 1st to coincide with their other arrangements. As I understand it, Little Yosemite Valley campers will get opportunities to climb Half Dome already, so the permits in general will be used by people who climb from the valley, and who generally will need to stay overnight there (or nearby). Instead of having an opportunity to climb Half Dome during a planned visit to Yosemite, climbers will need to schedule an entire trip based on plans for Half Dome. This could yield unintended consequences, such as preventing people from outside California from visiting (locals will have more flexibility for last-minute ascents).

Comments: My primary concern is safety. I understand that 1200 people visiting Half Dome may be too much for safety,

especially since most visits happen in a narrow window, and evacuating Half Dome under rapidly-changing weather conditions must be done quickly. But I don't understand why it makes sense to have a ranger at the top checking permits, but not to have him restrict access based on crowding. I also completely disagree about the goal of opportunities for solitude as a reason for setting a limit of 300 rather than 400 climbers. If I want solitude, I can control that: leaving 2 hours earlier will provide much more solitude! Or I can follow another trail that isn't so popular! I don't like crowding, either from a safety standpoint or an enjoyment standpoint. This applies to the Mist Trail too, though. I don't want to close off the Mist Trail after a certain number of people, though. I know that it will be completely crowded all summer at mid-day, and that it will be much less crowded at 6AM. Also, I know that there are many other places in Yosemite where I could seek solitude, off the beaten track. Defining permits to ensure solitude for a popular destination doesn't make sense to me at all.

I'm also curious: Under the permit system, people are only checked at the bottom of the cables, right? If I reach the bottom of the cables at 7AM, will a ranger be checking permits? I doubt there will be 7x24 monitoring. If I climb without a permit, will I face a huge fine?! As long as it's safe, this seems like a reasonable, practical solution... until hundreds of people a day do it...

Correspondence ID: 50 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,27,2012 11:38:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Safety, safety, safety! I am a technical climber who has scaled Half Dome many times. I always use a harness and carabiners attached to the cables when I descend them, because I recognize that I am exhausted by the time I get to that point, and usually have a large load on my back. Seeing hoards of inexperienced and poorly prepared day-trippers ascending the cables with no protection always makes me a little uneasy. I am in favor of any policy change that reduces the number of day-trip hikers on the cables, while continuing to allow technical climbers to descend the cables without a permit. NPS has no way of verifying the skill level of hikers before issuing them a Half Dome permit. When an unprepared day-tripper is allowed on the cables, they can pose a safety risk not only to themselves, but everyone else on the cables. I don't necessarily think technical climbers are any more entitled to use the cables, but I do believe that if they've reached the summit alive via a multi-pitch technical climbing route, the risk they pose to others on the cables is minimal. I am sure the general public is going to fight NPS tooth and nail about reducing the number of permits issued to day-use hikers, but you have to do the right thing and eliminate crowding on the cables for the safety of us all. Half Dome is not a family-friendly tourist destination, it is extremely demanding and dangerous.

Correspondence ID: 51 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,27,2012 14:00:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: 1. I've already emailed you about the cut and paste errors on pages 2-7 (alternative B) and 2-11 (alternative D), the management target number of hikers is under these alternatives is not 300, but rather 400 and 140, respectively.

2. ?It's really hard to figure out the commercially-guided hikes under alternative B. Trying to put together the text on page 2?8 under the "Commercial Use" section and table 2?2, it seems that the vast majority of the permits for commercially-guided hikers will be for those on multi-day trips, as the "Commercial Use" section under alternative B on page 2?8, talks about 5 individuals, guides and hikers, permits allocated among approved commercial guiding services.

3. ?There aren't enough details about the lottery to allow informed comments. Is the 2012 lottery model a rough guide?

4. ?The document is vague about the mix of Half Dome day hikers and wilderness permit hikers in alternatives B, C, and D.

Topic Question 2: 1. Commercial Use in alternative C, where it is proposed that hikers get their own permits and then secure a guide, seems unworkable, for the following reasons:

?Each person who puts in for a permit will then have to deal with the limit of 2 groups of commercially-guided hikers per day.

If there's as hopeful group of 12, they may have to put in for more than one permit; how will you know that they will really only count as one party?

The way alternative C is set up, it would effectively deny solo hikers and couples any chance of making a guided trip.

2. There aren't enough details about the advance reservation system to tell when hikers would know their dates.

Staying in the east end of the Valley (Curry Village or campground) is an important part of a great Half Dome Day Hike. Campground reservations for the last half of May and the first half of June are taken on January 15, so the lottery or first-come first served reservations should be done before that.

3. ?Seriously, folks, how can you tell a scenery appreciation hike from a purely recreational one? This seems to be a distinction without a difference.

4. Maximum party size of 30 for a commercially guided trip seems way too high for the wilderness values you say you are

trying to preserve.

5. ?I think an upper limit of 45 hikers on commercially-guided trips is too many, given the limits of 400 or 300 total hikers.

Topic Question 3: ?It is preferable to have commercial guide services obtain permits and then have them offer trips.

I think a middle path of around 25 commercial hikers, in 4 to 6 parties, should be considered along with alternative B of 400 independent hikers.

Topic Question 6: I'd like to continue to Hike Half Dome once a year, as a day hike, based at Curry Village.

I visit Yosemite 4 to 6 times a year, mostly for long day hikes and the High Sierra Camps when I can get a loop for the camps south of Tioga Road or an out and back 2 nights at one of them. (In the winter, I snowshoe -- at least, when there's snow!)

Comments: ?I am most in favor of alternative B, 400 hikers a day, with the modification on the number of commercially-guided hikes I suggest in question 3.

My Half Dome Hike in mid-August 2011 under this plan was a good experience.

I wish you would have webinars in the evening!

Correspondence ID: 52 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Removing the cables would deprive the public of one of the best hikes in the country.

Topic Question 6: Using the lottery, it is very difficult to get a permit because the demand is so high. Also, since the demand for a hotel room is very high, if you are travelling you need to book a hotel room a year in advance and then get a permit a couple of months in advance. Getting a permit requires that you sign on at the exact time that they go on sale or you won't get one, making it very difficult to plan a trip to do the hike.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 53 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,27,2012 15:58:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Fairness is a popular topic these days. Can the Park Service make the lottery system fair to all who wish to participate or will some be able to "scam" the system? I don't think there will be a large public outcry if the system is perceived as fair.

Comments: "The horse is out of the barn" so, although it would probably be best for the environment to close the cable down completely, the public by now feels entitled to experience the climb. The "preferred alternative" is most likely a good starting point, then adjust down to Alternative D if necessary later on.

Correspondence ID: 54 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,27,2012 16:48:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I hiked half-dome 4 times, twice with my oldest daughter, since last year I am trying to go back to take my other daughter up there, but I ended up canceling because I couldn't get permits. I am trying again this year and you guys came up with a lottery. I don't think it's fair. If I don't get it on march, I will have to cancel again. It makes no sense to keep doing it right into summer times. Do you know how hard its to get a room there? Very hard. I cannot wait until summer to see if I get a permit, I need to change my vacations by then. I am sure a lot of people think the same. I made my reservations months ago. I never had trouble on half dome when there were no restrictions. People die because they try to go up there when it is wet and cables down. Only 1 person die last year from the rock and it was because it was wet and no cables. I have seen idiots half way up weeping holding to the cables and asking for help because they were slipping and they were wearing converse shoes with no traction at all. I am afraid idiots like these will end up getting permits and it doesn't mean i will be safe, they can still fall no matter if there is 1 person or 100. Also, backpackers get 1/4 of the permits, why? The park needs money and these people don't bring too much money into the parks, i have nothing against them, but they should be in the same group. I spend at least a couple of thousands dollars when I go, then you guys send me letters asking for a donation, sorry, but not when it is not fair. I am ultra runner and I have done the trip to the top and back in less than 4:3hrs. I do have experience, I think a good idea is to make sure people climbing to wear running shoes or boots.

At the end, I don't think having 300 or 400 permits a day is going to help when there is no problem with fatalities.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 55 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,27,2012 19:19:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: You need to have a lottery system that mirrors the California Big Game Hunting system drawing. If you do not get drawn the first year you earn a point. In the second year draw, people with points get drawn before those with out points. The more points you have the more chances you have of getting drawn as the years go by. This option is fair to everyone. You also need to have each permit assigned to a person with a name or ID so that we don't end up with the scalpers ripping us off on the internet.

Topic Question 3: You suggest that alternative "C" is the "Preferred Alternative ". It is simply a matter of opinion. The fair way to provide the most people who have an interest in hiking up to the top is to choose Alternative "B" with a Lottery system that mirrors the California Big Game Hunting system drawing. If you do not get drawn the first year you earn a point. In the second year draw, people with points get drawn before those with out points. The more points you have the more chances you have of getting drawn as the years go by. You also need to have each permit assigned to a person with a name or ID so that we don't end up with the scalpers ripping us off on the internet.

Topic Question 6: Alternative "C" is to limiting in the number of people allowed to ascend the cables. Add a another cable and that will prevent the log jam from happening with the 400 people limitation.

Comments: The whole outcome of this government process should be determined by the majority of the people not by government officials which is what it appears is happening. "By the people" and "For the people".

Some where in our history we have lost this principle and the people are now "controlled by the government".

Please do the right thing and give this park back to the people.

Thank you for this opportunity to voice my "opinion" because in reality that is all any of us have.

Correspondence ID: 56 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,27,2012 20:24:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: In the comparison of Option B (400 people per day) and Option C (300 People per day) appear from the report to be approximately equal in terms of environmental impact, Safety and costs. The only real difference between B and C is the number of encounters with other hikers. In my opinion this shouldn't be a factor in considering how many people should be allowed on the trail.

The Half Dome is a busy trail so whether there is 300 or 400 people . 30% more encounters with other groups is not going to change the feel of the trail between a true wilderness area and a busy wilderness area. In the Sierras there are plenty of accessible true wilderness areas if solitude or a limited number of encounters is desired. Half Dome is not one of those areas. Users that choose to hike there don't go for solitude therefore this shouldn't be a factor in the decision and it shouldn't outweigh access by the public to the area.

The logic of choosing Option C is flawed in that it weighs "a feeling of solitude and wilderness" over "public access" in an area that will not have solitude regardless of the number of other hikers.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 57 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,27,2012 22:24:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: consideration should be given for seniors age 65+. I'm soon to be 70 and it is a race between the PARK SERVICE and FATHER TIME to see who is first to prevent me from climbing HALF DOME. [REDACTED] GROVELAND MEMBER YOSEMITE CONSERVENCY AND FRIEND OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK.

Correspondence ID: 58 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,28,2012 05:24:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: This plan and preferred alternative seem very well thought out given the complexity associated with balancing all the impacts. 300 hikers per day seems like a good target. So great job with that.

My biggest concern continues to be the permit system. While you've had a lot of flags raised on this from visitors and press, the permit system was not addressed in any depth in the plan. Managing the permit system and preventing illegal reselling of permits has been a nightmare over the past two years. Also the demand is now global, making it all that much more difficult to

secure a permit from the US. Further, it's difficult to plan a trip five or six months in advance, adding to the challenge.

The 2012 system, featuring a lottery and team leaders seems really complex and may be difficult to manage for visitors and NPS alike. I'm sure there will be lots of confusion. For example, you're going to have groups of people with permits showing up without their leader (who couldn't make it at the last second for all sorts of reasons) and rangers will have to deal with that in the heat of the moment, either turning the group back or letting them go without the leader.

In looking at your list of planners and reviewers, it wasn't clear that anyone had a very deep technical knowledge of current web technologies that could be helpful. At a very minimum, you need to prevent automated "bots" from gaming the system. That was at the core of the 2010-2011 scalping problems. Your website was operating in the dark ages in terms of security. For 2012, with the right software, I'm sure someone could overwhelm the lottery system with automated entries, tilting the odds in their favor. I'm not confident that the "leader" requirement will neutralize this.

So, my input would be to take a close look at the permit system to be sure it is simple, fair and easy to administer on the trail. Also, it's essential that you have an independent technical expert, current on the latest web security methods as related to ticket transactions review your on-line systems. I would not rely on whatever company ran the on-line transaction process in the past.

Correspondence ID: 59 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: The Half Dome cables should be permanently removed. Doing so would be in the same spirit as ending the Fire Fall and not rebuilding the Glacier Point Hotel, both of which I remember as a child. The Sierra Club put up the Half Dome cables in the early 20th century, and the Sierra Club can work with the NPS to take them down in the 21st, for all time. The cables are a relic of a bygone era.

Half Dome/Tissiak would still be available to skilled climbers, with a permit. Other visitors could be directed, in season, to the Cloud's Rest Trailhead off the Tioga Road. Cloud's Rest is even higher. It is also safer. Visitors can also be encouraged to walk around peaks, instead of climbing them, as the Hindus and Buddhists do with Mt Kailas, and as I do on Angel Island in SF Bay.

Removing the Half Dome/Tissiak cables might also be a gesture of goodwill to the Native American community. I have read they do not like people walking around on the top. I have also read that John Muir thought the view from the top made everything else look too small, implying that it is not quite right for people to go there.

Further, removing the cables could be a prod to the Australian government to restrict climbing on Ayers Rock/Uluru, in recognition of Aboriginal preferences.

N M W

Correspondence ID: 60 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,29,2012 09:26:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: N/A

Topic Question 2: I am very pleased to see that the park is considering removing the cables altogether. Although I appreciate that Half Dome is a popular hike, I think that if the park truly wishes to increase the "wilderness" experience for all, removing the cables is the correct option. Severely limiting the number of permits will require rangers to monitor those ascending the dome, which doesn't really help the problem. I am strongly in support of National Parks shifting the load of personal safety onto the hiker and I feel that cable removal will both decrease the number of people ascending the dome and the number of injuries.

Topic Question 6: I would never ascend Half Dome, mostly due to crowding. I use the remote areas of the park and off-trail areas for scientific research.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 61 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: For Half Dome I support going back to pre-2009 where no permits were required. I live close enough to visit the park several times a year with no planning, simply waking up to a beautiful day and deciding to go to Yosemite. To have to pick a specific day well into the future when I would want to go to the top of half dome is not convenient and if weather was bad on that day I have lost my opportunity for another year. The permits eliminate flexibility. I would suggest installing one more cable so you could ascend on one side and descend on the other. That would help reduce cable congestion.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 62 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Jan,29,2012 11:49:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: 1. If Yosemite is defined as a wilderness, then that definition should be the driving factor behind management of the park. While it is understandable that alterations to the park occur in a quest to balance this wilderness definition to the desire to open the experience to all Americans the wilderness definition should override the desires of all but the majority of our citizens. 2) I can only agree that a restriction of access or complete removal of the Half Dome chain trail is the responsible action to the present state of the trail. 3. Additionally I would like to see rock climbers restricted to the use of hexes and cams and have pitons and rock face damaging hardware forbidden.

Lets leave this place to its own devices as best we can.

Correspondence ID: 63 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Jan,29,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I am a long-time Yosemite backpacker, and have never been tempted to join a long line to hike up Half Dome. Limiting the number of hikers so that the trail can be evacuated in 45 minutes sounds like an effort to please all sides, but is bound to fail. To wit: with 300 hikers, you will still have kids in flip-flops, out of shape tourists in street shoes, even cowboy boots. They will still be juggling cameras and water bottles as they try to hold on to the cable. Being able to evacuate the trail in 45 minutes doesn't mean that all will get down before it rains. Knowing how slippery that granitic diorite gets, I think it's unconscionable to, essentially, give people a boost on their way up, and trust them to hang on for dear life coming down in the rain.

Topic Question 3: Please remove the cables. They are as much an anachronism as the fire show from the top of Yosemite Falls. We know better now, and so there's no excuse to continue it. Simply put, the cables help unprepared tourists get in over their heads. More will slip, fall, and die if encouraged by the presence of the cables.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 64 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Jan,29,2012 13:30:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: The booking system essentially means that it is impossible to obtain a permit. This was the case for me in 2011 as I tried to book. The entire season was sold out.

Having hiked the half dome in 2008 I want to do it again, and bring my son when he reaches the appropriate age. However, the booking system essentially block out most people. Lottery is not a solution for people travelling from abroad.

The view from the summit should be the right of man/woman to experience.

There must be a solution that would allow dedicated hikers to experience this hike.

Br

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Correspondence ID: 65 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Jan,29,2012 13:49:48

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: I am all for limiting the number of people in the park and removing the cables. If the climb is already being worn down, how much longer until it is permanently damaged?

Many popular state parks limit the number of cars allowed per day to protect the area. I would be appalled if they offered cables to climb to the top of Enchanted Rock in Fredericksburg.

Correspondence ID: 66 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Jan,29,2012 13:56:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: None

Topic Question 2: None

Topic Question 3: None

Topic Question 4: None

Topic Question 5: None

Topic Question 6: We try and visit Yosemite as much as possible for hiking and camping.

Comments: I understand the safety issues with having too many people on half dome but realize that what makes America great is the freedom and access we allow people to have to its many beautiful wonders. Life is full of risks, and free people should be able to make the choices. I hiked half dome and it was one of the most thrilling things I have ever done. Please don't take it away from generations to come. I am in favor of "no change".

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Correspondence ID: 67 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Jan,29,2012 13:58:34

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I think limiting the number of people makes perfect sense. I have driven through Yosemite twice now. Each time, I have been amazed at the number of people in the park. I have not yet had the time or privilege to hike any of the trails. While I cannot speak to the volume of hikers on trails, if the number of cars I see is any indication, it must be immense.

Comments: To me, Half Dome is an amazing beauty. I dream of the day I get the chance to go to the top. However, I am not an experienced climber. I still firmly believe I deserve a chance to make my dream come true. Therefore, while I think limiting the number of hikers makes sense, I think it would be a huge mistake to remove the cables. Personally, I would be offended. Becoming an experienced climber is something so specialized and to use that as a prerequisite for getting to the top is totally unreasonable. I would hope that if a person applied for a permit to Half Dome and the limit was already reached for the day they wanted to go, the park would be willing to grant a permit for the next available day. A reservation, if you will.

Correspondence ID: 68 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Jan,29,2012 14:12:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: We support alternative B 400 people per day. We completed the hike on a beautiful June day 2011 starting 6am and ending 7pm and did not encounter any traffic whatsoever on any portion of the entire hike. The cables were wide open at 12-1pm with 30+ people ascending/descending. In fact we found it sad that there weren't more people given the obvious no shows. It was fun to run into others on the same hike with the same goal and share our stories and comforting to ensure we were on the right path with others as we deviated from the path a couple times and had to be redirected back on. I think 400 per day is too few given our experience.

Topic Question 6: We have visited Yosemite several times for hiking and rafting and this was our first and last Half Dome hike. The problem with the permit system is coordinating the eventual date with a subsequent hotel reservation. You know most of us book best accommodations a year in advance and most likely would not coordinate with the date won in the lottery if you are lucky enough to win the lottery. So my only recommendation is that you actually hold the lottery pretty far in advance to allow people to secure coordinating reservations or change an existing one. I stayed at Blue Butterfly Inn and my reservation was required to be paid fully in advance and non-refundable. Perhaps allow people also to submit for lottery consideration on specific dates as any dates won outside of our hotel reservation date would have been declined.

Comments: More about us. I am 48 year old female Director at Fortune 500 Company for 30+ years. My husband 53 year old male Commercial Airline Captain 30+ years. College educated and combined salary \$300k+. 5 kids ages 19-26. This iconic hike was on our bucket list and we trained and prepared for it for exactly one year ensuring we were both physically and mentally prepared. We planned a slow long day, wore all the proper clothing, had all the right food, water and emergency supplies. We studied the hike and all of the accidents and fatalities to ensure we wouldn't be one of them. We read "Mr Half Domes" book and reviewed all of the links and videos on your website. In speaking with fellow hikers along the route, they too were in our age range and prepared much as we did. The hike went off without a hitch and was luckily uneventful. Yosemite is our favorite park. We have visited several times and it was an honor to have had the ability to complete this hike in our lifetime. We only did it once, and do not plan on doing it again. Please don't take this experience away from the public and if you must limit it, please do not limit below 400... we believe more you could easily allow 600 with no problem based on our experience. We also would not have had any issues with paying more for this experience, \$100 per person would seem more than fair even. We also suggest that the rangers have more authority to actually turn people away at subdome if they do not appear to be prepared. The truth is... while we were fully prepared, any other person on those cables that was not prepared had the ability to result in the death of any of us had they fallen and taken us with them. That was our biggest concern as we ascended and descended was the likelihood that someone else who shouldn't be there could fall and knock us off the cables as well. So our only recommendation is giving the rangers more power to decide who goes and who doesn't.

Correspondence ID: 69 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Jan,29,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: It seems rather wrong to limit the access of a Federal Park that is paid and maintained by the taxes of its citizens. A limit on the number of people allowed to ascend Half Dome only hurts the out of state tourists who have decided to make Yosemite a family vacation. The locals, though, will still have full access because of the ease of any sort of registration.

This type of proposal sends a message to vacationers that they are not going to get to enjoy this part of the park because the locals get preference.

Topic Question 3: A better alternative might a special fee required for the admission to an exhibit. This would limit the number of locals that show up on a regular basis to climb because "they can." And it would still allow the out of state tourists to visit the iconic rock. The fee needs to be high enough that it becomes cost prohibitive to do every weekend but not so expensive that it takes away from the family vacation. Something around \$10.00 person or \$30.00 per family. The funds could then be used maintain the trails and cable system. I'm willing to bet that a fee would reduce the number of people by 60%-75% because many people how are just "looking for something to do" will find other areas for the park to enjoy! Which will in-turn limit the amount of environmental damage done by over crowding.

Again the cost of the fee is the key. Make it cost prohibitive to do every weekend but not so much that it impacts the family vacation. After all, the purpose of the park system is to leave nature natural so that families can enjoy nature untouched by modernization.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 70 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,29,2012 14:46:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: The primary purpose of the Wilderness Act in 1964 is to "preserve", not restrict. The goal should be to allow as many visitors as possible to safely visit the sites while preserving it for future generations, rather than limit access. If weather is the issue, the number of people visiting on a daily basis is not the solution. An actionable, well-orchestrated, tested, and executable safety plan is.

Half Dome is unique in that it can be climbed by the average person in good health. It therefore represents a real opportunity for non-climbers to enjoy the climbing experience and views typically available only to accomplished climbers. It is a rarity which should be managed, not restricted.

I wholly support Alternative A - no restriction.

Correspondence ID: 71 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,29,2012 15:07:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: The parks belong to all us Americans. There should be no restrictions to access any of them. As long as the Parks give out literature of what is dangerous in the park and a notice to everyone entering the parks they enter at their own risk, then people have to judge themselves what they are capable of doing and not doing. If they take the risks, they have to live with the consequences. I think the cables need to be maintained because they have been placed there for people to enjoy the dome now for how long? Why get rid of them now? Because of some radical environmentalists who believe that all wilderness areas should be locked up and no one enjoy them? This earth has many beautiful places and we all need access to them to refresh our bodies, minds, spirits, and souls. The earth was made for us. What right does anyone have to restrict access to public areas.

I'm just really getting tired of radical environmentalists dictating to me all the time. These are my parks and I have the right to enjoy them any time I want. I shouldn't have to plan my vacation (subject to my boss' approval anyway) around whether I got a lottery ticket for a specific day. It's too hard to try and make connections. People need to be able to access these areas AFTER they arrive there, not have to plan their whole vacation date, travel, and motel arrangements around a freaking ticket in advance.

Correspondence ID: 72 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,29,2012 15:19:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please remove the handrail. It's a rock climb not a trail.

Correspondence ID: 73 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,29,2012 15:28:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 4: This has already been brought up, but as a wilderness area, there should be no cables installed into the rock face of Half Dome. Therefore, only option E conforms to this mandate. The fact that the cables are grandfathered into the system because of having been installed before the wilderness status is unfortunate, but this provides a good opportunity to fix that issue and protect the wilderness area by reducing traffic.

Topic Question 6: I use the park regularly for hiking, climbing, and backpacking. I think removing the cables would be the most fair and most effective way to reduce traffic and limit the number of people who attempt to climb to the top to only those who are experienced enough to know what they are getting into. Every time I've been to the top of Half Dome during the "open season" (while the cables are up), I've witnessed someone who has never climbed an exposed peak stiffen up in terror while climbing the cables, causing issues for everyone on the mountain. Since 2007, I've only been climbing half dome during the "off season" while the cables are down and inexperienced users are minimal. The cables make it too easy for completely inexperienced people to get themselves into a situation that they are uncomfortable with. Half Dome is not an easy hike, and climbing a 45 degree, exposed granite slab should not be viewed as something that "anyone should be able to do". By leaving

the cables in place, YNP is encouraging a large number of people to go beyond their limits and put themselves and others at risk, all the while putting extreme wear and tear on the rock face and trails. Removing the cables will allow people to "graduate up" to the level where they can climb half dome on their own, making it a much more rewarding experience for those who complete the journey, and reducing the amount of problems the park has to deal with because of inexperienced folks getting in over their heads.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 74 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: i believe one of the deaths you describe since 2006 was a suicide, and only the japanese climber from 2007 (i think) was not due to suicide or rain, and he drove all night and tried to climb with no sleep. i hope these deaths are not a factor in wanting to take cables down. if so might as well close the mist trail too

Topic Question 2: taking the cables down would be a shame. surely there is some middle ground between those who would have 10 million acres of wilderness shut off from civilization to allow a horse fly to "roam its habitat", and those who would cut down the rain forest to buld their "log cabin shopping mall". the cables are an experience that leads to an infatuation with yosemite and nature(it did just that for me)that can, in turn, lead to thousands of new conservationists who otherwise wouldnt have found a love of wilderness. letting 1,000 people a day, and taking the cables down for good are both extreme. the best answer lies in the middle ground as it usually does

Topic Question 3: 200-300 permits per day including weekends, and maybe a \$25 charge per person for trail upkeep

Comments: i could never begin to fully explain what yosemite means to me. i have climbed half dome 5 times now, and visit yosemite 3-4 times a year- at least- for the last 15 years or so. this love all began with a hike to the top of half dome, which has since lead to me hiking/climbing Mt Dana, Clouds Rest, Hoffman, Lyell, Conness and countless other hikes and climbs in yosemite, inyo, and john muir. half dome is responsible for my climbs of Whitney, Shasta, and Ranier, and i now consider myself a naturalist of sorts. i donate to yosemite, and sierra club...bottom line... i have a profound love of yosemite and the mountains, and i will even have my upcoming wedding in yosemite in Oct 2012.

SHUTTING THE CABLES DOWN FOR GOOD WILL "abort" countless new people from growing to love yosemite and the mountains as i do.

WHATEVER YOU DO, WHATEVER YOU DECIDE, DO NOT GO TO EITHER EXTREME. conserve the wilderness and keep the cables up. you can do both. this is not purely for selfish reasons. although i still plan on doing half dome again, for me i have moved on to bigger climbs and hikes for the most part, and though i would miss the opportunity to do it again...ive had my time.

but what other inner city kid, as i was, will never find the passion as i did, if the cables go down for good. half dome was the springboard i needed to get the confidence that the wilderness was accesible, and it called to me and i listened. hopefully you will listen to common sense too

Correspondence ID: 75 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I feel that Alternatives B onward are unfair. There should be no reason to limit access to this mountain. Why should an out of townner from another state like myself (or worse yet a visiter from another country) have to camp out at "first come, first serve" permitting office to be able to climb the jewel of Yosemite? These are our national parks and we ought to be able to use them.

Topic Question 3: Put up another set of cables parallel to the existing ones and make them one way. Cables on the right are used for ascenders, cables on the left for descenders. I don't think its an outrageously expensive solution and I don't think it harms the environment any. Matter of fact its alot safer!

Topic Question 6: I use the park to hike, any limitations on hiking to me are unacceptable. Heaven forbid people like to hike!

Comments: I think the permitting system being used as a way to limit people onto Half Dome should be done away with. These are our National Parks and we should be able to use them, not have to "wait in line" to use them. You want to use permits, fine! But use them as they were intended, to keep track of who goes into the wilderness and use them for rescue purposes, not as limiting devices or tickets. And that doesn't just go for Half Dome, it should go for anywhere in our National Parks, Forests and Monuments!

Correspondence ID: 76 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Consider setting the normal limit at 300 but allowing it to rise to 400 for certain peak times to allow for

demand on this important place. Under the 300 hiker limit I would still urge you to consider allowing a limited number of permits to be bundled for commercial/special use at least for non profit organizations such as the Sierra Club's Inner City Outings or others that help disadvantaged youth get exposure to these awesome places.

Topic Question 6: I visit the Park with my family and have hiked half Dome several times, each time doing it as a permitted overnight. I think that setting a permitted limit on total hikers is good both for safety on the cables and the experience. I like the impact reduction of the 300 limit but think that a limit of 400 - at least at certain times as noted above - may be needed to balance demand and experience.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 77 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: If you have to remove the cables in Yosemite park for George Nickas director of Wilderness Watch. You will have to remove all rails, decks, bridges, cable, chains benches, steps, outhouses, stores and all buildings in all US National Parks. Remove all roads so only wilderness hikers can use the parks. I think if Mr Nickas was handicapped in some way he might say I have a right to view the National parks also. Please do not lesson to Mr. Nickas or the Wilderness Watch Group, who are they to tell us how to visit our national parks. Yellowstone fan

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 78 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: It is not clear if hikers using the "Half Dome Trail" to access Cloud's Rest would be impacted by the quota.

Topic Question 5: Nothing near Yosemite Valley will be a wilderness experience with the sounds of 4 million vehicles a year and the daily "beep-beep" of garbage trucks emptying the dumpsters in Yosemite Village. One can get cell-phone access on top of Half Dome! In the wilderness? I think the Half Dome Plan should focus on safety, by limiting the numbers of climbers on the cables.

Topic Question 6: I hike the "Half-Dome trail" to Cloud's Rest. I think it has better views and more solitude than Half Dome. Hopefully the "Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan" will not impact the very few who hike to Cloud's Rest from the Valley.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 79 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The cables impose a natural limit on the number of climbers, there is no reason to impose a lottery.

Topic Question 2: Parks belong to the people, not a lottery of the lucky few.

Topic Question 3: A second set of cables would double capacity. Any stated goal that limits reasonable access to a park interferes with the rights of the people, and is in error.

Topic Question 4: Legal mandates is a load of bull dung, used to justify whatever you want it to justify, falsely.

Topic Question 5: Parks are not for the rich eco-crazed few, parks are for the people.

Topic Question 6: I would get turned away from climbing half dome, so the eco-crazed can take pictures without people. Parks are for the people, not the rich eco-crazed few.

Comments: Parks belong to the people, not a lottery of the lucky few.

Correspondence ID: 80 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,29,2012 16:36:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: People need to have access to go to the top of the Half Dome as it is. The parks were created for people to enjoy not for them to be seen from afar. I would say asking for a fee for the ability to use the cables is reasonable and measuring the traffic to put a reasonable limit on how many per day can climb is also reasonable but to rid the ability all together is a sad idea. Our tax dollars pay to have these parks maintained and limits have been put on the ability to build on the parks already. Radical solutions by those who are too selfish to allow others to enjoy what they already have makes no sense to me.

Correspondence ID: 81 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,29,2012 17:01:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH LOCAL AREA HIKERS WHO HAVE HIKED UP HALF DOME I BELIEVE THAT A LONG-TERM LIMIT OF 400 PERSONS PER DAY WOULD BE A REASONABLE LIMIT, NOT THE 300 PERSON LIMIT SUGGESTED BY THE PARK SERVICE.

Correspondence ID: 82 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,29,2012 17:02:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 4: None of the presented alternatives will restore true wilderness to this trail. The decision of which alternative is selected then has to be made based on what is better public policy.

Topic Question 5: The EA states that the current overcrowding on the cables has caused unacceptable impacts to visitor safety. The presented data directly contradicts this statement. Based on the accidents listed since 2006, the likelihood of a fall is 5 times greater when the cables are not that overcrowded (Sun-Fri) than at they most overcrowded (Saturday). The likelihood of a fall is also 18 times greater without cables than under maximum overcrowded conditions.

Comments: To: National Park Service Re: Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan - EA Public Review

The National Park Service (NPS) finds itself in a difficult situation. Clearly, to be in strict compliant with the California Wilderness Act of 1984, and as pointed in the EA, the NPS ought to ensure that the Half Dome Trail be untrammelled, natural, undeveloped, and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. In my opinion, none of these qualities are afforded by the Half Dome Trail. The simple fact that cables are provided for access, makes the area trammelled, not natural, developed, and provides the opportunity for large crowds of hikers to access the trail, eliminating all semblance of solitude.

This said, however, my opinion is that high appeal natural locations, such as Half Dome, encourage people who may not otherwise be inclined to experience the beauty of our National Parks to discover them. As clearly pointed out in the EA, climbing Half Dome can be a life-changing experience. It can create a passion for hiking and climbing, encourage additional forays into the wilderness, encourage fitness, and enhance the quality of life and the health of the population. Irrespective of the strict language of the Wilderness Act, it is good public policy.

I am a climber, and I enjoy the solitude of the wilderness. I have backpacked in Yosemite several times, and try to stay out of the Valley and the trails accessible from the Valley because I prefer areas with less people. However, the way I see the Half Dome Trail is the way I see Zoos. I'm not in favor of confining animals in zoos, but most children get their first look at wild animals in zoos, and many of those children grow up loving animals and become supporters of the environment. The animals in the zoo are the ambassadors for the animals in the wild, allowing most people who otherwise could not to experience them. Similarly, the Half Dome Trail gives so many more people an opportunity to experience the "wilderness". Many of them will fall in love with it, and will then seek true wilderness.

In regards to the No Action Alternative, the EA affirms "The No Action Alternative would result in unacceptable impacts to both visitor safety and wilderness character." I do not question the impacts to the wilderness character-I would say that all alternatives except for Alternative E impact the wilderness character. However, the EA does not even attempt to prove that the overcrowding is causing safety concerns. I would postulate that the exact opposite is true. The data presented in the EA supports the theory that one is the least likely to fall under the most overcrowded conditions. The following accidents are listed in the EA since 2006:

10/1/2006 Cables up Sunday 11/8/2006 Cables down Wednesday 4/19/2007 Cables down Thursday 6/17/2007 Cables up Sunday 6/6/2009 Cables up Saturday 6/13/2009 Cables up Saturday 6/23/2010 Cables up Wednesday 1/28/2011 Cables down Friday 7/31/2011 Cables up Sunday

Under Alternative A, the EA provides the following numbers of average People At One Time (PAOT) on the cables, presumably during the peak season:

Sun-Fri 27 Sat 69

Presumably, during the off-season, when the cables are down, the number of climbers is much lower. Using Alternative D as a basis, one could say that off-season, the average PAOT on cables is:

Off Season <6 say 5

Therefore, statistically speaking, following are the probabilities of a fall assuming the level of climbers has remained constant

between 2006 and 2011, and assuming that the cables are up for 24 weeks and down for 28 weeks out of the year:

Sat, cables up 9,936 climbers 2 falls 0.2 falls per 1000 climbers Sun-Fri, cables up 3,888 climbers 4 falls 1.0 falls per 1000 climbers Cables down 840 climbers 3 falls 3.6 falls per 1000 climbers

Statistically speaking, then, one is 5 times as likely to fall under Alternative B (similar level of PAOT than under current conditions on Sunday-Friday), than during the worst overcrowding conditions under Alternative A.

Similarly, one is 18 times more likely to fall without cables (Alternative E) than under the worst overcrowding conditions under Alternative A.

In conclusion, regardless of the level of user restriction that is imposed on the Half Dome Trail, I believe that this trail will never have the quality of true wilderness. Trying to impose those standards on this trail is futile. I also believe that the data presented does not back up the assertion that the overcrowded conditions are a cause for safety concern. If anything, the presented data seems to say exactly the opposite. I thus do not believe that any of the Alternatives presented meets the Needs and Purpose stated in the EA, as the two presented reasons for the study, restoring wilderness character to the trail and improving safety appear to be mutually exclusive. I thus favor Alternative A, or perhaps Alternative B as a compromise.

Correspondence ID: 83 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan.29.2012 18:05:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Topic Question 6: I climb Half Dome every few years via one of the technical routes and always descend the Cables Route. 1200 people a day on the Cables Routes is far too many for safety reasons, so I agree there needs to be a limit. 300-400 is a reasonable number. I would urge two modifications to the proposals: 1) Climbers ascending via another route should not be part of the 300-400 allowed on the Cables Route. Although a technical descent route, perhaps near Snake Dike, could be established by climbers, it is far quicker (and therefore safer) to descend the cables route, even when the posts/steps aren't in place. 2) Some of the 300 permits per day, perhaps even 100 of them, should not be reservable months in advance. For example, some of the permits for Garnet Canyon in the Tetons and permits for popular canyoneering routes in Zion are available to those willing to get up early and wait in line the day before. Some people cannot plan their lives 6 months in advance, and there should be another way for them to be able to obtain a permit. This is similar to the camping reservation system in the Valley already. You can get campsites 6 months in advance OR you can wait in line at Camp 4. I've used both options with success in the past depending on my circumstances.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 84 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan.29.2012 18:10:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Comments: One comment on the over use of Half Dome. Why not allow only a certain number of hikers on Half Dome per year and keep record of those hiker's names. With record of the hikers, then the park service could regulate how often they would be allowed to climb Half Dome. I know that there are a high percentage of the current hikers who make the trek to the top, every, single year. Why not restrict the hikers to once every so many years? For instance, with record of their name, restrict their trips to the top of Half Dome, once every 5 years. Thank you and good luck with any program to preserve the quality of the experience.

Correspondence ID: 85 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan.29.2012 18:18:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Topic Question 2: I do not think the cables should be removed. The surface is slick. If one person fell, people below would be at risk of being knocked over. I think it would be too dangerous to remove the cables.

I like the 400 people per day limit. To limit further would prevent too many people from exploring this natural wonder. I have been to the top once by day and once by night before permits were required. It is getting harder and harder for people to see the beauty in our National Parks because they can't get a permit. It is very frustrating to have to plan so far in advance and still not be able to do what you want to do.

Topic Question 6: I hike and backpack. I have had to drive back and forth into the valley because I couldn't get a campsite there. I won't go between Memorial Day and Labor Day due to the crowds. So I can see both sides of the issue. However, to remove the cables is asking for more deaths, and to restrict Half Dome to 200 or 300 people would deny too many people the opportunity. A fair compromise is in order.

Comments: Don't let the radicals take down the cables. It doesn't make any sense to protect something so much that nobody can see it.

Correspondence ID: 86 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Jan,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The current pass system does not work. When I hiked HD two summers ago, there was a man scalping tickets about 200 yards from the ranger who was checking tickets. Where was I? Oakland?

Topic Question 2: Take the cables down. They do not represent wilderness. I visit YNP at least six times a year.

Topic Question 3: Take the cables down. I hiked it with a permit two summers ago and it was too crowded . There are plenty of other great hikes in the valley and in Tuolumne. The YNP is getting too crowded and too expensive. Work on crowd control. I spent the summer of 1982 in YNP and it was never as crowded. The Half Dome hike had rickety cables then.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 87 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Jan,29,2012 19:38:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Taking down the cables would not work! It would take the Half Dome climb out of reach for 98% of the visitors, and there is already an "attitude" in Yosemite that if you can't climb as well as they can, then you don't belong in the park. I can't climb, even with the cables, and I know that. But why take this wonderful option away from those who can?

Topic Question 6: I camp there several times a year, usually in the tent cabins at Curry Meadow.

Comments: Limiting the traffic up Half Dome, either 150 or 300 people a day, would be a great idea! It takes nothing away from anyone, plus it preserves the natural area.

Correspondence ID: 88 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Jan,29,2012 19:44:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The problem is Half Dome climbing permits.

Topic Question 6: I do not hike the trails outside of the valley. My husband and I (we are in our 70's) ride our bikes and use the shuttle to get around the park.

Comments: The problem with the Half Dome climbing permits last year was that the permit was for only 1 day with no back up if there is inclement weather on the day of the permit. What ever number the Park service feels is safe should include a hold back of a reasonable number for climbers who could not climb because of environmental conditions, on the day of the permit. Use of the back up must be used with a few days, say 3-5 days. Also the Park Service needs to use a system that makes it harder for purchase of permits in volume to be used for resale. My suggestion would be to limit the number of permits to be for no more than 15 people. This this would allow a group of friends or family to have only one person get the tickets. Another way of halting scalping of permits would be to require the buyer to provide identification that can be verified with Park records.

Correspondence ID: 89 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Jan,29,2012 20:09:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I have been lucky enough to have visited the park several times for day hikes and back packing trips. One of the hikes I took was from Glacier Point to Half Dome during the last half of which I was accompanied by a couple I met on the trail. As we rested in the saddle before preparing to ascend to the top the weather turned bad and we were unable to complete our climb to the top. I would like to think that at some point in the future it might be possible to return to Yosemite and complete the climb. The essence of the experience would definitely be vastly diminished if it meant being in a "bumper to bumper" line of hikers. I therefor hope that one of the plans allowing three or four hundred people a day to climb to the top will be adopted.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 90 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Jan,29,2012 20:41:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative B is te best option in my opinion. I hiked this route for the first time in 2005 on a Saturday. Needless to say the trail was insane and to see people coming down outside the cables because there were so many people was borderline psychotic in my opinion. The second time I hiked it was July 31, 2010. This day was absolutely awesome. There were VERY few people on the trail and it felt like a real hike. Hardly anyone around above Nevada Falls. In fact, I remember calling back on the radio to my friend in the second group that started an hour later asking if he had seen anyone else on the trail because we had gone at least an hour not seeing a soul that morning. The afternoon was different, I'd say we ran into people on the way down once every 15-20 minutes and would have to work around large groups (boyscouts, etc). It did get obnoxious being asked if we had any extra permits by hikers on the way up as we were heading down that afternoon. Any changes I would make would be to maybe set up the checkpoint lower on the trail just above Nevada Falls. 400 permits would be perfect in the respect it would account for no-shows. The group a friend of mine brought up behind mine on the second trip had about a third

of it drop off at Nevada falls because the hike became too much, which I have found to be the case with several other friends that have made the hike.

Topic Question 3: Lower the checkpoint to just above Nevada Falls and use Alternative B but make 100 of the permits available at the wilderness centers the day of the hike. Also allow hikers to turn in unused permits to rangers at the checkpoint or wilderness centers for others to use.

Topic Question 6: Used mostly for hiking, some camping.

Comments: The permit system is working to keep congestion down. Most hikers don't go above Nevada falls unless they are going to the top. It'd be best to lower the checkpoint and make unused permits available for turn-in/reissue. The cables however need work. I wouldn't be discouraged from them being taken down all together. Frankly, they are a joke when viewed as a form of fall protection which is how they are seen by most hikers.

Correspondence ID: 91 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,29,2012 21:13:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Information provided is adequate.

Topic Question 2: I oppose restrictions or use of permits to allow access to the half dome cable trails. NPS Yosemite has millions of visitors each year. Your web site encourages visitors to explore off the road vistas. Restricting access to half dome using a permit system is unfair.

Topic Question 3: Remove the limited permit plan, install an additional cable and allow free access to anyone seeking to hike.

Topic Question 4: None noted; however, does the government have the right to restrict access in wildness areas beyond current regulations?

Topic Question 5: If you limit half dome access what is next limiting access to park to only those who haver hotel or camp reservations

Topic Question 6: I visit the park annually staying several nights in the high country to hike, fish and enjoy the wildness. We also normally visit the valley floor and will hike the glacier to valley trails. My family has been camping and staying in the park since the very early . I remember the old bear feeding anbd nightly fire fall.

Comments: Thank you for considering my thoughts and suggestion to eliminate the permit process.

Correspondence ID: 92 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,29,2012 21:25:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I believe in keeping the cables up but limiting the number of climbers to 200 per day. I also believe there should be reasonable education about climbing the cables and the dangers if the rocks are wet or a storm comes in.

I visited Yosemite in October 2011. My friends and I had planned to climb the Half Dome cables but decided it was too dangerous because it had been raining. Well it turns out that day that 20-30 people had to be rescued off the Dome because of a storm that came in and also I believe someone had slipped and fallen as well.

Yosemite is the most beautiful place I have ever been in my life and I believe it needs to be enjoyed by people. But I also believe the wilderness needs to be protected and also that people need to be protected from themselves as well in making poor decisions when hiking the Half Dome cables.

In addition to educating people about the dangers I believe people who sign up for a permit should sign a waiver and also if it is raining or a storm is coming in the cables should be closed for the day. I don't think it would be prudent to completely take the cables down. Not everyone is an expert rock climber and I feel you shouldn't have to be an expert to have the experience of seeing the park from the top of Half Dome.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 93 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,29,2012 21:51:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I attempted the Half Dome hike leaving about 6 am from the trailhead. I was not comfortable with the amount and skill level of people on the cables to attempt the summit but the hike was well worth it regardless. I was disappointed with the swimming in the river marked no swimming and I also felt it was just as dangerous on the trail from Vernal Falls down to the trailhead due to overcrowding and people obviously not in condition on my return journey. While 400 a day seems

reasonable for cable use, I didn't think the trail was overcrowded once past 2 miles up and I would be in favor of unlimited hiking to the cables. But the lower part of the trail needs some management.

Topic Question 3: I would suggest unlimited access at the trailhead up to say 7:00 am and metered access after that. The 400 permits could purchase some type of wristband and most hikers would self police the cables.

Topic Question 6: I would love to do this hike again and it is difficult to plan a trip from Michigan not knowing if one can even hike to the cables, let alone to get on the cables.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 94 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,29,2012 22:18:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 4: The original legal mandate for Yosemite National Park is for the enjoyment of future generations of the public. All gifts to the National Park Service were for that purpose. The cables on Half Dome were installed in 1919 as a way for the public (at least those in good health) to enjoy Half Dome.

The nation going back on our word to the creators of the national parks would be a violation of our trust. In this case, the meaning of the 1964 Wilderness Act is being stretched to violate the National Park Service's mandate to allow the public to enjoy Half Dome. I hope that your plan is eventually seen as illegal.

I bused into Yosemite in 2001 wearing my tent, barely got a campsite in the silly 6:00 a.m. long lines that I knew nothing about, barely got a wilderness camping permit, carried 2 gallons of water from the water fountain below Vernal Falls to the Little Yosemite campsite and made the trek up the next day, battling altitude sickness. Many people passed me.

As a poor person, I know that all constrictions on the public's right to walk up Half Dome are almost certainly going to deter me.

The country's population has changed since 1919. You don't have to make the ascent any easier, but the honorable thing is to put in fast and slow lanes of cables so that people can safely get off the mountain.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 95 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,29,2012 22:45:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Option b is good

Topic Question 2: Permits obtained 24 hrs in advance. 400 per day and allow walk ups to get cancellations/ no shows permits

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 96 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,29,2012 23:06:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I am for completely removing the cables and returning Half Dome to its natural condition. In addition, a limited number of people could be allowed to go up at their own risk, just as other wilderness areas limit daily use. The wilderness is not an equal-access type of place, and most people accept that and go where they have the experience and resources to do so. Remove the cables and limit the access.

Topic Question 6: I have visited Yosemite Valley many times over the years since the early 1970s, and Upper Yosemite once. It is increasingly overrun with too many cars and people. I used to think "it's the people's park and therefore we have a right to come and go as we wish", but now feel very differently. The wear and tear on the park was extremely evident to me the last time I visited, after not having been there for more than 15 years. It reminded me of living in the city, with the same crowd-control problems and pollution.

The park is a place where you should be able to look up and around and be able to hear the sounds and smell the scent of nature, not traffic and exhaust. We have come there to introduce our 4 kids to a place unlike any other and to stand in awe of the larger-than-life scenery found there. We have stayed in the old tent cabins in Camp Curry, cabins, Yosemite Lodge, camped in primitive camp above the falls, taken the trail by horseback up to Nevada Falls, hiked up to Glacier Point, hiked up to Mirror Lake when there was still a lake there, and done some longer hikes in the upper park.

The proposals would not affect any of those uses for our family because we know there are comparable views, in my opinion, from other points in the park if one wants to get there, with a bit more effort and planning. There are trails and opportunity to get to the top of peaks that overlook much of the park without making Half Dome the only way to do that. I think it has just become

the casual visitors' quickest and closest route to have a mountain-top experience, without the sacrifice of time and effort a longer hike would take. When I hiked up to Glacier Point I was 5 months pregnant and on our descent there was a horrendous thunderstorm, so I know it can be done!

I think most people accept the fact that there must be limits on how we use our parks and wilderness areas, especially people from overcrowded places like California. We all know that living and playing in places we love has to be shared with others, and that it won't be that beautiful place anymore if it's ruined by overuse. A lottery system similar to Desolation Wilderness (which I'm familiar with) would be a good example of regulating use, allowing some space for same-day visitors and substitutes to step in for no-shows and cancellations. It has reasonable fees and a reasonable sign-up period, with a user-friendly on-line program. I've always thought Yosemite was too hard to visit in recent years because it's become so competitive to get a space once the sign-ups open. I don't know how that could be solved, since there would still be millions of people wanting to visit, but at least when /if you do get to it won't be such a bad experience if the park is allowed to recover.

I'm excited that these issues are being addressed and hope to see a good outcome for the park. Thanks.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 97 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,29,2012 23:08:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Topic Question 1: Yosemite National Park Authorities should assume some responsibility for the heavy foot traffic at the cables because they use half dome as an advertising tool; putting its picture everywhere they can, from Yosemite's face book page to every park's vehicles and printed literature they put out. May be they should stop promoting half Dome so heavily and consequently draw less attention and fewer people to its trail. For many hikers, visiting Yosemite means climbing Haklf Dome.

Topic Question 2: Limiting day use access will violate the right of the hikers to visit the wilderness. We don't preserve wilderness so that it remains untouched. We preserve wilderness so that people can go and see it.

Topic Question 3: Stop promoting Half Dome so heavily. Remove front cover photos of Half Dome from Yosemite's face book page, all printed materials, park's vehicles, etc. For many hikers, visiting Yosemite means climbing Haklf Dome.

Comments: -----

Half Dome Cables, Too Many Hikers or a Bottle Neck

With the latest news on the death tolls at Yosemite National Park's Half Dome cabled section in 2011, it seems like the policy of permitted climbs for solving the problem of falls and deaths is not working. In fact a permit system can make the trail more dangerous. Those hikers who get lucky enough to get a permit, with little or no hope to get another one at a later time, set foot on a long and strenuous trail of 8.2 miles only to use their permits at the cables and may do so in dangerous conditions. In 2011 a permitted hiker attempted the climb over wet and slippery rocks and fell to her death. Why a hiker should take such a risk? Enforcing a permit requirement does not make the cables safe, but the last 400 feet of Half Dome can be climbed safer with the addition of a third cable and lifting permit requirements.

Reducing the number of hikers by issuing limited number of permits for hiking Half Dome does not solve the problem nor it suppress the interest in the climb. On the other hand, thousands and thousands of hikers who would have normally hiked Half Dome every summer and many more who will join them every year, will add up over time pressuring the Yosemite National Park's authorities to find a way to allow them exercise their right to use the trail. Yes, this is problem that needs to be addressed and yes, it is possible to solve the foot traffic problem at the Half Dome cables with a simple addition; a third cable.

Currently Half Dome has two permanently attached cables that are set up on posts in summer time making a one lane trail for both ascending and descending hikers. This bottle neck set up by itself creates the gathering of a crowd at the base and throughout the cabled path to the summit because descending and ascending hikers meet and squeeze through a narrow, steep and slippery path. If a third cable is installed in parallel to the existing two, a second lane is created, hence making a two lane two way path. This will greatly improve the flow of foot traffic in both directions. A third cable eliminates the queue on the steep trail and helps the hikers leave the trail faster, reduces the climb time, lowers the risk of hikers getting tired and consequently loose grip of the trail. A second lane can also be used as a passing lane, for quick clearing of the path in case of a sudden lightning storm, or for rescue operations.

When a two lane two way trail on Half Dome improves its safety, more permits can be issued to accommodate those who are interested and have the right to use the trail. We should keep in mind that the intent of the wilderness act of 1964 is to secure the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness for the PEOPLE. Keeping the a great majority of people out of the wilderness area by issuing very limited number of permits defeats the purpose of Wilderness Act.

If a two lane two way trail improved the foot traffic flow, then limited permit requirements can be lifted to open the possibility of returning to Half Dome anytime in the future if weather conditions deteriorate. This will also help the hikers manage their own risks and do not decide to hike the cables just because they have a hard to get permit. Benefits of installing a third cable are so many that one wonders why it has not been done already. A third cable can fix the foot traffic flow problem on the Half

Dome's existing cables and everyone, once again, can experience the joy and freedom of a day hike to the summit of Half Dome.

Correspondence ID: 98 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,30,2012 00:08:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I select Alternative E--Remove the Rails.

Warm regards,

Correspondence ID: 99 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 02:14:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: does not seem complete without supporting data for the questions below.

Is there raw data that can be accessed?

Who prepared the report details ? are they independant in thier basis

Topic Question 2: yes please clarify why the daily vivitation should be limited to 300 to 400 hundred person when if fact peaks of 1200 are experienced ? what are the time of day visitation profiles by hour of arrival? Why not approach the pathway in a instantaneous capacity model and allow daily visitation to seek it own maximized levels while maintaining safety as the #1 priority

Topic Question 3: suggest the above approach in Question # 2 to find the maximized capcity as a bsais to the restricted access visitation level to be proposed ?

Topic Question 4: no comments

Topic Question 5: yes what are the cuurent impacts based on observations what practices can be employed to mitagatte these issues or concerns

Topic Question 6: no comments at this time

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 100 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,30,2012 02:39:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Topic Question 1: While reading the plan I am missing thoroughgoing analysis of the information gathered during 2011 wile implementing the maximum amount of 400 dayhikers. During 2011 'Alternative B' was implemented on an interim basis, however any conclusions regarding this alternative are not included in the plan. This could give the reader a better analytical view on how to compare 'Alternative B' with other alternatives, mostly with comparable 'Alternative C'. The only difference is the limit of 400 users for 'Alternative B' en 300 users for 'Alternative C', which is the preferred alternative.

Topic Question 2: While reading the plan I noticed that the two major reasons for implementing a new plan are 1) safety and 2) maintaining the wilderness aspect of the Half Dome trail. The plan itself is completely based on average numbers of people making use of the cables and setting a maximum amount of users per day leading to different alternatives set by maximum amount of users. This leads to solving the issues regarding aspect 2, maintaining the wilderness aspect of the Half Dome trail.

The other important aspect of the plan should be the safety, number 1 of the two major issues. In the plan it is mentioned that the last years the amount of fatal accidents has increased significantly and a relation is made with the increase of users of the cable section on the Half Dome. However the plan lacks data on what the usercount was on the days of the accidents, but does give insight on the weather conditions on the Half Dome. It is most notable that these accidents occurred in bad weather (wet rock, lightning). As a reader I am not convinced that either of the alternatives improves safety for the user of the Half Dome cables. A person can still slip and fall during bad weather with a low amount of users and cause (fatal) injuries, this is not related to how busy it is at the cables. Further safety measures should be taken, for example with security lines to which people attach themselves (a form of via ferrata, being very popular in Europe). The plan really needs a better analysis on the safety measures required for the users of the Half Dome cables.

Topic Question 3: In relation to the comment made on Question 2 the plan is missing an analysis and alternative for better safety measures.

A good alternative would be to force people (by regulation) to use a climbing harness and a klettersteig-set which would greatly increase the safety of the users. A set could be bought in advance by the user (buyable for 100 USD) or could be rented from the

Yosemite NPS for an amount which would have to be calculated.

To give additional information:

We are visitors to the Half Dome from Europe and in every guide (Dutch, German) the writers of the guides advice us to bring with us our set of harness + klettersteigset in case of quickly approaching bad weather as this is the only way to create a safe climb on the cables.

Topic Question 6: The plan at this moment does not provide good information about the distribution of the permits. As visitors from abroad plan their trip through the USA for their holidays, these visitors have to create a plan for their trip far in advance of the month March to make sure they have a reservation in the parks they visit. Most of the time it is only possible to visit a park for a couple of days and then move on to the next park/city. This gives these international visitors a small range of dates to reserve for the permit system. If a lottery is implemented these visitors will most likely subscribe under all names of the party and all dates to increase their chances on getting their permits and increasing the amount of no-shows. This should be thought off in the plan, to perhaps make a difference between national and international users. Else the international users would create a large amount of no-shows leaving other national and international user perhaps empty-handed.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 101 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 06:44:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I support the Park Service's decision to restrict Half Dome use via the daily quota of either Option C or Option B.

Correspondence ID: 102 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,30,2012 06:51:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I prefer alternative B since it controls the traffic to a reasonable number (400 per day) that allows for a quality, environmentally sound experience while affording the public their legitimate right to climb this iconic peak. I made it to the base of the monolith before turning around when the wind picked up to the extent that I was afraid to continue. In my opinion, the cable should stay in place, otherwise only rock climbers will be able to make it. There will always be foolhardy folks who will take their chances despite the weather, and I don't think it is the job of the NPS to mollycoddle the public like a parent. Those who voluntarily take the risk take the responsibility for their actions.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 103 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 07:02:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I believe Alternative B is the best idea.

Correspondence ID: 104 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 07:52:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I like how the Park has handled the process during the "scoping" period. I believe that either alternative "b" (400 visitors) or alternative "c" (300 visitors) would provide the best balance between public access and environmental concerns.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 105 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 08:49:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative C

300 people per day

protect the wilderness experience for hikers to half dome

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 106 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,30,2012 09:00:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I'm in favor of limiting daily access and removing the cables leading to Half Dome.

I hiked Half Dome in the summer of 2003 and was surprised by what I saw. The hike was so easy because the trails were so open and well maintained/traveled, that it didn't feel like I was hiking at all -- a bad thing. The Mist Trails was so packed with people, it was like being in an amusement park setting, waiting for our turn to climb a little higher.

When I got to the cables and saw the crowds, it absolutely felt like Disney Land. Many people were not experienced hikers were depending on the kindness of others to help. An example of this were inexperienced hikers starting off without enough water. These people would make it to the base of Half Dome, only to be completely out of water. People they didn't even know would step up to give them some of their water, knowing and saying how foolish it was for them to have thought they'd be able to do it with so little water. Don't they read about the hike before attempting it???

Another surprise was seeing people hike in sandals, and I don't mean TEVAs. SANDALS!!! People weren't dressed properly - no hats, no sunscreen. Again, what were they thinking?? It shouldn't be the responsibility of a park ranger to be at the trail head inspecting everyone's gear to make sure they're well equipped, but in the case of Half Dome, maybe that would have been what was needed.

A hike like Half Dome should be enjoyed by people that are properly prepared. Limiting daily access and especially taking out the cables are at least two ways that could achieve that.

Correspondence ID: 107 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 09:31:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: SUPPORT: Alternative B

As a former California resident, I have hiked to the top of Half Dome five times. On one of those trips, I proposed marriage to my wife at the summit. This is a very special place to us -- a place we hope to continue to travel to for decades to come.

I appreciate NPS' concerns about crowding and realize measures need to be taken to keep the hike safe for all. However, under no circumstances would I support Alternative E -- the removal of the cables. This is THE iconic American hike -- the best the country has to offer. The removal of the cables would take that away.

On most occasions, I hiked to the top on a Monday-Thursday in the mid 2000s and felt like access up the cables was not congested at all. If limits need to be placed on hiking, I would support Alternative B. Four-hundred hikers a day seems like a reasonable number to support hikers' ambitions and keep it safe.

Please keep Half Dome open for all hikers. Future generations need to have the same wonderful experiences I had in being able to summit America's best mountain.

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 108 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 10:02:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Plan B.

Comments: Removing the cables from Half Dome, with the goal of making it inaccessible to anyone but the most experienced rock climbers is RIDICULOUS. I get the idea that with so many visitors, the wilderness is in danger of losing its "wilderness" qualities - but there are SO many other ways to protect it rather than removing access! For the record, I think continuing with Plan B (the 400-person daily cap that has been in effect all year) is a solid idea. Also, some wilderness groups (who I'm sure have substantial rock climbing experience and thus wouldn't be bothered by a lack of cables) are campaigning hard for Plan E (aka the crappy one). Not a good way to encourage people to go to this park if one of the major attractions is closed off.

Correspondence ID: 109 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 10:12:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: In August 2011 I hiked up Half Dome with a group of High School students from our church youth group. Way too many people even with permits.

I believe the lottery system at 140 people might help solve the overcrowding problem.

Comments: Make webbing & safety equipment mandatory.

Correspondence ID: 110 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 10:25:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: One of the goals this plan supposedly meets is to "protect the wilderness character of the project area." Yet, the Wilderness Act of 1964 defines wilderness by four qualities: "untrammeled," "undeveloped," "natural," and "outstanding opportunities for solitude...." Current conditions on Half Dome, which will continue even after implementing this plan, fail to meet any of those standards. Even crowds of 300 people per day, though reducing the trammel, do not render the peak untrammeled. As for "undeveloped," the bolts drilled into the rock and the cables lashed to them certainly constitute "developed" and most definitely are not "natural." Our last quality addresses opportunities for solitude. To that I have only a challenge: find solitude in a crowd. Only the stillest minds of our generation may not have difficulty doing so.

It seems, then, that the only action left to the NPS of Yosemite, in order to preserve Half Dome's wild nature and align it with the Wilderness Act of 1964, is to remove the cables altogether along with with the bolts. That is, unless the goal is to preserve not the wilderness but access to it. And that is ultimately the choice. I argue that perfect engagement with wilderness involves toil, or how can we appreciate it? Certainly not with masses at our backs. But I also believe that in our age the people who most need to discover wilderness will never do so if the way is too difficult. So it's a fine line we walk.

Having pointed out these discrepancies, I do applaud the NPS for addressing this issue and taking action to preserve a beautiful place. Whatever the outcome, it seems the impact will be reduced, and that is a good thing. Three hundred is less than 1,200, and I think it's a reasonable number that will maximize both the opportunity for visitors to enjoy Half Dome and reduce the human impact upon it.

Correspondence ID: 111 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 10:41:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative B has proved to be effective when I climbed up half dome. Someone was checking for permits near the base and there wasn't overcrowding that caused any dangers. This also helps maintain the trail from overuse. I believe this method has worked well.

Removing the cables can cause more danger to those foolhardy with little experience in climbing.

No restrictions has caused jams at the cables previously and should not be implemented again for the sake of safety and experience.

Topic Question 5: Having no restrictions will cause overcrowding and potential harm to the trail.

Topic Question 6: I'm just a casual camper who loves Yosemite. Taking down the cables will ruin the experience of reaching the top of half dome.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 112 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 10:48:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Remove the cable. People need start taking responsibility for themselves and stop relying on the government to protect their basic safety. A wilderness area is just that - a wilderness area. You should have the skills to safely navigate the environment and survive on your own. If you don't have the skills, learn them. Otherwise you don't have any business being there. If you were visiting the Great Barrier Reef and wanted the "full" experience you'd learn how to scuba dive. The same applies here. If you want to experience Half Dome at it's ultimate grandeur learn how to climb. I encourage everyone to enjoy all the National Parks, Wildernesses, Recreation Areas, etc. to their fullest but we need to change the general public's mentality. It should be everyone's personal (not the Parks Service) responsibility to know their own limits and stay within them.

Correspondence ID: 113 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,30,2012 11:00:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Most hikers start from Happy Isles, so hikers starting at Little Yosemite Valley have a head start and could arrive very early at Half Dome : hence have time slots for the climb. Someone from LYV could be up and down before the crowd from the main valley arrive.

Time slots could also apply from the main valley too, say a very early start, or an afternoon start for an experienced hiker would mean him arriving before or after the main rush.

Topic Question 6: I walked the JMT last year and hope to do so again this year. Climbing Half Dome was an integral part of that experience. It would be a shame if I have to walk straight past Half Dome due to lottery ticketing.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 114 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,30,2012 11:19:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Mission failure: all plans that limit visitation will result in my inability to hike to the the top of half-dome; thus very much detracting from my "enjoyment" of the park.

Topic Question 3: Do your job: facilitate public use. Few things are less impacted by pedestrian traffic than a GRANITE MOUNTAIN! Develop more alternatives. If I can reasonably hike up another peak for a similar experience, that would be acceptable to me.

Topic Question 4: The NPS mission is to preserve, protect, and promote enjoyment. By taking the lazy way out by restricting enjoyment; you've failed to adequately attempt to accomplish the mandated mission.

Topic Question 6: I've never been, but hope to take my family one day. Apparently you don't understand how aggrieved I'll be when I can't hike to the top of half-dome and partake of the splendor.

Comments: Congratulations on a bang-up job! If your arms aren't too sore, please pat yourselves on the back some more. Truly you are genius folk.

Allow me to educate:

1. Your highest priority should be protecting our fellow earthlings within the park. (You're unaware of this because it hasn't been mandated by congress, but I thought you should know what your highest priority should be.)
2. Rocks, no matter how large, don't have a care in the world; and will neither suffer from nor be grieved by any actions we take.
3. Enjoyment of people hiking up Half-Dome can be accommodated with no additional harm to our fellow animals, and little detraction from the natural splendor of the place.
4. Expanding trail development, not neglecting or removing what exists will benefit public safety; and best achieve the NPS mission balance.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm a conservationist. And I wish you and at least 90% of humanity were wiped from the face of the earth. I would like to see entire states completely free from any effects of humanity. But, where are we to go to escape the nearly endless sea of buildings, roads and parking lots?

What good is such a scenic wonder if not to be enjoyed responsibly?

But, I would be amiable to some visitor restriction; so long as it's not me and my family. As long as we can hike and enjoy ourselves I'd be satisfied if you limited other people's use. And please start by restricting access of politicians, park employees, people with park passes that already benefit from parks more than I, foreigners, in-grates, n'er-do-wells, litter-bugs, hunters, fishers, and other evil-doers.

Thank you [REDACTED]

self-anointed smarter than thou

Correspondence ID: 115 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Jan_30_2012 11:36:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 3: If limits are placed on the number of people that can summit half dome, the system should definitely have permits available for those that want to hike at off peak hours - meaning those that want to start after sunset and summit before either sunrise or (if slow) just after sunrise. The impact of these hikers cannot be lumped in with the normal hikers that begin their hike with the daytime hikers.

Rather than limit the number of permits allowed per day, instead limit the number of people that can be on the cables at one time. Or limit the number of people who can be on the dome at one time. I realize that the permit approach is intended to do that but it is a grossly imperfect approach that trades off ease of execution at the expense of not meeting the demand for access.

Another alternative would be to put up a second set of cables in combination with a limit of the number of people who are allowed up - either by permit or by a limit on the number on the cables at any one time. The demand for access is certainly above the 300 or even 400 number. This option would achieve your safety goals while meeting the public's demand for access.

Topic Question 6: I use the park in two ways. When I want a wilderness experience, I make use of the vast majority of the park that is not Half Dome and really not Yosemite Valley. When I want to hike to the top of half dome, I stay in populated areas

such as the campground and fully expect that my experience will not be a truly wilderness experience. It seems a bit preposterous that half dome to be a true wilderness experience. Those who want that should make use of the rest of the park. Just like those who want a real wilderness experience should not use the campgrounds. The temporary measures in place have already affected my use of the park in a negative way.

Comments: Overall, as a longtime visitor to Yosemite, taxpayer, and outdoor proponent, I recommend: - a compromise approach to Half Dome realizing this is a high-demand wilderness area and thus there will be human effects on the environment and that solitude cannot truly be expected at and on the way to Half Dome vs the many remote areas of the park

- a view that people should understand that crowding will occur and there are risks with both that crowding and weather including slipping / lightning stikes. If needed, permitting can be used to inform/consent hikers (either limited or unlimited permitting).

- Do NOT lower the limit below 400 and preferably raise the limit to a varying level as in the next bulleted item

- Enact additional management by the park to facilitate maximum usage. This may mean having a ranger stationed at the base of the cables or other other capabilities. --- Any access restrictions be adjusted downward or upward based upon the weather (vs unneeded restrictions when no dangerous weather is predicted). --- Control access at the base of the cables to control the number on the cables to a desired level. This could also account for the number on the face and the overall time needed to evacuate the dome in case of dangerous weather --- If access continues be limited, that night time ascent permits be separately issued vs day permits. --- If access continues to be limited, in concert with controlling access at the base of the cables, have back up permits. These allow access if and only if traffic is sufficiently light to allow additional people to ascend. (This maximizes usage while controlling expectations / complaints.)

HERE'S WHY:

The question of what approach is appropriate is certainly a matter of perspective. It is also a matter of degree. Within Yosemite there are areas that are fully left to wilderness and there are areas such as valley floor campgrounds with paved parking lots and multiple buildings.

My perspective is that Half Dome is different than the campgrounds but is also very different from the truly wilderness areas of the park. It is a very well sought out area and a driver of park attendance. The approach for Half Dome should be a compromise somewhere between the campground areas and the vast majority of the park that is truly wilderness areas. Any priorities for Half Dome being a source of wilderness at a level of providing solitude should be relaxed. There should be substantial access to the modest number of people who can complete the approximately 10 hour hike under the assistance provided by the cables. In other parts of the park and other national parks we have altered the wilderness to provide access - again in varying degrees. We have campgrounds, foot bridges, fences, hand rails, and go as far as vehicle briges and roads. My view is that all of these have impacts on wilderness but we have chosen to trade those impacts off for access and we should do so for Half Dome too.

If Yosemite National Park consisted only of the valley and Half Dome my perspective might be different. However, it doesn't. People who want wilderness at a level of solitude have ample other areas of the park in which to find solitude. On a number of trips to the park, I certainly have done so. Meanwhile, Half Dome is an area that should be a compromise of wilderness and people. The sizeable attendance to date suggests people want this access despite the crowds, waiting lines, and dangers involved.

With regard to long travel times due to large numbers, I think that is/should be a part of the expected process as should be the risks involved with any ascent that requires assistance by safety equipment. A potential approach would be that anyone who hikes the dome must sign off on the potential for long travel times and the risks due to overcrowding and weather. That can be in the form of a waiver or permit whether the number of hikers is regulated or not.

The final goal, weather, is a completely understandable concern. I have been atop Half Dome when rain looks imminent and even when there has been snow covering much of the top. I have two thoughts. The first is that there is varying levels of danger involved with outdoor activities and hiking Half Dome is at the upper end of the danger level for the weekend type outdoor person. People should be forced to acknowledge both that risk and their willingness to accept that risk - perhaps in the form of a waiver or permit (as above - either limited number or unlimited).

The second that the limits appropriate for bad weather (or when bad weather is possible/probable) are not appropriate for days when such weather is not probable. The demand for access is too high to indiscriminantly apply the worst case limit. Why, on a clear day where lightning/thunderstorms are not forecast, should we limit access to that of a day where lightning is probable? If you need to limit access on those days where such storms are predicted or even remotely probable, do so by additional management, but don't bring the normal capacity/throughput down indiscriminantly.

Correspondence ID:	116	Project:	29443	Document:	44771
Received:	Jan,30,2012 11:37:14				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Topic Question 6: I travel to Yosemite perhaps 25- 30 times per year. My experience generally includes day hikes throughout the park as well as some small amounts of rock climbing, and winter backcountry trips. Once a year, we try to get a group of people to hike half dome, although that has been much more difficult to plan with the new regulations.				

Comments: Hello:

I would first like to say that I am a believer in protecting our environment and that I take as much care to do so as any member of the sierra club or any other such organizations. I have grown up with the value of treating our wilderness with care and respect and quite frankly, resent any of these legal action groups trying to impose their ideas about how to take care of our lands. Secondly, I have always understood that these protected areas are OUR lands... the people's land... NOT the exclusive domain of some who believe that their ideas of preservation and wilderness use are the only correct positions. Again, I deeply resent such political action groups, and by the way, find many of these folks environmentally hypocritical.

Obviously Yosemite is impacted. Unfortunately, there are those that feel that all human visitation and use of this land should be illegal or severely restricted... NOT FOR THEMSELVES of course!

To completely remove the half dome cables would be a horrible injustice to the public who own these lands. The half dome experience is one of the great activities the people who visit Yosemite can participate in.

Practical suggestions: 400 people per day... a lot better than up to 1200, less restrictive than 300. The half dome hike is NOT in my opinion, a wilderness experience in solitude. There are MANY other options for those seeking solitude. In fact, one of the great pleasures I have every time that I hike half dome, is my many encounters with other human beings from all backgrounds, places, and ages... whom have as much right to be there as I and who enjoy this experience in their own way.

Another suggestion is that you would find a way for the possibility of larger groups... say 15-20 be able to plan their adventure together... perhaps allowing two or three such groups per day the ability to reserve space.

Please find a balance in your pursuit of a new system. Let not the ideological, political agenda of a few, prohibit the access and experience of the half dome cables and adventure for the many. A balance can be found... it is the law of nature... homeostasis... discover it and it will be health and vitality for all (including our natural environment).

I would be more than happy to voice this perspective in any public hearing or legal action.

Thank you for your time.

██████████

Correspondence ID:	117	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	Y
Received:	Jan_30_2012 11:57:40						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Topic Question 3: New plan element: "Time of day" based permits for backpackers in Little Yosemite (Early Bird and Afternoon). Since many climb Half Dome before or after an overnight in Little Yosemite, many hikers have a "head start" on heading up to the top of Half Dome or are able to hike much later in the day than those starting from the valley floor since they don't have to make it all the way back to Happy Isles in one day. It seems you could increase the total number of permits allowed (eg allow up to 400 under the 300 permit plan) by allocating additional "Early-Bird" permits to backpackers in Little Yosemite who start up the trail early in the morning. (eg: Anyone who starts up the trail from LY by 7 or 8am is going to be ahead of those starting from Happy Isles). You could also allocate a certain number of "late hiker" permits for those who are going to spend the night in Little Yosemite after hiking to the top. (eg they can't start up the cables until after 3pm.) This "spreads out" the people on the cables by time-of-day, alleviating congestion during peak hours, while maximizing the number of people who are allowed to make the hike. I have been to the summit of Half Dome, 5 times... as both a day hiker and a backpacker (Twice under the Half Dome permit system). My experience has been that with an early start from Little Yosemite, I don't see any day hikers on the cables. The same is true for a late start from Little Yosemite... day hikers need to start back by early afternoon in order to get all the way back to the valley floor. My proposed new element: If the 300 (or whatever number) of permits is already taken (by day hikers or backpackers), an additional 50-100 (or whatever makes sense) could then be allocated to backpackers if they agree to start the ascent early in the morning or later in the day. This allows those backpackers who plan early to get a "regular" permit and they can climb half dome whenever they want, but if the permits are all gone, additional time-of-day permits could allow those willing to get an early start or start later in the day to still experience the top.						

Comments:

Correspondence ID:	118	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	Y
Received:	Jan_30_2012 12:11:01						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Topic Question 2: "Remove cables" alternative *increases* likelihood of accidents and will NOT improve safety. There are too many people out there who will attempt the backside of Half Dome even if cables are not present, whether they have rock climbing experience or not. This alternative would lead to people thinking they could simply "free-climb" the backside. Yes, the total number of people hiking the trail would be reduced, but fatal accidents would increase. If changes are being made in part due to safety issues, removing the cables would have the exact opposite effect.						

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 119 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 12:13:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I would charge a little more for the permits and use those funds to add 1 extra cable to the dome. One side for ascending and one for descending this would cut down on a lot of the traffic and time it takes to reach the top and reduce the risk of people bumping into each other and potentially tripping someone. The extra cable would also decrease the time it takes to get off the dome should a storm move in to quickly. And obviously once the cable is in place reduce the permit fee back to were it is currently.

Topic Question 6: My self and a group of friends visit the park at least 3 to 4 times a year. We take different trails depending on the group that attends the trip. Our age group ranges from late 50s to 9 years old, Yosemite is a great place for family bonding and great adventure. I believe if the parks start restricting or blocking off trails because some people are not careful enough or have enough respect for nature and end up dyeing in the process we might as well stop selling cars, close amusement parks. People are dumb in general we do things that can kill us every day but that's the great part about life we have the choice to sit home or enjoy the outdoors and come what may. It is not the parks fault if someone does not mind the rules or the warnings, And gets too close to the edge it's that persons fault and no one else.

Comments: Restricting the number of people climbing Half dome to 400 a day is a reasonable number. I think a time stamp should also be added to the permit so as not to have all 400 people on the dome at the same time each permit holder should have at least a half an hour time limit on the dome its self.

Correspondence ID: 120 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 12:13:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Limiting the number of people to Half Dome is fine--300 to 400 a day. But please don't take the cables down. I had the pleasure of going up to the top in the early 1990's (way less people) it is still one of the highlights of my life. I plan on taking my Daughter and a group of girls up there someday. Most of us will never climb Everest or any mountain close to it. Half Dome is the closest thing we have to that feeling of WOW. I've always appreciated how much YNP has taken in public oppinion for all their projects over the years. Thank you for that.

Topic Question 6: I tend to visit every year in the Spring--to avoid crowds. I've taken the YARTS bus and carpooled. I generally take people that have never been--and they usually come away transformed and a big supporter of our National Parks--and hopefully vote in favor.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 121 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 12:24:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I did not see addressed in the plan the issue about the folks who obtain a Half Dome access ticket by coming in using a Wilderness Permit from a different part of the park. That is how I was able to climb Half Dome this past summer. The direct route from Happy Isles was filled in early June for the duration of the year.

Would hikers from other parts of the park still be able to get around the lottery associated with the single day climbers from the Valley?

Topic Question 2: I believe Alternative C or D would be appropriate. There is no point in having a park if there is no one able to enjoy it. By the same token, overuse will destroy the beauty. I remember the fire falls when I was a kid... I would think 200-300 a day, spread across the day, plus hikers coming in from other parts of the park, would be okay.

Topic Question 3: Maybe alternative D+ = 200 a day plus any hikers coming in from other parts of the park not restricted by the one day lottery. I have to believe studies have been done which is why you came up with 300 or 140 a day. I have no data to support 200 a day, but while 400 seems high, and maybe 300 is high as well, maybe 200 plus Wilderness Permit holders would still help to further alleviate the traffic.

Topic Question 5: I'll just reiterate that the best way to maintain the beauty of a wilderness area is to have no human impact. But then no one gets to enjoy the beauty of the park. There needs to be a happy medium. After all, if both sides are equally not happy that usually means a true mid point has been reached.

Topic Question 6: This past summer 2011 was my first hike/climb up Half Dome. I was unable to find online any of the 400 daily lottery "Golden Tickets" available, as my buddy and I referred to them, in June when I tried to see if there were ANY dates left in the year. There weren't any through the take down on the cables in October. My buddy and I were able to get tickets along with our Wilderness Permits for spending five days and four nights in the park backcountry. For many people, this is the only way to gain access to Half Dome. And for many folks trying to make a 17 mile round trip hike to the top of Half Dome in one

day is a true stretch, kind of like climbing/hiking to the top of Mt Whitney in one day, though that's about four miles longer...

Restricting further the number of people making the hike up Half Dome is smart and the right thing to do for safety reasons if nothing else. If you take down the cables it will absolutely restrict access, but will also open the climb up to idiots who think they can make it without proper rock climbing skills.

Restricting to 200-300 plus Wilderness Permit holders seems more realistic, at least until the park figures out a way to help alleviate the auto traffic gridlock on the valley floor. That's a way bigger issue than camping in the valley or climbing Half Dome.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 122 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 12:31:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The permit process as currently instituted seems to have the same flaws as the previous Grand Canyon River Permit system. That is, it seemed many people would reserve a spot but not pick up the ticket thereby taking up permit space from those who would otherwise actually use the tickets.

Topic Question 3: If one was required to pick up the ticket the night before, or pay a much higher fee (that was refundable upon picking up the ticket the day of) there would be some prevention for the problem of overbooking and under-utilization.

Another thing that ought to be contemplated is withholding a large portion of tickets for people to access on a first come first serve basis.

Topic Question 6: I use the park as a climber mostly. As such a removal of the cables would not seriously effect my enjoyment of the halfdome hike or climb to the summit. However, for the vast majority of people who either do not have the skill or experience, the money for the gear, or the money for a guide, their use would be effected. It seems to me to be unfair to the non-climbing public as there are few other peaks in the park that are accessible to them, and none as fantastic as Half Dome. I regularly do the hike up the Mist Trail to the summit with friends or family and total removal of the cables would make such an effort more difficult.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 123 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 12:53:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I visit Yosemite 2-3 times a year. Usually Tuolumne Meadows for a short visit after the Mono Lake Chautauqua (if the pass is open). I also visit the Valley in winter or spring as it is more enjoyable then, to hike and birdwatch. I am unlikely to climb Half Dome again, though will probably explore other peaks. Some winters I come to the park to cross-country ski. Usually I stay with friends or camp, outside the park.

Comments: I support alternatives B and C for Half Dome. Climbing Half Dome is a spectacular way that many people have experienced the park. And yes, some have challenged themselves more than expected, though continuing education given with the permit may help with that.

I've climbed it only once myself (in the 1980's) and was almost too afraid to continue, finding it scarier than other peaks I've climbed (20+ of Colorado's 14'ers, the Grand Teton, Shasta, and many 3rd and 4th class routes on Sierra Nevada peaks), due solely to the crowd: standing there, barely moving, with time to reflect, was mentally hard (the mind over matter part of climbing).

With a less crowded situation, able to keep moving at one's preferred pace, would make it easier and safer to do the ascent, as well as providing a more enjoyable outing. It should also enhance the experience for everyone. The ascent may not be a true wilderness experience but it will allow people to enjoy the natural environment more, especially as they hike up to the base of the cables with fewer crowds.

This iconic climb may also contribute towards people becoming impassioned supporters of Yosemite and of the national park idea.

Correspondence ID: 124 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 13:43:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Please see comments below.

Topic Question 2: Please see comments below.

Topic Question 3: Please see comments below.

Comments: Thank you for soliciting comments.

As further explained below, I believe (1) 300 hikers per day is too restrictive and (2) a third cable should be added, alongside the other two.

By adding a third cable, there could be an "up" lane and a "down" lane, with the two lanes sharing the middle cable. Separate up and down lanes would greatly improve safety, and would permit usage to be doubled from what it would otherwise be without compromising safety.

Limiting usage to only 300 or 400 hikers per day strikes me as far too restrictive. Half Dome is one of the iconic hikes in the world. We should encourage people to use and enjoy this hike, within the limits of safety.

I live in Texas and have done the Half Dome hike one time, in the summer of 2010. I was able to do it on a weekday, when no permit was required. If usage is limited to only 300 hikers per day, or any similar number, I expect I will never have the opportunity to hike it again. Permits will be too difficult to obtain.

Yes, greater usage means more people on the trail, and thus less opportunity for a solitary experience. But that needs to be weighed against the desires of many people to do this hike. There are plenty of other hikes in Yosemite and elsewhere that offer seclusion.

While greater usage may increase erosion somewhat, it is difficult for me to believe that such an increase on one small part of a vast national park, which itself is one small part of a vast American west, should be given such significance.

The park belongs to the American people, not merely to those who have the privilege of being its temporary stewards -- many of whom may balance these objectives much differently than the rest of us do.

People are part of nature too. Let us enjoy it.

Thank you for considering my views.

Correspondence ID: 125 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan_30,2012 14:31:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I learned of the Half Dome proposals from a former student of mine in my Geology of the National Parks and Monuments class at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI.

When I read the new proposals I was appalled that there is any consideration of taking down the cables on Half Dome thus making it attainable for only experienced climbers!!

I have twice done the Half Dome summit hike and must say it is one of the most memorable days in a park anywhere!! There is nothing else like it.

Yes, it was crowded last time I was there, 2005, but so what, it is our National Park, not just a private destination for a select few.

If the cables come down then overly concerned do gooders win another round in restricting access for the people.

My suggestion is continue to keep the cables up.

A reasonable permit system can be devised that will allow permits for small groups, permits that can not be scalped or traded!!

Plan B 400/permits/day sounds reasonable and one that can be enforced.

Please feel free to contact me.

Correspondence ID: 126 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,30,2012 14:32:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments:

January 30, 2012

Superintendent Yosemite National Park Attn: Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

Re: Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan EA

Our Center has reviewed the Park's proposal for management of visitor use of the Half Dome trail that is located in the Yosemite Wilderness. While we understand the desire of Park staff to continue to allow access to as many visitors as possible, our Center believes that maintenance of the cable system is fundamentally in conflict with the Wilderness Act and should be discontinued if a strict legal interpretation of the Act is adhered to by the Park. Given this position, Alternative "E" would be the preferred alternative to preserve wilderness values. Even though the cables are an historic use and provide extremely popular opportunities for visitors to reach the summit of Half Dome, the cables appear to be in conflict with the intent and specific mandates of the Wilderness Act.

It is important to clarify the intent of the Wilderness Act as it pertains to both manmade improvements within wilderness and how the cables act as an attractant such that recreation is concentrated around the base and at the top of Half Dome.

The federal Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 spells out in Sec. 2 (c) that a wilderness is recognized as "an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) general appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?"

Two key provisions apply to the cables and the concentrated recreational visitation to, up, and above the cables. The first wilderness requirement is that there are not to be permanent improvements and that the area is managed so as to preserve its natural conditions. Anyone standing near the base of the cables or watching a line of climbers ascending the cables would not attempt to claim that the "improvement" of the cables is natural. The cables are clearly an unnatural improvement. The Park Service actively manages the cables by erecting and maintaining them throughout the recreational season, year after year. If the current decision is to continue erecting the cables each year into the future, the cables would be a legally-defined permanent improvement.

The second conflict is even more obvious. A wilderness area is to be managed so that the imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable and that a visitor has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. As noted above, any wilderness visitor to the general area near the base of the cables will find the cables highly noticeable. Perhaps most importantly, the inducement of climbing the cables draws as many people to the cables each day as the Park chooses to allow (up to 1,200 in the past). When even 200 people a day arrive primarily in the mid-to-late morning or early afternoon to climb the cables and ascend/descend before late afternoon, the result is a concentration of visitors congregating around the cables. The Park Service in all honesty cannot make the claim that recreational use tied to the cables provides outstanding opportunities for solitude or recreation of a primitive type in the surrounding area. The very opposite is true. The cables draw concentrations of visitors to an improvement that allows them to ascend where the majority of the public would otherwise be unable to ascend.

It has been rationalized that because use of the cables was occurring prior to the Congressional designation of Yosemite's wilderness, the continued use of the cables was "grandfathered in" as an acceptable use consistent with Wilderness Act intent. The EA does not provide any evidence that Congress intended for the cables to be "grandfathered in" as a legally-consistent ongoing improvement deep within the Yosemite wilderness.

In terms of the California Wilderness Act, the EA acknowledges that the Act directs the Park Service to manage wilderness according to four qualities that are practical and measurable. The first is "untrammelled" ? free from modern human control or manipulation. The erection of cables and the seasonal removal of the cables is clearly human control of access up the steep slope. Thus, cables conflict with the untrammelled criteria.

A second conflict between the California Wilderness Act and the use of cables comes from the quality of an area being "natural." The cables with their railings are not in any way natural.

The third quality of wilderness is that an area is to be "undeveloped." The EA clearly acknowledges that the Wilderness Act determined that this quality is degraded by the presence of structures or installations. Who with the Park Service can argue that the cables are not an installation?

The fourth quality, which we previously referenced, is that a wilderness area is to provide solitude, or a primitive and

unconfined recreational opportunity. Because recreational visitors congregate at the cables, the management action to allow the cables conflicts with this criteria/quality.

For all of the above reasons, the cables and railings erected on the side of Half Dome throughout the recreational season and their attractive draw for climbers results in concentrated use in that area of the wilderness that is legally inconsistent with the federal and state Wilderness Acts. Thus, on a strictly legal basis, Alternative E is the appropriate choice.

However, given the Park staff's clear desire to maintain the cable access despite legal concerns, our Center provides the following suggestions for minimizing legal conflict with Wilderness Act direction. The less that people are concentrated and crowded in the midst of a legally established wilderness area, the more that wilderness values will be protected and a true wilderness experience will be possible. In order to lower the numbers of people who congregate over a few hour period daily during the season when the cables are up and accessible, the Park should adopt a management plan that truly minimizes crowding and the number of those ascending the cables during peak use hours.

Accordingly, we advocate for a more significant reduction in visitor use than the 300 visitors per day that is recommended in the Park's Preferred Alternative "C". We recommend that the Park adopt Alternative "D", which would allow 140 visitors per day, would result in far less crowding, better protect natural resources, and provide more of a "wilderness" experience for those visiting Half Dome. We provide more detailed comments on the Environmental Assessment of these Alternative management strategies in the comments below.

Visitor Crowding and Safety Under the Park's preferred Alternative "C", 300 visitors per day would be issued permits to access the Half Dome trail. This is an improvement from the current 400 per day that is allowed, and certainly much preferable to the unacceptable conditions prior to the permit system being implemented. However, this Alternative does not truly reduce the levels of crowding to what the majority of visitors would prefer to enjoy in a Wilderness setting or what may be deemed to be legal consistency with managing for a Wilderness experience. The 2008 Half Dome Study found that the majority of respondents would prefer to see no more than 10-30 people at one time (PAOT) on the Half Dome cables. Instead of using this number as the maximum desired condition, the Park uses it as an average to come up with the 300 person maximum limit. Under this scenario, according to Table 2-1, the maximum PAOT on the cables would be 36 people during the week, with up to 41 on weekends, with an average of 15-19 PAOT. With 41 people on the cables at one time, that is still roughly one person every 10 feet of cable. This would exceed what is considered a desirable level of crowding for visitors that were surveyed.

If the Park instead chose to implement Alternative "D", the desired condition of 30 PAOT on the cables as the maximum acceptable would be achieved. As shown on Table 2-1, this scenario would result in a maximum of 30 PAOT on the cables on a weekend day, with an average ranging between 6-11 PAOT, thus resulting in conditions that are acceptable to the majority of those surveyed. Rather than propose a compromise from what is currently being implemented, we urge the Park to utilize the statistical data that was compiled to inform a plan that reduces the crowded and unsafe conditions on the Half Dome cables by implementing Alternative "D".

In addition to crowding on the Half Dome cables, the Park has estimated the average encounter rate on trails to determine crowding levels. Under the Preferred Alternative "C", which would allow 300 people per day on the trail, the average encounter rate would be 16 groups per hour (approximately 1 group per 3.7 minutes). Under Alternative "D", this encounter rate would be reduced by half, to roughly 8 groups per hour (1 group per 7.8 minutes), resulting in a much less crowded wilderness experience on the trail. This difference is highly important for a number of reasons tied to wilderness management. It is one thing to be running into a new group of hikers every four minutes when you are at a portal area in close proximity to the wilderness boundary. But as federal land managers have consistently determined in wilderness plans, the further into the wilderness one travels, the fewer the encounters should occur. Thus, the Preferred Alternative's encounter rate of 16 groups per hour on the trail is not only inconsistent with any condition of being in a wild area, but it is inconsistent with wilderness management principles of having low encounter rates when well within a designated Wilderness area.

Table 3-2 shows the estimated "mass descent times on the cables" in the event of an emergency or incoming storm. Under Alternative "C", the descent time is estimated at 47 minutes, which would still be a significant amount of time to return hikers and emergency personnel to safe ground. Although the Park does not provide an estimate for evacuation under Alternative "D", it can be assumed that evacuating a maximum of 30 PAOT would be much more manageable than the worst case scenario under Alternative "C" where up to 41 PAOT would need to be assisted at one time.

Commercial Use Our Center recommends that whichever maximum visitor level is ultimately selected, individuals summiting Half Dome via a commercial permit be counted towards the total permits issued. For example, if 300 is the maximum limit, this should include all the general public plus those included in commercial groups.

We support the proposal that potential clients first secure permits using the same system as the public prior to signing up with the commercial guide service. This would be the equitable approach so that Half Dome access is provided first and foremost as a benefit to the general public. While our Center is supportive of the maximum user limits proposed under Alternative "D", we are not opposed to allowing some commercial use of the trail provided that it provides the educational component currently required of such outfitters.

Natural Resources As noted in the EA, the current permit program has resulted in improved resource conditions and, over time, will likely result in further reductions in negative impacts to vegetation and to wildlife. While the Park asserts that any of the Alternatives that reduce current visitor use will improve conditions, it is clear that (in lieu of removing the cables - as proposed

in Alternative "E") Alternative "D" best protects these resources by reducing the numbers of hikers to a manageable level. We disagree that the impacts can be represented as the same regardless of whether Alternative B, C, or D is implemented. Allowing 300 or 400 visitors would undoubtedly result in greater vegetation being trampled, more human waste, and far greater levels of wildlife-human habituation than reducing the visitor limit to 140.

The EA appears to underplay the potential negative impacts to the population of Mount Lyell Salamander that is known to be present on the top of Half Dome and the vicinity of the trail. While the salamander may be nocturnal and "live in areas not frequented by day hikers", its dispersal and movement may be affected by high numbers of hikers who tend to explore all areas of the summit. While the EA states that the salamander is not at risk from hikers, the past disturbance of rock piles and high visitor use on the summit have been tied to the reduction in the salamander population. Because Park rangers cannot regulate where people choose to explore on the summit, the Park should assume that there continues to be at least some degree of threat to this isolated population of salamanders. Accordingly, the Park should take measures to reduce this threat. In addition to our recommendation of the 140 person per day visitor limit that would be proposed under Alternative "D", we urge the Park to educate the public, patrol the summit, or take other measures to ensure that salamander habitat is not disturbed and that individual salamanders are not harmed through ignorance or avoidable actions.

Conclusion In summary, we respectfully point out that the Park has both a pledged responsibility and a legal mandate to manage wilderness areas with a high degree of resource protection and outstanding opportunities for quiet solitude. Given the crowding and unsafe conditions on the Half Dome trail that would continue to some degree if the preferred alternative was selected, it is clear that a significant reduction in the number of hikers on the trail and cables is necessary to achieve wilderness management objectives. As noted at the beginning of these comments, the complete removal of the cable system would return the wilderness area and trails leading to Half Dome to a more pristine condition that would be most in keeping with the intention and legal direction of the Wilderness Act. Given the Park planning staff's preference to continue to seasonally put up the cables and continue to allow significant Half Dome access to the general public, our Center thus recommends Alternative "D", which limits access to 140 people per day.

We note in closing that the Park Service clearly walks a difficult path as it attempts to please a wide range of often opposing interests and also attempts to meet (to the extent feasible) the huge demand for recreation in the Park. But as we believe is true in other important upcoming management plan decisions in Yosemite, there are legal mandates that place Wilderness Act direction or Wild and Scenic River Act direction as a clear priority. It is highly likely that the Park will find itself in court in a drawn-out battle over whether or not cables are even legitimate for use in a wilderness area unless the Park chooses to markedly limit human crowding and resource impacts due to Half Dome visits. CSERC strongly urges the Park to either adopt Alternative D or restrict recreational use even further in order to protect wilderness values and resources.

Thank you for considering these comments



Correspondence ID: 127 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 14:48:59
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: See comment section below. Not sure how to answer this.

Topic Question 2: I have been bringing a group of between 25-30 women to hike the Half Dome trail since 2006. The first 3 years we hiked on a Friday but due to congested cables, in 2009, 2010 and 2011, we hiked on a Thursday. Last year, we obtained permits to hike on Thursday, September 15th. Obtaining permits made a lot of difference. I do not understand why you would begin using a lottery system when the new system worked just fine. Last year, the cable congestion had declined and it was much safer to climb.

Topic Question 3: Using a lottery system where one team leader can get permits for only six people totally reduces the option of me bringing my group. I do not have a new plan element, I just seeing it getting more and more complicated to hike this trail.

Is it possible to offer Half Dome permits to those who make reservations ahead of time? Give those people who have to make reservations months ahead of time the opportunity to obtain permits on the date they will be staying.

Comments: One of my biggest problems I encountered last year is this . . . every year in January I MUST reserve 6-7 rooms for September. I had to wait until June to obtain permits and luckily I got the number of permits I needed for the date I had already gotten rooms for. If I had NOT gotten permits for the dates I had already made reservations for, we would have canceled our entire trip. But, if I had waited to get rooms until after I obtained permits, there would have been NO rooms left to reserve. Do you understand the problem? It's beginning to get frustrating and I think as much as I LOVE bringing a group there, we may have to go somewhere else in the coming years because of this difficulty.

I do understand the problem though and I appreciate the fact that you are trying to do something to make the cables safe.

Last year, only half of our group hike the Half Dome trail. The other half hiked Cloud's Rest. And, this year, depending upon whether we get lottery permits or not, will hike Cloud's Rest or Upper Yosemite Falls.

I so enjoy bringing my group there. Such a wonder 4 days we spend there. I only hope we will continue to be able to visit this beautiful treasure.

Correspondence ID: 128 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 16:34:59
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: While I understand the need to alleviate congestion on the cables, my concern about limiting the number of permits to 300 or 400 is twofold... 1) If there has been as many as 1200 a day (which is crazy, why do we need to cut that number by more than half? I would think 600 is still a reasonable number to limit it to. 2) With a limit as small as 300 - 400 per day, you are opening up a secondary market for these permits, where ticket brokers will snatch up all the permits and begin to sell them at a profit. We saw some of this in the past year but it will only get worse. Then you are unintentionally making this life changing experience limited to those with significant financial means.

Yosemite National Park is my favorite place on earth. I have made the Half Dome hike twice, and plan to make it at least 20 more times. I hope to pass the love of this hike on to my children and grandchildren but I will not be able to if it becomes too exclusive or too difficult to plan.

Correspondence ID: 129 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: 01/25/2012 06:44 To AM yose_web_manager@nps.gov cc Subject From NPS.gov: HALF DOME, EL CAP & HIGH CAMP

Email submitted from: [REDACTED] /yose/contacts.htm

Today's SF Chronicle reports that you are considering reducing the number of people allowed on Half Dome/Tissiak. I applaud this move. Article says you are accepting comments. My comment is that NPS consider removing cables altogether (with Sierra Club, which put them up). People can be directed to safer and higher Cloud's Rest in season, via Tioga Road trailhead. Skilled climbers would still be able to attempt H D./Tissiak, with permit. H.D./Tissiak cables are a hold over from an earlier era that included the firefall and Glacier Point Hotel, both of which I remember, and both of which were removed. Reducing humans on H.D./Tissiak might also be a goodwill gesture to Native American community, and a prod to Australian gov't to consider the same at Ayers rock/Uluru. People should consider walking around things instead of climbing them sometimes, as Hindus and Buddhists do with Mt. Kalas, one of the few never climbed. I do something similar as a volunteer on Angel Island State Park in SF Bay. I would also like to repeat my earlier request that you consider lottery permit type system for El Cap, if you have not already done so, to reduce human impact, especially the issue of human waste being thrown down by climbers. Further, I would like to repeat my even earlier request that a composting toilet be installed at Merced Lake High Camp, if that has not already been done, at a new location, farther away from the river. Moreover, the same thing should also be considered for Glen Aulin High Camp. The composting toilet I have in mind is like the ones already in place at Little Yosemite Valley and Sunrise High Camp. Actually, if cables are H.D/Tissiak are ever removed, composting toilet at L.Y.V. could perhaps be moved to one of the locations I have suggested. NMW

Correspondence ID: 130 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,30,2012 18:48:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: none

Topic Question 2: I'm thinking that limits on numbers who can go up the cables will put an undue burden on the park service and my also be grounds to give greater culpability to the NPS - should hikers engage in dangerous behavior outside what a reasonable person might.

Topic Question 4: none

Topic Question 5: this area's path may be impacted, but does not harm other areas of the park

Topic Question 6: everytime I go to yosemite the highlight of my trip is climbing Half Dome

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 131 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,30,2012 19:16:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I am sure that Alternative E is not seriously being considered, however that is what I would prefer. I have been to the summit of halfdome several times. I understand fully that public access is a major goal and mandate for the NPS, however I do not feel that those cables are in the spirit of the Wilderness Act of 1964. If the cables were not already in place, I doubt they would have ever been approved, and I do not feel that we should be spending public money to maintain something that flies in the face of this law. If park visitors need ways to prove themselves there are many many ways in Yosemite, included climbing halfdome sans cables.

Topic Question 3: Again I personally prefer removing the cables altogether, barring this, I prefer the most limiting of visitor impact on the trail, and least expenditure of funds to maintain the cables.

Topic Question 4: Ok, the Wilderness Act deA wilderness is defined as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined as an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character, without permanent improvements or human habitation. I know there are exemptions but I believe the entire existence of the cables and the culture that surrounds hundreds of people wanting to climb the cables is against this definition.

Topic Question 6: Admittedly, I am a rock climber and could still access the top of that rock. I also feel there are many grander stones in Yosemite that dont have this cable problem. However I also do not like many other conditions in the park that are a direct consequence of visitor demands. This is a case where 'we' could do something, and people will have forgetting the cables in a much shorter time than is probably expected.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 132 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,30,2012 22:29:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: The main purpose of a National Park is to provide an wilderness experience to the public. I agree that degradations of the environment needs to be addressed. However the public should still be allowed maximum access. The wide and eroded trails are created during the spring wet conditions when the soil is muddy. There should probably be some encouragement for hikers to stay on the main trail during those conditions or limit access during that time.

The focus seems to be on a daily limit. Another approach would be to create a more even flow of hikers up the cables. Hikers who camp at Little Yosemite Valley could be encouraged to leave early. Others, especially those in decent shape could be encouraged to leave later in the day from the Valley. I have started descending from the top as late as 5:00 pm and have made it to the Valley with plenty of time to spare. This is one of those things that could not be implemented with precision due to all of the variables; but a general approach would allow more people access with less congestion.

Historically, my favorite overnite campsite was the top of Half Dome. To me, if campers were required to haul out their bodily waste, similar to Mt. Whitney, camping on the top of Half Dome could be restored. I have camped overnite when there were more than 125 people camping at night on the weekend without problem (other than the bodily waste problem). During the week, the most I encounterd were 3 or 4 people. A total ban is unnecessarily restricting the public from enjoyment of the setting.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 133 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,30,2012 22:36:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: The [REDACTED] School uses Yosemite National Park for our multi-day camping trips. Please see my comments below.

Comments: My name is [REDACTED] and I'm the founding headmaster of [REDACTED] School, which began in 1981. Personally, I first climbed Half Dome in 1958 with my brother, father, uncle, and grandfather. Hardly anyone was on the trail that day, and it was one of the most memorable days of my life. I was 11 years old. I continued to climb it, taking my future wife there in 1968. Again, hardly anyone was there. Suzie and I still remember a comment made that day on the summit by a young boy to his father: "Dad, we're closer to heaven now!" When I became an elementary school teacher, I led my 5th grade class to the top in 1972. Then when I helped start a new, private school in 1981, I began to lead our secondary students on trips to the top of Half Dome. Between 1982 and 2002, [REDACTED] school climbed Half Dome nine (9) times! As the years went by, however, it got more crowded. In 2002, I made the decision that it was no longer safe for our group to do what we had done for years. We now have alternate hikes, including Clouds Rest.

I am writing this letter to the Park Service to advocate for keeping the historic cables in place for future generations to have the possibility of getting to the top. I do support a quota system during peak periods. Last summer a small group of our Class of 2011, on their own did what I wouldn't allow their generation of [REDACTED] students to do. Right after graduation, four of them traveled to Yosemite and did the hike in a day. They called me on their cell phone so excited to share that they had made it. The quota system worked for them. Even if you have to tighten up the quota system, please let a safe number of hikers have the exceptional experience so many people have enjoyed. I know the Fire Fall had to go, but please keep the cables there for generations to come.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 134 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,31,2012 00:34:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Topic Question 1: There was so much information I have to take a time out so I can go back and find the incomplete information. Will all the plans allow permit holders for Happy Isles to Little Yosemite access to Half Dome Summit? Will permit holders (advance permits) still be allowed their summit pass when they get their permit months in advance?

Topic Question 2: Plan A will not work. To much impact and it really can effect safety.I have never been on the cables with more than 20 people but plan A is a free for all and it allows for one that wants to go to Yosemite for solitude, to be in the middle of rush hour in LA.

Topic Question 3: I like plan D and though plan E really suggests complete protection it would be selfish for me to want plan E. Plan E takes away that hike/climb many take to find peace. It could be a family's annual trip. Possibly someone lost a loved one and wanted to go to a place where they have gone as a child to think but do not obtain the skills or equipment to climb the Dome without cables. My offer of a new plan would be to allow plan C from May until the third week of August. The last week of August up until the second week of October the cables come down and only climbers with their own gear and a wilderness permit can climb Half Dome. Also, though I have never done the mule trip to Merced Lake them mules tear up that trail and crap all over the place. I'm sure they have been doing their thing there for years but they also impact that trail just as much if not more than 1200 people a day.

Topic Question 4: The NPS has the right to protect the park I'm very grateful you allow the public to comment.

Topic Question 5: There is no doubt the amount of people going to Half Dome via the Muir trail, cause many environmental consequences. I see rocks that have been spray painted on the way to Vernal falls, I see people from all over the world disrespect this great place. I come here so much I have seen it all. I have seen tour buss folks bathing in Mirror lake and just letting baby diapers float down river.I have been on top of Half Dome when it had Jeffery Pines. It amazes me people think green wood will burn especially at high altitude. Plan A will destroy the fun, solitude, and pleasure of the experience to even suggest it is a high deficiency.

Topic Question 6: I have been adjusting with changes for years and plan C or D would not effect my use. I think the reservation system that is currently in place needs to stay in place. (No Lottery) Getting an advance permit from Happy Isles to Little Yosemite should allow one to also summit to the top of Half Dome. Plan E will effect the use for many but if protecting the park is the main goal then plan D with a lottery system for Half Dome use among wilderness permit holders will need to happen. If protection is the goal plan D is the way to go. 300 people a day is still to many and I want to do the Dome every year until I'm 80 and I'm saying this. I met a 79 year old woman on the cables years ago and she inspired me. I met her at 2pm on the cables. She had lots of flashlights. Plan C is fair to the public and world but if protecting is the goal why not allow 45 days of the year to go to only people with gear and knowledge. Also make it very clear that anyone attempting to climb Half Dome without gear will do so on their own choice and it can result in death.

Comments: With whatever changes happen enforcement will need to be a key issue. This needs to be implemented into the budget and Half Dome fees if need be. I also would like to find a way to get cell phones to link up to rangers in all parts of heavy impact. People that spray paint rocks or destroy this park need to be held accountable. We need to be able to make a call and help the NPS get these people when we see them. Even a sign with a 1000\$ reward and a phone number to call would be a great thing. Can I just take these folks down and hold em on my own till a ranger gets to me?? There needs to be a system for these folks that want to deface and destroy this beautiful place. Education needs to somehow get to some people especially regarding water. I see so many people coming up to Half Dome when I'm coming down that have not had water since Vernal Falls. They don't even have an empty bottle of water that I can fill. Dehydration and lack of common sense go hand in hand on that hike from Happy Isles to the top of the Dome. These folks would have a much better experience if they were told to pack a water filter or at least 64 oz of water. I know it's somewhere in the flier they get when they get to Yosemite but it needs to be printed on their permits in bright letters so they get it! I have filtered and given hundreds water over the past 20 years.

Correspondence ID: 135 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,31,2012 08:27:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Topic Question 2: Our National Parks were originally created to preserve the beauty of nature for us to enjoy. That enjoyment means a responsible interaction by visitors. To severly limit that interaction (Alternate E) is relegating all visitors to the status of immature children. The ascent to Half Dome is (in my opinion) the most popular activity for outdoor enthusiasts at Yosemite. This is as much a part of the Yosemite experience for my family as viewing a waterfall. To remove the ability to choose this experience would be to defeat the original purpose of the NPS system. So too, would be unlimited access (Alternative A) which creates unsafe conditions during peak visitor months. A middle ground must be reached to accommodate those who wish to enjoy this unique example of nature. Limitations through the reservation system for Half Dome have been challenging but necessary for safety. Having experienced huge crowds and controlled crowds up Half Dome I agree with Alternative C as the best plan. It is middle-ground and reasonable. Help exercise restraint, but do not close the door completely.

Comments: Yosemite National Park is in my opinion, an example fo the Hand of God in the creation of this planet. It is the crown jewel in the State of California. Unfortunately as such, it has the propensity to attract both the irresponsible as well as the responsible. At times, regulations must be established to protect people from themselves (a sad state indeed for humanity, but necessary none-the-less).

I wanted to thank the NPS for the exceptional work done to keep this particular park open for the public. It is a significant challenge to maintain access to the beauty of Yosemite for ALL types of visitors. And to preserve the beauty of nature while combatting the destructive tendency of the irresponsible. A difficult balancing act that has been accomplished admirably in my opinion, thus far. Thank you for your service and sacrifice that my children might experience the beauty of this earth and learn to responsibly care for it.

One more note. As a Scout Leader this has been especially significant. We have and are planning to bring our Scouts to Yosemite. It is an outdoor laboratory to experience conservation, service, and to develop a deep appreciation for nature and God's creations. A video or book does not come close to being there and the filling of all the senses with the beauty of nature. Especially as manifest in the startling creations found in Yosemite. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

- [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 136 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,31,2012 11:30:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I have hiked half dome several times before permits. I would go along with Alternatives B or C. Just like Mt. Whitney it keeps things accessible, organized, safe and still a good wilderness experience. The hardcore people can find some other rock more secluded to climb.

Correspondence ID: 137 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,31,2012 12:54:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I believe that if the cables were removed, people would still try to hike the trail and possibly be in more danger of serious injury. I have hiked the cable trail for years and hope the park officials chose to allow 400 per day, with stricter controls to keep scalpers from buying up permits for personal financial gain. I think the day before and early morning of in person purchases are the best alternative for 400 hikers per day. First come, first serve is a viable option.

Topic Question 6: I set up groups of friends each year to hike Half Dome and we usually have 10-14 hikers each year. We camp in sites or curry village, enjoy the park and get new folks to enjoy Yosemite each year. I believe that removing cables would be a disaster to how the park is enjoyed.

Comments: Love Yosemite, it's beauty, and how I use the park to entice folks to get out and exercise more. Let's keep the trails open.

Correspondence ID: 138 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,31,2012 14:20:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I have explored the park numerous times but have not wanted to "tackle" Half Dome due to the congestion of those willing to enjoy natural beauty as if in an amusement park. I encourage you to limit access to this wonder as without limitation most visitors are left wondering what much of the wonderment is all about.

[REDACTED]

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 139 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,31,2012 14:52:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Hello,

I have been bringing CLU students to half dome for a wilderness leadership development trip for 3 years. It is open to students from all walks of life and provides opportunities that most of these students would never experience. We do the trip in August and we were able to reserve a permit to hike when it was limited to 400. The first years we waited over an hour on the cables, but this past year was easy and safe. I would like to vote for the 400 permits a day.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 140 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,31,2012 15:57:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: None

Topic Question 2: Alternative A will guarantee growing concern over safety, and likely loss of life. Alternative E is simply unnecessary.

Alternatives B and C will work the best because they offer a reasonable balance between demand and safety.

However, the permitting process needs an overhaul.

Topic Question 3: Safety: If safety is the primary concern, then all hikers must attend a safety seminar before receiving their permits. Higher permit fees will pay for the seminar.

I have hiked to the top 16 times in the last 12 years, and I have seen too many novices who have no business trying to hike Half Dome. Many are out of shape, have the wrong shoes/clothes and have no idea how much water is needed. I feel badly for these poor souls who mistaken think that all hikes are easy. We are all forced to watch a video about bear safety and then sign a disclaimer; why not have the same requirement for those who want to take on Half Dome? Perhaps a video of a few "walking dead" hikers barely making it back to Curry would do the trick!

Permits The current permit process gaurantees that those with slow computers and slower computer skills will never get a permit; that's unfair. A lottery system is far more equitable. I'm unsure about the need to set aside permits for last minute hikers. I also don't now why Little Yosemite hikers should be given so many permits. I think that everyone should plan and prepare for this hike. I do think that members of the Sierra Club and/or Yosemite Conservancy or any other group that supports out National Parks should be given "priority seating", so to speak. A special allotment for members of these groups might just spur interest from the public to look into these groups and hopefully join them.

Topic Question 6: When a permit is issued for just 1 specific day, it could indirectly cause a hiker to make the trip even if conditions aren't optimal. If a hiker plans a trip to Yosemite well in advance dreaming of their hike to the top, the chances are that they will try to make it to the top even if its cloudy with a chance of rain. If the permit was for 2 days, the hiker could then postpone the hike for a day if rain is in the forecast.

Comments: I absolutely love Yosemite and all that it offers. I've been a regular for over 60 years and I don't plan to stop visiting anytime soon. Last word regarding permit fees: raise them! If a visit to Disneyland costs over \$100, why not \$25 for the hike of a lifetime? Thanks to everyone who is trying to make it an even a better place to visit.

Correspondence ID: 141 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,31,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: [REDACTED] 01/31/2012 12:40 PM To yose_web_manager@nps.gov cc Subject From NPS.gov: Half dome Permit

Email submitted from: [REDACTED].com at /yose/contacts.htm

Made to top of Half Dome twice. I've seen the traffic at the cable section. However, I do not think that the one-day hiking permit is right. Permit should be issued for single use in 3 or 5 consecutive days. If I take my family from East coast to Yosemite to hike Half Dome, and it turns out that my permit date has foul weather. This implies that we cannot make our high-lighted hike for our trip. However, if the permit is good for a single use within the 3to 5 days period, at least we would have a chance to hike. Another option is to have two rangers - one at the base and one at top of the cable section to control traffic. I have the same issue at Grand Canyon. Mt. Whitney, the Wave, These parks are established for people to enjoy. Otherwise, lock up the area and just show the movie!

Correspondence ID: 142 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Jan,31,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: [REDACTED] 01/29/2012 04:28 PM To yose_web_manager@nps.gov cc Subject From NPS.gov: Half Dome

Email submitted from: [REDACTED].com at /yose/contacts.htm

I have explored the park numerous times but have not wanted to "tackle" Half Dome due to the congestion of those willing to enjoy natural beauty as if in an amusement park. I encourage you to limit access to this wonder as without limitation most visitors are left wondering what much of the wonderment is all about. [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 143 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Jan,31,2012 22:08:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am 62 years old and have climbed Half Dome since I was 16, all told over 25 times. So I've seen it all over the years, and watched as the experience changed and evolved. I've climbed it with friends and family. What an fantastic experience even after all these years. I might add that I make the hike from Happy Isles in 7.5 hours every time.

I must say, and told every Ranger I saw last summer, that the new permit plan made the experience considerably more enjoyable. In fact, it was like it was back in the 80s and 90s. It was less crowded and incredibly safer. I said last year was going to be my last if it would have been like the previous two years. But it wasn't. So thank you for improving a rapidly deteriorating situation.

However, and I get the wilderness argument, to take down the cables would certainly eliminate this experience for someone my age and certainly many others as well. I personally like the compromise of 3-4 hundred daily permits. That was enough to restore the quality of the experience and hopefully lessen the impact on the environment.

I also liked the visible Ranger presence.

So thank you for restoring this great hike to what it used to be, but please don't go to extremes and eliminate it altogether.

Sincerely,

██████████

Correspondence ID:	144	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	Y
Received:	Feb,01,2012 08:50:06						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Topic Question 1: Will there be an age limit on the those who can apply for a permit via the lottery system?						

A lottery system needs to be well thought out, the details are incomplete.. My preferred is 200 people per day, 100 advance permits - 100 day before permits. Thus my lottery would be:

100 permits through advance permit with a group size max of 6 people. Advance permit would be made via a computer system that would make permits available up to 4 months in advance. If the demand is so high then do a month by month lottery:

Study this system carefully!!! <https://www.blm.gov/az/paria/index.cfm?usearea=CB>

With the month by month lottery three possible trip dates are possible.

100 permits via day before via a lottery. I.e. during the day people could put in their name with the number of permits desired (6 max) for the next day. At 6pm that evening the lottery is held and permits issued. Such a lottery reduces the need to be "first in line" and people can plan their activities accordingly. If permits are unclaimed by 8am the following morning first come first serve.

Topic Question 2: The preferred alternative of 300 people is still too many people to have an acceptable of wilderness experience. The number of encounters is too high to be satisfactory. The 30 person limit on a commercial use is too high. Wilderness limits on a group size of 12 should be followed whether a private or commercial group (including guides). For cables because of safety it should be limited to 6.

Topic Question 3: Alternative 200 people per day. Fewer encounters, better safety on the cables. Group size max would 6 (7 if using a guide)

No advance commercial permits - however, private parties with permits may hire a guide. A guide would not count in the totals. There can be an unlimited number of privately guided parties.

Those overnighing before hiking the cables would be subject to the permit system.

Topic Question 4: EA statement: "Finally, if through the ongoing monitoring of visitor use on the Half Dome Trail the NPS determines that this allocation system resulting in a use level far below 300 people per day as a result of no-shows, the NPS would consider taking action to adapt the permit allocation system so that actual use more closely approximates the daily use limit. One such action could be to sell additional permits, above the use limit number, to make up for an expected number of unused permits."

The above is a bad idea - never over sell the permits. Use the under utilization as a management tool to provide relief for an over utilization area.

Topic Question 6: I would never use the cables for ascent only descent as I am a technical rock climber. However, I value the

wilderness experience on the way out.

Comments: EA statement: "In order to provide equitable and fair access to Half Dome permits, commercial guides and outfitters would not be allowed to compete for Half Dome permits (either day-use or as part of an overnight wilderness permit) . Instead, potential clients would compete for permits using the same system as the general public. Once they have permits, they can utilize the services of the concessioner, a Special Use Permit or Commercial Use Authorization holder that is providing educational or scenic trips. Guides for approved trips will be issued a permit automatically."

The above is the single most progressive part of the the EA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Commercial outfitters should never have an advantage over private parties.

Correspondence ID: 145 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,01,2012 11:56:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I would like to offer my support to plan A.

Topic Question 6: I have only been on top of half dome once, roughly 10 years ago, and it was a very memorable experience. I understand that novices like myself pose challenges to the park service. Nevertheless, I feel that limiting access would result in more negative than positive outcomes. There has to be a better way than the permitting process.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 146 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,01,2012 12:12:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The permit limit of 400 a day is already causing problems. Scalpers snatch up all the permits and a black market has been created. This also means that a majority of the people who would like to climb Half Dome cannot obtain the permits. I am one of those. I climbed it last in 2010 when only weekend required permits. I could not obtain the weekend permit even 1 minute after they went on sale. Instead, I took a day off to climb on a Monday. Since many others also could not get permits they did the same. The conditions were very overcrowded and it took me 50 minutes to get up the cable portion. People were going up the outside because they were so frustrated.

Topic Question 3: I feel a third cable and no permits is the safest alternative. Since a third cable is not yet one of the proposed alternatives I have no choice but to beg for option A this year and hope for a third cable option next year.

Topic Question 6: I will not be able to obtain a permit through the current system due to scalpers so I will once again, not be able to climb Half Dome

Comments: To reiterate so my comments are continuous,

The permit limit of 400 a day is already causing problems. Scalpers snatch up all the permits and a black market has been created. This also means that a majority of the people who would like to climb Half Dome cannot obtain the permits. I am one of those. I climbed it last in 2010 when only weekend required permits. I could not obtain the weekend permit even 1 minute after they went on sale. Instead, I took a day off to climb on a Monday. Since many others also could not get permits they did the same. The conditions were very overcrowded and it took me 50 minutes to get up the cable portion. People were going up the outside because they were so frustrated.

I feel a third cable and no permits is the safest alternative. Since a third cable is not yet one of the proposed alternatives I have no choice but to beg for option A this year and hope for a third cable option next year.

I will not be able to obtain a permit through the current system due to scalpers so I will once again, not be able to climb Half Dome

Correspondence ID: 147 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,01,2012 12:16:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Dangers.

Two items.

1. Limit the number of people who can go up daily. Have time slots for the amount of people who can go up at one time.
2. RE-RIG the cables and make people clip in, in a safe fashion.

This will limit the number of deaths and also limit other peoples mistakes when they possibly fall into others and kill them also.

Correspondence ID: 148 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,01,2012 12:24:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Adding a 3rd cable would give access to everyone without limits to people. Limiting access would especially be hard on our international visitors.

Topic Question 3: Add a 3rd cable and have no limit to access.

Topic Question 6: I've visited Yosemite every year for the past 30 years to climb and hike. Limiting access to Half Dome would hurt that experience.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 149 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,01,2012 12:25:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The option to limit the Half Dome trail to only 300 per day is unreasonable. Climbing to the top of Half dome is an accomplishment I will not ever forget. Had the 300 per day rule been in effect, there is no way I would have been able to do it. My child will never know what it is to accomplish such a feat. Limiting the numbers would be like giving your child a new car, but saying they could only drive it in the driveway between 1am and 1:15AM....it makes NO sense.

Topic Question 3: Putting in a third cable would help get rid of the backups experienced at the bottom of the final climb.

Also, maybe charge a fee for the hike. \$20 per person would be enough to pay for improvements and help with and get around any bad environmental impact.

Topic Question 4: You are making a public park, which belongs to ALL taxpayers, private.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 150 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,01,2012 12:40:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: My recommendation is for Alternative A, not C.

Topic Question 2: The park has gone out of their way to make it safe and still folks see fit to climb over rails provided for their safety and not abiding by set rules. In spite of the limit of the number of hikers that will be imposed, people will continue to not follow rules and fall. Why not have unlimited access as long people stay on trails and use fire rings as provided?

Topic Question 3: Go with Alternative A due to reasons noted above.

Topic Question 4: Put should go up Half Dome at their own risk.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 151 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,01,2012 13:07:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The socioeconomic effects on the local county is not an effective scale to measure general public's reactions to the introduced quota system. Day hikers and campers planning to climb half dome seldom stay far from the half dome trailhead. Since 94% of the park visitors visit for 4 hours or less, number of vehicles entering the park is not an effective gauge either!

Topic Question 2: Alternative E (removal of the cables) is certainly not a worthwhile option. It would not make sense to close Yosemite valley because a large number of people are visiting it! Similarly, if overcrowding is a problem, more challenging trails need to be advertised by NPS to distribute the enthusiastic crowd. Closing out a very popular (foot) trail to a large section of public interested in outdoors seems contrary to the spirit that John Muir had towards nature!

Also reducing the number of permits makes it harder for people to effectively plan their trips (especially for folks traveling over long distances to hike the half dome).

Topic Question 3: Equally challenging trails need to be advertised by NPS on their website and park materials to distribute the

enthusiastic crowd.

Topic Question 4: Though marked as "wilderness" other national parks (Arches National Park, Oregon Caves etc.) have continued to maintain "human made" accessibility related changes since those changes were done to the park prior to the areas being marked as wilderness regions. Hence the wilderness argument does not justify the removal of cables on half dome (which were put up before the wilderness status on the trail).

Topic Question 5: The section on visitor experience does not cover the frustration experienced by hikers who do not get the permits they are seeking. If the park had 1200 hikers on half dome trail per day and the number is limited to 140 per day, NPS has definitely converted the visitor experience of the majority (of the original 1200 aspirants) to a non-visitor's experience!

Topic Question 6: Limiting the number of people on the half dome trail will reduce the number of visits by myself and fellow hikers, since we have had several visits to encourage first timers personally.

Comments: Anyone who has visited Yosemite before will confirm that hikers wanting to experience wilderness tend to stay away from the valley floor, the roads and from popular hikes such as half dome or other waterfalls. While these seekers of solitude can have the majority of Yosemite for themselves, hikers ambitious for the quest of half dome have nowhere else in the world to go!

The wilderness act specifically grandfathered in any object that was present at the site before the passage of the wilderness act. Hence the argument that the man made cables should be removed to comply with the wilderness act is incorrect. Other national parks, like Arches National Park and Oregon Caves, also have such grandfathered man made implements that they continue to maintain and use today.

NPS is free to set up a quota limit to control the number of people accessing the cables, but please be mindful that an overly restrictive policy can be counterproductive in the long run. NPS should also use this opportunity to change the fee collected for the pass to recover for the maintenance of the trail.

The very fact that half dome trail has the highest encounter rates in all of US wilderness areas is a testimony of its popularity! If NPS is interested in increasing the number of visitors to the park who stay for longer than 4 hours, then they need to keep such iconic trails open for general public (not just to specialized climbers). The park should also advertise (on their website and park printed materials) other equally challenging hikes in the park to encourage the constructive distribution of veteran hikers.

Correspondence ID: 152 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,01,2012 13:58:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alt C. It is a reasonable middle ground between different stake holders.

Topic Question 3: An addition is to have 50 daily pass given in morning, in person.

Topic Question 6: We visit in every few years, hiking, walking and driving around various places.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 153 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,01,2012 14:20:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The study incorrectly claims there is a need for change because the crowding ?adversely impacts wilderness character of the area by compromising visitor?s opportunities for solitude? (p. 1-2). The Half Dome hike is not an experience in solitude. Everyone knows that hundreds of people use the trail to Half Dome every day, either to get to the peak, the campsites or the waterfalls. Climbing the cables to the top of Half Dome is more about the view from the top and the challenge to get there. It is an out of the ordinary experience. If you want solitude there are over 700,000 acres in the park where you can find it. You won?t find solitude on the Half Dome trail or most of the other trails near the park center, like the one to the top of Yosemite Falls.

The study incorrectly claims there is a need for change because the ?high use levels on the trail adversely impact wilderness character due to adverse impacts to natural resources? (p. 1-2). It is true that the trail does change the landscape in its immediate vicinity. However, the inference is that decreasing the traffic on the trail will significantly change the impact on the wilderness area when the fact is that the trail?s footprint is so small that it is hardly noticed by the plants and animals living in the region. It is common to see deer, birds, snakes and other wildlife along the trail, as I did in 2008. And I know of no plants whose existence is threatened by the hikers.

The study incorrectly claims there is a need for change because the ?crowding has raised concerns about safety? (p. 1-2) on the cables. This concern does not seem to be shared by the people coming to Half Dome in ever increasing numbers. If the public had concerns then I believe the crowds would be decreasing, not increasing. Historically, the data doesn?t prove that the cables are any more dangerous than some of the other aspects of Yosemite. The study?s data is incomplete since it doesn?t compare the

source accidents in the park. An internet search seems to indicate that the Mercer River causes far more injuries and deaths than do the cables. Is the next move to close off the entire Mist Trail because someone plunged over Vernal Falls?

The study cites that visitors would be more comfortable with no more than 70 people at one time (POAT) on the cables (p. 1-4). This data is simply conjecture. It is doubtful that many of the people polled had any expertise on the operations of the cables. Most were probably like me, they had only experienced using the cables one time. How would they know what it is like during light, moderate and heavy traffic? Seventy POAT on the cables works out to be only one person every 5.7 feet, assuming 400 feet of cable. My experience was that a tighter spacing did not seem to bother anyone or limit their desire to make the ascent.

Topic Question 2: All the options that limit access to the park could bring on unintended consequences. The park system is funded by the American taxpayer. If the average American can't see or use the park, their desire to continue to foot the bill for their acquisition and operation will wane.

Topic Question 3: Adopt the unlimited access alternative.

Topic Question 4: During the National Park Service's testimony to congress in which they were requesting that the people of the United States designate Yosemite as a national wilderness, the NPS director said "The adoption of our wilderness recommendation for the park will not change the existing management, operation, or programs?" (Testimony of Russel Dickenson, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, June 18, 1981, page 292) (p. 1-1). This wilderness included the Half Dome trail. Limiting the use of this trail simply because it is enjoying a surge in popularity means that the testimony was false and misleading. The National Park Service should stick to its original promise and allow unlimited use of the trail to the peak of Half Dome.

Comments: I have read the January 2012 Environmental Assessment for the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and I have some comments. In chapter 1 it is stated that the purpose of this project is to; 1. Protect the wilderness character of the project area while providing the public with appropriate opportunities to reach the summit of Half Dome. 2. Improve the visitor experience on the Half Dome Trail by reducing crowding and limiting encounters among hikers. 3. Protect the area's natural and cultural resources. 4. Improve public safety by reducing crowding on the Half Dome Trail. I would like to address each of these points as they are reflected in the proposed plan's alternatives.

Plan alternatives B through E all require limiting access to the Half Dome Trail and will not provide the public with appropriate access to Half Dome. The study does not cite figures for how many people visited the trail at Half Dome's peak during the most visited years of 2008 and 2009. However, it does state that there are approximately 137 days when the cables are up (p. 3-31). Alternative B limits visitors to 400 per day while Alternative C allows 100 fewer. This equates to a difference of 13,700 people per year who will be denied the opportunity to experience one of the most dramatic vistas in America. I assume that adopting Alternative B over the unrestricted access of Alternative A would also exclude a similarly large number of visitors. To me, this is unacceptable. Why should I as a taxpayer be footing the bill for the maintenance of a park that I may not get to use or see? Though I live 3000 miles away in Maryland I have been to Yosemite three times and was able to visit the top of Half Dome on 17 July 2008. Even though the report labels 2008 as one of the trail's most congested, I found it to be extremely enjoyable and would love to go back. I did not see it as overcrowded. The wait at the base of the cables was minimal and just long enough for me to enjoy the sight of people climbing and to snap a few photographs.

Point 1 and 2 also speak of keeping a wilderness environment that is free of crowds. The definition of "wilderness" that is inferred in the report seems to mean that the presence of any human detracts from the surroundings. Mankind must not figure into the author's idea of a natural creature. If encountering others on the trail detracts from the experience then I would suggest that they try the Ostrander Lake Trail just a few miles away. Or maybe some of the other 750 miles of trails throughout the park would do. When we hiked out to Ostrander Lake I think we saw maybe six people the whole day. Solitude is not what you hike to the top of Half Dome for. Half Dome is for the thrill of the experience and the view. You will be sharing that experience.

Points 1 and 3 also talk about protecting the park. I concede that the area along the path will be trampled and the geography eroded from the foot traffic. However, the limits will only be imposed on two miles of trail and the trail affected area will probably be no more than 10 yards wide. This works out to be that just over 7 acres of the park's 768,000 acres are impacted by the hikers to Half Dome. To me, this seems like a small price to pay for the enjoyment of thousands of people who protect and support the entire park through their taxes.

The final point involves public safety. According to the report, over the last 42 years there have been fifteen significant injuries or fatalities on the cables of Half Dome. Three of these, or 20 percent, were after the permit system limited access in 2010, though one of these incidents happened when the cables were down. If you exclude the one incident in 1969 under unknown conditions and the three in 2006, 2007 and 2011 when the cables were down and the people involved would not have been helped by any of the proposed plans, this leaves just eleven incidents that the restrictions of alternatives B through E might have impacted. And this low number (just a little more than one every four years) may be exaggerated. According to news stories, the last fatality was in 2011 when a young woman climbed up the cables even though it was raining, which is against the posted guidelines and common sense. She slipped and fell on the way down. The report's Table 1-1 shows that seven of these eleven incidents occurred when the rocks were wet. Only four people slipped under dry conditions. I can easily imagine that many if not all of the seven incidents that occurred under wet conditions would not have been prevented by limiting the number of people climbing the cables. They would only have been prevented had the climbers used their brain.

When you first arrive at the bottom of the cables it is pretty clear that you are facing a significant effort. The rocks are worn and

smooth. The incline is steep. I do not believe that the poor judgment of a few should limit the freedom of thousands. I believe that even if you try to help the foolish by removing the cables, the truly foolish will still find a way to hurt themselves. The incident where three people crossed the safety railing and entered the river just above Vernal Falls, resulting in all three getting swept to their deaths, is a tragic case in point.

I am especially glad that my sons and I were able to enjoy the same scenery as witnessed by John Muir back in 1875, all with the aid of a couple of cables. Sometime in the future I hope to return to Half Dome, possibly with my grandchildren. Until then I hope that the U.S. National Park Service does not knuckle under to the selfish interests of a few, such as Wilderness Watch, and limit or close off access to our park.

Correspondence ID: 154 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,01,2012 16:34:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I think that limiting accessing to Half Dome using a Permit to restrict access to a single date or window of time forces people to take risk and hike Half Dome during unsafe condidtions.

Topic Question 2: In the past folks who stayed in or near Yosemite could assess the weather and ascend Half Dome when the conditions were safe. If weather moved in which is common then folks could wait out the weather for a better day later in their stay. The method of issuing a permit for a particular dday forces people to hike the trail at all costs. It cteates an attitude that if I do not do it today then I will not have another chance. So folks are more apt to risk the journey despite warnings otherwise.

Topic Question 3: Allow open access with a permitting system that can be managed amd tracked perhaps a GPS that

Topic Question 5: Accidents on Half Dome are primariaily due to weather issues not overcrowding. I support limiting access to cables on days when it is unsafe to climb the cables like during thunderstorms.

Topic Question 6: I love Yosemite and used to visit the Park yearly. The new method of resrvations allows scalpers to reserve and resell sites. Since the number of camp sites were reduced after flooding I find I visit other recreation areas like Lake Tahoe rather than Yosemite. I highly recommend that Yosemite and access to its beauty be open and fair accessed. With technology getting reservations and ensuring safety can work together. People who are abusing or being unsafe need to be cited. Barriers are well marked but need to be enforced and people fined with posting that indicate the fine e.g. \$1000 for crossing the barrier. Hiking Yosemite is one of the greatest moments of my life. Folks need to understand the inherent risks. I would not limit access to Half Dome instead allow folks to purchase permits that are good for their length of stay.

Comments: Keep our national resources open to the public and accessible. A move to restrict will also encourage the restriction of public funds to manage and act as steward of the resources.

If our citizens do not experience a place like Yosemite it is likely they will not value the costs associated with maintaining the park. Like the arts if a person doesn't expeirence and appreciate them then they will not want to support them with taxes or fees. Restructing access makes the park become a playground for the few rather than the public at large.

Correspondence ID: 155 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,01,2012 16:34:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I feel the current permit system is not working. Permits are limited and almost impossible to obtain other than through scalpers. Furthermore, once in possession of a permit, the rarity of that permit encourages hikers to push on and take unsafe risks, knowing that "this is their only chance." (1) Scrap the current permitting system for a lottery (similar to the high-Sierra camps) to make it more fare. (2) Make the permits good for period of time (2-5 days, for example) so bad weather doesn't nullify the person's chance to finish the ascent. (3) Station a park service employee at the base of the cables to prevent ascent during hazardous conditions. (4) Install a third cable so there can be separate ascent and descent paths. If these four steps are put into place, then alternatives B, C, and D are all practicable and will reduce environmental impact. Without these three steps, only alternative A and E are practicable and only E will reduce environmental impact.

Topic Question 6: My wife and I have hiked Half Dome during the last week of July every year for the last 6 years. We have not gained a permit for the last two years, so we've been content to stop at the saddle before the cables. The year prior to the permit system, we didn't take the cables due to overcrowding. The trail has gotten more crowded each year. So I understand that, if left unsupervised, Half Dome's popularity will result in increase environmental degradation and unsafe hiking conditions. However, the current permit system doesn't work and should be essentially scrapped. The system that would personally benefit me: a lottery system that grants for our party of two any one day within a 4-5 day window.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 156 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,01,2012 17:00:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: By limiting the number of permits to Half Dome & further reducing the permits to the proposed 300 you are denying access to Half Dome. I realize this is exactly what you intend to do, prevent the public from enjoying the outdoors.

This new permitting process directly affects me. Recently I returned from a trip on Mt. Whitney and as I drove home thru Yosemite I was disappointed that I couldn't just pull the car and hike Half Dome. The people who routinely use the parks are the people who appreciate all they have to offer and we can be your biggest supporters. It seems that the Park Service's plan is simply to deny access rather than to expand it. I don't see this as visionary plan but rather a stupid one.\

I suggest you abolish the permit system. However, if you keep it I recommend that you change the permits to allow them to be used during a two week period. Under the current system people are pressured to hike when the conditions are unsafe. If you allow them to have more flexibility as to the day they climb they can make better and safer hiking decisions.

Correspondence ID: 157 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,02,2012 05:35:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: So parks should only be used by the deserving few deemed to be worthy by George Nickas, executive director of Wilderness Watch. If you want to dry up support and funding for the National Park system this is one of the best ways to do it. The National park system was not created as an elitist group of so-called nature specialist playground. They would love to get rid of all the undeserving or at least pen them up in the smallest area possible.

My daughter and I climbed Half Dome together and I will always remember the time we were together their and hope she will also.

Correspondence ID: 158 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,02,2012 10:45:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I agree with option C (300 people per day) and disagree strongly with the option to remove the cables entirely. I had the privilege of hiking Half Dome and reaching the summit (via the cables) back in 2003. I distinctly recall both the fear of the challenge and the joy I felt at reaching the top with my friends, and of being able to survey the grandeur and beauty of the peaks all around me from that vantage point. As a hopeful future father, I'd love the opportunity to be able to take my children up the same path when they are old enough, and for them to be able to experience the same delight and wonder.

Please strongly consider retaining the cables, and simply restricting the number of passes available per day.

Thank you!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 159 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,02,2012 11:22:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: A third cable will eliminate the overcrowding on the cables. Plain and simple. Also, getting rid of the permits will not force hikers and to summit on days when the weather is inappropriate for climbing on the cables. By getting rid of the permits, hikers will be able to summit when the weather makes it safe.

Topic Question 3: Third cable makes perfect sense. Why not try it? If there are still problems, take down all three.

Topic Question 6: I have backpacked every year since 1969. I have summited Half Dome 6 times. The last time was Sept 2011 and the first time was Oct 1990 when the cables were down. I am 65 years old.

Comments: For a lot of people that climb Half Dome, it is a goal in their life of things to do. The so called "Bucket List". This goal encourages people to get in shape. It gives them a purpose to get in shape. Once achieving this goal, it gives them a lot of self-satisfaction and "fun bragging rights". It encourages people to get outside and enjoy some of the natural beauty of the world. I have been to the top of Half Dome 6 times and am amazed at how many foreign languages I hear. This is obviously a destination for tourist from all over the world. It is in guide books for things to do when visiting the United States. We need to put in another cable to make it less crowded going up and down. If there are still problems after a third cable is installed, then discuss taking them down. This is way too popular and beneficial to even be discussing limiting access with permits or talk of taking down the cables.

Thank you. [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 160 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,02,2012 12:31:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I like plan B or C. My family and I have been going to Yosemite at least once a year since 1985, and I do a couple of solo trips a year as well. I have climbed Half Dome twice and both times I felt uncomfortable on the cable section due to the number and skill level of the hikers around me. I would not feel comfortable taking my son up there the way things stand now, but 300-400 people a day would make things much safer.

Topic Question 6: Please make the registration for the hike easy and online. Also, please leave some percentage of the daily passes for people who just show up and want to hike the dome. Maybe 10% or something. People who are inspired to climb after seeing it, should be supported to some extent in the home of all inspiration.

Comments: Keep up the good work!!! YoSAR RULES!!!

Correspondence ID: 161 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,02,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Could you please provide access to the following documents referenced in the plan:

Lawson, Steve and Kiser, Brett 2010 Memorandum. Half Dome Visitor Use Model Simulation Results ? Scenarios 1 & 2.
November 29. 2011 Half Dome Cables Visitor Use Model Scenario Analysis, Final Report. April 2011

Correspondence ID: 162 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,02,2012 20:38:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: All complete

Topic Question 2: Support Plan which would allow 400 permits/ day.

Topic Question 3: Keep the cable system intact. Four hundred permits per day. Create a permit only zone beginning at Little Yosemite Valley (like the Mt. Whitney Zone).

Topic Question 4: None

Topic Question 5: None

Topic Question 6: I have climbed Half Dome 11 times since 2001. I witnessed first hand the tremendous jam ups on the cables. That caused me to alter my access routine to start extremely early avoiding the crowds. It worked well for me.

Limiting access has not really made the experience better, but it has created a potential scarcity of experience that caused me to consider summitting in slightly more risky conditions. I think there is a new undertone that is difficult to quantitate with this. I am really opposed to decreasing permits to 300 (or fewer) because I have no doubt that it will lead to more risky behavior.

Comments: Please reconsider increasing the permits to 400 per day. Also creating a Permit only zone in Little Yosemite.

I do have John Muir Trail access permits for mid June (entry at Happy Isles) and hope to summit Half Dome once more , but I am not sure if these wilderness permits will let me access Half Dome.

Correspondence ID: 163 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,02,2012 22:44:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The permit system's main flaw is that visitor are given one date to make their assent of Half Dome, and no required safety education for the hike. For those who have acquired a permit in advance, and traveled 100's or 1000's of miles for this experience, limiting the permit to a single day puts great pressure on an individual to hike on that day. Under these circumstances, a visitor is more likely to risk hiking in bad weather, increasing the danger. If the permits were valid for a period of 5 to 7 days, it would reduce the risk of visitors attempting the hike in less that good weather conditions. Also, having no required education on the dangers of Half Dome means that the permit program does very little to improve safety.

Topic Question 3: Permits should be given out only after the visitor attends an education session. The info session would educate the visitors on the dangers of the Half Dome Hike, and instruct the visitors on proper safety measures, including equipment, clothing, food & water, etc. They should also be instructed on proper climbing techniques for the cables. Most importantly, they need education on the dynamic weather condition and how bad weather conditions result in dangerously slippery rock and lightning. The permits should be valid for 7 days, and restricted to the visitor attending the info session. ID?s must be carried on the hike to validate the permit. Also, harnesses should be available for rent, also with instruction on how to use them. The quantity of permits should be increased to make access to the permits more reasonable, which currently is not the case. It is nearly impossible to get a permit to climb Half Dome unless you are willing the pack-back in on one of the designated trail-heads.

Topic Question 5: On Page 1-2 "NEED FOR THIS PROJECT" Bullet 1: There are 100's of square miles available for visitors to experience solitude. It is only on this narrow corridor near the trail to Half Dome that this solitude is not available, so visitors have almost unlimited opportunities for solitude in the wilderness areas off of the Half Dome Trail. Bullet 2: It is only on and near the Half Dome trail that the "wilderness character" is impacted. Almost everyone on the trail is going to Half Dome, so any

?impact? is acceptable to the vast majority of those those on this trail.

Topic Question 6: I have hiked Half Dome 8 times, starting in 1989. The last was in 2010. I was there in 2009 when Gina fell. Every member of my family has made the trip, most more than once. It is a "favorite" family adventure. I expect to continue as long as I am able. Yosemite has been our #1 vacation spot for 35 years, both camping in the valley, and backpacking in the wilderness. Even with 400 permits per day, the permits are almost impossible to get. When a month opens up, the permits are gone in minutes of their availability. My options now are to backpack with a wilderness permit, or do the hike at night, neither of which is my preferred option.

Comments: Even though Half Dome and the trail to it are designated as wilderness, because of the public desire to experience this hike, it needs to be treated differently. The impact to the wilderness is only in the narrow corridor next to the trail, and nearly all those on the trail are there for this Half Dome experience. Those who want the wilderness experience have hundreds of other trails and off-trails to choose from. It does not serve the public interest to attempt to maintain this trail as it would other wilderness trails.

The real issue is how to maintain the safety. Before the permit system, the number of hikers to Half Dome was in the 10's of 1000's per year. I read that the numbers were near 50,000 per year. The number of accidental deaths on Half Dome in the last 10 years has averaged maybe 1 per year. This is about 1 in 50,000. I think that this can be improved with better education, training and availability of harnesses for rent.

The problem with the cables is that people block others from going up and down. It only takes 15 or 20 minutes to go up if there is no one blocking you, less than that to go down. Inexperienced hikers, who have no idea what they are getting into, and have no training or instruction, are the ones who tend to block the cables. Sometimes they just freeze up, one hand on each cable, and everyone is blocked in both directions. It would be a great help if all hikers were required to have instruction and see a video on how to climb the cables. There should be great emphasis put on not blocking the cables for others.

It's not the crowds that pose the greatest danger. It is the wet slippery rock and the people who freeze up on the cables and block others from getting down when the weather condition go bad, which can happen very quickly. I read that Manoj Kumar was held up for a long time in the cold and wet conditions before he slipped and fell. I read that he was held up by a person who was frightened below him and was blocking everyone from going down. It wasn't the number of people that caused this problem. It was one person. If Kumar could have descended without the long wait in the wet freezing cold, he may not have slipped and fell to his death.

I saw Gina Bartiromo fall the week before Kumar fell, and I stayed with her for 3 hours until the SAR team got her stabilized. There were no crowds preventing her descent. It was cold and wet, and she was not prepared for the weather. She also was not trained on how to safely descend the cables under these conditions. She also did not know that she could just sit down and wait for help if she felt it was too unsafe for her. She didn't have to fall, but it had nothing to do with the crowds. There were only about 30 people on the dome when she fell, maybe half of those on the cables. The permit system would have done nothing to prevent her fall unless it was combined with a mandatory education session.

I believe the same was true for Hayley LaFlamme last year. It wasn't the crowds. The permit system didn't help. If she had been educated, it could have saved her life. Seeing a video on the climb, the effects of weather conditions, and seeing how slippery the rock is when it is wet, would have helped her to make a better decision. Kumar, Gine, and Hayley all fell because of the cold and slipper rock, not because of the crowds. The existing permit system may have helped Kumar from having to wait so long on the cables, but it would not have helped Gina and Hayley. However, the permit system does entice people to hike in bad weather, since they are restricted to a signal day, increasing the danger. This may have contributed to Hayley's decision to go up in bad weather.

The proposed options (Alternative B, C and D) do little to improve safety, while preventing thousands from experiencing one of the most amazing adventures they may ever have. Half Dome is a national treasure, and the public has the right to experience it. Any proposal should focus on how to make the trip safer while minimizing the number of people who are denied the experience.

Correspondence ID:	164	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	Y
Received:	Feb,03,2012 08:59:31						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Comments: I strongly disagree with the idea of adding a thrid cable. Please don't bend to public opinion and allow further development/infrastrucutre in wilderness.						

Correspondence ID:	165	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	Y
Received:	Feb,03,2012 11:09:47						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Topic Question 2: I am in favor of leaving the cables in place as is, and limiting daily use to 300 permit holders. Unrestricted use results in heavy traffic jams and inevitable environmental damage to this sensitive area.						

Comments:

Correspondence ID:	166	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	
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Received: Feb,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: The Honorable Ken Salazar Secretary, Department of the Interior 1849 C Street, N.W. Washington DC 20240

Re: Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan

Dear Secretary Salazar:

I write to express my concern with decreased access to the HalfDome Trail and urge you to address the growing demand for permits as you finalize the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan.

The Half Dome Trail is one of the most popular hiking trails in America, attracting as many as 1,200 visitors per day during peak season. In 2010, Yosemite National Park instituted a strict permitting process that limited the number of Half Dome Hikers to only 300 per day, ostensibly to reduce overcrowding. As a result, thousands have lost access.

For over a year, rather than developing the means to provide greater access to Half Dome, the National Park Service has instead weighed options to eliminate it completely by removing the cables to the last 400 feet of the Half Dome Trail that were originally installed by the Sierra Club in 1919.

I understand your concerns about overcrowding on the cables at Half Dome, but I believe that they can be addressed by adding a third cable to make the trail safer and expand public access at the same time.

The Organic Act directs you "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same..." Eliminating or greatly restricting access to a national treasure is utterly at odds with the mission of an agency that is supposed to encourage, welcome, facilitate, and maximize the public's enjoyment of the public's natural monuments. Accordingly, I urge you to rescinding the restrictions on Half Dome hikers and instead turn your attention to restoring an attitude of maximizing access for park visitors.

Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 167 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please don't cutoff access to half dome by removing the cables. As I have yet to climb this icon. I actually had permits this past summer, but was unable to make it out to California. I can understand that the trail is not what it once was. But to a first time visitor, it still would be an amazing sight and test of human will to achieve the summit. Lower the amount of permits if need be, but never remove those cables. If you do remove the cables I fear that people would still attempt the summit, and you may have even more accidents.

Correspondence ID: 168 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,03,2012 16:49:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: This is not a "balancing act" as stated by your staff. Your duty is to preserve wilderness character. Is NPS up to the task ??

Topic Question 2: Allowing the cable system to remain would violate the Wilderness Act. Allowing 300 people per day would harm the environment & impair wilderness character.

Topic Question 3: You should recommend that the area be de-designated if the NPS does not have the will to manage it as wilderness.

Topic Question 4: You already must know this: the Wilderness Act prohibits unnecessary structures and installations.

Topic Question 5: 300 people per day would cause significant adverse effects to the environment and wilderness character due to: over-crowding, loss of solitude, litter, human waste, etc. You have provided no honest basis upon which to conclude that these impacts will not be significant.

Topic Question 6: I'm not going anywhere near Half Dome again unless/until you get the crowds under control... 20-50 people per day would be reasonable, such as at most wilderness trailheads.

Comments: Dear National Park Service,

I'm writing about your Half Dome Plan, and I'm specifically concerned about your staff's comment that:

"Finding balance is something we have to do." (Huffington Post 1/29/12, see below).

When it comes to wilderness stewardship, it is not your job to "balance" the desires of recreation visitors with preservation of wilderness character. It is your duty to preserve wilderness character.

In all of your decisions about wilderness management, the desires of visitors must be subordinate to preservation of wilderness character. Yet your staff appears to begin from the entirely incorrect assumption that wilderness character and visitor preferences for easy access must be "balanced." Such statements by your staff indicate a fundamental misunderstanding of your responsibility under the Wilderness Act. Please see that your staff receives adequate training and direction regarding the Wilderness Act.

Please select Alternative E, to remove the unnecessary, intrusive, and harmful cable system at Half Dome, once and for all. History will show that Alt E is the correct choice.

Sincerely,

██████████

REFERENCE:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/29/yosemite-half-dome-plan_n_1240217.html?view=print&comm_ref=false

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, Calif. - There was a time not long ago when a climb to the top of Yosemite National Park's Half Dome was a solitary trek attempted by only the most daring adventurers.

Over the past decade, however, the route has been inundated with up to 1,200 nature lovers a day seeking to experience the iconic mountain that is stamped on the California quarter, stitched on a line of outdoor clothing and painted on the side of the park's vehicles.

Now officials want to permanently limit access to the granite monolith, frustrating both hikers who journey there for a transcendent experience and advocates who say the plan doesn't go far enough to protect a place in a federally designated wilderness area.

"At the end of the day, if the visitors and users of wilderness aren't willing to make sacrifices to preserve the wilderness character of these areas, then we just won't have wilderness. We'll have some Disney-fied version of it," said George Nickas, executive director of Wilderness Watch.

"If people want solitude in Yosemite, there's another 12,000 square miles to do that," counters hiker Pat Townsley, a Bay Area resident who has been to the top nine times.

This past week the park released its environmental assessment of options for the future of the Half Dome trail, which studies show is the busiest by far of any in the National Park's designated wilderness areas. The aim is to improve safety on the Dome and make the trail to get there less crowded.

Options range from doing nothing to removing the cables that hikers use to pull themselves up the 45-degree final climb, rendering it inaccessible to all but experienced climbers.

Nickas calls them "handrails in the wilderness," and says his agency might sue to have them removed if park officials don't choose that option.

"There is often an attempt by agencies to make wilderness all things to all people, and they can't do that and still be wilderness," he said.

The park's recommendation is something in between a complete ban and the free-flowing days of the past when hikers packed together on the cables like cars in rush hour traffic. It would allow 300 people a day past a check point two miles distant beginning in 2013.

"There's some subjectivity to this decision," said park spokesman Scott Gediman. "But we considered how wilderness is

managed and personal interviews with people about their experience on the trail. Finding balance is something we have to do."

In 1874 the slick dome that rises 5,000 feet above the valley floor was described as "perfectly inaccessible." But in 1919 the Sierra Club installed the first cables along the 400-foot final ascent so that visitors without rock climbing experience could hoist themselves to the summit _the size of 17 football fields_ to drink in stunning views of Little Yosemite Valley, El Capitan, endless Sierra and the Valley floor.

"Once you get up there it's like `holy cow.' It's just one of those moments in your life when you go `wow' and you question your existence and space and time and everything else," said hiker Townsley, who thinks everyone should be allowed the experience.

There is no doubt that if the decision were made today, there would be no braided steel cables and stanchions drilled into Half Dome. Congress passed the Wilderness Act in 1964, and 20 years later designated 95 percent of Yosemite, including Half Dome and the well-worn eight-mile trail leading to it, as land that should not be altered by the hand of man.

Over the decades the number of visitors to the park has steadily climbed, topping 4 million last year_ in part because the park is an easy drive from Los Angeles and the Bay Area. And the idea of scaling Half Dome in a day as measure of personal fortitude also began to grow.

At least five people have died on the cables since 2006, nearly all with rain as a factor, officials say. Rangers want visitors to be able to descend the slick granite in 45 minutes if they have to escape the fast-forming storms that make footing precarious, and limiting numbers is the only way to do that, they say.

Last year park officials instituted a temporary 400-permit lottery for daily access, which is roughly from Memorial Day until the first snow in October.

"I think they're doing a fine job, but I think they've got a hairball that they're dealing with trying to come up with something that works," said Rick Deutsch, who wrote the book "One Best Hike: Yosemite's Half Dome." He says 400 permits is a more workable number that accounts for no-shows.

The increase in visitors is a challenge to park officials who must balance access with the system's mandate to protect resources for future generations. The park already has been struggling over whether to limit the number of cars allowed in the gates to protect the Merced River that cuts through the heart of Yosemite Valley and is federally protected as Wild and Scenic.

The chance for the public to weigh in on all of the options in the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan ends March 15.

"Climbing Half Dome is iconic and we understand that," spokesman Gediman said. "But at the same time we're having to preserve and protect the park for future generations and provide for a positive visitor experience, because the National Parks belong to the American people."

Correspondence ID: 169 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,03,2012 22:24:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: none identified

Topic Question 2: Recognizing the recent overcrowding on the cables, suppositions used to create report seemed accurate.

Topic Question 3: Rec 400 daily permits and establishment of a permit only travel zoen form Little Yosemite Valley on (has worked in Mt. Whitney area)

Topic Question 4: none

Topic Question 5: none

Comments: I have climbed Half dome 10 times since 2001.

The issues identified are real.

I really would like the NPS to espouse Plan B, 400 permits a day. The proposed 300 limit would really create a scarcity that could enable poor judgment on climb day. I recall thinking a bit differently when the permit system came to being (about making the summit). Plainly, I felt that since I had a single chance, the weather would have to be pretty bad to stop the ascent. In

past years, since we could always come back, there was no pressure to complete because there was always "another day".

No longer. The 300 permits availability creates an almost arbitrary shortage of opportunity. To address the impact on the environment, I would consider a permit only zone in Little Yosemite Valley (Backpackers/ hikers). The outhouses are excellent and should not be removed.

The removal of the cables is an atrocious idea which in the long run could diminish respect for the wilderness as fewer people become exposed to the magnificent natural displays there.

Correspondence ID: 170 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,04,2012 00:24:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: None

Topic Question 2: Having hiked Half Dome about a dozen times over the years, including six of the last seven, I've noted crowding becoming a major issue on the cable, and with consideration to some deaths in recent years, I think it would be unsafe and irresponsible not to restrict usage. I think 300 is fine, with 400 as a definite maximum.

Topic Question 3: The only reasonable alternative I can see is to have another route and cable, if this is even feasible.

Topic Question 4: None noted

Topic Question 5: Seem reasonable.

Topic Question 6: I've been hiking the trail yearly of late to stay in shape and focused on my goal of completing the hike when I'm 80 (five more years). I would hate to miss that final goal, but I still think not having some limitation of numbers is dangerous.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 171 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,04,2012 05:37:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I THINK CHOICE D- 140 PEOPLE..... LESS IS BETTER....IT IS AWFUL THAT PEOPLE ARE DIEING ON THIS ROCK!! and IF it is a stormy day or change of storms, CLOSE IT!!!! NO ONE allowed....

Comments: I HAVE A SISTER WHO LIVES IN JACKSON HOLE IN THE TETONS AND HAS BEEN CUAGHT OUT IN THESE STORMS AND THEY ARE WICKED DANGEROUS....YOU CAN DIE!! AND FOLKS DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO OR HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF....! there really is no safe way to protect people who choose to go up the cable, i know they are risking their own lives, but strick limit on the numbers would sure give PAUSE to those who should not be going up that rock!! good luck....tough choices

Correspondence ID: 172 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,04,2012 13:16:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Topic Question 2: I think the plan to allow 400 people per day on the cables is a better option than 300 people a day. I've climbed half dome twice - once on a Wednesday and once on a Saturday. The wednesday experience had no lines and was extremely safe. The Saturday experience had long lines and seemed dangerous as it was difficult to climb down half dome. The problem on Saturday was not only the number of people, but also the fact that they all showed up at the same time. We were on the trail by 530AM and when we climbed the cables, no one was there. It was when we left that there was a line. Perhaps a better system would be to issue permit with times. Station a ranger to check the permit and not allow the person to go up until it is their time. That's how they regulate rides at theme parks. It doesn't matter how many people you limit on the cables if they all show up around the same time. A 400 person limit is also better than 300 because of the amount of people who chicken out and don't go on the cables. Both times I went there were many people sitting on top of the sub dome who were too afraid to go up. 400 people will quickly be reduced by those who are too scared and people who just don't show up for whatever reason. From someone who has been to half dome before permits, I believe the permitting system is great even if you only allow 300 people a day. There were way too many people on the cables on the Saturday I went and many looked unprepared for the hike. At least if they buy a permit in advance, they may prepare in advance which should reduce the dangers. Please allow this great hike to stay open to the public. I love this trail and would hate to see it closed.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 173 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,04,2012 13:46:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: My family has used the park for hiking in wilderness areas for 30 years. We have never used the Half Dome

Trail since we did not feel that we had adequate skills to handle it safely.

Comments: The main reason for my comment is this. My husband has led many tours from foreign visitors into Yosemite. Their time was closely scheduled so there was no fear that one would wander onto the Half Dome Trail by accident. However, there are far too many foreign tourists who are not in a controlled group that wander trails without knowledge or instruction. We have seen them hiking the Angels Landing Trail in Zion in flip flops or little high heels. Just because a trail is there doesn't mean everyone has the sense and ability to use it safely. In addition to protecting the wilderness aspect of the trail, there is the obligation to protect visitors from themselves. If they are not capable of handling a trail which could be a real threat to life, they do not need access to it.

At very least I think that access to this trail should be severely limited in number of hikers and consideration given to removing the chains themselves. The obligation to protect the wilderness and protect the public from unnecessary risks outweighs the right to "all" wilderness areas.

Correspondence ID: 174 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Feb,04,2012 15:21:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support the last alternative because it provides the best environmental benefit. The Park needs to be significantly more protected from human intrusion. Half Dome is being bombarded with downward foot pressure by the thousands, and eventually that trail of human feet will make a permanent and irreversible physical imprint on the Dome itself.

Comments: A full master plan for the Yosemite National Park should be undertaken to address overall needs for the Park, with a particular focus on balancing environmental preservation against visitor demand. There are many elements of the current state of the Park that have damaged the reason why it was designated as a national park to begin with.

Correspondence ID: 175 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Feb,04,2012 19:45:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: I would strongly approve implementing Alternative E - removing the cables. I have been to Yosemite several times and I am always saddened by the overwhelming number of private vehicles, overcrowded trails, and damage and disrespect that visitors have for our national treasures. I have also visited many other special natural and man-made monuments around the globe and the results have always been the same - without strict controls and oversight by the government, many of these sites have been damaged beyond repair. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to protect the national parks at any cost - regardless of the objections of a few that believe that they are free to do as they please while visiting these irreplaceable wonders. Removing the cables would eliminate several problems:

1. Reduce the safety risk considerably, as only the most experienced climbers would take on the climb. 2. Eliminate much of the cost of carrying out rescue missions due to inexperienced and foolhardy hikers. 3. Most importantly, protect the natural beauty of Half Dome and the park itself by limiting access to those fragile areas.

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 176 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Feb,05,2012 12:14:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: With the stated goals in mind, no change is out of the question, but the stated alternatives are too limiting.

Topic Question 3: Considering that except for those who live close by, most of us will visit Yosemite once in our lifetimes, a limit of 1000 visitors per day to Half dome would be more reasonable, and would at least give us a chance to go to the summit if we're in the park for a week, and still preserve the site for future generations.

Comments: Although some visitor limits are necessary for safety and preservation, they should never be so restrictive that visitors cannot enjoy every aspect of our National Parks.

Correspondence ID: 177 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Feb,05,2012 12:34:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The report lacks a chart showing actual numbers of people at different times of the day on the cables and on top of Half Dome. Density is the central issue, not total numbers.

The only information falsely addressing density is the "average groups per hour" in Table ES-1. The average is not the peak. The peak is where problems occur, not the average.

Similarly, "max number of people per day" is a deceptive measurement. This peak is likely achieved only during a few major holidays. Then the question is, are permits actually needed all days of the year or only during certain high-demand days?

What is the safety threshold? That is, what is the maximum number of people safely allowed on the cables at one time, or on top of Half Dome? When do these thresholds occur? What times of the day on which days of the year?

On ES-i, the document states there were "four fatal falls" between 2006 and 2009. However on page 1-5, the document makes clear in two of the cases resulting in fatal injuries, three were on wet rock and in two of these, the cables were down. Recent incidents mainly occurred in off-peak season. The one fatality in July, 2011 involved lightning and wet rock. Consequently, it seems difficult based on the data presented in the document to justify safety concerns regarding the numbers of people on Half Dome.

The potential environmental impacts in the reference document are clearly overstated, almost as if written by someone or for someone who has never been on the Half Dome trail. A high percentage of hikers from the Valley make it to Nevada Falls and return. Relatively few continue up to Half Dome. How is the environmental impact on the Nevada Falls trail acceptable, and the impact on the Half Dome trail not acceptable? Or will the entire basin become restricted in the future?

Topic Question 2: Restricting access to the Half Dome exclusively through the use of permits further commercializes the Park and goes against the mission of the National Park Service, which is to administer specially designated lands as a public resource, not as a private park, or wildlife refuge. Public access is a paramount duty of the Park and limitations of access should only be justified based on safety or actual threat to a sensitive environment.

An exclusive permit program will create added public disfavor and frustration with the National Park Service. Access to the park is already burdensome to some lower income people with increasing costs of entrance fees. Further commercialization of the Park with expensive permits does not reduce the growing Disneyland character of the Park.

If the public cannot feel Yosemite and other National Parks are their parks, they will reduce their support for the National Park Service. That is counter-productive for NPS.

Topic Question 3: Issue permits only for peak days during the season, and only during peak times of the day for safety. Enforcement of permits is difficult at all times of the day anyway. Permits required after a specific time of day, e.g. noon, that can vary depending on expected peak demand hours that day is a reasonable compromise. If the expected peak demand is below a certain threshold, then no permits would be needed. It more easily enforced, and minimally impacts public access. It is not reasonable to argue a commercial vendor would not sell permits under these conditions. Maintaining public access is more important.

Topic Question 4: The National Parks were set up to be a resource for public benefit. They are not a wildlife refuge where people are to be kept out. Access to Half Dome should be controlled by numbers of people on the top or on the cables at the same time, that is, by density. That would be justifiable from a safety perspective. The Park should not be made a playground for the elite. It is a public place. A permit system arbitrarily restricting numbers during the entire day arbitrarily imposes restrictions that are not justifiable based on safety. Access to Half Dome should be as free and open as possible, and if density is below the level of safety concerns, no permit should be required.

Any permit system must be enforced. Allowing free access during non-peak hours is not a significant added burden. In fact, it reduces the burden of enforcement and better achieves the co-equal goals of safety and access.

Topic Question 5: Half Dome is solid granite. Even 10,000 people per day will not degrade it, unless they leave trash on top. To expect "solitude" is unrealistic. In fact, the social contact is important because it reinforces the mutual appreciation for the park. When you reach the top, you look at the other people there similarly in awe of the place. Humans are a part of nature too. People need to appreciate the value of the National Parks to continue support for them.

Topic Question 6: I would like to be able to decide to drive up early in the morning, park, and climb to the top of Half Dome, just because I might feel like it. I have done it twice. It is difficult to go from the valley floor to the top and back in one day. You must be in good condition, and you must start early.

None of the proposals address controlling peak traffic on Half Dome while maximizing public access. A commercial permit vendor only increases the Disneyland nature of the Park. It is not the mission of NPS to create "solitude". The Parks are a public resource, not an exclusive wildlife refuge, although wildlife are protected - as a resource.

I recommend that permits only be required during peak times of the day when the traffic is expected to surpass a threshold likely to indicate an unsafe condition. A hiker arriving at Half Dome before say, noon, should not require a permit to go up the cables. Use permits only to control the peak traffic.

The advantage will be to turn back people who will not be able to get to the top of Half Dome and be able to get back down to the Valley before dark. Walking on the trails at night, without a light, e.g. past Vernal Falls, is spectacularly dangerous.

Comments: The National Park Service has presented no useful data in the reference document to justify any Half Dome access permit based on safety concerns. There is no report of any study documenting an increased safety risk that can be ascribed to the numbers of people on the cables or on top of Half Dome. There is no established threshold beyond which the number of people

on the cables or on top of Half Dome are at elevated risk. There is no established number of people on the cables or on top of Half Dome at which elevated risk becomes unacceptable. Once these numbers are determined, a scientifically justifiable unsafe peak demand can be defined. No data have been presented indicating when such peak demand times occur, and on which days of the year. At this time, the National Park Service cannot demonstrate the current densities in fact constitute a safety risk.

Storm evacuation is a separate risk. The reference document makes clear the majority of accidents have occurred in wet or icy conditions. Furthermore, most injuries did not occur during peak times, rather they happened during off-peak times in Spring or Fall. The risk associated with summertime thunderstorms is already handled by signs posted at the bottom of the trail where the exposed ascent of Half Dome begins. The accident data show there were only two injuries and one fatality in Summer since 1994. Therefore, summertime thunderstorms have not been shown to pose an elevated risk. The reference document states Management Policy is, "visitors must assume a substantial degree of risk and responsibility for their own safety."

The Half Dome trail is already wide. It easily accommodates the numbers of people. The environmental concerns are overstated. The trail covers a very limited area, and wildlife are unaffected a relatively short distance from the trail.

I have climbed to the top of Half Dome from the Valley in one day twice. It is impossible to make Half Dome perfectly "safe". That is what nature is all about. If you make a mistake, like swimming above Nevada and Vernal Falls, you certainly could die. Similar, to try to create "solitude" is ridiculous. There are places in Yosemite for that, but Yosemite Valley is not one of them. If people want solitude in Yosemite, they can visit in winter.

There are some people who apparently don't like other people. There are others seeking power and donations from supporters. These are the ones who want to limit access to Half Dome. They will make well-reasoned arguments why people should not be allowed here and there in Yosemite. Human exclusion might be justifiable in certain locations based on documented critical environmental sensitivity. Half Dome is not an environmentally sensitive location in any respect. The top of a solid granite dome lacking soil is not a hospitable environment for wildlife.

According to the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916, the National Parks are, "for the enjoyment of future generations". Part of the mission of the National Parks is to provide public access to the parks, even large numbers of people, in order to appreciate the natural beauty of the place. It is not the mission of NPS to create "solitude".

Clearly, commercialization should be limited. However, to restrict the NUMBERS of visitors seems to go against the purpose of the Park. To restrict the density of visitors could be justified based on safety. Half Dome is not an environmentally sensitive place. That means controlling numbers at peak times, not all times.

Correspondence ID:	178	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	Y
Received:	Feb,05,2012 21:28:33						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Topic Question 2: There is no reason to alter or regulate the route in any way. Keep access to our national treasures free and open for all to enjoy.						
	Comments: Further regulation and enforcement would prove costly, difficult and unnecessary. Occam's Razor. Let them climb Half Dome. That is all.						

Correspondence ID:	179	Project:	29443	Document:	44771		
Received:	Feb,06,2012 10:24:43						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Comments: Strongly recommend the Alternative A - No permits or limits on hikers. Safety concerns are VASTLY overblown. If we were to close anything that was related to death in the park, the first thing to go would be the roads, and the second access to the river.						

Correspondence ID:	180	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	Y
Received:	Feb,06,2012 11:34:46						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Comments: I think the lottery system instituted is a good idea, however the timing is poorly thought out. Anyone from the east coast, who for the most part will rely on flying out to California to climb Half Dome, is at a disadvantage. I would like to climb Half Dome in July, but I cannot book plane tickets well in advance because the lottery results are not to be released until April. I suggest moving the lottery to January, or even earlier.						

Correspondence ID:	181	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	Y
Received:	Feb,06,2012 11:44:17						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Comments: Suggestion: People who got a permit for hiking Half Dome should be required to reconfirm their hike 2-3 days before the scheduled date either in person with a ranger or at least via email. Permits that are not reconfirmed should become available for purchase on the day before the scheduled hike. This way people who couldn't get a permit many months in advance have still a chance. I think that many people buy a permit (because it is cheap) and then they never show up. That is unfair to those who are honest and only buy a ticket when they actually need it.						

Correspondence ID: 182 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,06,2012 12:05:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Plan C is the best. Restrict 300 hikers a day. I have done half dome twice, and something i want to do with my kids (i do not have them yet) Please do not STOP the half dome.

Enforce strict safety measure.

thank you

Correspondence ID: 183 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,06,2012 15:25:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I think keeping the cables in place and limiting daily use to 300 permit holders is the best solution. The last time I hiked Half Dome in October used this solution, the trail was not overly crowded, and the hike was enjoyable.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 184 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,05,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: [REDACTED] 02/05/2012 11:23 AM To yose_web_manager@nps.gov cc Subject From NPS.gov: Halfdome Cables

Email submitted from: [REDACTED] at /yose/contacts.htm

A friend told me that there might be problems with the cables installation/mainenance and erosion of the rock surface. No suprise there, of course. That's true wherever alpinists drive pitons into the rock surface. I wonder if a polymer type, slightly flexible insert with metal sleeves for the cable attachments might be an answer. Such an insert might absorb the constant flexing of the cables under varying loads, rather than to have a direct and unforgiving (inflexible) metal-to-rock interface. Just a thought. Thank you. [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 185 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,07,2012 10:31:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The current and proposed permit lottery systems DECREASE SAFETY by enticing hikers to use the trail and cables in marginal or unsafe weather conditions. When one only has a one-in-four shot at a permit, they are much more likely to use any permit UNDER ANY CONDITIONS. The Park Service should NOT be encouraging unsafe wilderness practices.

Topic Question 3: The Plan is flawed in not considering alternatives that would INCREASE ACCESS, rather than restrict access to Half Dome. Such an alternative would include a new one-way looped trail system to minimize trail conflicts and environmental damage, and would include a NEW PARALLEL CABLE on Half Dome to increase climbing and weather evacuation safety.

Topic Question 6: It is now doubly improbable that visitors can obtain both a Yosemite lodging or camping reservation AND a Half Dome hiking permit on the same day. Any lottery system should give priority to those with lodging or camping reservations.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 186 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,07,2012 11:00:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I think that the preferred plan limiting use to 300 people per day sounds reasonable. It sounds like the safest alternative. My group's safety when hiking is the most important thing to me and anything that leads to less crowding on the cables while still permitting reasonable access is the best option. The mountain will be there if you can't go that time. More limited use does not sound necessary and I know that many would be disappointed greatly if the cables were removed.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 187 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,07,2012 12:09:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: limiting access via limit permits issued per 24 hour period has created the following results: 1. I have found Half Dome permits on sale on Craig's list for \$100 2. Eliminated visitor spontaneity, let's hike Half Dome tomorrow 3. The continued development of Government interference into our lives, I wonder how John Muir would have felt regarding a permit to hike anyplace in Yosemite because to many people want to enjoy an area the public owns, not the Government. 4. Nature can

be dangerous, people get hurt or even killed, why do you want to limit American exploration of our land - their way verse your way. 5. I have summit ed Half Dome 14 times in 53 years, every decision to summit has been decided within 5 days of summit ting, I have no desire to plan 6 months in advance to obtain a permit for a specific date, what happens if it's pouring rain and i would like to delay my hike 24 hours...I'm screwed. 5. At the end of the day, what's reasonable for the owners (Americans) of Yosemite NP

Topic Question 3: I would like to see a permit process that accommodates long term permit applicants and daily permit applicants. I also feel the Dome can accommodate 500 to 800 hikers between 8am to 5pm (perhaps the busiest time period 11am to 3pm), no permit would be require if you plan on summit ting between sunset and sunrise (yes I have watched the sun rise on 5 different occasions, once there was only 5 of us on top)

Topic Question 6: I have visited Yosemite at least once every year of my life (yes my parents took me camping there when I was less than a year old) and have visited the park 5 times in a single year. The biggest problem with Yosemite Valley is access to the entire valley. More asphalt path ways need to be installed around the entire 15 mile loop for hikers, wheel chairs, bikers, rollerblades, and strollers...riding your bike to El Capitan is very dangerous on the road or illegal on the dirt hiking path (which I have been mountain biking for the last 15 years). Why has the government elected to ignore this concern, potential hazard, and limiting access to the valley by other than bus or vehicle.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 188 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I have hiked the entire John Muir Trail twice and climbed Half Dome twice. The half dome climbers need to be controlled. The cables should not be removed. But a single line of new cable could be installed so that up and down traffic are separated. That would allow twice the number of safe users. A permit system needs to be installed just like the control of overnight hikers on the John Muir Trail. There would be a cost for a permit to pay the cost for a ranger at the bottom of Half Dome to monitor the permits.

Correspondence ID: 189 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am writing to urge you to not to adopt the proposed limit if 300 hikers per day outlined in the draft stewardship plan for the Half dome trail. Instead, hikers should have unlimited access to the trail, and the trail should be classified as non-wilderness, like the Valley Floor. I understand that the Half Dome trail is technically in a "Wilderness" part of Yosemite. However, it really is not wilderness, and should not be treated as such. Instead, it should be given an exemption from Wilderness status that extends for a few feet either side of the trail. Precedent for this is given by the management plan of the Valley, which incorporates a dual mission of making the outdoors accessible to newcomers (and future National Parks supporters and conservationalists) and maintaining the "wild" character of the valley floor.

Correspondence ID: 190 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I vote to place a limit of 300 climbers on Half Dome at any given time. And, yes, take down those cables so as to discourage amateur climbers.

Correspondence ID: 191 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: While I believe that it was a mistake to install the Half Dome cables, there they are. We cannot put the cat back into the bag and remove the cables altogether, even though that would be a clean solution to the problem. Instead, I advocate installing a "3rd rail," or cable, if you will. This will create two lanes for the trail up the Half Dome slab: one for going up, the other for going down. This will relieve most of the problem with folks descending, the most dangerous part. I suppose a permit system should continue, but there should be 75 first-come-fist-serve permits reserved for the morning of each day, perhaps issued in Little Yosemite or at the base of the cables, to make it possible for early risers to get permits on the day of their trek.

Correspondence ID: 192 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher, I am writing to beg your consideration of these thoughts regarding your staff's Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment (EA). I reviewed the EA at your website, and found it fundamentally flawed and, frankly, very disturbing. I have been hiking in Yosemite for nearly fifty years. In recent years, the Half Dome trail has become so overcrowded that I no longer will use it. I have been completely displaced by the overcrowded conditions, lack of solitude, proliferation of litter and human waste, cell-phone chatter, and other impairments of wilderness character which have been invited and abetted by the Park Service's abject failure to adequately limit and control exploding recreational uses. The current EA process is an opportunity for the Park Service to make the bold decisions necessary to restore wilderness character to the Half Dome area, yet your staff has settled for mediocrity. As superintendent, I hope you will do the right thing, and select Alternative E (remove the cable system). Your staff instead proposes Alternative C, which would permit the permanent installation and ongoing maintenance of the cable system, with up to 300 visitors per day. This is unacceptable for two fundamental reasons. First, it would explicitly allow the cable system to remain in Yosemite's wilderness, in violation of the

Wilderness Act's clear prohibitions against permanent structures and installations. And second, it would allow up to 300 visitors per day on the Half Dome trail. Your staff rationalizes Alternative C by saying it provides "low encounter rates on the trail, similar to use levels found on other high-use trails in Yosemite's wilderness and other wilderness areas" (reference: e-mail from yose_planning dated 1/24/2012). This bogus rationale assumes that it is okay to allow excessive visitation, loss of solitude, and other substantial impacts simply because such impairments of wilderness character have been allowed elsewhere. Please don't accept such obviously and fundamentally flawed rationalizations. When I visit Yosemite's wilderness, I do not want to encounter large numbers of people along trails. Allowing three hundred persons per day would perpetuate the current mob scene. Such high numbers of encounters shatter opportunities for solitude, and result in the other impacts outlined above. Please do not bow to the wishes of the mob in violation of the Wilderness Act. If your agency is (for whatever reason) unwilling or unable to select and implement Alternative E, then you should retract your EA and reissue it with an additional alternative, which I will call Alternative H (the "H" being for "honesty"). If you cannot select Alternative E, the Park Service should admit that it is unwilling and/or unable to manage the Half Dome area as wilderness, and recommend to Congress that the area be de-designated. In short, you should do one of two things: Either manage the area as wilderness, or recommend that it be de-designated (to allow the permanent structures and installations to remain, and the mob scene to continue). Anything in between would be unlawful, intellectually dishonest, and a clear failure of your wilderness stewardship responsibilities. In closing, I implore you to select Alternative E. I also request that you direct your staff to refrain from using the word "stewardship" to describe unlawful proposals that would so dramatically compromise and impair wilderness character. Thank you very much for considering my views.

Correspondence ID: 193 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear National Park Service,

I'm writing about your Half Dome Plan, and I'm specifically concerned about your staff's comment that:

"Finding balance is something we have to do." (Huffington Post 1/29/12, see below).

When it comes to wilderness stewardship, it is not your job to "balance" the desires of recreation visitors with preservation of wilderness character. It is your duty to preserve wilderness character.

In all of your decisions about wilderness management, the desires of visitors must be subordinate to preservation of wilderness character. Yet your staff appears to begin from the entirely incorrect assumption that wilderness character and visitor preferences for easy access must be "balanced." Such statements by your staff indicate a fundamental misunderstanding of your responsibility under the Wilderness Act. Please see that your staff receives adequate training and direction regarding the Wilderness Act.

Please select Alternative E, to remove the unnecessary, intrusive, and harmful cable system at Half Dome, once and for all. History will show that Alt E is the correct choice.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 194 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,07,2012 17:52:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Topic Question 2: As a climber, I'm not sure that I would object to the removal of the cables all together, but I think that would be irresponsible management of a park icon. Of course, nobody has any right to summit any mountain, returning it to its pristine state would be difficult to criticize, but the adventure offered, and the tradition already in place, mean that taking away the cables route would certainly miss the opportunity to inspire future generations of hikers and outdoor enthusiasts.

Topic Question 6: Perhaps not a recommended mode of use, but the crowding on the trails might make me more interested in making the trip as a night hike. Even then the summit is not pristine, but it's certainly less crowded. I assume the trail above the sub dome would be off limits without a permit, but would not be actively monitored during the evening / very early morning?

I think taking an active position on night hiking half dome would likely have the objectionable features described in the rejected plan including summit window times, but it might be something worth thinking about.

Comments: Overall, I think that Option C does sound the most reasonable. Option D would be preferable for me, as I do truly value the wilderness experience, but having substantial cost associated with the permit is definitely objectionable. I wonder if the anticipated fees could be limited while still retaining low usage numbers?

The most crucial step in making this an acceptable process for the public will, of course, be the system by which the permits are administered. From the report, it sounds as though the NPS is dedicated to actively monitoring how the system is working throughout the course of the season, but I would like to emphasize that active transparent on the part of the NPS will definitely be appreciated by the community (ex. real time metrics of number of applications, number of permits granted in each of the different ways, how many people actually used the trail, monies collected, and ways in which money was spent).

It's a lot of work to be sure....managing permits, keeping the trail in pristine condition, dealing with public outcry, etc. But having wilderness experience on Half Dome is a pretty unique experience, and keeping that experience open to many, while still leaving those without permits feeling not too disappointed, is an important part of the overall Yosemite experience.

Thank you for all that you (personally, and the NPS as a whole) do to keep Yosemite beautiful.

Correspondence ID: 195 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,07,2012 19:08:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I concur that there are way too many using the trail to Half Dome. I hiked it June, 2011 and had a very memorable experience. What I did not care for was the amount of people on both the trail and on the cables that were (in my opinion) not equipped to be there. Either they were not carrying water with them, had on improper shoes or had young children in tow. If a Ranger has to man the trail now to ensure everyone is carrying a permit then perhaps that same Ranger can be utilized to turn people away that clearly are not thinking ?safety for ALL?. Improper shoes can and does cause slippage on the granite. The granite has been traversed so much that its actually worn slick in places. Someone slipping due to improper shoe wear is a hazard to themselves as well as every other person who has the unfortunate luck of being in those cables at the same time. Someone not carrying water or having an ample amount with them should not be allowed on the trail. They run into a issue due to dehydration they become a liability. And I just don't know what a parent would be thinking to take a child under 6 years of age up Half Dome. If Half Dome is something that child wants to experience let them come back when they can manage the trail without assistance (I literally encountered a man carrying his child up the cables).

Topic Question 6: My family - defined as husband, wife, son (24 yrs old)and daughter (22 yrs old) are returning to Yosemite this June (2012) in hopes of hiking Half Dome together. We are all experienced hikers and would love to share this hike together. I wasn't opposed to the lottery method used last year (I actually participated in it but the cables were still down during our stay). I'm not sure how this new method will work.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 196 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,07,2012 21:29:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Presenting Half Dome as a crowded place while ignoring the fact that the top of Vernal Fall is over 4 to 5 times more crowded than Half Dome in a summer day. If overcrowding at Half Dome is a problem, top of vernal fall is a disaster in summer. If such large crowds are allowed or ignored and tolerated, then Why Access to Half Dome needs to be limited?

Topic Question 2: We need to accept Half Dome as what it is today -- an iconic land Mark under heavy use by the park authorities and hikers alike. Yosemite National Park's heavy publicizing of Half Dome has lead to drawing of crowds and hikers to the park. For some, hiking Half Dome is the first and only thing to do at Yosemite as now, thanks to all the public exposure of half dome by park authorities, Half Dome is an integral part of Yosemite's identity. Limiting access to Half Dome will result in great demand and pressure by hikers, may result in unpermitted access and high level risk taking by hikers.

Topic Question 3: Adding a third cable to the existing two to make a two lane two way trail. This will help the hikers to access the summit without waiting and consequently leave the area faster. I am sure the solid granite will not lose more than a fraction of a millimeter(if at all) in the next 200 years. A Permit system may still be in place with five to six hyndered permits per day as the new two way trail can easily carry the foot traffic.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 197 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,07,2012 22:50:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: For a couple years now, you've run Half Dome permits with a 400 person per day limit due to the recent safety issues. You now identify a preferred alternative with a 300 person a day limit. Your document doesn't give great reasons (in my opinion) why the limit should decrease. Yes, there is not a lot of solitude on the trail, but trail users can choose almost any other trail in the park or any number of trails in nearby parks and Forest Service areas/wildernesses and get more solitude. My suggestion: Keep the 400 person per day limit (e.g. adopt alternative B) since that solves the safety problem and is what you consider the minimum necessary management action. Let trail users self-select whether they want solitude or not. Maximize the number of people who are allowed to visit Half-Dome.

Correspondence ID: 198 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,08,2012 11:29:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I think the cables should be removed - Alternative E. They take away the wilderness character of Half Dome and turn it into an "amusement park" attraction. Only people experienced enough to climb Half Dome using technical climbing methods should be allowed to reach the summit. I hope to see the wilderness character of Half Dome restored.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 199 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,08,2012 17:36:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The alternative recommended by NPS strikes a fair balance between the Park Service's mission to make park resources and recreational opportunities available to visitors, while respecting safety concerns and the Wilderness Act. 300 permits/day will promote an acceptably low-level of environmental impact, and allow for a wilderness experience.

Topic Question 6: I visit the park to experience the unique wilderness hiking opportunities that Yosemite offers. I have hiked to the top of Half Dome twice in the past three years - once in 2009 before permits were required, and again in 2011 under the permit system. The 2011 experience was significantly more satisfying, due to fewer hikers on the trail and the cables. I took my 13 yr old daughter to the top in 2011 -- wouldn't have felt comfortable trying it without the "crowd control" that the permit system ensures. The new permit system is fair, and intelligently addresses the flaws that existed in the old permit system. The recommended alternative would allow me a fair opportunity to hike the Half Dome in future visits to Yosemite, and provide conditions that would promote a quality hiking experience.

Comments: I understand the tension between the desire to keep this iconic hiking experience available to visitors, and the need to respect and adhere to the provisions of the Wilderness Act. In my opinion, the recommended alternative achieves an admirably fair and pragmatic balance between the two concerns.

Correspondence ID: 200 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,09,2012 09:08:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: N/A

Topic Question 2: I believe that limiting permits to 300 hikers per day (or 2100 hikers per week) is the best option. Based upon the park's recommendations, it seems like the limit will help ease environmental impact and also provide for safer hiking conditions. The one issue with this is permit availability. I will provide a few suggestions for improving permit availability in my response to question #3..

Topic Question 3: I firmly believe that children under the age of 13, or children under a certain height, should not attempt half dome. It's a very dangerous hike. This restriction could be stated when individuals attempt to purchase permits. Rangers are already present to check permits when hikers near the summit and they would be able to enforce this policy. I believe that this could limit some of the use and also lower some of the risk involved for children and their families.

Here's an idea for making unused permits available to hikers who weren't able to obtain a permit in advance. This idea would require the park to limit the total number of hikers on half dome over the course of a week, rather than just a day. Rangers stationed at the base of the sub dome would scan a barcode on each permit. This scan would immediately be reflected in a permit database. By approximately 5 p.m. each day, the park could determine how many permits were not used (most hikers would already be making their descent at this time.) These unused permits would be available for use the next day, and would be up for grabs at a central location in Yosemite Valley ? not to exceed 2100 permits used in one week. There could still be limitations placed on how many unused permits could be made available each following day. For example, if a day is a complete wash-out and none of the 300 permits are used, maybe only 100 would be made available for the next day in order to control crowds.

Topic Question 4: I could not determine any.

Topic Question 5: N/A

Topic Question 6: I believe that a permit system is necessary. I do not think that there should be unlimited access to half dome.

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Correspondence ID: 201 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,09,2012 11:54:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: 300 people a day on half dome sounds like a reasonable number to me. I would like to see a CHANGE in the current permit system; 1. Charge a small fee, \$15 for example for the permit to be used to maintain the trail. 2. Make it mandatory to confirm each permit either in person or by phone, by noon the day before the permit is to be used. 3. Make any permits available that were not confirmed at 2:00 PM the day before the would be used. This system for permits on the Mt Whitney trail and it works very well. Thanks for your consideration [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 202 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,09,2012 23:12:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Plan E. take down the chains, if people can make it up free climbing then more power to them.

Comments: Plan E. take down the chains, if people can make it up free climbing then more power to them.

Correspondence ID: 203 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,10,2012 10:20:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The EA quotes the Yosemite wilderness management plan for a justification for the cables, but ignores case law and the clear text of the Wilderness Act in relationship to structures and installations in Wilderness. A park plan does not trump or over-ride a statute. The clear text of the Wilderness Act prohibits structures or installations unless they are necessary to administer the wilderness. The cables are not necessary to administer the wilderness. In fact, a strong case can be made that the cables detract from almost every aspect of wilderness (undeveloped, solitude, challenge, pristine). While I believe a strong case can be made for keeping the cables up and managing them under your preferred alternative, it is not a wilderness-based one. Instead, it is a public use, or greater public good, or one based on facilitating access to a great icon.

On page 2-2 you state: "New facilities will not be constructed in wilderness but existing facilities may remain." quoting the YWP. It does not say that anywhere in the Wilderness act and the statement contradicts established case law. Current wilderness management frameworks all state that a managing agency should always work towards full-compliance with the Act to achieve optimal wilderness conditions.

On page 2-3 you state: "Guidance from the Yosemite Wilderness Management Plan, supported by NPS Management Policies, directs that replacing or maintaining facilities such as railings or bridges in wilderness should only be considered in areas where long tradition and high hazard to wilderness visitor safety requires them" (NPS 2006, YNP 1989). Again, this contradicts the Wilderness Act and a local park plan cannot override a statute and its clear intent. Again, the burden on the NPS is why the cables are necessary to administer the wilderness. Some facilities like radio repeaters, bridges, and even airports in a large wilderness area can pass this test -- the cables cannot.

Topic Question 2: The Wilderness Act prohibits structures and installations in wilderness unless the structure on installation is necessary to administer the area under the Act. Why are the cables necessary to administer the area as Wilderness?

As a followup question, if the cables are really and truly necessary to administer the wilderness, why to you have an alternative that would remove them (Alt. E)? Because you did not dismiss this alternative, it must be reasonable. Therefore, the minimum requirement test for administration of the area as wilderness does not require cables, which in my mind, makes them illegal under the act. And since you have structured your Purpose and Need around protecting and enhancing wilderness, Alternative E is the only reasonable and valid alternative available to you.

Topic Question 3: Change the Purpose and Need to something related to a NPS goal, and include an alternative that removes the half dome route from Wilderness. Then manage it as under your preferred alternative.

Topic Question 4: The Wilderness Act prohibits structures and installations in wilderness unless the structure on installation is necessary to administer the area under the Act. Why are the cables necessary to administer the area as Wilderness?

As a followup question, if the cables are really and truly necessary to administer the wilderness, why to you have an alternative that would remove them (Alt. E)? Because you did not dismiss this alternative, it must be reasonable. Therefore, the minimum requirement test for administration of the area as wilderness does not require cables, which in my mind, makes them illegal under the act. And since you have structured your Purpose and Need around protecting and enhancing wilderness, Alternative E is the only reasonable and valid alternative available to you.

Topic Question 6: I have been up the cables numerous times. It is a great experience. I used to go up them starting at 3AM so I could avoid the crowds. I could always have a good experience that way. Now I will now have to get a permit and will be more restricted.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 204 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,10,2012 12:25:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Whatever you do, don't remove the cables. People will try to climb the rock without them and there will be more accidents and potential deaths. That's my advice as a clinical psychologist.

Topic Question 3: So, beside doing whatever is necessary to control crowds on Half Dome, and make the hike up the cables a bit safer, I think there should be a program to promote the other hikes out of the valley and the ones throughout the rest of the park. I've done a lot of those hikes, and they were all memorable.

Topic Question 6: I am a regular Yosemite visitor, and have been for most of my life. I have hiked Half Dome many times in the past, the last time in 1997 before the crowds hit. I have no desire to hike it now, not only because I'm older, but mainly because

the crowds would ruin the experience.

Comments: I am in favor of limiting the crowds, but I also believe that this is a problem created by Yosemite as a result of virtually everything having Half Dome as its signature identifying landmark. Spread out the riches - have pictures, t-shirts, mugs, etc. with something on it other than Half Dome. There are amazingly beautiful places in Yosemite that are virtually ignored in all of the ads and marketing materials. So, change how Yosemite is marketed, in addition to doing what needs to be done to limit the traffic up the cables.

Correspondence ID: 205 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,10,2012 12:29:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The permit system, at any level, does not work because it precludes the ability to experience the Park on an informal basis, the ability to climb Half Dome on the sudden appearance of a beautiful day. The permit system purportedly addresses preparedness and safety, but it does nothing to accomplish those ends - an out-of-shape, ill-prepared person can obtain a permit anyway. Instead, the permits merely restrict those lucky enough to get permits to climbing *only* on a given day, regardless of conditions or safety considerations.

Topic Question 3: Separate "up" and "down" cables should be installed, and the permit restriction removed. From direct experience, much of the "crowding" is from bottlenecks caused by people going up and down at the same time. Ameliorate the cross-traffic, and the issue will be materially approved.

Topic Question 6: I use the park for hiking, camping, and driving tours. Limiting Half Dome access through permits negatively affects my experience, because it removes the ability to make spontaneous decisions on where and when to hike -- both in the sense of precluding the ability to climb Half Dome on the sudden appearance of a beautiful day, but also in the sense of restricting those lucky enough to get permits to climbing *only* on a given day, regardless of conditions.

Comments: I have climbed to the top of Half Dome, via the cable system. I'm glad I did it years ago, before the permit system. As a working professional with limited time off, the permit system creates an unwieldy system that discourages me from ever again attempting the climb -- I don't know when my job will allow me free time; and even if I had some certainty as to vacation days *and* had applied for a permit *and* had received one, I can't know what the hiking conditions will be and whether I'd want to climb Half Dome.

The only problem with the old system was "crowding". That problem could be readily solved by installing separate "up" and "down" cables; by eliminating the conflicting flow, the bottlenecks are removed and the crowds would go away.

I disagree with the decision to preclude consideration of this alternative in the document, and believe the document is faulty in that regard.

I also disagree with the decision to pick seemingly arbitrary numbers for the alternatives, and then simply choose the one that is not the highest number. The document smacks of post-hoc reasoning, and I have no confidence that the system is providing an answer that is either most efficient nor most appropriate.

Correspondence ID: 206 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,10,2012 12:56:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: n/a

Topic Question 2: n/a

Topic Question 3: Ticket should be reserved as e-permits when there are more than 4 people in a group. These larger groups should be required to present to a station where they can show ID and register the group they are with prior to obtaining the permits that they have reserved online. This would keep the people online from ordering 20 for a group and then selling to random people.

Another option for those who want a permit is that photo ID be submitted electronically for each person wanting to make the climb. It would cost more, to have someone to check the ID's for each permit, but would be much more affordable than purchasing a hacked ticket online. It is my belief that people would gladly spend \$10 a permit from the park and provide their ID. versus the 30-40 that a scalped ticket would cost.

Topic Question 4: n/a

Topic Question 5: I think 300 sounds like about the perfect number. Half-Dome is a hiking icon, and I would hate to see it retired, but also know that safeguards with regard to number of people hiking per day have to be taken into account. 300 is a safer number versus the 200 people/climb that you have seen on Half-Dome in years past.

Topic Question 6: In the past, I have just done site seeing. Tomorrow, I want to experience all that the park has to offer: hiking/camping/half-dome.

Comments: I love Yosemite. It is the most beautiful place I have ever been. Please keep Half-Dome accessible to the public and keep the thrill of that hike alive.

Correspondence ID: 207 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,10,2012 14:08:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Many people travel from far away to come to Yosemite to do the Half Dome hike. They usually must make their plans up to a year in advance in order to secure some type of accommodations (room or campsite) during their stay. The smart people are also using that time to get or stay in shape for this arduous hike. After all this prep work, if the weather is uncooperative on the particular day that their permit is good for, all is lost. I think the permits should be available for a small range of dates (perhaps 3 days), in order to allow for an alternative date when the weather might be bad. Since this might increase the number of hikers on a particular day, the number of permits allocated in advance should be lowered. People should check in the night before (say by 5 pm) and any permits that aren't checked in could be made available to other hikers after 5 pm.

Comments: The above is just a suggestion. Details would have to be worked out. The main point is that it is a real shame for people to plan a year in advance to do this hike, spend all the time and money it takes to get there and stay there, do all the work to get in shape (all right, maybe we should all be doing that anyway) and then on the one day they have a permit to hike to the top of Half Dome it is raining.

I do believe there has to be some control on the numbers going up there. It has just become too popular to let everyone go up there whenever they want. I first hiked to top in 1974 when I was working in the park. There were very few people up there. In 2005, my husband and I attempted the hike. We got as far as starting up the cables but soon turned back without getting very far up because it was so crowded the line was practically at a standstill. (I did finally get back to the top again, with my sister, in 2007. With a nice early start, going up the cables was not too bad. By the time we started back down, not long after getting to the top, it was already getting unpleasantly crowded on the cables.)

P.S. Although I live in Colorado now, I grew up in California and spent summer vacations in Yosemite. It remains near and dear to my heart.

Correspondence ID: 208 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,10,2012 18:42:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: A personal definition of a wilderness experience does not include "hundreds" of people doing anything in proximity to one another; Alternative D, less is more.

Topic Question 3: The park could make visitors aware of the option to camp on the north-east shoulder, which eliminates ascending/descending cables during peak congestion times with day hikers and backpackers who overnight in Little Yosemite Valley. When one camps on the north-east shoulder, the hiker can go to the top of Half Dome for sunset :-) and again at first light for sunrise :-). Having done this dozens of times (from both Yosemite Valley and Sunrise Trailhead), one can easily be on top of Half Dome (and the cables) alone. No exaggeration. The north-east shoulder is a dry campsite, so water management is obviously important but completely reasonable.

Comments: In conjunction with developing a Half Dome Plan, NPS should simultaneously look at developing alternative, worthy destinations. We all know why people might want to "climb" Half Dome, but maybe these same people could be swayed to "climb" other peaks if only they knew about them.

One such example is Mt. Conness. If NPS and its partners, such as Yosemite Conservancy, invested in re-developing the existing use trail - a little more than a mile in length - between Middle Young Lake and the basin below the summit of Mt. Conness, a significant number of backpackers would immediately be drawn to this peak.

Many of us with "above average" or "advanced" route-finding skills reach Mt. Conness from Young Lakes without any difficulty, but it is not reasonable to expect the general public could succeed on a route-finding backpack.

During summer when Half Dome usage is at its peak and the valley is (too) hot, the high country offers desirable alternatives.

Correspondence ID: 209 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,10,2012 22:04:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: (The general comment below raises an issue with a plan element that may have undesirable secondary consequences.)

Topic Question 3: (The general comment below suggests adjustments that would allow the park to respond to those secondary

consequences if they were observed to occur.)

Comments: While I am generally supportive of any of alternatives B, C, or D, I am concerned with the potential for unintended consequences with the following from pages ES-vi and ?vii. This is from the section on actions common to any of the alternatives that retain the cables, although specific number comes from alternative C:

"A percentage of the total 300 permits would be allocated to wilderness permit holders who start their trips from specified trailheads in the Half Dome area. Because those permit holders would already have gone through either a reservation or first-come first-served process, the NPS would not subject them to additional permit competition to use the Half Dome Trail (Pacific Crest Trail permit holders would not be eligible for this privilege but could compete through the normal day use permit allocation system)."

I did not see a similar statement in the detailed discussion of the alternatives in Section 2.

I believe the guarantee of Half Dome access to wilderness permit holders, while a good initial position, should not be codified in the plan. The park should retain full operational flexibility to re-balance all types of day and overnight usage, consistent with the overall goals, in response to changing visitor behavior, without having to re-open the plan.

My concern is that the guarantee has the potential to set up a competition between hikers who wish to access the wilderness beyond Half Dome (e.g., the upper Merced basin or the John Muir Trail) and those seeking primarily to hike only Half Dome. There could be a decrease in availability of the deeper backcountry and an increase in LYV overnight usage. It is also possible day hikers would seek overnight permits and then exit without an overnight stay. Perhaps none of this will happen. The EA should at least identify the possibility of secondary impacts beyond the Half Dome area and acknowledge the situation needs to be monitored. If these sorts of concerns do materialize, adjustments in access policy may prove wise. For example, it may prove helpful to separate the trail quotas for Happy Isles to Little Yosemite Valley (LYV) and Glacier Point to Little Yosemite Valley (LYV) into "with" and "without" Half Dome groups. Perhaps some other solution would be best. The quoted wording, however, reduces the park's ability to adapt. Elsewhere the Stewardship Plan EA wisely allows for a high level of operational flexibility to meet plan goals. The linkage between wilderness permits and access to Half Dome should be called out in the plan as other specific items are: with plenty of allowance for changes in the details in response to future unknowns, consistent with the overall goals of this and other park plans.

Correspondence ID: 210 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,11,2012 06:44:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Topic Question 1: In the EA you use the example of Snow Lake to put the extreme encounter rates of Half Dome into perspective. There is one important aspect of this that you miss completely, however: The USFS has never legitimized the encounter rates of Snow Lake by covering them in any sort of way in a planning document. Snow Lake is an anomaly and an extreme one at that. The USFS does not indicate that those encounter rates are acceptable. In fact, all the Region 6 information related to encounter rates would indicate that those are unacceptable. Here, you are stating that Half Dome encounter rates are acceptable because you have found an anomaly in the wilderness system that approaches them. It defies logic.

This has major implications for every agency managing wilderness in the Wilderness Preservation System. For this reason, this decision cannot be viewed as having no significant impact. If you go forward with 300+/day as acceptable, this action will legitimize (by saying an agency managing wilderness believes that this extreme encounter rate still provides opportunities for solitude) a level of non-solitude that exceeds any other planning process for wilderness by a factor of 3 or 4. This is not an action with "no significant impact for that reason alone."

You need an EIS to cover this decision, for your decision has major significant impacts for the wilderness system as a whole.

Topic Question 2: None of the action alternatives except E provide a level of solitude commensurate with acceptable wilderness standards.

Topic Question 4: The cables are a structure in wilderness. The wilderness act prohibits structures.

Topic Question 5: You do not consider the precedence of this action in light of the entire wilderness system as an indirect impact.

Topic Question 6: I would not go to this urban experience. If it were truly a wilderness experience I would be there.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 211 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,13,2012 12:38:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: These plans do not address how prepared or equipped hikers are for this trip. See question 3 for a response.

Topic Question 3: I have reviewed and commented on these types of proposals before and I am always amazed how many pages can be used to say the same thing over and over. That being said I agree that the best proposal is to limit to 300-400 people per day, but it seems like you have overlooked or ignored the biggest problems that I have witnessed on the rock. I have reached the summit at both ends of the spectrum. I have hiked on a day that a Hike for Life group of 300 pink shirt walkers chose to assault the peak and I have also led a Boy Scout group that arrived at the cables an hour before sunrise and we waited until it was light enough to see the cables. Needless to say I enjoyed the less crowded conditions, but the problems were not the crowds themselves. It is that the crowds bring more, how shall I say ?idiots? in a politically correct manner, inexperienced hikers. We saw people in flipflops on the cables. We saw people on the way up who were shaking and could not move without holding both cables. We have shared water with people who left the trailhead with ONE bottle of Aquafina. I encouraged those people to turn around for their safety and the safety of those around them and they would not turn around. If you had 100 experienced and fit and well-equipped hikers on the cables it could flow quite smoothly. But if you have 30 hikers and 3 of them are frozen in fear or wearing flipflops the entire group is now held captive by these people. I realize that we cannot administer IQ tests when making a reservation, but this hike is not the right hike for groups of Hike for Life, overweight, dehydrated, ill-equipped, out of breath, day hikers. In the Boy Scouts we require the Scouts to complete training hikes prior to joining on our trans-Sierra or multi-day backpacks through Yosemite. Maybe we need more education for these hikers so here is my plan to incorporate a training hike into the lower portion of the trail. 1. At the time of making a reservation people need to sign a statement that they need to be in top physical condition and be properly equipped to attempt this hike. 2. Add signs along the way that provide benchmarks. The first sign appears at the trailhead and asks each hiker to note the time of day and reminds them that they must have proper footwear and at least 2 quarts of water when they leave Little Yosemite camping area. Also, if it is after 9 AM they should not be planning on reaching the top of Half Dome. 3. A volunteer could also be stationed at this trailhead sign to check reservations and also ask about water and footwear. Those without reservations or the proper equipment will be told they cannot ascend the controlled portion of the trail. 4. The next sign is at the top of Vernal Falls and says that if it has taken longer than X hours from the trailhead or is after Y o'clock, they should not plan on reaching the top of Half Dome. 5. The next sign is at Little Yosemite and says that if it has taken longer than XX hours from the trailhead or is after YY o'clock, they should not plan on reaching the top of Half Dome. They should also be reminded to have at least 2 quarts of water before they leave the river. 6. Last chance sign at the bottom of the cables. If people do not have proper footwear, skill, or strength they should not attempt the cables. And if it is after YYY o'clock they should not ascend. Now I realize people do not read but maybe if they see that they are dropping behind they are not rated for this hike. I read that you do not want to overly control or pamper people on this trail as it is a hike in the wilderness and the other wilderness trails do not have this protection. Do you really think a common hiker in flipflops even knows the difference between a hike in designated wilderness and any other? They think they are out on a walk and when 1200 show up to go on the same walk it almost makes it seem like it is easier than it really is. You need to protect and educate people where they are and they are on the trail to Half Dome, Wilderness or not. I would rather scare them at the trailhead than find them frozen in fear on the cables.

Topic Question 6: From now on I only plan on ascending Half Dome as part of a larger backpacking trip that allows me to leave Little Yosemite by 4 AM and be off the cables before the crowds arrive.

Comments:

Correspondence ID:	212	Project:	29443	Document:	44771
Received:	Feb,13,2012 14:16:33				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Topic Question 3: The simple solution to safety and crowding problems on the Half Dome trail is to add another cable, or even add another cable pair creating up and down lanes, with a safe "passing lane" between the new and existing cables. There would never be crowding or delays, and safety problems would be significantly reduced. I have climbed the cables in all types of conditions for 50 years, and delays on the cable can happen with even small numbers because of slow or timid climbers causing people to go outside the cables. Adding another cable or two has always been the solution to safety and crowding problems on the trail. Instead of fixing the cable "bottleneck" of the trail, the alternatives aim simply to deprive people of the experience of hiking to the top of Half Dome with its spectacular views, so that a few lucky souls can have a "wilderness" experience or more "solitude". There are hundreds of places in the Park where one can experience wilderness and solitude. The top of iconic Half Dome does not need to be limited to a few so it can be a "wilderness" experience. The only honest and logical "alternative" to address the safety and crowding problems is to add one or two cables. I am sure that this "study" will cost more than what it would cost to add cables. And, to anyone that would argue that more cables would increase maintenance costs, I would suggest that the Park charge a small fee which would easily pay for maintenance of the cables, old and new. Fix the problem. Don't use the problem as an excuse to deprive people of one of the greatest experiences in the Park.				

Comments:

Correspondence ID:	213	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	Y
Received:	Feb,13,2012 20:03:47						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Topic Question 3: Some of the negative impact, and a majority of rescue activities, comes from people not aware of what they are getting themselves into.						

Oregon Caves NP has a mock-up set of their steep and narrow stairs at the Visitor Center, where you sign up for a tour slot. People are then aware of what it is like on the stairs inside the cave. A great, safe, test case for my son at the time.

For Half Dome: Build a short, comparable mock-up of the cables (50 feet?) either near the trailhead, or permit station. Heck,

have the people GO UP the test section before they get their permit. Can use either an existing rock, or build one.

If only 150 people "pass" on a given day, so be it. They'll be 150 fewer people on the trail that day.

This is an easy trial: have Rangers set it up on a likely rock somewhere in the Valley for a weekend in May, use 11mm rope instead of cable, etc. Get feedback from the people who try it.

Might need to have participants sign a liability waiver first.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 214 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,13,2012 20:50:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I climbed Half Dome during the summer of 2011. My preference is for alternative B. Based on my experience, having 400 people per day allowed permits did not adversely affect the quality of the experience and maximizes the number of people that are able to experience Half Dome.

Correspondence ID: 215 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,13,2012 21:25:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Please REMOVE the cables! This kind of thing has no place in a national park. It's not necessary for the enjoyment of the park. That should be obvious. This is the 21st century, after all. The protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat should be your top priority.

Topic Question 6: I hike, but I have never thought Half Dome to be an attractive destination, due to its danger and lack of shade. There should be many areas of the park that are off-limits to people, for the sake of the wildlife. Humans should not be so selfish that they require access to every square inch of the world!

For more information, see <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/india3.htm>.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 216 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,13,2012 21:46:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The current system of permitting 400 visitors a day may be the best option if it is actually enforced. I visited Half Dome via overnight camping in LYV with my family this past July 16, 2011. we obtained HD permits along with our wilderness permits. We encountered park rangers at the base of sub dome and at the base of the cables. Neither asked to see our permits. In addition there was a hiker in distress (fear of descending) at the top of the cables. The ranger below was notified by another hiker from the distressed hiker's group. The ranger commented that the hiker would figure it out. I encountered the hiker, gave him my climbing harness and walked him down the cables. It seemed that the ranger was more concerned clicking his counter than providing Visitor Education and Safety.

Comments: I have been visiting Yosemite for over 40 years and climbed Half Dome for the first time with my wife about 20 years ago. We returned to climb Half Dome this past summer and summited with my son, my wife and two daughters deciding that they were not up for the cable ascent. It would be an incredible disappointment to them if they were to find out that this past summer was their only opportunity to climb the cables. I believe that the current interim management plan has not been tried to see if it works. As I mentioned earlier in this survey, the quota was not being enforced. No one was checking for permits. In addition, education and safety were not paramount in the ranger's actions at the base of Half Dome while we were there. A system has been set up and needs to be enforced in order to be properly assessed.

The cables should be maintained, open, and regulated. Give the current quota system a chance.

Correspondence ID: 217 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,14,2012 00:19:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: 400 people would not be overcrowded at all. I've probably have done it with over 1000 on the trail before and 300 of us on the cable at one time in the early afternoons.

Topic Question 6: I am a physical therapist who has hiked up to the top of Halfdome 14 times and have had to turn back two other times do to wet weather. I guide groups up of friends and family each time. I have hiked up in late March to early Oct. I stopped hiking up on Saturdays due to the extreme amount of people the past 6-7 years. Sundays have gotten to be too many people also. I feel the changes the last 3 years are definetly needed. It was much better last year because of the limited amount of hikers. We are scheduled to go up again this 6-21-12 if I make it in the lottery for 6 of us. None of my group have ever had an accident. I make sure everyone has proper shoes, layers of clothing, two bottles of water, a whistle, a flashlight and I bring my

water filter. I end up filtering for others too not in my group, or shining flashlights for those who aren't prepared or ace wrapping someone's ankle. I also now let people in my party know it's ok to bring a safety harness to hook on to the cable. If anyone is hesitant going up the cable, I tell them to not attempt it. I do not charge anyone for my guidance or help. What I'm getting to is I would hope someone like me has a greater chance to win at the lottery because of my safety record and experience. I would hope the permit application process allows for someone to list why they think they would be wise and safe. I feel 400/day would be appropriate. My group makes it a 12 hour round trip from the parking lot beginning. I also have hike Porquepine Trail up top, Yosemite Falls, etc.

Comments: I wish that one camping spot for 6 persons anywhere in Yosemite Park would be automatically tied into someone winning the lottery for a party of 6. It's so difficult when the two aren't tied together. There should be that option.

The park already has enough signs for safety and directions. I don't feel there is a need to put more up. The mistakes are usually human error of ignoring the signs or using poor judgement. There are the unfortunate times when a fast moving storm seems to come out of nowhere even when your weather signs at park entrances say it will be clear skies. I have hiked halfdome on two weekends when someone has fallen to their death or permanent injury, luckily not seeing any directly.

The park rangers are doing a great job.

Correspondence ID: 218 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,14,2012 08:47:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I would recommend the following action plan to reduce crowding and increase safety on the Half Dome Summit Trail:

1. Require all hikers to use a via ferrata harness on the Half Dome cables. 2. Utilize a lottery system to limit the number of hikers to a reasonable number, ie, 300. 3. Require those who win a lottery ticket to present their ticket and their via ferrata harness to the park headquarters by 12:00 p.m. the day before their hike in order to receive a written permit to hike the half dome cables. Any hiker who does not have a via ferrata harness would forfeit their lottery ticket and that space could be opened up to other hikers who have a via ferrata harness but did not win a lottery ticket. 4. A park ranger would be stationed at the half dome cables to make sure that hikers have their permit and harness with them.

The benefit of requiring the via ferrata harness is that the cost of purchasing the harness would limit the number of people who enter the lottery and would also reduce the safety risks of hiking the cable portion of the trail.

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Topic Question 6: I am involved with an organization, Summit Leaders, that plans outdoor leadership experiences for men. Our group hiked the Half Dome trail last year including the cables to the summit and has another trip planned this year. The use of the lottery system makes it extremely difficult to calculate the number of people who can participate and register for an excursion until we know how many people have received a permit.

Comments: Even last summer with the lottery system and the 400 people per day limits in place, I was shocked at how unprepared some of the hikers appeared to be. Our group saw people hiking in flip flops, teenagers carrying a single nalgene water bottle for the entire hike, and small children climbing the cables unaccompanied by an adult. I believe that requiring hikers to demonstrate that they have the capacity and the will to purchase the proper gear for this hike would reduce the number of hikers and greatly increase safety for all.

Correspondence ID: 219 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,14,2012 10:57:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: When planning a trip to Yosemite in the summer, you MUST make arrangements (particularly if you wish to stay in the valley) in extreme advance. Long before the current lottery system would inform you on whether or not you were to get your permit. Additionally airline prices in the summer start out reasonable in February, but can double in some cases by late April. I traveled to Yosemite last year solely to hike Half Dome. I bought my flight, booked me room, then crossed my fingers in regards to getting the permit. If I'd not gotten the permit, I would have spent all those travel expenses and not been able to enjoy the hike that was the reason behind my travels. Fortunately, though the permits were gone in less than 7 minutes after the sale began, I was indeed able to get one and do the hike. At the same time, I did not get the day I intended and had to do some rearranging of my bookings to accomodate. For the future, it would be nice to know the permit is secured as early as February, which would allow more flexibility in dates (because nothing else would be booked yet) and more comfort in spending money on the rest of the trip.

Comments: I had a wonderful Half Dome experience on July 3, 2011. I started out very early and while I did run into other hikers, the trail was not overly crowded. I did not have to wait to ascend or to descend the cables and on top of Half Dome I was able to wander away from everyone for a time.

Coming down there was a crowd hanging out on SubDome. This was because someone had climbed half way up the cables and

freaked out. He wouldn't go up. He wouldn't go down. The people waiting did not want to be below him on the cables. I left before the situation was resolved.

As I continued to make my way down it seemed like most of hikers I past just below SubDome were looking for permits. Although I did not share mine, the group I was tagging along with gave away the two or three they were carrying. In a sense it didn't matter as no one was checking permits and lack of a permit did not appear to be stopping anyone from hiking the trail(I assume they intended to hike as far as they could get without being stopped).

Overall, hiking back down was not terribly crowded until I'd made my way back to the waterfalls at which point there were times I had to wait in a line on the trail as hikers squeezed in both directions on narrow sections of path. Most notably jammed was the mist trail, though a lot of people were hiking the mist-John Murr trail loop, so everything was busy. Several people had very small children (some near infants strapped to adult backs) with them which was causing further traffic chaos. Children on foot on the mist trail were shorter than the guard rail causing parents double next to them on the trail, fully preventing traffic from moving the opposite direction. Some kids were frightened and parents were trying to carry them, which was dangerous for both parties.

In all, the Half Dome trail past the falls was indeed wilderness and away from it all, particularly when compared to the lower part of the trail; Curry Village, where we'd waited in a 30 minute line for pizza the night before the hike; and the valley in general, where the traffic was so backed up it took us over an hour to get from the tunnel to Curry village and caused us to fully miss our dinner reservation at Ahwahnee (thus the wait for pizza). Actually that traffic was enough to turn me off on the idea of a return visit...I can sit in traffic in Chicago. The valley was beautiful, but the fumes and honking cars defeated the purpose of a national park visit for me.

...but I will be visiting other parks. This April....Channel Islands.

Correspondence ID:	220	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	Y
Received:	Feb,14,2012 11:19:12						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Topic Question 2: BEST ALTERNATIVE:: No permits required, and INSTALL A THIRD Cable for safety. We live in a free country. I am 61 years old and would like to responsibly hike Half Dome a few more times in my lifetime. I would like my granddaughter to be able to experience hiking Half Dome, please don't take this highlight of a lifetime away from our children and grandchildren.						

Second Best Alternative:: Allow 600 permits per day and add a third cable. This would allow more people to experience one of the best hiking experiences in the world!

Alternative B - 400 permits issued per day ::This is still very confining and restrictive...we live in a free country, why can't I hike responsibly wherever I want on my National park land? If a storm comes up, the permit holders who are visiting from afar would have no chance to hike the next day or two if the weather cleared up.

Alternative C - 300 permits issued per day :: I have hiked Half Dome twice before and now I am restricted by this lottery method..or, limited permit method. When there are thunder storms on the day I would have a permit to hike, I would be kicked off the mountain with little or no chance to try the next day.

Alternative D - 140 permits issued per day :: Too restrictive! I have hiked Half Dome twice before and now I am restricted by this lottery method..or, limited permit method. When there are thunder storms on the day I would have a permit to hike, I would be kicked off the mountain with little or no chance to try the next day.

Alternative E - Remove the cables ::: This alternative would be unacceptable! I have hiked Half Dome twice before and now I am restricted by this lottery method..or, limited permit method. When there are thunder storms on the day I would have a permit to hike, I would be kicked off the mountain with little or no chance to try the next day.

Topic Question 3: Alternative A - No permits or limits on hikers

Topic Question 4: The proposed restrictive mandates of limiting Half Dome hikers is an affront to my freedom and liberty. We live in a free country. Why can't I hike responsibly wherever I want to hike on my National park land?

Topic Question 6: I have responsibly hiked Half Dome twice before and now I am restricted by this lottery method..or, limited permit method. When there are thunder storms on the day I would have a permit to hike, I would be kicked off the mountain with little or no chance to try the next day. Our freedom is at stake, just add a third cable for safety. I would like my granddaughter to be able to experience hiking Half Dome some day, please don't take this experience of a lifetime away from our children and grandchildren.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 221 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,14,2012 14:16:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Erect a 3rd and 4th cable to accommodate more hikers. One set of cables for ascension and the other for descent. Create a specific time frame window for approved permits in order to control/limit the number of cable users at any one time. Hikers would be responsible to meet their predetermined time slot or their permit is void. For example, a permit would stipulate that a hiker can be at the subdome no sooner than 11AM and must be exited no later than 2PM.

I realize you have already considered and rejected a 3rd cable because it doesn't comply with the "Approved Wilderness Management Plan" but I still question the wisdom of voting no to either a 3rd or 3rd and 4th cable.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 222 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,14,2012 16:38:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Assuming that half dome is "wilderness" is the first mistake. 400, 300 or even 100 people per day is not a wilderness. So do not try to meet that goal. The goal should be to offer the climb to as many people as can be safely accommodated each day.

Topic Question 2: When I climbed half dome in sept of 2011 the limit was 400 per day, neither the cables or the top were crowded.

Topic Question 3: Regarding damage to the areas around the trail and endangered species, I suggest efforts to more narrowly define the trail and public information to discourage hikers from dropping food or feeding the animals. Keep people on the trail and away from endangered species.

Comments: I understand that we need a quota system to keep people from over loving half dome, but the biggest problem I encountered was Recreation.gov. This web service is so bad that every person who works their should be replaced. Better yet the park service should look for an outside contractor (not a government agency) who could set up a better system.

Correspondence ID: 223 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,15,2012 07:20:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The plan is complete but I have hiked to the Top of Half Dome 12 times and I have always wondered if it could be possible to put up a third cable and have going up on the right and going down on the left. This is because most people are right handed and the dominant hand would not have to be shared on the middle cable for support. The wooden planks could also be used on the down side for foot stability.

Topic Question 2: I applied for a permit to hike in 2010 with my son. We had the permit but the snow in June did not allow for the cables to go up and we had to plan our trip for mid-week. This worked but I also had to change camping reservations I made months in advance. I would now like to take my daughter this summer and if we do not get in on the March lottery and must do the short notice lottery, what camping reservations or sites might be available to us on such short notice?

Topic Question 3: Is it possible to set aside a camp area for Half Dome permits that have been acquired with short notice? I am assuming these will be California residents who can drive to Yosemite in 24 hours.

Topic Question 6: Our family travels to Yosemite three times a year and we would like to share the Half Dome experience with our kids. I understand limiting the number of people on the cables as I have had concerns myself as the cables are packed and accidents can happen. I believe a third cable and directing up and down traffic would eliminate the accidents caused by crowding. I believe that a permit process is good for revenue so that the trail can be maintained, more rangers can be in the area, educational materials can be produced with the permit. I suggest a third cable and a higher number of permits offered, perhaps 600 permits.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 224 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,15,2012 18:00:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: My son and I hiked to the top of Half Dome in early August of 2011. We encountered a limited number of people on the trail and arrived at the bottom of the cables at approximately 11:00 AM. There were less than 15 people on the cables (both ways) on the way up and fewer an hour later when we went down. The number on the dome was somewhere between 30 and 40. All of these were fewer than I expected and were easily within the range for what I would call a pleasant and quality experience. I therefore believe either Alternative B or C would accomplish the desired objectives.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 225 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,15,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: This is a bit of a sore topic for many people and even for myself, but purchasing a permit could be another alternative. By putting a price on something it may get people to rethink their trek up to Half Dome. The price many get people to shy away or the extra money that is made can be put to use in preserving certain areas of the park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 226 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,15,2012 23:22:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I have been to the top of Half Dome three times, between 1979 and 1986. On each trip our experience matched that of the ranger who reported no crowding in 1984. On the first trip I was surprised at how many people spent the night (permitted during all of my trips), but there were probably less than a dozen parties, certainly no more than the maximum number on top at once contemplated under Option C. I was appalled the first time I saw a photo similar to that on the Comment home page, showing people "bumper to bumper" on the cable, and many more waiting.

During the second trip a lightning storm arrived just as we arrived at the cables, and we went back down below the lower dome with no problem, spent the night nearby, and went to the top the next morning.

I cannot imagine that our experiences would have been satisfactory with the amount of use described during the last decade.

While at age 72 I am unlikely to make the ascent again, I encourage my grandsons to make the trip. On my own and on their behalf, I see no problem with a fee permit to pay for maintenance. Living nearby, we would have no problem adjusting our schedules to make the climb on a date when we could get a permit.

Visitors who live far away and have to fit their activities into scheduled vacation days might be adversely impacted, but the alternative is to transform what was a highlight of my life into a frustrating and dangerous experience.

Therefore, I support Option C.

Correspondence ID: 227 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,16,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The rangers that are reviewing permits are at the base of the sub-dome. They probably should be at the Half Dome trailhead below as I've experienced hikers who were not aware of the permitting process getting all the way up to the sub-dome to be turned around

Topic Question 2: When we hiked Half Dome last year we were approaching the base of the sub-dome and there were these hikers standing next to the trail where a mother bear and cubs were trying to cross the trail - they were dangerously close to the mother bear and she was in an atck stance - we told the hikers to disperse, but they did not listen - when we told the rangers at the sub-dome they just shrugged it off - the last thing I want to see is someone being mauled by a mother bear

Topic Question 3: I noticed that people are taking short cuts on the switch backs causing erosion on the trails - maybe there should be postings fining people who are caught going off trail in these areas I've witnessed people doing it mostly going down

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 228 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,16,2012 13:23:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I completely agree with the need to protect the park's environment by limiting access to Half Dome. I do have issue with the process by which access to Half Dome is obtained. I live out of state. To ensure I have lodging accommodations in the park during the period when the cables to the top of Half Dome are up, I have to make reservations a year in advance. I would visit Yosemite during this summer period for one and only one reason and that is to hike to the top of Half Dome. But with the current process there is no guarantee that I will be able to secure a pass for the period during my stay. If unable to acquire a pass, I have to cancel my reservation which could be just weeks before I'm scheduled to leave home for the Park. To acquire the necessary pass to hike Half Dome before making lodging reservations is sure to encounter a no vacancy situation. I suggest the access process be modified to allow visitors with confirmed reservations in the Park to reserve passes to Half Dome if they so opt. I would agree to a non-refundable fee to secure and hold pass reservations for a specified date that coincides with their lodging reservation.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 229 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,16,2012 13:57:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Topic Question 1: The biggest source of trail and habitat destruction in the park is the National Park Service. 1) pack trains grind up trails and pack animal feces create a fly infested experience for hikers. 2) salamanders and frogs are most likely being killed by fish planted in lakes that never had fish.

Topic Question 2: Limiting access is not an acceptable policy. This dome is merely a rock. It will not die or suffer greatly. Park rangers are already a pompous group of arrogant ***holes.

Topic Question 3: How about accommodating the demand? The planet is grossly overpopulated anyway and there is no way to change that fact. Let's install clean water sources and viable toilet facilities along the trail as if we were in the 21st century instead of pretending it's 1899.

Topic Question 4: The very title of the Wilderness Act disqualifies its application to the Half Dome trail. If the trail required a full days hike just to reach it then... maybe. The fact visitors can drive their cars right to the trail head eliminates any aspect of wilderness from this issue.

Topic Question 5: See question 1.

Topic Question 6: I rarely use the park anymore due to the overcrowding caused by the lack of any new facilities having been constructed in my lifetime. As a young man there were enough camp sites to accommodate the demand. Even though there are dozens of viable campground locations (this is not a small park) the Park Service seems to enjoy keeping visitors in overcrowded conditions while employees live a relatively luxurious lifestyle in OUR PUBLIC PARK.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 230 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,17,2012 11:53:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: None known

Topic Question 2: All are feasible, depending on politics, funding allocations, and the impacts deemed acceptable. Whatever alternative the NPS determines is correct, some users will applaud the decision, others will be pissed, and some will appeal the decision. Can't please everybody....

Topic Question 3: None

Topic Question 4: The obvious difference is interpretation of the Wilderness Act "requirements", and only one, remove the cables, compliments the Act completely.

Topic Question 5: Good document - fairly easy to understand.

Topic Question 6: I have visited Yosemite only once in July 2011 to go up Half Dome. I left the TH at 4 AM and was on top by a bit before 9 AM. five others were on top, and I met two coming down the cables. Spent a half hour on top, a half hour at the bottom of the cables observing other users, and got back to the TH a bit before noon. The weather was exceptionally good - sunny and temps on HD in the 50s, with no wind.

Personally, as a mountaineer/trail runner for the past 50 years, I thought the trip up the cables was fairly straight-forward. I met two users descending while I was going up, five on top, and no one while descending. Physically, some effort is required, but mentally and emotionally is much more difficult if one is not used to scrambling/climbing, especially on the cable descent. During my half hour at the bottom of the cables, seven climbers started up. The conversations heard before they started up included at least two commenting they were "scared sh...ss" but they went up the cables after their companions persisted. I was not there when those two came down, but i would guess "scared sh... ss" was still applicable. Two other users started up the cables, but came back down just before the steep "step", maybe a third of the way up. An additional observation was maybe half brought their gloves, and the others scrounged a pair from the pile at the bottom of the cables. I would not enjoy the cables with bare hands. On the way down the sub dome, I counted 64 users coming up that part of the trail, and encountered maybe twice that many before I got back to the falls.

I base my thoughts based on this very small snapshot of use on the cables. I am surprised there are not many more deaths and injuries on the climb. I would not want to think about the hazards of a hundred users on the cable ascending and descending at the same time, particularly on wet rock or in a high wind. And I am not impressed with what some users (including young males with ego issues, sorry....) will try without the proper experience, equipment, or common sense.

Obviously, encountering that many users on the trail, the candy bar wrappers et al on the side of the trail, the noise associated with the users, and the effects on vegetation and wildlife are not the experience described in the Wilderness Act.

My first preference would be to remove the cables, primarily for safety. The granite will only become smoother as more shoes go up it, and the number of people putting in for the permits will only increase. Obviously removing climbing HD as the destination will significantly reduce the number of trail users and the impacts, and better comply with the intent of the Wilderness Act. Politically, removing the cables might be very difficult?

My second preference would be the 140 permits/day - with no shows, maybe 120 would go up the trail? The interpretive signing along the trail is good - just gotta get people to stop and read it. I would also add a box for the gloves at the cables - has a high wind ever removed the pile (and scattered them over the lower slopes)? Perhaps one of the ecological toilets such as that at the Boulderfield on Longs Peak in RMNP would minimize sanitation issues, especially with fewer users. The toilet could be located in many places, on or close to the Subdome.

I was a climber in Colorado when RMNP removed the Long's Peak cables, I think in the 60s. Safety and impacts were the issues there also. The situation at HD is not quite the same as Longs - Longs has several other Class III routes up the peak, so it is still accessible. Again, I recommend the same fate for the HD cables - return the area to "wilderness" and minimize hazards in the backcountry. Good luck with the process.

Comments: None.

Correspondence ID: 231 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Feb,17,2012 13:05:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I coordinate a trip each summer for my boss and his group of 12-15 guys. It's a mentoring group, and the hike to Half Dome is the culminating team-building event of their year-long program. I've noticed that the new permit lottery system is limited to 6 participants per group. Overall I like the new lottery system because it seems like a more fair and flexible method, (especially since you can request flexible dates.)

But for a group larger than 6 even if we split them into three groups, there is no way to ensure all 3 groups would get the same date. I suggest you offer some method for larger groups to "link" their lottery applications, so that they all get accepted, or rejected or moved to a second-choice date, all together as a unit.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 232 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Feb,17,2012 14:18:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I agree with the proposition to reduce and manage the crowds by limiting the amount of people that hike to Half Dome per day. As an Outdoor Educator, climber and hiker I had the pleasure to be at the top of Half Dome. I don't know if my children will have the same pleasure if we don't start managing the crowds. Last time I was there, animals were so used to people they would fight to get food out of our hands. That is not proper behavior for a "wild" animal, but unfortunately they have been domesticated by the ignorant crowds that feed them, leave trash and packs unattended. Education is only one of the many pillars our society needs in order to behave in the wild. Humans don't know how to enter the outdoors anymore, we are too alienated, too disconnected. That is why rules and regulations were invented, to manage society and put a little order in the primitive behavior.

Topic Question 3: Yosemite National Park can implement something similar as Mount Whitney system. A lottery system consisting in x number of people per day. This way it will help visitors prepare with more anticipation, read and review what they need to bring for the trip, etc. It will also limit the amount of visitors per day, decreasing the daily impact in the fauna and flora. Giving the wild a break. NPS could also charge an extra fee for the lottery number. This money could be used for restoration purposes in the area and it will filter the amount of people hiking.

Topic Question 5: I believe taking the cables out, in the current state of events, will probably cause more death than good. People need to get educated first. I would consider taking the cables down in a couple of years if things get worse after implementing other systems and definitely allowing less amount of visitors to enter the hike.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 233 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Feb,18,2012 16:23:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Access to the wilderness and/or Half Dome could require completing a wilderness training class from a certified organization. Once a person has taken the class and completed an exam to demonstrate his/her understanding, the person would then be issued a Wilderness Certification Card. This process could be similar that that given and required for scuba diving. The classes could be given by certified organizations and wilderness outfitters, such as REI. There would be a fee paid to the organization giving the class, maybe \$100. For Half Dome, or other places, there could be special certification

requirements required, and if necessary, that would be stamped on the Wilderness Certification Card.

Permits to climb Half Dome could then be issued at any Yosemite Ranger station upon presentation of the Wilderness Certification Card.

This method would actually improve safety on Half Dome by requiring people to be trained on wilderness safety and dangers, as opposed to the proposed plans which do practically nothing to improve safety. (see my earlier post from Feb 2 for further explanation of this last point)

Comments: The proposed plans of limiting the number of climbers per day do little to improve safety while denying many of the opportunity to climb Half Dome. The past permit issuing plan and the new lottery plan make it almost impossible to get a permit, and requires being able to make plans months in advance. It also gives equal access to inexperienced hikers with no understanding of the dangers of Half Dome, over those hikers with wilderness experience and good knowledge of the dangers.

In some ways, the current permit system adds to the danger. It motivates people to do climb in bad weather while requiring no training or education on the dangers. It also increases the percentage of ignorant day hikers on the trail and cables over plans that require verifiable training.

The current permit system did not save Hayley LaFlamme and would have done nothing to prevent Gina Bartiromo's fall (at which I was present). It is not the crowds that present the greatest risk. It is the inexperienced hikers who do not understand the dangers, and the current permit system which motivates people to climb in bad weather.

The proposed plan does not require any training or education for obtaining the permit. It only increases the danger by motivating those fortunate few who do obtain a permit after months of planning and a little luck, to climb Half Dome on their assigned day, even if the weather is not the best. They have no other optional day to climb other than their assigned day, and if they have traveled 100's or 1000's of miles for this one day event, they may not be willing to forego the adventure because of a few light clouds on the morning of their scheduled departure. Once at the cables, knowing that it is now or never, more people will take the risk rather than wait for another day for good weather, since that is not an option with the current permit system.

Using a Wilderness Certification Card accomplishes the goal of both reducing the crowds and improving safety. Having the Wilderness Certification Cards means that extra effort and prior preparation must be performed to make the trip, which will limit those qualified for a permit. The many of the casual day hikers that are currently seen on Half Dome may not take the time to obtain the certification, and if they do, all the better. This will reduce the crowds and ensure that those who do climb are better prepared. Having the Wilderness Certification Card also improve safety for 3 reasons: 1) People will be trained on the dangers and safety requirements. 2) The passes can be good for several days (7 days), which allows hikers to wait for good weather. 3) Requiring a Wilderness Certification Pass will automatically reduce crowds without placing hard daily quotas.

In summary, using a certification program will accomplish the goal of improving safety without denying so many people access and so much inconvenience and luck for obtaining permits. There is little cost to NPS, because the certification training can be provided by other certified organizations at a nominal cost. It also eliminates the burden to NPS of managing the very unpopular reservation/lottery system as it is currently proposed. In addition to Half Dome, the Wilderness Certification Pass could be required for obtaining any wilderness permit, thereby improving the problem of untrained hikers and backpackers in other wilderness areas.

Correspondence ID: 234 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,18,2012 17:45:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: The current plan, limiting access to the Half Dome cables, does not provide proper balance between environmental concern and safety issues, and the human experience. Scaling Half Dome is an iconic accomplishment for people from all over the earth.

The Park hosts millions of visitors annually and it seems inappropriate to subject a well traveled portion of the Park to provisions of the Wilderness Act. It is in the public interest either to remove the Half Dome Trail from provisions of the Wilderness Act, or alternatively amend or provide a waiver to the Act to at least enable installation of a third parallel cable. A third cable would facilitate simultaneous cable ascent and descent to mitigate danger from crowding. Encounters on the trail are an expected part of the Half Dome experience and I do not believe they lessen the enjoyment for the vast majority of hikers.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 235 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,19,2012 10:04:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I've been to the top of HD four times. Prior to the permits, the backlog at the base was typically caused by scared, slow hikers (those that probably shouldn't have been there in the first place.) My recommendation is a third cable... A passing lane of sorts. It would not be very invasive to the environment, by widening the current cable path by only a foot or two. A third cable would allow ALL who want to experience HD the ability to do so. Slow hikers can still have access, but not hinder others. Additionally, cost saving could be had by eliminating the rangers checking permits, the costly permit system, and more

savings that I'm not aware of.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 236 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,19,2012 19:24:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Incorrect: The wilderness experience is reduced by higher numbers on the trail. Living in Florida I do not get to attempt the Half Dome Trail often. I climbed on a Saturday, June 28, 2008 before the quotas, and based on your statistics in the EA, likely one of the all time busiest days. I had a wonderful wilderness experience.

Topic Question 2: Alternative B, Minimal Management Action is the most agreeable and can allow more people access and full wilderness experience.

Alternative E, removal: IT IS ABSOLUTELY IRRESPONSIBLE FOR NPS TO CONSIDER TAKING DOWN THE CABLES.

Topic Question 3: This wonderful park belongs to all Americans. Rather than random lottery or walk up one day prior, I suggest quotas for international and national, and within the nation, state by state quotas based on population of home state, similar to House of Representatives in Congress. AND make sure that the home state address is on the US governmental acceptable ID. This will allow trail access across all population sectors of the USA. And decrease scalpers, who are most likely in California.

If safety is deemed the main issue, consider adding another cable.

Topic Question 4: "Wilderness" is open to interpretation. If some wish to define wilderness with severe quotas to limit access so severely, why don't they just go farther into the park beyond the Half Dome trail?

Comments: Traveling from Florida means it is a rare occasion for me to try the climb. It was a great experience of my lifetime to climb the Half Dome with cables round trip from my Upper Pines campsite on a very busy Saturday in summer 2008. My wilderness experience was not reduced. Alternative B is the option most agreeable.

Correspondence ID: 237 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,20,2012 18:55:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I read a lot of the EA and did not see how technical climbing users would be treated if they wanted to descend the cables and last 2 miles of the Half Dome trail. I believe a person does not need a permit to engage in technical climbing, so if they are stopped by a Ranger who is performing compliance checks on permits, how will this be addressed by both the Ranger and the technical climber(s)?

Topic Question 4: Since the NPS Organic Act strives for some balance between preservation of resources and use of those special resources, I believe the preferred alternative leans too heavily toward preservation of resources and additionally over states the safety concerns by always talking of threats of thunderstorms, etc. The Sierra has long stretches of ideal summer weather with hardly a cloud in the sky (I know from months spent in the Sierra including hiking the John Muir Trail), which makes the threat of storms less than the document tries to "sell". Also while Search and Rescue incidents seem to be increasing, they still seem to be a very small percentage of overall users and greater educational efforts should be tried first before limiting use so abruptly. The park needs to do more to put the responsibility on users to be better informed and prepared to deal with potential conditions (perhaps they could be required to watch a video describing the overall risks and demands of the ascent when picking up their permit). Give the public the right to see their national park and opportunity to do a "life enriching" activity, climbing Half Dome via the cables. I think a more reasonable limit is 400 per day as getting to the top of Half Dome is the number 1 goal of a majority of non-casual hikers to Yosemite.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 238 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,21,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Email submitted from: [REDACTED]/yose/contacts htm

hello, i just had a quick comment about the permit system for half dome. i think its a great idea for weekend visitors, but getting permits so long in advance leaves a chance that there could be unpermitted weather on half dome. I have noticed that people are still making the trek regardless of weather, because they want to do it but they dont want to be fined for hiking on a clear day. a day they dont have permits for. now, i and most people realize that half dome should only be hiked on clear sunny (or starry) days/nights. however, there are visitors who, and this is only an example, who think its a good idea to jump a fence for a pic on vernal falls. nothing can save those visitors, they were doomed to begin with. at least reconsider permits during the weekday. thank you.

Correspondence ID: 239 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Feb,21,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: You should charge \$20 per person to hike Half Dome with a permit.

Correspondence ID: 240 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,22,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: 2-13-12 Re: Half Dome Plan Keep the cables available to the public. Strike down Alternative E. Yosemite is God's gift to the people of the world. And Half Dome is the crown of the queen of nature's beauty. Keep the cables open and available.

Correspondence ID: 241 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,23,2012 12:32:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Although Yosemite is crowded on certain days, for the most part there are not incidents due solely to the number of people who chose to hike half dome. Much of the trouble is caused by people not following the rules, and that should be their own fault, not the fault of the NPS. Yosemite is a fantastic park and should be open to all who care to access it. The chains on the trail were installed years ago and serve as a safety device to prevent accidents for those who access the dome. They do not detract and help to preserve life by adding a measure of safety. Half Dome should not just be for "extreme" hikers.

Topic Question 2: Given the number of people who access Yosemite, it is unfair to limit the number of hikers to 300. 400 is not much better; however, I understand it is unrealistic to expect the NPS to resist pressure from the radical environmentalists and leave the trail, even though it is supposed to be for public enjoyment and is maintained in a manner to preserve it for future generations. As a conservationist, I maintain that parks can be enjoyed by anyone who wishes to do so if they follow reasonable rules and procedures - stay on designated paths, don't litter, etc. Also, the "lottery" system is patently unfair to out-of-town hikers. With the price of travel, it is unreasonable to expect that hikers, if they are not lucky enough to be picked in the lottery, to show up the day before and hope they can obtain a permit.

Topic Question 3: Implement Alternative B, 400 people per day. Access would be on a reservation basis on a first come/first served basis. Reservations could be made by phone or internet much like hotel reservations are made, up to one year in advance. This will preserve the character of the Half Dome trail but still allow access, albeit somewhat limited access. This is also more equitable to out-of-town hikers as under the current proposal/system a lottery in March and obtaining unused permits the day before is patently unfair to travelers, particularly given the limited hotel accommodations available. Also, do not remove the chains. They are a safety feature, have been installed for years, and allow the non-extreme day hiker to enjoy the natural wonder that is half dome.

Topic Question 4: the legal mandate is to make the park accessible for visitors. The National Park Service encourages visitors, but once visitors show up, seek to put limits and restraints on visiting. This is inconsistent. While the NPS must protect parks for future generations, limiting access to current generations is unfair, and illogical. This trail can be maintained for future generations without severing limiting present access.

Topic Question 5: the negative environmental consequences have been overstated. I hiked half dome and other trails in the park two years ago. Because of the clearly marked trails, there was very little negative impact outside of the trails. The trails themselves do not negatively impact the environmental integrity of the park, they are defined, limited, maintained, patrolled and structured. Again, to preclude visitors for the sake of preservation is only necessary where the visitors will destroy the overall value of the park - which is not the case in Yosemite.

Topic Question 6: My husband and I fly from Ohio to California to access the park, as specifically to hike half dome. To limit access to the half dome trail to a lottery system would likely mean that we would not choose Yosemite as a destination, and thereby miss the beauty and splendor of the park. This would be a tragedy.

Comments: Please do not remove the chains or limit access to half dome to less than 400 people per day. Also, change the lottery system to a reservation system. The reservation system would be more straightforward, could be easily computerized and would be a more equitable access system.

thank you.

Correspondence ID: 242 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,24,2012 09:26:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I would prefer to see Alternative D implemented.

Correspondence ID: 243 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,24,2012 10:09:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I can largely support the preferred alternative. I appreciate that a balance between "the wilderness experience", providing access, and natural resource protection is being sought. The Half Dome climb is such an iconic American experience. I believe that NPS should continue to provide that experience to a broader-than-typical range of visitors. It may be the sole wilderness experience that many people have in their lifetimes (and the cables are an important component of that). To that end, I am concerned that the permit fee may be somewhat exclusionary. By reducing the amount of access (i.e. limiting the number of people who can have access on any given day) and also charging a permit fee are two barriers for some. Further, having to make a reservation by web becomes an additional barrier. Technology is great for those of us of certain age, ability, and education. Further, the cost to access the experience and the park starts to become onerous for many. I would urge NPS to find a permitting solution that is considerate of these concerns. We who are well-educated, somewhat affluent, and tech saavy have a multitude of opportunities to access the wilderness and enjoy the wonders of the backcountry; here at Half Dome, as has been the case for decades, there is the opportunity to provide that for many.

Thank you for your efforts and commitment to manage and preserve our country's most special places!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 244 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,24,2012 10:15:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: N/A

Topic Question 2: Alternative B seems to be the most attractive alternative given the number of permits issued at the current level and not being used. However, at one time, only a third of the persons attempting to hike to the summit actually reached the summit. Basing the number of permits on the actual number of persons reaching the summit pre-limit was 300. It should not have been a surprise that fewer than 300 would actually show on any given day. Based upon prior numbers of 300 persons reaching the summit in a day, it would seem appropriate to start by limiting the number of permits to 900 and adjusting downwards only if more than 300 persons actually reach the summit regularly.

Topic Question 3: N/A

Topic Question 4: N/A

Topic Question 5: Limiting to 300 permits was overly restrictive based upon past actual use.

Topic Question 6: N/A

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 245 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,24,2012 23:28:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Dear Committee and NPS,

Although most would agree that 1,200 people in one day makes for a dangerous and at times chaotic situation, I believe you should find a way to accommodate a larger number of visitors than the low levels that are being proposed. It looks as though the proposals are going from one extreme to another. I propose reducing the traffic from peak levels of 1,200 by possibly 25% and monitor the situation to see if things are improving. It looks as though most of the fatalities have happened within the last 10 or so years when the usage levels have spiked.

The Committee and NPS should also consider modifying the cables to allow for more free flowing traffic. Why should a person that is afraid of heights and pauses on the cables inhibit another person's ability to experience Half Dome?

At the very least, those people and families camping in Yosemite valley should have access to all the the trails, including Half Dome. Having that access is part of enjoying your stay in the valley. I propose that those actually staying in Upper, Lower, and North Pines campgrounds have automatic access to Half Dome.

Thank you,

██████████

Correspondence ID: 246 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I have hiked the portion of the trail in question for 20 years. While the focus on quantity (numbers of groups

encountered per hour, total number of hikers permitted to summit per day, etc.) is important, an aspect which I feel needs to be addressed is not only how many hikers but their preparation. There needs to be more done to reduce the number of people who, because of lack of preparation and awareness, are safety risks to themselves and others. Here I mean tourists who simply aren't prepared for the demands of traveling to the summit of Half Dome. People who are dehydrated (carrying only a small water bottle). People hiking in sandals. Many of the people who go to the summit are not prepared to do so safely. They are a risk to themselves and others. People risk their safety and mine to take pictures (sometimes outside the cables). At Grand Canyon you are required to watch a video before traveling into the backcountry. In terms of safety more needs to be done to educate and prepare people who, without this preparation, carry the potential to create life-threatening safety risks.

Topic Question 5: The ridge below the sub-summit is already hammered and it would take closing it off to everyone for years to allow this area to recover any semblance of its wilderness character. Others have commented on the presence of unburied toilet paper and human waste, along with the scent of urine and soiled clothes (I've found and packed out everything from T-shirts and shorts to bandanas, jeans, sweaters, and even jackets used as toilet paper) on the ridge below the sub-summit. It's my understanding that no new structures (such as a composting toilet) can be built at this time. Given the climate, I think what is needed is a pack-out human waste system given to everyone with a permit. Like on Mt. Shasta where paper bags with kitty litter are given out, people using this already compromised area need an alternative to damaging the resource further.

Topic Question 6: I have visited Yosemite multiple times a year for 20 years. I make at least two trips to Half Dome each year: one late in the spring, when snowshoes or microspikes are needed to ascend the sub-summit below Half Dome; the other in the fall after the stanchions and wooden footrests come down. The only alternative that would affect my use of Yosemite and the portion of the John Muir Trail in question is the one that would close the summit to all-non-technical climbers (so the preferred alternative C would not affect my use: even with reduced traffic to the summit there are still too many people, cars, campfires, barking dogs, boom boxes, for me to come into the Yosemite Valley during peak season. Besides, there are so many other parts of the park to enjoy while everyone else is crowding into Yosemite Valley).

Comments:

Correspondence ID:	247	Project:	29443	Document:	44771	Private:	Y
Received:	Feb,25,2012 09:21:07						
Correspondence Type:	Web Form						
Correspondence:	Topic Question 2: I like the plan of reducing traffic to 300 in order to balance access with safety and protection of the environment, and the Park's re monitoring and protection sources (such as Rangers).						

Topic Question 3: I have frequently hiked to Half Dome over the past 20 years. As a result of my experience I would make 2 recommendations:

1. Many hikers are not prepared to summit safely. I suggest hikers be required to watch a video that provides instruction on carrying water, proper clothing, behavior on the cables, & Leave-No-Trace hiking. (Something similar to the requirement to hike in the Grand Canyon.)
2. In each of my trips to Half Dome I bring out garbage bags full of trash, especially toilet paper and soiled undergarments. Mount Shasta has instigated a human trash pack out system to help eliminate the problem of accumulating human waste on the mountain. I suggest that the same be done for Half Dome.

Topic Question 6: I no longer go to Half Dome or the Valley during Peak Season so my use would not be effected.

Comments:

Correspondence ID:	248	Project:	29443	Document:	44771
Received:	Feb,25,2012 10:22:32				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Topic Question 1: The comment is always made of the congestion at the bottom of the cables. The truth is that the congestion and most of the accidents are caused because another set of cables beside the existing ones would totally eliminate the problem.				

Topic Question 2: When a city grows and traffic congestion gets continuously worse we don't cut back on the amount of cars on the road and we don't shut the road down completely-which shows that three of the options listed are not the answer. A city will add another lane of traffic to smooth out the flow.

Topic Question 3: Install another set of cables and have one set going up and the other to go down. Take time and widen the trails by moving fragile and endangered species of plants back from the trails so people in a hurry will not short-cut the trails and do harm to plants and animals.

Topic Question 5: I believe educating the public through signs, literature and talks will show people the importance of staying on the trails and stop the damage they are doing.

Topic Question 6: I believe the park service is taking the easy and lazy way out by just mandating changes instead of facing the

facts and fixing the problems. Please try some of the suggestions I have made and prove me wrong.

Comments: I love the National Parks of the United States and I don't want them limited and I don't want them damaged and destroyed. I believe it takes work and I believe a survey of people coming back from the Half Dome hike would agree that the suggestions I have made are the best answer to these problems. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on these issues.

Correspondence ID: 249 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,26,2012 22:00:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: This is a great idea! I'm all for limiting the number of visitors so the animals and plants can recover. Please implement more restrictions. My last two visits have been unpleasant due to the crowds.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 250 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Yosemite National Park, Superintendent ATTN: Half Dome Stewardship Plan PO Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

February 19, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my concern about the long-term plan to manage Half Dome access. I have summited Half Dome twice: once in July 2009, before the permitting system, and once in September 2011, after the interim permitting system was put in place.

I would like to see more details of how the permits will be allocated, which unfortunately was not addressed in the plan.

My main concern with the current permitting system and what I assume will continue under all the preferred alternate A plan is that the system is too inflexible by allowing for summiting on a single day despite the requiring booking the permit months in advance when weather conditions are unknown. When people know they only have once chance to summit Half Dome because of the permit, they are more likely to take dangerous risks in order to complete the epic hike, and climb the cables in marginal weather conditions. Only a week after I completed the hike last year, reports of hikers stranded on the summit during a thunderstorm were published in many newspapers. No doubt many of these hikers pushed on despite dicey conditions, knowing that the permit allowed them to summit that day only.

The experience before and after the permitting system is without comparison. When I summited in 2008 it was crowded, unsafe, and took 45 minutes to climb the cables. In 2011 it was a pleasure to climb the cables, taking only 10-15 minutes. I strongly support the need to control access to ensure safety and preserve wilderness. However, more flexibility should be built into the permitting system to allow people a range of days to summit, so people do not feel the only option is to climb the cables in marginal weather conditions.

Sincerely,



Correspondence ID: 251 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,29,2012 15:57:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I am in favor of removing the chains as this is an unnatural and unnecessary addition within designated wilderness. The ability to attain the summit of this peak is made possible to many who have no concept of difficulty and are unprepared for situations which may arise. Leave this peak to those who have developed proper skills to attain its summit rather than enabling the masses.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 252 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Feb,29,2012 16:06:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I have not been to the top of Half Dome since the restrictive permit system has been instituted. I do, however, recognize that with the increased recreational usage has stressed not only the sites themselves but the people trying to use them. As with the valley campgrounds a reservation system for the Parks most used locations should be implemented. I do believe that the immediate safety of each wilderness user lies with that individual. A wilderness hike brings with it many known safety

issues that with the proper knowledge can be mitigated. Hiking to the top of Half Dome obviously takes a physically fit person. The only other obvious safety issue is the ability to read the weather signage. If an individual can't determine approaching thunderstorm clouds in a timely manner so as to avoid rain and lightning storms then they really have no business hiking to the top. Limiting the number of visitors will help reduce the wear and tear on the trail. A portion of the permit revenue could support the current maintenance. I have reviewed each of the alternatives and find that Alternative C, the preferred alternative, is the best choice to meet the greatest needs for those seeking the summit of Half Dome.

Thank you. Ron Farrar

Correspondence ID: 253 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Feb,29,2012 18:59:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I feel alternative C or D would be your best options. The climb now is way too crowded and that is attracting inexperienced people to the cables. Which is causing accidents. Limiting it to 300 or 140 on a permit only basis would greatly reduce the inexperienced hikers on the trail. My only concern would be incorporating wilderness permits into the summit permits so backpackers don't have to try for 2 different permits on the same date.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 254 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,01,2012 08:37:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: Alternative E (Remove the Cables Alternative): Under this alternative, the NPS would remove the cable system from Half Dome altogether. The summit would only be accessible to technical climbers with proper equipment. One commercial trip per day would be allowed under Alternative E.

Comments: Interesting take. Remove the climbing aids and make sure the climber understands the risks. The crowding will self abate. I don't believe there should be commercial interests at all here. How many times must we pay for the use of the park? Cars and buses should stop at the gate. Our parks are becoming like theme parks, crowded, dirty and paved from end to end. The more commercial they become the less I like them.

Correspondence ID: 255 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,01,2012 08:56:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Establish a lottery system, thus restricting use and enhancing the experience by half dome hikers. Trust me there are plenty of people leaving Yosemite disgusted at the crowds and lack of genuine connections between them and the resources Yosemite is famous for having.

Topic Question 4: I would like to point out that this question is worded much like the rest of the Park Service trickery. The real discrepancy is between the current use and the legal mandates for the National Parks mission. You are 'required' to provide enjoyment, WHILE PRESERVING THE INTEGRITY OF THE RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. Not to mention the tighter belt squeezing wilderness restrictions. There are some places people are not suppose to be. The top of half dome is one of them.

When you opened the flood gates in the beginning you should have planned ahead for congestion issues. Now you are having some tough decisions to make. One thing the Park Service is in desperate need of, foresight.

Topic Question 6: I traveled to Yosemite one time. It was disgusting. I grew up in Colorado, have a degree in Natural Resources Management, and have worked as a seasonal park service employee in Glacier National Park.

Yosemite, a postcard for how the parks system has failed.

Comments: I would recommend a lottery system. You could still offer visitors the chance to hike the dome, yet manage for wilderness aesthetics and resource enrichment. Restricting use would benefit the experience, and stay true to the mission statements of the Park Service. You seem to be catering to only one crowd. There are many people that seek solitude, or at least semi-solitude in Yosemite's case.

Too many mules in the Grand Canyon has led to restrictions because of trail degradation and visitor complaints. Yosemite needs to step up and make tough decisions for the betterment of resources, and the people that enjoy them. You can't make everyone happy. Are we going to be disgusted by the next generation because we couldn't do the right thing?

Correspondence ID: 256 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,01,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I understand the over crowding, but this is going to be a real frustration for locals who would like the flexibility to go up spontaneously. Sometimes, we will go at a moments notice because Yosemite is in our backyard. Also, my understanding is that you have a 7 day period to use your permit. How is this going to limit access on a particular day? I am not

sure what the answer is but maybe there can be exceptions for locals that have proof of residency.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 257 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,01,2012 09:59:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Certainly safety of park visitors and nature preservation are, and should be, important to the NPS and to Yosemite specifically. However, as a taxpaying citizen, I financially support all things that the NPS manages, which are quite a few things! As a financial supporter, whether I want to be or not, I think that there should be no restrictions on the half dome cables. So many taxpayers are already paying for the maintenance and management of the all the national parks, and so many of those taxpayers do not even visit these parks. Those taxpayers that do visit should not be subject to restrictions on the things we ultimately are paying for. That is what those alternatives, B-E, end up causing, and that is, in my opinion, not right. Do not get me wrong, I am not advocating a policy of only taxpayers may enjoy the park and the trails and such, and separating taxpayers from foreign visitors, non taxpayers, etc. Not at all. From a taxpayer viewpoint, restrictions are a slap in the face. I am already paying for the cables and trail maintenance, I should not have to go through more policy and procedure to actually be able to use it, as well as pay anymore in fees or dues.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 258 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,01,2012 16:01:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: There is no analysis of what the Wilderness Act actually says, and how the courts have interpreted the Act regarding structures and installations in wilderness.

Topic Question 2: No alternative that specifically proposes to leave the cables in Wilderness is legally defensible given that the structure or installation is not necessary to administer the wilderness.

Therefore, the only alternative that would withstand legal challenge is removing the cables.

Topic Question 4: No alternative that specifically proposes to leave the cables in Wilderness is legally defensible given that the structure or installation is not necessary to administer the wilderness.

Therefore, the only alternative that would withstand legal challenge is removing the cables.

Topic Question 5: There is no analysis of the legal interpretation regarding structures or installations in wilderness and when they can remain or be perpetuated, or when they cannot.

Topic Question 6: It is too crowded. I don't consider it wilderness. You have let it get to a ridiculous point in places like Little Yosemite Valley and Half Dome.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 259 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,01,2012 19:13:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I believe that removing the cables is the best solution. Doing so would drastically reduce the number of hikers on the trail without requiring a permit. This would solve the problem of overcrowding without limiting access to public lands which belong to the people of the United States. Removing the cables is also the option that is most consistent with the Wilderness Act.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 260 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,02,2012 07:09:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: The permits should be released the day prior to the hike. That way, anybody entering the park has a chance to do the hike without having to have the ability to plan their vacations based on a lottery date. Zion National Park uses a similar system for permitting their technical canyoneering routes and it seems to work well.

Topic Question 6: This permit process discriminates against those who cannot plan vacations in advance. There needs to be some provision for those who recreate spontaneously. Personally, My job does not allow me to schedule vacations weeks or months in advance. I would imagine that I am not the only one with these circumstances. I would love to visit the park more often, but usually make it once every couple of years. On most trips I am with family an unable to commit an entire day to hiking Half

Dome. When I do have the chance, it will almost certainly be with only a day or two of notice and planning. I understand that there is a two day lottery, but that still leaves the possibility of missing the chance to do the hike. When your talking about a year or years between trip, finding the right opportunity could take half a decade or more.

Some only have once chance in their life to visit the park. These people may not be educated about the process and miss the chance all together.

Simply put, the permit process caters to those with flexible schedules who are in the know about the requirements well in advance and eliminates the opportunity for spontaneous adventure (in regards to this particular hike)

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 261 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,03,2012 11:01:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: The frustrating part of this study is the lack of connection mentioned to overall park misuse. Yosemite Valley needs to better limitations on how many people are allowed in each day. The overnight use is monitored easily, but day use entry is way out of control. Day use needs to be limited drastically in order to maintain a healthy and safe environment where nature is protected and visitors have a positive experience.

Plan C, which would limit the access to the cables to 300 people per day is the best plan. Restrictions have to be made. The hike is difficult and dangerous, overcrowding is not acceptable for safety reasons. However, restricting access completely would be a travesty. Nature is our responsibility to protect and maintain, but not at the expense of never getting to enjoy it. Over the last two seasons, restrictions have helped to stabilize the cable section of the half dome trail. Last season, however, the system was abused as to purchasing and illegally selling permits. The system needs to be improved. Utilizing option C, 300 people per day, is a positive alternative. I would like to see permits issued for the Mist Trail as well. In order to backpack in the Yosemite Back Country, you need a permit. In order to climb Half Dome, or Yosemite Falls, or Mist Trail, you should need a permit as well. These are extremely high traffic areas and are much more difficult and dangerous than most visitors realize. Implementing permits for these areas would ensure that visitors understand the dangers and challenges, and that the traffic flow is managed. Mist Trail should not allow more than 1000 people per day. Upper Yosemite Falls should only allow 500 people per day, Half Dome cables should be limited to 300 people per day.

Correspondence ID: 262 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,04,2012 08:10:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Plan option B is a reasonable option and the one that I prefer. I believe that Half Dome is more than a 'wilderness' area and is enjoyed by many, many people that visit Yosemite. Our National Parks are for the enjoyment of all citizens and visitors. There is ample wilderness area in Yosemite outside the Yosemite valley and Half Dome areas. I would include Half Dome with the other visitor attractions such as Yosemite Fall, Vernal Falls, Nevada Falls, Glacier Point, Badger Pass, etc. and is therefore not really a 'wilderness' area. I agree that it is reasonable to limit the Half Dome visits but only because over crowding leads to safety problems on the cables, I don't agree that trail encounters is an issue. People that hike to Half Dome, for the most part, start the hike from the valley so any expectation of privacy or limited 'trail encounters' is bogus. If hikers want 'privacy' on the trail then Yosemite valley is not the place to be. There are many miles of hiking trails in Yosemite that are available for a more 'wilderness' experience but people should not expect to find privacy from the valley. Clearly, the desire of the people to visit Half Dome has been demonstrated over time and the demand is what is driving this discussion. Any attempt to prevent people from visiting Half Dome would be a disservice to the people that support the National Parks through fees and taxes. Half Dome and the Half Dome trail are not wilderness areas and should not be treated as such. Again, Option B is the best alternative. Thanks

Topic Question 4: Half Dome and the Half Dome trail should not be considered 'wilderness' areas. Any designation as such through legislation is clearly not accurate. The demands of the people for access is clear and the demand is the reason for this discussion. Anyone that thinks Half Dome and the Half Dome trail should be wilderness areas is clearly out of touch with the desires of the people and the reality of the situation. People want access to Half Dome and they should have it but I do support some restrictions due to safety concerns not due to the trail experience.

Topic Question 6: I visit Yosemite at least once per year and often times more. I have hiked all the trails that originate from the valley and also many of the high country trails that originate from Tuolumne. I believe that our National Parks serve multiple purposes. The preservation of wilderness areas is a key component of the park system and I support the setting aside portions of our nation's lands for that purpose. I also believe that our parks are to be enjoyed for their attractions and beauty and as many people as possible should have access. I also understand that need to restrict certain areas due to safety reasons although I am generally opposed to quotas because quotas result in access restrictions for some people. Quotas also promote black market sales of permits and this should be prevented by making permits non-transferrable..

Comments: A lengthy comment is not necessary. The issue is simple and clear. The people have spoken through their actions. The people clearly want access to Half Dome. The number of people that want access is the reason for this discussion. Since people want access, it should be provided in the safest manner that is reasonable. The cables have become a Yosemite tradition and are world renown and should not be removed. To try and enforce any concept that Half Dome is a 'wilderness area' would be misguided and a disservice to the people.

Correspondence ID: 263 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,05,2012 17:54:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not applicable

Topic Question 2: I agree with the preferred alternative (alternative C). Restricting access may sound harsh to some, but that is the balanced way to still provide access to Half Dome while reducing and controlling the environmental impact caused by hiking/camping activities. The permit system also provides an opportunity to educate visitors about that specific hike, which is not an easy one, helping the visitor to prepare for it before hand.

Topic Question 3: Not applicable

Topic Question 4: Park officials could have interpreted the Wilderness Act in a way to remove the cables, thus drastically reducing access to Half Dome. I'm glad that NPS chose a more sensitive approach that balances access to the resource and conservation of the same.

Topic Question 5: Not Applicable

Topic Question 6: I'm happy with alternative C. I usually hike once or twice a year to Merced Lake using the John Muir Trail and my least favorite part of that trail is between Nevada Fall and Little Yosemite Valley due to traffic and trampling of the trail.

Comments: Please see the answers to questions 2, 4 and 6 for my comments.

Correspondence ID: 264 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 12:26:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: i think to reduce the crowds of people on the half dome trail there needs to be a way to weed out the people who are not true outdoor enthusiasts. If the cables were to remain in the down position all year long it would discourage people from bringing their entire family on the trail with them.Its become more of a tourist attraction than a mountaineering experience.You got people on the trail that have no wilderness experience and therefore no respect for the potential damage they leave behind.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 265 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,06,2012 16:12:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 266 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 16:15:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 267 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 16:19:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: As a visitor and advocate since 1970, I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 268 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 16:22:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 269 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,06,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The plan does not take into account the historical importance of the cable system and the access it provides to those who have made family tradition out of climbing the mountain. More research should be conducted to ensure that PARKS is meeting the intent of Congress in management options that were chosen for more consideration.

Topic Question 2: Alternatives that do not INCREASE safe capacity for hikers runs contrary to the law. We need to engage young people and minority communities in the efforts to engage in wilderness activity. Limiting the number of people who experience Half Dome reduces the number of people who have a

Topic Question 3: Add a third cable.

Topic Question 4: You are seriously reducing public access to public lands. Completely contrary to law.

Topic Question 5: You do not take into account the intensity of the public who want to use.

Topic Question 6: Stop listening to special interest groups. Listen to hikers.

Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome.

Increase access.

Correspondence ID: 270 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Mar,06,2012 16:24:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I vote for plan "B." Because I live in California, and love Yosemite so much, I am a regular visitor to the park; I've only done the Half Dome climb once, with my 12 year old son about 10 years ago. We did the climb over Memorial Day weekend, and it was a particularly crowded; it looked like the most crowded picture you have on the "plans website." My son and I did this as a 1 day hike, leaving Curry Village about 5AM and getting to the bottom of the cables at around 11. I remember thinking that after the 8+mi hike (from Curry), it felt like we were waiting in line for the Matterhorn ride at Disneyland - but the wait wasn't quite that long, and I couldn't help but thinking that if everyone ahead of us made that hike, then they were just as entitled to get up there as we were. We waited for a bit before we could access the cables and waited again after every few yards ascent until we reached the top. While I would have preferred not waiting, taking it very slowly up the cables was actually wonderful, as it afforded me contemplative time to enjoy the view. Once we reached the top, I was amazed at how quickly the crowd completely disappeared in the vastness of the space up there, and I didn't feel the least bit of overcrowding. It was a beautiful experience. We enjoyed our lunch and stayed up there until after 1PM; the walk back down was very peaceful and relaxed, until we reached the very crowded Mist Trail. My point here is that if I was up there on one of those very crowded days, I don't think that limiting the experience to less than 400 people per day is very fair to all who come to enjoy the park and especially this particular hike. I am someone who absolutely appreciates my solitude (I usually visit Yosemite mid winter and start my hikes pre dawn - to avoid running into too many people). The only crowded part of the experience was the wait to get up the cables; that was not a very large portion of the total 17+ miles of my day, and I still can't get over the vastness of space that exists on top of that rock, and how quickly the crowd exiting the cables dissipates. It seems an impossible task to tell people who've managed to actually get reservations to stay in the park, whether they are camping, cabining, hoteling it or backpacking with your very restrictive backcountry permit, that they cannot make this climb without an additional filter that must be passed through. So I agree that some limits must be placed on the number of visitors, and of the choices still on the table, I would choose the 400 limit, but I think 500 is more reasonable.

Topic Question 3: 500 people per day seems reasonable, but its unfair if that total includes commercial tours. That would turn something that anyone can afford to do who has the energy and time, into more of an elitist chance that those who can afford a commercial slot could get, ahead of people of less means. so maybe 500 permits + 50 commercial slots.

Topic Question 5: I think you overestimate the impact of peoples intrusion into the 'solitude' of the experience, since the space on top is so huge that 600 people can easily spread out and not intrude on each other. The only crowded part of the experience is at the cables and the stone steps leading up to them; finding a way to time peoples arrival to that point would seem a much better solution to this perceived problem

Topic Question 6: As I stated above, I mostly can only plan my visits to the park during mid winter, off peak periods. Plan is a poor choice of words since I cannot plan my visits (I am a freelance worker) and would be very challenged to organize my visits with enough advance to manage to actually get a permit for half dome, once it is required.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 271 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y

Received: Mar,06,2012 16:28:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which

would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 272 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,06,2012 16:34:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 273 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 16:42:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 274 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 16:42:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Jong Kim

Correspondence ID: 275 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I have never been able to hike it i try every time to get passes and am always denied

Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 276 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I think there does not need to be a "new plan," and certainly not a permit system, in regards to Half Dome hiking. We have had decades of the former system working with remarkably few casualties; since danger can never be fully mitigated, and since each climber can see the risk and decide for him or herself whether to climb, the no-permit system is a reasonable choice.

We should return to a no-permit, no-restriction system.

Comments: I fully agree with Save Half Dome's prepared statement:

"I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage."

I would further add that as someone who has enjoyed hiking in California for decades, I am always saddened to see the introduction of new regulation into the wilderness environment. There are so few places where one is free from the constant barrage of nagging, needless, condescending attempts to control one's every movement; hiking in nature has been one of the few places where one can minimize the degradations of one's rights as a free adult.

For the NPS to now create an artificial "do not cross" line in the middle of wilderness, which one can only pass if one has been lucky enough to (literally) win a lottery, is an example of regulation gone too far in an attempt to fix a problem that does not exist.

Correspondence ID: 277 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 17:06:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 278 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome.

Topic Question 6: I am a climber and use the half dome trail to access climbing on half dome and other nearby walls. We use the cables to carry gear to the top of half dome and back down for different projects that require starting at the top.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 279 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,06,2012 17:12:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: There are many areas where people can go to get what some consider "a true wilderness experience". If that's what you're looking for then don't go to Yosemite Valley. If you want see the grandeur of yosemite and have several "WOW" moments, you can get this even if experiencing it with several others. I was fortunate to secure a back country hiking permit for last October and therefore also received a Half Dome permit. We had tried securing permits for Half Dome alone but were unable to obtain any. While hiking up to Half Dome several person in our group commented that it was interesting that most of the people with permits were foreigners. That leads me to believe that the permits are being scalped and maybe not even in the states. You will never be able to fairly allocate tickets. It's a shame that local residents can't even obtain permits. I Urge you to stop limiting the numbers allowed and IF safety is an issue then I would vote for the installation of a third cable. As a side note, when we finally got to the cables the wind was hollowing and it looked like a storm was coming in so we opted not to go up. People have to take some responsibility for themselves. We were still happy to have had the permits just to be able to get up on top of the Sub Dome. These were some of the best views we experienced the entire trip. If you do continue to limit the numbers on the cable I would strongly recommend that people still be allowed up the Sub Dome. The Permit check in should be much closer to the cables themselves.

Correspondence ID: 280 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,06,2012 17:31:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I think it is fundamentally incorrect to stop free willed people from hiking in any National Park in America. I define hiking as walking in a park where that person wishes to travel anywhere on public lands without interfering with existing wildlife such as during mating rituals.

Topic Question 2: Free willed people need adversity and challenges to overcome and learn from. People even need to see others fail and possibly die so that they can strive to attain their personal goals they have set for themselves. The spirit of the National Park Ststem should encourage and foster these uniquely American traits and values. America is the land of the free and America is a place that grows leaders and strong people. We cannot be free with all the rules being proposed by bureaucrats sitting in offices holding meetings to decide the future of Americans that are actually hiking and climbing mountains, canyons, deserts and forests.

Topic Question 3: Add a new cable system right next to the existing cables so there is an UP and a DOWN cable system.

Topic Question 4: I do not believe we should keep people off the trails. The park was meant to be used and enjoyed 24 hours a day. I am asking for basic human rights of being able to walk on the trails at Half Dome. No motorized vehicles just walking.

Topic Question 5: Most of the deficiencies are intangible spirit killers. By turning the parks into a police state full of enforcement citations it is spoiling the experience.

Topic Question 6: I wish to be able to enjoy Yosemite as a hiker at my whimsical leisure and not have to make reservations well in advance without regard to weather and adverse conditions. I take responsibility for my actions within the park.

Comments: I am sorry to even have to be writing for this cause....it makes no sense that we have to explain to the bureaucrats why we love the parks and want to enjoy them without all the newly proposed rules and regulations. Please stop imposing the reservations to climb Half Dome and build a new second cable route next to the existing one so that as many strong willed adventurous people can experience the natural beauty that Yosemite has to offer to a human being. Do not stifle the spirit of people from all over the world that seek to experience Half Dome trails. We all have enough regulations in our high population centers, please leave a little Wild in the wilderness. Thank You for the chance to let my voice be heard. [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 281 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 17:46:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 282 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 17:50:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Return to the no permit policy the current plan makes it near impossible to get a permit without going to craigslist scalping

Topic Question 2: The new plan should b the original no permit policy perhaps 2 sets of cables 1 up and 1 down

Comments: the original no permit policy worked extremely well for the public. why reinvent the wheel?

Correspondence ID: 283 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 18:01:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The current limit doesn't work because the permits are TOO CHEAP. Many people buy up blocks of permits at the beginning of the season, planning to use only a few of them and making permits unavailable for those of us who do not apply for them on time.

Topic Question 3: I enjoy hiking many trails in the Sierra, and have always eagerly anticipated one annual trip to the top of Half Dome (which I have been unable to do since the permit process was instated). For myself, and others like me for whom the top of Half Dome is a very special goal each year, a \$50.00 permit would be a reasonable price to pay and would prevent the 25-times-a-year people from hogging all the available trail time. Or perhaps a pass to Half Dome could be included in membership in the Yosemite Conservancy, or with the purchase of a life-time senior pass (both of which I have).

Topic Question 6: I use many of the trails in the park. As stated earlier, I have always looked forward to my annual HD hike, and had always assumed that this very special experience would eventually end because my age--and not a lack of permits--prevented me from doing it any more. It is sad for me to be unable to obtain a permit, and then talk to people on the trail who say "Oh yeah, I bought tickets for every weekend, so I can go whenever I want"---they don't seem to realize, or care, that their greed prevents others of us from going at all.

Comments: I know the "Save Half Dome" group would like to go back to the free-for-all that existed before the permit system was first instated, but I don't think that is the right answer. As I aged and slowed down, I experienced many instances of younger hikers shoving me aside on the sub-dome instead of waiting for a safe passing spot. This irresponsible rudeness is extremely dangerous and frightening, and is why there has to be a system in place to make it safe for ALL hikers. To bad there's not a test to weed out inconsiderate bullies at the bottom of the trail...

Correspondence ID: 284 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Sincerely,

██████████

Topic Question 6: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Sincerely,

██████████

Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Sincerely,

██████████

Correspondence ID: 285 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,06,2012 18:27:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 286 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,06,2012 18:30:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 287 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,06,2012 18:49:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: The Park belongs to the people and hardy folks enjoy the challenge of the Half Dome summit. I recommend a third cable, which would eliminate the need to set a limit on visitors. Hey, smart folks like me know to go very early in the day any way.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 288 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 18:52:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: Park visitor and possible climber on another visit.

Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

The plan as proposed seems to encourage more risk-taking, rather than less, by making the limited access artificially valuable and pushing people to use their permits even when conditions (or personal factors, such as tiredness or time pressure) are not optimal.

The NPS should be looking to expand access to the Parks, not decreasing it. Unless people love their parks, they will not vote to save them when money is tight.

Correspondence ID: 289 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 18:54:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: As an avid hiker and supporter of our National Parks I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 290 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 19:18:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 291 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Keep the trails open.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 292 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 20:14:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system

and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 293 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

I have climbed the peak several times and think through signage you have made people fully aware of the risks involved with undertaking the climb. At some point you have to let people take responsibility for their own actions and not control access to such a treasure. Freedom and personal responsibility are two fundamental American tenants that the Park Service should uphold.

Correspondence ID: 294 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 21:12:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I like to go up Half Dome every few years, but it's a zoo now. I don't want to waste precious park resources on rescue for overcrowded Half dome hikers in bad weather, so I support the 300 person limit even if it means I have to apply for a permit in advance. And if it gets to be a problem, I'll just go up Cloud's Rest instead!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 295 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I urge you to adopt alternative A. It will allow for fair use of the trail. If problems of congestion result a third cable can be put into place. I miss hiking Half Dome with my friends because we can't obtain permits together.

Topic Question 6: I have hosted an annual trek up Half Dome. However, since the permitting system I have been unable to obtain sufficient permits. Our excursion is organized. Our bikers are prepared. Your current system prevents our enjoyment of one of the world's best hikes.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 296 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 297 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 22:03:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 298 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 22:04:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Why can't the Half Dome trail and Half Dome itself be removed from wilderness status?

Topic Question 2: Removing Half Dome from wilderness designation would open up improvements to the trail and the dome itself including but not limited to adding a third cable to the dome. Said improvement would allow hikers to move unimpaired in each direction. negating the bottleneck effect of hikers going both directions at the same time. This option would make the trip

safer if not faster and would allow more hikers the opportunity to experience Half Dome.

Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 299 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 23:18:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 300 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,06,2012 23:19:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The lottery doesn't work, the trail should be public

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 301 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,06,2012 23:31:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I don't believe cutting down the number of people will stop people from hiking Half Dome. There are many ways in and out of the park and on the trails.

Hikers of Half Dome or any other areas of Yosemite should be required to sign a waiver of liability and must understand the risk, consequences and basic practices when in the park. All should be trained on the conditions, what to do in case of an emergency, storm, rain, wind, etc.

Topic Question 3: I believe that the safety restrictions of hiking Half Dome are too lenient. Instead removing the cables or limiting the access down to a possible 140, why no reinforce the cables, make the right side 'up' and the left side 'down'. Include a cable on each side that requires individuals to attach themselves via carabiner, and have that cable include 'stoppers' in case of accidental slip.

This will create a more safe way to travel up and down the cables and will also make it safer for the other individuals traveling up and down the cables, in case someone above them slips and falls.

The carabiner shouldn't give a false sense of security and all should take extreme caution when hiking Half Dome, but possibly cutting down the number of visitors to 500 or whatever the park feels is reasonable - but adding that little extra safety requirement to make sure everyone's safety is a top priority.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 302 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,07,2012 00:19:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The permitting system and limit of 300 people per day, will make it next to impossible to experience Half Dome. Families and friends cannot coordinate lodging in Yosemite as well as half dome permits. Camping or tent cabin reservations are difficult to obtain and so are the half dome permits. I have brought my daughters to Yosemite Valley for almost every summer for the last 13 years. Because of our stays in Yosemite and our two hikes up Half Dome they have literally fallen in love with Yosemite, National Parks, the great outdoors and being in the mountains. Half Dome is responsible for their awe and love of nature. Don't take that away. We tried last summer to obtain permits but weren't able to coordinate our high sierra reservations with a half dome permit for our group of two moms and our daughters and their friends. I want to take my young nephews in a few years to hike Half Dome and to instill in them the same love of nature, but it will be impossible to get permits.

Topic Question 3: 1. Add a third cable to create two lanes so that people can hike up one way and down another in a safer environment. 2. Ban car travel in the Yosemite Valley and require entry by bus and you will limit the number of people in the Valley, thereby automatically limiting the number of people that attempt Half Dome daily.

Topic Question 6: Please see answer to Q 2.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 303 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,07,2012 01:10:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/commentForm.cfm?documentID=44771>

Topic Question 2: Inspire and reward new and old generations of Americans with the challenge of climbing Half Dome. Remove permit requirements and allow all to try -- as Americans do -- without guarantee of success or failure. If you truly want to address the problem of lines up the cables, treat it for what it is: a traffic problem. The solution is then obvious and I describe it below.

I hiked the Muir Trail in 1968 and have savored the Sierras for decades. I climbed Half Dome on that hike and have done so a number of times since. I'm sure I dislike crowds more than most, but I am also all for enhancing the public's appreciation of the beauty, grandeur and challenge of the outdoors. In particular, it's obvious to me that our younger generation needs to EXPERIENCE the Sierras, not observe them.

In the following, I address two issues. First, how can we simultaneously protect the wilderness and also enhance the experience of people who want to enjoy it? Second, I offer a very simple and practical solution that will solve the problem of congestion on the sub-dome and along the cables.

A. HOW TO PROTECT WILDERNESS AND SATISFY PEOPLE

Half Dome is a precious resource. The legions of climbers who have sweated their way to the top over the past century have magnified its glory. The price it has paid has been barely noticeable. The NPS website's list of "environmental" harms "eroded trails, "high encounter rates" on the trail, crowding, vegetation loss on the trail, chipmunks eat hikers' graham-cracker crumbs, etc. " would be laughable were it not for the fact that some people actually believe this stuff. I'm just amazed that no one remembered to lament the irreparable damage done to the granite by drilling holes for the poles that hold the cables. I'm all for fixing eroded trails and not littering, but let's get real here. The actual acreage impacted by people is miniscule compared to the total area. The impact upon Half Dome is remarkably small for the tremendous amount of joy that its ascent has brought to millions of people over the years. If anything, the NPS should be proud that it has made such a precious resource accessible to so many people. And should continue to do so.

I explain BELOW how the Park Service can end the congestion problem. But the larger question is, who should decide what enhances a person's experience? Whether a visitor chooses to climb and risk a line at the cables or he chooses to admire it from the Valley below? THE VISITOR is the one who should decide what optimizes his/her experience, not a bureaucrat sitting at a desk. Do YOU know better than I what satisfies me? (The correct answer is "No.")

When crowds are a problem, potential climbers "self-regulate" by choosing not to climb at some times and to climb at others. THE ONLY PEOPLE INCONVENIENCED BY THE CONGESTION ON HALF-DOME'S CABLES ARE THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO CLIMB THEM. Let those people decide for themselves. The elephant in the room is that most people who crave the Half Dome experience have a very narrow window of opportunity available in which they may climb. There are enough real impediments -- weather, jobs, campground reservations, conditioning, fatigue, time, health, vacation schedules, etc. To throw additional and unnecessary impediments such as permits and permit limitations in front of them is not just unfair -- it's outrageous.

B. HOW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF CONGESTION AND LONG LINES

If the NPS really wants to solve the problem of long lines snaking up the cables, hire an engineer. I'm an engineer and I look at the cause. The lines are long now because some climbers slow to a crawl due to exhaustion or fear. This stops everyone else behind them. All it takes is one person to stack up an entire parade below. When several people slow down, the line grinds to a halt. Hence, 45-minute ascents. This is merely a TRAFFIC problem. I ask you, how do you deal with extremely slow drivers on mountain roads who stack up traffic behind them? Limit the number of drivers? Require them to request a Tioga Pass road permit months in advance? Demand that they drive faster? No, you set up mechanisms to allow others to pass them. Voila! " the congestion disappears and everyone's enjoyment rises. The slow ones and the fast ones move as they want.

I see two simple solutions, both of which you've implemented on roads and both of which would work on Half Dome: 1) CREATE A "TURN-OUT." Of course, a real turn-out would be difficult to make. But a "virtual" turn-out would do the job. Simply erect a sign at the bottom of the cables urging slower climbers to permit faster ones to pass, and encouraging faster climbers to do so. Explain on the sign why this is a valuable service that will benefit everyone. Right now there's a culture in which most hikers "being civil and seeing the top so near " are willing to "wait a little longer" and not pass the exhausted person immediately ahead. All of this "waiting" concatenates to a long, slow grind. If the slower climbers were to simply step to the right and wave the faster climbers past them to the left " and if the faster climbers were to pass without feeling rude " the congestion would disappear. You demand this of drivers on mountain roads " why not request it on Half Dome? 2) CREATE A "PASSING LANE." In other words, add a third cable. This would create a "lane" going each way up. The one-way lanes would then permit faster climbers to pass the slower ones more easily than is now the case. As long as people understand that passing is socially commendable and they don't fear being trampled by someone descending from the top, they will use it, the line will

move and the congestion will disappear.

The 'turn-out' alone will solve the bulk of the problem. Add a 'passing lane' and you've driven a stake through it. Then you can point to Yosemite's handling of this as a rational, systematic traffic solution that will work with similar problems elsewhere in the country. Half Dome climbers will be happy, Yosemite rangers will get promotions ' everyone wins!

Kill the present permit system and return to a rational approach that will satisfy all but the most radical extremists and will enable future generations to not just view Half Dome, but LIVE Half Dome!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 304 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 305 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 306 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,07,2012 07:16:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Any option besides Alt A is really not fair to the general public who pay for the parks. Just because I don't have the opportunity to get a pass shouldn't restrict my enjoyment of seeing Half Dome from the top. Making it up to Half Dome was one of those moments that is dear to my heart and I will never forget. Having any of the restrictions you propose would not have allowed me that moment. Nor will it allow it for my daughter who is coming of age and would like to do it as well.

Topic Question 3: A third cable would alleviate the lines tremendously.

Topic Question 6: Used to hike in the parks...a different one each time. Half Dome was, without a doubt, the best. To have that taken away or limited to 300 a day would be a crime.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 307 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 308 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771 **Private:** Y
Received: Mar,07,2012 08:09:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: 1. We seem to be hiding behind Half Dome being designated Wilderness. It is designated, but we all know - It (the hike) is not Wilderness. This could be an opportunity to redefine 'Wilderness' as it applies to Half Dome since it is so widely used. Just the trail - not the whole park.

Topic Question 2: 1. The permit system in general DECREASES safety by limiting opportunities, which directly results in people climbing under riskier conditions because that is their only designated day with a permit for the entire season.

Topic Question 3: 1. Permits and climbers restricted to US citizens only. US citizens pay for this park. US citizens should get the permits. All members on a permit must be US citizens, too. Make people carry an ID/driver's license.

Topic Question 4: 1. Permits and climbers restricted to US citizens only. US citizens pay for this park. US citizens should get

Correspondence: PLEASE ALLOW ONLY 300 PEOPLE AT A TIME ON THE HALF DOME TRAIL!!!!

Laurel Tremaine Email: [REDACTED]

Superintendent Attn: The Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

Correspondence ID: 313 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The plan to limit half dome visitors to 300-400 per day does not give out of state or out of country visitors a once in a lifetime chance to participate in this hike.

Topic Question 3: Add a third cable. If you have to limit hikers, limit hikers to 600 per day. Reserve 200 per day for 'day of hike' signups. The best plan is to not have hiker limits.

Topic Question 5: Half Dome is a ROCK, it can't be trampled.

Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 314 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 315 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage

Correspondence ID: 316 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,07,2012 13:35:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No issues noted.

Topic Question 2: I do not agree with any of the 3 proposals (B-D) to limit access to a fixed number of hikers per day. Forcing people to get permits in advance ignores the fact that high Sierra weather is not seasonally predictable. If the weather for climbing on the date of your permit is not safe a person might be influenced to attempt the climb anyway. It would be particularly difficult to plan a safe Half Dome hike for those who are from other States or countries. Option E will cause more problems than the NPS has now, plus the public would be denied access to a national treasure.

Topic Question 3: I like the idea of adding a third cable to provide safer access for those who are climbing and those who are descending. This would also increase the number of hikers who could use the cables on a particular day. Right now too many hikers are taking risks by going outside of the two existing cables due to the two way traffic or because others hikers are not moving. This would also be safer for those are tired or frightened on the cables because they would be less likely to be prodded or ridiculed by faster hikers.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 317 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,07,2012 14:11:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Now is the time to TAKE ACTION on the park service proposal. I am recommending Alternative A, which would mean no permits or limits on the number of hikers. This is the safest alternative as those with only one chance to hike half dome on a given day will dangerously go ahead and climb even if there are thunderstorms threatening. Please vote for Alternative A.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 318 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 319 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,07,2012 15:07:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: Cable access to Half Dome cannot be eliminated. It's one of the great experiences that the common person can still enjoy. However, a limitation on the number of hikers is needed. The permit system needs some changes to accommodate more than the mad rush of reservations being made months in advance. A day-before and same-day permit allocation should be implemented in addition to the advanced permit system already in place. The day-before and same-day permits should still be managed on line only, to avoid too many people waiting in lines.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 320 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,07,2012 21:45:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The report understates the impact of it's proposals in order to to recommend it's alternative.

Topic Question 3: A third cable would seem to have minimal environmental impact while substantially improving visitor experience and increasing safety and summit evacuation time, even in the low user scenario. It should be installed.

The plan somewhat pompously assumes that visitors would value solitude on trails and lack of waiting over the experience of climbing half dome and in fact would prefer not to climb at all rather than climb a busy route. This is extremely presumptuous and most likely incorrect. Most people climb Half Dome for the challenge and accomplishment. If they want solitude they already have many more options in the park to achieve that.

The vast majority of people would probably rate being denied the opportunity to ever climb half dome (see the analysis in question 6 below) as being worse than climbing a crowded half dome.

Nevertheless both parties could be accommodated. By improving the cable system to add safety, and offering "permit only" days and "open" days, or days with extremely high limits then visitors could self select into groups who would prefer to climb and not meet others on the trail and to those who are prepared to undertake the climb despite any crowding. e.g Saturday restricted, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday free access, Wednesday restricted, Thursday and Friday free access.

Half Dome is iconic. it would be easy to develop the trail in a way that would protect the environment while simultaneously improving access. The balance between keeping the trail in the wilderness area and denying most people access, vs removing it from the wilderness area and allowing better access to all should fall on the side of better access.

No level of reasonable level of user restriction will turn this into a "Wilderness" trail. Removing the wilderness designation and improving the trail and trail facilities to reduce environmental impact would seem to better balance the interests of all users.

As noted above, for those who value wilderness and solitude, Yosemite offers thousands of other ways for them to achieve that.

Topic Question 4: Clearly the proposal that would improve safety would be to install an additional cable, regardless of the number of visitors on the dome.

Environmental impact of one more cable and effect of the perception of half dome by approximately four million users per year is negligible. They are only noticeable by users of the trail for whose benefit they are there, and at any distance two cables is essentially no better or worse than three.

The report vastly understates the impact of denying people the opportunity to ever climb half dome (see 6).

Topic Question 6: Under the preferred proposal Only 2.7% of the park's visitors will be afforded the opportunity to climb half dome in any year. Even if the permit system were usable by US citizens only, and it were considered a "once in a lifetime" offer, under this proposal only 1.7% of the current US population would be able to apply for a permit and receive one within their lifetime. This assumes an average active hiking "life" of 50 yrs over which the participant would be old enough yet not to frail to make the trip).

Denying 98 3% of the US population the chance to ever climb Half Dome seems an extreme action compared to adding an additional cable or the "inconvenience" of passing other hikers on the trail.

The permit process additionally would have a chilling effect on people's choice to visit the park, be inspired and climb the dome during their visit.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 321 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,07,2012 21:59:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I support plan B for the Half Dome Cables. I think moderate crowding at some places is acceptable. Yosemite Valley and parts of the Park that are popular or wonderful experiences , but with lots of people. Plan C is the next best alternative. The first time I went up the cables it seemed somewhat scary, but I was impressed when at the top I found a grade school age group who went down the cables very nicely while only holding on to one.

I think the cables are well worth keeping. [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 322 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,07,2012 23:31:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 323 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,08,2012 08:39:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Trailhead quotas have failed

Topic Question 3: I support the addition of the third cable. I support positioning a ranger at the cables to limit the number of hikers during peak times and to restrict access as weather approaches (i.e afternoon thunderstorms)

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 324 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,08,2012 12:32:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Instead of taking the simpleminded approach of restricting access to Half Dome; please address the issues logically. Require those visiting Half Dome to register (with no limitations on the number of people who can use the trail or climb): Registrants acknowledge all risks and... If funding is a concern - charge a trail fee. If liability is a concern - have users sign a waiver. If the cost of rescuing unwise trail users is an issue - make it clear they will pay the park service for the cost of a rescue.

Those of us who want to enjoy the experience responsibly should not be penalized for issues beyond our control when reasonable solutions are apparent.

Correspondence ID: 325 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,08,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 326 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,08,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 327 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,08,2012 15:44:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I think that restricting access to the summit of Half Dome is not a fair plan. I do believe numbers should be limited and the fairest way is to let nature determine who climbs and who doesn't, just as she does on other granite faces in the valley.

Topic Question 6: I travel the Yosemite Wilderness for the solitude and serenity and I have avoided Half Dome and its access

trail due to the volumes of visitors. Removal of the cables would enhance my experience in this part of Yosemite.

Comments: I believe that people do not respect this amazing creation when it requires no special expertise to ascend and descend. I think, as with the Firefall, it's time for the cables to become part of history so that Half Dome becomes even more awe inspiring.

Correspondence ID: 328 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,08,2012 23:34:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative B. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative B as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 400 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 329 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,09,2012 07:55:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 330 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,09,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: The current planning seems to be making a trip to the park way too difficult (too many rules, regulations and permits required) to enjoy such an incredible area. I have been coming to the park for a wide variety of uses since the early 50s and every time I hear about plans for the future it makes me cringe. It's almost like the park service would like it to be a place just for themselves...less work, less maintenance, less people to deal with. I understand the crowd control issue and dealing with really stupid people, but please think of the majority of the people who come with respect and gratitude to be able to enjoy just an amazing place freely.

Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 331 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,09,2012 10:51:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: In regards to restricting access to half dome, or closing, or do nothing. I would vote for leaving as is..no permits required, but I would consider having a ranger at the base of subdome who could monitor the # of those past that point. , Or maybe having someone at the base of the cables who could monitor the number of people. I understand having too many on the cables, but if the amount could be regulated it might make it a little easier to evacuate. I am not in favor of the permit system. There are too many ways around it and someone always figures out a way to get a bunch of permits, that they can sell on ebay or some other way. I had the opportunity to climb half dome back in 2008. People book their vacations with some adventure in mind. If you had a permit, and it ended up being a rainy day,,that doesn't seem very fair for someone who has traveled thousands of miles for the opportunity to climb half dome. I vote for putting some rangers in key locations to help monitor the numbers. At least everyone will know that they have an opportunity. You could still charge a modest fee, just to help offset some of the cost,,maybe \$10.00 or so just to use that particular trail. \$10.00 would be nothing to put out for the opportunity.

Thanks for listening from a guy from Illinois Tom

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 332 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,09,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I have already submitted my opinions and comments in a previous altercation with your assinine comment elimination system; however, here is the simple summary of my feelings:

I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 333 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,09,2012 22:15:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Simply limiting the number of visitors to Half Dome leaves in place the most serious and deadly problem - people going both up and down on one set of cables. Furthermore, no matter how fair you try and make it, any system that limits visitors will wind up discriminating against some and preventing them from achieving their goal and right to this once in a lifetime experience.

Topic Question 3: There must be two paths - which could be accomplished with three or four cables as appropriate - one designated/restricted for upward bound traffic, the other designated/restricted for downward bound traffic.

Topic Question 5: It has been my observation that there are those who know the system and how to best utilize it who are bent on doing all they can to limit, restrict and even eliminate use by others. The "preferred alternative" C is a clear case of this sort of thinking and action. It is already near impossible for many people, including myself, to get a reservation in one of the campgrounds as whenever I try, even the very second reservations open, I get error messages and/or am told no reservations are available.

Topic Question 6: I try to visit Yosemite at least once a year. I drive to the park in my Prius with my camping gear. I park my car, set up my tent and walk or use shuttle busses to get around. I utilize the stores in the valley and also occasionally eat at the various eateries. I make it a point, when the cables are up and conditions permit, to visit Half Dome but, with the new proposal to limit traffic and require advance permission, it's virtually certain I won't ever get there again. I am a disabled vet and my disabilities are getting worse as time goes by. Soon will make it impossible for me to get up the cables, or for that matter to leave the valley floor unless I drive (and I prefer not to) so it's critical that I get a couple more chances to make it up Half Dome before that happens. So for me the only acceptable answers are NO CHANGE or NO LIMITS - whether or not you will put up a second set of cables to do what REALLY needs to be done to solve the REAL problem is up to you.

Comments: To reiterate, the REAL PROBLEM is that there is one set of cables for two directions of traffic. The REAL solution to the REAL problem is two sets of cables, one for traffic going up, the other for traffic going down. Limiting how many people to achieve this once in a lifetime (for many) experience is just wrong. I bring people who've never been to Yosemite and never will go again and for them getting to the top of Half Dome is a lifetime dream. Now it is likely and in fact virtually certain they never will get to do it. As for me, I soon won't be able to make it up the cables anyway, so I'm speaking for all those who deserve a chance but won't get one because some people have decided to unfairly and unreasonably restrict the rights of all to do this for whatever personal reasons while, most likley, they will be little affected or completely unaffected because, knowing how the system works, or by "having a friend on the inside", they will still be able to go up with little or no chance of ever being denied.

Yosemite and Half Dome belong to all of us - all of us have an equal right to experience it. This right will be restricted inappropriately or denied by any system that does not simply solve the REAL problem - bidirectional traffic on the cables - without imposing limits on how many people get to do this.

Correspondence ID: 334 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,09,2012 22:31:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The Park Service never sead that people wanted limits or they wouldn't go up half dome. They never tried to come up with a plan that would accommodate the traffic. They just came up with a plan that eleminates people.

Topic Question 2: I think plan A should have a cap of 900 people per day and a day use fee be implemented that would go to putting a third cable up more restrooms near the base of half dome some money need to go in to trail repairs from the top of nevada falls to half dome. We need to help Nature out and not just beat her up.

Topic Question 3: Third cable to make the last climb safer witch woud speed up the climb and do away with the long lines. It would also make getting people of the rock faster incase of a storm as both cables could be used to go down. The need for restrooms at the base of half dome to keep down contamination of the forest.

Topic Question 4: When you look at thier own rules for wilderness Half Dome don't fit it. At some point way back before they put it in the wilderness it probably did. They the Park Service buy putting a Ranger Station in Little Yosemite Valley violate their own rules.

Topic Question 6: A a youn man my parents would take us back packing in the high country for four or five days using or horse

to get around. Know we to day hikes of up to twelve miles per day and stay in camp ground out side of Yosemite Valley.

Comments: The Park Service mission is to protect and manage for the people to use NOT TO KEEP US out.

Correspondence ID: 335 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,10,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: When I last climbed Half Dome in 1992 we planned a several day trip, allowing us flexibility for bad weather. Any permit system which is restricted to a specific day does not increase hiker safety; it decreases it. With the limited number of permits, and the difficulty in getting them, those with permits are going to use them regardless of rain or lightning.

Topic Question 5: I am sure that a way could be found to put up a 3rd cable without needing to drill more support holes into the rock.

Topic Question 6: I last hiked Half Dome in 1992. I would like the opportunity to hike up again my daughter and son-in-law. That will be nearly impossible with the restrictions on hikers. He is a Medical Student, who cannot predict his schedule way in advance. Only those "in the know" who can pick a specific date in the future will get permits. The National Parks are supposed to be for everyone.

Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 336 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,10,2012 20:02:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative E would be my first choice since it would be similar to Grand Teton, which I have done and really enjoyed the experience. It prevents people that are not well educated about mountaineering and physical/mental abilities needed to perform such a task - result in limited hinderance for the true enthusiast. If cables had to remain, I would go with Alternative B.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 337 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,10,2012 21:16:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Several typos, but I will defer to you proofreader.

Topic Question 2: 1. The recommended Alternative, C, is too conservative because of the few numbers it would allow up the cables. Alternative B lies well within the 70 PAOT that the Lawsen study arrived at. But even that value was not a precisely determined number but was a very subjective ?visitor informed threshold.? When people were asked what would they prefer, it was easier for them to pad their response to the lower number.

Quoting from the Yosemite website:

<http://www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/hdfaq.htm>

??research shows that travel on the cables becomes inhibited when use is more than 400 hikers per day. When use exceeds 400 people per day, the cables become congested and travel up and down the cables takes significantly longer.? Alternative B provides a safe experience for 400 daily users.

2. Hiking Half Dome is possible for anyone with education, preparation and motivation. I firmly believe that if the park is serious about making the hike safer, there would be a mandatory pre-hike ?class seminar? that each hiker would have to attend in order to do the hike. MANY hikers are not educated about treating water, drinking water, proper footwear, early departure, weather concerns, Leave No Trace, emergency procedures, etc. (While the park has done a fine job of posting info on the website, there is no confirmation that the visitors have actually read it or merely check ?yes? when getting a permit.) The mission should be to ensure everyone has the baseline knowledge in order to venture out on this difficult hike. While I understand that a wilderness experience requires the visitor to assess the risks involved and act appropriately ? most are not aware of this. Despite Congressional declarations, Half Dome simply is NOT thought of as wilderness.

I suggest that prior to being allowed to do the hike, that educational sessions be set up in the theater ? perhaps five times a day for hikers. Either a ranger or a trained volunteer could show a video and discuss the above. Perhaps a 30-45 minute session would suffice. Upon completion, the hiker would be issued a card that is stamped to certify that that individual has done the training. (Future hikes would not need the session, since the person has the ?Half Dome Education? card.) It should then be shown (with their permit) to the ranger at Sub Dome prior to being allowed to continue. The classes could be held in the evening

to accommodate late arrivals. As a bare minimum, the Trip Leader should be required to attend the education class.

3. I do not think the 2-day lottery process is appropriate since those visitors may have NO prior education or preparation for this extremely strenuous hike. A mandatory class described above would address this to make the hike safe for all. Another consideration is that the 2-day process would make getting accommodations almost impossible. If this was the only option for a visitor and they reserved a place in the valley, they would not know if they had won the lottery until after the cancellation period. Thus, it appears the 2-day process would benefit primarily locals who could stay at home or visitors who are already in the park (and most likely unprepared). Hotels at Gateway towns are about an hour drive to the Happy Isles trailhead ? not recommended when facing a 10-12 hour hike. Driving back on dark mountain roads while exhausted invites accidents.

Topic Question 3: The current alternatives allow for holders of Wilderness Permits to receive a Half Dome permit with their wilderness permit if their wilderness itinerary reasonably includes Half Dome. I contend that this is prejudicial to day hikers. It seems that the honor of getting a backpacking permit should be special and that winners of that system are already being rewarded by being able to enjoy Yosemite's backcountry in a camping experience. Why should that group (currently 25% of the total Half Dome permits) be additionally rewarded with a Half Dome permit? Many visitors simply can't go camping in the wilderness. They are not trained or prepared for such trips, but they can do a one-day hike up to Half Dome. I believe the system would be made more accessible to more hikers if ALL of the allotted Half Dome permits were for day hikes only.

Topic Question 4: The newspaper of record should be one in a city more representative of where the vast majority of visitors to Yosemite come from: The San Francisco Chronicle or The San Jose Mercury. Many people are unaware of actions published in the Mariposa Gazette, newspaper that serves a very small community.

Topic Question 5: No comment.

Topic Question 6: I have written the only hiking guide book for Half Dome: "One Best Hike: Yosemite's Half Dome." It has sold over 10,000 copies and has helped many do the hike safely. I have done the hike 31 times. It is my personal passion. I give over 40 lectures and classes at outfitters (REL, Sports Basement, etc), Museums, Boy Scouts, Civic Groups, the LeConte Memorial Lodge, etc. I arguably know as much about Half Dome as anyone. I am known as "Mr Half Dome." Half Dome is a goal and a journey for many ? it is for me. The alternatives listed would greatly affect my ability to do the hike. I often do the hike alone to gather information and the lottery system will make it very hard for me to do more than one trip per summer. If I am lucky I will be able to do it once a summer. If I am lucky. In light of the purpose of Half Dome Stewardship Plan I support the Draft EA with my preference being Alternative B.

Comments: Thanks to all participants for their fine work on the development of this EA.

Correspondence ID: 338 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,10,2012 22:11:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Your document/analysis has a major flaw in it. "the park would retain the cable system and implement day-use limits through a permit system allowing XX hikers per day". If you are calculating the number of permits based upon number of permits given out on a particular day to be the number of permits actually used, you are mistaken! The number of permits actually used is way smaller than the number of permits given out. I can't remember the statistic right now, but I believe it was only about 70% of the permits actually used that were given out.

So, for Alternative B, your document should read something like this: "the park would retain the cable system and implement day-use limits through a permit system allowing 571 hiking permits, projecting that 400 permits would actually be used by the hikers per day"

Topic Question 2: Alternative A is the best. I've hiked to the top of Half Dome 22 times. Many times on the weekends (before permits!). During the week, never a problem with crowds. Weekends? Rarely a problem since I'd get to the cables by 10am. On the 2 or 3 times I'd be at the cables at noon or later, I'd just hike up the outside of the cables. I was always polite and always gave others the benefit of any doubt (and let them have the right-a-way).

Topic Question 3: Here are my comments I made to some friends about an addendum to Alternative A (if necessary).

Since a ranger is posted at the base (I assume right before the rock switchbacks) to verify permits, an alternative would be for that ranger to regulate flow. After 100 or 200 hikers (or however many the NPS wants) have passed and are still on the top, create a line/queue. When one hiker comes down, let one go up. This would create an incentive for people to come early and maybe get off the top more quickly (feeling guilty that a line is expanding below).

There would be no need for permits. How would the ranger keep track of the flow? A simple handheld clicker/counter with the ability to run both up and down (add and subtract numbers of people). Example: The number of people at the top is say 198. A group of 5 hikers come up to the check point, the ranger allows all 5 to go up. Now the total is 203 (okay, allow for some flexibility on party/group size). The next group of 4 come to the checkpoint and the ranger starts a line. 6 hikers come down, the ranger removes 6 from the counter (now down to 197). The group of 4 is allowed to go up (ranger adds 4 to the counter for a total of 201). The next group comes up to the checkpoint and a new line is created. This is a very simple solution that costs nothing more than it costs now and saves the public a huge hassle of having to deal with permits running out or dealing with

scalpers.

Topic Question 4: N/A

Topic Question 5: Of the 22 times I have hiked Half Dome before the permits were required, I rarely saw garbage along the trail. Truly, I can't believe this is even an issue. As far as wear and tear on the trail is concerned, yes, the trail needs to be repaired on occasion, but the worse part of the trail is not the last 4 miles! It's the first 2 miles going up to Vernal Falls. Finally, someone fixed that part of the trail 6 years ago (thanks!).

Topic Question 6: I love Yosemite National Park. Who doesn't? I love to take all the day hikes out of Yosemite Valley.

I love hiking Half Dome! I've done it 22 times, once since permits have been required. I've tried to get permits online when they first come available and they are gone in 2 hours. I then find permits on craigslist selling for over \$100! I contacted one of the sellers of 6 permits and she said she sold them all for \$100 each on the first day! Okay, that's 6 permits at \$1 each and sold for \$100. What percent profit is that anyway!!?! 10,000 percent profit?

Permits are now given out on the day of, but when? 7am? I leave on the trail at 6am, this is not acceptable for me.

Permits are a total hassle and a waste of everyone's time. I loved the days when I'd come up on Thursday, hike up 4 mile trail, then hike Half Dome on Friday for myself and then hike Half Dome with my friends on Saturday at a much slower pace. Gone are those days unless the NPS gets rid of the permit process.

Comments: I think I've said it all. Thanks, ■■■

Correspondence ID: 339 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 15:34:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Plan E is the only alternative that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 340 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 15:37:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative E (Remove the Cables) is the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness.? Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 341 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 16:00:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support Alternative E-Remove the Cables in the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment. Reason #1: Not everybody needs to go everywhere; the wilderness should be taken on its own terms. Reason #2: Since they're a bad idea anyway, removing the cables would save on maintenance in this time of budgetary austerity.

Thank you for your attention. God bless.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 342 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 16:02:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternatives A, B, C, and D would continue to degrade, on varying levels, the wilderness quality, conditions, and designation of Half Dome.

Topic Question 3: Alternative E would accomplish the goal of restoring wilderness quality and conditions to Half Dome Trail.

Topic Question 4: Alternatives A, B, C, and D do not meet with the Wilderness or National Park criteria for preservation of the land within it. They would continue to degrade Half Dome with equipment and overuse.

Topic Question 5: Continued instillation of cables and additional equipment degenerates the formation of Half Dome, and continued crowded conditions creates more wear and tear on the formation. This also destroys the quality of wilderness and preservation that are sought out by many when going to National Parks, as stated in the National Park Service policies.

Topic Question 6: I use the Park for solitude and seek out intact wilderness. Having equipment going up the side of Half Dome destroys any aspect of preservation, solitude, or wilderness qualities. Proposal E is the only one that would preserve the NPS or Wilderness policies.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 343 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 16:11:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness. Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Topic Question 3: Those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so.

Topic Question 4: NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness. Putting rails or any other structures on Half Dome violates this rule.

Topic Question 5: Over time, the face of the mountain will be defaced by the constant traffic wearing a path on it. The constant jarring that the cable daily receives will also loosen the rock causing the face to chip and pit. Half Dome with holes on the face for the convenience of hikers? I don't think that's a policy the general public wants, nor is this consistent with NPS policy.

Topic Question 6: As a visitor and tourist, I do not want to see cables or any other man made structures applied to natural wonders like Half Dome. This is a travesty and against NPS rules as stated above. You are destroying the very reasons for visiting this park in the first place.

Comments: I support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 344 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 16:14:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Plan E or complete removal of the cables is the only viable solution if the integrity and preservation of Half Dome (a national treasure) is to be maintained. Half-way measures will only yield half-way results.

Topic Question 3: This Plan E should be implemented as soon as possible.

Topic Question 5: Only focusing on the preservation of half-dome as a goal is somewhat short-sighted - - the sheer number of visitors in the area currently is likewise going to lead to degradation of surrounding areas. With the removal of cables, attraction to the portion of the park will thereby be limited, positively impacting flora and fauna in the vicinity as well.

Topic Question 6: Ways in which I have utilized the park in the past have been - - rafting on the Merced River, horseback riding and hiking.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 345 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 16:17:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I join with other caring and concerned persons in advocating for the adoption of Alternative E, removing the cables on Half Dome.

Topic Question 2: The world's unspoiled places and the nation's parks and wilderness places need to be protected, preserved, and maintained in as close to their natural state as possible. Those who want amusements can go to amusement parks.

Topic Question 3: Alternative E would remove the cables and maintain Half Dome in its natural state.

Comments: Unchecked overpopulation, consumerism, and recreational use and abuse of the world's and the nation's remaining natural areas is destroying what is left of them, driving species to extinction, and despoiling the environment. It is time to call a halt to this.

Correspondence ID: 346 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,11,2012 16:19:16

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I don't think removing the cables will limit the number of people who use the trail. I've hiked to the base of the cables several times, but not used them. Removing the cables will increase the number of people who "freeze" half-way up and require assistance. If crowding at the cables is the problem, add more cables. If environmental destruction along the trail is the problem, charge \$50 per day to use the trail and use the money for maintenance and restoration. Don't set a hard limit. Charge enough to get the numbers down to sustainable levels. Charge more on the weekends. Maybe have a handful of free or discount days.

Topic Question 3: The obvious answer is to create more national parks and wilderness areas. Restore Hetch Hetchy!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Topic Question 6: I've been going to YNP for 50 years. It's changed quite a bit. I remember when you could stand on outcroppings over the valley floor at Glacier Point. Can't do that any more. There is a LOT more asphalt, more railings, and things that attract the RV crowd. It should have been left more wild. It's much too Disneyesque now and so you have unsustainable use. Disneyland was built for profit; National Parks are meant to preserve a natural wonder.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 347 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,11,2012 16:24:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: My comment is simple...I believe that Alternative E - Remove the cables, is the most reasonable way to keep Half Dome as a sacred place, unmarred by mans need to concur. Viewing from a distance is quite adequate and should be considered so by all who come to visit Yosemite to see this magnificent rock. If we continue to let people hike up her slopes, mar her with drilled holes while our shuffling feet continue to dig a path on her surface what will be next? A coffee shop at the top? All this also puts people at risk of serious or fatal injury. The Half Dome trail's popularity is taking a toll on its wilderness environment: ? Vegetation damage and soil loss on and near the trail corridor, including many sections that are very wide and deeply eroded ? Habituation of wildlife along the trail corridor, and particularly at the summit and subdome, from improper food storage and feeding ? Threats to a population of the Mt. Lyell Salamander, a California Specie of Special Concern ? Severe crowding on the subdome, summit and cables, including long lines to use the cables ? Very high encounter rates on the entire trail Increases in the number of people hiking to Half Dome are impacting the environment so that it no longer reflects the conditions called for in the Wilderness Act. Let Half Dome be.

Topic Question 6: I have come to Yosemite for a natural high from the splendor of this beautiful natural wonder. Thankfully it is a park and not some sort of resort destination or it would be more overcrowded than it has already become. Half Dome must remain an unscathed beauty without crowds of people trying to fulfill a need to scramble up her slope.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 348 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,11,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Alternative E - Remove the Cables. Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, ?Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness.?. Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 349 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,11,2012 16:34:18

Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support Plan E, to restore Half Dome to its wilderness state, apart from rock climbers who wanted to tackle it. Currently it is a zoo! Remove all the cables, stanchions, steps, and anchors so that this icon is no longer defaced.

Comments: We love to visit Yosemite and applaud your efforts to keep it as pristine as possible. Our favorite time to come is in the winter after a snow when it is uncrowded and even more beautiful. The roads are constantly plowed and gritted to keep them open.

Correspondence ID: 350 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 16:38:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I would simply like to say that I support Alternative E which entails completely removing the cables to Half Dome, thereby restoring it to its more primitive condition.

Correspondence ID: 351 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 16:40:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: A place that has been designated as wilderness should be just that, wilderness. This means it should not be invaded with "improvements" by Governments or any branch of the Government. People seek these places out for solitude and peace not for more of the same congestion they encounter in their everyday lives.

Correspondence ID: 352 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 16:46:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please support Alternative E for Half Dome.

Correspondence ID: 353 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 16:51:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Please select Alternative E for the Half Dome Trail at Yosemite National Park. It appears that by using crutches visitors are loving the trail to death. Restore the wilderness feeling that is directed by NPS regulations.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 354 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 16:59:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 4: Alternative E - Remove the Cables

I support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome.

It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness.?"

Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 355 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I would like to express my support for severely limiting the number of climbers on Half Dome. I believe the chosen Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment alternative should be Alternative E - Remove the Cables. Alternative E would not only drastically reduce the number of climbers and restore more of the true wilderness character of Half Dome, but it is the only alternative that truly complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?".The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness."

Correspondence ID: 356 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 17:05:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternatives A-D still require the cables to be placed and removed each year.

Topic Question 6: I was the Wawona District naturalist at Yosemite from 1964 through 1966. I climbed Half Dome with Bob Barbee, and we saw ONE other person that day. Times have changed in 46 years, and visitation has increased to the point that it is no longer defensible to encourage hundreds of visitors per day to climb a cable ladder up Half Dome. The sense of solitude that Bob and I experienced is no longer available under existing conditions. Just as it was timely to discontinue the Firefall, it is now time to discontinue the use of cables to climb Half Dome.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 357 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 17:07:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I first hiked to the top of Half Dome around 1962, and have done so several times since then, last time in 1998 on my 50th birthday. I see no reason to remove the cables ? they are just one more part of a heavily constructed trail that has numerous other improvements throughout its length. Just because they are more or less unique to Half Dome does not necessarily mean that they should be removed. An awful lot of people will be very disappointed to find out that they can no longer access one of the most spectacular places in Yosemite Valley.

Adding a third cable seems to me the most sensible solution to this issue. That is what occurred to me when I first heard about it, and I'm glad to see that I am not the only one that has thought about it. If the cables are to be removed then all of the bridges over the Merced River, all of the handrails at the top of Vernal, Nevada, and Yosemite Falls should be removed, all of the rock steps, retaining walls, trail signs, and other improvements should also be removed.

Correspondence ID: 358 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 17:14:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I am writing in support of alternative E which is to completely remove all handrail cables on Half Dome. It's been abused for years and it's time to give this special place a rest already.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 359 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 17:21:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 4: I'm in favor of honoring the spirit if not the exact letter of the NPS wilderness regulations. If the cables and stanchions are not to be permanently removed, the number of climbers should be severely limited, so that the semblance of wilderness can be experienced by those who visit Half Dome. I believe alternative D comes closest to a reasonable, honorable plan.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 360 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 17:21:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I support Alternative E.

Correspondence ID: 361 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 17:36:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I support Alternative E.

Correspondence ID: 362 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 17:37:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I like alternative E. It will save money by not having to remove and reinstall the hardware every year and it will improve the experience for those who are able. Currently this is not a wilderness experience. It is a cluster ****!

Comments: I like alternative E? remove the cables.

Correspondence ID: 363 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 17:37:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I support Alternative E. The Park should not find itself in the position of having to provide accessible ways/methods for so many people to access the Dome. It degrades the entire wilderness experience.

Correspondence ID: 364 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,11,2012 17:38:34

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I am in favor of Alternative C, the preferred alternative. I believe it offers recreation opportunity for hikers while still providing some measure of protection to the environment. Limiting the daily number of hikers trekking this treacherous trail will still maintain their safety, and will give them a more desirable experience with a manageable number of tourists at any given time. This method is similar to that used in the Grand Canyon for rafting excursion on the Colorado River, and has a proven track record of success.

Topic Question 6: I have not had the privilege of going to this Park, and look forward to it sometime soon. With cables and handrails, I will have a better chance of enjoying this trail as I suffer from knee problems like millions of Americans in their 50's. Without the handrails, I and millions of Americans that support the NPS through our tax dollars, would be excluded from this particular activity. I am not suggesting that this trail be modified for ADA accessibility, which is not practicable in this situation. But I do feel that any other alternative will serve only the ultra-fit and young outdoor enthusiast and exclude too many others who want to participate in this activity but require a little assistance via handrails. I also favor protection of natural resources and feel that Alternative C accomplishes both of these objectives.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 365 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,11,2012 17:43:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support Alternative E- Remove the cables from Half Dome completely. Granted, the view from the top is awe-inspiring and many people have come to expect assistance in reaching the heights. However, given that Half Dome is located within a designated wilderness area, the Park must comply with its own policy: ?Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?. The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness.?

Cables to the top of Half Dome are undeniably modifications of wilderness. In addition, the crowding associated with the scramble to the top is destroying the wilderness characteristics of the area. Please allow wilderness to be restored by removing the cables from Half Dome.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 366 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,11,2012 17:48:20

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: Yosemite National Park Superintendent

I think plan A should be kept with a few changes to it. Number one would be that you add a third cable to the dome. This by itself would make a safer trip up and down for all that make the trip. The other thing it would do if people did get caught on top during a storm they would be able to get down faster. With a way up and a way down you wouldn't see people swing out on the wrong side of the cables and there wouldn't be the long line that you have now. I understand the cable work as a lightning rods. With the new technology as time goes by you might take a look at nylon or some other type of rope ?

I also feel that restrooms should be added at the base of the dome as people are leaving a lot of unwanted stuff under bushes and rocks.

The other thing that needs to be undertaken is better upkeep of the trails. We need to help out Mother Nature.

I feel that you should sell tickets just like you collect a fee for camping. Say the fee is Ten Dollars, Two Dollars would go to administration and the balance would go to improvements of the trails, the third cable and restroom. The ticket would be different than most in the fact that it would have questions on the back as to weather or not if you made the climb, time of day that you climb, the number of people in your party extra to make a complete study and make the park more customer friendly.

People will climb the dome cables or no cables it is going to make a nightmare for you to enforce, as it is not a place that you can drive to in a minute's time.

You say you can't do some of these things because it is in the wilderness. Look at your own definition of what wilderness is, that part of Yosemite didn't when it was put in the wilderness because it was already being impacted. There are things that can be done for safety and to protect the wilderness and the public's right to use the park.

Please take another look at what you are doing do a deeper study look at it from all angles not just the Park Service view point.

I did attend the open house put on by the Park Service March 7, 2012. You canceled it once and that you moved the location at the last minute in an attempt to throw people off and keep them from coming. The meeting was very informative but very one-sided which most of these meetings I have went to are. When it got down to the point we could ask questions a small hand full

were allowed and they cut us off to go on to the White Wolf Lodge Rehabilitation which I feel your staff did a good job on . I would of liked to seen more parking put in place but that is for the next battle. We finished with White Wolf in plenty of time which any good speaker would have know was go to happen. My point is cut of the question time because you don't to here it and you are afraid that other people would here ideas that you don't like.

Just one last thing, I am not new to Yosemite by any means and have seen a lot of improvement like all the new restroom in the high country. On the other hand I have seen parking taken away so people have to keep driving around . One night when my daughter and I where in the park making a new key for a car which was after dark cars were parked all most all the way down to Bridle Vale Falls. These people had walked jumped on a tram or something to go to other places in the Valley. Yes you have taken out camp sights because they are in the flood zone every 35 or 40 years. Back to me being no stranger to the park I have a 1948 Dodge Truck that we have had since it was new and used it to hall our horse to he high country to go packing. Yes we used the old Tioga pass road down through Yosemite Creek which we packed out of quite often.

Sincerely [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 367 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 17:48:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 4: USPS is charged with administering designated Wilderness in accordance with the standards of the Wilderness Act. Handrails, or in this case cables, are inconsistent with the provisions of the Wilderness Act

Topic Question 6: My rock scrambling days are over. If the cables and steps are removed I will likely never experience the summit of Half Dome. But, with the cables and steps in place, Half Dome loses its natural character and the reason I would want to go there. I will feel the loss of naturalness more than the loss of access. I am now a much more casual user of the outdoors, but this isn't about me or my personal utilization of the park or its resources. This decision is about the USPS stewardship of the Park's wilderness resource for the benefit of all Americans, for this and for future generations. That resource is degraded when USPS transforms it from a natural formation into a theme park. This decision is about the land itself. Where man is a visitor not an engineer. That is why I urge USPS to retire the cables to the summit of Half Dome and not reinstall them

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 368 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 17:50:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am writing in support of Option E, the removal of the cables and the return of Half Dome to its natural wilderness state. There are plenty of excellent hikes in Yosemite, and the cables create overcrowding on Half Dome.

Correspondence ID: 369 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 18:06:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Any Alternative other than E - removing the cables - would result in continued spoiling of the wilderness character of Half Dome. Already the cables on Half Dome and the trail leading to its top have become severely overcrowded. There is no solitude or sense of primitive and unconfined recreation, which are essential ingredients of Yosemite's wilderness character. Up to 1200 hikers a day have used the trail during peak periods.

Alternative E is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms... The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Comments: I support Alternative E - Remove the Cables.

The presence of the cables have resulted in Half Dome and the trail leading to its top becoming severely overcrowded. There is no solitude or sense of primitive and unconfined recreation, which are essential ingredients of Yosemite's wilderness character. Up to 1200 hikers a day have used the trail during peak periods.

Alternative E is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms... The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

In 1980, Professor Joseph Sax wrote a book entitled Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks. In it Sax argues for preservation of wilderness in the national parks and urges the NPS to not build handrails to the top of mountains to

allow mass visitation. Half Dome today is the literal opposite of his epigrammatic title.

Correspondence ID: 370 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 18:21:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Remove the Cables

This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome.

It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness."

Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 371 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Half Dome handrail question - Alternative E

This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 372 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 18:28:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support "Alternative E - Remove the Cables".

Alternative E is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 373 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 18:36:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: i support alternative e. i do not want handrails to go up mts. drop the handrails in wilderness areas

Topic Question 2: wilderness should be wilderness. not everybody can be in wilderness

Topic Question 3: we need wilderness in some areas.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 374 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative E is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Topic Question 5: Visitors use the cables as they pull themselves or climb up the steep incline. In the fall at the end of each

season, NPS removes the cables and stanchions and re-installs them every spring. Because of the cables, however, Half Dome and the trail leading to its top have become severely overcrowded. There is no solitude or sense of primitive and unconfined recreation, which are essential ingredients of Yosemite's wilderness character. Up to 1200 hikers a day have used the trail during peak periods.

In 1980, Professor Joseph Sax wrote a book entitled Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks. In it Sax argues for preservation of wilderness in the national parks and urges the NPS to not build handrails to the top of mountains to allow mass visitation. Half Dome today is the literal opposite of his epigrammatic title.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 375 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 18:49:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I strongly urge you to eliminate the cables on the back of half dome. It has led to overcrowding and has eliminated the feeling of wilderness and serenity that a National Park should provide. I strongly support Alternative E.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 376 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 18:59:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: It appears to me that all aspects of the situation that need to be covered have been covered adequately.

Topic Question 2: Based on the reasoning in the document, I believe the preferred Alternative B would work.

Topic Question 3: I believe all reasonable alternatives have been covered including those that have been rejected.

Topic Question 4: There is enough flexibility in the law that I believe the proposals are all legal.

Topic Question 5: None.

Topic Question 6: I first visited the Park in 1958 as a backpacker when people went to the dump to see the Bears. I climbed the Half Dome Trail in 1959, being the only person on the trail after being the only person camped in Little Yosemite Valley the night before. I last visited the backcountry in the 1980's when 300 people camped in Little Yosemite Valley. I last visited the Valley in about 2005 when the traffic was horrific but your management made the visit "reasonable". I'm also familiar with the similar overcrowding on Mt. Whitney and the success of the management applied. While I'm not current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Comments: There are "extreme" attitudes on both sides of issues like this. Often these attitudes reflect unrealistic or just pure adherence to points of view that do not accept the need for reasonable compromises. The same "ranting" occurred when it became necessary to limit visitorship on Mt. Whitney, yet the imposed management plan has maintained a reasonable level of use with a reasonable wilderness experience.

What I experienced on Mt. Whitney and Half Dome in the 1950's will never return, which is too bad, but that loss is a consequence of growing population and new technology.

A balance must be reached between this and preservation of the values of wilderness and parks. I believe you have done an excellent job of analysing everything and have come up with an acceptable preferred alternative.

Correspondence ID: 377 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I feel that the NPS should remove the hand cables. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 378 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Dear National Park Service (NPS):

I am writing you today to urge you to accept Alternative E, removing the cables from Half Dome Trail and Half Dome. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

In 1980, Professor Joseph Sax wrote a book entitled Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks. In it Sax argues for preservation of wilderness in the national parks and urges the NPS to not build handrails to the top of mountains to allow mass visitation. Half Dome today is the literal opposite of his epigrammatic title.

Please make certain that we consider the preservation of wilderness first, rather than the access of visitors, at Half Dome. Thank you for considering my remarks.

Correspondence ID: 379 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 19:33:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I would simply request that Alternative E of the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment be implemented. I would like to be able to see this famous site in a natural state. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 380 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 19:45:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I feel that the route location inside designated Wilderness makes handrails and artificial safety aids very problematic. If a Wilderness location can't be accessed with standard trail-building techniques, it should be left to that extent "inaccessible". Thankyou.

Correspondence ID: 381 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness.? Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 382 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 20:01:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I support Alternative E, which will restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 383 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 20:17:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Constant traffic, both foot and transport to get people to an area, degrade our natural resources and despoil our natural environment.

Topic Question 3: Leave nature along and let people enjoy it from afar, as they have in the past.

Comments: I suggest removing any existing cables and returning Half Dome to its original state as much as possible.

Correspondence ID: 384 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 20:31:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Please support alternative E. It is the only choice that actually supports the wilderness character of the area. Ropes and climbing aids should not be part of wilderness mountain areas.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 385 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 20:32:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Urge adoption of Alternative C - Limit to 300 People per Day.

Correspondence ID: 386 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 20:48:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: 'Alternative E: Remove the cables' is the only choice that describes the true Wilderness Act of 1964. Half Dome will be beautiful once again when the handrails and the 1200 people a day are gone. We must protect our treasures.

"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it." ? President Lyndon B. Johnson, on the signing of the Wilderness Act of 1964

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 387 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 21:51:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I believe that Alternative C is probably a good compromise and would reduce the congestion at Half Dome. If this is to be maintained as a wilderness area than Alternative E is best but probably hard to do with the Valley so close.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 388 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 22:58:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I have reviewed the current Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment and am strongly in favor of the removal of the cables from the mountain - the Assessment's Alternative E.

Correspondence ID: 389 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 22:59:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I strongly urge the NPS to adopt Alternative E: Remove the cables.

I consider our national parks to be the one place I know the land is managed for the benefit of the plants, animals and the ecosystem it represents. Wilderness, I strongly believe, should be met on its own terms. Removing the cables would be more closely aligned with the objectives of the wilderness designation.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 390 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 23:00:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I believe the wild should remain wild. We hold these lands in trust. These are not theme parks. I believe there should be no cables, nothing pounded into the rock, no people climbing all over this "wild" area.

Correspondence ID: 391 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,11,2012 23:43:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: With regard to Half Dome in Yosemite N.P.,I feel that Plan E is the only plan that keeps to the original purpose of use of structures within all national parks--to provide access but to keep the parks wild.

Topic Question 3: With reference to Yosemite's Half Dome, Plan E should be adopted because this is the only plan that stays true to the original purpose and plan for all of our national parks.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 392 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:53:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I would like to support Alternative E, remove the cables. Every time I see pictures of the amount of people climbing up Half Dome, it reminds me of a line getting into an amusement park ride. That amount of people have to be

destroying the natural landscape.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 393 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 01:41:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 4: I am in full support of the Wilderness Act and all that it entails for the protection of Yosemite National Park. It is ironic that the first cables up Half Dome were placed with the help of Sierra Club, but this was prior to the Wilderness Act. Now, the cables would never be installed on Half Dome. Any NPS proposal that does not adhere to both the spirit and the law of the Wilderness Act is unacceptable in my mind. I would like to see the cables removed, leaving Half Dome for those who are capable of scaling it without the 'handrails.'

Topic Question 6: I am an infrequent visitor to Yosemite National Park, since I live in Alaska. I have climbed up Half Dome, and I was surprised to find the chain guardrails in the park. I am more of a hiker and climber. I've climbed many routes in Tuolumne Meadows and elsewhere in the park. I feel that Yosemite Wilderness is sacred and should be free of manmade technology, such as handrails. Although I am 60 years old, I advocate removal of the chain rails. Those people interested in climbing Half Dome can accept that it takes a certain skill set to do so. It's there for those who have the skills. There are many accessible places for the visiting public to walk and enjoy Yosemite National Park without climbing the Half Dome chain route.

Comments: Please select Alternative E for steward management of the Half Dome Trail. Wilderness should be free of a chained route up the peak. Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms. I urge the National Park Service to restore the wilderness character of Half Dome and to remove the chain handrail to the top.

Correspondence ID: 394 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 03:41:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: none

Topic Question 2: none

Topic Question 3: none, plan C is OK

Comments: Last year enjoyed the cable system on 7/26 and very satisfied of the permit system limiting the daily number of climbers to 300

Correspondence ID: 395 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 04:47:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I write in support of Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms...The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness."

Though most would not be able to reach the summit without the cables, other visitors to Half Dome are prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing, and could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 396 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 06:04:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I am writing to support Alternative E. Please restore the wilderness of Half Dome as a Mountain Without Handrails. This is the best preservation option, which should be the main point.

Topic Question 2: This is the best preservation option.

Topic Question 3: I support Alternative E.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 397 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 06:18:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I would like to see Option E, the removal of all cables on Half Dome, enacted. This would be the only option that would restore a sense of wilderness to Half Dome.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 398 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 07:34:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am writing to encourage NPS to select alternative E, removing the cables, at Yosemite's Half Dome Trail. This is the plan that makes the most sense since it would restore the wilderness conditions of this trail and the backside of Half Dome. NPS's own policy that they don't modify wilderness areas to eliminate risks associated with wilderness.

Not everything has to be accessible to everyone. Please select alternative E.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Correspondence ID: 399 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?".The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 400 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 08:45:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please choose alternative E and restore Half Dome to real wilderness character .This is the safest alternative for the public, and the easiest for the National Park Service to administer .

Correspondence ID: 401 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 08:48:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?".The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness.? Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 402 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 09:37:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support Alternative E. It is the only one that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?".The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness.? I visited Half Dome in the 1970s and there were no cables or handrails and it was not necessary. If you cannot make the climb without these things, then you can just enjoy the view from below.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 403 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am writing to express my support for "Alternative E", to restore the wilderness of Half Dome as a Mountain Without Handrails. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms....The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored. Thank you for your time and attention.

Correspondence ID: 404 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 10:20:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I was shocked to see a photo showing the line of people climbing and waiting to climb Half Dome! With the steepness and the barren surface offering nothing in the way of traction, as well as the number of people involved, I'm surprised there haven't been more fatalities. Offering a platform on which to view the valley from a safe vantage point is one thing, but encouraging people to attempt something this dangerous is tempting fate. It is true that people should be given the freedom to choose how far they want to risk their own safety, but many people are not known for their wise choices in this respect and subsequently endanger the lives of others in the process. My choice for Half Dome's stewardship plan would be either Alternative D or E, preferably E. In addition to the safety factor, there are also the natural features to consider. Current status does not comply with NPS policy which mandates that it will not modify wilderness to eliminate risks normally associated with wilderness. Alternative E would seem to best comply with this policy.

Correspondence ID: 405 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 10:59:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly suggest adopting Alternative E. Remove the cables.

Correspondence ID: 406 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please select Option "E" remove cables.

This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?".The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 407 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 11:16:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: As it regards the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan, I support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?".The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 408 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 11:28:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: Alternative E - Remove the Cables

Comments: Do Alternative E - Remove the Cables. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?".The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 409 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 11:30:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support option "E" for a variety of reasons. It by far the easiest option to implement. All other options are unwieldy, complicated, expensive and innately unfair.

Topic Question 6: I am a backpacker and casual peak climber. I have hiked many, many of the backcountry trails of Yosemite and the High Sierra in general.

Comments: Option "E" solves the problem by severely limiting the use of half dome. This will go far toward restoring wilderness character to the trails in the area. Removing the anachronistic cables permanently is, in my view, the only way to steward the wilderness in a serious and thoughtful way.

Correspondence ID: 410 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 12:05:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Plz do not remove cables. I think best option is to limit amount of people per day to access. Thanks for considering

my opinion. I hope a good decision is made. Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 411 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 12:07:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Comments: The Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan is flawed in a way that leads to an improper an unnecessary end state recommendation of restricted access to the half dome summit. The Plan is based on a preconceived biased end state rather than on real unbiased facts and principals. The plan states the purpose to be: protect the wilderness, improve visitor experience by reducing crowding and limiting encounters among hikers, protect the area's natural and cultural resources, and improve public safety by reducing crowding. Two of the purposes unnecessarily restrict the possibilities for the end state by specifically stating "reducing crowding". These purposes assumedly originated from the 3 specified needs. Before possible end states can be properly weighed against one another, the validity and completeness of the needs must be accessed.

The first stated need, "Crowding along the Trail and the summit adversely impacts wilderness character of the area by compromising visitors' opportunities for solitude" is derived from a misinterpretation of the Wilderness Act. In the context of the Half Dome Trail, there is no need for solitude. The correct parsing of the applicable item in the Wilderness Act, Section 2.(c) item (2) is: "A wilderness has outstanding opportunities for solitude OR a wilderness has outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation". Only one of the 2 statements needs to be true. The opportunity to hike to Half Dome's summit satisfies the 2nd statement. Hiking permits limit the opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation and are in direct conflict with the 2nd statement. A desire to maximize opportunities for solitude can still exist, but it cannot arbitrarily do so without including the context of also maximizing opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The second stated need is "High use levels on the Trail adversely impact wilderness character due to adverse impacts to natural resources". Wilderness character and natural resources are important, but the Plan fails to quantify what the adverse impacts are with the different end states and so we are left with only a magical interpretation. Less people is assumed to be better, but why not let 500, 600, 700, or more people per day. Where are the projections of trail use versus trail degradation, wildlife impacts, vegetation destruction, and human waste?

The final stated need is "Crowding has raised concerns about the safety of both the public and that of rescue personnel on the cables. Crowding subjects hikers to long travel times and delays in ascending and descending the Half Dome cables and may prevent them from getting down from the exposed portion of the Trail in a timely manner so as to avoid rain and lightning storms". Safety is a concern and it includes both a social and individualistic component. A socially engineered plan should ensure that the end state is indeed better than the original state, in safety, fairness, and in respect to an individual's liberty. Permit systems may incentivize behavior that may lead to decreased safety. Each individual is ultimately responsible for their own safety and must manage it accordingly. There are lots of things an individual can do for their own safety and there are lots of non permit solutions that can be used to ensure safety.

In the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan, there are statements about Half Dome evacuation times, fast moving summer times, and a reference to Lawson's and Kiser's 2011 study titled "Half Dome Cables Visitor Use Model Scenario Analysis Final Report ? Yosemite National Park". The Stewardship Plan states that 83 minutes would not allow hikers to descend in time to avoid fast moving summer storms, which is meant to imply that a restriction is necessary. This is a false conclusion and a distortion of facts. It is clear that Lawson's and Kiser's 2011 study on mass descent estimated times are improperly modeled to capture real conditions. Their models and estimates seem to be based on two way traffic on the cables, which would not be the case during an evacuation scenario. This would lead to evacuation scenario estimates being exceedingly high. Whether their end simulation used two way traffic or one way traffic, their model would be flawed if it was not based on accurate meaningful data. The background data for their models came from photographic observations. These photographic observations do not contain information for evacuation scenarios. This means that the evacuation models are improperly based and thus their results under evacuation scenarios are flawed and unreliable. As for fast moving storms, the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan does not point to data that indicates how quickly storms form, how often they form, when they form, what people's reaction to the preceding weather and storms would be, and whether or not solutions exist that give weather warnings.

In the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan, there are references to Lawson et al. 2009, the "Half Dome Cables Modeling and Visitor Use Estimation Final Report ? Yosemite National Park". These references cite surveys and number of people at one time (PAOT) on the Half Dome Cables data. However, the data is improperly interpreted and false conclusions are reached. Lawson et al. 2009 determined the visitor-informed threshold for crowding to be 70 PAOT on the cables. They determined this by giving individuals 5 photographs and asking them to rate them from very acceptable to very unacceptable. The pictures contain 170, 105, 70, 34, and 11 people in them with an average of 78 people. The question is flawed because it forces a ranking and a scale. This almost guarantees that the mean result of the survey will match the mean of the number of people in the pictures (70 people vs 78 people). There is a statement in the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan that states that 80% of respondents indicated that they would prefer to see no more than 10 to 30 people at one time on the Half Dome cables. This question is a standalone question that does not ask the preference in the context of a tradeoff. A more insightful question would ask about a PAOT in the context of a management plan. When people were asked about potential management actions, only increased signage received a majority of support and a permit system received only 27% support.

The surveys cited missed the most obvious and factual survey. That is the survey of what people actually did. Before the temporary weekend permits were put in place, 1200+ people would attempt to summit Half Dome on days where 1200+ people would attempt to summit Half Dome. For these people, the experience and opportunity to summit Half Dome outweighed everything else. When weekend permits were enforced, weekdays saw a significant rise in the number of people attempting to summit Half Dome via the cable system. This evidence suggests that if people wanted to avoid the 1200+ crowded days, they could have but chose based on their own personal preference and economic considerations to summit Half Dome during a peak

period.

The needs for the Half Dome Stewardship Plan have been shown to be improperly defined, biased, and based on improper or non-holistic interpretation of facts. As a result, the Half Dome Stewardship Plan's recommendation is a poor one. Given the alternatives put forward, Alternative A should be selected.

Correspondence ID: 412 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 13:37:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: e because this is a wilderness area,not an entertainment place.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 413 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 13:40:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am writing to urge the National Parks Service to support Alternative E. Please restore the wilderness of Half Dome as a Mountain Without Handrails.

Correspondence ID: 414 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: A drastic change from the 2008 Conditions would be too great a change.

Correspondence ID: 415 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: Even if you reduce numbers, consider adding a 3rd cable.

Correspondence ID: 416 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: With this comment I am asking the NPS to support Alternative E. for the Handrail solution at the Yosemite's Half Dome Trail. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

In 1980, Professor Joseph Sax wrote a book entitled Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks. In it Sax argues for preservation of wilderness in the national parks and urges the NPS to not build handrails to the top of mountains to allow mass visitation. Half Dome today is the literal opposite of his epigrammatic title.

Thank You

Correspondence ID: 417 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 14:57:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative E (removing the cables) is the only alternative that complies with the Wilderness Act and NPS Wilderness policy.

Topic Question 4: See answer to question #2

Comments: Please select Alternative E -- remove the cables -- and do NOT support changing Wilderness boundaries in order to accommodate the non-conforming cables.

Correspondence ID: 418 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am sorry to be late in responding to the Half Dome Plan, but I have some major concerns about the Half Dome Plan and about Yosemite in general. We recently moved from Madera, California and over the years Yosemite has been my favorite hiking/backpacking place. I have taken student groups camping and family groups hiking/backpacking a number of times while a teacher and as my children were growing up. I have probably climbed Half Dome 30 to 35 times with different groups and for most of them it was probably their first time to climb to the top. I think it is somewhat easier to go up when the cables are laying flat on the ground as you can pick them up and use them at the appropriate height for you. But that would not work for most people. I have climbed to the top when it was very crowded and when there was hardly a person going up. A couple of times the

kids were scared of going up and so we just got to the cables or a little ways up and then turned around. I am concerned about safety and that is why we turned around and I have never gone up when there are clouds around or anywhere near.

I was on the telephone when you had your "Webinar" session where we could listen to the conversation about Half Dome, but that did not work out well. The code they gave me did not work, and then we could not give any comments either. It was also rather confusing in terms of how to respond and get involved in asking questions or making comments. But thanks for trying to get us involved.

It seems to me that if people are willing to take that difficult trail from the valley to the top of Half Dome that there should not be a limit on how many are able to hike to the top of Half Dome. Sure some people might fall, but considering the number who climb there, the accident rate is most likely very small. People drown in their bath tubs, but we don't eliminate bath tubs, they get electrocuted with hair dryers when they try to use them when they are in the tub, but we don't eliminate hair dryers. They get hurt and killed on skate boards, but we don't eliminate them.

The survey referred to in the Half Dome Webinar seemed to me to possibly be flawed in that you took it at one or two times. How do you know that they were representative of those who climb Half Dome? If you asked me I might state that I would like to have Half Dome to myself (which I don't) but that kind of a vote should not be included in a survey, in my view. Visitors may have preferred 30 on the cable, but what is the basis for that number? How was it determined that above 70 on the cables was too many? Probably more people have climbed it in the last few years, fearing that a quota would be installed, and they wanted to beat that quota and permit system. Getting off the top quickly might be a consideration worth merit, but they should not be there if a storm is around the corner. They took a risk by going up there, when your sign at the bottom clearly states that they should not go up on the dome. Skiers should not ski outside of skiing areas, but they do that and often pay for it for their lives. If we do dumb things, we take the risk and we don't need the National Park Service or any Governmental Agency being our mother. They warned us and we are adults. It was also stated that Half Dome usage was compared with other parks, but that is not really a fair comparison. There is no other place like Half Dome, as far as I know.

If you are for sure going to implement a permit system of some type, I hope there is a way for some to get permits that day, early Saturday or Sunday morning, or the day before in the evening. When we took college students to the park, we would get there late Friday night and a good share had never been to Yosemite before. We would talk about the hikes and usually about 1/3 of the group would want to hike to the top. We had and would have no idea before we got there who might want to hike to the top and so the permit should be available Friday evening for some to accommodate for those in that type of a situation. I think your Option 3 of 300 per day is too small. I think it could be double that and that would still allow for plenty spaces between people who want to climb Half Dome. Three hundred just seems way too small of a number.

Also, if I understand it correctly, you still do not have the 2010 Data Analysis completed. If that is correct, why not wait for information and analysis?

Summary about Half Dome ? First choice is to have no permit process. Let those who want to climb, climb. ? Second choice would be to limit the number to at least double the Option #3 of 300 per day. With any system, I hope individuals can get a permit to hike the day before. ? Finally I think the idea that Wilderness Permits allow them to hike is great, although I don't like the fee costs and I hope the day they climb will not have to be specified in their permit.

Other concerns about Yosemite. Why are the group camps closed before the end of October? The weather is usually good for the first half of October. Colleges on the quarter system like Stanford University don't start school until the end of September or early October. I was not at Stanford but we were on the quarter system and would come about the second week of school or about the second weekend in October. By late October the weather was usually too iffy and thus we came earlier. When we first started bringing students to Yosemite in the 1970's, the group camps were still available and that was nice. But they have not been for a number of years as they are now closed by October. Please consider leaving them open longer.

Traffic is quite bad, but I think much of the traffic problem is caused by the Park Service itself. Having one lane from Camp Curry to Yosemite Village creates a problem in the number of cars that need to get through the area. I realize that the current system allows busses and other emergency vehicles through the area at all times. Maybe a few turn out areas could be used so that if a bus comes or an emergency vehicle comes, cars could get off and let those vehicles by. Maybe even another lane might be considered and implemented. Furthermore, the way the traffic directors direct the traffic also causes delay.

Parking for Yosemite Falls is another interesting thing. There used to be a nice parking lot that busses and cars could park at. Now we have to park along the road, helping create congestion, unless we stay at the Yosemite Lodge. The bathroom and trails are very nice, but it was better before. Sure groups like the Sierra Club and other conservation groups probably did not like the parking area, but why do they have so much clout? Why is the Sierra Club allowed to have their visitor center in the Valley and why are they allowed to have the buildings at Tuolumne Meadows? I don't think it is fair for them to be able to have their visitor center in the valley. If they believe in what they preach, the center should be out of the valley and out of the park.

Why are the camping sites not increased in the valley floor? Both the Upper River and Lower River campgrounds were very nice campgrounds that many enjoyed in the past. Why have they not been reopened after the 1987 flooding? My guess is that many of the wealthy and Sierra Club types probably stay in the Yosemite Lodge, the Ahwahnee, or Camp Curry cabins, or maybe even at Housekeeping. The "common man" who does not have the money and likes to come to Yosemite probably camps out more in campgrounds. If true, the approach being taken seems to benefit the rich and discriminate against the middle class or

poorer individuals who like Yosemite.

My guess is that many believe that people like myself don't really understand the problems being faced and don't really have a good grasp of what needs to be done. Granted, we don't have all the knowledge needed, but neither do the rangers, park service personnel, congressmen, or others. We all can learn. A good example of this is a number of years ago the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, and/or other agencies decided that they would put out all the fires started in the forest. So when a fire was started they quickly put it out rather than let burn out a lot of undergrowth. Well a number of us looked at that then and thought that was not a good idea, because after a number of years the undergrowth would be so big and ready to burn , major fires would be likely. It did not take any genius to see large fires happening. That happened some and fortunately the policy was changed to allow for controlled burns and to let many fires burn themselves out.

I am sorry to go on for so long, but I get really frustrated with many of the policies and approaches being taken and considered in the National Parks, particularly Yosemite National Park. It is a wonderful place and sometimes it seems like those who are fortunate enough to be able to live there and enjoy it, want to limit it to themselves rather than thinking of ways that would make the park more assessable and enjoyable to the many others who would also like to enjoy the park. I don't mind the crowds and if traffic gets too congested, many will not keep coming back or may not choose to come in the first place.

Thanks for listening to my concerns. Since moving to San Diego, I am not able to enjoy Yosemite, Sequoia , Kings Canyon, and the beautiful Sierra Nevada mountains like I have in the past. I just hope they remain available to the common, middle class, individuals who make up the majority of our population

Correspondence ID: 419 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment. As indicated in the report, the Half Dome Trail is of special interest to park visitors, with as many as 1,200 average daily visitors in 2008. We understand and support the need to provide a safe environment for visitors while protecting the wilderness character and natural resources of the half Dome Trail, however, our Board is concerned about the preferred alternative decreasing the number of visitors from an average of 1,200 to 300 users per day. This represents a 75 percent decrease and would greatly impact the experience of park visitors.

The frequently asked questions about Half Dome permits states that the current lottery is allowing the purchase of up to 400 permits per day and that this still allows for free flowing conditions on the cables through the day. With this in mind, our Board would respectfully request that the Park Service would consider a reduction of no more than 600 visitors per day, with the intent of allowing the maximum number of visitors as safety would allow.

The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors supports the new lottery system for sale and distribution of permits, as the old system made it very difficult for the typical park visitor to obtain permits in a timely manner. Non-transferability of permits also decreases the ability for individuals to misuse the system by purchasing permits and then reselling them.

The ultimate goal is to maintain the park's natural resources for generations to come while providing a safe environment to do so. The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors continues to support the National Park Service in this endeavor and looks forward to working together in the future.

Correspondence ID: 420 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support Alternative E.

This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness. Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 421 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 16:44:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Designated wilderness should be just that: wild. Providing and maintaining cables and steps for visitors to access the top of Half Dome violates the idea of "wilderness" and is counter to the NPS's own policies, which state in part:

"Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms"

and

"The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness"

I favour option E, removing the cables and steps. Unfortunately, the NPS has encouraged access by those less than qualified to attain the top without the cables and steps. Therefore, for a while there will be unqualified hikers making the attempt... so the NPS should post signs highlighting the removal of the cable and the inherent dangers in the climb at the trail head in the valley, at the trail fork(s) above the falls that lead to the base, and at the base itself. If the NPS has been posting a ranger at the base during times of high usage, then a ranger should still be posted there until unqualified access attempts dwindle.

Correspondence ID: 422 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 16:51:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: please remove the cables on Half-Dome. They are an artificial construct on what should be a natural(if difficult climb. They would be comparable to installing a fixed metal ladder on the face of El Capitan! Some places should remain the domain of those with the fortitude and skills to travel without permanent structures. I'm not a climber! Thanks and Happy trails

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 423 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 16:51:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: No hand rails at Half Dome - it goes against the spirit of Wilderness to provide structures. Choose Alternative E - remove permanently the hand rails on Half Dome

Topic Question 3: No hand rails at Half Dome - it goes against the spirit of Wilderness to provide structures. Choose Alternative E - remove permanently the hand rails on Half Dome

Topic Question 4: The legislation of the Wilderness Act says no evidence of man should encroach on the wilderness. There are so many people we need places where crowding is not an issues and wilderness values are not diminished or destroyed. Choose Alt E - It's the only possible legal choice.

Topic Question 5: No hand rails at Half Dome - it goes against the spirit of Wilderness to provide structures. Choose Alternative E - remove permanently the hand rails on Half Dome.

Topic Question 6: No hand rails at Half Dome - it goes against the spirit of Wilderness to provide structures. Choose Alternative E - remove permanently the hand rails on Half Dome.

Comments: NPS should be following the letter as well as the spirit of the law embodied in the Wilderness Act. No man-made structures should be in the Wilderness.

No hand rails at Half Dome - it goes against the spirit of Wilderness Act to provide structures. Choose Alternative E - remove permanently the hand rails on Half Dome

Correspondence ID: 424 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 16:59:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Alternative E - Remove the Cables! "Wilderness is not wilderness if shows the presents of man." Quote by Jeffrey R. Poss

Correspondence ID: 425 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 17:09:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: See comments, below.

Comments: Regarding Half Dome Trail in Yosemite, I support Alternative E, no cables.

Correspondence ID: 426 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 17:09:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I support option C for Half Dome access - keep cables up and allow 300 people a day. This is a balanced approach that still allows access to Half Dome, but not out-of control crowds along with all their impacts.

Climbing the back side of half dome using the cables is an amazing experience that should not be taken away from the public.

Option E is too excessive. Also there is risk in everything we do; removing the cables due to risk (as per option E) penalizes everyone. Thank you for allowing me to comment.

Sincerely,

██████████

Correspondence ID: 427 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 17:15:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Plan E is best. I am a minimalist when it comes to intrusion on the environment and nature. I am a zero population growth member and believe the more wilderness we can keep in pristine, natural condition the better for Mother Earth as a life support system. I also support limiting family size, as in China. Earth is going to burn to a crisp from overpopulation and global warming! And we will have brought it on ourselves!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 428 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Having cables and stanchions on Half Dome conflicts with NPS policies.

Topic Question 2: We need to restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. Removing cables and stanchions is the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness."

Topic Question 3: Remove the cable and stanchions from Half Dome, Yosemite. Humans do not need to be able to access every single inch that nature has to offer. Encroaching on hard to reach areas reduces the natural beauty it has to offer and destroys the sense of wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 429 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 17:26:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment

I think you should not replace the cables and stanchions. The area should remain the wilderness it is supposed to be. There are enough wilderness areas already ruined by careless visitors to the sights.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 430 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 17:28:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: All options except for Alternative E contravene the spirit and intent of the Wilderness Act. It is not the intent of the Wilderness Act, nor the NPS, to provide equal access and opportunity to everyone in every activity.

Topic Question 6: I have only visited Yosemite once but have plans on returning. If I do return, I would rather try to climb Half Dome on my own terms than with the assistance of cables with hundreds of other people.

Comments: Please select Alternative E, removing the cables, for the climb up Half Dome.

Correspondence ID: 431 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 4: Alternative E (Remove the cables) is the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness.?"

Alternative C does not comply with these policies.

Comments: I support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome

Trail and the backside of Half Dome.

It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness."

Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

In 1980, Professor Joseph Sax wrote a book entitled Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks. In it Sax argues for preservation of wilderness in the national parks and urges the NPS to not build handrails to the top of mountains to allow mass visitation. Half Dome today is the literal opposite of his epigrammatic title.

I urge you to restore the wilderness of Half Dome as a Mountain Without Handrails.

Correspondence ID: 432 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 17:37:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I am all for taking the cables out of the rock of the Half Dome. What's the point if you "help" people get up there? If you can't climb up there without the help of cables etc. then you shouldn't be there. Not only is it too overcrowded, so there's no real peace there, but it's bound to eventually destroy all or part of the rock! Please, let the wilderness be wilderness. Thank you

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 433 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 17:37:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: Camping and hiking - see comments below - I would be willing to have my use affected in order to preserve wilderness.

Comments: I am nearly 69 years old and realize that my choice for Half Dome may limit my access to the area, however, my preferred choice would be to return this spot to wilderness and eliminate the present crowding. NPS policies state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Therefore, the only option seems to be Alternative E of the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment, to remove the cables. Failing that, the numbers should be drastically reduced and only offered through some sort of lottery.

Correspondence ID: 434 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 17:42:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Alternative D - Limit to 140 People per Day

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 435 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 18:05:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Mr Neubacher, et al,

We at Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides (SYMG) share in Yosemite's vision to create a safe and memorable wilderness experience on Half Dome. Since 1991, SYMG has been a leader in active travel throughout the Sierra. We have guided countless visitors up Half Dome and look forward to continuing our offerings to this iconic and rewarding summit. This short letter outlines why the directors of SYMG feel that it is necessary to provide for a better alternative for obtaining day-use Half Dome permits for commercial outfitters so that we may continue offering the service of guiding park guests up this iconic peak in safe and rewarding way.

There are few mountains throughout the world that compare to Half Dome. Certainly Yosemite's own EA Report clearly demonstrates the number of visitors who are drawn to its summit each year. In our experience, we've found that many park visitors prefer to hire a guide for their Half Dome day for (a) maximizing their chance of success, (b) the increased margin of safety, and (c) learning more about Yosemite's unique cultural and natural history along the way. In fact, the service we offer exactly mirrors the four major goals outlined in the Half Dome Plan.

Under the pretense of anecdotal evidence, we also argue that our guides not only support our own clients on the Half Dome Trail and Cable Route, but also provide advice and assistance to countless other wilderness users during a majority of our

guided outings. This is particularly true on the Cable Route portion of the trail.

Thus, there is value for Yosemite's visitors in having professional guides easily able to obtain permits to guide trips up Half Dome Cable Route. Yet it has now become quite difficult for commercial outfitters to participate in the lottery system. As a result, we are finding that we are not effectively able to offer this service to those park visitors who seek it.

The major roadblock for commercial outfitters is that specific names need to be assigned to the permits. As a solution, we suggest the following options, with Option (a) being our preferred option.

(a) setting aside a number of daily permits (12-15 participants for instance) separate from the public lottery that commercial outfitters such as SYMG can reserve through the wilderness office when we have bookings. All CUA holders allowed to lead day trips up Half Dome would share in this permit pool. This is similar to how the wilderness permitting system operates in Inyo and Sierra National Forests.

(b) setting aside a number of daily permits (12-15 participants for instance) from the public lottery quota that commercial outfitters such as SYMG can reserve through the wilderness office when we have bookings. All CUA holders allowed to lead day trips up Half Dome would share in this permit pool.

Note on options (a) and (b): If these permits are not reserved by the day of walk-in permit availability, they could be added to the walk-in pool. Thus, CUA holders would not participate in the lottery. Any of our guides possessing the valid CUA would have the ability to pick up the permit and lead the outing.

(c) allowing authorized commercial outfitters such as SYMG to enter the lottery multiple times under the company's name and under one rec.gov account. Any of our guides possessing the current CUA would have the ability to pick-up the permit and lead the outing. This is similar to how the wilderness permit system in Yosemite currently operates.

We at SYMG feel that these are each viable options and should be considered under the new management plan. Thank you for your time and interest. We are happy to discuss any of this with you at your convenience. [REDACTED]

Respectfully,

[REDACTED] General Manager & President, SYMG

Correspondence ID: 436 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 18:10:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: In the question of over use of the Half Dome Trail I am suggesting the removal of all trail to the top assistance, hooks, ropes, pins etc, in other words approve Option E. As the NPS has stated itself as part of policy toward Wilderness that "the NPS will not modify the Wilderness areas to eliminate risks that are normally associated with Wilderness." I would love to go to the top, Im too old should have done it when I was younger and needed no false assistance.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 437 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 18:16:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Allowing 400 people a day is certainly better than 1200, but they'll still be wearing ruts into half dome and having a non-wilderness experience.

Topic Question 3: Take the cables out, so Half Dome can become the Wilderness Area it's supposed to be.

Topic Question 4: The Wilderness Act requires that the designated areas be left as much as possible in their natural state. The picture of that press of people crowding up the back of Half Dome evokes the line of foolhardy prospectors slogging single-file up to Chilkoot Pass during the Klondike gold rush. But the scars and deepening ruts of this particular "gold rush" will not be mitigated by layers of snow, as the deepening ruts continue to scar what is supposed to be untrammelled wilderness.

Topic Question 5: Decreasing the number of people in the rut will make it take longer for the scar to deepen by a certain amount, but the damage will happen nonetheless. The impacts of the experience on people will be better with decreased crowding, but the Wilderness Act was designed to protect wilderness, not the breathing room of the crowds.

Topic Question 6: I haven't been to Yosemite in many years, but I'll be visiting in early June. I don't know how much I'll see of the back of Half Dome or the people crowding together to get up it, but if I see a Chilkoot phenomenon, it will definitely detract from the experience.

Comments: I don't think it's the Park Service's mandate to decide whether or not to abide by the Wilderness Act. I think it's their job to enforce it.

Correspondence ID: 438 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 18:20:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: If I had a vote I'd vote for Alternative E - Remove the Cables they're OBSCENE!!!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 439 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 18:24:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Leaving the situation as is is untenable. Restricting the numbers would be an improvement, but is still not appropriate for a wilderness area. Protecting the nature of wilderness by accepting the wilderness as it is is what the National Parks should be about.

Alternative E: Remove the cables is the option the fits with the purpose of wilderness and our national parks.

Topic Question 6: I have gone hiking and backpacking/camping in Yosemite and greatly appreciated the solitude and beauty.

Comments: I support Alternative E: Remove the cables. Restore the natural ruggedness of Half Dome as well as the serenity of the area.

Correspondence ID: 440 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 18:42:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Although I strongly support preservation and maintenance of wilderness areas, for half dome, I support your preferred alternative, Alternative 3, or Alternative 2.

Although not a true wilderness experience, the unique experience of standing on top of half dome should not be limited to the elite few capable of technical climbing. Even if limited to the few, there would still be too many to make climbing half dome a true wilderness experience.

Topic Question 6: I started in the Valley when we hiked the Muir Trail and did Half Dome early in the morning after camping just past it. I do plan to do more Sierra backpacking.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 441 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 442 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 19:07:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: the alternative of removing any aid for climbing half-dome would limit the number of visitors to the top and leave a more "wilderness" experience.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 443 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 19:15:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I strongly support Alternative E, the removal of cables on Half Dome, in the true spirit of accepting the wilderness on its own terms. I visit Yosemite twice a year, and have done so for most of the past thirty-five years and the majority of those years as a tent camper.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 444 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 20:48:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No comment

Topic Question 2: Alternative E, remove the cables: We used to have Cables on the nnnorth face of Longs Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park. The cables were remmoved as they were not natural features. A wooden shelter and horse barn were also removed from a site just above timberline. There are may routes on Longs some more and some less tehnic. We still have too many people on the mountain in the summer, but we have too many people

Topic Question 3: Remmoval of the cables is the best alternative.

Topic Question 4: I see none.

Topic Question 6: I am now in my 80's and no longer climbing. I speak from past experience.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 445 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 22:29:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I've loved hiking up Half Dome and visiting other areas of Yosemite -- I've visited 4 times in my life so far, and plan to visit again!

Comments: I'd favor either option A (no change), or B (limit to 400 visitors/day).

Correspondence ID: 446 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 22:54:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please implement Alternative D - Limit to 140 People per Day on Half Dome. Do not add any new structures and only perform necessary maintenance on what is already in place.

Correspondence ID: 447 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,12,2012 23:04:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am another citizen that thinks you should remove the cables and poles from Half Dome, and limit the visitors to less than 150 per day.

Correspondence ID: 448 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 00:14:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I think that, given the Wilderness Act and the goals you have stated, that really there is no viable choice other than Plan E. The cables have helped to undermine the conditions there and are counter to the Act. To continue to provide the cables represents a problem that is difficult to deal with as the demand will always be there to use the cables. There are far too many natural places in the US that have been allowed to be used in an irresponsible manner to the point that they are no longer wild nor beautiful so, although we speak of a rock, we have a responsibility to take care of it. The half dome should be left to the experts to climb, with the proviso that the experts enjoy it without defacing, damaging or littering.

Topic Question 3: As an alternative, the plan involving the smallest number of visitors per day might be used as a fund-raiser to help restore damaged areas of the park, wherein cable users must pay a special fee to be able to go up. However, strict supervision of these climbers to ensure they take care of the area they're visiting would be needed.

Topic Question 6: I lack the money to visit the park but, if I were able, I would want to enjoy remote areas that hadn't become defacto "tourist destinations" with the consequent damage by careless people.

Comments: Every day we lose wilderness to giant natural resource companies who don't care about anything other than profits, and damage is done to wilderness areas by thrill seekers (such as extreme snowmobilers, ATV users, motocross bike users, etc.) who are more interested in the challenge of "conquering" a natural area than they are with the consequences and feelings of people who come to view the pristine beauty.

I used to live near Sand Creek Park in Aurora, Denver, and I was terribly saddened when the expanse on the opposite side of the river was paved over with a trail and neat grass. Instead of seeing natural beauty as I sat in a dead tree near the creek, all I saw was another manmade distortion of nature, backed by houses and streets. I don't even know, now. Even worse, on my side of the creek, recreational motorbike users had torn up an extremely hilly area of the park which included a prairie dog colony. It was

my pleasure to enjoy the prairie dogs, foxes and birds that lived there, and my great unhappiness to see humanity's disregard for it. Once, I even went through the park cleaning up much of the trash left by visitors and bums (who camped there). I had enough for 4-5 barrels, and I hadn't even cleaned up 1/4 of the park.

Please, protect what we have for future generations - even if that means restrictions.

Correspondence ID: 449 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,13,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence:

Topic Question 1: support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness. Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

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Topic Question 4: support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness. Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Topic Question 5: support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness. Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

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Correspondence ID: 450 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,13,2012 06:00:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence:

Comments: Please support Plan E. Wilderness should remain wilderness, not be made accessible to humans for their sake.

People can see half-dome from wherever they are able: from the bottom if that's all they are capable of, with technical climbing if that is their skill level. Limiting the number of people may be helpful, but it still undermines the wilderness (and it will lead to squabbles with humans who don't understand the phrase "no, you can't go there"). Protect the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 451 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 06:41:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I firmly disapprove of tourists climbing the backside of the Dome using cables or any other mechanism. What a huge liability issue for the National Park Service, not to mention that humans have no civility these days and havoc could break out from this experience. The Dome should be viewed from afar not humans trampling through the land or up the backside like ants for a "better view".

Topic Question 3: No new plan--stop humans from putting themselves and the forest service in harm by removing any access to the Dome

Topic Question 5: Environmental issues are always placed last when it comes to humans utilizing the parks. Man is the nastiest creature on the face of the earth when it comes to destroying beautiful land, environment, air, water. Therefore, the environmental consequences of man tramping up the backside of the Dome are so apparent--scaring wildlife, trampling the earth, noise, and most of all litter.

Topic Question 6: I have used Yosemite as pure pleasure hiking the trails, viewing the Dome, seeing the great outdoors.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 452 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 06:51:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: The EA examines five alternatives:

Alternative A - No Action Alternative B - Limit to 400 People per Day Alternative C - Limit to 300 People per Day (NPS Preferred Alternative) Alternative D - Limit to 140 People per Day Alternative E - Remove the Cables

I pick Alternative E: Remove the cables. If people are not fit enough or have the skill to reach half Dome on their own. Then maybe they shouldn't be there in the first place. They can visit a less remote park and have their picnic lunches there. The wilderness should be restored to its original state. Having large numbers of people will deteriorate the area further.

"Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness."

Correspondence ID: 453 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 07:47:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I support Option E, remove the cables

Correspondence ID: 454 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 08:09:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Removal of cables to the top of Half-Dome

Topic Question 6: I enjoy the wilderness aspects of our national parks and cables to the top of half-dome diminish the natural state of this park icon.

Comments: I am writing you in support of "Alternative E - Remove the cables" for Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment.

I believe this option is most consistent with the NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness."

As a regular visitor of Yosemite National Park, I support the removal of the cables to the top of the iconic Half-Dome.

Thank you, - [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 455 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,13,2012 08:20:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: NA

Topic Question 2: No handrail or chain is a burden. We just need to keep number under 400-300 per day by permit.

Topic Question 3: Try the 400-300 a day permit plan for a few years.

Topic Question 4: See Justice Department.

Topic Question 5: Anything OTHER than the same old same old is a step the right way.

Topic Question 6: No change for me. Permits and waiting list are fine. I can take all the Photos I want under thoses terms.

Comments: I support the NPS. Keep up the great work. We need to give the Parks more of everything except privatization.

Correspondence ID: 456 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 08:27:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: None to my knowledge.

Topic Question 6: I travel through the park and look at the beautiful seanery!

Comments: I climb 14ers here in Colorado. Only one is in a National Park. It is Longs Peak and it has a technical route similar to Half Domes. It once had a cable route but they wisely, removed it. When I climbed it, there were over 100 "lights" behind me. (it is recommended that one start his climb about 3 AM, I started at 1 AM). It appears that removing the cable from Longs Peak didn't reduce the amount of climbers by much. I say, "remove the cable from Half Dome"!

Correspondence ID: 457 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 08:51:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Back country camping permits should include the ability to climb Half Dome in addition to the day hikers. Those doing technical rock climbing routes should be given permits to descend the cables in addition to the daily allotment.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 458 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 08:55:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am writing to request that the NPS use Alternative E with regard to Half Dome. I am not a frequent visitor to the trail, but have been there three times in my life. I still remember the sense of awe I experienced on the occasions I was there, particularly the sense of "this is nature's way" of challenging the exploratory sensations in us human beings. It would be a travesty in my mind to take away that challenge by inserting any other means of ascending the trail than by simply climbing. Alternative E provides that continuing challenge and the sense of being at one with Half Dome's natural situation. We lose much when we can't experience nature on its own terms.

Please consider serious evaluation of the positive reasons embedded in Alternative E. and conclude upon that as the best of the alternatives.

Thank you,

██████████

Correspondence ID: 459 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 09:14:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Crowded and dangerous conditions for all users exist with cabling system.

Topic Question 2: Removal would markedly decrease the number trying to reach the summit, but focus on more prepared users who prefer a more natural experience.

Topic Question 3: See above; decreased numbers would make it safer for those better prepared for the real difficult climb.

Topic Question 6: Have not used the climb, but have in many other locales and prefer the more natural experience.

Comments: I support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies.

Correspondence ID: 460 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support Alternative E - Remove the Cables

This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness. Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

In 1980, Professor Joseph Sax wrote a book entitled Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks. In it Sax argues for preservation of wilderness in the national parks and urges the NPS to not build handrails to the top of mountains to allow mass visitation. Half Dome today is the literal opposite of his epigrammatic title.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 461 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 09:51:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support plan E. Remove all cables from the back side of the half dome trail. If people cannot get to the top of a mountain on their own means the park should not have to put in cables and metal ladders for them. Visitors of all of our national parks need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms.

Topic Question 3: I would suggest that the park removes all of the cables and wire ladders and not put them back on for the coming season.

Topic Question 4: Having 400-1200 people hiking up and down one single trail a day the opposite of hiking in the wilderness. It can be dangerous having that many people on a cable ladder system.

Topic Question 6: I use our NPS to find solitude in the wilderness. Removal of the cable ladder system would bring that back to the park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 462 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 09:58:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support alternative E. Why do we feel we must always change things? Instead of living with them, we live against them. We talk about how we cherish and want to protect the wilderness environment, then don't appreciate it for what it is. Leave Half Dome alone. If people can't enjoy the awesome beauty of it without crawling all over it, then they can go elsewhere.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 463 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 10:44:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Plan E, removing the cables from Half Dome, makes the most sense since protecting the mountain and its surroundings is the primary purpose of the park. Without careful preservation, there soon will be nothing worth visiting.

Cables were removed years ago from Longs Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park and I cite it as a prime example of the value of such a move. The removal of the cable and its anchors improved the look of the mountain and eliminated the rusting, corrosion, and cracking they caused. The cables were long gone when I finally climbed the peak back in '79, and the achievement meant far more coming without artificial aids. I encourage you to return Half Dome to its natural state, with no cables. It will help preserve the mountain for future generations by reduce the traffic to the top and restoring the natural state of the mountain.

Topic Question 6: I've never been to Yosemite, but it's on my bucket list. Please protect it so that it will be worth the trip both

for me and my descendants.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 464 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 11:01:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I think I would vote for limiting the number of visitors to say 300/day or even fewer, but not remove the cables entirely.

Comments: I've been there twice, even stayed over night once before the restriction. These experiences have deepened my appreciation of nature in all it's infinite beauty. Without the cables, nada! My daughter climbed it last summer! Hooray! For her and for life.

Correspondence ID: 465 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 11:25:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Climbing anchors do not belong in wilderness -- period! Regardless of whether they aren't considered permanemnt structures due to their removal each fall.

Topic Question 2: See 1 above. Only permanently removing them is the only wilderness-worthy alternative.

Topic Question 3: I recently viewed the program about the young man who climbed Half Dome totally free form -- no anchors, ropes, etc. If there are people who want to climb with anchors and ropes, there are plenty of other non-wilderness settings to do so. This is just one more example of the slippery slope, that-area-by-area, is diminishing the purity of wilderness. If this continues, then the designation will become meaningless.

Topic Question 4: While the Act may allow for non-permanent structures, and the bolts are removed each year, the bolt holes remain as a constant intrusion -- a permanant alteration in the rock face that have no right to be there. I know that rock climbing enthusiasts equate the bolts to a rock face trail, similar to a hiking trail. The difference is that without use or maintenance the earthen trails will grow over and return to their natural condition (e.g. Shendandoah and other eastern parks.) The holes in the walls of Half Dome will remain defaced for eons of geologic time.

Topic Question 6: Although I have only visited the park on one occasion, I believe that whether I go there often or not, that this decision will create one more precedent to diminish wilderness, both here and throughout the system.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 466 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 11:35:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternatives B and C both seem to address the primary concerns. Alternative D seems too restrictive, leaving very few people able to have the Half Dome experience.

Topic Question 3: Please consider accommodating non-commerical groups, such as boy scouts, schools, large families, and church groups, as part of the day use permits. Many scout troops use a hike to Half Dome as a capstone hike, giving scouts a strong sense of acheivement. With the current interim permit system, groups of more than 6 are very unlikely to get permits on the same day. Please consider setting aside one "group" permit for up to 25 people per day. This is still within wilderness travel limits but allows for group experiences. At a time when the NPS is trying to reach diverse audiences, these organizations (and large ethnic families) are an important constituency; excluding them from Half Dome due to an unfair preference for only small groups further alienates them from their parks. A limited set aside for groups would resolve this problem. Otherwise you will have many duplicate applications for permits as groups try to "work the system" to get multiple permits on the same day, to the detriment of smaller groups. (this parallels the issue of not having group campgrounds in Yosemite Valley)

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 467 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 11:58:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I strongly oppose Alternative A (no limits/status quo) with or without installation of a 3rd cable as too negative of an impact on the environment and potential wilderness experience. I also strongly oppose Alternative E (removal of cables) as an extreme denial of public access to this unique wilderness experience.

Topic Question 3: I support Alternatives B or C (400 or 300 limits) or even a blending of the two, as follows: 400 person limit on Saturdays (or Saturdays and Sundays) 300 person limit on all other days (maybe a 150 limit on one day for those choosing even more of a wilderness experience). Also, find some way to allow/permit wilderness hiking companions to join permitted

cable climbers up to the saddle immediately beneath the cables without climbing the cables themselves.

These approaches and alternatives seem to well balance access to, enjoyment of, and preservation of the unique wilderness experience of the Half Dome trail and climb.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 468 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 12:46:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative D, with it's 140 person limit is more in line with, though still considerably above, the Happy Isles Wilderness Permit trailhead quota yet, if anything, the permittees lured to Half Dome by the permit process have more impact on the wilderness character of the backcountry along the route due to their deeper penetration and the fact they'll be traveling on the corridor far longer as they go in and out in the same day; arguably doubling the perceived crowding in that wilderness corridor.. Happy Isles trailhead quota totals 40 including the pass thru's, Glacier Point to Little Yosemite Valley adds another ten (which in any case largely travel a different route); yet Alternative C is 400!, Close to TEN times the backpacker limitation.

Thus I prefer Alternative D, lessening the overall corridor impact and giving, I expect, more weight to the overall considerations and not as tightly focused on the cable section.

Topic Question 6: I'm an active backcountry backpacker and so the overall wilderness character of the park has an impact on my wilderness experience. That includes routes that overlap with such somewhat more tourist destinations as Half Dome.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 469 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: As an advocate of wilderness and our National Parka I support Option E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the ONLY alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms".The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness.? All other options are not in compliance with that NPS policy.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 470 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 13:11:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: If I have an input to the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment, my vote would be for "Alternative E - Remove the Cables"! The top of Half Dome is a beautiful place if you come from the wilderness on the John Muir trail, and with so many people there is it difficult to enjoy that beauty.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 471 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 13:13:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative C is a reasonable compromise in the interest of safety and preservation between long established de facto policy of no limits on access and a strict interpretation of the law that Wilderness Watch advocates. It seems like an administrative nightmare, but if NPS thinks it can implement this fairly, let's give it a try. If it doesn't work out then maybe Alternative E needs further consideration. One step at a time please. Besides, didn't the "structures" on Half-Dome precede the Wilderness Act and therefor be subject to some kind of grandfathering?

Topic Question 6: I love the wilderness aspects of Yosemite, but I used the cables to get up Half Dome and celebrate on the day the US landed on the moon in 1969. It wasn't at all crowded then, but I understand the subsequent problems with safety, crowding and degradation, and I don't need to go up there again in my lifetime (or afterward). Just as trips down the Grand Canyon are now rationed, the problem of too many people now requires rationing of access to Half Dome. Too bad, but some things are limited in this world, and unless we are willing to resort to rationing by putting a high dollar price on them (probably inappropriate in a national park), we have to get used to living with limits.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 472 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 13:20:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: NO Handrails on mountains please!!!

Correspondence ID: 473 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,13,2012 14:14:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: First of all, is this a "Done Deal" or are you really going to respect the response of the public/users?

Topic Question 2: Have you ever visited generally similar natural wonders in other parts of the world? Germany, Switzerland, Australia, etc.? I'm forever ecstatic at the absence of endless (dumb?) safeguards to "protect" the (unlimited) millions of visitors. While I don't mean to suggest there aren't safeguards in some places, it seems to me that it's only the U.S. that gets carried away. Half Dome was fine as a naturally limiting site and safe for anyone with common sense.

Topic Question 3: I don't see how you can dispute the addition of a third cable - and "Up" and "Down" passage. Then, step aside and let the public enjoy the experience.

Topic Question 5: Environmental consequences are more often than not, overblown. Every time I walk the many trails in Yosemite where the roots of old trees have been trampled for decades - and the trees flourishing - I recall so many dire warnings by environmentalists of death and destruction by footsteps. In some instances, the same applies to "touching". There has to be wear and tear to enjoy. It isn't the number, it's the maintenance! Let us enjoy it!

Topic Question 6: Our family (and countless others, I'm sure) are essentially spontaneous in our trips to Yosemite. Even if we're staying for a week or so, the opportunity and decision can be quite short notice. We manage one way or another to find lodging, but obtaining a permit to climb Half Dome would likely be impossible. Our climbs thus far (two) were totally spontaneous, decided the night before. They were successful and it was an overwhelming experience. Don't do away with spontaneity, please!

Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 474 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,13,2012 14:32:52

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative E will work because returning our parks to their truly wild status is treating wilderness as "wild" which they should be.

Topic Question 6: I love to spend time getting away from the noise pollution of our cities and getting back to nature as it is meant to be. Less crowds means quieter conditions allowing visitors to think clearly and get away from the stresses of every day life.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 475 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,13,2012 14:41:43

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: The iconic Half Dome peak in Yosemite National Park and the trail leading up to it lie within designated Wilderness. For many years, the National Park Service (NPS) has maintained a number of structures on the backside of Half Dome to assist visitors in reaching the summit. These structures include a steel cable system, stanchions that are drilled into the rock surface to hold the cables, some wooden steps, and some permanent anchors bolted into the rock.

Without these structures, most visitors would not be able to reach the top. Visitors use the cables as they pull themselves or climb up the steep incline. In the fall at the end of each season, NPS removes the cables and stanchions and re-installs them every spring. Because of the cables, however, Half Dome and the trail leading to its top have become severely overcrowded. There is no solitude or sense of primitive and unconfined recreation, which are essential ingredients of Yosemite's wilderness character. Up to 1200 hikers a day have used the trail during peak periods.

Of the five alternatives being considered, I urge the NPS to adopt Alternative E.

This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?.The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness."

Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the

wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Please support Alternative E.

Correspondence ID: 476 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 14:42:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Regarding the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment: The NPS preferred alternative, Alternative C limit 300 people per day, does not fulfill established NPS policies

Topic Question 2: Established NPS policies state "The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." By providing mechanical appliances such as cables, stanchions and other permanent or seasonal aids, existing policies are being ignored.

Topic Question 3: Established NPS policies state "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". Only visitors with the skills and equipment to engage in these activities should be allowed to undertake these activities.

Topic Question 4: The NPS is mandated to provide and maintain areas of designated wilderness for the public. The NPS is NOT mandated, and in fact is prohibited, to provide access to areas, activities, or situations which could change or disrupt the aspect of 'wilderness'; nor modify or develop any natural elements of the wilderness to provide ease of access or use.

Topic Question 5: By providing and maintaining mechanical appliances such as cables, stanchions and other permanent or seasonal aids, the nature and aspect of 'wilderness' will be distorted.

Topic Question 6: Seasonal visitation and recreation. Any concept of 'wilderness' is weakened through the use of mechanical permanent or seasonal aids which are not elements normally found in a natural environment. For all visitors the concept of wilderness should remain as a natural environment without un-warranted human intervention.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 477 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 15:24:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Designating the HD trail as wilderness is absurd. 98% of those doing the Dome never get 100 yards off any trail...already there are 3 bridges, carved steps, miles of paved trail...even a two story crapper but still this is not enough to keep the trail pristine. Make another designation - a "special" wilderness designation (this would also work on the Whitney trail too - like I said - special. After this new designation, erect more toilets just below the cables, perhaps add another row of posts (an up and down cable path), and increase rangers on the lollipop trail itself. The unchanged quota of 400 would be adequate - everybody has a right to try for themselves. Do not lower the quotas but make it safer. Allow wilderness permits passing by HD free access as before. Charge each individual doing only the Dome lollipop trail (HI - LYV - HD and return) a \$10 - \$20 fee to cover added maintenance costs.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 478 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 16:10:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: General Comments:

Well written EA demonstrated YOSE did provide alternatives that represented a range of appropriate actions.

One concern I have is the reference to Yosemite National Park's intention of embarking on a new Wilderness Stewardship Plan. In the document it states it will be a "Plan" (page 2-11 Table 2-3), as a "Plan revision" (page 3-37) and also "plan update" (Appendix A-2). Is the 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Plan to be re-written, updated or revised?

Specific Comments:

Page 1-5 Table 1-1: Accidents on Half Dome

This table only speaks to the accidents on the Half Dome Cables (a portion of the trail) and does not paint an accurate picture of the accidents and near misses that have occurred on other portions of the trail. A better more complete picture would be painted if it included Sub-Dome and also mention that many visitors who do, or intend to do Half Dome, require assistance elsewhere along the trail corridor (Lost Lake SARs and Sub-Dome near miss of 10/2010 for example). May want to mention the PSAR

messaging efforts, its successes and also its lack of success (no fatalities in 2009 and 2010 but fatalities in 2011).

Page 2-3 second to last paragraph; may want to include Table 3-1 here to help people see what the encounter rates are you're referencing.

Page 2-4 second paragraph; make sure it is clear that YOSE Wilderness Permits are ONLY required for overnight wilderness users.

Page 2-22 Table 2-3; Natural Resources - Wildlife Cumulative effect listed as "Beneficial." Is this really possible to have a beneficial cumulative effect under the no action alternative when visitors will not be regulated?

Page 2-23 Table 2-3; Park Operations - there is no mention of the impact of a more active administrative presence and how it will impact the area.

Park Operations Cumulative Effects - no explanation on how it was determined the alternatives were all considered "beneficial."

Page 3-3 third paragraph; wording; instead of "Wilderness areas in Yosemite" it would more accurately read "areas within the Yosemite Wilderness" as technically the Yosemite Wilderness is only one Wilderness area within the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Page 3-16 second paragraph; once off the Half Dome Cables the trail is still "constrained" and in places like the Sub-Dome it is constrained with potentially deadly consequences if you stray off of the trail.

Page 3-29 Talking of impacts under "Park Operations ? Alternative No Action" it states "moderate, long-term, adverse impacts" which is confusing? moderate and adverse? Perhaps defining these terms would make it clearer? Second sentence, "Adverse impacts to natural resources would continue to occur?" What is the Park doing to address these current issues - Half Dome EA and/or what else?

Page 3-30 fourth paragraph; not an accurate account of current staffing at Little Yosemite Valley; 1-2 social science staff 1-2 bear techs 2-4 commissioned rangers 1-2 SAR techs Shoulder seasons see trail crew and other staff; camp can have anywhere from 2 ? 30 people staying in it (2011). With a more active administrative presence predicted in the future these numbers are not likely to go down.

Alternatives B, C, D would likely increase the administrative footprint for example; In 2012 plan to have 1 GL-09 term LE supervisor, 2 LYV Rangers, 2 HD Compliance Rangers, 1 bear tech, 1-2 SAR techs, unknown social science staff, trail crew to set up and take down cables, etc. Just the nature of and increased need to manage Half Dome means and increased administrative presence unless clearly stated why not (limited number of people require less management than unlimited numbers). Section 3 throughout; descriptions used to describe impacts as "long-term, beneficial," or negligible, minor, moderate, major, etc. don't seem to make sense, perhaps define meaning of these terms or why they are used to describe impacts? Examples: Page 3-34; regional, adverse Page 3-35; how can an impact be "long-term, minor, regional, and adverse" Page 3-36; change in format and now impacts are, "long-term, minor, regional, and adverse"

Page 3-13, Fourth paragraph; second sentence typo; "is as a primary" should probably read "is a primary"

Page 3-37; "YNP Wilderness Stewardship Plan Revision" Yosemite does not currently have a "Wilderness Stewardship Plan" but a "Wilderness Management Plan" that was done in 1989.

Page 3-39, second paragraph; "sand and gravel" are considered non-renewable energy or materials. Is this what you really want to say, that sand and gravel are considered non-renewable resources???

Page 3-39, last section; "Relationship of short-term uses of man's environment and long-term productivity?" is poorly written, especially the second paragraph. Why make the case for one thing but then argue its limited impact due to the small area involved? In the 3rd paragraph, how have special concern species adjusted to the existence of the trail, by moving away from previously occupied habitat?

Page 4-1, first paragraph; list of specialists in 2nd sentence should include Outdoor Recreation Specialist; Wilderness Specialist - you can confirm this with the list of prepares on page 5-1.

Page 4-2, fourth paragraph, third sentence typo; "USFWS on was used?" should delete the "on"

Sections 6 and 7; Why not include the 1984 CA Wilderness Act?

Correspondence ID: 479 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 17:38:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389 Attn: Public Comment Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan EA

13 March 2012 Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

The following comments on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) are submitted on behalf of the Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee. The comments represent the sole official position of the Sierra Club.

The increasing popularity of the Half Dome Trail in recent years has resulted in unacceptable environmental, safety and wilderness value issues. Since 2006 there have been multiple fatal falls and an increase in the number of dangerous NPS rescue missions directly related to the overcrowded conditions. Public safety would improve and dangerous and expensive NPS rescue missions would be reduced if the crowding conditions on the Half Dome cable system were eliminated. For these reasons implementation of a day use permit system as called for in the EA is essential to regulate and limit access to the Half Dome Trail.

Of the alternatives presented the Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee recommends a number lower than the 300 persons per day (PPD) presented in the preferred Alternative C. A lower limit would give even greater protection to resource and wilderness values and further improve the cultural environment on the Half Dome summit. The Sierra Club supports a lower level of visitation of 200 PPD to further reduce the unacceptable crowding and congestion on the Half Dome trail. Reducing encounter rate to that of other high use wilderness trails in Yosemite is not sufficient. Reducing the 300 PPD proposed in the preferred alternative to the Sierra Club's proposed 200 PPD would help reduce front country wilderness congestion to a new standard for acceptable encounter rates in NP wilderness and would result in a better visitor experience on Half Dome and many other back country wilderness trails where encounter rates exceed desirable levels. Reducing numbers significantly below the 300 PPD proposed in preferred Alternative C would further alleviate the extreme crowding, congestion, and adverse resource impacts on the John Muir trail between Happy Isles and the Half Dome trail junction.

The cost recovery proposal for the Half Dome trail permit system must not set precedent for establishing fee requirements for general access in other NP and NF wilderness areas. While in general the Sierra Club opposes fees for public land use, other than long-customary entrance fees for national parks, and most especially fees for visiting wilderness, which could be viewed as illegal commercialization of wilderness, we recognize that the Half Dome situation is exceptional. It can be compared to the USFS administration of the Mt. Whitney trail, where special administrative restrictions had to be put into effect due to crowding. We understand that the permit system puts a special administrative burden on the NPS. We would not condone payments for permits for the Half Dome being used as a precedent for other wilderness areas or the NPS raising the level of fees beyond the nominal amounts described in the EA. To do so would pose a grave negative risk of allowing commercialization to affect the wilderness experience, against which the agency should always be on guard. Fees and their associated commercialism profoundly alter the relationship of the American public with its unique system of public lands-and with its perception of the value of those lands. Fees also discriminate against those with less ability to pay and present a form of "confining recreation" thus a departure from the ideal of wilderness for "unconfined" recreation.

██████████ Chair Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee

Correspondence ID: 480 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 17:46:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please remove the cables from the trail at Half Dome. The hardware, in my opinion, stand in stark contrast to the concept of wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 481 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 18:24:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Take the cables out!! There's no need for handrails to the top of mountains to allow mass visitation. You open yourself up for lawsuits and too many people means too many problems, like litter.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 482 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 19:01:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: If you put any limits on the amount of day hikers you are not allowing the park to do it's main function, which is to protect the wild areas of our National parks/icons WITH THE SUPPORT OF AVID OUTDOOR PEOPLE. What's next people paying to hike to the summit? Plan A please.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 483 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yosemite's Half Dome: Mountains with Handrails? Because of the cables, Half Dome and the trail leading to its top have become severely overcrowded. There is no solitude or sense of primitive and unconfined recreation, which are essential ingredients of Yosemite's wilderness character. Up to 1200 hikers a day have used the trail during peak periods.

Topic Question 2: I support Alternative E of the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms." The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness. Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 484 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 21:26:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I suggest that the Park Service pursue alternative E which would remove the hand rails and cables from Half Dome and return it to a Wilderness status

Topic Question 6: This approach would eliminate overcrowding on the climb to Half Dome and restrict the access to those who are capable of technical rock climbing.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 485 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 22:15:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I would support Alternative E - Remove the cables Reaching the top of Half Dome should be an accomplishment of experienced rock climbers and mountaineers. I don't believe the Park Service should provide day hikers with the assistance of cables to have this "visitor experience". It has resulted in overcrowding and many deaths. Keep Yosemite wild. Restore the rule of personal responsibility in exploring Yosemite.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 486 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 22:54:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I feel option C is the best solution for the overcrowding and hazardous situations that exist today during the summer months. I have ascended the summit 8 times and the last two times (2007 and 2009) have been way too crowded.

Topic Question 6: I love to hike as many trails as I can while I can. I visit Yosemite 2 to 6 times a year. With a limit of 300 people a day having access to Half Dome I feel the over crowding would be greatly reduced.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 487 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 23:19:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: It would be a shame to take down the cables. My family and I want to ascend the beautiful HD and I'm sure there are thousands of other families who also want to do the same. Please do not take away this magnificent experience.

Correspondence ID: 488 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,13,2012 23:35:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I am writing in support of Option E, removal of the cable system. All of other developed alternatives fail to uphold the NPS's responsibility to preserve wilderness character. Even though the cables predate the designation of the wilderness area, Half Dome is a treasure that deserves the highest standard of preservation. Two principle attributes of wilderness are inherent risk and solitude- as long as the cables are in place and dozens of visitors are allowed per day, the wilderness character will not be achieved.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 489 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I urge the NPS to permanently remove the cables and their stanchions leading up to Half Dome. The pristine views and wilderness are becoming compromised by excessive use. This also complies with the NPS policy that states "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

Correspondence ID: 490 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 09:54:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I don't see any analysis that would support keeping a structure or installation as necessary to manage the Wilderness.

Topic Question 2: There seems to be little acknowledgement of Yosemite's role in the Wilderness Preservation System. Yosemite has that reputation. It invented the "Swiss Cheese Wilderness" where the high country ghettos called camps remain. Similarly, no other place would recommend keeping a Mountain with a handrail in wilderness.

Topic Question 3: Removing the cables should be your goal. If you want to keep them, remove Half Dome from Wilderness.

Topic Question 4: The elephant in the room is keeping a structure or installation that is clearly not necessary for managing Yosemite Wilderness.

Topic Question 5: There is not enough recognition of the precedent this would establish for every wilderness area in the U.S. This alone should require an EIS. The indirect effects of this, should it be legitimized with a FONSI, would be extremely significant in the EIS context.

Topic Question 6: I went up the cables when I was in high school in California. That was 50 years ago. It was a pretty good experience then. After seeing the pictures (even of 300 per day use level), I would not return. It's not a wilderness experience. Have you gone mad??!

Comments: Wilderness Watch better be all over this one!

Correspondence ID: 491 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: After learning about these hand rails in Yosemite Park from the Wilderness Society, I wondered why in the world would anyone ever install such things that? Just because someone wants to get to the top of a natural structure doesn't mean the National Park Service has to go out of its way to help people to do so. The only thing that the NPS should be doing is to protect and preserve the U.S.'s natural treasures. Putting in and taking out rails each year is an adverse process to protecting and preserving Half Dome or any other rock formation.

Comments: As a member of Wilderness Watch, I am writing this comment to the National Parks Service in support of Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms?". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

In 1980, Professor Joseph Sax wrote a book entitled Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks. In it, Sax argues for preservation of wilderness in the national parks and urges the NPS to not build handrails to the top of mountains to allow mass visitation. Half Dome today is the literal opposite of his epigrammatic title.

Correspondence ID: 492 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 10:14:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Add a third cable thus creating two "traffic lanes," one for ascent, one for descent.

I understand park officials have stated such a solution would violate the 'Wilderness Act.'

Solution - Obtain an exemption from the 'Wilderness Act.' The act should not be considered sacrosanct. Laws are made by man and may be altered or rescinded by man.

The mandate for our national parks requires they be set aside for the enjoyment of ALL.

Topic Question 4: See Question 3 re: 'Wilderness Act.'

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 493 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 10:15:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: For many years, I was in the park hiking and climbing during all seasons (1960s & early 1970s). Having done that and in my old age having reflected on those activities, I now believe that wilderness is more important than providing pleasure by modifying nature to please visitors.

Comments: I prefer Alternative E - Remove the cables

Correspondence ID: 494 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 10:50:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: NA

Topic Question 2: I am going for Preferred Alternative C (as opposed to Alternative B or D) b/c I trust the NPS staff to find the "sweet spot" number for balance between safety and enjoyment of nature. I can also see value in Alternative E, but I think that may be a bit too drastic at this point.

Topic Question 3: NA

Topic Question 6: Personal climbing, hiking, backpacking and camping trips. I also had my wedding at Glacier Point on 10-2-10 in the midst of an amazing thunderstorm. My company, ASI Peak Adventures also brings a few dozen people a year for backpacking trips and camping.

Comments: NPS could improve their reservation system. I know alot of "permit scalpers" were selling Half Dome Permits for \$50-\$100 on craigslist, when the permit only costs a few bucks. My friend complained to Yosemite, who was well aware of the problem, and they said they were fixing the problem with their outdated computer reservation system (which allowed scalpers or computer "robots" to buy up tickets in hordes). I haven't kept track of what has been done or the ins and outs of permitting. I know for campsites, they require the person's name on the permit to show up in person....while that's a pain for commercial trips, that makes good sense for personal trips. I feel like we have reached a reasonable work around by having the ability to list the company as a leader, but there are certainly some details still to be worked out.

Being on a permit system means most hikers have been planning for their big Half Dome hike for many months. This means they should be better prepared for the tough hike. (no last minute hikers in blue jeans and flip flops and one water bottle.)

Correspondence ID: 495 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 10:54:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I frankly think the correct option (C) was chosen, and I think the program has already proven itself; instead of having every single permit sold out in advance (but then being "transferred" via sales on Craigslist) we have a non-transferrable system so the person registering is the person hiking. This, in my opinion, will greatly help make permits available to those who truly want them.

I have found 1 major issue with the system, in my opinion.

I submitted a permit for myself for this year. About a week later, my dad indicated that he'd love to go with me, but can't go on the date that I had requested. So I called about either cancelling or editing my initial permit, and was told that wasn't possible.

I wasn't looking for a refund of my \$4 50. I was simply trying to free up the permit that I had already requested so that it would be available for someone else to request and use, since I was now going to be listed on my Dad's permit. Instead, what might

happen is that I'll end up with 2 permits, and 1 won't be used, meaning that it was just wasted.

Refunds should not be allowed. Cancellation of requests so that you can make a new request should absolutely be allowed.

Correspondence ID: 496 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 11:02:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: None noted

Topic Question 2: When comparing Tables 2-1 and 2-3, Comparisons by Alternative, it's hard to see much of a difference between Alternatives B and C, except for the number of PAOTs between the two alternatives. Whereas Alternative C estimates the maximum PAOTs on the cables at 36, to provide for a greater backcountry "wilderness" experience over Alternative B at a maximum of 51 PAOTs on the cables, the difference in wilderness experience seems somewhat unimportant or diminished by the fact that Half Dome is immediately adjacent to the Valley floor and that a portion of the views from the top of Half Dome are that of the developed nature of the Valley floor. If Half Dome were further removed from the Valley floor or the views from the top were only backcountry views, I could see where Alternative C would be preferred. Alternative B provides for 100 additional people per day to access Half Dome without negatively affecting the environment (per Table 2-3 Comparison Table). Alternative B seems to provide for a greater number of people to experience Half Dome per day while still providing for a reduction of environmental impacts from the interim day use plan currently in effect. I prefer Alternative B for these reasons.

Topic Question 3: None offered.

Topic Question 4: None

Topic Question 5: None

Topic Question 6: I visit the park on average every other year usually camping within the Valley floor. I would like to hike to the top of Half Dome again, and it seems like I would have a greater opportunity to do so under Alternative B.

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this environmental assessment.

Correspondence ID: 497 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 11:04:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I support Plan D for Half Dome.

Correspondence ID: 498 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 11:26:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As the Wilderness Program Coordinator of Camp Tawonga, I represent the wilderness department of a Jewish Non-Profit resident camp located right outside of Yosemite that offers guided hikes to Half Dome every summer. We have been commercial users of the park for many years now and hold a Special Use Permit to take groups of 15 (one leader) out on one-to-two night backpacking trips and day hikes in the summer months (June-August). We average four day hikes a summer to Half Dome, with around 12-15 participants on each trip (one guide, two chaperones, and 9-12 campers). Our camper population ranges from seven year olds to fifteen year old campers mostly from the Bay Area and Israel. Under the legal wording of the Determination of Extent Necessary for commercial services, we would be considered to guide both recreational and educational trips. Our guided trips to Half Dome both serve a recreational purpose to day hike to the summit, as well as an educational purpose to teach leave no trace policies, natural history, wilderness values, physical fitness, and mental toughness. As we would love to continue to provide this opportunity to our campers, Camp Tawonga would hope that a plan for commercial users of our sort would be considered. Due to our continued desire to day hike to Half Dome around four times a summer Camp Tawonga supports Alternative B. Tawonga advocates for Alternative B because of its greater number of permits and also preferred allocation for commercial users. The 400 permits allowed still serves the purpose of being responsive to demand, while also reducing environmental impacts and accommodating for risk management concerns. Tawonga also prefers Alternative B as it allows for five permits per day set aside for commercial use for up to two commercial trips per day (this does allow us to plan ahead and know in advance that we have 5 permits awarded for specific days). However, we would ideally like to have 10 more permits for each day trip (as we lead groups of around 15). Being set aside five permits does not address our needs as an organization to send an educationally guided trip of 12-15 participants. The EA states that day-use permits would be "allocated through a combination of advanced reservation and day before allocation" (pg. 2-1), with up to 30 permits allocated for educational purposes and 15 permits allocated for scenic purposes. What would be the advanced reservation system in which we could be guaranteed extra permits for those dates that we already hold the 5 set aside permits on? Addressing this issue of commercial guiding groups being able to get 12-15 permits a day, on behalf of Camp Tawonga, I have thought of a possible solution. In order to allow for organizations and commercial users to plan ahead and be guaranteed a certain number of permits per day, there would need to be a system in which they could prove their purpose of use (either educational or scenic), and be awarded permits on certain dates thru an advanced reservation service competing with other commercial users (instead of competing with the public). This could be a separate lottery system, similar to the one used for the public for the 2012 season. During the lottery system the commercial user could pay an extra fee, show proof of commercial use and reasons for the Half Dome trip (either educational or scenic). They could be awarded up to 10 extra permits (in addition to the 5 permits per day set aside earlier) for the dates that they desired. Similar to the lottery system this year, there could be a maximum of seven days

each trip leader is able to request. As proposed already the policy could cap the amount of commercial educational permits at 30 per day and commercial scenic permits at 15 per day. This system would reduce the competition that commercial users would have if they were allocated permits in the general public's lottery system (as proposed in Alternative C). If Alternative C is more preferred due to the 300 maximum cap on permits, you could combine B and C to allow for 300 issued permits, 5 permits set aside for commercial users, and a commercial lottery system with a cap of 30 educational commercial use permits per day and 15 scenic commercial use permits per day awarded. This would amount to 345 permits per day for day users.

Correspondence ID: 499 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,14,2012 13:36:59

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Two elements that should be considered (in my opinion) are the addition of a third cable to create ascending and descending lanes, and the requirement of use of harnesses to clip to the cables to prevent unimpeded falls. With these two elements the numbers of permits should be able to be maintained at 400 per day as is the current amount, which is already over-subscribed and requires a lottery. Increasing the fee for the permit would allow for the funding of the third cable. The use of harnesses may be more controversial and it could be recommended and available (harnesses could be obtained for a rental fee when you pick up your permit) as a trial with consideration of making mandatory at a future date if successful.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 500 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,14,2012 14:22:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: You have ignored one of the major safety issues on half dome, the super-slippery rock between the cables. see my comments below.

Topic Question 2: You definitely need to lower the traffic, 300-400 people a day seems reasonable.

Topic Question 3: see my comments on the slippery rock below.

Topic Question 6: I live close to the park in Twain Harte and visit the park often, maybe 30-40 times per year. I have backpacked much of it and climbed many of its peaks. Many of my visits are day hikes. It is a wonderful park.

Comments: My major concern about half dome is safety. Your analysis of safety issues has missed one of the most important facts. The rock between the cables has become incredibly slick and slippery because of the hundreds of thousands of climbers that have smoothed the rock. In 2011 I took several friends to half dome and fitted them all with a waist harness and carabiner that could be clipped to the cable. I did not climb (weak shoulders) and sat for about two hours at the bottom of the cables and observed the following: about 15% of climbers had made themselves a harness and biner, about 10% of the climbers retreated from the steepest part of the rock complaining about the rock being too slippery. I also heard of one young lad who slid down the rock controlling his descent by hand pressure on the cables. I also observed that almost all the climbers were using arm strength to pull themselves from cross piece to the next cross piece. Its only a matter time until some weak armed person slips and takes several others off to their deaths. The first thing to do is eliminate crowding. Several years ago I came down outside of the cables because the footing was much better there and the main track was stalled and crowded. I agree that traffic should be limited to 300-400 per day. Plus I think it is essential that you implement one of these three options to overcome how slippery the rock has become. 1. Move one of the cables to establish a new route. Not a good solution because the new route would eventually be smoothed also. 2. Abrade the rock to eliminate the smoothness of the rock. This seems unnatural. 4. Put more cross pieces of wood in so that they are only a step apart. This seems to me to be the best solution and an essential thing to do to make the climb safe.

I am an experienced sierra peak climber and first climbed half dome in spring 1950 when the cables were down. I was doing a bit of rock climbing then so it was easy and the rock gave us good footing. I have continued to climb it and the last time I climbed it, about 4 years ago, I noticed how slick the rock had become. I came down outside the cables where the rock gave better footing and I just used one cable. It is imperative that you solve the slippery rock problem.

Very truly Yours, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 501 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,14,2012 14:37:38

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The Half Dome trail is not "natural", "untrammled" or "undeveloped"

Topic Question 3: Add another cable to provide up and down lanes.

Comments: Add another cable to provide up and down lanes. 3 cable system would increase safety.

Correspondence ID: 502 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,14,2012 15:05:52

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence:

Topic Question 1: The Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan EA and the Determination Of Extent Necessary discriminate against the segment of the public who needs or prefers the services of a guide. This discrimination occurs because of the terminology used and the assumptions made, by limiting their opportunities for access. The EA also lumps the services of guides into a category of "Commercial Use," which it limits significantly without consideration of the numerous advantages that guides provide or the fact that they are providing access to a segment of the public that otherwise would not have access.

Topic Question 2: Proposed Alternatives B, C, D, and E all discriminate against the "Guided Public" by limiting their access disproportionately. Because all of the alternatives considered discriminate against a segment of the public, the guided public, by limiting their access more than that of the non-guided public, this Environmental Assessment will result in significant impact on this user group.

Topic Question 3: See comments below

Topic Question 4: see comments below

Topic Question 5: see comments below

Comments: The Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan EA and the Determination Of Extent Necessary discriminate against the segment of the public who needs or prefers the services of a guide. This discrimination occurs because of the terminology used and the assumptions made, by limiting their opportunities for access. The EA also lumps the services of guides into a category of "Commercial Use," which it limits significantly without consideration of the numerous advantages that guides provide or the fact that they are providing access to a segment of the public that otherwise would not have access.

Using "Commercial Use" terminology in place of using "Guided Public" is inherently discriminatory. The only permitted "Commercial Use" on the Half Dome trail for many years has been in the form of outfitters and guides. The only reason this group uses this trail is to accommodate the interests of their clientele, the segment of the public who needs or prefers the services of a guide.

The EA frequently refers to "commercial use" as a separate component of the use. While this is technically true, it hides the fact that it is referring to a segment of the public, which either prefers a guide, or needs a guide in order to visit this unique location. "Guided Public" is a more appropriate way to refer to this user group.

The EA commonly makes a distinction between "commercial use" and "public use." Distinguishing the guided-public purely as "commercial use" is inherently discriminatory, because it unfairly pits them against "the public" in competing for access. This implies that the guided public is a commercial user, competing with the public, and therefore less qualified to have access to Half Dome. The guided-public and the non-guided public should have equal access to Half Dome, without discrimination. The non-guided public should not have preference over the guided public.

An example sentence from Alt #4, where no guided-public access is allowed, which displays this discrimination follows: "Displacement of non-commercial visitors by commercial visitors would therefore be unnecessary under this alternative." Why should non-commercial visitors have precedence over the guided-public? They should not. Access should be available equally.

The EA refers to "non-commercial hikers" and "non-commercial public" as groups without defining them. The use of these terms lends credibility to the need to use the terms: guided public and non-guided public, in order to eliminate confusion and eliminate this discrimination.

Appendix C, Determination Of Extent Necessary on Half Dome Trail, discriminates against the guided public. An example of this discrimination from Appendix C, Part 7: "In order to maximize opportunities of noncommercial hikers, commercial trips will be limited to two per day. This basically says; maximize opportunities for the non-guided public by limiting opportunities for the guided public.

Another example of this discrimination is in the Recreational Purpose paragraph. "In the case of Half Dome, commercial services are not necessary to realize the recreational purpose as non-commercial visitors consistently fill the area to capacity." This sentence implies that access to Half Dome for the guided-public is not necessary because the capacity is filled by the non-guided public. Access to the Half Dome trail for Recreational Purpose should be equally available to all public, guided and non-guided alike.

Access should be considered in determining extent necessary for commercial use. Guides and Guide Services, as a form of "Commercial Use," exist purely because of the segment of the public who needs or wants their assistance to gain access. Without the guided public, there would be no commercial use in this form. Removing or limiting access for guides is the same as removing or limiting access for the guided-public, thereby discriminating against this segment of the public.

Hiking and climbing guides and guide services are necessary to provide access to Half Dome, because without their services a segment of the public would not be able to reasonably or safely attempt this hike.

Similarly, outfitters and guides are necessary to provide access for persons with limitations or disabilities. For example, Mark Wellman used the services of pack mules to gain access to Half Dome and El Capitan during his historic paraplegic ascents.

There are many forms of commercial use. In determining extent necessary for commercial use, it is appropriate to make a distinction between commercial use that is necessary to provide access and commercial use that does not provide access.

"Commercial Use" in the form of guides and guide services is necessary for realizing all of the Wilderness purposes, including the purpose of recreation. Because the service of guides is necessary to provide access for a segment of the public, commercial use in the form of guides and guide services is necessary for realizing all of the Wilderness purposes. Otherwise, the guided public will not have equal opportunity.

Requiring the guided-public to acquire permits in the same system with the non-guided public discriminates against the guided-public. It is standard in the guiding industry, and common knowledge, that acquiring permits for the activities in question is part of the service provided by guides. For this reason, the guided public will not know that they need to participate in the permit system lotteries. They rightfully will assume that the guide service would provide the permits, so they will likely miss the lotteries. Thus, the guided public will be at a disadvantage and potentially blocked from access.

NPS should make permits available to guide services for realizing recreational purpose, and all other Wilderness purposes, so that the guided public and the non-guided public have equal opportunity. Providing a reasonable number of permits for the guided public by making permits available to commercial operators, in the form of guides and guide services, is the only way to avoid discriminating against this user group.

The guided public is an important group to include. The guided public as a group is typically made up of new users; people who are interested in safety, companionship, and learning; and people who are less confident in their experience, skills, or ability. This is an important group to include, because: ? New users need leadership, education, mentoring, interpretation, and supervision most. ? Without the option to use guides, this group will potentially go without guides, which increases risk and resource damage potential, and reduces interpretation and stewardship opportunities. ? Half Dome as an objective is uniquely powerful for providing Wilderness and Yosemite stewardship when this group is accompanied by appropriately trained guides. ? This is an important feeder group for Wilderness stewardship.

The guided public is not likely to comment on this EA. Because this group is partially made up of new users, they are not likely to know that they need to comment here, or else they will be at a disadvantage. They may not have decided yet that they want to hike Half Dome, so this EA will not be on their radar, until it is too late.

Another component of this group, the less confident, may not comment here for that reason alone, they are timid. They also may be embarrassed to be identified in that group. Or, they may not even consider a guide until they think about actually doing something as big and challenging as Half Dome. These people, while guided public users, are not likely to comment on the disadvantages that the current alternatives will yield.

For these reasons, and the discrimination listed above, the comments gathered during previous public scoping will not accurately reflect the need to ensure equitable access for the guided public.

Proposed Alternatives B, C, D, and E all discriminate against the "Guided Public" by limiting their access. Because all of the alternatives considered discriminate against a segment of the public, the guided public, by limiting their access more than that of the non-guided public, this Environmental Assessment will result in significant impact on this user group.

Only Alternative B provides some access for the guided public, by providing guide services access to a small number of permits. This amount should be larger.

Using ratios of pre-2010 use is an appropriate method of determining the amount of permits available to the guided public in the form of commercial use permits for guides and guide services.

Alternative C (Preferred) ? 2 permits for guides if clients get own permits is not a reasonable or necessary limit. Under Alternative C, what happens when more than two groups with permits want to use guides? Are they faced with the choice of either not going, or trying it without the guide? The first choice is not likely, so they will be forced to the ladder, which could lead to trouble and a possible Search and Rescue. There should be no limit here, because the number of guides will be determined by the demand of the guided public. Guides have no reason to go if there are not clients.

Advantages of guided public trips ? Safety, both for their direct clients and others around ? Commercial services employ professional guides with experience, training, and certifications, which greatly reduce risk and improve safety. ? Additional first aid and search and rescue resources on site. ? Stewardship ? Guides are an opportunity for the Land Manager to provide information to the guided public, the segment of the public that potentially needs it the most. ? Resource Protection ? Guides know the rules and current issues, and ensure compliance. Clients that hire guides rely on the guides to know and follow the rules. ? Education ? Guides and guide services want to add value to their trips. Education is a necessary and significant part of their service. ? Modeling good behavior ? Guides, and other people with prominence and authority, modeling good behavior is

very persuasive in establishing good behavior in new users.

Eliminating or restricting access for guides will increase damage, risk and incidents of Search and Rescue. If guides are not available to people who want or need a guide, they will either miss out or try it without a guide. This could easily lead to increased incidence of the following problems: ? Resource damage due to not knowing the best practices or park rules and regulations ? Search and rescues due to inexperience, lack of ability, and un-preparedness

Guides are an historic and necessary use in Yosemite Wilderness Yosemite has a long history of guide as a necessary and respected service. Both John Muir and Hutchins worked as paid guides. Yosemite Conservancy, NPS and many other groups lead "guided" trips.

Backpacking trips that occur in the area of Half Dome should include permits for Half Dome.

On a backpacking trip in the area surrounding half Dome it is a reasonable expectation that one will want to hike to the top of Half Dome. The freedom to hike the surrounding summits is a normal part of a Wilderness backpacking experience. Making certain areas off-limits to people with permits for a given area will change the Wilderness experience for those people, and thus the Wilderness Character.

Correspondence ID: 503 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 15:19:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: To put cables/handrails on Yosemite destroys the character of this cherished landmark and diminishes the experience for those willing to make the effort to climb it without artificial aids. People have climbed Yosemite for years. Those of us unable to do that can admire the skill of those who can. To use cables/handrails belittles the accomplishment and reward of the climbers.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 504 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 15:55:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I think one option C is a good compromise allowing the average person to continue to climb half dome while still limiting environmental degradation and providing for public safety. There are already permit and reservation systems for back country camping and for that matter camping and driving in Yosemite Valley itself so I think visitors can adapt to limits being placed on their travel to half dome, therefore option C (or B or D) should work to achieve the stated goals.

Comments: Any plan that is chosen should be open to modification, ideally on a yearly basis. The natural resources do need to be protected for future generations and that should be the priority as it currently is. At the same time people should be able to use the area freely as long as no permanent degradation takes place. I think an education and public relations effort needs to be a large part of and plan implemented. If you restrict access to much without clear examples (pictures of permanently damaged natural features, garbage and human waste, people who have died because of too many people up there at once) there will likely be a backlash with potentially more damage to the area.

Correspondence ID: 505 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 15:59:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please choose option E. The overwhelming majority of users of the half dome trail and cabled ascent seek to summit half dome because the park has made it so easy for them. Summiting a landmark like half dome should have the endurance requirements and risk assumption commensurate with its size and activity. We're talking about ascending thousands of feet atop a granite mountain in the sierras, this should not be a accomplishable on a whim. The NPS needs to help us enjoy the park, but the half dome cables have been, for years, an example of the park going to far to accommodate users.

I feel all goals can be accomplished if the rock is returned to its original condition and technical ascents, like the other major domes in the area, will be the only way to summit them.

By removing the enticing element of the facility of the cables, you remove half dome from the must-do list of many many people, and instead, turn their eyes toward the beauty of the entire area, not just this one corner of the park.

Thank you, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 506 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 17:03:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: HI, I believe that the natural environment of the parks should be left alone. Remove the cables etc. and let Half Dome be Half Dome. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 507 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 17:05:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please adopt Option E, the removal of all cables from Half Dome. Some places must remain special, sacred even, and the demeaning the summit hike into a tourist experience is highly offensive.

Thank you for your time.

Correspondence ID: 508 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 17:55:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I have been an avid backpacker and hiker throughout the Sierra Nevadas. I have taken many, many trips over the years (decades) with one trip covering the entire Muir Trail. I know and love the Sierras. Coincidentally, while in Europe, I hiked in the Sierra Nevada in Spain. It is very different (drier) than our Sierras.

On another trip, I enjoyed one month backpacking alone across Alaska and Western Canada. I also backpacked alone into the Arctic Circle in Norway.

To celebrate my 60th birthday, I rode my bicycle alone across the USA, "From sea to shining sea". This year, to celebrate my 65th birthday, I am cycling solo from Canada to Mexico. Clearly, I appreciate the beauty of our outdoors and I have shown and shared the outdoor beauty of America via extensive trips with my children throughout the USA.

That said, I am continually displeased more and more by government involvement in our outdoor activities.

More fees and restrictions also require more security, more gate keepers, more ticket issuers, more ticket checkers, more expenses just to collect fees, and more costs to hikers simply to cover the cost of all of the more ... listed above.

There are benefits to simplicity.

SO, MY SUGGESTION IS for the Park Service to move toward less involvement and more openness. Increase the use of education as a major vehicle to protect our beautiful outdoors. This can also enhance enjoyment.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 509 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,14,2012 18:37:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Instead of issuing permits, simply regulate how many hikers are on or above Sub Dome at any given time. Every time one person comes down off Sub Dome, another will be allowed to go up. It may seem unfair to force hikers to wait in line to go up Sub Dome and the cables as if they were a ride at Disneyland, but this concept is not too different from how it was before the permit system. Hikers who had done their research would know that if they arrived at the cables after about 11am, they would likely have to wait in line to get on the cables, simply due to the sheer volume of hikers. If it is not offensive to liken the cables situation to Disneyland even further, a limited number of "Fastpass"-style permits could be issued in advance. The 200 or so permit-holders would be allowed to bypass the line at the base of Sub Dome while the remaining hikers waited in line for others to descend. This idea would limit the potentially dangerous crowding on the cables and on the summit, while still giving everyone a chance to do the hike, including those people who did not win the permit lottery.

Comments: if the permit system is going to continue, I would like to suggest some alternative implementations. As an avid hiker who discovered the Half Dome hike a little over a year ago, I was disappointed to discover how limited the supply of permits was. Like hundreds of other hikers last spring, I waited online at 6:59am to snag permits during the three-minute window before most of them disappeared. I wasn't able to get the dates I wanted, so I instead grabbed whatever I could get in hopes of trading with other permit-holders. However, this selfish strategy left many other hikers permit-less because I'd bought the permits they needed. I eventually ended up giving away all my extra permits to others who needed them, but it made me realize how inefficient the system was.

I realize that the National Park Service (NPS) can't afford a more complicated system, and that it's dangerous to have more hikers on the cables. Hopefully this year's permit lottery will be more successful and cause less problems and frustration. Either way I have a few ideas that I believe would improve the system while still satisfying the requirements:

1. Charge \$30 to \$50 per permit instead of just the estimated \$8 operating cost plus \$4.50 processing fee. This way, NPS makes more money from the system (perhaps to cover the cost of stationing a ranger at the base of Sub Dome), and people will think twice before buying permits they don't need. If refunds are offered, this will also encourage hikers to return unused permits. One argument was that the permits should be available to people from all financial backgrounds; however, \$30 is insignificant after taking into account the price of gas, owning a car (or taking Amtrak/YARTS), food and lodging in the park, and decent hiking equipment.

2. Make most of the permits available only one month in advance. When permits are released three months in advance, many hikers choose to buy permits for multiple dates because they haven't finalized their plans yet and the \$1.50 is negligible. The newly instituted 50 "next-day permits" help in this regard.

3. Develop a system in which permits can be reused. For any given day, even if all 400 or 300 permit holders were to show up (which they never do), they would not all summit at the same time. Permits can be designed such that a descending hiker can hand their permit to one who is waiting at the base of Sub Dome. These two individuals would not be anywhere near the cables at the same time. Since the major concern is congestion on the cables, this modified permit system would maintain the current standards of safety while allowing more hikers to ascend the cables.

There has been talk of completely removing the cables from Half Dome because they disrupt the "wilderness." I disagree with this view because while the cables are not "natural," they are only visible from up close, and they enable thousands of hikers to arrive at one of the most awe-inspiring destinations in Yosemite. Without the cables, only climbers with the proper technical equipment and experience would be able to reach the top of Half Dome. Half Dome is an icon of Yosemite, NPS, and California, and it means so much to so many people. The cables allow hikers to realize their dreams without causing any harm to the wilderness. Some people may argue that the cables cause crowding along the first five miles of the John Muir Trail, but even if the cables were removed permanently, hikers would still flock to Half Dome and hike all the way up Sub Dome, if only to gaze longingly at the summit, mere hundreds of feet out of reach.

I hope you will find a way to continue installing the cables every summer so that future generations of hikers can follow in their predecessors' footsteps and stand on the Visor to admire the awe-inspiring view of Yosemite from a mile above the valley floor. I also hope that you will consider my suggestions for a revised permit system and that you will create a new system which allows hikers to spend more enjoying the outdoors and less time bartering online or worrying about how a one-minute internet connection failure or a random lottery can ruin even the most well-planned trip.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my opinions, and I wish you all the best in developing a new Half Dome Plan which will hopefully allow more hikers to enjoy this inspirational hike!

Correspondence ID: 510 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,14,2012 18:58:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Only Alternatives B and C adequately address the requirement for hikers to safely get off the summit should the weather suddenly change. This is a factor that should not be compromised. The No Action Alternative and Alternative B fail to sufficiently provide for a safe Half Dome hiking experience.

Topic Question 6: It's a 3 day trip to Yosemite by car for my family. Planning is essential for us to access accommodations and activities. Without a permit process it would be impossible to know in advance if we would be able to access Half Dome safely. Only a permit process would insure that manageable numbers would be on the trail.

Comments: Safety: Only Alternatives C and D guarantee usage numbers that allow for timely egress from the summit should inclement weather arise suddenly. Protection of Environment: It is more likely that hikers will be more sensitive to environmental concerns because the access to the trail is not a sure thing. It must be planned in advance and would be very difficult to hike on a whim. It is more likely that some amount of study and awareness would result from even the most casual planner. Fairness: The current lottery system is by far the most fair way to distribute permits. Even last year's system was flawed and heavily favored computer users, especially a group of 4 or more group hikers working together from separate computers and separate locations. In addition, I believe it is critical that the system for permit distribution be very tight. Last year one Half Dome blog site openly encouraged its readers to gather as many permits as possible and use the web site as a trade market. It was not unusual to see users with 20 and sometimes 40 permits openly trading them for dates that they could not otherwise get. This same site made no attempt to insure that unused permits were returned to the recreation.gov web site as desired by the NPS. Speculative buying of this nature could have been the major contributor to the lower than anticipated daily hikers - unused and not needed permits. This year on 25 January that same blog site openly encouraged readers to bid for 6 permits even if they only needed one "So try to get 6 permits and give them to fellow blog readers." Fortunately the policy of requiring the trip leader to check in at the Sub Dome with all associated hikers in the trip put an end to such encouragement. My point is this: Unless the policy is tight there will always be entrepreneurs who will attempt to circumvent the spirit of the policy.

Correspondence ID: 511 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,14,2012 20:25:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I think the permit method needs to be evaluated for actual use. Giving 400 permits means many days less than 200 may show up due to advance planning changes. I think they should give out at least 600 permits to expect around 400-500 to show up

Topic Question 3: The majority of the traffic on the cables seems to come from 12-2 or so, it seems there should be an allowance to hikers to arrive early and use the cables.

Topic Question 6: I like to plan to come to the park just a few weeks ahead of time and the current permit process makes that very difficult.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 512 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 00:22:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: It is difficult to plan lodging in concordance with the permitting procedure.

Comments: I agree with the limit of no more than 400 people to hike half dome daily. I think that there should be a fee of at least \$20 per person to hike the dome. I also think that children younger than 15 years old should not be allowed to hike half dome.

Correspondence ID: 513 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 03:07:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Reducing the number of people who are allowed on Half Dome may enhance the "wilderness experience" for a small number, but destroys the wilderness experience for the thousands who cannot get a permit to hike.

Consider the net effect on not only those permitted to hike, but also those prevented.

Topic Question 3: Open up permits where people are allowed to enter the subdome before 9 AM, before 10 am, before 11 am -- set up time slots -- so you reduce the crowd in the prime time noon to 2 PM (or whatever the prime time is). Open up slots for people to enter the subdome AFTER 3 PM, and 4 PM, and so on.

While some people might not like this idea, I am sure many would jump at the opportunity to hike. Lots of people start their hikes at 3 AM on Mt Whitney -- you will find that significant numbers will accept this in order to be able to hike Half Dome.

Topic Question 5: It is just plain stupid to decide that such a popular trail needs a reduction in numbers so a few snobs can hike without being bothered by lots of other hikers.

If people want a "wilderness experience with solitude", they are looking in the WRONG place on the most popular trail in Yosemite.

All anyone needs to do to find solitude is to make a 90 degree turn and walk 50 yards off the trail.

Topic Question 6: I climb Half Dome on an occasional basis, often with the cables "down" -- the ridiculous "limit access" restrictions pretty much force me to hike outside the summer season now.

Comments: Limiting access to increase safety is a fallacy. Do you build a fence at Vernal Falls to prevent hikers from going over? No. Do you build barriers to keep people from falling into the river on the Mist Trail? No. So why would you limit access to Half Dome? By making Half Dome permits even more difficult to get, more and more people will take risks and go up when weather and temperatures make it dangerous, when before, they could plan to return on a better day. Now, their chances of returning are scarce, so they will take bigger risks.

People do not climb Half Dome to find solitude in the wilderness. So using the need for solitude is an excuse by some people with the snob attitude that all the common "Disneyland Types" should be excluded. That is what I feel is occurring here -- Park personnel and others wanting to exclude people. This attitude is rampant with all the tight restrictions on trail access quotas.

There are other ways to decrease the congestion on the cables. If you would just think a tiny bit "outside the box", you might try the time-slot idea. There will be lots of people who would accept the challenge and the opportunity. Just try it -- even for a SINGLE day!

Just shutting down access is the foulest thing you could do! ...But that is "Park Mentality". Keep those lousy tourists out, and you have "protected" the wilderness, and you can sleep at night.

Unfortunately, by keeping more and more people out of the wilderness, there will be fewer and fewer people who support wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 514 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 05:37:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I favor plan element E as this restores Half Dome to natural state.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 515 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 08:35:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I find the four hundred or so permits issued for daily has increased the safety of climbers on the cables ans has made the hike to Half Dome more enjoyable.

Please do not reduce the current number permits. I think a slight increase of an additional 100 permits would allow the NPS to maintain its goals and objectives of NPS and still provide enjoyable experience for park visitors.

Correspondence ID: 516 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 08:37:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Option E: Remove the Half Dome cables and bolts Stewardship Plan: -- Require permit to climb -- Limit number of permits -- Post signage and law enforcement rangers at the base as necessary to explain applicable federal law [including the Wilderness Act] and NPS policy and procedures, to check permits and determine access based on interview, gear check, and hazard assessment

Comments: First, as a research physicist in the San Francisco Bay Area, I spent time climbing and hiking in Yosemite then became a seasonal Valley law enforcement ranger. Then I spent a career in many other parts of the world. I know how fragile Yosemite and other wilderness ecosystems are.

This is not a single issue. This is a worldwide issue of essential ecosystems threatened by man. Along with civil rights, we have the responsibility to preserve and protect the earth -- ordinary and extraordinary places. How we manage Half Dome signals our will to preserve wilderness, indeed, the earth.

Correspondence ID: 517 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 08:54:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Table ES-1: The numbers in Table ES-1 are not explained well and the alternatives are not treated equally. Much of the Table appears to rely heavily on model assumptions. Explain where the numbers are coming from for each alternative.

Also, numbers are separated out for Sat-Sun only for one alternative A. The other alternatives do not make this distinction.

Topic Question 2: Alt E: removing cables would lead to more accidents. People would come up devices and ways to use the existing holes.

Topic Question 5: The assumption of a true wilderness experience on this trail should be reconsidered. People's expectations are different for heavy use trails. There are plenty of alternatives for people to avoid crowds. The other trails might get more crowded as use is reduced on this trail. This seems to be happening ever since the quota went into effect.

Topic Question 6: I access Half Dome during wilderness hikes from other trailheads, sometimes outside the park. Keep this option open and easy for people.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 518 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 09:04:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Alternative A - No restrictions with an improvement and expansion of the cable system

Comments: Our nations population is growing and it's people have more opportunity to travel within it. So why are we looking at plans to limit access to the Park by the very people that help support it?

I have not read anything that recommends improving and expanding the cable system to handle the increase number of visitors now and in the future. The current plans seem to keep the park for a "select few" but be supported by all. With the growing number of retirees each year that have plans to visit the National Parks now that they have the time and money to do so, why is the Parks trying to prevent them from visiting and enjoying the features of the Parks that they have provided financial support for so long?

Alternative A - No restrictions with an improvement and expansion of the cable system

Correspondence ID: 519 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 09:13:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support Alternative E. This alternative is the only one that would restore wilderness conditions on the Half Dome Trail and the backside of Half Dome. It is also the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms". The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness. Though many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables, those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored. COMPLY WITH NPS POLICIES; LEAVE NATURE ALONE!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 520 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I will probably never climb Yosemite with my grandchildren because it will require such extensive pre-planning. So sad.

Even if we are able to make the trip, I don't think it will have the same celebratory experience because so few people will be included. Every time I'm on that trail I'll be thinking about how the NPS is curtailing outdoor recreation to create "solitary experiences" for a few.

Comments: I oppose all action alternatives and support the no action alternative. The NPS needs to do an unbiased review of the deaths on Half Dome and determine whether some additional safety equipment should be adopted to reduce the risk of deaths (e.g., third cable, harnesses, etc.). Any NPS plans to curtail visitation should require another EIS because of the flaws with this EIS.

? The action alternatives will all severely reduce Yosemite visitation and outdoor recreation, probably by 90%. The Half Dome trip is an icon of outdoor recreation that should be promoted instead of discouraged by the NPS. For many families such as ours, the Half Dome trip is a coming of age outdoor experience for our children that inspires a lifetime of enjoying rigorous outdoor activities. By implementing this plan, the NPS will be severely diminishing the recreational value of Yosemite. Healthy Parks Healthy People is just a marketing slogan and not the mantra of the NPS.

? The NPS has manipulated the use of surveys to support their claims. I have not read the EIS or reviewed the study but from what was presented on the webinar indicated that people wanted the lower number of encounters. However, did the survey ask if they wanted to drastically cut visitation so only a few people could have a solitary experience?

? The NPS should implement a third cable to promote safety and evaluate support equipment that may make the climb safer (e.g. harnesses, gloves, etc.)

? The NPS presenting to the public that the "no action" alternative will not be considered by the NPS undermines the EIS process. Before any action items are implemented another EIS needs to be conducted that does not attempt to manipulate public comments.

? The action alternatives do not present alternatives but merely how deep to cut to create the "solitary experience" (aka, cutting out people) desired by the NPS.

? All action alternatives will likely increase the safety risk of the Half Dome trip as visitors will be more inclined to climb Half Dome in stormy weather. Visitors are more likely to climb because it will be more difficult to come back another day. My understanding is that the death rate on Yosemite has actually increased since the implementation of the permitting process, and it is disturbing that the NPS seems to have so little concern for public safety.

Correspondence ID: 521 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I oppose all action alternatives and support the no action alternative. The NPS does need to do an unbiased review of the deaths on Half Dome and determine whether some additional safety equipment should be adopted to reduce the risk of deaths (e.g., third cable, harnesses, etc.). Any NPS plans to curtail visitation should require another EIS because of the flaws with this EIS.

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? The NPS should implement a third cable to promote safety and evaluate support equipment that may make the climb safer

(e.g. harnesses, gloves, etc.)

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? A process to fairly measure and publically report the decline in outdoor recreation from this arbitrary NPS policy needs to be implemented.

Correspondence ID: 522 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 11:08:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I favor removing the cables entirely of the 5 alternatives being considered for access to the backside of Yosemite's Half Dome.

Correspondence ID: 523 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 11:16:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: none

Topic Question 2: Only Alternative E will work by removing the cables to restore wilderness conditions.

Topic Question 3: Once again Alternative E will place Half Dome Trail to its original state without man-made objects [the handrails & cables].

Topic Question 4: Legally, this property should be free of too much human intrusion. It is designated National Park land.

Topic Question 6: When I visit the park, I would like it to be as pristine as possible. Having steel cables & other manmade materials takes the beauty of Nature away.

Comments: Taking the cables away would lessen the crowd of people.

Correspondence ID: 524 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 11:56:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Your plan as it stands now excludes almost everyone from making effective plans to both: A) obtain a campsite and B) obtain a Half Dome permit on the same day before August 16th

Right now, your March application period for Half Dome permits allows people to know when they will have a permit for Half Dome, and what date they may climb on, sometime in early April. As long as that date is prior to April 14th, they can then get in the recreation.gov website on the morning of April 15th and secure a website (hopefully) for the window of August 15-September 14th.

This means that ALL dates prior to August 15th that one acquires a pass for Half Dome are a complete "shot in the dark" as far as planning ahead.

You CAN'T get a campsite for your summit bid day now because you won't KNOW your summit bid day until early April at best.

I understand that this is the exact system Mt. Whitney (and other high use areas) uses, but Mt Whitney hardly has the volume of people coming through it that Yosemite does. Yosemite is a HUGE attraction without ever even taking Half Dome hikers into consideration. The campsites would be (and are) LONG GONE and taken by PLENTY of other people without the hikers ever even being in the mix.

The date to RECEIVE your lottery permits for hiking Half Dome needs to be accelerated drastically, as the vast majority of the

season is gone before one could ever plan their visit.

Topic Question 3: Use the "Bar Method" two hikers come off the dome - two hikers enter the cables. Three come off - three enter, etc... This would necessitate less hours worked by the rangers (only peak use hours), and allow more permits to be issued.

Comments: Hello members of The NPS, YNP, fellow Sierra Club members and John Muir fans, and anyone else who might actually read this. My name is Griff Joyce and my favorite place on this planet is the top of Half Dome. It's fate and accessibility have long been a concern of mine. I was there when the studies started on the Half Dome trail, and I've been near for a couple of the deaths. I've personally guided hundreds of people to the top of this iconic landmark through informal, bring-your-buddies-along kind of trips (sometimes several in a summer). To my friends, I am regarded as a "Hobbyist Expert" on the subject of this very special place. I have summited Half Dome 27 times so far, and hope to someday have my summit count exceed my age (I'm 42). I'm getting there slowly but surely... :-). In the summer of 2010, I chose to celebrate my 40th birthday with a trip to the top of Half Dome with many of my friends. Several of them had been on previous trips, and some were newbies. Regardless, I had the honor of hosting the worlds coolest birthday "party" on top of the Dome. We weren't there long. We just wanted a sunset picture as a group, to sing happy birthday, and get down safely. Most of those things went according to plan... Anyway, my point is: that I simply LOVE Half Dome. LOVE IT. And I definitely want to see it used in the best manner, and as much as possible. I write to you today to bring up a couple of issues that I'm sure have been discussed, but wanted to make sure to get my two cents in prior to the big decision being made. Number one - campsites. I'm sure you're well aware that the window of opportunity for campsites in Yosemite for mid June to mid July has come and gone. Likewise, the window of opportunity for mid July to mid August will also come and go BEFORE ANYONE KNOWS WHAT DAY THEY MIGHT HAVE A HALF DOME PERMIT. To reiterate; it will be impossible to secure a campsite anywhere in Yosemite with any amount of certainty AFTER knowing what day you have a permit to hike to the top of Half Dome for. For all dates prior to August 16th, I guess the hiker will just have to hope a site opens up, or perhaps drive from El Portal or Groveland if they wish to spend the night before or after their epic hike. Driving after the Half Dome hike is NOT a good idea. You know as well as I that this hike pushes many of the hikers WELL past their normal limits. Driving fatigue is bad normally after that hike, but now the hikers will have to drive over an hour before they sleep. THAT is NOT looking out for the safety of the hikers. The current proposed system simply pushes the danger away from the cables and into the car... Because the hikers won't have an appropriately close campsite. And that's assuming Half Dome passes are given out in a timely manner. If they are received AFTER April 15th, then that pushes that "date of certainty" back to September 16th. And that's pretty much the whole Half Dome hiking season, isn't it? Number 2 - I'd like to share with you my feeling about the Half Dome trail. It's inspirational, beautiful, and magical. Nowhere else, in my experience, is there such a wonderful place for getting people to take risks, push their limits, and have a peak experience that is SO accessible to them. I coach and teach. I'm all about getting people to reach into themselves and try harder, be stronger, and become something more - simply because they willed it to be so. This trail is simply MADE to draw this out of people. Think about it: They can see the top from the Valley floor. Being unaccustomed to such grand scope, they figure that if they can see the top, it MUST be achievable. Chuckle... little do they know what they are in for, huh? They can read about the hike in any of the guidebooks and information with tips and guidelines is readily available. Intel can be gained from just about ANYONE in the valley, as we have all done it several times. It becomes manageable in the brain of the hiker. Whether this is a good idea for this particular hiker or not, they can gather enough info that LACK of information is no longer a good reason to NOT go. They become intellectually convinced that this may be possible. The "Cool Factor" of Half Dome is beyond my ability to describe. The fact that it is SO well known makes the thought of climbing it (and later bragging about it - why do you think your "I made it to the top" shirts are so popular?) becomes so intoxicating to the prospective hiker that they begin to think it could actually happen. Getting on the trail and starting is SO EASY. Someone that has no real intention of going to the top should it "get hard", can certainly start and "check it out". But we all know how investment works - the more you put into something, the more you want to see it through. By the time these folks get to LYV, after again looking at the top (from the back side this time), the thought of making it becomes more and more real. What we know that they don't, is that LYV might be about half the DISTANCE, but it works out (in my estimation) to being somewhere between 1/4 to 1/3 of the EFFORT required to reach the top. But these newbies don't see it that way. They think, "Hey, if that's halfway, why not just keep going and go all the way to the top? That wasn't so bad." This is where the trail, mixed with investment and "Cool Factor" become inspirational and magical. I have seen SO MANY people on that trail that have NO BUSINESS having made it past LYV. They CLEARLY don't do things of such a strenuous nature often, if ever. They are last people that should be hiking this trail and jumping onto the cables. But there they are. And they usually make it to the cables. The cables. Oh the cables. If people knew just how scary those cables are the first time you see them, they would never have started the hike. Those cables are TERRIFYING to most hikers on their first trip up them. But there's that investment thing rearing it's ugly head again. Generally speaking, folks that would NEVER take a risk like the cables say something along the lines of, "That looks particularly awful, but I have worked WAY too hard to turn back now." I LOVE this. Again, the hike is simply amazing at never letting you know just how deeply it will test you until you are too invested to back off. It's like God created something we SHOULD all want to do, and candy coated the first half so that we'd actually get out there and do it! And this is what I want you to understand: Half Dome has an allure that actually gets people off their butts and gets them to do something outdoors that they can be proud of for literally the rest of their lives. There is great value in that. If you want people to come and ENJOY the park, Half Dome is not a necessary piece of that puzzle. There are PLENTY of other things to see, do, and take pictures of. If this is your only goal, then shut Half Dome down to all but the most organized, motivated and lucky. But if you truly want people to EXPERIENCE, and CONNECT WITH the park, why on earth would you take away this amazing experience from so many people in the future? I know, I know - I'm writing about the exact population that showed you the need to limit access in the first place. I'm lobbying for the people that get lost, scared, and hike with insufficient water or light. I know - they are not like us. But as a true fan of Half Dome, I don't want its access to be restricted to mostly those that are readily prepared for it. Don't you get it? I WANT the uninitiated to be able to share the joy of the outdoors with me! They didn't understand when they started the day, but they do by the time they finish. That rock is your best salesman and paradigm changer in the park, maybe in the whole National Park system. You want people to connect, but you are taking away the one thing that tricks them into that connection the best. I want, very badly, for someone to be able to get a "wild hare" and just decide to do the Half Dome hike one day that they are there on vacation with their family. I want them to go buy a backpack with a water reservoir from the mountain shop, throw on their sturdiest sneakers, and just start walking, and not stop until they make it to the top (as is the case so often now). I want the spontaneity of this destination to remain intact. I want Half Dome to REMAIN magical. The magic is in the accessibility. Why not restrict entry onto the rock like entry into a bar? You know - a bar can only allow "so many" people at once (safety codes and all), so they

have a "One comes out, one goes in...two come out, two go in" rule. This isn't a bad plan. This would keep the numbers on the cables down, and the hours the Rangers would be required there would likely be limited to the hours of 8-4"ish". As it stands now, the Rangers have to be vigilant much earlier and later, from my understanding - including full moon nights, as they are so popular. Are you really going to send a Ranger out there in the middle of the night just so you can monitor the "legality" of ascending a rock... at midnight? I hope not, but I've heard that this is a distinct possibility... So, for anyone that actually gets this far into my opinion, here it is... I would love to see NO RESTRICTIONS, or the "bar entry method" outlined above. I would love to see a THIRD CABLE But if either, or both, of these are unrealistic requests, I would cast my vote for 400 HIKERS A DAY, please. (And keep in mind that you could likely easily manage 500 a day with the "bar entry method") Thank you for your time and consideration. - [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 525 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 12:00:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I strongly urge the National Park Service to adopt Alternative A, which would eliminate the current permit system and place no limits on the number of hikers allowed to climb Half Dome. Furthermore, I suggest adding a third cable, which would eliminate congestion on the trail, increase safety and allow more hikers the opportunity to explore their natural heritage.

Correspondence ID: 526 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 12:07:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: The NPS has a long tradition of restricting day-use access only when absolutely necessary; there are only a handful of places within the national park system that are subject to day-use quotas. If you do go with alternatives B, C or D, please consider modifying them to provide a window of time when people can freely use the cables without a permit. Some examples would be:

Permits are required for people ascending the cables after 10 AM.

Permits are not required on Tuesdays.

This would allow unrestricted public access to the cables, while still addressing the safety and wilderness character concerns. The first example would spread usage out across the entire day rather than having everyone bunch up on the cables over the same several-hour period. Because the second example picks a day in the middle of the week, it would be unlikely to generate the large crowds traditionally seen on weekends and holidays.

Topic Question 6: As a California resident, I appreciate the flexibility of being able to visit Yosemite without planning months in advance. The current permit process makes day of / day before users second-class citizens to those who reserve months in advance, unlike most wilderness overnight permits which are split 50/50 between the two groups./

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 527 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Wilderness Watch P.O. Box 9175 Missoula, MT 59807 March 15, 2012

Mr. Don L. Neubacher, Superintendent Yosemite National Park P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

ATTN: Half Dome Plan

Dear Mr. Neubacher,

The following are comments by Wilderness Watch on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment (EA), dated January 2012. Wilderness Watch, as you may know, is the only national wilderness conservation organization solely focused on the protection of Wildernesses in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Congress designated Half Dome as part of the Yosemite Wilderness in 1984.

For the reasons detailed below, Wilderness Watch supports Alternative E - Remove the Cables, but without the mandated commercial services that Alternative E requires.

1. Removing the Cables is the only Right Option for Wilderness. Alternative E is the only option that abides by the directives of the 1964 Wilderness Act, 16 U.S.C. 1131-1136.

Retaining the cable system violates the legal definition of Wilderness. Section 2 (c) of the Wilderness Act defines Wilderness in part as: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain"

and "an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements" which "generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable" and "has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?." The cable system violates all these components of the definition of Wilderness.

Retaining the cable system violates the Wilderness Act's primary directive to preserve wilderness character. The Wilderness Act requires the National Park Service (NPS) to preserve Half Dome's wilderness character. Section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act requires that "each agency administering any area designated as wilderness shall be responsible for preserving the wilderness character of the area and shall so administer such area for such other purposes for which it may have been established as also to preserve its wilderness character." The cable system does not preserve but degrades wilderness character.

Retaining the cable system violates the Wilderness Act's prohibitions on structures and installations. Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act further prohibits structures and installations in Wilderness by requiring that "there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area." The cable system on Half Dome is precisely the structures and installations prohibited by the Act: cables, stanchions, wooden steps, permanent rock bolts, and more.

In the EA, the NPS attempts to sidestep the requirements of the Wilderness Act by calling the cable system a handrail, and needed for visitor safety reasons. In 1980, Professor Joseph L. Sax wrote a seminal book entitled *Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks*. Among his many suggestions, Sax suggests (on page 61), "Rather than seeking mainly to serve the wide variety of recreational preferences visitors bring with them, park managers would encourage all visitors-- whatever their past experiences or skills--to try more challenging and demanding recreation." Yet retaining the cable system on Half Dome would fly in the face of this needed suggestion, and would make Half Dome the exact opposite of Sax's epigrammatic title: a Mountain With Handrails.

Consistent with Sax's work, the Park Service's own policies suggest that providing handrails for visitors to climb mountains is inappropriate in Wilderness:

"Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms. Accordingly, the National Park Service will promote education programs that encourage wilderness users to understand and be aware of certain risks, including possible dangers arising from wildlife, weather conditions, physical features, and other natural phenomena that are inherent in the various conditions that comprise a wilderness experience and primitive methods of travel. The National Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness, but it will strive to provide users with general information concerning possible risks, any recommended precautions, related user responsibilities, and applicable restrictions and regulations, including those associated with ethnographic and cultural resources." (NPS Management Policies 6.4.1)

The rationale for accepting wilderness "on its own terms" goes beyond the absence of structures; it strikes at the heart of our relationship to Wilderness. By yielding our uses and demands we learn one of the most important lessons from Wilderness--the need for restraint. The ability to accept places as they are, and to let them be. This is the message the NPS can promote by making a decision to remove the cables.

2. The NPS Must Reduce Visitor Levels to Those at Time of Wilderness Designation.

The Preferred Alternative C, 300 People per Day, is wholly inadequate for preserving wilderness character. A reduction in visitation to this level, while certainly a step in the right direction, will still allow crowding and destroy the "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreation" that the NPS is required to provide by the Wilderness Act, section 2(c). Removing the cable system will immediately lower visitation to a level that does protect and restore wilderness character.

The NPS must at a minimum establish a visitation level that retains the opportunities for solitude on Half Dome that existed when the Yosemite Wilderness was established. As noted on page 1-4 of the EA, the evidence suggests that visitation levels at the time of designation were 100 to 200 people per day. While this level of use is still far above what almost anyone will concede exceeds an "outstanding opportunity for solitude" in a wilderness setting, it at least adheres to the NPS policy of nondegradation, which suggests each area "will be measured and assessed against its own unimpaired standard." (NPS 6.3.7) The proposed action, while an improvement over the current substantially impaired condition, allows for substantial degradation to the situation that existed when the Yosemite Wilderness was established.

Alternative D, 140 people per day, most closely matches this level, but even this level may exceed the actual use in 1984. The NPS must reduce visitation to Half Dome to the level that existed in 1984 at the time of wilderness designation. This is consistent with the House Report language referred to in Appendix C-4, "The [NPS] has implemented various mechanisms and restrictions to guide and control visitor use?and is admonished to continue to institute such actions in a timely manner as may be necessary to assure the perpetual retention of wilderness resource character and the opportunity for visitors to experience the solitude of wilderness in this type of area system-wide."

3. The Proposal to Authorize Commercial Services Violates the Wilderness Act and Case Law.

The prohibition on commercial enterprise is one of the most restrictive in the Wilderness Act. The reasons are many, they are

not lost on Yosemite National Park officials, and were discussed at length at the recent "commercial outfitting and the Wilderness Act" conference at Stanford University in which Yosemite officials played a major role.

As the Ninth Circuit court found in the Wilderness Society case, "These statutory declarations show a mandate of preservation for wilderness and the essential need to keep commerce out of it." (emphasis added). Despite the letter and intent of the law, much of the Half Dome "Determination of Extent Necessary (DEN)" analysis strives to invite commerce in. In this regard, we believe the document is remarkably at odds with both the spirit and letter of the law.

"A rose by any other name is still a rose"

The definition and interpretation of commercial services is overly-broad and includes prohibited commercial enterprise. For example, commercial filming is a commercial enterprise, not a service, and can not be included in Wilderness. The primary purpose of commercial filming is to make money, not to experience Wilderness, as the DEN suggests, and therefore it should not be allowed. The exception might be an NPS-sponsored film in which NPS controls the message and distribution of the film and where profit isn't the motive, but this is a far cry from what NPS proposed to allow.

In addition to Wilderness Act violations, the DEN's approach to authorizing filming and other "education services" begs the question of whether the NPS is inserting itself into questionable First Amendment territory. Unless NPS at Yosemite controls the content, message, and distribution of the films or educational programs it authorizes in Wilderness, how can NPS assure that these programs serve a necessary wilderness purpose? NPS might want to rethink the can of worms it is opening in its attempt to broaden heretofore accepted interpretations of what constitutes an appropriate commercial service in Wilderness.

The definition of what would not qualify as "Proper" activities is good as far as it goes, but it needs to include other generally prohibited uses such as structures and installations. This is especially pertinent to Half Dome, since the commercial services may ostensibly be relying upon the structures and installations associated with cable system in conducting their trips. Similarly, because commercial enterprise is prohibited in Wilderness many of the commercial activities previously mentioned can not be considered proper activities for commercial services. While photography, drawing, painting, and scientific research are legitimate wilderness activities, they are not appropriate in wilderness if conducted as part of a commercial enterprise.

Finally, much of the DEN is a recitation of possible activities that might occur in wilderness from recreation to education to conservation, etc. But nowhere does it explain why it is necessary for any of these activities to occur on the Half Dome trail, nor why commercial entities are necessary in order for these activities to occur at all. We're very hard-pressed to understand why any educational service is needed on the trail that can't be met elsewhere in Yosemite or otherwise, or is not already being met in spades by the tens-of-thousands hiking/climbing the route. The DEN attempts to shoehorn in commercial education entities by creating a distinction between "formal" and "informal" educational activities, but there is nothing in the DEN to support the claim that commercial education programs are needed.

Please accept Wilderness Watch's comments as part of the record for this issue.

Sincerely,

██████████ Conservation Director

Correspondence ID: 528 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 14:23:19

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 3: To give more people access to the top of the half-dome, the lottery should forbid participation of those who went up there already. Another alternative is to allow only experienced hikers/photographers up there to photograph views for the rest of us who can't go up there. The photographers can use the cables to get down quickly in an emergency while juggling their equipment.

Topic Question 4: Everytime NPS installs stanchions and cables after uninstalling them at the end of the previous season, NPS alters the Half-Dome. If this wear-and tear eventually would result in the inability to re-install them, then this system would deny future generations access that the current generation has. Thus, to provide equal opportunity to all generations, this system should be discontinued. In the same way that it's non-discriminatory to handicapped people who still can't access the top of the dome, access to the top can be restricted naturally by removing the cables.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 529 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The Half Dome EA as noted on C-11 mentions "In the case of Half Dome, the demand for access far exceeds capacity, so noncommercial visitors are already being denied access in large numbers." This statement says two things, 1. If true, this is a clear indication there is a need for guided commercial trips. Why is the EA determined to limit this access? 2. Does the data you present support the statement above in quotation marks? It does not appear to.

Topic Question 3: Offering a separate plan for guide services and commercial outfitters would separate the commercial use and non-commercial use visitor. The INYO NF has a plan in place for commercial use and it seems to work nicely. A similar example would be the Stanislaus NF and rafting on the Merced and Tuolumne Rivers. Offering a reasonable number of permits each day for guide services can be done in such a way that it does not negatively impact the resource, visitor safety or the wilderness experience. Why is the demographic desiring guided services being negatively impacted and limited to one of Yosemite National Parks natural wonders?

Topic Question 5: A gaping hole in the EA and listed alternatives exists relating to individuals who wish to use a guide service to hike Half Dome. People who wish to use a guide service do so for many reasons. The current EA and alternatives limits this demographics access to wilderness. Guide services and commercial outfitters exist because there is a demand for that service. If this demand did not exist, there would be no guide services or commercial outfitters. Possible demographics affected include people who need a guide because they do not have the skills necessary to travel into the wilderness or to Half Dome. Additionally, people want guides to provide education along the way. This could be stewardship, resource education, interpretation, wilderness travel skills, Leave No Trace, team-building, leadership, etc. Lastly, people with disabilities who need to use a guide will not have the same access as people without disabilities. For example, someone like Mark Wellman may not be able to access Half Dome due to the current language of the Half Dome Environmental Assessment. This is discriminatory behavior.

Topic Question 6: The Half Dome EA has the potential to effect/change the way wilderness is managed in all National Parks nationwide. This should be taken seriously and all aspects of its impacts discussed. There is a clear need for guided services/commercial use visitors in our wilderness areas. If this need did not exist, no guide services/commercial outfitters would be operating. People have been utilizing guiding services in Yosemite through its history-John Muir, Hutchins, Yosemite Conservancy, NPS rangers, Sierra Club etc. I encourage the National Park Service to consider all user-group needs and desires when determining the fate of our National Park System. You will be affecting your children's experience in Yosemite and our nation's parks!

Comments: The guided public is an important group to include. The guided public as a group is typically made up of new users; people who are interested in safety, companionship, and learning; and people who are less confident in their experience, skills, or ability. This is an important group to include, because: ? New users need leadership, education, mentoring, interpretation, and supervision most. ? Without the option to use guides, this group will potentially go without guides, which increases risk and resource damage potential, and reduces interpretation and stewardship opportunities. ? Half Dome as an objective is uniquely powerful for providing Wilderness and Yosemite stewardship when this group is accompanied by appropriately trained guides. ? This is an important feeder group for Wilderness stewardship.

The guided public is not likely to comment on this EA. Because this group is partially made up of new users, they are not likely to know that they need to comment here, or else they will be at a disadvantage. They may not have decided yet that they want to hike Half Dome, so this EA will not be on their radar, until it is too late.

Another component of this group, the less confident, may not comment here for that reason alone, they are timid. They also may be embarrassed to be identified in that group. Or, they may not even consider a guide until they think about actually doing something as big and challenging as Half Dome. These people, while guided public users, are not likely to comment on the disadvantages that the current alternatives will yield.

For these reasons, and the discrimination listed above, the comments gathered during previous public scoping will not accurately reflect the need to ensure equitable access for the guided public.

Using ratios of pre-2010 use is an appropriate method of determining the amount of permits available to the guided public in the form of commercial use permits for guides and guide services.

Advantages of guided public trips ? Safety, both for their direct clients and others around ? Commercial services employ professional guides with experience, training, and certifications, which greatly reduce risk and improve safety. ? Additional first aid and search and rescue resources on site. ? Stewardship ? Guides are an opportunity for the Land Manager to provide information to the guided public, the segment of the public that potentially needs it the most. ? Resource Protection ? Guides know the rules and current issues, and ensure compliance. Clients that hire guides rely on the guides to know and follow the rules. ? Education ? Guides and guide services want to add value to their trips. Education is a necessary and significant part of their service. ? Modeling good behavior ? Guides, and other people with prominence and authority, modeling good behavior is very persuasive in establishing good behavior in new users.

Eliminating or restricting access for guides will increase damage, risk and incidents of Search and Rescue. If guides are not available to people who want or need a guide, they will either miss out or try it without a guide. This could easily lead to increased incidence of the following problems: ? Resource damage due to not knowing the best practices or park rules and regulations ? Search and rescues due to inexperience, lack of ability, and un-preparedness

Backpacking trips that occur in the area of Half Dome should include permits for Half Dome. On a backpacking trip in the area surrounding half Dome it is a reasonable expectation that one will want to hike to the top of Half Dome. The freedom to hike the surrounding summits is a normal part of a Wilderness backpacking experience. Making certain areas off-limits to people with

permits for a given area will change the Wilderness experience for those people, and thus the Wilderness Character.

People watch a lot of TV. Why weren't TV ads used? As an employee of the concession in Yosemite NP, I have spoken to hundreds of frustrated people (literally!) who didn't know about the Half Dome permit setup until they were at Yosemite or within a few weeks of their visit. Why didn't the NPS do a better job letting its constituency know about these new changes and their right to share their opinion? As tax payers, the United States citizens are all part owners in Yosemite and should have a right to express their opinion.

Correspondence ID: 530 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 15:43:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: We have visited Yosemite on numerous occasions over many many years. My first reaction would have been to remove the handrails; however, after comparing notes with close friends who actually live there and who frequent Half Dome as well, they seem quite happy with the hand rails and say that those wishing to "be alone" with Half Dome can simply choose to go at off peak usage and that there are myriad other places to explore and find peace and quiet and solitude within the Park. So with that in mind, I would place my vote for Alternative A, No Action required.

Correspondence ID: 531 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 16:14:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I understand the need to evaluate this situation. However, I urge you to only impose the limits from June 15th until September 15th. This should solve most of the problems. I have been trying to make this climb for the last couple of years but have never gotten my kids together to do it with me. They are both in jobs that make future planning difficult which makes getting a permit in advance almost impossible. Leave some time for the spur of the moment trips. You could at least go a couple of years with this kind of schedule and see how it goes.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 532 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 16:20:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I would encourage Alternative E - no handrails on Half Dome. We should be providing a truly natural environment in the national parks.

Comments: I would encourage Alternative E - no handrails on Half Dome. We should be providing a truly natural environment in the national parks.

Correspondence ID: 533 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 16:56:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternate B - 400 permits per day I prefer this alternative. Since this is a hike that I like to take often and have done over 5 times in the last 20 years. I have been on the cables with over crowding and light trafic. The light traffic is great but I do not want it to be very difficult to obtain a permit. I do not want it to be like the Mt. Whitney permit where it is very hard to get a permit. (I have tried the Whitney permit 5 times in the last 10 years and only got a permit once).

Comments: I like your suggestion of 100 or less permits for backpackers. I would also like at least 50 (prefer 100) permits available the day before at the permit office in the valley. I typically book 5 to 7 days in the valley and like the opportunity to pick up a permit when I am there.

Correspondence ID: 534 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 17:04:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I support Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment Alternative E ... to completely Remove the Cables from Half Dome Trail.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 535 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 17:09:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: When you cut down the number of people allowed to hike, you may enhance their wilderness experience, but you wipe out the experience for the hundreds you turn away.

Topic Question 3: Set up permits with time slots. Morning access, prime-time or any-time access, and late afternoon access. Experiment with time ranges and numbers. More time slots -- even permits only for dawn access!

PLEASE, maximize the numbers of permits in every way possible!

Comments: Shutting down access due to a small rush-hour period is insanity. This is NOT management, this is feeble-minded hand-wringing.

Correspondence ID: 536 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,15,2012 18:08:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Alternative c or d works. I have been up HD 5+ times and I think that it is way too crowded with Inexperianced hikers who don't prepare and I see them End up suffering dehydration injuries etc. i don't think commercial groups should be allowed unless it is led by a professional org. With HD experience. I am also not opposed to removing cables altogether, per the Sierra clubs protective measure which I am All for protecting yosemite.

Topic Question 6: I hike and backpack every year in Yosemite. I do like to know the challenge of HD is available and would still Like that option avail so I can share the exp with friends that haven't done it yet.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 537 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,15,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The goals include the solution, preventing alternative solutions from being considered. The Plan has a stated goal of: 'Improve public safety by reducing crowding on the Half Dome Trail?', which seems like a pretty good goal until one realizes that it presumes that the only solution to improving public safety is to reduce crowding. Stating a solution as part of a goal essentially eliminates consideration of other alternative solutions. The Plan has another such goal: 'Improve the visitor experience on the Half Dome Trail by reducing crowding?'. That has the same pre-defined solution, and thus should simply be: 'Improve the visitor experience on the Half Dome Trail?.'

Topic Question 2: This plan increases the risk of a fatality until Alternative E (Remove the cables) is implemented. There has already been a fatality with Alternative A in place in 2011, July 31, 2011.

Topic Question 3: Ah, that is the rub...the stated goals, as I've said in Question 1 include the solution. 'Improve public safety by reducing crowding on the Half Dome Trail?' does not allow for solutions that do not reduce crowding, since 'reduce crowding' is a requirement in the goal.

Here are two good goals:

1. Improve public safety on the Half Dome Trail
2. Improve the visitor experience on the Half Dome Trail.

Topic Question 6: For the last several years, my family members and extended family have visited Yosemite with the primary goal of hiking the Half Dome Trail. By taking away my freedom to hike the trail at a time of my choosing--and convenience--you severely limit my Yosemite experience. I do not want to be forced to come mid-summer, perhaps on a weekend, and have to face the crowds in Yosemite Valley. I have been coming in the Fall, after school is in session, and mid-week. I have been doing so to achieve the solitude you are trying to legislate with this plan. My wife and I will still come for the solitude of the snow and the beauty of the Awahanees (plus the food, of course).

Comments: Synopsis: The Half Dome Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment, Document H3015 (YOSE-PM), begins with a flawed premise by stating the goal to "Improve public safety by reducing crowding on the Half Dome Trail", a simple, obvious solution, that to paraphrase Winston Churchill, is dead wrong, and in this case, quite literally. There was a fatality during the first full year of the permit lottery that severely restricted access to the Half Dome Trail. The plan now recommends more of the 'reduce crowding' solution, Alternative C with a limit of 300 permits per day, versus Alternative B's 400 in 2011, and is unlikely to improve safety.

Stating the expected solution in the goal excludes other, perhaps better solutions from being considered. The goal should have been simply "improve safety on the Half Dome Trail", which would allow all safety-oriented solutions to be considered. There is little evidence to indicate that crowding is actually a significant factor in the safety issues, other than on the cables, and then only for evacuation from the top. If crowding on the cables were considered an independent problem to be solved, the authors would certainly have found a better solution, such as adding a third cable, which would eliminate the traffic jams and dramatically speed up evacuations from the summit.

Although Alternative C, a limit of 300 people per day is the stated recommended solution, one can make a pretty good case that the authors fully expect that Alternative E, removal of the cables, will ultimately be implemented, should the fatalities continue--and they will, unless the true safety issues are addressed.

Hiking the Half Dome Trail and successfully making it to the top of Half Dome is an incredible physical accomplishment. This Plan needs to encourage people to take that challenge, not restrict access, or, worse yet, remove the cables that have made that

final ascent safe for almost a century.

The Fatal Flaw

Since "Improve public safety by reducing crowding on the Half Dome Trail" is one of the Plan's goals, that is what was attempted with a lottery for 400 hiking permits per day, first just weekends, which simply moved the Saturday crowd to mid-week, then expanded to all days for 2011. Unfortunately, with the permit lottery in place during 2011, there was a fatality on Sunday, July 31, 2011-during "wet rock" conditions. The lottery and permit system gives people one, single date to hike the Half Dome Trail, so, if the weather is bad, some may take the risk of hiking when the rock is wet, since they might never get a chance again. The problem? Wet rock is quite dangerous, and "wet rock" is listed as the conditions for the preponderance of injuries and for all but one of the five fatalities. You will also see folks who will attempt the cable portion of the hike despite fatigue and acrophobia symptoms, since that might be their only opportunity to complete the hike. Alternatives C and D further reduce the probability of getting a permit in the lottery versus the 400 permits in the current program, increasing the odds of risky behavior. By the way, the daily limit includes permits that automatically go to overnight hikers who have wilderness permits, further reducing slots for day-hikers on the Half Dome Trail.

Before the lottery and permits, people like me took the simple approach when the weather was bad: just wait until tomorrow, the day after, next month, or even next year. There was no reason to take chances, since there was always another day to make that hike, but not with this plan.

Crowding and Safety

There did not seem to be any specific evidence that crowding was actually a safety issue, other than needing faster evacuation on the cables when a storm is approaching. The section "Effects of High Use Levels on Safety", on page 1-5 references Chart 1-1, also on page 1-5, and continued on 1-6. After I looked up the day of the week for the 15 incidents in the chart, I was surprised to see that Saturday was not the highest day for incidents, even though it typically has about twice the volume of the other days of the week. Saturday did have a fatality, on wet rock, and was tied with Wednesday and Thursday with three incidents. Although each of those days also had a fatality, they were off-season with 'wet rock, cables down' as the conditions. Sunday was by far the worst day, with four incidents total, including two fatalities, the sole dry rock fatality on Sunday, June 17, 2007, and the 2011 wet rock fatality, on Sunday, July 31, 2011. Monday and Friday had one incident each, although the Friday incident was "icy rock and cables down", another off-season incident. No incidents were listed for a Tuesday. "Wet rock" was clearly the predominant listing for the conditions.

Further indication that safety was more of the public reason than the real reason is that the Executive Summary cites the "four fatal falls occurred between 2006 and 2009 on the Half Dome cable system" as the reason for this project, even though two of those were off-season, and thus not something covered by the Plan. The Executive Summary also omits mention of the fatality in 2011, perhaps because it would have pointed out the fatal flaw described above. "Improve public safety by reducing crowding on the Half Dome Trail" has that wonderful 'truthiness' that passes for actual fact these days, so that perhaps people who read the Executive Summary would just accept the recommendations without reading the body of the document.

Making the cables safer

The primary safety concern in the Plan is how fast the top of Half Dome could be evacuated when a fast-moving storm is approaching. A third cable would significantly improve that time, since there would be two lanes of downhill traffic, and the faster people could pass those moving more slowly. The chart on page 3-16 shows the mass descent times for the various alternatives, listing 83 minutes for the 'No Action' Alternative A (unregulated), and 47 minutes for Alternatives B and C, 400 and 300 permits respectively. The evacuation time for Alternative D, 140 people per day was "unknown" (although stated elsewhere to simply be 'less than 47 minutes') and Alternative E was "N/A", since, apparently, evacuation would no longer be the concern of the NPS. If the third cable makes evacuation only half of the 83 minutes, at roughly 42 minutes, it is about 10% faster than Alternatives B and C, with the advantage of allowing the faster folks to pass those going more slowly, reducing chances of risky behavior such as descending on the outside of the cables. With the current cables and recommended plans, there is still the risk of a traffic jam-either up, or down.

Unfortunately, adding a third cable was relegated in the Plan to the "Alternatives considered and dismissed" part of the document-dismissed for failure to meet the 'reduce crowding' goal, which seems to also have become the wilderness solitude goal. If the 'reduce crowding' goal was focused just on the cables, then a different solution would have emerged.

The cables can get crowded. That is why my son, my cousins, and I decided to do a mid-week hike. Anyone who had experienced the crowds on the cable would love to see a better solution, although 'removal of the cables and thus to never see the summit of Half Dome again' option would be something I doubt that they would choose.

The plan characterizes the crowded cable situation as a lack-of-solitude problem, rather than a safety issue on its own. Clearly no one should expect to climb the cables without interaction with others, since everyone going up will see and encounter folks coming down. Thus, a more rational approach would have been to determine the causes of delays going up or down and ways to alleviate those delays. My experience with the cables has been seeing a long line of people below a person stuck part way up the cables-even mid-week. I suspect that acrophobia is often the culprit, the other would be fatigue. As an acrophobia sufferer, I'm lucky that I've learned to spot the symptoms as they are developing, and can take appropriate action. Thus, I've been able to ski and rescue people on steep, icy runs, ride chair lifts over deep canyons, rappel off sheer, undercut rock faces, etc. Unfortunately,

most people just succumb when their brain decides they are too high, and sink, frozen onto the ground. Then their friends all gather around to help, fully blocking the cables. A third cable would give everyone else a passing lane, while those needing help down or just a rest can do so.

New cables in the wilderness? The Wilderness Act does allow such safety devices when appropriate, as covered in Appendix D of the document.

Removal of the cables?the ultimate goal?

As a long-time project manager, the four acceptable alternatives (B, C, D, and E) looked remarkably like a phased project plan. With Alternative B, the current program in place in 2011 as phase one, there is the appearance that Alternative B had met its completion criteria-apparently lack of safety-and that it was time to move to the next phase, Alternative C, the recommended alternative, which reduces the permits to 300 per day. Should Alternative C also show a lack of safety, the plan would then continue to progress, reducing permits further, to 140 per day with Alternative D. Should Alternative D also show a lack of safety, that just leaves Alternative E. When I saw that Alternative E, removal of the cables, had quite a bit of implementation detail, and included one commercial trip per day, with 8 people for 'educational' purposes, I started to wonder if that was not the true goal of this plan. I can see a need for someone to teach technical rock climbing where the cables now are, helping novice students reach the summit of Half Dome, since very few hikers would ever get that thrill again.

Then there is the list on page 2-16, which described the "seven evaluation factors" for the alternatives. Perhaps a bit of a Freudian Slip that there are just six items listed, not one of which is safety oriented. Listed are "Opportunities for solitude" and "Wilderness-based visitor experience and access", but not safety. The 'seven' was clearly not a typo, since that number is mentioned again when it was said: "When seven factors considered equally, Alternative E (Remove the Cables) scored the highest". A slight mention of safety came in a chart at the end of Chapter two, which had "Risk Management" as an "Impact Topic", which merely showed evacuation times for each alternative, where known, implying that the 83 minutes for Alternative A was too long and that the 47 minutes for Alternatives B and C was acceptable.

Conclusion

The Half Dome Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment, Document H3015 (YOSE-PM) needs to be revised with what should have been its original goal: Improve safety on the Half Dome Trail. By not dictating a solution, such as 'reduce crowding' then the plan can first diagnose the root cause of the safety-related events, and craft a solution that addresses those needs. Having hiked the Half Dome Trail several times, adding a third cable seems pretty simple and obvious to me, but I've learned to not jump to that conclusion without further study. Clearly adding a third cable does not address the more serious issue of people hiking the trail and making the final ascent or descent on wet rock. If I were leading the team, I'd explore ways to educate people on the risks and find ways to provide an early warning of impending storms, especially lightning. Other parts of the country certainly have lightning warning systems, but they are not in the Wilderness.

It is impossible to achieve true wilderness solitude on the Half Dome Trail-unless you take away all reasons to hike that trail, which is exactly what the final alternative in the Plan, Alternative E, Remove the Cables, does. Once Alternative E has been implemented, I can clearly visualize a Yosemite Park Ranger telling people: "it is so unfortunate that we had to take down the cables on Half Dome that allowed hikers to reach the Half Dome summit for almost a century. We tried everything to improve safety, but nothing worked." Please keep that scene from coming true.

As Mr. Spock said: "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few". A better future includes safety elements that do not restrict access to this wonderful, and, despite its physical challenges, very popular trek, the Half Dome Trail.

Sincerely yours,

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Correspondence ID: 538 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 18:51:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I would prefer that the trail to Half Dome be properly maintained, but I do not want the trail shut down completely. I think that permit system is bad because it does not allow enough people to use the trail and had impeded me for 2 years from hiking the trail. The current 2012 system encourages people to buy 6 permits because they cannot partially cancel the permit in case people drop out of the hike.

I would like there to be MORE permits (or NO permits at all). I think the park service should work to eliminate the possibility of scalpers and commercial enterprises like REI prohibited from purchasing permits. Companies that lead trips like REI charge a couple hundred to lead a trip there and is making financial gain on the limited spots.

Correspondence ID: 539 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 18:59:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: With this year's lottery system, there is no provision for tying a permit in with park lodging. That is, people

must wait until 'early April' to know if they will even receive a permit, and for what day that might be. They must then arrange for lodging, by which time it might be impossible to find lodging in the park for the date of their permit.

This is even more of a problem for the proposed daily lottery of unused or cancelled permits. For instance, I live 360 miles from the park. In such a case, am I expected to receive a permit, try to obtain lodging, drive to the park and be ready to do my hike, all within two days? Many, if not most, people cannot arrange something like that at a moment's notice.

The new system does not allow transference of a permit. I have to apply for a permit four months before my planned hike. At this time, I'm not even sure who will be going with me. Even if I did, if my hiking partner should cancel on me, does this mean I am not allowed to select a new partner, since they won't be able to use one of my permits? That is completely unreasonable.

Topic Question 3: If overcrowding is your primary concern, please consider adding a third cable. This would greatly alleviate the crowding conditions.

Topic Question 5: As for the supposed degrading conditions of the trail caused by overuse, I have done this hike three times: 2000, 2010 and 2011. I have not noticed much difference in the condition of the trails over that time period. On the contrary, I'm always amazed at how pristine the park always looks. The NPS does a great job of repairing and maintaining the trails, and I think most hikers are respectful of the park. I have even taken the time to pick up trash on my way down the mountain.

Comments: While I commend your efforts to control the overcrowding situation on the cables, and to try to prevent the scalping of permits which took place last year, I see serious flaws in the current lottery system, as implemented for 2012 (listed above, under Question 2).

My opinion is that the requirements for a permit may actually increase the danger on this hike. If someone knows they only have one day to make the summit, they might be inclined to take a chance and make the ascent under less than favorable conditions, knowing they likely won't have another opportunity this season. This becomes particularly true the more difficult you make it for someone to obtain a permit. I have even wondered if that might have been a factor in the July 31st death last year.

Whatever decision you make, I hope you will allow as many people as possible to continue enjoying the hike. I would hate to see it restricted to 140 people per day.

In closing, there will always be people who make bad decisions, and who get in trouble for it. Please don't make it impossible for the people who make intelligent decisions to enjoy this great hike.

Correspondence ID: 540 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 19:27:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: I've ascended the cables. Except for a young girl freezing partway up and scalpers exploiting Half Dome hikers, I thought last year's permit system was workable. Some hikers didn't obtain passes, but they were able to get them at the bottom of sub dome, courtesy of hikers who had extra, unused ones. I appreciate that the NPS is trying to eliminate the scalping. I don't like the idea of removing the cables or removing restrictions or adding a third cable.

We'll see how well the lottery system works this year.

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 541 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 19:59:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I was a park service intern in Little Yosemite Valley for the summer of 2007 and returned to volunteer for a couple days at a time in the summers of 2008 and 2010. The Little Yosemite Valley and Half Dome are assets to the park and their preservation and continued accessibility for future generations are of great importance. I agree with the preferred Alternative C which allows for 300 permits per day, 7 days a week as I believe that it will promote the wilderness experience and ensure a safe number of people on the cables at any given time.

In 2010, I saw the permits in use on the weekend and it definitely helped to regulate the traffic on the cables. When we asked visitors about their experience on Half Dome, most were satisfied with the brevity of the waiting time for the cables and ascent and descent time of the cables. In the future, the use of permits on Half Dome will likely encourage visitor preparation in support of preventative search and rescue.

The Forest Service Adventure Pass is an example of another successful permit system. Just to mention one benefit, as visitors to the national forests, we have seen a significant reduction in the amount of trash. Permits cost \$5 per day which makes the forests accessible to all socioeconomic groups.

Topic Question 3: Upon reading the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan I came up with a couple of suggestions for

consideration. 1. Distribution of permits between day hikers and overnight backpackers: It was not clear if the ratio of 100 permits to backpackers and 200 permits to day hikers would be maintained similar to the permit system utilized in 2011. This distribution is conducive to having the day hikers and overnight backpackers arrive at the Half Dome cables at different times. Thus the distribution of permits will assist in maintaining a lower number of people on the cables at any given time. 2. Minimum age of 18 for primary permit holder: Perhaps a minimum age of 18 for the primary permit holder could be established. This will likely contribute to the overall preparation of the group, and better decision making on behalf of the group (especially in the event of inclement weather, or the health of individuals in the group) in support of preventative search and rescue. Age could be verified during the application process and a liability waiver could be signed (or clicked for an online reservation).

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 542 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Park Service, We see recreational days constantly increasing in the wilderness area. Man is a blight on the roots of the great oak tree that once was America and he will exploit every resource to its fullest. The interpretation of conservation changes with each generation and the boundaries that once seemed extreme are always crossed later in the name of progress. The parks need to implement a proprietary limited access system based on restricting the users that have the most negative impact on the park. This can be done by charging users of the park for their direct cost impact. (Examples)Camp site improvements and clean up, let the guest fee bare that directly. Use of the bike paths, collect path repair fees with rental charges or with the entrance fees upon arrival. The guided climbing guests pay to have a steward (guide) to assist with their visitation, why not have a similar program for all guests on the valley floor and the walls. This is a limited resource and the flood of human traffic is not. We face the destruction of our parks unless the stewards help the uneducated preserve the resource. Socially responsible citizens pay for this with tax dollars, they should have the first right of use over those who do not share in bearing the financial burden. This is not discrimination this is true conservation. Let those who respect and support the resource have primary use of the park when user days need to be limited. Thanks. [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 543 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 21:00:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I totally agree with limiting the number of people accessing the cables every day. This makes good sense in that it helps to protect the trail and nearby environment while allowing access to this most spectacular and popular hike. I would like to see the NPS sticking with 400 permits per day that was in place last year so that it would allow a reasonable number of people to access the trail daily. If NPS thinks 300 would be more beneficial in the long run, then I could agree with that but would disagree with fewer than 300 permits being issued daily. There must be a balance for all.

Topic Question 3: I would like to suggest from a safety point of view of the installation of a third set of cables. This seems very reasonable solution to allow for a safer one way flow up and down the dome. I understand that this was not a stated proposal but one must consider it would be very helpful in easing congestion and allowing for quicker access down in the case of a storm.

Topic Question 6: I travel to the park twice yearly for hiking and like to hike Half Dome yearly. I will be very disappointed if a permit is not "won" this year. I had no trouble last year because I applied at the appropriate time and got two permits. I am afraid that this year, with the lottery, that may not be possible. I would like to suggest that you return to a non-lottery system, first come-first serve permit system that you used last year.

Comments: Please keep the Half Dome hike open for the public to enjoy with safety in mind. I think the limited permits per day is a great idea, just keep it reasonable.

Correspondence ID: 544 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 21:22:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: David Brower has said that Yosemite's goal should be to both minimize the impact of the people on the park, but also maximize the impact of the park on the people. The ability to access one of the most beautiful places in the world, to hike and roam freely through the park likely creates vastly more supporters of the national parks than the output of every park conservation group combined. It is the ability to reach out and experience the park that maximizes impact of it on the people. While many visitors never get more than a few feet from their car, many of the die-hard supporters and repeat visitors of the National Parks (including this one) gained their appreciation for the park system on a hiking trail in Yosemite.

This comment expresses grave concern that the language about solitude in the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Half Dome Trail may destroy that ability for the many visitors to the Yosemite Wilderness. Nearly everyone who day hikes out of the valley enters the Yosemite Wilderness at some point. The ability to do so without a permit, at any time and with minimal regulation is of incalculable benefit in letting people gain a broader appreciation of the park. But while the EA focuses on the Half Dome Trail, the interpretation of the Wilderness Act that it espouses is logically not limited to Half Dome - it would apply through every Wilderness, on every trail, and taken to its logical conclusion would be detrimental to the overall interests of the National Park System.

The interpretation of the Wilderness Act's requirements for solitude propounded in the Draft EA is flawed technically, is arbitrary, and at the very least is not mandated by the words of the act itself. The most glaring technical flaw is that the comparison trails selected to compare to the Half Dome Trail are completely inappropriate. The EA claims that the highest

"published" trail encounter rate is 18 on a National Forest trail in Washington. The only other comparisons are in Tuolumne Meadows area of the park. The logical conclusion to draw from this is in fact that the only literature at all on group encounter rates outside of Half Dome appears to be two studies, one on National Forests in Washington, and one on Tuolumne Meadows, a portion of the park which receives far, far fewer visitors than Yosemite Valley.

These can't be taken seriously as appropriate comparison trails, or actually be the "hard look" required by NEPA. Anybody who has ever spent time in Yosemite knows that many of the other trails that pass through the Yosemite Wilderness, including the Four Mile Trail, Yosemite Falls Trail, and even the Mist Trail which is directly below the trail analyzed in this EA, and on which nearly every Half Dome visitor also travels on, are frequently far busier than the Half Dome Trail. Stating for instance, that an alternative of 500 people or more was not considered because group encounters would be triple the Cathedral Lakes Trail, a "heavily used trail", is laughable. Anybody who has hiked on any of the above Wilderness trails in the summer has experienced group encounter rates far above triple that of the Cathedral Lakes trail. Calling any trail in the high country "heavily used" in comparison to the valley trails simply fails to pass the smell test. At best the comparisons are extremely misleading. Even outside of Yosemite, there are many trails in designated wilderness, like the Ridge Trail up Old Rag Mountain in Shenandoah, which get just as busy as Half Dome. Just because the conclusion is inconvenient for the preferred alternative does not mean this reality can be ignored.

The failure to develop literature cannot be an excuse to avoid taking a hard look at the reality of wilderness trail use. If the National Park Service really believes that the levels of use on the Half Dome Trail before permits were clear violations of the Wilderness Act, then it is conceding massive and unabated violations throughout Yosemite and many other national parks. The EA should directly answer what level of crowding it finds to be a violation of the Wilderness Act. Is it 16 group encounters per hour? 24? 33? 40? In answering this comment, please do not reach for the "This is outside the scope of the EA" rubber stamp, or "We don't know what the use numbers are on these other trails" dodge - appropriately placing Half Dome visitor use in the context of wilderness trail use generally and Yosemite Wilderness trail use specifically is absolutely in the scope of the EA, and there is plenty of evidence to suggest that these other trails have as much or more use than the Half Dome trail above Nevada Falls.

While the EA misleadingly marshals facts in support of less people on the Half Dome Trail, the requirement for solitude that the EA seems to take so seriously is not even legally required by the Wilderness Act. The Wilderness Act requires only that an area have either opportunities for solitude OR opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The permit system for Half Dome has not meaningfully given opportunities for real solitude, but it has certainly confined recreation. But more importantly, the park appears to be cherry-picking one particular part of the Wilderness, claiming that it in particular doesn't provide opportunities for solitude, and trying to change it, without considering that the Wilderness as a whole does in fact provide substantial opportunities for solitude. It is entirely speculative to say that even the no-permit system was in violation of the Wilderness Act - certainly the dramatic reduction in use contemplated by this EA is not required by it.

As stated earlier, if this level of solitude is actually required by the Wilderness Act, it would absolutely destroy the ability of many visitors to enjoy Yosemite beyond their car. For day-trippers and casual hikers just looking to take a short hike, requirements for permits to hike on any Yosemite Valley trail would basically leave them unable or unwilling to enjoy a more productive kind of recreation. It would in fact turn the Yosemite Wilderness into the most confined, restrictive Wilderness in the country. This cannot have been the intention of the Wilderness Act, which has language that seeks to encourage, not prevent, people getting out of their cars and enjoying these areas in a primitive way. When the act is being used to state that not having free-following conditions on the cables 24 hours a day is a major negative impact on wilderness character, the act is being strained well beyond the intent of Congress.

Additionally, if this degree of solitude is so important, then the adoption of this proposal has a potentially severe and ongoing impact that has not been addressed by the EA. If the demand for the Half Dome Trail on weekends is in the neighborhood of 1,000 people per day, with only 300 permits available, it stands to reason that a substantial portion of these other 700 people may choose and are choosing other nearby trails instead, all of which already have substantial use. This impact is wholly unaddressed, and the preferred alternative as well as the interim emergency permit plan may be compounding already overcrowded conditions on these other wilderness trails. Before adopting a final EA, NEPA requires that this impact be addressed. In particular any analysis of this impact should address the compliance of these other trails with the apparent strict requirement for solitude contained in the Wilderness Act, especially with the additional traffic of those turned away from Half Dome.

A second major problem with the EA is the internally inconsistent "Alternatives Considered but Dismissed" section. The EA makes safety one of the overriding objectives of the plan, which is fine as far as it goes, although the relation between safety and crowding is far from obvious. The real problem of course is that most of the accidents on the cables, and 4 of the 5 fatalities, have occurred during what the EA euphemistically calls "Wet Rock" conditions. Other recent incidents (even with the 400 person per day permit system in place) are similarly caused essentially entirely by "Wet Rock." Despite the fact that the majority of the safety problems have occurred due to climbers climbing in unsafe conditions beyond their ability, the park does not want to post a ranger during these circumstances because it wants to give climbers the freedom to make their own choices, even choices that may result in death or serious injury. All of this is fine as far as it goes.

The problem is that the EA then proceeds to dismiss any alternative based on controlling the times of day that permits will be required on the ground that it will not increase safety, based on the fact that the park has had (although without providing evidence) search and rescue incidents due to people hiking at night. Despite the fact that this section directly follows the section about posting a ranger during wet rock, here, gone is the libertarian attitude about letting hikers and climbers face the dangers of the elements on their own terms - hiking at night is just too unsafe and expensive for the park, while climbing on wet rock on Half Dome (which has caused 4 fatalities, numerous injuries, and other close calls) is not. This inconsistency is glaring enough.

But more importantly, this part of the analysis engages in impermissible "cherry-picking" of one element of what would clearly be a larger plan. Of course any particular element of any plan can be dismissed on the ground that it doesn't increase safety - allowing anybody to hike at all to Half Dome "does not increase safety." The question is whether an alternative that includes controlling the times of day people may visit Half Dome meaningfully helps to achieve the goals that the EA sets out to achieve.

A plan that only requires permits during certain hours of the day has much to recommend it - it would preserve opportunities for people to engage in a less confined sort of recreation, and would provide opportunities for solitude by distributing the crush of Half Dome visitors from a few peak hours to broader points throughout the day, both goals encouraged by the Wilderness Act. Letting people climb Half Dome permit free from 6 PM at night to 8 AM in the morning, at their own risk, would meaningfully advance the goals of the plan as a whole. Off-hours climbing probably is occurring and will continue to occur anyway (the famed full moon climbs of Half Dome technically require an overnight permit after all), but there is no need to turn more people into scofflaws. The NPS could conclude that any such plan is unworkable, but that is something that should be carefully studied, not considered and dismissed outright.

Finally, the EA fails to address the safety concern of the permit system potentially encouraging people to make poor decisions regarding whether to climb the cables in wet rock. Recently, according to a story in the SF Chronicle, reprinted and available at://mountainrescueblog.wordpress.com/2011/10/13/half-dome-on-the-radar-again/ , with the interim permit system in place, numerous people climbed Half Dome in clearly unsafe and inappropriate conditions, despite warnings. Perhaps part of the reason why people are choosing to climb in these so manifestly unsafe conditions is the fact that getting a permit is such a hassle that they think they may never have an opportunity to climb again if they turn around. There is clearly a human factors problem here - when the system is set up so as to make it largely impossible for people to climb again during their vacation if they are turned around due to weather or other reasons, the unintended consequence is that people may start making irresponsible decisions in order to compensate. Particularly as nearly all of the safety problems at Half Dome have had a tenuous connection to crowding, but a very real connection to unsafe weather conditions, the permit system may in fact be making Half Dome less safe rather than more. At the 300 person per day number in the preferred alternative, the unintended consequence may be far more episodes of poor judgment in a desire to get to the summit.

If a permit system is decided upon, a potential revision to it would be to have 50 or so walk-in permits per day reserved for people who picked up a Half Dome permit in the week prior to the intended climb date. This fact could be made well-known with a sign at the base of the cables, next to the sign that already warns people not to climb if weather is approaching. This would at least mitigate some of the poor decision making that may be caused in part by the permit system.

Ultimately, this is a seriously flawed EA. Maximizing the impact of the park on the people is important. Overcrowding is not desirable, but neither is placing a massive lock and key on the Yosemite Wilderness for everyone who didn't reserve months in advance. Telling many of these potential life long supporters of Yosemite and the parks that "sorry, you can't climb Half Dome" or "sorry, you can't hike on any valley trail" without waiting in a long line, playing a crapshoot lottery, or reserving months in advance will be seriously detrimental to the NPS as a whole, and contrary to the intent of the Wilderness Act. The park does not have to go down this path.

Please withhold personally identifying information to the extent practicable.

Correspondence ID:	545	Project:	29443	Document:	44771
Received:	Mar,15,2012 21:46:25				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Comments: I strongly feel that removal of the cables on Half Dome should not even be considered.				

Correspondence ID:	546	Project:	29443	Document:	44771
Received:	Mar,15,2012 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Topic Question 1: I feel that the current Half Dome Stewardship Plan discriminates against the public in regards to the public who choose to hire a guide. Many people are either physically, or mentally unable to safely ascend Half Dome on their own are among those who might hire a guide. Other people enjoy learning about the mountain environments, and mountaineering skills by hiring a guide as well. I feel all people are who choose to ascend Half Dome with, or without a guide should be considered equal citizens.				

Topic Question 3: Re-think guiding not so much as "Commercial", but open your minds the the "Public Service" that a professional guide offers

Topic Question 6: I use the park with my family as a nature enthusiast, as a hiker, backcountry skier, & climber. I also work in the park as a professional climbing guide for Yosemite Mountaineering School. My concern is not to protect "my" guided ascents of Half Dome, there are many other assignments that are available. My concern is to protect the rights of the public from discrimination. Most of the people that I have guided to the summit of Half Dome have had personal needs, handicaps, health concerns, or desires which brought them to the act of hiring a guide. It was for many of these folks a life dream that was unobtainable on their own. Others felt that hiring a guide was just a safer way to ascend as local, professional guides bring local judgement, skill, safety, experience & knowledge. Guides need not be viewed as strictly "commercial", we are "public service".

Comments: The Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan EA and the Determination Of Extent Necessary discriminate against the segment of the public who needs or prefers the services of a guide. This discrimination occurs because of the terminology used

and the assumptions made, by limiting their opportunities for access. The EA also lumps the services of guides into a category of "Commercial Use," which it limits significantly without consideration of the numerous advantages that guides provide or the fact that they are providing access to a segment of the public that otherwise would not have access.

Using "Commercial Use" terminology in place of using "Guided Public" is inherently discriminatory. The only permitted "Commercial Use" on the Half Dome trail for many years has been in the form of outfitters and guides. The only reason this group uses this trail is to accommodate the interests of their clientele, the segment of the public who needs or prefers the services of a guide.

The EA frequently refers to "commercial use" as a separate component of the use. While this is technically true, it hides the fact that it is referring to a segment of the public, which either prefers a guide, or needs a guide in order to visit this unique location. "Guided Public" is a more appropriate way to refer to this user group.

The EA commonly makes a distinction between "commercial use" and "public use." Distinguishing the guided-public purely as "commercial use" is inherently discriminatory, because it unfairly pits them against "the public" in competing for access. This implies that the guided public is a commercial user, competing with the public, and thereby less qualified to have access to Half Dome. The guided-public and the non-guided public should have equal access to Half Dome, without discrimination. The non-guided public should not have preference over the guided public.

An example sentence from Alt #4, where no guided-public access is allowed, which displays this discrimination follows: "Displacement of non-commercial visitors by commercial visitors would therefore be unnecessary under this alternative." Why should non-commercial visitors have precedence over the guided-public? They should not. Access should be available equally.

The EA refers to "non-commercial hikers" and "non-commercial public" as groups without defining them. The use of these terms lends credibility to the need to use the terms: guided public and non-guided public, in order to eliminate confusion and eliminate this discrimination.

Appendix C, Determination Of Extent Necessary on Half Dome Trail, discriminates against the guided public. An example of this discrimination from Appendix C, Part 7: "In order to maximize opportunities of noncommercial hikers, commercial trips will be limited to two per day. This basically says; maximize opportunities for the non-guided public by limiting opportunities for the guided public.

Another example of this discrimination is in the Recreational Purpose paragraph. "In the case of Half Dome, commercial services are not necessary to realize the recreational purpose as non-commercial visitors consistently fill the area to capacity." This sentence implies that access to Half Dome for the guided-public is not necessary because the capacity is filled by the non-guided public. Access to the Half Dome trail for Recreational Purpose should be equally available to all public, guided and non-guided alike.

Access should be considered in determining extent necessary for commercial use. Guides and Guide Services, as a form of "Commercial Use," exist purely because of the segment of the public who needs or wants their assistance to gain access. Without the guided public, there would be no commercial use in this form. Removing or limiting access for guides is the same as removing or limiting access for the guided-public, thereby discriminating against this segment of the public.

Hiking and climbing guides and guide services are necessary to provide access to Half Dome, because without their services a segment of the public would not be able to reasonably or safely attempt this hike.

Similarly, outfitters and guides are necessary to provide access for persons with limitations or disabilities. For example, Mark Wellman used the services of pack mules to gain access to Half Dome and El Capitan during his historic paraplegic ascents.

There are many forms of commercial use. In determining extent necessary for commercial use, it is appropriate to make a distinction between commercial use that is necessary to provide access and commercial use that does not provide access.

"Commercial Use" in the form of guides and guide services is necessary for realizing all of the Wilderness purposes, including the purpose of recreation. Because the service of guides is necessary to provide access for a segment of the public, commercial use in the form of guides and guide services is necessary for realizing all of the Wilderness purposes. Otherwise, the guided public will not have equal opportunity.

Requiring the guided-public to acquire permits in the same system with the non-guided public discriminates against the guided-public. It is standard in the guiding industry, and common knowledge, that acquiring permits for the activities in question is part of the service provided by guides. For this reason, the guided public will not know that they need to participate in the permit system lotteries. They rightfully will assume that the guide service would provide the permits, so they will likely miss the lotteries. Thus, the guided public will be at a disadvantage and potentially blocked from access.

NPS should make permits available to guide services for realizing recreational purpose, and all other Wilderness purposes, so that the guided public and the non-guided public have equal opportunity. Providing a reasonable number of permits for the guided public by making permits available to commercial operators, in the form of guides and guide services, is the only way to

avoid discriminating against this user group.

The guided public is an important group to include. The guided public as a group is typically made up of new users; people who are interested in safety, companionship, and learning; and people who are less confident in their experience, skills, or ability. This is an important group to include, because: ? New users need leadership, education, mentoring, interpretation, and supervision most. ? Without the option to use guides, this group will potentially go without guides, which increases risk and resource damage potential, and reduces interpretation and stewardship opportunities. ? Half Dome as an objective is uniquely powerful for providing Wilderness and Yosemite stewardship when this group is accompanied by appropriately trained guides. ? This is an important feeder group for Wilderness stewardship.

The guided public is not likely to comment on this EA. Because this group is partially made up of new users, they are not likely to know that they need to comment here, or else they will be at a disadvantage. They may not have decided yet that they want to hike Half Dome, so this EA will not be on their radar, until it is too late.

Another component of this group, the less confident, may not comment here for that reason alone, they are timid. They also may be embarrassed to be identified in that group. Or, they may not even consider a guide until they think about actually doing something as big and challenging as Half Dome. These people, while guided public users, are not likely to comment on the disadvantages that the current alternatives will yield.

For these reasons, and the discrimination listed above, the comments gathered during previous public scoping will not accurately reflect the need to ensure equitable access for the guided public.

Proposed Alternatives B, C, D, and E all discriminate against the "Guided Public" by limiting their access. Because all of the alternatives considered discriminate against a segment of the public, the guided public, by limiting their access more than that of the non-guided public, this Environmental Assessment will result in significant impact on this user group.

Only Alternative B provides some access for the guided public, by providing guide services access to a small number of permits. This amount should be larger.

Using ratios of pre-2010 use is an appropriate method of determining the amount of permits available to the guided public in the form of commercial use permits for guides and guide services.

Alternative C (Preferred) ? 2 permits for guides if clients get own permits is not a reasonable or necessary limit. Under Alternative C, what happens when more than two groups with permits want to use guides? Are they faced with the choice of either not going, or trying it without the guide? The first choice is not likely, so they will be forced to the ladder, which could lead to trouble and a possible Search and Rescue. There should be no limit here, because the number of guides will be determined by the demand of the guided public. Guides have no reason to go if there are not clients.

Advantages of guided public trips ? Safety, both for their direct clients and others around ? Commercial services employ professional guides with experience, training, and certifications, which greatly reduce risk and improve safety. ? Additional first aid and search and rescue resources on site. ? Stewardship ? Guides are an opportunity for the Land Manager to provide information to the guided public, the segment of the public that potentially needs it the most. ? Resource Protection ? Guides know the rules and current issues, and ensure compliance. Clients that hire guides rely on the guides to know and follow the rules. ? Education ? Guides and guide services want to add value to their trips. Education is a necessary and significant part of their service. ? Modeling good behavior ? Guides, and other people with prominence and authority, modeling good behavior is very persuasive in establishing good behavior in new users.

Eliminating or restricting access for guides will increase damage, risk and incidents of Search and Rescue. If guides are not available to people who want or need a guide, they will either miss out or try it without a guide. This could easily lead to increased incidence of the following problems: ? Resource damage due to not knowing the best practices or park rules and regulations ? Search and rescues due to inexperience, lack of ability, and un-preparedness

Guides are an historic and necessary use in Yosemite Wilderness Yosemite has a long history of guide as a necessary and respected service. Both John Muir and Hutchins worked as paid guides. Yosemite Conservancy, NPS and many other groups lead "guided" trips.

Backpacking trips that occur in the area of Half Dome should include permits for Half Dome. On a backpacking trip in the area surrounding half Dome it is a reasonable expectation that one will want to hike to the top of Half Dome. The freedom to hike the surrounding summits is a normal part of a Wilderness backpacking experience. Making certain areas off-limits to people with permits for a given area will change the Wilderness experience for those people, and thus the Wilderness Character.

Correspondence ID: 547 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,15,2012 22:47:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments: The following comments are submitted on behalf of the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club. The Tehipite Chapter encompasses all of Yosemite National Park. Thank you for this opportunity to make suggestions. We trust that you will find our comments to be of use in your efforts to protect the visitor experience and the natural resources of Yosemite National Park.

These are comments on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment, dated January 2012.

We have discussed the issues with NPS staff a number of times over the past two years, and find that their analysis of the situation and proposed ways of dealing with it are rational. Except for an occasional detail, we don't hear them saying anything that we disagree with.

Our inclination is to accept that the NPS has done a good job of addressing the problems, and their recommendations seem reasonable.

The climb and descent are inherently dangerous now, while that was not the case in the past. The rock has become polished from the passage of countless feet. The climb will become still more dangerous as the rock becomes further polished.

Because of this, it may be that the cables will need to be removed at some point in the future. However, because society does not seem to be ready for it now, we feel that it would be unwise for the NPS to remove the cables at this time.

We do not see any point in trying to second-guess the NPS as to what number of people is best. Even though each of the Alternatives has a rationale for it, no matter what number is picked, the number will inevitably be arbitrary to some extent. Probably the most important thing is to have the flexibility to adjust the number up or down in the future, as experience dictates the need to make adjustments. We see nothing wrong with the Preferred Alternative, provided that the NPS will have the ability to adjust the number of hikers up or down as experience will indicate is appropriate.

We believe that it is a mistake to justify controls on the grounds that it is a designated Wilderness. Crowding and safety concerns, and resource issues, exist regardless of whether it is a Wilderness or not. Even in the absence of a Wilderness designation, the Park Service is mandated to protect the visitor experience as well as to protect natural resources.

The ideal solution for the cable problem might be to have a ranger stationed at the sub-dome regulating access to the cables so they do not become crowded. The ranger could also point out to people that the climb is dangerous, especially when it is wet, leaving it up to the individual whether to continue on or not. Regulating access in this way would eliminate the need for setting a daily quota for the cables---what would matter would be how many people are on the cables at one time, not the cumulative total for the day. A daily quota is meaningless if all of the people show up at the base of the cables at the same time. The NPS has had a ranger stationed at the sub-dome anyway, checking for permits. The ranger's function needs to be expanded to include regulating the flow of traffic.

Such regulation would solve the problem of the cables, but would not address the impacts on the trail below the sub-dome, or crowding on the summit.

Our feeling is that the ideal solution for the problem of the trail in its entirety would be to focus on regulation of access to the cables at the sub-dome. If this were the focus, the perceived need for a daily quota for the trail might become irrelevant. As with so many management problems in the Park, if the public is better informed about conditions on the Half Dome trail, changes in behavior would be likely to greatly reduce the magnitude of the problem.

We concur with the NPS having set the scope of the EA process as being an analysis of the two miles of trail from the junction with the John Muir Trail to the summit of Half Dome. Considering the Half Dome hikers' impact on the John Muir and Mist Trails would have complicated the process needlessly. The problems on the Half Dome trail are severe enough without folding them into broader considerations. The Half Dome problems are best addressed as a separate issue, rather than getting entangled with any perceived problems on the John Muir and Mist Trails. We concur with the NPS' intent to consider the broader questions within the context of the upcoming Wilderness Management Plan process and the Merced River Plan process.

Aside from the fact that they don't agree with us on every little detail, we think the NPS has done a good analysis and has come up with a good proposal.

Thank you for seeking public comments on this planning project. We trust that you will find our comments to be useful.

Correspondence ID: 548 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar, 15, 2012 22:56:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

Topic Question 6: I am now 79 and my use of Yosemite Park is limited compared to my backpacking days. While I agree that Half Dome has become over crowded, I strongly object to cutting off the means whereby only strong, young and experienced climbers and hikers can enjoy the vista from the top. The Grand Canyon in Arizona is another iconic hiking and backpacking location and the Colorado River is a wonder to float down. I have hiked many miles in that park including rim to rim and return backpacking. The park service limits the number of such hikers per day, as well as limiting the rafting trips on the river. Sometimes one has to make reservations months in advance. Still the parks trails and river remain open to ordinary hikers. I will support the park service plan in Yosemite to limit hikers to the top of Half Dome to 300 per day. Your proposal smacks of elitism of the worst kind. [REDACTED]

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 549 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 23:08:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: NPS: I have to clarify my earlier remarks re plans to change access to Half dome in Yosemite Park. I support the NPS plan to limit hikers to 300 per day. My reference to the "your plan being elitist" was to the Park Watch organization's preferred proposal to remove the cables and allow access only to strong, fit and experienced hikers. Preservation of the wilderness is a desirable and necessary endeavor. But to preserve it perfectly, all parks would have to be closed to everyone, all the time. That, of course, would defeat the whole purpose of having parks set aside for our enjoyment. So keep the top of Half Dome accessible, but limit the daily trips to 300. [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 550 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,15,2012 23:58:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Count me in favor of the third cable proposal.

Another way to control crowding on the cables and evacuation times would be to have a ranger enforce a limit on the number of people who could be above the bottom of the cables at any given time. If the limit were reached, hikers would be required to queue at the bottom of the cables. This would work best in conjunction with a daily quota, but would allow a larger daily quota while still controlling the maximum crowding. For example, there could be a daily limit of 500 with a maximum of 120 allowed on or above the cables at any one time.

Topic Question 4: The proposal, though started on the basis of safety on the cables, is currently aiming to limit use based on excessive encounter on the approach trail, citing the Wilderness Act requirement for "substantial opportunities for solitude." It is my opinion that the proposal is misreading this as a requirement to provide a degree of solitude in all places and at all times in the Wilderness. Rather, I believe that a correct reading would allow for the fact that visitors in search of solitude have the opportunity of choosing lesser used areas than one of the prime attractions and/or choosing to come at non-peak times of the day.

Topic Question 5: The whole "visitor informed limit" is bogus--it's based on visitors being shown simulated photos of 10, 30, 70, 100, and 170 people. This methodology is incapable of indicating whether the limit should be 50, 70, or 85 on the cables at once.

The mass descent scenarios are also suspect. They are based upon a descent-time function based on observations in normal conditions, with a bidirectional flow on the cables. In an actual mass-descent scenario, the flow of people on the cables would be nearly unidirectional, and presumably less affected by crowding.

Topic Question 6: Any sort of permit process significantly decreases the chance that I will use an area. The hassles involved discourage me from coming, and the planning time-frames required seldom match my trip-planning time horizons.

Comments: A > B > C > D > E

Correspondence ID: 551 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Correspondence ID: 552 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,26,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: I climbed Half Dome in 1971 and even then I shared the hike with what I would call a lot of people. The experience of climbing Half Dome is one of the most incredible experiences I have had in Yosemite. But part of that experience is to have access without crowds.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff. I have hiked to Keet Seel in Navajo National Park - there they have a limit of 20 people per day. 300 at Half Dome should be the maximum ever allowed.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Correspondence ID: 553 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Please Respond to #2100-CO-DJ-EO March 14, 2012

Don L. Neubacher Superintendent National Park Service P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Don,

DNC Parks and Resorts at Yosemite ("DNC") wholeheartedly endorses the NPS efforts to improve the visitor experience and visitor safety through its evaluation and study of the Half Dome Trail as reflected in the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment ("EA"). We have read and studied this EA and attended the public open house that featured this plan to learn more about it and to discuss issues with NPS staff. We offer the following comments for your consideration prior to reaching a final decision.

We believe that Alternative B, with adjustments to the commercial services information, should be the preferred alternative. Compared to Alternative C, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative B will daily provide 100 more park visitors the opportunity to summit Half Dome, one of the most unique and iconic outdoor recreational activities in the National Park system. Our opinion is that the benefit from 100 more people per day enjoying this experience far outweighs the disadvantages as compared to Alternative C. Our opinion is based on the following comparisons as presented in the EA:

-At average rates in Table 2-1, Alternative B results in only 8 more encounters per hour in the trail, 9 more PAOT (Persons at One Time) on Cables and 7 more PAOT on the summit than Alternative C. -At maximum rates, the PAOT on Cables is a total of 51 (15 more than Alternative C) and PAOT on Summit is 52 (11 more than Alternative C). -For Alternative B, PAOT on Cables is far below the visitor preference of no more than 10 to 30 and a maximum acceptable condition of 70, identified as the preference of more than 80% of the respondents to the study quoted in the EA. -As we understand the situation, the issue of safety was the single most motivating issue in conducting this EA and the evacuation time for both Alternatives B and C is 47 minutes. -Table 2-3 (Summary of Effects by Alternative) indicates that Alternatives B and C have identical impacts in all areas except for the section on Commercial Guides, where Alternative B has an allocation of five (F) noncompetitive permits per day and Alternative C has none.

The reasoning for selecting the lower number of hikers in Alternative C references other wilderness trails, including the Snow Lake trail, which was concluded to be the heaviest traveled trail in a wilderness area. This trail, which does not have a permit system and which allows dogs, has an encounter rate of 18 groups per hour. The conclusion that the acceptable limit for the Half Dome trail should be less than Snow Lake trail does not seem appropriate when only considering a number, rather than considering whether the level of use on the Snow Lake trail presents any issues relating to wilderness experience or resource protection. Certainly the inclusion of dogs on the Snow Lake trail changes the nature of the trail experience as compared to Yosemite. The unregulated encounter rate that existed on the Half Dome trail (116 per hour) certainly should be reduced, but we believe the extent of the reduction is not supported by the data presented in the EA.

The exhilaration, sense of accomplishment, appreciation of outdoor and natural environments and personal satisfaction that comes from completing the Half Dome ascent is significant. Depriving 100 people per day of this opportunity for a wilderness experience and personal fulfillment seems a disservice to Yosemite's visitors as compared to the tradeoff of encountering 8 fewer groups per hour on the trail (on average), reducing the maximum people on the summit from 52 to 41 and reducing the average on the summit from 26 to 19.

For these reasons, which were clearly presented and analyzed in the EA, it seems that the tangible benefit to 100 more visitors a

day outweighs the perceived advantage of reduced encounter rates, particularly since the additional people have no impact to Wilderness Character and the numbers of people allowed under Alternative B are well below the visitor preferences cited in the EA. In fact, it may be that additional people beyond the 400 identified in Alternative B also create no additional disadvantages to evacuation times, Wilderness Character or that the additional people would create an encounter rate outside the use limits favored by 80 percent of those surveyed, but there are no data points in the EA to determine if that is the case.

Based on our reading of the EA and understanding of the situation, we also believe that the Commercial Use Alternatives identified in Table 2-2 warrant further consideration. Exhibit B indicates that there were a total of 303 hikers on commercial trips in 2008 and 470 in 2010. While we do not have the total number of hikers, we believe we can safely assume that this use is a very small percentage of total use and is likely to remain so.

Part of the motivation given for limiting commercial services as noted on C-11 is that "In the case of Half Dome, the demand for access far exceeds capacity, so non-commercial visitors are already being denied access in large numbers." We question whether the data supports this conclusion, although it may be true.

Since there is no consideration in the permit process for those who would like a guide or not, we have no basis to understand whether there is any displacement.

We are told that under the current system, the number of permits actually used on a given day is always less than the number distributed. This would suggest that there is no real displacement of those who intended to use the permits, regardless of whether one desired a guide or not. Would it not be equally reasonable to assume that the demand for guided services is already included in the existing quota system and that people are not being denied access because of the "no show" situation that exists each day?

It also seems inappropriate to exclude a person from eligibility for the daily permit on the basis that, if selected, they would want a guide for whatever reason-- education, comfort, overcoming a disability, etc. The test should be whether their guided experience detracted from the wilderness experience enjoyed by others, not whether they displaced someone who concluded that they did not want or need a guide or who may simply not be aware that the service existed.

Part 9 of Exhibit C notes that the commercial use limits will be recalculated when significant changes in use patterns occur, so if the number is initially set higher, it can always be reduced based on subsequent learning. We would also ask that you consider that adjustment of use limits can be evaluated based on the merit of the situation, whether there is a change in use patterns or not.

We found that the Determination of Extent Necessary (Appendix C) section is very difficult to comprehend. On the one hand, concession operations are defined as "commercial services" as a statement of fact, yet the services provided by concession and other guided services fulfill most of the education attributes listed on page C-8. An individual who is totally or relatively inexperienced in wilderness skills would be inclined to hire a guide (commercial service provider) to acquire the skills necessary to enjoy the recreational benefits of wilderness, yet preference is given to those with prior experience by NPS policy by the words on page C-11 that "the service will, to the extent practicable, afford visitors ample opportunity for inspiration, appreciation, and enjoyment through their own personalized experiences without the formality of program or structure."

From our reading, another example that creates confusion is on page C-6: "Research trips using pack stock support, will typically not be considered as a commercial service trip because the primary purpose and effect of the trip is the enhancement of scientific understanding of park resources, not commercial interests." On the other hand, the supplier of the pack stock support may be a commercial provider whose primary interest is to realize a profit from providing the necessary services. It would seem the individual who has a goal of enjoying the recreational purpose of wilderness and who employs a guide to assist in that purpose would be a similar circumstance as the case of the research trip cited above. In both cases, the commercial services provided are incidental to the purpose of the trip.

Page C-6 adds confusion in noting that "a commercial service is one that relates to or is connected with commerce wherein work is performed for another person or entity, if the primary purpose is the experience of wilderness through support provided for a fee or charge and if the primary effect is that the wilderness experience is guided and shaped through the use of support services provided for a fee or charge." It would seem to use that guiding and shaping a wilderness experience is the very intent of trips designed to teach many of the skills listed in the "Education" section on C-8. People who have limited or no experience in the wilderness may need more "shaping" of their experience than those with more experience. It may also be that experienced users of the wilderness are, in fact, not contributing to a wilderness experience through their behavior and that some "shaping" of their experience is also appropriate.

We also find the Leave No Trace exception on page C-9 to be confusing. While it may be that "Leave No Trace training is considered a fundamental prerequisite for all wilderness visitors?" proof or certification of this training is not a requirement for wilderness entry, nor a qualification for obtaining a wilderness permit. All DNC guided trips have the goal of teaching this program to clients and applying Leave No Trace principles to all areas. It is a very unusual trip if we have not eliminated fire rings or taken out trash left by other parties. This training may be especially valuable in the wilderness in that it has immediate applicability and its explicit exclusion is confusing.

The net result of the application of these principles is that people who are less knowledgeable about wilderness or have fewer skills than others will be forever disadvantaged in trying to enter and learn about wilderness in a safe and responsible fashion. Further, the general public can compete for permits without consideration of skill or ability. Those who acquire a permit through

this process should be able to hire a guide if that is what is necessary for them to actually use and enjoy the permit. Denying a guide to those who have competed with all others for the permit unfairly discriminates against those individuals and deprives the park and others on the trail the benefits of a guided experience as enumerated below.

The EA does not adequately identify and consider the many advantages that guide services provide not does it clearly distinguish between guided trips for recreation, scenic, and educational purposes. Most often, all three are included in a guided trip. Some advantages of guided trips are described below:

-Safety, both for their direct clients and others around ? Commercial services employee professional guides who are familiar with Sierra weather patterns and trail safety issues. For example, the level of experience, training, and certification required by DNC, greatly reduces risk and improves visitor safety. -Stewardship ? Guides are an opportunity to provide information to the guided public, the segment of the public that potentially needs it the most. -Education ? Guides and guide services want to add value to their trips. Education is a necessary and significant part of that equation. -Modeling good behavior ? Guides, and other people with prominence and authority, provide positive examples, which can be very persuasive in establishing good behavior in other visitors. -If guides are not available to people who want to need a guide, they will either miss out or try it without a guide. This could easily lead to increased incidence of Search and Rescue efforts and/or resource damage. -Guides are an historic and appropriate asset in Yosemite Wilderness. Yosemite has a long history of guiding as a necessary and respected service. Both John Muir and James Hutchings worked as paid guides and Yosemite Conservancy, NPS and many other groups lead "guided" trips. -Outfitters are necessary to provide access for persons with limitations or disabilities. For example, Mark Wellman used the services of pack mules to gain access to Half Dome and El Capitan during his historic paraplegic ascents.

In summary, DNC asks that NPS reconsider its Preferred Alternative and select the Alternative B day-use limit of 400 people. We also encourage NPS to further study the Commercial Use analysis and decisions presented in the EA. We believe that both Alternative B and C unfairly discriminate against the guided public and unnecessarily limit guided services. Appropriate application of the public's right to hire a guide if they choose provides greater opportunity for access and enjoyment of the Half Dome Trail and the wilderness experience.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on this plan and for considering our comments in the planning process.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 554 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I had the pleasure of climbing Half Dome alone in June 2008 at the age of 67 & again in June 2009 with a friend. I have spoken to others who have negotiated this iconic hike & all agree it was an arduous but wonderful experience.

I recently read in the Los Angeles Times about the new lottery system being put in place this year.

The fact that people, individuals as well as families or groups of friends, can no longer simply decide at a convenient time to travel to Yosemite & make this storied climb is unfortunate. When I climbed in 2009 there was a group of Old German Baptists hiking the trail who were at a church convention in Merced, visiting from Indiana. They had decided at the last moment, since they were in California & may never return, to travel to Yosemite & make the hike. The females were dressed in full length dresses & their hair in neat buns as is their religious custom. To see several of these women & girls dressed as they were pulling themselves up the cables was an inspiring sight to behold. If there had been a lottery in place or obligatory permits they & many more people who do not have the means to plan vacations months or years in advance would have had no chance to have this experience of a life time.

Both times I climbed I was impressed by the pristine nature of the trail despite the fact it was well traveled. Never was there an impediment along the way caused by too many hikers. Granted there were several on the cables but that is simply where the climb backs up a bit. It was no big thing.

Of course the five deaths are unfortunate but they must be given some context. I suspect it is a small death rate based on the amount of people involved & compared with other areas, both rural & urban. I believe the highways driven to access the park have higher mortality rates.

This will for the most part eliminate the common person visiting the park on a trip that did not have the luxury of being planned long in advance, or the family who is not aware of this onerous system. You will make it a trail for the elite & that is unfortunate. The more people who are fortunate enough to visit places like this throughout our country the better. This is an activity, when our nation is fretting over the lack of activity of our youth & the growing numbers of obese children that should be encouraged.

Respectfully,

Correspondence ID: 555 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Sir,

Half Dome, like Couds Rest, are jewels of our Wilderness Peaks.

The Wilderness Act clearly rejects mechanical or artificial, permanent structures in Wilderness. In light of the Wilderness Act what is the loss to removing the Cables?

I support Alternative E. There once was a Fire Fall.

Thanks

Correspondence ID: 556 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Mr. Neubacher, et al,

We at Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides (SYMG) share in Yosemite's vision to create a safe and memorable wilderness experience on Half Dome. Since 1991, SYMG has been a leader in active travel throughout the Sierra. We have guided countless visitors up Half Dome and look forward to continuing our offerings to this iconic and rewarding summit. This short letter outlines why the directors of SYMG feel that it is necessary to provide for a better alternative for obtaining day-use Half Dome permits for commercial outfitters so that we may continue offering the service of guiding park guests up this iconic peak in safe and rewarding way.

There are few mountains throughout the world that compare to Half Dome. Certainly Yosemite's own EA Report clearly demonstrates the number of visitors who are drawn to its summit each year. In our experience, we've found that many park visitors prefer to hire a guide for their Half Dome day for (a) maximizing their chance of success, (b) the increased margin of safety, and (c) learning more about Yosemite's unique cultural and natural history along the way. In fact, the service we offer exactly mirrors the four major goals outlined in the Half Dome Plan.

Under the pretense of anecdotal evidence, we also argue that our guides not only support our own clients on the Half Dome Trail and Cable Route, but also provide advice and assistance to countless other wilderness users during a majority of our guided outings. This is particularly true on the Cable Route portion of the trail.

Thus, there is value for Yosemite's visitors in having professional guides easily able to obtain permits to guide trips up Half Dome Cable Route. Yet it has now become quite difficult for commercial outfitters to participate in the lottery system. As a result, we are finding that we are not effectively able to offer this service to those park visitors who seek it.

The major roadblock for commercial outfitters is that specific names need to be assigned the permits. As a solution, we suggest the following options, with Option (a) being our preferred option.

(a) Setting aside a number of daily permits (12-15 participants for instance separate from the public lottery that commercial outfitters such as SYMG can reserve through the wilderness office when we have bookings. All CUA holders allowed to lead day trips up Half Dome would share in this permit pool. This is similar to how the wilderness permitting system operates in Inyo and Sierra National Forests. (b) Setting aside a number of daily permits (12-15 participants for instance) from the public lottery quota that commercial outfitters such as SYMG can reserve through the wilderness office when we have bookings. All CUA holders allowed to lead day trips up Half Dome would share in this permit pool.

Note on options (a) and (b): If these permits are not reserved by the day of walk-in permit availability, they could be added to the walk-in pool. Thus, CUA holders would not participate in the lottery. Any of our guides possessing the valid CUA would have the ability to pick up the permit and lead the outing. (c) Allowing authorized commercial outfitters such as SYMG to enter the lottery multiple times under the company's name and under one rec.gov account. Any of our guides possessing the current CUA would have the ability to pick-up the permit and lead the outing. This is similar to how the wilderness permit system in Yosemite currently operates.

We at SYMG feel that these are each viable options and should be considered under the new management plan. Thank you for your time and interest. We are happy to discuss any of this with you at your convenience.

Respectfully,

Correspondence ID: 557 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

I am an avid camper and day hiker. I have hiked the trail to the top of Half Dome and thought it was a great hike, with a wonderful view. However, if the cables were not in place I would not have gone to the top. I am not experience in rock climbing and feel only those with experience should be allowed to climb Half Dome.

I feel the cables should be taken out and left out. Any person who wants to get to the top of Half Dome should do so AT THEIR OWN RISK. A sign at the beginning of the trail and at the bottom of the Half Dome should be in place to let people know the risks.

Just like the idiots who went over the barriers, and the falls, did so at their own risks.

I have seen people wear high heels and carry no water or proper clothing 'hike' the trail to the bottom of Vernal Falls. I can see these people trying to go up Half Dome and causing problems for others.

Please consider talking out the cables and leaving them out.

Thank you

Correspondence ID: 558 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent,

Congress designated much of Yosemite a wilderness area, and such a designation carries important responsibilities. The part of the park under discussion because of Half Dome's cables, is in designated wilderness.

Managers must preserve and enhance the wilderness character of designated wilderness. This is the Wilderness Act's prime directive. Anything less is an assault on the wilderness idea. It is an equivocation and is against the law.

Please select Alternative E and remove the cables on Half Dome. Please enhance the wilderness character of this priceless place.

This is the only alternative that complies with NPS policies that state, "Park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms...The national Park Service will not modify the wilderness area to eliminate risks that are normally associated with wilderness." Many current visitors to the top of Half Dome might not be able to reach the summit without the cables. Those visitors prepared for wilderness conditions and technical climbing could still do so. The crowding problems would be alleviated, and the wilderness character of Half Dome and its trail would be restored.

When John Muir roamed the Earth and brought first attention to Yosemite's grandeur, he promoted sweeping new ideas about human beings and our place in nature. People at the time dismissed his idea that glaciers had carved Yosemite's U-shaped valleys. That was unimaginable. And people dismissed his assertion that human beings were a part of nature, not in complete dominion. That, too, was unimaginable.

Muir's books have never gone out of print in his country. His ideas are now part of what makes us Americans. And so I am asking that you recognize that humility guides our management in wilderness. Not convenience or popularity.

Please remove the cables from Half Dome. Please make sure that our great, great, grandchildren will be able to understand truly wild nature in Yosemite.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 559 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Petition
Correspondence: [REDACTED]

Don Neubacher Superintendent, Yosemite National Park ATTN: Half Dome Plan P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, California 95389

Re: Official Comment and Petition on Half Dome Environmental Assessment

Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

I write to you on behalf of Save Half Dome (SHD), a group composed of citizens from across the country united in support of eliminating restrictions on the number of hikers and installing a third cable on the Half Dome Trail.

In total, 576 individuals have signed the SHD online petition (included with this communication) which recommends the adoption of "Alternative A" in the Half Dome Environmental Assessment, effectively eliminating the current permit process by

placing no caps or restrictions on the number of individuals allowed to hike the Half Dome Trail. In addition, the petition specifically outlines an alternative to the permitting process in the form of a third cable on the eastern slope of Half Dome, which would reduce trail congestion, increase safety and provide open-access for members of the public.

In regards to the Half Dome Environmental Assessment document, there are several statements and false premises presented which are factually inaccurate, the most significant being the conclusion (page 45) that a third cable may not be added according to the Approved Wilderness Management Plan approved in 1989 which prohibits the construction of any additional facilities beyond those which existed in 1989. According to this argument, a third cable on the trail would constitute a "facility", a false premise given that the cables (unlike a restroom, drinking fountain or retail shop) are mere extensions of the Half Dome Trail itself, permitted under federal wilderness restrictions. In addition, the U.S. Organic Act Specifically directs you "to conserve the scenery and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide enjoyment of the same..." Eliminating access to the Trail for tens of thousands of individuals across the United States hardly meets this important goal.

For the aforementioned reasons, all alternatives put forward in the Half Dome Environmental Assessment, save for Alternative A, pose significant and direct challenges to the goal of providing for the public enjoyment and discovery of one of America's greatest national treasures and are, in the view of this group, unacceptable.

Save Half Dome is composed of individuals from across the country who have had amazing and life-changing experiences while climbing the Half Dome Trail, an opportunity which we feel should not be denied to any individual who is willing to assume the tremendous risks and rewards associated climbing this famous monolith, regardless of encounter rates. We hope to extend this right and privilege to future generations, who under the current proposal, might be far more unlikely to ever experience this incredible hike. In fact the "opportunity cost" of imposing such a rigorous permitting system on hikers with such serious and draconian consequences, such as penalties of \$6,000 or up to 6 months in jail, has consequences that are unaccounted for in the Environmental Assessment. These opportunity costs are the most harmful as "opportunity" is perhaps the most valuable thing Half Dome has to offer for those who climb it to commemorate life achievements such as surviving cancer, achieving weight loss, physical fitness or coming of age. All of these are real-life scenarios that have been documented/recorded and might never have happened under the current permitting system, particularly for out-of-state visitors.

We strongly urge you to act in the spirit that guides our National Parks System, allowing members of the public to see and discover their natural heritage providing a gateway to environmental conservation, recreation, appreciation, and discovery. In addition, we also appreciate this opportunity to make our voices heard and comment on the Half Dome Environmental Assessment, which will have tremendous consequences for the long-term management of the Half Dome Trail for generations to come.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature line]

[Redacted signature block]

[Redacted signature block]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Correspondence ID: 561 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

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Sincerely

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 579 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
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Correspondence ID: 585 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Correspondence Type: Fax
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 605 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am in agreement with the following statements in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I've learned that it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

It's my understanding that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 610 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 612 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Please protect Half Dome and provide a more natural experience for visitors. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 615 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I do not believe there should even be any cables on Half Dome. If we were all supposed to climb it, it would be accessible. It defaces the Park.

Since I know the cables will not be removed, why not use the existing cable to go up & install a seperate one for the return. What are a few more pegs in the rock & it would make it safer & easier for all to climb.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

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before allocation is a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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My son is a climber and I respect his views on this issue and fully support Alternative C, as does he.,

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Correspondence ID: 641 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

My stepson did Half Dome wearing flip flops! I also think NO ONE should be allowed to climb without adequate footwear.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 672 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 673 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail. I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 674 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 675 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 677 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 678 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence ID: 679 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 680 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 681 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution. I remember the beauty of the climb as a young child. Help keep it open and safe.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 682 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Correspondence ID: 683 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 686 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 688 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
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I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 689 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 690 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 691 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 692 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 693 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment as I am writing in support of Alternative C, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience, and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail. Much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for considerably less hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail, while protecting Yosemite's natural resources.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair system for distribution. Thanks for considering my comments!

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Overcrowding the access only leads to more possible accidents and incidents around Half Dome. Visitors need to be well educated to the local ecosystem and conditions of the area for a safe ascent.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 699 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Thank you for considering my comments.

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Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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I have enjoyed the opportunity to hike Half Dome and found it to be a rewarding experience. However, the great numbers who flock to this destination created a safety concern for me as I climbed and descended. My personal experience leads me to believe that changes need to occur ASAP, and Alternative C seems the most reasonable to me. Additionally, I believe the Yosemite staff and its partners/concessionaires need to start promoting equally stunning and challenging hikes, such as Clouds Rest, which will assist crowd control.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 701 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 703 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: There are to many climbers daily on half dome. The Park should Start charging a daily use permit to climb half dome. There should only be a save amount of climers allowed to climb every day. When that level is reached no more climbers for that day. You could also offer 3 day passes or yearly passess.

This would help raise needed funds in the National Park System.

p.s. you may want to have the permit include all mountains in Yosemite.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 704 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 705 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 706 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 707 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 708 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 709 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

Please, put this Alternative C into law. As we are ravaging our country's bounty right and left. I grew up hiking the mountains where I grew up: the San Gabriel Mountains. Later, I worked in my family's Western Auto Store in the Sierra Mountains. I fished & hiked those mountains, also. I hope that my grand children will have that same experience. With correct stewardship, our great natural resources & parks will be there well into our country's future.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 710 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 711 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: I'm writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I have made that hike twice - once in 1980 and once again in 1990. I didn't realize it has become so popular. In both trips to the

top of Half dome I was accompanied by two people the first time and only one the second time.

A permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

The Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 712 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 713 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 714 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Please keep the "pristine" appearance to Half Dome. Not the constant erosion and noise that damages the environment that is going on now.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the

natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 715 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 716 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 717 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I support Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative. I believe it provides the best balance between a positive hiking experience and protection of the wilderness along the Half Dome Trail.

Congratulations for your thorough scientific research and study to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail. The permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide enough access to the Trail and protect the natural resources. Importantly, it will provide the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

If the cables are still in good repair, then I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed. They have allowed for safe access to one of Yosemite's most exhilarating and popular attractions. The suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users given through advanced reservation and day before allocation appears to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 718 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. Having said that, I BELIEVE THAT TOO MANY PEOPLE USE HALF DOME SELFISHLY, AS SOME KIND OF PERSONAL "GOAL", WHEN IT SHOULD BE TREATED WITH THE RESPECT IT DESERVES AS A NATURAL WONDER AND ALLOWED TO BE WILD. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 719 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 720 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 721 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

It is unfortunate that the popularity of hiking Half Dome has attracted a lack of respect by some individuals for the resource, other hikers and safety. Hopefully regulation of use will restore a balance.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 722 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 723 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

It is important to honor the reason we have such parks, to be allowed to know the serenity and beauty of places like this.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 724 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative because it provides the best balance between a good visitor

experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

Much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the optimum plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and, most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

The Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. The combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment and for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 725 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 726 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I am very glad that you are studying this problem and will come up with a solution. I am 70 years old and a native Californian and I treasure Yosemite. I have had many good experiences there and am always inspired by its beauty.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 727 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

The Yosemite experience can be unique and precious to those able to enjoy it. My wife and I still remember ours with great

fondness.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 728 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

It doesn't help that someone advertises someone climbing the dome on TV for some Credit Card company!

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 729 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments. I feel that it would be of great benefit to only allow sale of permits to people that can provide proof of ID as the person that obtained the permit to discourage the current scalping situation that seems to be happening.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 730 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and

I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

I have never climbed Half Dome, but my friend and another woman went part way up in July of 1998. They had to stop because it began to rain. They could not have attempted the climb without the cables. They were in their 60's.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 731 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment.

I was astounded several years ago when I viewed the climb to Half Dome through binoculars from the back side. It was literally miles of people hand to foot, clinging to the cable system. A serious accident was one misstep away. Not to mention the horror of such a "traffic jam" on that trail.

I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 732 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I support Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 733 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments. Is there no way to stop the destruction of our heritage in before some of us live it?

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 734 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I believe in providing the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 735 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I don't climb mountains but I think any experience that climbers would want, is to not have too many people vying for the same spot. Half Dome in Yosemite seems to draw many climbers. I know that the Park limits those who can enter so that the park does not fill beyond capacity. I hope those wanting to climb Half Dome will want the safe and not so crowded experience.

I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

With such a popular place, sadly it has to have limited capacity to ensure a wonderful experience for all.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 736 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the

natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution. As a frequent visitor to the park, I believe this strikes the right balance of allowing access, while also preserving the park for all.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 737 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 738 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Regarding the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment, I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 739 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: As a neighbor living near Yosemite and a former backcountry ranger at Sequoia-Kings Canyon NP and Grand Canyon NP, I have invested a great deal of time in wilderness stewardship, both on the job and from a more scholarly perspective. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff. It is important that a permit allocation system be designed in such a way that it cannot be "gamed" by computer-savvy operators who then resell the permits (if you look on Craigslist or other online sources, you don't have to look very far to find evidence of "free" permits being sold by those who have cornered a supply, not for private use, but for commercial gain!)

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 740 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

There are too many of us. A permit system, combined with a few alternative suggestions is the way to go. I am long past scrambling up cliffs but in my day I enjoyed a good walk in the mountains. The problem is Half Dome is what folks know about it and are not aware of other places to go. It is less experiencing the wilderness than something to do that everyone else has require a day of pick up and clear up as part of the permit;

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 741 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to hike Half Dome and will always consider it one of my greatest memories. I do recognize the need for a limit to the number of people on the cables and hope this plan is adopted.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 742 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing you today in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the

natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 743 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am

writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I have visited Half Dome twice in the past decade, ascending to the top of the Dome once. I agree, there are too many people attempting to climb up at any one time, and visitors should be limited. Many hikers were ill-prepared for the ascent. Requiring advance reservation would encourage more preparation.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 744 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

Furthermore however, I feel that with so many people vying for the limited number of permits, access should be given to "first time climbers" over those who have done it many times. The same people should not be allowed to "hog" the system and climb over and over when there is such a list of people who have not done it at all.

I also believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 745 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am

writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the

natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 746 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Laurie Handler

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 747 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 748 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-

users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 749 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 750 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 751 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

My grandfather (Alexander Phimister Proctor) was one of the first to stand atop HD in (ca.) 1884 (see, "An Ascent of Half Dome in 1884"). He, my dad, my cousins and I would agree- cutting down traffic would no doubt make for a safer and more enjoyable experience.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 752 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Well me and my family hav enjoyed the park for over 60 years now and we have seen that the park does have to many people coming into the park and the visitor should be limited to a number like lets say 2,000 people a day and a web site where they can log into and request a pass to come in the park and as for the climers I suggest that the park service let only those who have experince in clumbing go up the others should take traing somewhere and if thewy want to climb Half Dome they get a certificit and bring with them or fax it to the park serivce with their request to climb half dome and limmit the number of climbers a day that way it will lessen the danger to those wanting to climb and those who are just visting and not climbing because if something is not done fast then something is going to happen which just may close the park to all visitors all it takes is afew ti ruin it for the rest its something that we as the people of this country have to learn to live with to many people at one time is not good for the park and for the safty of others.Thank you for the oppportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments. Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 753 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: RESTORE HETCH HETCHY !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Correspondence ID: 754 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I've been asked to ask you to select Alternative C, but I am totally ignorant of the alternatives, so can't recommend one alternative over the other.

But I do support necessary management. I've walked up Whitney before any controls, and since controls were established, and fully support those controls. As a general rule, when demand exceeds capacity, management control becomes necessary.

I've been up Half Dome in quieter times, and can well imagine the situation with increased popularity.

So controls are necessary. Mt. Whitney, and the whole Sierra Backcountry are good examples.

I support your efforts.

Regards,

██████████

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 755 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the oppportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment.

I've made the trip only one time, and that was a day trip from the Valley floor. The cable section of the climb was crowded, but I'd rather have crowds than no cable access at all. As a 50-something climber, I would simply have to pass without the cables.

I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a

good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail. I'm not an ecologist, so I'm not sure that 300 is the exact number, but for sure it has to be limited below the current peak usage. A reservation system, while not ideal, is an acceptable solution that gives me and others the chance to enjoy the experience in an optimal environment.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 756 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I further would advise that a better system be implemented to prevent those ascending from the top of Half Dome to be mixed with those descending. Perhaps there should be specific hours set aside for the two activities so they do not overlap, thus causing too much crowding of those going in opposite directions. Additionally, If the number of permits per day should be reduced still farther, for safety sake, then by all means reduce the number. The ability to hike Half Dome is definitely a special privilege and should be revered as such. It should not bow to the more accommodations for the visitors is better. It is not. The first priority should be safety of the trail and protection of our unique natural treasure.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 757 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment.

The following proviso I believe to be the wisest method of improving safety and impacts:

Remove the cables on Half Dome's rock face.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I firmly and unequivocally believe that the Half Dome cables should be removed.

These cables are not natural phenomena, and climbing half dome with them is essentially the same as building stairways up any other mountain.

For instance, El Capitan would have the same problem should staircases be installed, as would any other inherently dangerous mountain.

Please reduce the traffic on Half Dome, as we all know that it is the focus of perhaps the most lightning strikes of any feature in Yosemite. Do this through restoring it to its original and natural state.

I find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 758 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

I've read the complete report & feel that this is the best solution for all of those that love & enjoy the parks & also respect the need to protect them for our children's children....

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 759 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. We support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as we believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

We understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and we agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

We believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. We also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 760 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: As a concerned American citizen and taxpayer and frequent visitor to Yosemite I appreciate this opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of

Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 761 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I recall trying to climb the cables back in the 90s and being unable to continue to the top because of all the descending hikers. I spent most of my time gripping one cable to allow several people to climb down. A limited numbers of climbers would be a good solution.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 762 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 763 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments. We have an amazing natural resource and some of the most beautiful country to share with the world. Please protect it and preserve it for us and for our families in the future.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 764 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Please do all you can to protect Yosemite's Half Dome from the onslaught of too many hikers! There should be a reasonable and safe limit for all who seek to climb this magnificent rock.

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 765 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

In the early summer of 1984 after I had just come down from Half Dome, 3 people were killed on the top of Half Dome as an unpredictable afternoon storm came in. I was lucky not to have been on the top. With more manageable numbers on the top, people could be warned ahead of time and lives saved.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 766 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment.

As someone who has hiked Half Dome, I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I feel that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. Even people without fear of heights can be vulnerable and endangered without the cables. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 767 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution. Half Dome is the essence of solitude and spiritual bliss but with too many people it destroys the experience.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 768 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

I also recommend a smoking ban throughout all National Parks. PLEASE DON'T SELL CIGARETTES IN THE NATIONAL PARK STORES!!! When I climbed Half Dome two years ago, the amount of cigarette butt litter along the trail, on the top of Half Dome, and in the valley at every bus stop was appalling! Especially considering the fact that each of these miniature toxic waste dumps contains cadmium (battery acid), arsenic (rat poison), formaldehyde, polonium 210 (radioactive ingredient), ammonium hydroxide (toilet bowl cleaner), acetone (nail polish remover), and hydrogen cyanide (used to kill people in gas chambers), and poisonous nicotine among the 619 additives, 63 known cancer causing carcinogens, and 4,000 to 8,0000 deadly chemicals which are in tobacco smoke. When I tried to send a box of cigarette butts (which I collected from my trip to Yosemite) back to Philip Morris, I was told by the post office that it is illegal to send cigarette butts through the mail. When I asked why, I was told that they are considered "TOXIC WASTE". Smoking has no place in a national park. Careless people who smoke cause forest fires, pollute the air so that other visitors cannot enjoy their visit ,(THE SURGEON GENERAL HAS STATED THAT "THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF EXPOSURE TO TOBACCO SMOKE!", and the toxic litter poisons the water when it gets washed into the rivers, lakes and streams. You don't allow alcoholics to throw their empty bottles out car windows or to leave them on the ground all over the park, so why enable nicotine addicts to destroy the park with a product which is far more toxic than any can or bottle?

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 769 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: On the contrary, I believe Half Dome's cables SHOULD BE removed. It will surely keep a great many amateur people from trying the climb which iin itself would limit any further destruction in Yosemite!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-

users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 770 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail. This should be explained in many ways to erstwhile climbers. Those who care about the health of Half Dome and Yellowstone will understand.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 771 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.I

I climbed Half Dome over thirty years ago.I consider it one of the highlights of my life. Scary....yes but what an accomplishment, for me! I want that to be a safe experience for any future climbers. It's an absolutely spectacular view of God's creation.

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 772 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 400 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-

users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

All users staying overnight on top of Half Dome should limited and have a reservation to do so. Other overnight users should have a reserved camp site at the base of Half Dome, or at Little Yosemite Valley.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 773 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 774 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: As a member of the Yosemite Conservancy, and a long-time Yosemite visitor, I am pleased that the hard work and research that has gone into developing the Half Dome Train Stewardship Plan, Alternative C, has born fruit. I am writing in support of Alternative C, as I think it is the most balanced and reasoned plan to prevent erosion of the park experience for all visitors, while protecting wilderness resources. It is absolutely clear to those of us who regularly visit this spectacular wilderness that overcrowding is a huge problem, particularly in the high-summer season. The Park Service has successfully developed a reasonable proposal, balancing wilderness experience with protecting wildlife and terrain along the intensely used Half Dome Trail corridor.

I agree that 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting natural resources and the safety of the park's visitors and staff, and that the Half Dome cables should not be removed, as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

My only additional comment involves hikers backpacking on the John Muir trail: if their use permit is linked to their wilderness campground reservation could a window of dates rather than a single date on the use permit be available to them? Sometimes the dates on a long hike can be hard to gauge precisely. In my experience the vast majority of our back country users are passionate defenders of our parks. It would be a nice gesture.

As a homeowner in June Lake with long and strong ties to the eastern Sierra and the Sierra Nevada, I ask for your support of the Alternative C plan for the Half Dome Trail corridor. Thank you for considering my comments.


Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 775 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Limiting Half Dome hiking is a must. The quiet beauty of this majestic hike is spoiled by "freeway traffic at rush hour" on the trail and cables.

The safety issue is appalling. The scrambling on the cables is unreal. Even on the trail, more agresive hikers will force others

into unsafe positions for passing.

I know we can't turn the clock back, but 40 years ago I can remember not seeing another soul at the top of Half Dome. Now it's a convention site!

I strongly support limiting the number of daily hikers, both for enjoyment and safety.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 776 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I have been up Half Dome twice in my lifetime. Both times were scary because of the over-crowded nature of the cables. As some hikers struggled with physical or psychological challenges, others had to manoeuvre around them (all the while people are also going in the other direction). This presents a situation where people simply can't go at their own pace and sometimes people move to the outside of the cables in order to stand to the side or move ahead. This is also dangerous and undoubtedly contributes to situations like a close friend of mine witnessed a few years ago when she saw a young man fall to his death.

Not only is the over-crowding on Half Dome a safety issue, but the over-crowding on the trail makes a true wilderness experience impossible. If the Park wants visitors to enjoy the natural beauty of Yosemite and discover something about what "wilderness" means, it will limit use to 300 people per day.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. Without the cables, I see very few people deciding to forgo the journey to the top of the dome. Too many people will attempt this climb, which for inexperienced climbers has far too much exposure to attempt without protection. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution. The only thing I would change about Alternative C is to include hikers participating in commercial trips in the proposed 300 people/day quota.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 777 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

I have climbed Half Dome many times myself; starting in 1955. I have also enjoyed the "Fire Fall" from Glacier Point. Over crowding is not only unsafe, but spoils the natural flavor of the site and the experience. It is too bad that the popularity of our National wonders requires limitations and other measures. However, this seems to be the best compromise.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 778 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Back in 1963 I climbed Half Dome. This was an important experience for me as it taught me respect for Yosemite's formations, cliffs, and trails. I have bragged about it for years. My daughter has also climbed HD, and it has remained a highlight of her mountain experience. So the privilege should be maintained. But to keep things safe, a reservation system should be implemented to control the actual numbers of people at any given time.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 779 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

There is only one HALF DOME; PLEASE MAKE IT SAFE AND TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT...

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 780 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I saw Half Dome when I was 10 years old. My family was staying at the Awanee in its opening months. That vacation was planned by my parents to show Yosemite to my brother and myself. We took car trips throughout the park, and it was great. There was so much to see, that we spent time being in a few places rather than everywhere for the 2-1/2 weeks we were there.

I feel that visitors to the park must conform to what the limits of the park are, or the visitors will wear out the park by overcrowding all the popular spaces, inadvertently wrecking animal nests and burrows, trampling on the grass, waiting in the noisy crowd to see a site. In order to save the park for eternity, I suspect that not every visitor will not be able to see the park whenever she or he wants. If we allow crowds to mill around the park whenever they want to, I feel the park paths, waters, etc. will be overrun by humans and not be able to withstand all of the tourists. To protect the park, I feel that people will have to wait until their names show up in a ticket raffle in order to limit the amount of people who can enjoy the park and/or a given sight at any give time.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and

I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

We also need to consider how many people are fit enough to walk around the park in the steeper parts or the more rugged ones. I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

It may sound unfair to limit the amount of people to Yosemite at any given time, but we need to think of the parks welfare too.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 781 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 782 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments. Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 783 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment...

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for

distribution.

***I also would like to suggest that there should be alternatives which would provide a similar experience for climbers. There must be multiple alternatives in the park. "Explore Trail G, rated 97% as challenging as Half Dome." "Trail M, combining opportunities both to climb and to see 53 different animals and insects. Fill your observation card and give it to a Ranger on your return."

At the Ranger Station, bulletin boards should give multiple choices, with photos of the different trails, degree of difficulty, and the environment at trail's end.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 784 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: In 1999, I took the challenge and climbed Half Dome in a day, using the cable route. It was a dangerous experience, and anything but the sublime wilderness adventure we love in Yosemite. I watched the line of ants on the cables above and below me and wondered how strong the cables and planks were -- and how we'd get off if a storm suddenly arose. I saw people go outside the cables to avoid the crowd. And I had to help one young woman down the cable when she froze with fear half-way up. So as much as I oppose permits in Yosemite or any national park, I support permits in this case.

I generally support the following boilerplate text, and alternative C. However, I fail to see why ANY commercial permits should be issued, and I oppose the issuance of such permits. The national parks were not set aside for the lining of the pockets of the 1 %.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 785 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Thank you for considering my comments.

***** I'm all for those who want having the fabulous experience of ascending Half Dome. BUT, Half Dome belongs to the world as a natural treasure, and it is our duty and responsibility as American citizens to protect this incredible land form for the future people on this planet. It doesn't belong to us. We are only trustees, which means we have to protect the land, rather than listen to those who whine like spoiled children. People can't always have what they want when they want it. Whining won't help. Organizing a proper system allows everyone to have a wonderful experience in due time, while protecting this unique land form. THE LATTER is the primary goal. People satisfaction is secondary.

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Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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I also strongly object to the recent popularization of free climbing, a stupid and suicidal stunt that should be banned in Yosemite.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 842 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thomas O. Nass' Paraphrase and Enhancement of W.C. Lowdermilk , U.S. Dept of Agriculture 1948, from "Conquest of the Land Through 7,000 Years"

This Holy Earth Thou shall inherit this Holy Earth as a Faithful Steward, respecting, protecting and conserving its Environment, its Resources and its Productivity for future generations. Thou shall safeguard its Fields from erosion; its Soils and sub-Surface from Chemical Saturation; its Waters, its Ground Waters and its Air from chemical Pollution and over-heating. Its Oceans from over fishing; its Forests from desolation; its Mineral Resources from depletion; its Hills from overgrazing by thy herds and its Creatures from extinction. All this so that thy descendants may enjoy its abundance as once did thee. As all Nations do share in the Ownership of this Holy Earth. Ergo, if any Nation or its leaders should fail in the responsibilities of their Stewardship, then all of thy Crop land shall become sterile ground with wasting gullies; thy waters unfit to drink; thy air too thick to breathe; the meat of thy herds and thy flocks, as the spawn of thy waters and thy oceans, unfit to eat. If any of the above should come to pass, then thy descendants shall gradually diminish in their number and eventually depart in their entirety from off the face of this Holy Earth. Why? Because thy insatiable greed and ignorance of thy ignorance shall have decreed it so. Thomas O. Nass,

5th Marine Division - WWII

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 843 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: While I am no longer able to hike something like HalfDome I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail. I do love Yosemite and have visited several times.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment.

I am writing to express support for Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that extensive research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail, and I agree that a permit system that allows for no more than 300 hikers per day will provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I also feel that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. In addition, I support the suggested combination of permits for overnight and day users allocated through a system of both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable arrangement.

Thank you for your attention to my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 845 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: The reason Half Dome is overpopulated is obvious.

California, the US, and the entire Earth is overpopulated (with humans).

The Park Service can't possibly "manage" endless population growth, and should seriously consider taking a stand against human overbreeding. That is 100% related to the Parks' mission, and Parks ought to say so, without being squeamish about it.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 846 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a

good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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Correspondence ID: 847 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 876 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Correspondence ID: 885 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, Re: H3015 (YOSE-PM) Yosemite National Park P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

Synopsis: The Half Dome Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment, Document H3015 (YOSE-PM), begins with a flawed premise by stating the goal to "Improve public safety by reducing crowding on the half Dome Trail", a simple, obvious solution, that to paraphrase Winston Churchill, is dead wrong, and in this case, quite literally. There was a fatality during the first full year of the permit lottery that severely restricted access to the Half Dome Trail. The plan now recommends more of the 'reduce crowding' solution, Alternative C with a limit of 300 permits per day, versus Alternative B's 400 in 2011, and is unlikely to improve safety.

Stating the expected solution in the goal excludes other, perhaps better solutions from being considered. The goal should have been simply "improve safety on the Half Dome Trail", which would allow all safety-oriented solutions to be considered. There is little evidence to indicate that crowding is actually a significant factor in the safety issues, other than on the cables, and then only for evacuation from the top. If crowding on the cables were considered an independent problem to be solved, the authors would certainly have found a better solution, such as adding a third cable, which would eliminate the traffic jams and dramatically speed up evacuations from the summit.

Although Alternative C, a limit of 300 people per day is the stated recommended solution, one can make a pretty good case that the authors fully expect that Alternative E, removal of the cables, will ultimately be implemented, should the fatalities continue-and they will, unless the true safety issues are addressed.

Hiking the Half Dome Trail and successfully making it to the top of Half Dome is an incredible physical accomplishment. This Plan needs to encourage people to take that challenge, not restrict access, or, worse yet, remove the cables that have made that final ascent safe for almost a century.

The Fatal Flaw

Since "Improve public safety by reducing crowding on the Half Dome Trail" is one of the Plan's goals, that is what was attempted with a lottery for 400 hiking permits per day, first just weekends, which simply moved the Saturday crowd to mid-week, then expanded to all days for 2011. Unfortunately, with the permit lottery in place during 2011, there was a fatality on Sunday, July 31, 2011--during "wet rock" conditions. The lottery and permit system gives people one, single date to hike the Half Dome Trail, so, if the weather is bad, some may take the risk of hiking when the rock is wet, since they might never get a chance again. The problem? Wet rock is quite dangerous, and "wet rock" is listed as the conditions for the preponderance of injuries and for all but one of the five fatalities. You will also see folks who will attempt the cable portion of the hike despite fatigue and acrophobia symptoms, since that might be their only opportunity to complete the hike. Alternatives C and D further reduce the probability of getting a permit in the lottery versus the 400 permits in the current program, increasing the odds of risky behavior. By the way, the daily limit includes permits that automatically go to overnight hikers who have wilderness permits, further reducing slots for day-hikers on the Half Dome Trail.

Before the lottery and permits, people like me took the simple approach when the weather was bad: just wait until tomorrow, the day after, next month, or even next year. There was no reason to take chances, since there was always another day to make that hike, but not with this plan.

Crowding and Safety

There did not seem to be any specific evidence that crowding was actually a safety issue, other than needing faster evacuation on the cables when a storm is approaching. The section "Effects of High Use Levels on Safety", on page 1-5 references Chart 1-1, also on page 1-5, and continued on 1-6. After I looked up the day of the week for the 15 incidents in the chart, I was surprised to see that Saturday was not the highest day for incidents, even though it typically has about twice the volume of the other days of the week. Saturday did have a fatality, on wet rock, and was tied with Wednesday and Thursday with three incidents. Although each of those days also had a fatality, they were off-season with "wet rock, cables down" as the conditions. Sunday was by far the worst day, with four incidents total, including two fatalities, the sole dry rock fatality on Sunday, June 17, 2007, and the 2011 wet rock fatality, on Sunday, July 31, 2011. Monday and Friday had one incident each, although the Friday incident was "icy rock and cables down", another off-season incident. No incidents were listed for a Tuesday. "Wet rock" was clearly the predominant listing for the conditions.

Further indication that safety was more of the public reason than the real reason is that the Executive Summary cites the "four fatal falls occurred between 2006 and 2009 on the Half Dome cable system" as the reason for this project, even though two of those were off-season, and thus not something covered by the Plan. The Executive Summary also omits mention of the fatality in 2011, perhaps because it would have pointed out the fatal flaw described above. "Improve public safety by reducing crowding on the Half Dome Trail" has that wonderful 'truthiness' that passes for actual fact these days, so that perhaps people who read the Executive Summary would just accept the recommendations without reading the body of the document.

Making the cables safer

The primary safety concern in the Plan is how fast the top of Half Dome could be evacuated when a fast-moving storm is approaching. A third cable would significantly improve that time, since there would be two lanes of downhill traffic, and the faster people could pass those moving more slowly. The chart on page 3-16 shows the mass descent times for the various alternatives, listing 83 minutes for the 'No Action' Alternative A (unregulated), and 47 minutes for Alternatives B and C, 400 and 300 permits respectively. The evacuation time for Alternative D, 140 people per day was "unknown" (although stated elsewhere to simply be 'less than 47 minutes') and Alternative E was "N/A", since, apparently, evacuation would no longer be the concern of the NPS. If the third cable makes evacuation only half of the 83 minutes, at roughly 42 minutes, it is about 10% faster than Alternatives B and C, with the advantage of allowing the faster folks to pass those going more slowly, reducing chances of risky behavior such as descending on the outside of the cables. With the current cables and recommended plans, there is still the risk of a traffic jam--either up, or down.

Unfortunately, adding a third cable was relegated to the "Alternatives considered and dismissed" part of the document--dismissed for failure to meet the 'reduce crowding' goal, which seems to also have become the wilderness solitude goal. If the 'reduce crowding' goal was focused just on the cables, then a different solution would have emerged.

The cables can get crowded. That is why my son, my cousins, and I decided to do a mid-week hike. Anyone who had experienced the crowds on the cable would love to see a better solution, although 'removal of the cables and thus to never see the summit of Half Dome again' option would be something I doubt that they would choose.

The plan characterizes the crowded cable situation as a lack-of-solitude problem, rather than a safety issue on its own. Clearly no one should expect to climb the cables without interaction with others, since everyone going up will see and encounter folks coming down. Thus, a more rational approach would have been to determine the causes of delays going up or down and ways to alleviate those delays. My experience with the cables has been seeing a long line of people below a person stuck part way up the cables--even mid-week. I suspect that acrophobia is often the culprit, the other would be fatigue. As an acrophobia sufferer, I'm lucky that I've learned to spot the symptoms as they are developing, and can take appropriate action. Thus, I've been able to ski and rescue people on steep, icy runs, ride chair lifts over deep canyons, rappel off sheer, undercut rock faces, etc. Unfortunately, most people just succumb when their brain decides they are too high, and sink, frozen onto the ground. Then their friends all gather around to help, fully blocking the cables. A third cable would give everyone else a passing lane, while those needing help down or just a rest can do so.

New cables in the wilderness? The Wilderness Act does allow such safety devices when appropriate, as covered in Appendix D of the document.

Removal of the cables...the ultimate goal?

As long-time project manager, the four acceptable alternatives (B, C, D, and E) looked remarkably like a phased project plan. With Alternative B, the current program in place in 2011 as phase one, there is the appearance that Alternative B had met its completion criteria--apparently lack of safety--and that it was time to move to the next phase, Alternative C, the recommended alternative, which reduces the permits to 300 per day. Should Alternative C also show a lack of safety, the plan would then continue to progress, reducing permits further, to 140 per day with Alternative D. Should Alternative D also show a lack of safety, that just leaves Alternative E. When I saw that Alternative E, removal of the cables, had quite a bit of implementation detail, and included one commercial trip per day, with 8 people for 'educational' purposes, I started to wonder if that was not the true goal of this plan. I can see a need for someone to teach technical rock climbing where the cables now are, helping novice students reach the summit of Half Dome, since very few hikers would ever get that thrill again.

Then there is the list on page 2-16, which described the "seven evaluation factors" for the alternatives. Perhaps a bit of a Freudian Slip that there are just six items listed, not one of which is safety oriented. Listed are "Opportunities for solitude" and "Wilderness-based visitor experience and access", but not safety. The 'seven' was clearly not a typo, since that number is mentioned again when it was said: "When seven factors considered equally, Alternative E (Remove the Cables) scored the highest". A slight mention of safety came in a chart at the end of Chapter two, which had "Risk Management" as an "Impact Topic", which merely showed evacuation times for each alternative, where known, implying that the 83 minutes for Alternative A was too long and that the 47 minutes for Alternatives B and C was acceptable.

Conclusion

The Half Dome Stewardship Plan Environmental Assessment, Document H3015 (YOSE-PM) needs to be revised with what should have been its original goal: Improve safety on the Half Dome Trail. By not dictating a solution, such as 'reduce crowding' then the plan can first diagnose the root cause of the safety-related events, and craft a solution that addresses those needs. Having hiked the Half Dome Trail several times, adding a third cable seems pretty simple and obvious to me, but I've learned to not jump to that conclusion without further study. Clearly adding a third cable does not address the more serious issue of people hiking the trail and making the final ascent or descent on wet rock. If I were leading the team, I'd explore ways to educate people on the risks and find ways to provide an early warning of impending storms, especially lightning. Other parts of the country certainly have lightning warning systems, but they are not in the Wilderness.

It is impossible to achieve true wilderness solitude on the Half Dome Trail--unless you take away all reasons to hike that trail, which is exactly what the final alternative in the Plan, Alternative E, Remove the Cables, does. Once Alternative E has been implemented, I can clearly visualize a Yosemite Park Ranger telling people: "it is so unfortunate that we had to take down the cables on Half Dome that allowed hikers to reach the Half Dome summit for almost a century. We tried everything to improve safety, but nothing worked." Please keep that scene from coming true.

As Mr. Spock said: "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few". A better future includes safety elements that do not restrict access to this wonderful, and, despite its physical challenges, very popular trek, the Half Dome Trail.

Sincerely yours,

██████████

Correspondence ID:	886	Project:	29443	Document:	44771
Received:	Mar,27,2012 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				

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I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 887 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. Personally, I support the idea of only 100 climbers per day. However, as that is not acceptable to many would-be climbers, I support Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

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I hiked the trail and unfortunately was not able to climb the cables. I plan to return one day to complete the hike to top. So I would always like to have that option.

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Correspondence ID: 896 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: When I first viewed Half Dome in 1961, I knew it was a very special "rock". Please take action to save it and the park for ALL visitors!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-

users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 897 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 898 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 899 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: My family and I want you to know that we support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, because we believe that it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

We think that a permit system needs to be established that primarily protects the wilderness trail yet still allows for 300 hikers per day. This would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and, most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

In addition, we agree that the Half Dome cables should not be removed since they allow safer access to the Dome. It would be more fair and equitable to also combine permits for both overnight-users and day-users when allocated through both advanced and day-before reservation.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 900 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources as well as the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 901 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 902 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 903 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: charge each visitor a fee that will eventually cut steps into the granite. Each year cut a few more steps. Al Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 904 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 905 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: I have hiked Half Dome and I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 906 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 907 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

I would welcome copies of Alternatives A, B, etc.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 908 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 909 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail. As a frequent visitor to Yosemite I am very interested in maintaining a quality experience for all who want to be able to enjoy the majesty of this magnificent place. I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 910 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 911 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 912 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Reasonable limitations are necessary, and safety must be paramount. Daily limits should be adjusted for weather conditions as well since too many people getting pummeled by a sudden storm could be very dangerous.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 913 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 914 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

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Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

The park is hard enough to get a reservation for camping, please consider those who have used the park for over 60 years, and would love to take their grandchildren on a wonderful hike.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 916 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments. And TAKE ACTION NOW!

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 917 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 918 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Alternative C is by far the fairest most equitable way to allocate this precious resource.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 919 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 920 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between positive visitor experience and protection of wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and, most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

Because competition for the limited number of permits will likely intensify, it will be important for the Park Service to create a fair and equitable system for obtaining the permits. In years past, commercial outfitters have gobbled up many of the permits, and not used them all, while individuals who can and will use them were denied permits. Perhaps a lottery system could allow all interested parties a fair chance at obtaining a permit.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 921 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I support Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 922 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 923 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 924 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

In addition, I would like to see all smoking banned from all the Parks, both National and State Parks and also plastic bottles that I now find in the most remote parts of the Parks as well as cigarette butts that eventually land in the stomachs of wild life!

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 925 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 926 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 927 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 928 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 929 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Correspondence Type: Letter

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I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 961 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Correspondence ID: 965 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Correspondence ID: 967 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 975 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Please support Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, It provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

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As someone who has been fortunate enough to experience the climb via the cable to the top of Half Dome, I would favor limiting the number to give a good experience. Also, having too many people would likely decrease the safety.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 986 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail. I think that this is an excellent solution.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 989 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Hello. I write as someone who has been enjoying Yosemite National Park since I was 11 years old -- and now I am 70!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail, and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution. Lastly, I'd like to encourage the system to set something up as to allow for a more diverse space for those that do have access to said natural spaces, this should include trans/queer youth/adult people of color and our working class communities.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 992 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you in advance for doing the best thing now.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 993 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

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Correspondence ID: 994 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 995 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

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I will be brief. It is time to use a plan that will give people the opportunity to continue to use Half Dome, but in limited numbers to ensure safety and preservation of Half Dome.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 996 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence ID: 998 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
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Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1001 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

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I fully well realize two things: the Park is being "loved to death by the overuse and your staff is being stretched to the limit - with ever increasing numbers needing to be supervised and serviced. I spent time in your sister facilities in both Zion and later in Yosemite and witnessed some dangerous and careless use in both places and how hard the Park Service worked to keep it all together for us to enjoy.....most of us DO appreciate your difficult job of balancing conflicting wants with the needs of these national treasures.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1003 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

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P.S.: I proposed to my wife at the base of Bridal Veil Falls!

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1004 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1005 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative. I am doing so because I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail, and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1006 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1007 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. The first thing needed is contraception (e.g. Planned Parenthood). The number of Homo sapiens on this planet has increased 5 BILLION since I was born.

I suggest: 1. charge more 2. multi trails to top.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1009 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. As a resident of Groveland, California, Yosemite is basically in our backyard and we visit Yosemite on a regular basis. Several of our friends have had the fabulous opportunity to climb Half Dome and it is an experience everyone that wants to should have that opportunity.

I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. .

I believe Alternative C is a well-thought out, prudent and balanced plan that will serve visitors to Yosemite well, allowing enough hikers access to Half Dome, while preserving the natural character of the park, by eliminating overcrowding and the resultant safety issues that could create.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1011 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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I hiked Half dome with several members of my family in 1997, and it is an experience that is forever etched in my mind. I want that experience to still be available to my grandkids; the two oldest kids are almost 13, unless steps are taken to preserve the

resources, that may not be an option for them.

Thank you for considering my comments, and please take them seriously.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1013 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
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I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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People go to National Parks, as well as other nondeveloped areas, to get away from overpopulation, overcrowding, noise and light pollution, and the extreme stress urban life subjects everyone to. They do not enjoy encountering some or all of these blights when trying to escape them.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1017 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: I support Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative. I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1019 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: We don't want to lose the beauty of Half Dome!!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Sincerely,

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Sincerely,

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Thank you for considering my comments. Barbara Spinrad

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1022 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
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natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1023 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Contrary to this website and their intent to force me to accept an unacceptable alternative:

I am against any plan which proposes to restrict use in any way.

I am against any permit system and against the imposition of any fees for use.

I am against the current Half Dome permit requirement.

I am for the creation of two sets of cables - one for traffic going up and the other for traffic going down.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1024 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1025 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I have been to Yosemite over twenty times since childhood and am now 42 - I love the park, all that it means to me and my family, and now as a father, what it will mean to my son. Yet, I have never done the "Half Dome Hike" because of the crowding and apparent danger because of the crowding and popularity of the hike, preferring to enjoy the many other hikes, especially the often overlooked hikes that offer equally spectacular views. I am very happy to learn that the Half Dome safty and crowded issue is being proactively studied and addressed and am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I can see how it both provides a balance between providing a positive visitor experience while protecting of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I would be disappointed to see the Half Dome cables removed permits plan for 300 a day is an excellent idea. While it may prevent some from enjoying the hike - Yosemite doesn't lack for alternatives, and communicating those alternatives can certainly be worked on, as I have come over twenty times and yet to do the Half Dome Hike! In fact, these new guidelines will actually make the hike more appealing to hikers like me who have put off the hike until it can be done more safely and with less people around.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

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Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence ID: 1082 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence ID: 1103 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence ID: 1113 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
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Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1143 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence ID: 1153 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Fax

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1154 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: I am writing to comment on the environmental assessment for use of the Half Dome trail. I support Alternative C, since it permits continued reasonable daily use of the trail while protecting park resources and wilderness values.

A permit system which permits 300 daily users is fair and reasonable while providing for visitor use, enjoyment and safety.

The cables must be left in place! They provide a measure of safety for trail users, not all of whom are experienced mountaineers.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1155 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,27,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. People were climbing up the wall before the cables had been erected for the season. Leave them there, just regulate flow. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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Thank you for considering my comments.

P.S. I Love Wildlife love [REDACTED]. AND FOR OUR KIDS LIVE & THEY FUTURE TO.

"In this great future, you can't forget your past..." Bob Marley

P.S. I Love Wildlife love [REDACTED].

Thank you for helping to save these executives why saving the Western Gray Whale important.

Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to your swift action to ensure a complete ban on whaling in Iceland.

Sincerely,

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Thank you for considering my views on this issue. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely, Thank you for considering my views on this issue. I look forward to your reply.

Yours truly, Thank you for considering my comments. Thank you for taking my concerns into consideration. Sincerely, Thank you for considering my comments. P.S. I Love Wildlife

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence ID: 1162 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

I went up the cables hike with my girlfriend in the summer of 2004 and it was incredibly crowded and slow-moving on the cables. I was surprised by how steep it is and how much you really had to hang on the cables to stay on the wall. The line was packed solid all the way to the top and we would be stopped in a spot for 15 minutes at a time waiting to move just a couple feet. This seems pretty unsafe as it took a fair amount of endurance to get up the thing since we couldn't move at a natural pace. I'm a climber so I was decently comfortable hanging out waiting to move but my girlfriend was not, so I had her in a harness

with a leash running up the cables. There is a pretty high potential for an accident up there (which I'm surprised there's not more of) and having to wait in traffic has got to exponentially increase it. And besides, the traffic truly diminishes the overall experience since you lose your stride and get fixated on what the hundreds directly around you are doing.

This effort to limit the number of hikers/day on the path popped up in my Facebook feed today and I thought it seemed like a good idea. It's the sort of hike I think groups would happily wait a day or two to get on it if they had to. It's probably only a matter of time before the high traffic reaches a tipping point and a tragedy occurs. I encourage the park to be proactive, not reactive.

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My then 12-year old daughter and I benefited from the current system in August of 2011 when we were granted a permit to have

a once-in-a-lifetime experience to hike to the top of Half Dome. She (and I) will cherish the memory of the accomplishment, without the crowds we were worried we would find. It was a moving and peaceful experience, made safer both by the limit on people being able to get to the top, as well as the safety of having the cables to guarantee safe passage.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1169 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1172 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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Correspondence ID: 1173 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence ID: 1176 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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I am now 73 yrs old; when I was in my late twenties, a friend and I climbed Half Dome. It was an awesome experience that I will never forget so I'd like to see some kind of system that works for any climbers as well as the needs of the visitors and staff and Certainly protecting the natural resources.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1188 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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I believe the induction of a permit system is essential to protect this national treasure.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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Correspondence ID: 1190 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Please don't give in to political and economic pressures from the shortsighted greedy. Thank you for considering my comments.

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Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1195 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Have a Visitor Use Assistant stationed at base of the cables, who will regulate the number of climbers on the cables, to ensure safety, and better experience, during the most crowded days, summer, weekends, holidays. Put a sign at start of trail in the valley, saying there is a Ranger at the cables, who will control access, and that not all hikers may not get access to the cables. This is will eliminate the paperwork and cheating that goes on.

Sincerely,

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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1198 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: WHILE PLACING AN ADDITIONAL SET OF CLIMBING CABLES FOR EXPANDED CAPACITY AND DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE MIGHT BE THE CHEAPEST ; i THINK THAT PROVIDING AN EXPANDED BACK COUNTRY CAMPGROUND NEAR THE ASCENT POINT MIGHT ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE AND ALLOW A FEW DOZEN ADVENTURERS TO GET AN EARLIER START AND THEN MAYBE RATIONING CLIMBERS FROM NOON OR 1PM ON. THIS WAY RANGERS WOULD NOT HAVE TO ARRIVE SO EARLY TO ENFORCE THE SYSTEM AND ONLY BE REQUIRED HALF DAY ??

I HOPE YOU SEND THIS PROJECT BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD,

THANK YOU FOR READING MY INPUT..

PLEASE READ ON ///

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am NOT writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I THINK THAT NOT ENOUGH scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I DISagree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and LEAST importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also DO NOT find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Correspondence ID: 1199 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1200 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1201 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

I have been up Half Dome three times and value the experience greatly. Overcrowding diminishes the experience and creates unsafe conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1203 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Balance is most important for safely and for the experience one is anticipating.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1204 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1205 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail. If the trail becomes too crowded it does take away from the park visitors experience. I think it makes sense to limit the number of climbers on half dome.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the

natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1206 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1207 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1208 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

I have personally never seen this area but look forward to some day. I think this proposal sounds like a fair and reasonable way

to keep all safe and protect the natural area.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1209 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1210 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Please limit the number of climbers that can be on Half Dome at once. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1211 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail. I am an old timer rock climber and it directs concerns me and the experience of friends of mine.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1212 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1213 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

I think that a lottery similar to the one used for Mt. Whitney, with a monthly follow up of available dates could be quite effective and still allow hikers to plan there visit ahead of time.

On a more personal note, I have promised my 11 year old grandson that I will take him up half dome and I don't want to disappoint him

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1214 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1215 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1216 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: I have personally climbed Half dome using the cables and have hiked and backpacked in Yosemite for nearly forty years. I am greatly interested in having this precious resource managed in a way to enhance the visitor experience and protect the environment. That's why I support Alternative C for the reasons as enunciated by the NPCA.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1217 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1218 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a

good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research has gone into finding the best plan for the Half Dome Trail. A 300 hikers per day system would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments. We must protect Half Dome and its visitors.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID:	1219	Project:	29443	Document:	44771
Received:	Mar,28,2012 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				
Correspondence:	Don Neubacher CA				

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID:	1220	Project:	29443	Document:	44771
Received:	Mar,28,2012 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				
Correspondence:	I just returned from a wonderful visit to Yosemite National Park. And I very much appreciate the protection and preservation of the park's wilderness resources.				

Commenting on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment -- I support Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail, and a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day seems an appropriate compromise providing access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources as well as the safety of the park's visitors and staff. It also seems the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through advanced reservation and day before allocation would be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Also, the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I have used these cables and found them a great aid at the end of my long hike up to Half Dome.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID:	1221	Project:	29443	Document:	44771
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Received: Mar,07,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: As regards the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1222 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1223 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

██████████

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1224 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Balance is most important for safety and for the experience one is anticipating.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1225 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1226 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail. I am an old timer rock climber and it directs concerns me and the experience of friends of mine.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1227 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C. Clearly something needs to be done to prevent overcrowding and the carelessness of the visitors. Education is not a realistic option, since people do not consider that death is possible with each step.

Most reasonable people can accept limits, but it does interfere with spontaneity. I would like to see the limits include a time of day exception that would allow for unlimited access during the hours of dusk to dawn. Also, consider having a ranger camp at the flats before the first dome (even a volunteer) who could assist the travellers.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1228 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1229 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Please consider limiting the number of hikers who climb beautiful Half Dome in Yosemite National Park. Our national parks should not become like Disneyland or a shopping mall. They are meant to be protected, but outdoor "sports enthusiasts" threaten to ruin the environment of our parks as a profit-hungry industry uses them for economic gain. The wilderness should remain wild. It cannot sustain this volume of abuse.

I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1230 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1231 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Please consider limiting the number of hikers who climb beautiful Half Dome in Yosemite National Park. Our national parks should not become like Disneyland or a shopping mall. They are meant to be protected, but outdoor "sports enthusiasts" threaten to ruin the environment of our parks as a profit-hungry industry uses them for economic gain. The wilderness should remain wild. It cannot sustain this volume of abuse.

I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1232 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Yosemite is a popular destination. Half Dome and the Vernal Falls trail can seem like Los Angeles in rush hour traffic with climbers moving in lock step to move up or down (no exaggeration!). I believe a permit system will help alleviate the congestion. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1235 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1237 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

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Correspondence ID: 1240 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type:

Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

I climbed Half Dome a few years ago, and was concerned about the large number of climbers going up and down, and I had to hang onto the outside of the chains coming down.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1262 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1263 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the

natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1264 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: I am a frequent visitor to Yosemite. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1265 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1266 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: We are happy to have the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. We support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative. We believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

Much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail we know. We agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

The Half Dome cables should not be removed because they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's Half Dome. The suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation appears to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1267 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1268 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

I was at Yosemite a long time ago as a teenager and it seemed to me I remember almost no one climbing the Dome. For everyone's safety a limit of the number of climbers on the Dome at any one time seems not just sensible, but prudent. It would be awful to have to put restrictions in place after a tragedy. Sort of locking the barn door after the horse is stolen.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1269 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a

good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1270 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as it provides a good balance between a visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I agree that a permit system allowing for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and -- most importantly -- the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

The Half Dome cables should not be removed, as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions, and the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation seems both a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1271 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

Much scientific research and study has gone into to identifying the best plan for the Half Dome Trail, and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide generous access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

Half Dome's cables should not be removed, as they have historically allowed for safer access. The suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day-before registration to be a fair system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1272 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between

good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1273 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1274 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1278 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a

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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1284 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Sincerely,

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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1292 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1294 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

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Correspondence ID: 1307 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Thank you for considering my comments.

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Correspondence ID: 1322 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence ID: 1340 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence ID: 1352 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771

Received: Mar,28,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Correspondence ID: 1387 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence ID: 1400 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Don Neubacher CA
Correspondence:

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1412 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1415 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1421 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1429 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

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Correspondence ID: 1440 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Thank you for considering my comments.

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Correspondence ID: 1443 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence ID: 1449 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence ID: 1473 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Sincerely, Ms. Sandra Applebaum

Correspondence ID: 1503 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 1505 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1597 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

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Correspondence Type: Letter

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

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Correspondence ID: 1608 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence ID: 1612 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence ID: 1615 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1628 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1632 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence ID: 1639 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence ID: 1641 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence ID: 1643 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence ID: 1645 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Correspondence ID:	1646	Project:	29443	Document:	44771
Received:	Mar,29,2012 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				
Correspondence:	Don Neubacher CA				

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Received:	Mar,29,2012 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				
Correspondence:	Don Neubacher CA				

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment. I am writing in support of Alternative C, the park's Preferred Alternative, as I believe it provides the optimum balance between a good visitor experience and protection of the wilderness resources along the Half Dome Trail.

I understand that much scientific research and study has gone into the effort to identify the best plan for the Half Dome Trail and I agree that a permit system that allows for 300 hikers per day would provide adequate access to the Trail while protecting the natural resources and most importantly, the safety of the park's visitors and staff.

I believe that the Half Dome cables should not be removed as they have historically allowed for safer access to one of Yosemite's most iconic and popular attractions. I also find the suggested combination of permits for overnight users and day-users allocated through both advanced reservation and day before allocation to be a fair and equitable system for distribution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 1657 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

Dear Don Neubacher,

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Correspondence ID: 1658 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

Subject: I Support the Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan Alternative C

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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence Type: Letter
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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
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Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Don Neubacher CA

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Correspondence ID: 1668 **Project:** 29443 **Document:** 44771
Received: Apr.03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Petition
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