

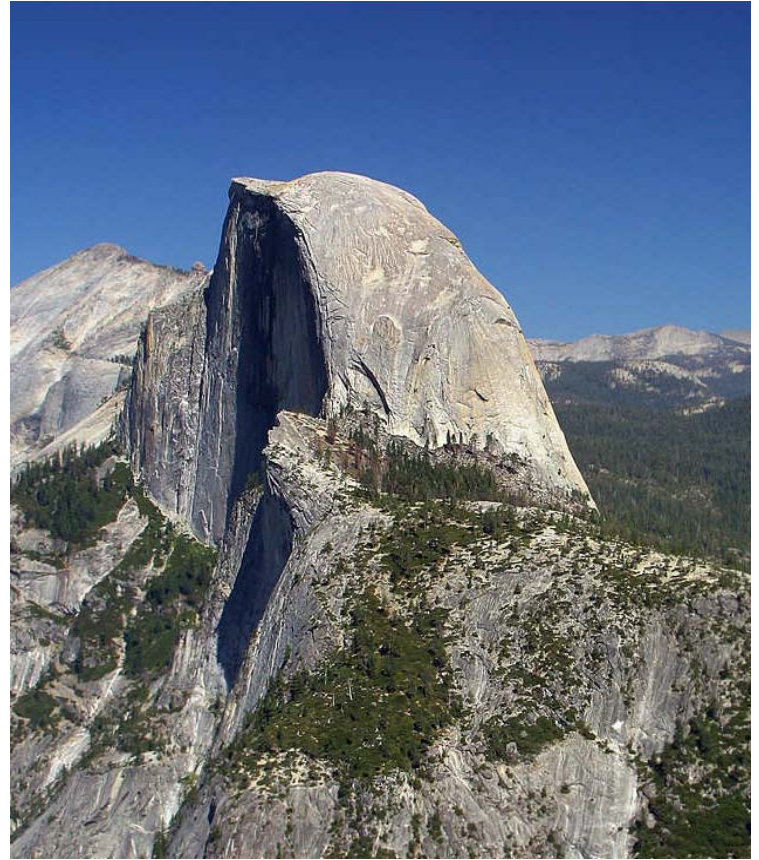


## Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan

Half Dome is an iconic, granite peak visible from many spots in Yosemite National Park. It rises 5,000 feet above the Valley floor in one dramatic sweep of sheer rock. Its summit is a goal for a broad cross section of the public. Since its first ascent in 1875, Half Dome's peak has become a major draw for park visitors. Studies conducted in 2008 observed that Saturday and holiday use averaged more than 800 hikers per day with peak numbers from 1100–1200 hikers. Crowding has led to the following problems:

Increased use of the Half Dome Trail has led to conditions that adversely impact wilderness character, including:

- High encounter rates on the trail result in inappropriate conditions for experiencing solitude in the wilderness
- High use levels impact natural resources which contribute to wilderness character and visitor experience
- Crowding subjects hikers to safety concerns due to long travel times and delays in ascending and descending the Half Dome cables. This is particularly concerning when rain and lightning are approaching.



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### Why is the plan needed?

The purpose of this plan is to address the following:

- Protect the wilderness character of the project area while providing the public the appropriate opportunity to reach the summit of Half Dome;
- Improve the visitor experience on the Half Dome trail by reducing crowding;
- Protect the area's natural and cultural resources; and,
- Improve public safety by reducing crowding on the Half Dome trail.

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### What is the schedule for this plan?

Public Scoping for this plan occurred from May to July 2010. Public review of the environmental assessment will take place from January 24 through March 15, 2012. A decision document will be completed in time for the 2013 hiking season.

## What are the alternatives?

The alternatives were shaped through input from visitor-use studies, public and internal scoping, and American Indian consultation. This plan focuses on actions that will protect and enhance the wilderness character of Half Dome Trail, as well as the ability of visitors to manage personal risks.

The environmental assessment (EA) presents and analyzes five alternatives for public review and comment regarding wilderness character and risk management on the Half Dome Trail, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act.

- Alternative A: No Restrictions (No Action)
- Alternative B: 400 People Per Day
- Alternative C: 300 People Per Day (Preferred)
- Alternative D: 140 People Per Day
- Alternative E: Remove the Cables

Common to all alternatives:

- Visitor education
- Ranger patrols
- Trail maintenance
- Visitor–use monitoring
- Wilderness camping

Common to Alternatives B, C, and D:

- Maintain the Half Dome Cables
- Regulate use via a permit system
- Adjust allocation of permits to improve equitability and efficiency as technology or other opportunities become available. The National Park Service will periodically update permit allocation plans and advise the public of any changes to the program.
- Permit fees would likely range between \$5 and \$20 to recover costs for monitoring, safety and stewardship education, ensure compliance with use limits, and wilderness protection.

These alternatives represent a reasonable range of options to satisfy the purpose of and need for the project, while also meeting all relevant legal requirements. To review the environmental consequences of these alternatives, please visit: <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/hdp.htm>

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## How can I get involved?

- **Visit online:** [www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/planning.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/planning.htm)
- **Attend Public Open Houses** on the last Wednesday of each month from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Visitor Center Auditorium in Yosemite Valley. Park entrance fees are waived for visitors who attend the Public Open Houses.
- **Submit your email address** to receive the park's periodic electronic newsletter [yose\\_planning@nps.gov](mailto:yose_planning@nps.gov)
- **Provide input during the planning process.** You can submit comments by visiting the National Park Service's Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) project page at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/halfdome> Or send regular mail to:

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