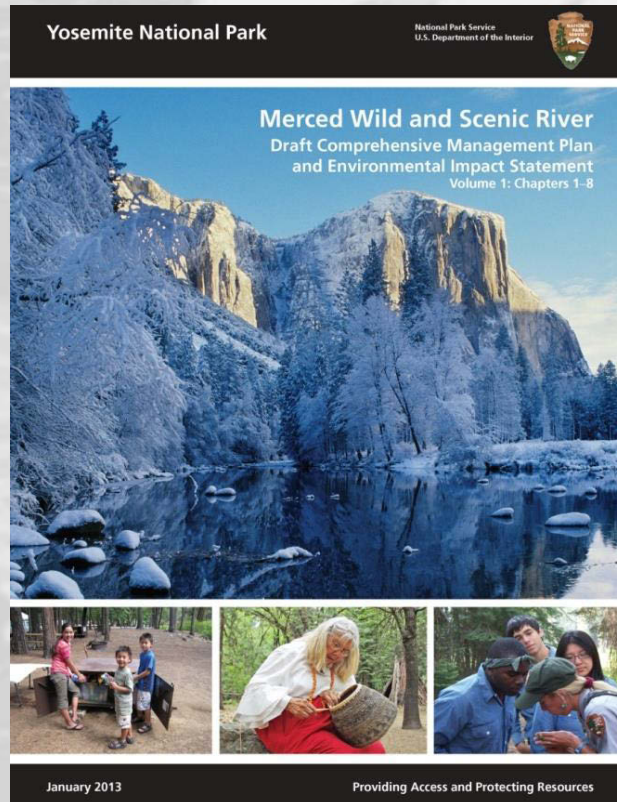


# MERCED WILD AND SCENIC RIVER

## Draft Comprehensive River Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement



**Wawona Public Meeting  
March 15, 2013**

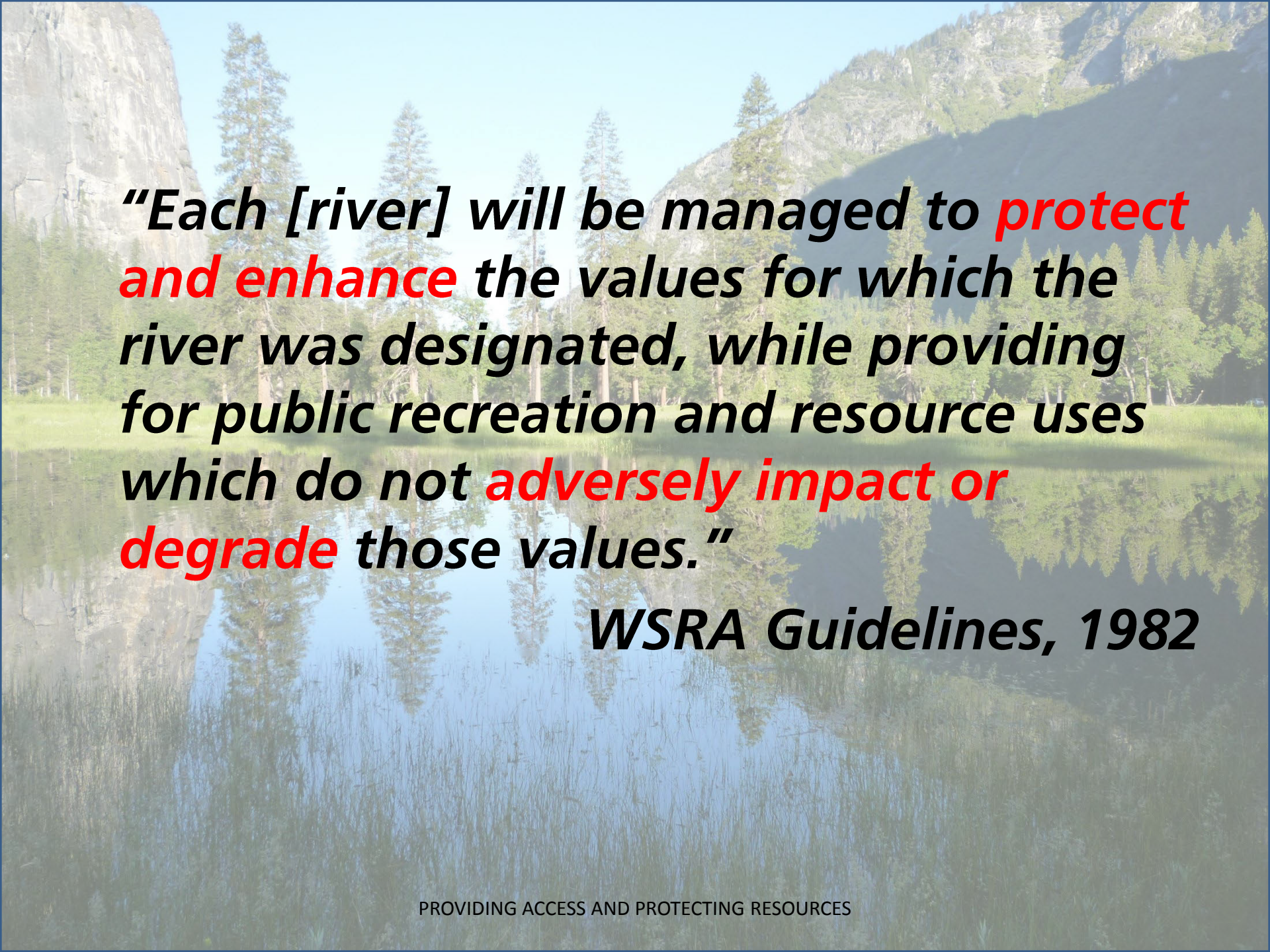


**Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River**

**YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK**

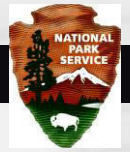
**Merced Wild and Scenic River**



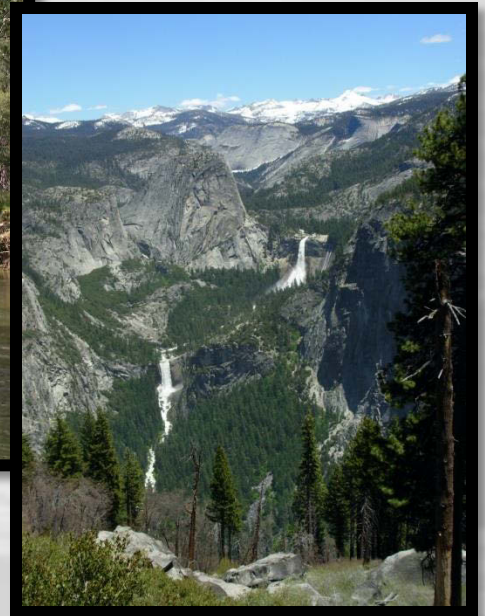
A scenic landscape featuring a river in the foreground, a forest of tall evergreen trees in the middle ground, and rugged mountains in the background under a clear blue sky. The river reflects the surrounding greenery and sky.

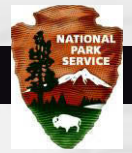
*“Each [river] will be managed to **protect and enhance** the values for which the river was designated, while providing for public recreation and resource uses which do not **adversely impact or degrade** those values.”*

***WSRA Guidelines, 1982***

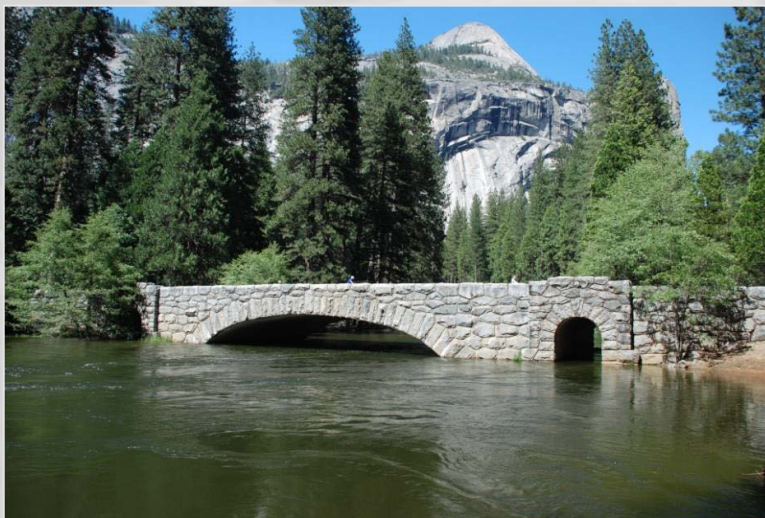


# Actions to Protect and Enhance River Values

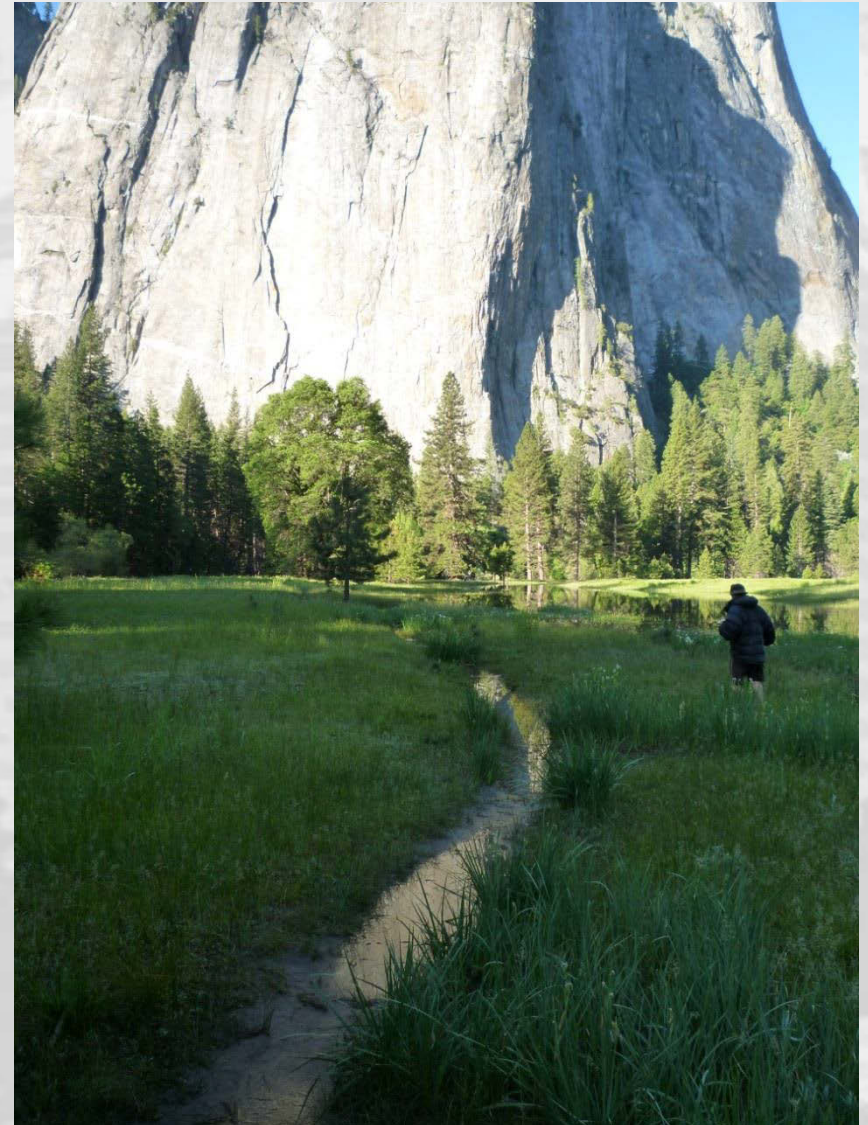




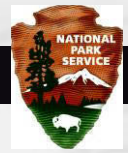
**Sugar Pine Bridge**



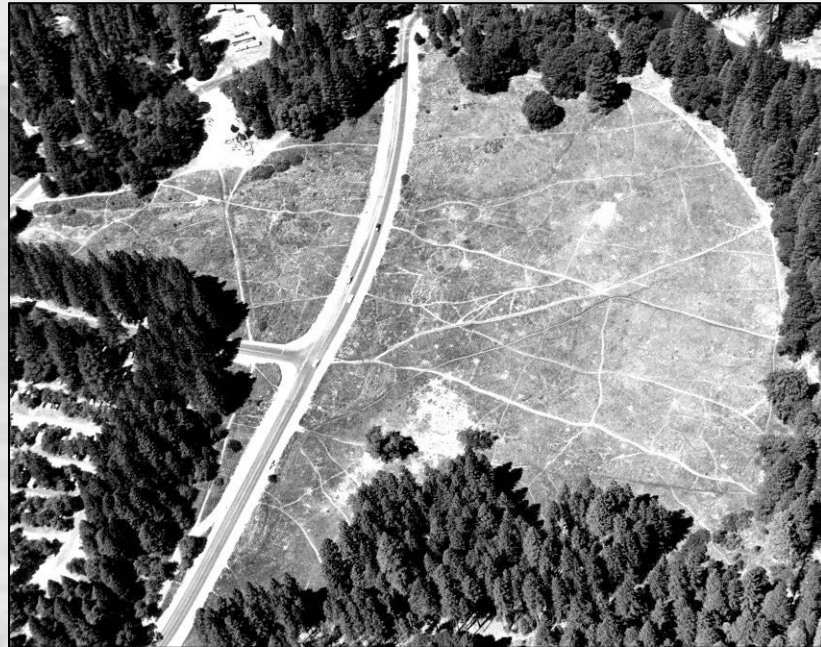
**Stoneman Bridge at high water**



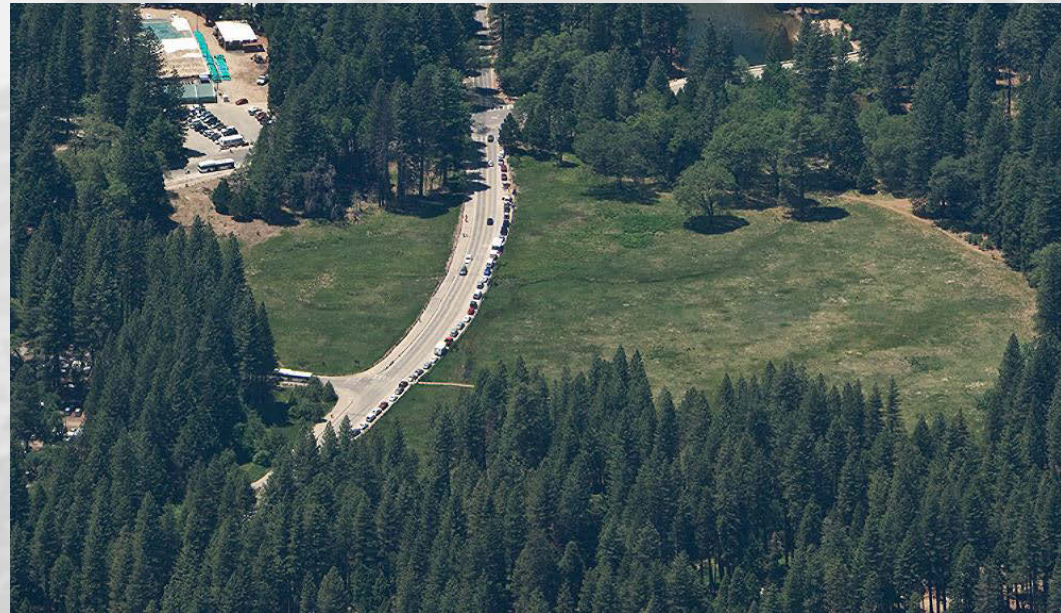
**Flooded informal trail in El Capitan Meadow**



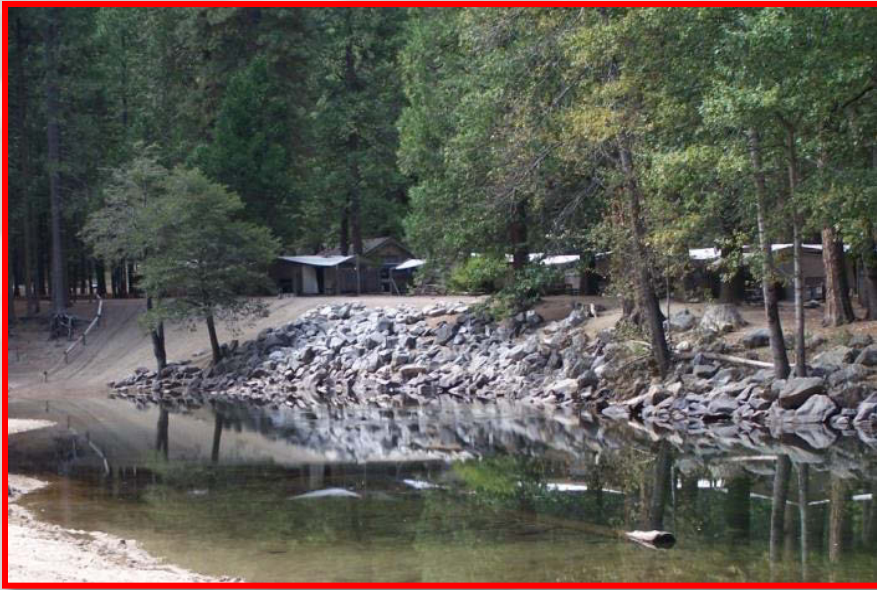
# Removing Informal Trails



**Stoneman Meadow in 1987 before restoration, showing informal trail network**



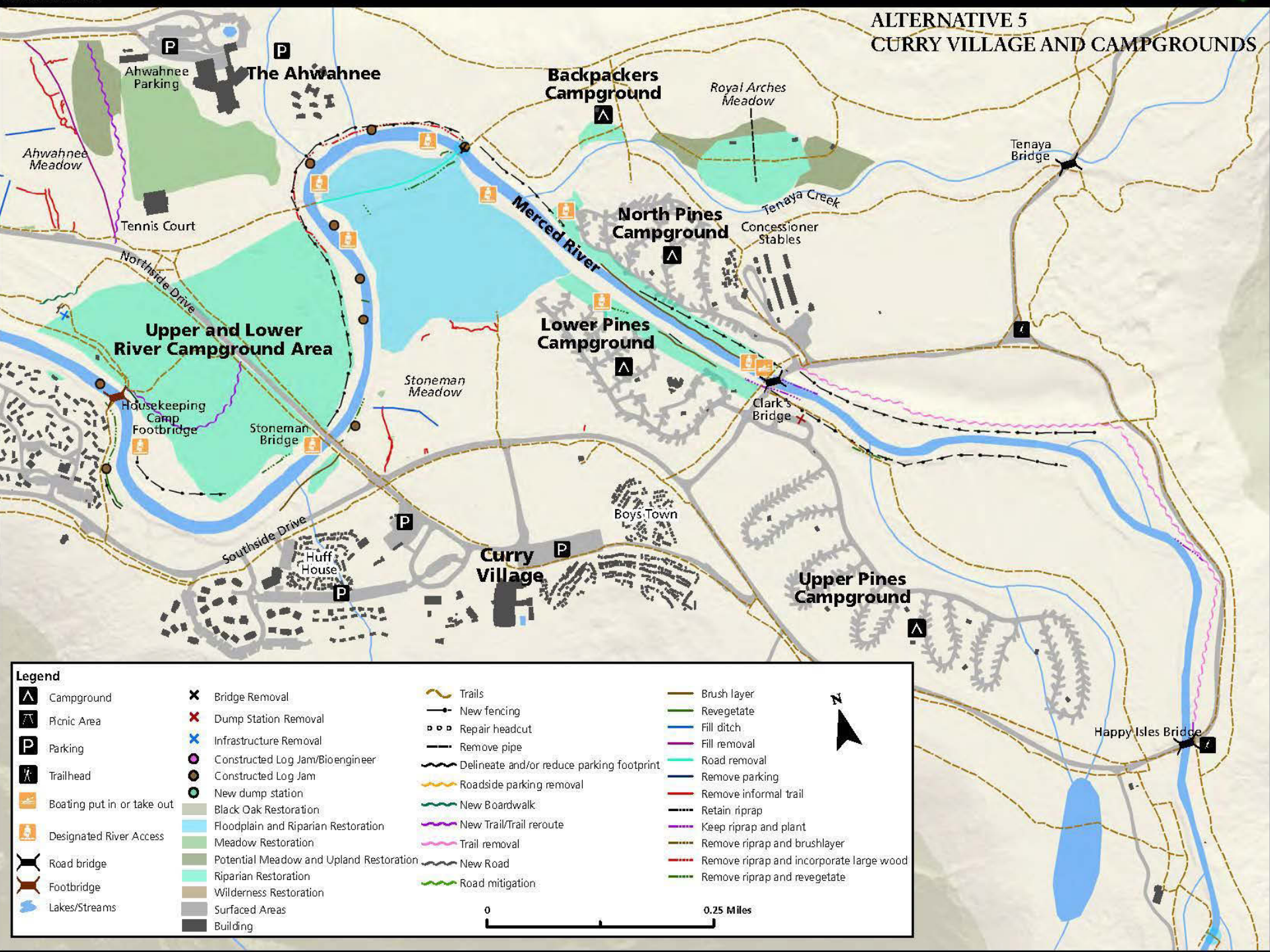
**Stoneman Meadow in 2008 after restoration and boardwalk installation**



**Devil's Elbow, pre-restoration, 1993**

**Devil's Elbow, post-restoration, 1995**

# ALTERNATIVE 5 CURRY VILLAGE AND CAMPGROUNDS

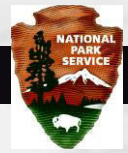


**Legend**

|                            |   |   |  |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| Campground                 | Bridge Removal                          | Trails                                    | Brush layer                              |
| Picnic Area                | Dump Station Removal                    | New fencing                               | Revegetate                               |
| Parking                    | Infrastructure Removal                  | Repair headcut                            | Fill ditch                               |
| Trailhead                  | Constructed Log Jam/Bioengineer         | Remove pipe                               | Fill removal                             |
| Boating put in or take out | Constructed Log Jam                     | Delineate and/or reduce parking footprint | Road removal                             |
| Designated River Access    | New dump station                        | Roadside parking removal                  | Remove parking                           |
| Road bridge                | Black Oak Restoration                   | New Boardwalk                             | Remove informal trail                    |
| Footbridge                 | Floodplain and Riparian Restoration     | New Trail/Trail reroute                   | Retain riprap                            |
| Lakes/Streams              | Meadow Restoration                      | Trail removal                             | Keep riprap and plant                    |
|                            | Potential Meadow and Upland Restoration | New Road                                  | Remove riprap and brushlayer             |
|                            | Riparian Restoration                    | Road mitigation                           | Remove riprap and incorporate large wood |
|                            | Wilderness Restoration                  |   | Remove riprap and revegetate             |
|                            | Surfaced Areas                          |   |  |
|                            | Building                                |   |  |

0 0.25 Miles





# Draft Preferred Alternative

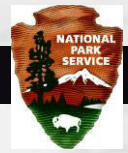
- Ensures that the experiences enjoyed by generations of families are sustained over time.
- Provides visitors the choice of accessing Yosemite Valley by private vehicle or transit.
- Reduces traffic congestion and crowding with organized and efficient day-use parking.
- Creates a “sense of arrival” with redesign of the primary day-use parking area and removal of industrial and administrative functions.
- Improves circulation, reduces congestion and provides for a more relaxed visitor experience.



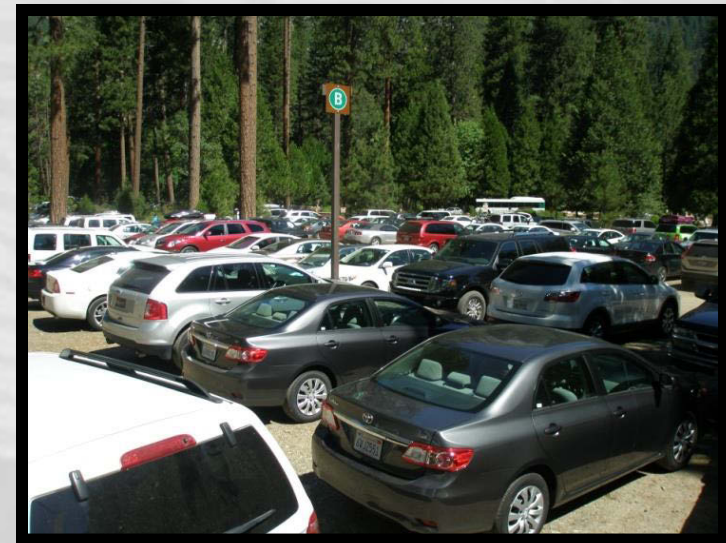


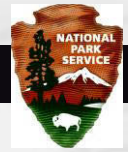
# Providing Access





# Yosemite Village Day-Use Parking Area (Camp 6)

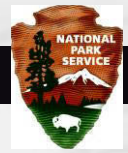




# Yosemite Village Day-Use Parking Area

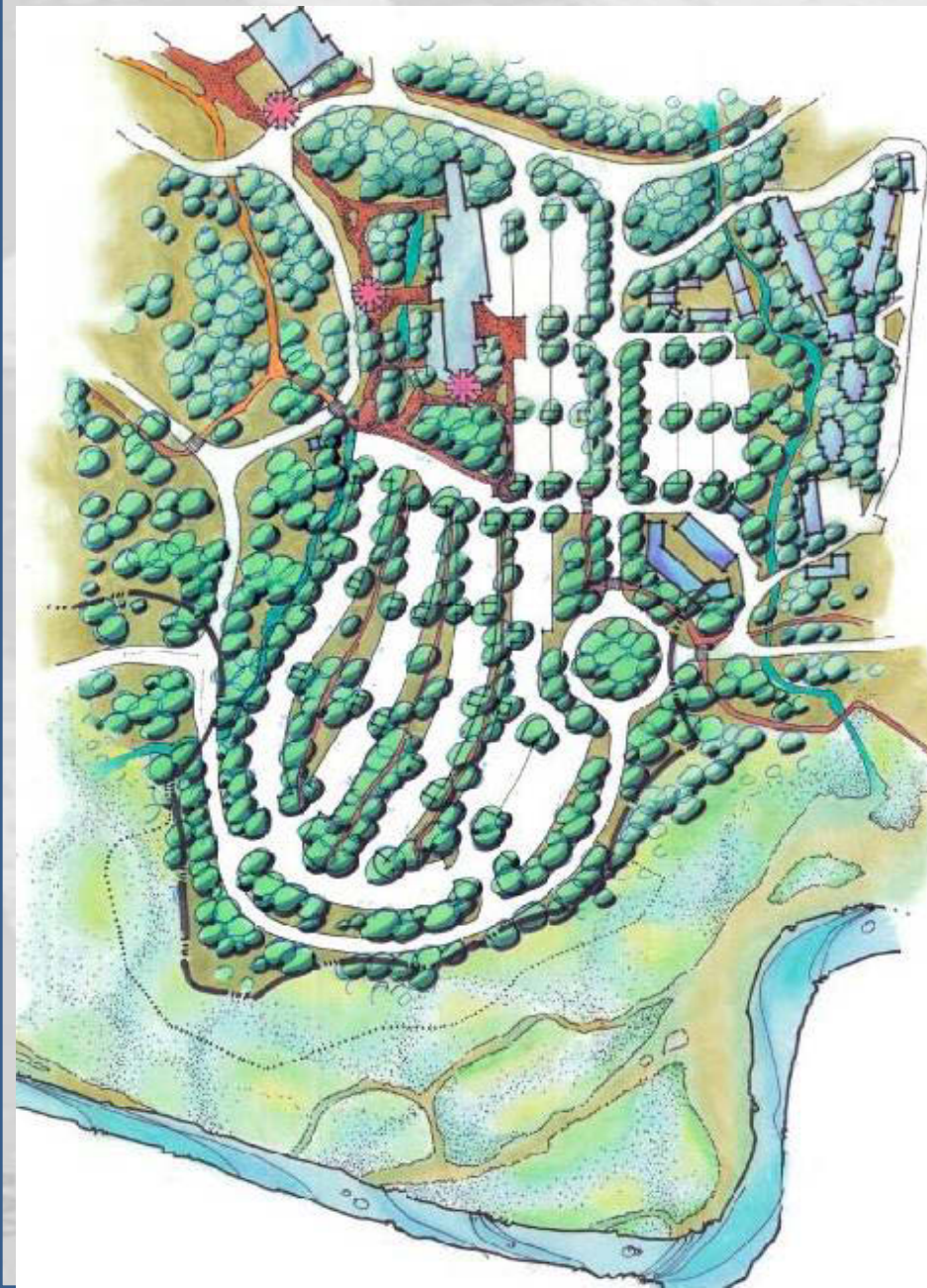


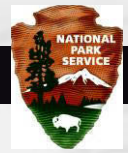
Parking Pulled Back from River



# Yosemite Village Day-Use Parking Area

## Draft Preferred Alternative

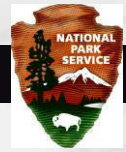




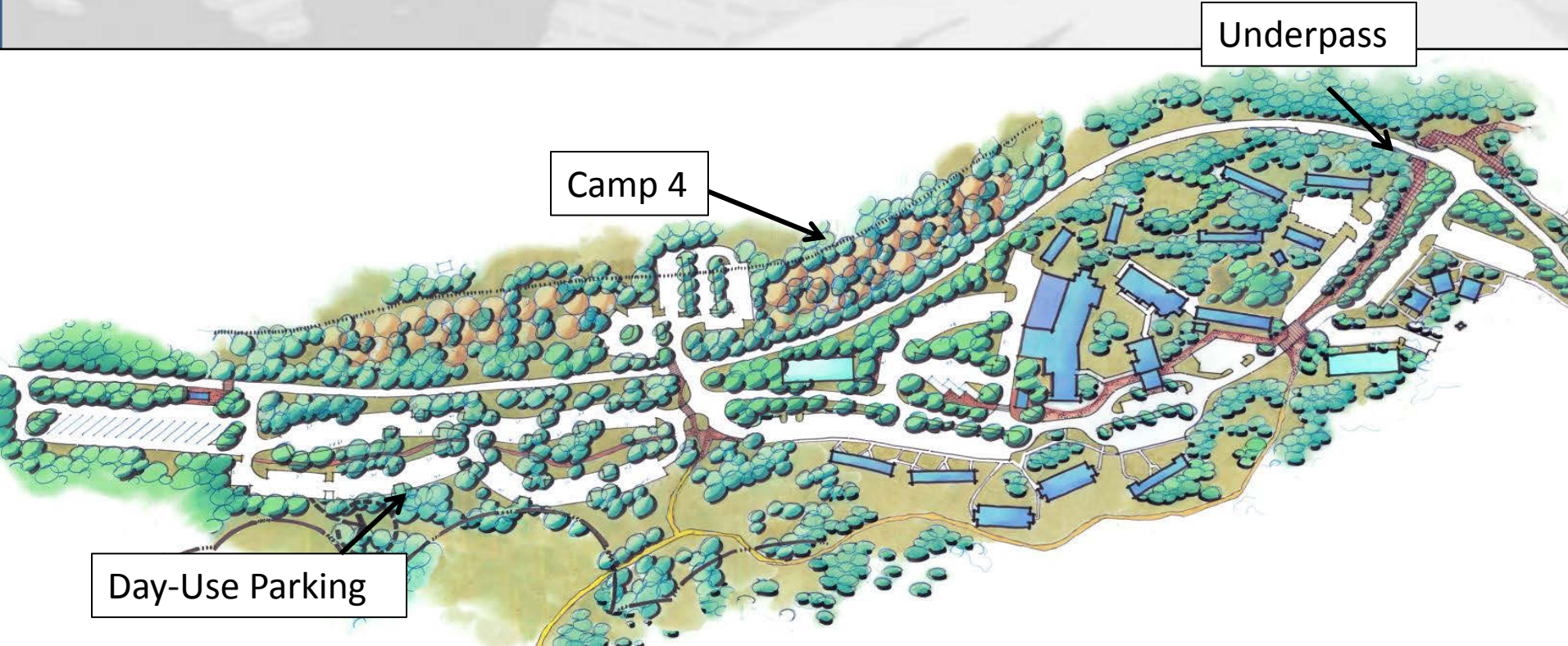
# NPS Valley Maintenance



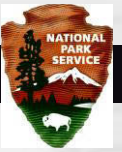
## Draft Preferred Alternative



# Yosemite Lodge and Camp 4

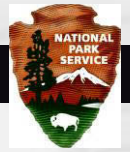


## Draft Preferred Alternative



PROVIDING ACCESS AND PROTECTING RESOURCES



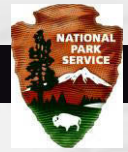


# El Portal - Abbieville

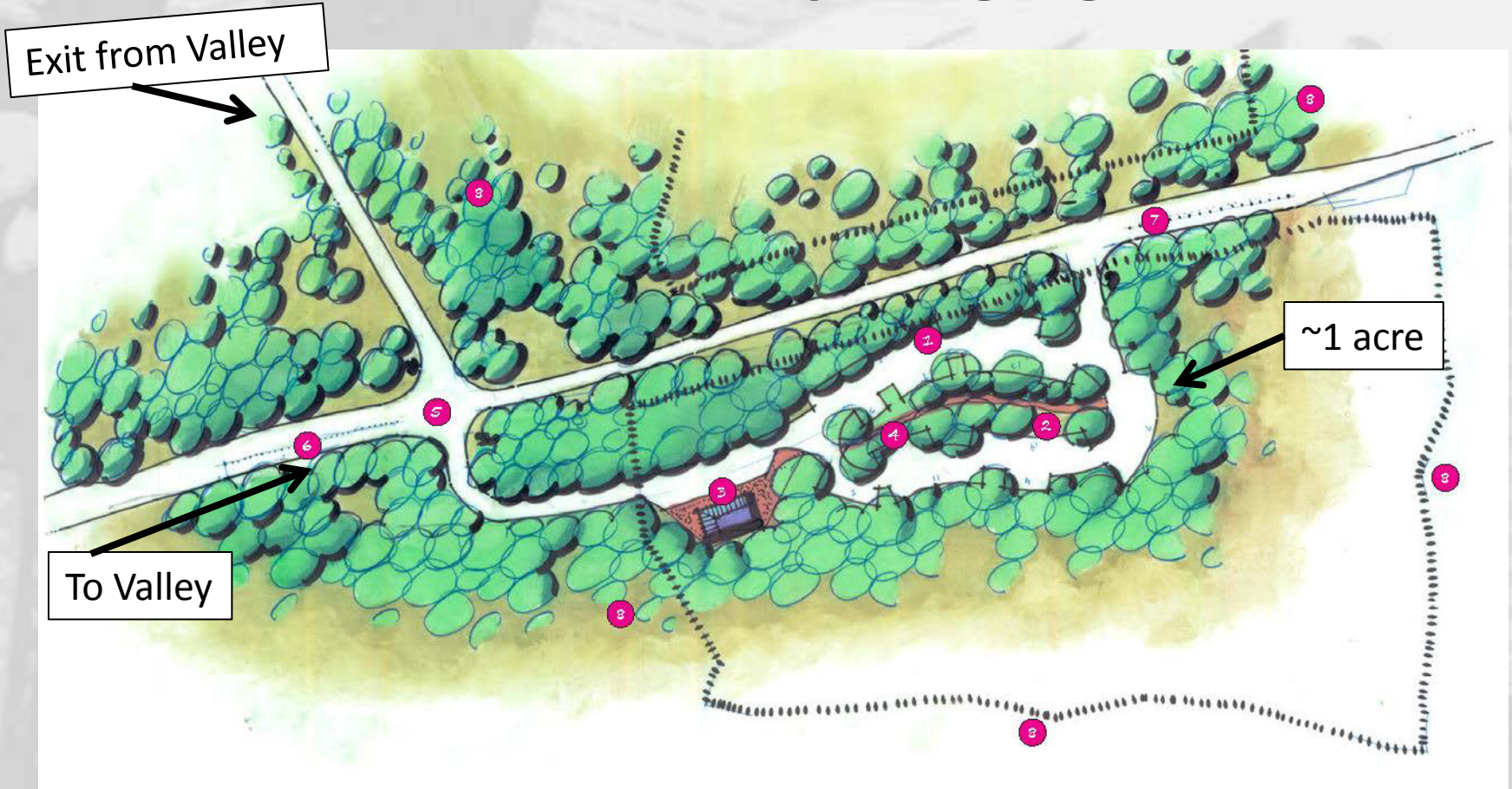


## Draft Preferred Alternative

PROVIDING ACCESS AND PROTECTING RESOURCES



# West Valley Staging



## Draft Preferred Alternative

PROVIDING ACCESS AND PROTECTING RESOURCES



# Camping Units

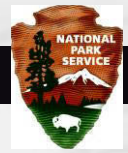
|                                    | Alt 1      | Alt 5       | Details  |
|------------------------------------|------------|-------------|--|
| <b>Yosemite Valley</b> (No Action) |            |             |  |
| Backpackers                        | 25         | 10+16       | 16 walk-in sites outside of the 100 year floodplain  |
| Camp 4                             | 35         | 35 + 35     | No change to this National Historic Register site, 35 walk-in sites constructed east of Camp 4 |
| Lower Pines                        | 76         | 71          | 5 sites within 100 feet of the river removed   |
| North Pines                        | 86         | 72          | 14 sites within 100 feet of the river removed  |
| Upper Pines                        | 240        | 238 +<br>87 | 36-site RV, 49 walk-in, 2 group sites  |
| Yellow Pine Admin Site             | 4          | 4           | Group administrative sites   |
| Former Upper River                 | 0          | 30          | 30 walk-in sites   |
| Eagle Creek                        | 0          | 42          | 40 auto sites and 2 group sites  |
| <b>Wawona</b>                      |            |             |  |
| Wawona Campground                  | 99         | 86          | Sites removed within 100 feet of river or culturally sensitive areas                           |
| <b>Total Camping in Corridor</b>   | <b>565</b> | <b>726</b>  |  |



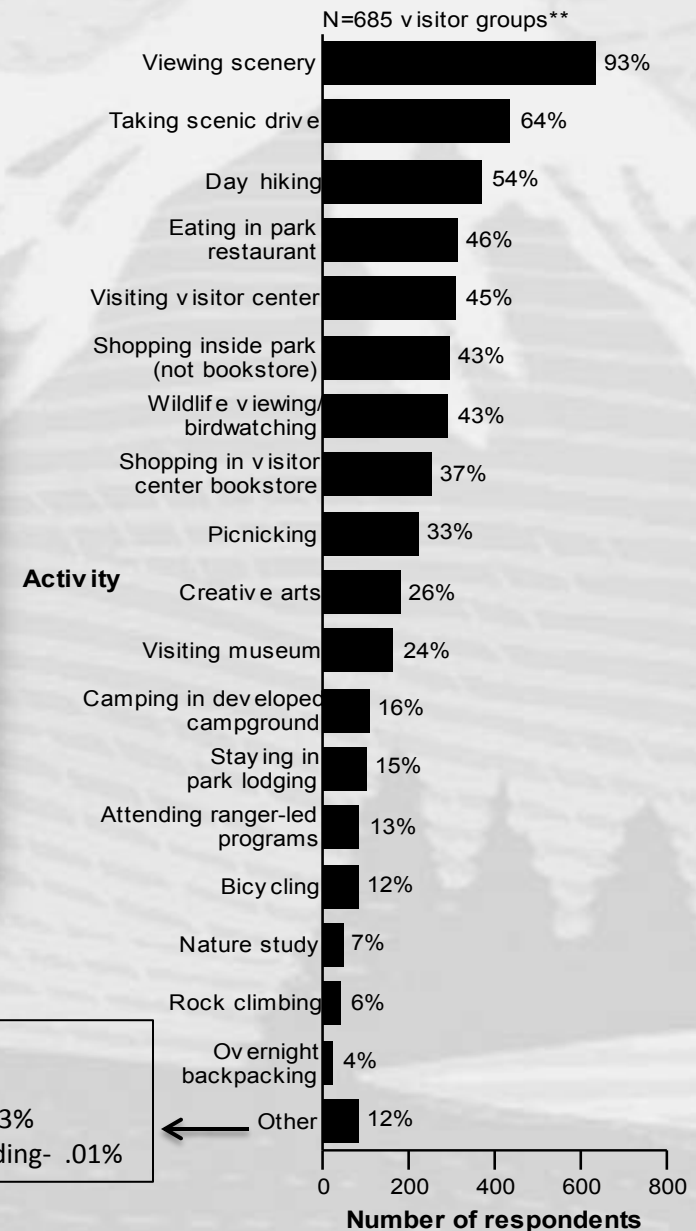
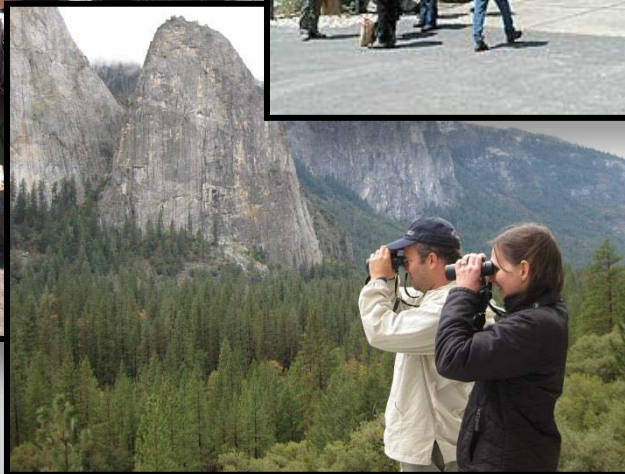
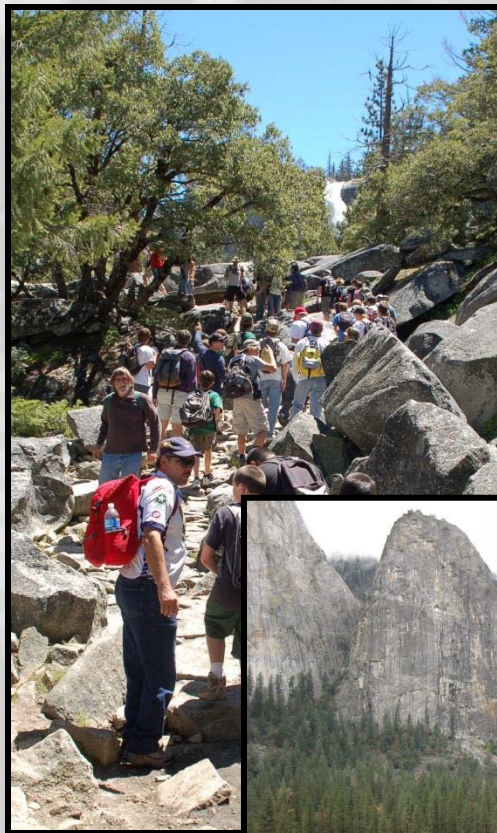
# Lodging Units

|                                  | Alt 1           | Alt 5           | Details                                      |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| (No Action)                      |                 |                 |  |
| Merced Lake<br>High Sierra Camp  | 22<br>(60 beds) | 11<br>(42 beds) | Remove 18 beds                               |
| The Ahwahnee                     | 123             |                 | No change to National Historic Landmark      |
| Housekeeping Camp                | 266             | 232             | Remove 34 units from bed and banks           |
| Curry Village                    | 400             | 453             | 290 tents and 163 hard-sided units           |
| Yosemite Lodge                   | 245             | 245             | No changes                                   |
| <b>Total Valley Lodging</b>      | <b>1,034</b>    | <b>1,053</b>    |  |
| Wawona Hotel                     | 104             |                 | No Change to this National Historic Landmark |
| <b>Total Lodging in Corridor</b> | <b>1,160</b>    | <b>1,168</b>    |  |

\* El Portal: Private accommodations exist but are not on NPS land; therefore, they are not listed here.



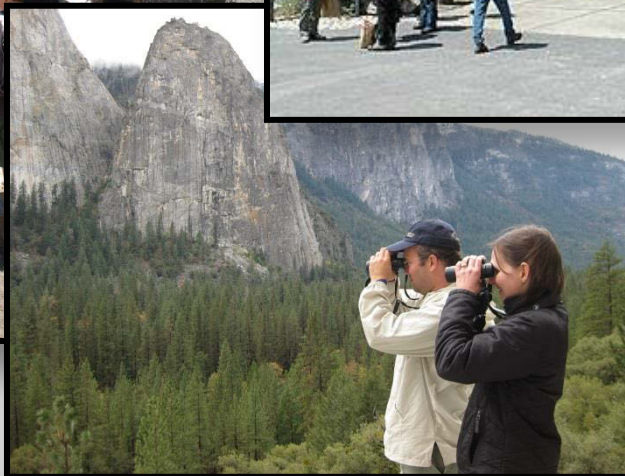
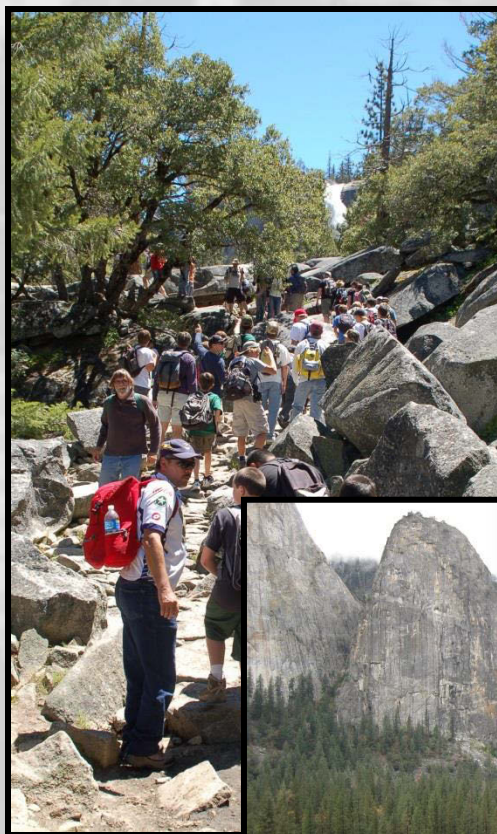
# Visitor Activities: Summer Use



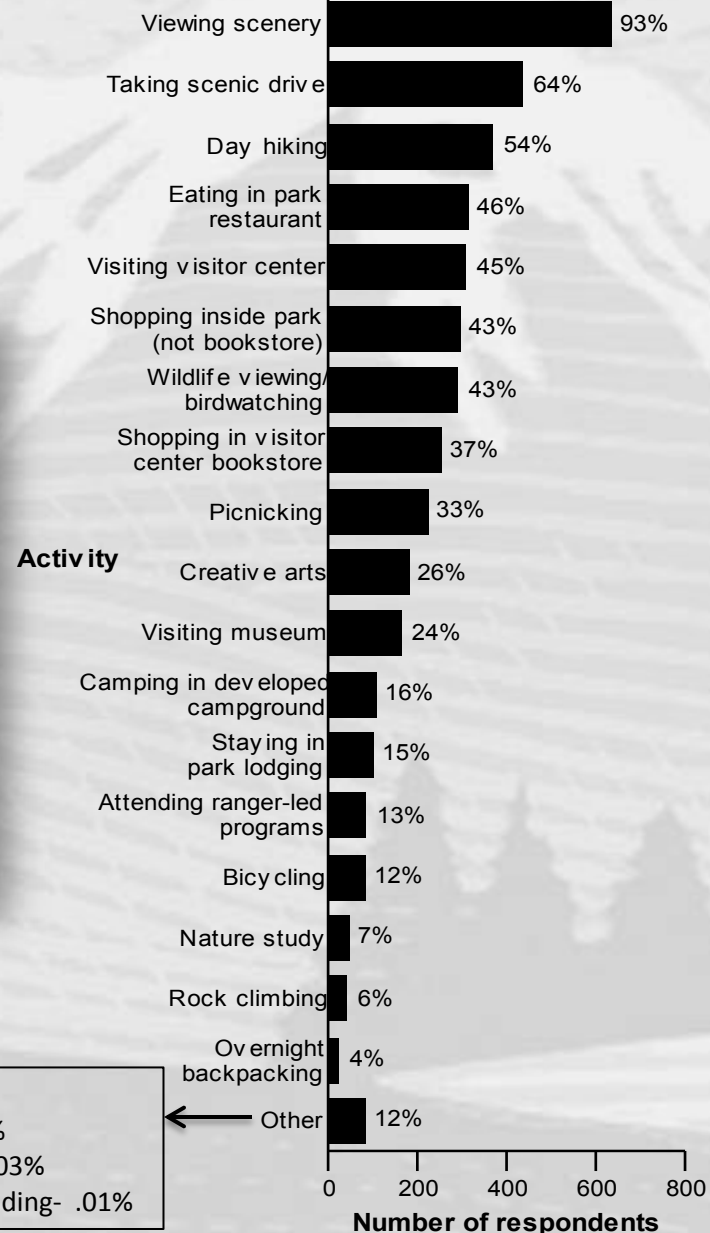
Including:  
 Rafting- .03%  
 Swimming- .03%  
 Horseback Riding- .01%



# Visitor Activities: Summer Use



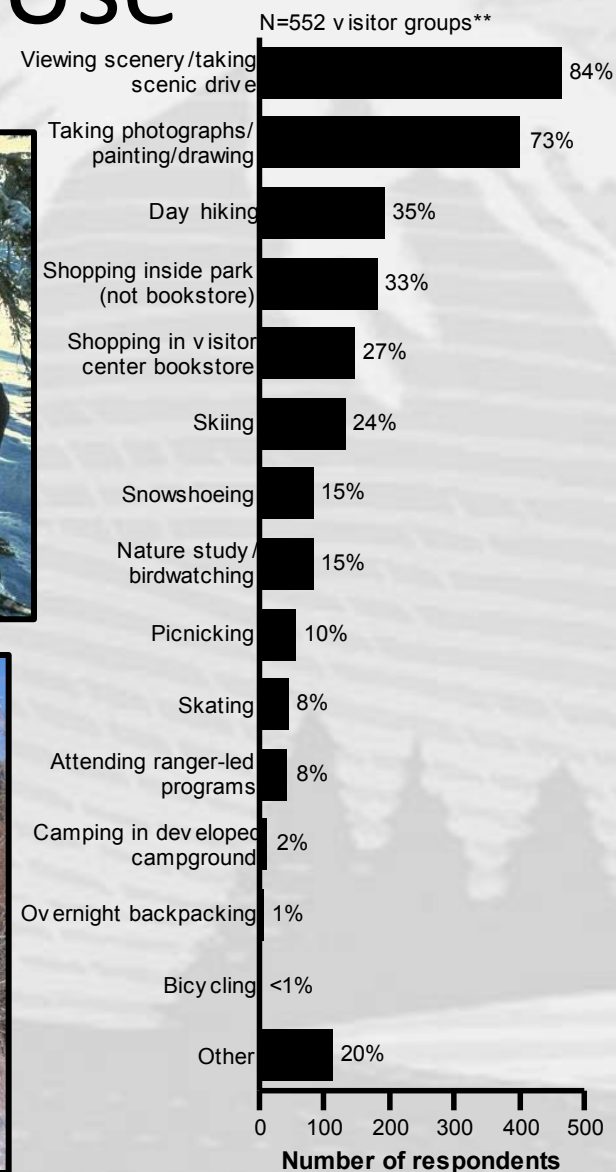
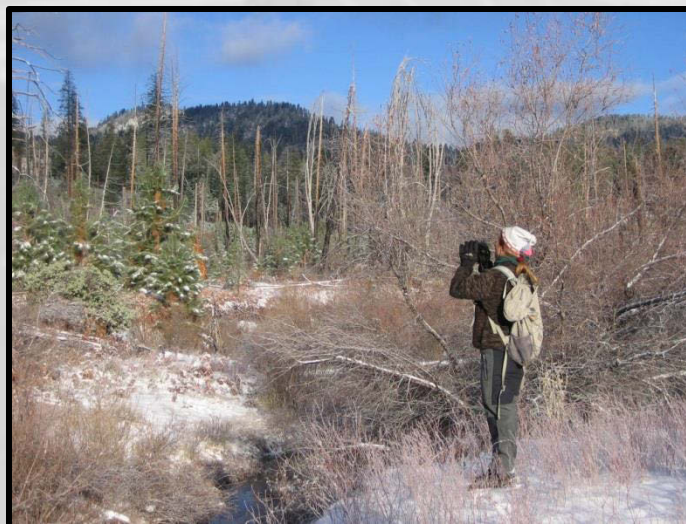
N=685 visitor groups

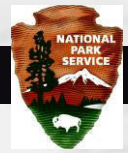


Including:  
Rafting- .03%  
Swimming- .03%  
Horseback Riding- .01%



# Visitor Activities: Winter Use





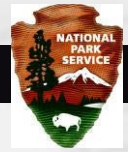
# Merced River Plan Facilities Analysis

**5** “To illustrate the level of degradation already experienced in the Merced and maintained under the regime of interim limits proposed by NPS, we need look no further than the dozens of facilities and services operating within the river corridor, including but not limited to, the many ...

-- (*Friends of Yosemite v. Kempthorne*, 9<sup>th</sup> Circ., 2008)

... swimming pools, tennis courts, mountain sports shops, restaurants, cafeterias, bars, snack stands, and other food and beverage services, gift shops, general merchandise stores, an ice-skating rink, an amphitheater, a specialty gift shop, a camp store, an art activity center, rental facilities for bicycles and rafts, skis and other equipment, a golf course and a dining hall accommodating 70 people.”

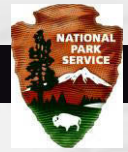




# Merced River Plan Facilities Analysis

## Proposed for Removal:

- Curry Village and Yosemite Lodge temporary employee housing
- The Ahwahnee Swimming Pool and Tennis Court
- Yosemite Village Concessioner Garage and Concessioner General Office
- Yosemite Lodge Swimming Pool, Snack Stand, Bike Stand, and Post Office
- Yosemite Art Activity Center
- Happy Isles Snack Stand
- Curry Village Ice Rink, Bike Stand, and Raft Stand
- Commercial Horseback Day Rides in Yosemite Valley
- Odgers Bulk Petroleum Storage in El Portal
- Old Wastewater Treatment Plant in El Portal

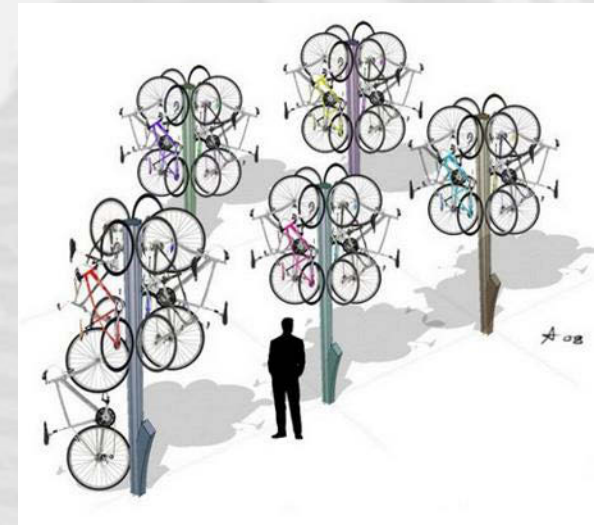


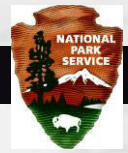
# Merced River Plan Facilities Analysis

## Opportunities for bike rental relocation within and outside river corridor



- Consider “safe” spots outside the river corridor
- Reduce scale and function to accessory uses outside other facilities (lodging, retail outlets, food service, commercial stables)
- Use self-service kiosks activated by charge cards or cell phone payment
- Concessioner maintains bicycles with a mobile service vehicle





# Merced River Plan Facilities Analysis

## Opportunities to keep ice skating as a seasonal recreation activity



- Replace the existing facility elsewhere with a seasonal installation
- Consider Winter use of a temporary rink over existing parking facilities or paved areas
- Consider temporary rink as an overlapping Winter use of Curry Village swimming pool
- Concessioner is responsible for annual installation and operation

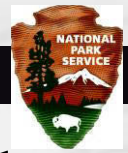




# Replace Substandard Housing



**Replace temporary, substandard housing with code compliant residences**



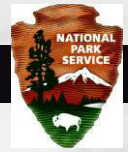
# Wawona Maintenance and Fire Facility

- Remove maintenance operations from river's edge
- Replace all modular structures with permanent buildings, including fire and maintenance facilities
- Preserve historic WPA-CCC era structures in place
- Reconfigure and screen bulk storage areas



## Draft Preferred Alternative

PROVIDING ACCESS AND PROTECTING RESOURCES



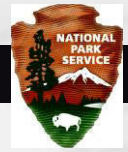
# Wawona Store and Day-use Area

- Replace inadequate restroom buildings with a larger-capacity facility
- Improve existing parking area to accommodate buses and RVs
- Extend automobile parking east along Forest Drive
- Prohibit parking on west side of Wawona Road
- Improve picnic areas and define river access



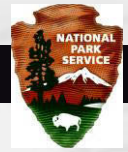
## Draft Preferred Alternative

PROVIDING ACCESS AND PROTECTING RESOURCES



## **Actions Common to All the Alternatives in Wawona**

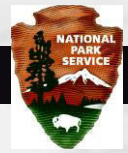
- Restore natural resources within the 150-foot riparian buffer (public lands only)
- Improve Swinging Bridge day-use area at the end of Forest Drive, on the south side of the river; add a vault toilet and trash enclosure; delineate parking
- Relocate stock camp to protect cultural resources
- Extend waste water treatment system to Wawona Campground
- Wawona Hotel tennis court to be removed
- Wawona Hotel remains fully protected as a National Historic Landmark
- No new construction is proposed in Section 35



## **Actions Proposed by the Preferred Alternative in Wawona**

- Commercial day rides will continue to be offered by the concessioner
- Wawona Campground, Loop A modifications to protect natural and cultural resources; 13 campsites will be removed (86 sites will remain)
- Wawona Hotel golf course and golf shop to remain





# User Capacity/Visitation

## East Yosemite Valley Peak-Day:

**Current free-flow visitation: 14,800 people**

2011 Facility Capacity 14,836 PAOT

+ "capacity of extra cars on road" 3,480 PAOT

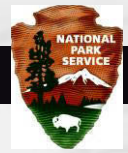
= Total 2011 Capacity 18,316 PAOT

**2011 Observed Visitation 20,900 people**

Alternative 5 Planned User Capacity: 16,683 PAOT

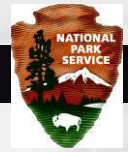
**Alternative 5 managed peak-day visitation: 19,900 people**

**Range of Alternatives – Peak-Day Visitation 13,200 – 21,800 people**



# Merced River Plan's Range of Alternatives

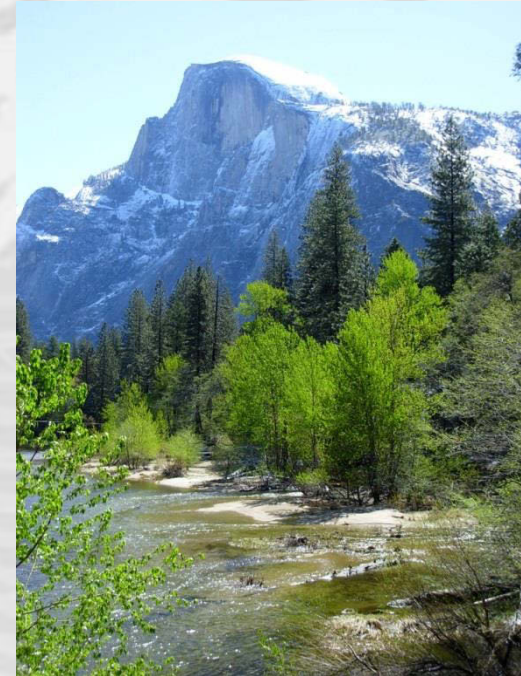
| Actions                              | No Action     | Alt 2         | Alt 3         | Alt 4         | Alt 5         | Alt 6         |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Acres Restored                       | 0             | 347           | 302           | 223           | 203           | 170           |
| <b>Peak East Valley Visitation</b>   | <b>20,900</b> | <b>13,900</b> | <b>13,200</b> | <b>17,000</b> | <b>19,900</b> | <b>21,800</b> |
| Day Visitors                         | 14,800        | 9,400         | 8,500         | 10,500        | 12,800        | 13,700        |
| Overnight Visitors                   | 6,100         | 4,500         | 4,700         | 6,500         | 7,100         | 8,100         |
| <b>Yosemite Valley Lodging Units</b> | 1,034         | 556           | 621           | 823           | <b>1,053</b>  | 1,248         |
| <b>Yosemite Valley Campsites</b>     | 466           | 450           | 477           | 701           | <b>640</b>    | 739           |
| Parking Spaces for East Valley       | 5,200         | 4,000         | 4,300         | 4,905         | 5,600         | 6,099         |
| <b>Total Project Cost (\$M)</b>      |               | <b>\$263</b>  | <b>\$187</b>  | <b>\$223</b>  | <b>\$235</b>  | <b>\$418</b>  |



# Merced River Draft Plan

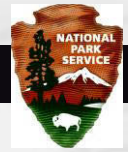
- **Public Meetings**

- Feb. 27: Yosemite Valley
- March 6: El Portal
- March 7: Mariposa
- March 14: Oakhurst
- March 15: Wawona
- March 20: Groveland
- March 21: San Francisco
- March 26: Los Angeles



- **Comment Analysis – April and May 2013**

- **Final Plan/Record of Decision: July 2013**



# Merced Public Review & Comment Periods

## Merced River Plan

- 100-day review period
- Comment period closes April 18

## Comment

Online:

[http://parkplanning.nps.gov/mrp\\_deis](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/mrp_deis)

Mail:

National Park Service

Merced River Plan

P.O. Box 577

Yosemite, CA 95389

Email: [yose\\_planning@nps.gov](mailto:yose_planning@nps.gov)

Fax: 209 / 379-1294

