

Public Scoping Meeting Comments
11/16/2009
4-8 p.m.
LA Rivers Center, Los Angeles, CA

Comments/Questions

- Don't "Zionize" Yosemite Valley (requiring people to come in by shuttle bus)
- Concerned about the years of bookwork. What will happen to numbers of campgrounds in the meantime?
- Maintain river sites as they are
- Would like to have information about this plan at lodging reservation website, campgrounds, lodging check-in registration desk, etc.
- Why is the Superintendent living in a house in Yosemite Valley? Look at the number of tents that could be there! Why is the school still there when there could be campsites there?
- Concerned that the science may be skewed based on the agenda of a particular scientist/consultant
- There is so much to celebrate: the protection of meadows (we applaud this) ; the shuttle bus system (this is great). If you look at all the aspects and voices, the campers have not been heard. Backpackers, climbers voices are heard. But look at the campgrounds.
- Lots of people are getting into their cars to get ice/supplies at the store. What if there was a way to have someone come through the campground to sell ice? Keep people in campground
- As a family that has enjoyed Yosemite Valley for multiple generations, I see the reduction of camping as limiting the opportunity for new generations to enjoy and learn. These are the people who want to see the Valley protected. Don't eliminate them.
- We need an opportunity for affordable family drive-in camping. This has been totally left out of the picture: those who want to set up camp, enjoy the Valley for the week, this is being limited, pushed aside
- If people don't have a computer, they cannot find out about public meetings; NPS is concealing this info
- Would like transparency regarding the groups that are participating in the planning process. NPS needs to be clear about who is influencing the decision making. Who are the Tribes? Who are the agencies being consulted?
- How do you define the scope of your scope? Does it include all things near the river (like the stables?)
- How do you define "protection"? Are there areas that are being damaged that will be addressed in this plan? (for example, riverbank erosion at North Pines)
- Will this plan have implications for other Wild and Scenic Rivers? Other national parks?
- What is the role of evolution and the natural processes in this plan?

- There's a contradiction between rapid rate at which the split-rail fence goes up along the river, yet the Upper and Lower River Campgrounds remain languishing with no action
- Since flood campsites have been reduced. Who gave the NPS the right to eliminate those sites?
- Been here before. And you guys will just do what you want
- Do not close Northside Drive. Not safe for emergency access and exit, especially during a flood
- When will we get a new concessionaire? (I don't like the prices). People are priced out
- Would like to see some competition for business in the park. No incentive to provide better service
- When there are fewer campsites, you have greater impact at those existing sites

What do you Love about the Merced River in Yosemite? (Yose Valley, Wawona, El Portal, high country)

- The diversity of things to do (for all age groups) at campgrounds in the Valley.
- Campgrounds! Restore to previous # of sites (before flood)
- Suggest that NPS limit advance campground reservations to 75%. The other 25% would be first come-first served
- Allow some compromise to natural resources in the Valley to provide for visitor use
- Build a bike trail to west end of the Valley (i.e. from Yose Lodge)
- Consider a sliding scale entrance fee – by # of days in park

What should stay the same?

- Merced River watershed should be kept to Wild and Scenic
- Watershed should remain available for use by people
- Car camping

What do you want to see fixed? changed? improved?

- Mirror Lake used to be a lake 25 years ago. It's not a lake anymore. [clarification: restoration is not encouraged] What is the extent of restoration efforts or protection that you propose? Natural processes must be allowed to happen
- Circulation system touches on the river in several places. What is the relationship between planning goals and existing transportation facilities?
- Address parking and access at Mariposa Grove of Big Trees. Too much movement when capacity is reached and people need to be shuttled from the Village

- Greater volume of traffic at Wawona entrance is bound for the Valley, not Wawona
- Use camping reservation system to build mailing list – think about other typical users and groups and contact them for meeting announcements
- Demand for camping is high. Clearly there is a need to disperse activities around the Valley
- About 5% of the river is actually being used by people, 95% is not. The rules for use are too stringent. Split-rail fences have been installed as barriers between the people and their river, without public input
- Park staff moved too quickly in closing campgrounds and building fences
- 60% of the park's campsites have been removed from public use, either by restoration or by exclusive access thru on-line computer system
- North Road must be kept open to public use
- Concessionaire should be replaced by someone/corporation that will provide services and merchandise at fair prices.
- Reduction in camping is a disservice to those people who really love the Valley and have protected it for years and years (generations). We can't get in
- Huge influx of tour buses has changed the park visitors experience
- Provide more campsites at affordable rates for families, people without RVs and other intrusive technology
- Identify interested parties and organizations by name for disclosure purposes and transparency
- Ensure objectivity of scientists and consultants throughout the planning process
- Numerous car trips are made by campers going to the Village for ice and back. Provide concession services in campgrounds, as mobile vehicles
- Do not Zionize Yosemite – everyone parks down at the Visitor Center and rides a shuttle into the park
- Demolish the Superintendent's house and replace it with campgrounds; the school too
- Small details – like ice at campgrounds are important. 1-hour parking at the market is a brilliant solution
- Restore the Firefalls!
- Reinstate campgrounds from Happy Isles to the Swinging Bridge
- Reservation system opens and closes almost immediately – a huge load
- Provide a rationale for every action item e.g. what was the rationale for closing the Upper and Lower River Campgrounds?
- Campers should be required to re-affirm their reservations so that camp sites don't go unused when they fail to show up

What do you want to see protected?

- Making ice available locally at the campground; may seem like a small detail, but it makes a difference

- It would be absolutely catastrophic to close off Northside Drive (as was proposed in the YVP), especially if there was fire, flood
- Bear boxes and canisters have worked well
- Need to have these opportunities available for the next generation. There would be nothing worse than for there to be “look but don’t touch” at our national parks
- Would like to see commercial tour buses coming in to park be converted to CNG
- The limits on morning campfires is OK if it’s protecting the park. But we have to have campfires at night
- Would like to see some limited ability to pick up wood off the ground. Didn’t have beetle problems when people were allowed to pick up downed wood
- Walkways in the meadows are terrific. When people camped in meadows, they were trashed
- Bears – Trash used to be in one place. The bears went there instead of in the campsites. Once that was eliminated, bears went into campgrounds. Bear boxes are a good thing – they work.
- If parameters for the river are as broad as presented, concerned it may mean the elimination of camping in Yosemite Valley
- Camping means so many things to so many people Love to sleep under the stars. Love the smell of Yosemite in the air. It’s something to acquire by living it
- Back in WWII, camped wherever you plopped a tent. An inexpensive way for a family to enjoy a vacation. This is still important today
- What impressed most about the Ken Burns NPS special, that it came down to a single person who ignited others, creating wonderful park after another. It was that single voice, over and over again. Ken Burns captured it well
- Our family went to Washington DC to express a voice for family campers
- As long as there are people, there is no way to not impact the Valley. But so long as there is a way/place to keep impact contained, that is the purpose of national parks
- In Yosemite, your passion for the place gets woven into the fabric of your being