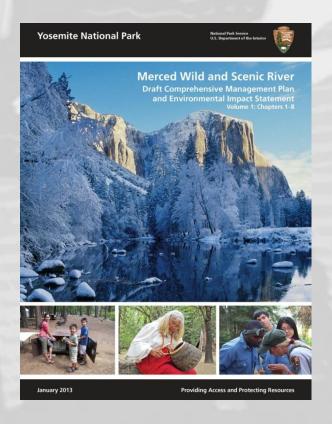
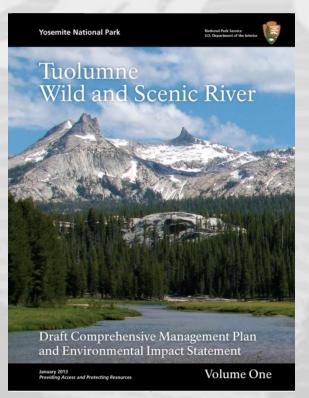
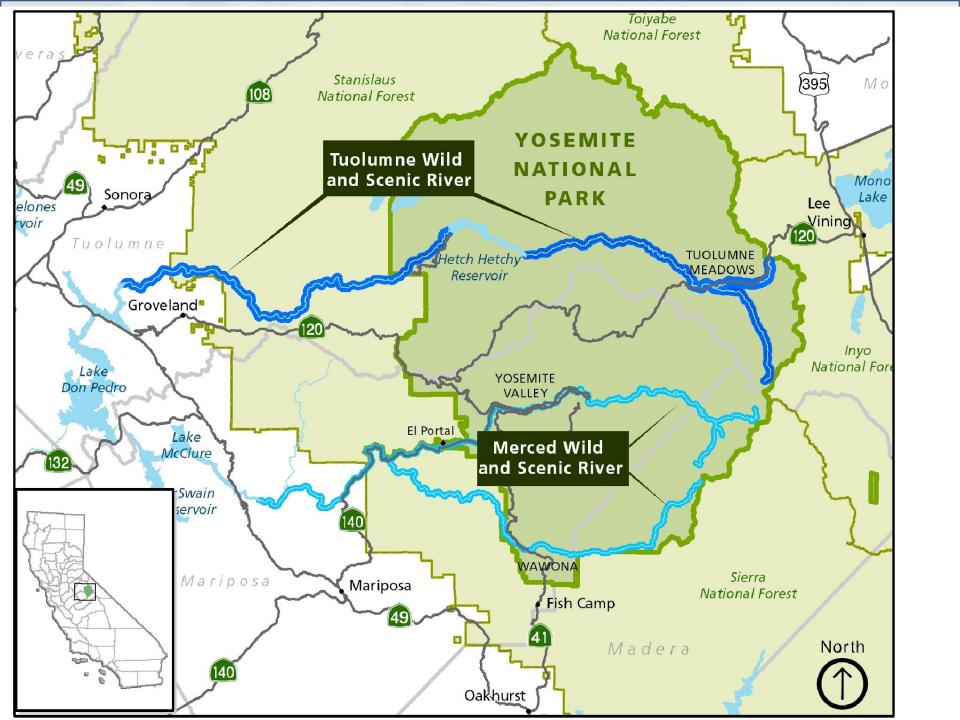
### MERCED AND TUOLUMNE RIVERS

Draft Comprehensive River Management Plans and Environmental Impact Statements





Mammoth Lakes Feb. 23, 2013



### Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968

- Protects free-flowing condition
- Protects water quality
- □ Protects and enhances the river's *Outstandingly*Remarkable Values (ORVs)— the qualities that make the river worthy of special protection
- Requires management plans to be completed to provide longterm guidance

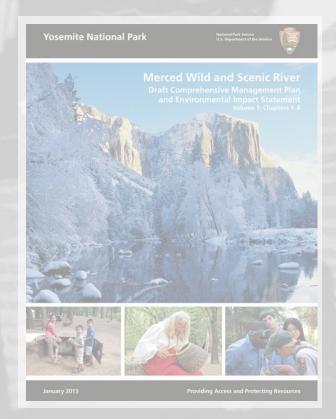


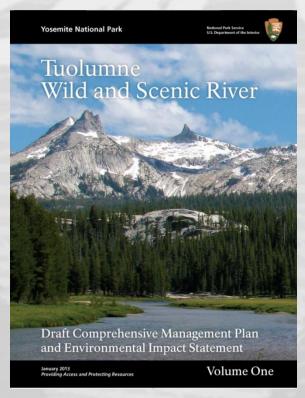
"Each [river] will be managed to protect and enhance the values for which the river was designated, while providing for public recreation and resource uses which do not adversely impact or degrade those values."

WSRA Guidelines, 1982

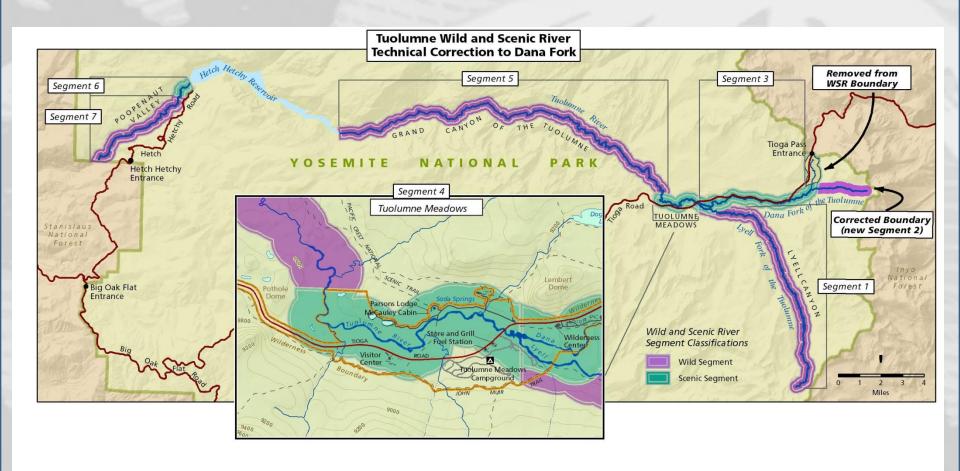
### MERCED AND TUOLUMNE RIVERS

Draft Comprehensive River Management Plans and Environmental Impact Statements





### **Tuolumne River Plan Boundaries**





### **Tuolumne ORVs**

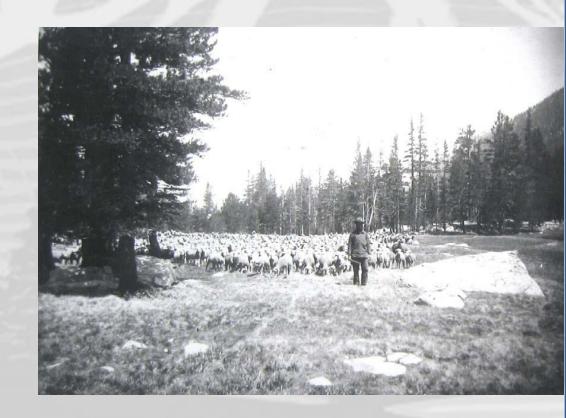
- Tuolumne meadows
- Poopenaut Valley
- Scenery in Dana Fork, Tuolumne, and Grand Canyon
- Parsons Lodge
- Archeological landscape
- Backcountry recreation
- High country access
- Stairstep river morphology
- Free-flow
- Water quality





# Tuolumne Meadows Baseline Condition Assessment

- Final Condition
   assessment released
   in 2011-- Chapter 5
- Major concerns were:
  - Lingering effects of 1800s sheep grazing
  - Trampling and social trails from contemporary human use





### **Baseline Condition Assessment**



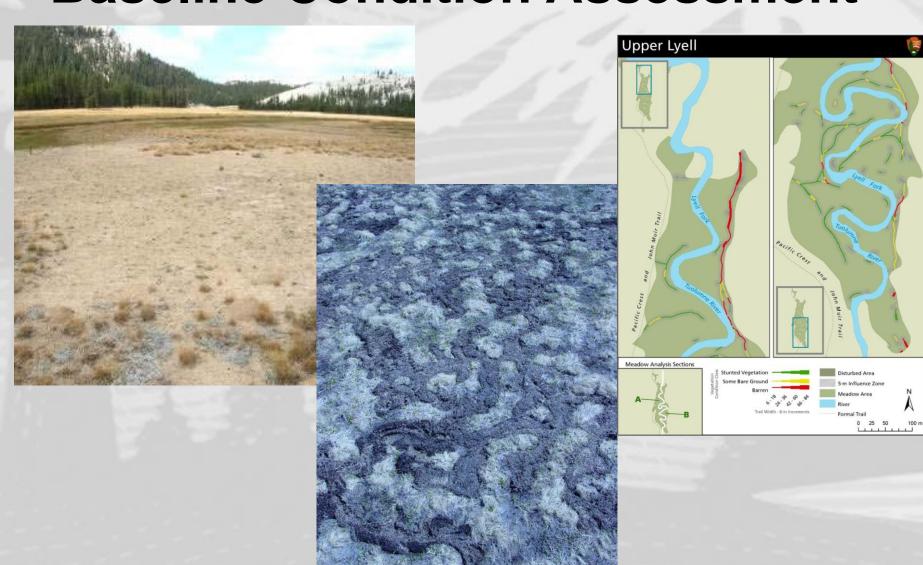






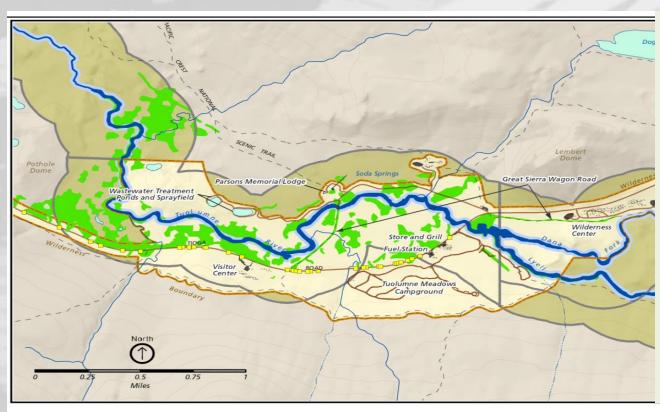


## **Baseline Condition Assessment**





### **Restore Tuolumne Meadows**



**Restoration Program** 

- 1. Eliminate informal trails
- 2. Remove structures from riverbanks and wetlands
- 3. Restore riparian vegetation along riverbanks
- 4. Mitigate effects of Tioga Road culverts
- 5. Mitigate effects of Great Sierra Wagon Road
- 6. Mitigate stock-use effects
- 7. Conduct more research

Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan Ecological Restoration Priority Locations

Priorities for Ecological Restoration

Culvert Repair/Replacement

Riverbank Restoration, Corridorwide as Needed

Wild and Scenic River Corridor Boundary

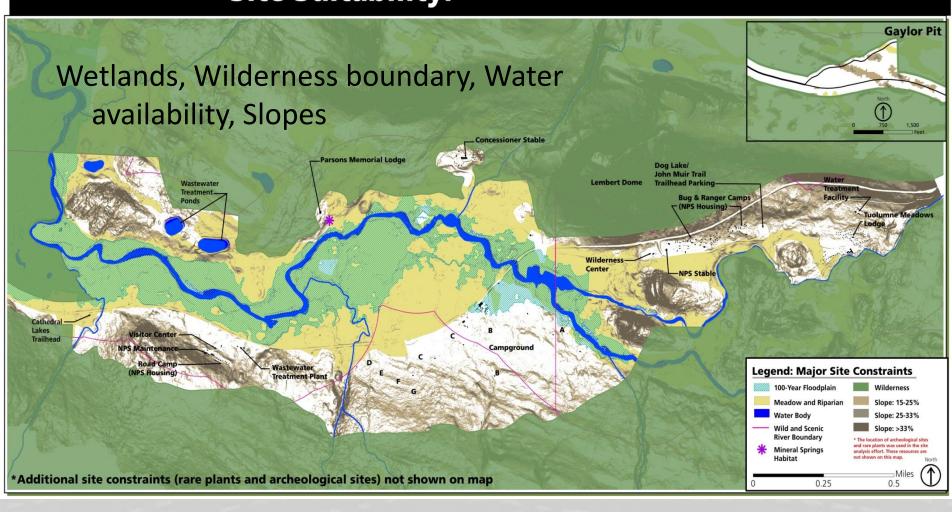
Yosemite Wilderness

Non-Wilderness



# **Tuolumne Planning Constraints**

### **Site Suitability:** Tuolumne Meadows





### **TRP's Range of Alternatives**

**Alternative 1: Emphasizing a Self-Reliant Experience** 

**Alternative 2: Expanding Recreational Opportunities** 

**Alternative 3: Celebrating the Tuolumne Cultural Heritage** 

**Alternative 4: Improving the Traditional Tuolumne Experience** 



# NATIONAL PARK

### Alternative 1: Emphasizing a Self-reliant Experience



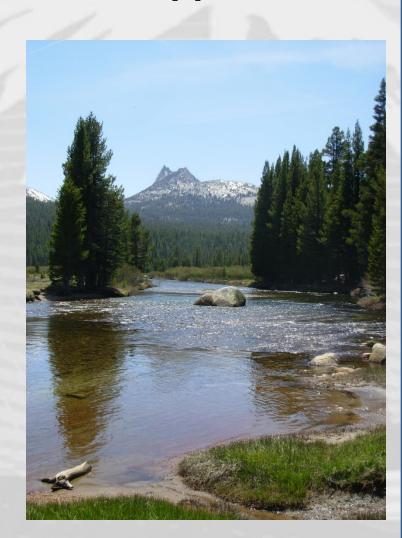


- Lodge eliminated
- Store, grill, & gas station removed
- Visitor contact station consolidated into wilderness center
- Stables & trail rides removed
- Glen Aulin HSC removed
- Campground capacity: 237 sites (304 now)
- Parking capacity: 481 (533 now)
- Overnight capacity: 2,032 (2,742 now)
- Day use limit: 1,033 (1,774 now)
- Employee housing: 100 (150 now)
- Water use: 33,000 gpd (64,000 now)



### **Alternative 2: Expanding Recreational Opportunities**

- Lodge retained as is
- Store, grill, & gas station retained
- New visitor contact station near store; wilderness center retained
- Trail rides reduced to 2-2 hr rides, with stables moved to near existing WWTP
- Glen Aulin HSC retained but converted to temporary outfitter camp
- Campground capacity: 345 sites (304 now)
- Parking capacity: 982 (533 now)
- Overnight capacity: 2,988 (2,742 now)
- Day use limit: 1,913 (1,774 now)
- Employee housing: 174 (150 now)
- Water use: 70,000 gpd (64,000 now)



#### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### Alt. 3: Celebrating the Tuolumne Cultural Heritage



- Lodge downsized to 34 cabins (69 now)
- Store & grill retained; gas station removed
- Visitor contact station & wilderness center retained
- Trail rides reduced to 2-2 hr rides, with stables retained at existing locations
- Glen Aulin HSC downsized to 28 beds (32 now)
- Campground capacity kept at 304 sites
- Parking capacity: 813 (533 now)
- Overnight capacity: 2,598 (2,742 now)
- Day use limit: 1,568 (1,774 now)
- Employee housing: 124 (150 now)
- Water use: 64,000 gpd (same as now)



### **Tuolumne: Preferred Alternative**

- Retain traditional Tuolumne experience
- Restore Tuolumne Meadows
- Consolidate development
- Make visitor use more sustainable
- Provide meaningful introduction to meadows for short-term visitors





# Retain Traditional Tuolumne Experience

- Lodge, wilderness center, store and grill retained
- Campground overhauled
- Hwy. 120 (Tioga Road) to remain open without restrictions

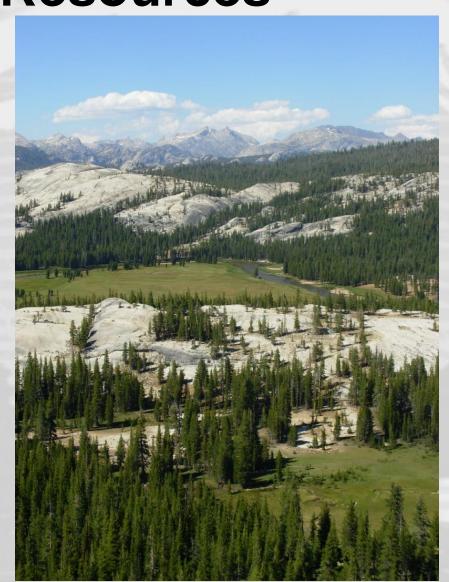






## **Protecting Resources**

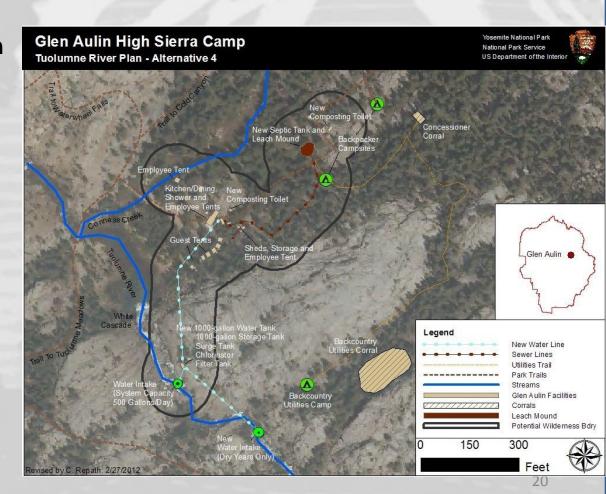
- Restoration program
- Eliminate roadside parking
- Move three cabins at lodge away from river
- Move all concessioner housing away from river & wetlands
- Limit water withdrawals at Tuolumne
- Remove gas station
- Stabilize "Little Blue Slide"
- Limit stock grazing in Lyell Canyon to 192 stock nights per year





# Protecting Resources: Glen Aulin

- Downsize Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp (32 to 20 beds)
- Replace Glen Aulin flush toilets with composting toilet
- Replace Glen Aulin backpacker composting toilet with new one
- Renovate water treatment system
- Eliminate meals-only service
- Eliminate wood stoves





# **Consolidate Development**

#### **Parking situation**

- Extensive road shoulder parking
- Affects Scenic ORV
- Side effect of meadow trampling
- Unacceptable safety concerns

#### **Proposed solution**

- Formalize & expand parking lots at Lembert Dome, Pothole Dome, store, Dog Lake Trailhead, Wilderness Center, existing visitor center
- Construct new centralized lot at new visitor contact station

#### **Consolidate other development**

- Wastewater treatment plant
- Employee housing
- Stables







### Make Visitor Use More Sustainable

- Upgrade wastewater treatment plant to modern codes
- Downsize Glen Aulin to be within wastewater treatment capacity
- Replace employee housing with codecompliant, efficient units
- Consolidate parking
- Connect visitor services with walking paths/trails
- Implement water conservation measures







# Provide Meaningful Introduction to Tuolumne Meadows

- Construct new visitor contact station
- Provide parking at that location
- Improve trail to Parson's Lodge
- Eliminate roadside parking
- Formalize shuttle stop at Lembert Dome
- Eliminate commercial day trail rides







## **TRP's Preferred Alternative Capacities**

Overnight Capacity	Action	Units	# People
Tuolumne Lodge	Reduce Tuolumne Lodge (- 35 units)	69	276
Campground	Retain current campground capacity	304	2,034
Glen Aulin	Reduce Glen Aulin HSC (- 3 units)	5	20
Wilderness	Trailhead Quotas Maintained	-	400
Total Overnight Use (PAOT)			
Day-Use Capacity	Action	Units	# People
T. M. Parking Area	Action Increase day-use parking (+222 spaces)	Units 562	# People 1787
			·
T. M. Parking Area	Increase day-use parking (+222 spaces)	562	1787
T. M. Parking Area Bus riders to T. M.	Increase day-use parking (+222 spaces) Increase regional public transit	562 8	1787 360

Employee housing: 274 beds (+5%, 262 beds now) / Water use: 67,000 gpd (+5%, 64,000 gpd now)



# **User Capacity Management**

- Camping and lodging: limited by # of rooms or sites
- Day users: limited by # of parking spots and by # of bus runs
- Admin use: limited by # of beds
- Plan includes provisions if demand for day use parking sites is regularly exceeded
- Plan applies monitoring to ensure that use does not adversely effect or degrade river values.



PROVIDING ACCESS AND PROTECTING RESOURCES

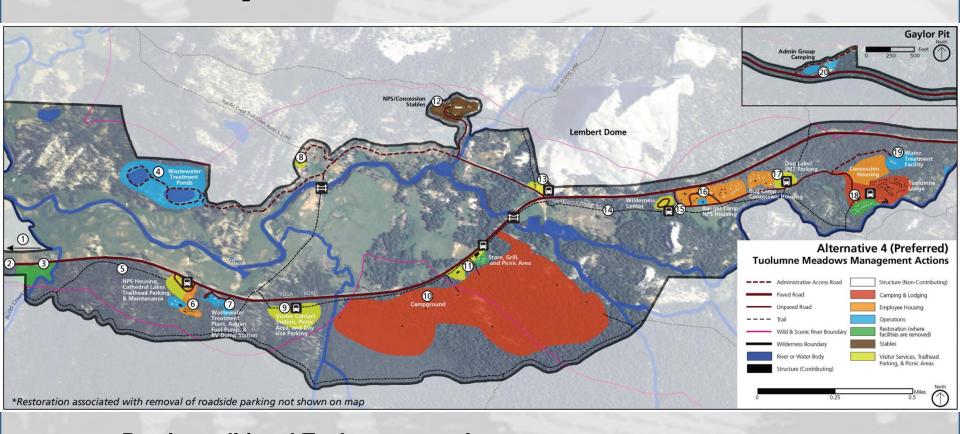


# **TRP's Range of Alternatives**

Actions	No Action	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4 (Preferred)
Acres Restored	0	233	175	176	173
Total Visitor Capacity Corridorwide (PAOT)	4,516	3,065	4,901	4,166	4,569
Total Overnight Capacity Corridorwide (PAOT)	2,742	2,032	2,988	2,598	2,730
Total Day Use Capacity in Corridor (PAOT)	1,774	1,033	1,913	1,568	1,839
Tuolumne Meadows Lodging Units	276	0	276	136	276
Tuolumne Meadows Campsites	304	237	345	304	304
Tuolumne Meadows Employees (NPS and Concessioner)	262	102	286	236	274
Parking Spaces in Tuolumne Meadows	870	481	982	813	914
Total Water Use (gallons per day)	64,000	36,000	70,000	60,000	67,000
Total Project Cost (\$M)		\$47	\$71	\$50	\$66



# Map Overview for the TRP



Retain traditional Tuolumne experience
Restore Tuolumne Meadows
Consolidate development
Make visitor use more sustainable
Provide meaningful introduction to meadows for short-term visitors

# Tuolumne River Plan: What's Next

- **Public Meetings** 
  - Feb. 19: San Francisco
  - Feb. 20: Groveland
  - Feb. 21: Yosemite Valley
  - Feb. 23: Mammoth Lakes
- Comment Analysis March and April 2013
- Final Plan: Summer 2013
- Record of Decision: Summer/Fall 2013



### **Tuolumne River Plan Public Review**

#### **Tuolumne River Plan**

- 70-day review period
- Comment period closes March 18

#### Comment

#### Online:

http://parkplanning.nps.gov/trp\_deis

#### Mail:

National Park Service Tuolumne River Plan P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

Email: <a href="mailto:yose\_planning@nps.gov">yose\_planning@nps.gov</a>

Fax: 209 / 379-1294





# Actions to Protect and Enhance







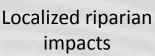


# Merced Baseline Condition Assessment

- Draft Baseline Conditions Report updated July 2012 – see Chapter 5
- Localized impacts to El Capitan
   Meadow
- Riparian areas between Clark's and Sentinel Bridges
- Hydrologic impacts of Sugarpine Bridge
- Informal trails through valley meadows
- Condition of National Historic Landmarks



Flooded informal trail in El Capitan Meadow



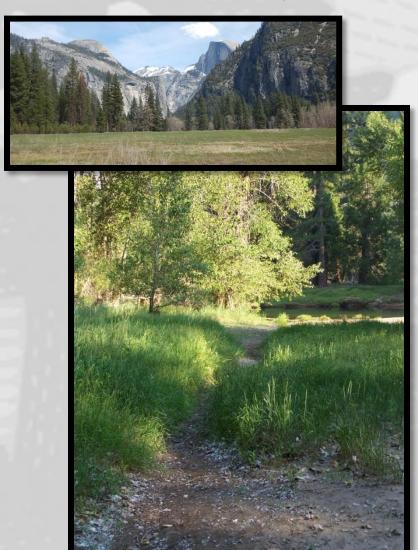




Hydrologic impacts of Sugar Pine Bridge



#### **Restore Yosemite Valley Meadows**





Remove Riverbank Riprap

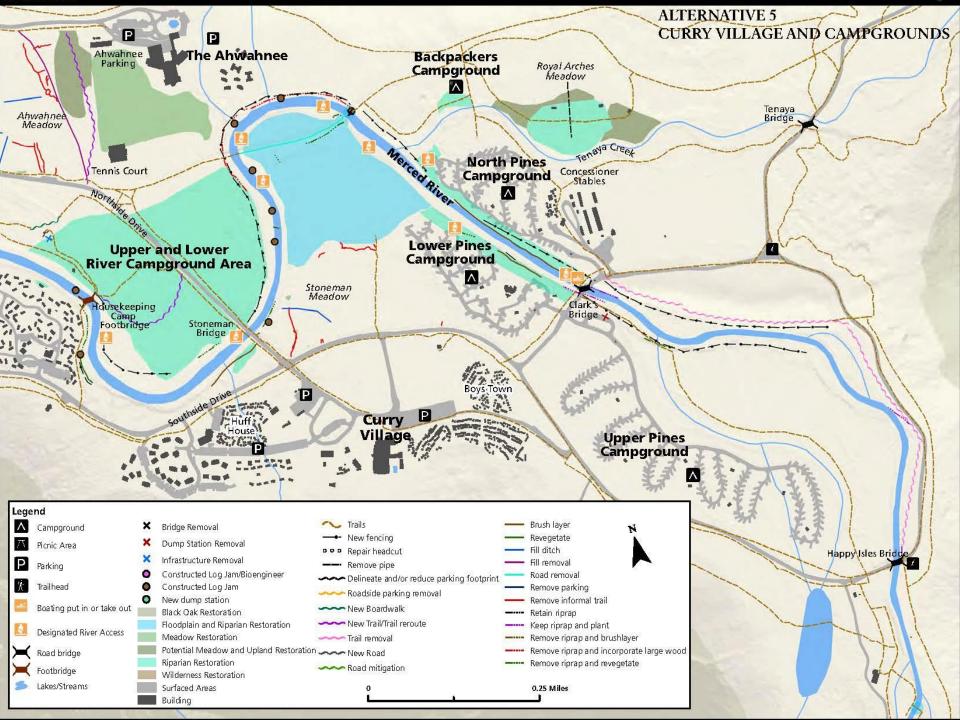


#### **Historic Preservation**





**Correct Impacts to Free-Flow** 





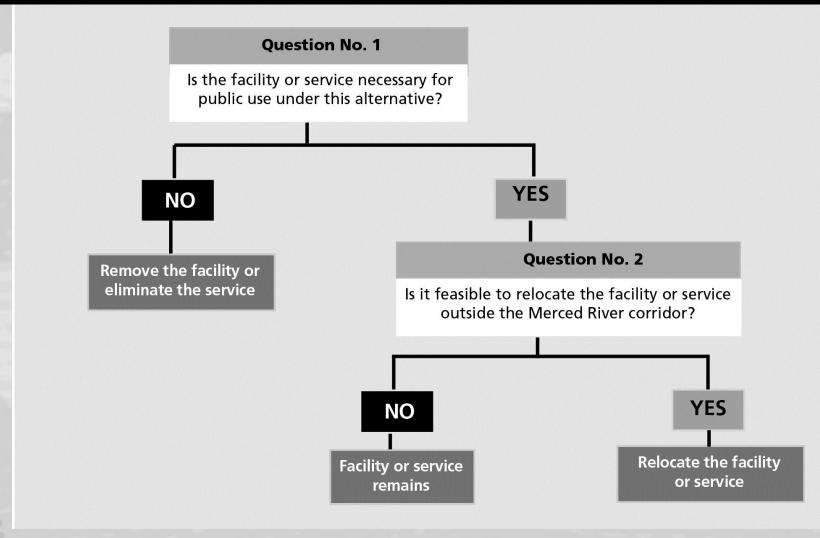
### Merced River Plan Facilities Analysis

#### Facilities Removed – Under All Alternatives

- 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



### WSRA Requirements for Facilities Analysis



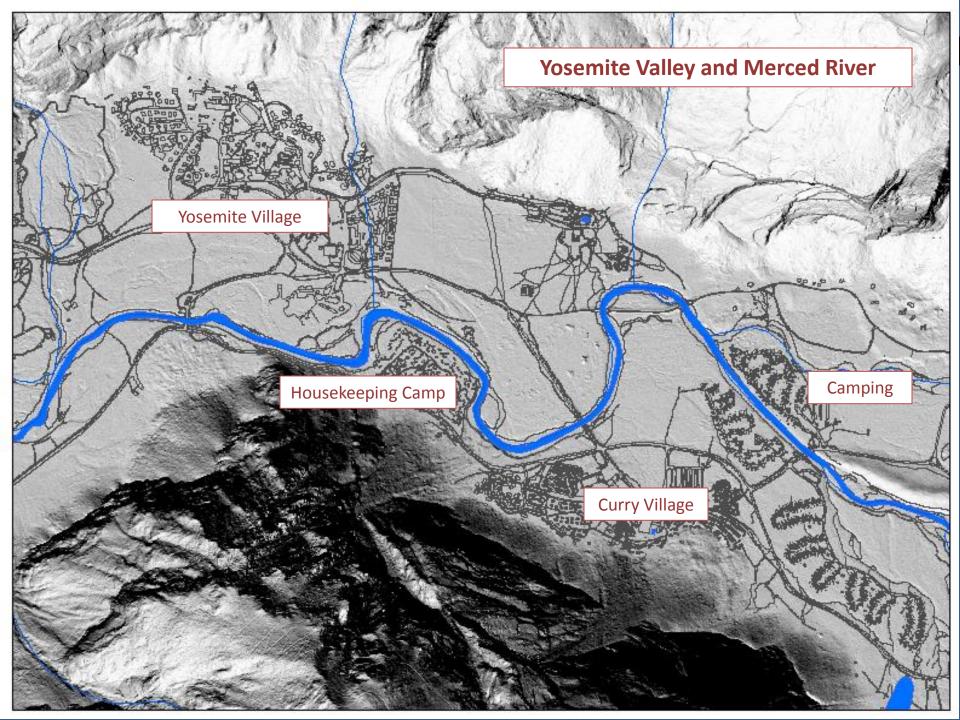


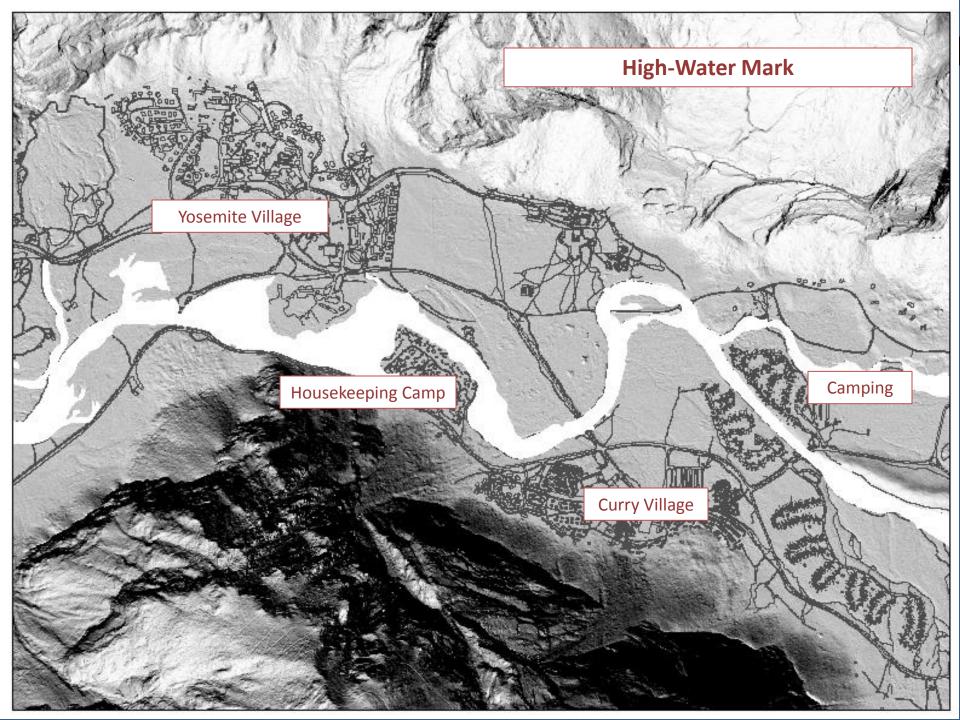
### **Merced River Plan Facilities Analysis**

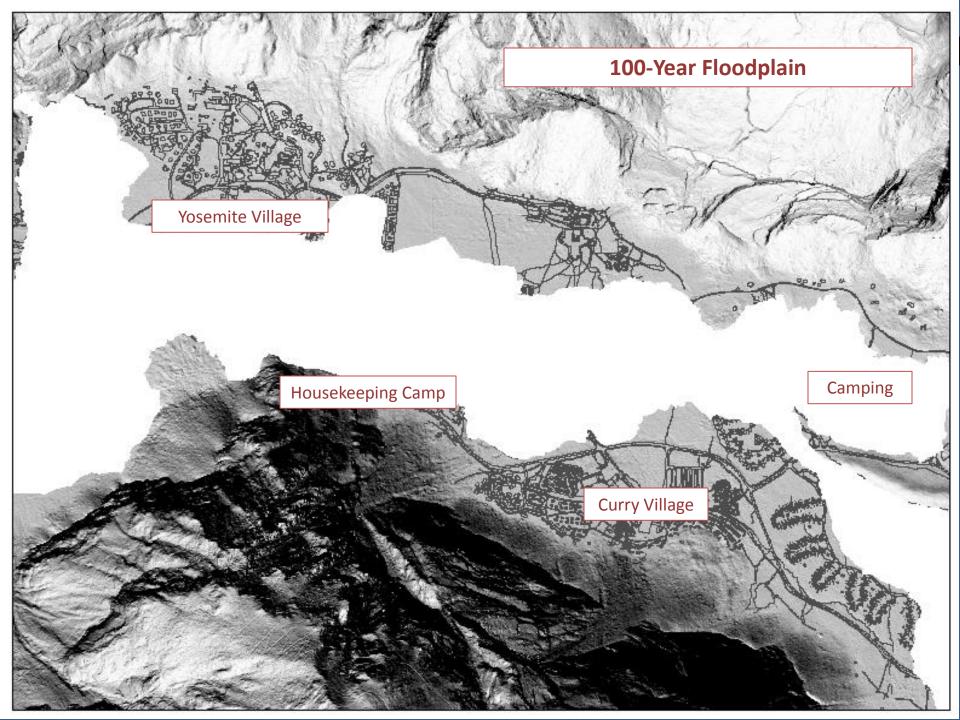
5 "To illustrate the level of degradation already experienced in the Merced and maintained under the regime of interim limits proposed by NPS, we need look no further than the dozens of facilities and services operating within the river corridor, including but not limited to, the many ...

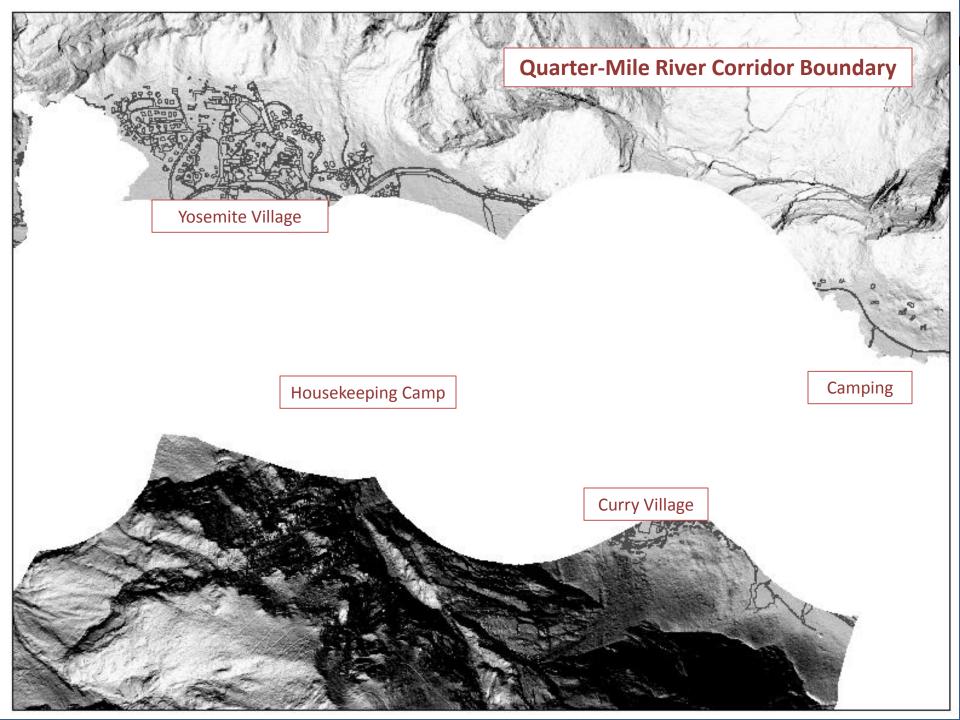
-- (Friends of Yosemite v. Kempthorne, 9th Circ., 2008)

... 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."









#### **Quarter-Mile Boundary and Edge of Talus**



Housekeeping Camp



Camping

Curry Village





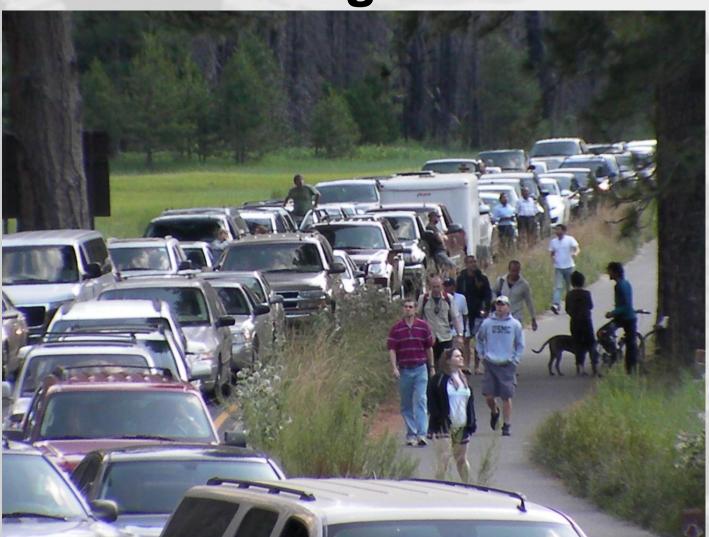
### **Draft Preferred Alternative**

- Ensures that the experiences enjoyed by generations of families are sustained over time.
- Provides visitors the freedom to access Yosemite Valley by private vehicle.
- Reduces traffic congestion and crowding with organized and efficient day-use parking.
- Creates a sense of arrival by redesigning the primary day-use parking area and removing 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)

#### **Current Condition**



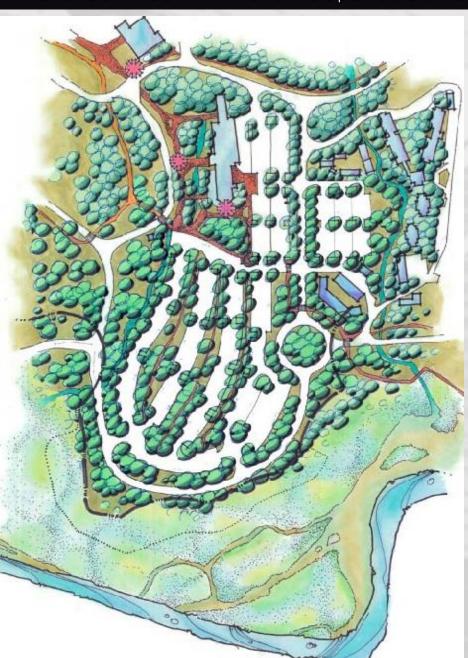




# Yosemite Village Day-Use Parking Area

**Parking Pulled Back from River** 





# **Draft Preferred Alternative**



# **Yosemite Lodge and Camp 4**



#### **Draft Preferred Alternative**





PROVIDING ACCESS AND PROTECTING RESOURCES

### Improving Visitor Experience

- Reduce Congestion and Crowding
- Expand low-cost camping by 37% in Yosemite Valley
- Replace Curry Village tent cabins with hard-sided units
- Provide a "Sense of Arrival" to Yosemite Village area





# **Camping Units**

	Alt 1	Alt 5	Details
Yosemite Valley	(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 + 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
Wawona			
Wawona Campground	99	86	Sites removed within 100 feet of river or culturally sensitive areas
Total Camping in Corridor	565	726	



## **Lodging Units**

	Alt 1	Alt 5	Details		
	(No Action)				
Merced Lake High Sierra Camp	22 (60 beds)	11 (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 and163 hard-sided units		
Yosemite Lodge	245	245	No changes		
Total Valley Lodging	1,034	1,053			
Wawona Hotel	104		No Change to this National Historic Landmark		
Total Lodging in Corridor	1,160	1,168			

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

# Replace Substandard Housing



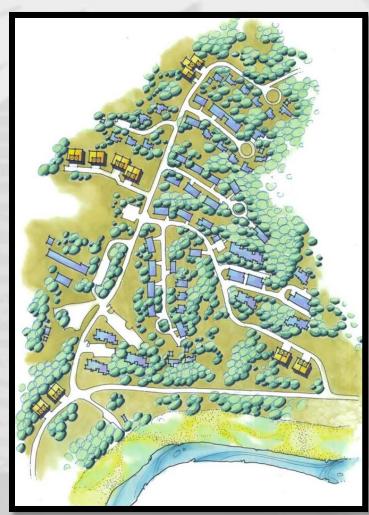
Replace temporary, substandard housing with code compliant residences



# Relocate Housing to El Portal



Abbieville / Trailer Village



Rancheria



### **User Capacity/Visitation**

**East Yosemite Valley Peak-Day:** 

Current User Capacity (People-at-one-time): 13,594

PAOT

Current free-flow visitation: 14,800 people

Effective 2011 Capacity 14,836 PAOT

2011 Observed Visitation 20,900 **people** 

Alternative 5 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 Alte	ernatives

ivierceu niver Plans nange of Alternative							
Actions	No Action	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	
Acres Restored	0	347	302	223	203	170	

13,900

9,400

4,500

556

450

4,000

\$263

PROVIDING ACCESS AND PROTECTING RESOURCES

13,200

8,500

4,700

621

477

4,300

\$187

17,000

10,500

6,500

823

701

4,905

\$223

19,900

12,800

7,100

1,053

640

5,600

\$235

21,800

13,700

8,100

1,248

739

6,099

\$418

20,900

14,800

6,100

1,034

466

5,200

**Peak East Valley Visitation** 

**Overnight Visitors** 

**Yosemite Valley Campsites** 

Parking Spaces for East Valley

**Total Project Cost (\$M)** 

**Yosemite Valley Lodging Units** 

**Day Visitors** 



### Merced River Draft Plan: What's Next

Webinars
1 p.m. Feb. 5, 7, and 14
10 a.m. Feb. 27

#### Public Meetings

Feb. 27: Yosemite Valley

- March 6: El Portal

March 7: Mariposa

March 14: Oakhurst

March 15: Wawona

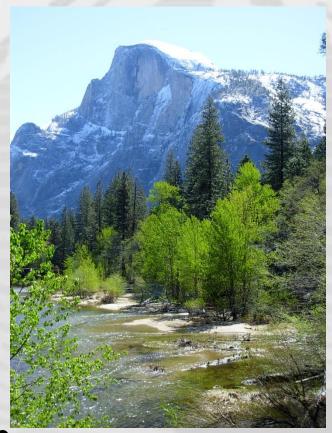
March 20: Groveland

March 21: San Francisco

March 26: Los Angeles



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

#### Mail:

National Park Service Merced River Plan P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

Email: <a href="mailto:yose\_planning@nps.gov">yose\_planning@nps.gov</a>

Fax: 209 / 379-1294

