

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 1

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 09/08/2011 Date Received: 09/08/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Here is my comments based on the questions suggested at the Mariposa Grove fact sheet:

1 - What would you like to see improved?

I would like to see the parking lot at the grove moved to a not so sensitive location outside the grove, but not too far from it (e.g., Tuolumne Grove). The new parking lot should be at a walking distance from the grove with pathways that lead visitors to the Big Trees. That parking lot should also be a shuttle stop allowing those who don't want to walk to take the shuttle. Private vehicles should be kept away from the grove.

2 - How can we protect these remarkable trees?

By preventing trampling of their roots, which means removing pathways/roads that are too close to the trees. Another way to protect them is to limit visitation by stablishing a sustainable number of visitors per day. Keep on doing the control burns, fire is vital to the health of giant sequoias.

3 - What does it mean to "restore" the Mariposa Grove and what would a restored grove look like?

Restoring the Mariposa Grove would mean, in my opinion, bringing the grove back to a more balanced ecological condition in which the natural processes (fire, hydrology, vegetation growth, etc.) would play the prominent role. Human interference/impact would derive from the controls of those processes for the benefit of the grove and from visitation. However, the planning team should not loose site of the reasons why the grove is protected while planning the restoration: to allow this and future generations to visit this magnificent place.

4 - What should the Mariposa Grove be like 150 years from now?

Perhaps this is a lofty wish, but I would like to think that the Mariposa Grove of 150 years in the future would resemble that Grove of 150 years in the past, when Yosemite Grant was signed by Lincoln.

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Correspondence: 2

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 09/18/2011 Date Received: 09/18/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The Mariposa Grove visitor experience would be enhanced with the removal of all vehicles on grove roads. The effort to see some of the impressive sequoias, once you've entered the grove's border, entails about the same amount of effort to visit lower Yosemite Falls. Thus I would remove the current tram system that travels on the grove's roads to provide more of a wilderness experience. Yes, a bit more effort is required to see the sequoias in the upper grove, such as the Galen Clark Tree. There's also more effort to see Upper Yosemite Falls than Lower Yosemite Falls, but that's part of the Yosemite experience.

Shuttle buses at the park's south entrance could transport visitors to the grove, and this could even justify disallowing private motorized vehicles from entering the grove's parking facility (or simply removing the parking facility, but allowing private vehicles to drop off people at the grove's entrance). Two issues stand out: 1) From my personal experience, the frequency with which shuttle buses run between the south entrance to the grove, and likewise from the grove to the south entrance is totally inadequate. Long wait times for the bus coupled with not everyone waiting can get on the bus due to the large number of people at the bus stop renders an unpleasant visitor experience.

2) The capacity of the parking facility at the south entrance is substantially below the demand for parking there. And if adequate parking is to be provided so that visitors are encouraged to see the grove via shuttle bus, do you want to have that parking facility adjacent to the south entrance, thus rendering a potential bottleneck of vehicles at the south entrance? Perhaps you can explore an alternative site for Mariposa Grove shuttle bus parking, albeit a site that is closer to the grove than the Wawona gas station, although running shuttle buses from "downtown" Wawona in addition to another site sounds fine).

Thanks for listening.

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Correspondence: 3

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 09/26/2011 Date Received: 09/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

1. We loved our visit to the Mariposa Grove, AMAZING.
2. It was difficult to find this comment area even with a printed comment form from the Wawona Hotel.
3. Suggestion 1 is to place a "picture stand" across from the most popular trees so you can set your camera on a post and set the timer to get everyone in the photo. Can just be one of your fence posts planted in the ground with a flat top on it. (Disney is great at this but please don't cringe at that reference)
4. Past the main area, just a few more seating areas along the way, again just flat topped rings of bigger trees here and there so you can set a spell while on the hike.
5. THANKS!!

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Correspondence: 4

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 09/26/2011 Date Received: 09/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

1. Improve the ground by removing all man made objects covering the ground. Uncover the ground and the ground has a better chance of surviving.
2. Protect the trees by not allowing nothing more than indigenous animals into the grove. This means no cars, roads, trails, parking lots, bathrooms, stores, garbage cans, bridges, maps, names on trees, and/or any identifying traces of man.
3. A restored grove is to remove all traces of man and the damage man has inflicted on the grove.
4. All a restored nature to manage the grove. Keep the government away from any form of management.

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Correspondence: 5

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 09/26/2011 Date Received: 09/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

First, safety. NPS ought to consider stripping lanes at south entrance, painting arrows for turns, painting double yellow lines into Big Tree area, paint pedestrian walk and parking slots at RR facility and parking lot. Most folks TRY to obey directions, but if they can't see lines, they plain just don't know what's expected.

Second, parking. 28 max parking at gate area, 110 max in Big Trees. How many folks did the volunteer counters count on an average day? NPS sets employees and public up for a frustrating day. Parking full at Big Trees and at entrance. Drivers sent to Wawona. Parking lot full in Wawona; drivers head back to Trees; oops, sorry, we're still full - go back to Wawona. Come to Yosemite, drive in circles and increase pollution. (but we put visitors on hybrids). Let's get rid of limited parking and provide shuttle only parking. Something new - if you want to see the Trees you have to park and take the shuttle. If NPS keeps encouraging the mobs to visit the park, NPS needs to be responsible and provide a place to park.

Third, close the park. If the roads in the park become an in-line parking lot, close the park! Safety and sanity are obvious reasons.

Forth, disabled parking. The Trees has 2 disabled parking spots. What's the ADA requirement??? But then again, if there's no parking provided at the Trees we don't need disabled parking either.

Fifth, tram parking/traffic. We can't allow foot or vehicle traffic close to the Trees' root system, but we can allow the trams. Side note: if we're going to charge \$27 to ride the tram, wouldn't it be nice to fill the pot holes and water the tram roads to alleviate dust? No 'disabled' vehicles should be allowed to follow the trams!

Last. Area should have at least 2 entrances and exits for safety and crowd control. If you enter a parking lot and it is full, there ought to be an option to go back thru the park or leave the park. This would certainly ease the congestion at South Gate.

Good Luck!

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Correspondence: 6

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 09/23/2011 Date Received: 09/28/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Letter
Notes: hard copy letter, original in admin record, scanned copy in PEPC

Correspondence Text

My wife and I are 80 and just returned from 2 days in Yosemite. Without the trams we could NOT have experienced Mariposa Grove! Our plan for restorations includes:

1. No cars beyond the entrance.
2. At the entrance (a) Create large parking lot (b) Place the visitor's center and gift shop there (c) Have displays, movies, and Ranger talks there.
3. Continue the tram to the first hiking trails for a small fee.
4. Continue the present tram service at a similar fee.
5. Rearrange parts of hiking trails to minimize sound [word illegible] by tram talks.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055
Correspondence: 7

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 10/05/2011 Date Received: 10/05/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The signs on the lower trail need to be updated. They are positioned incorrectly and the distance appears not to be accurate. We hiked out of our way to get to the Faithful Couple due to incorrect sign positioning.

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Correspondence: 8

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 10/06/2011 Date Received: 10/06/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Keep parking available closer to the grove than at the south entrance.
The access provided via personal auto is preferred over shuttle service.

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Correspondence: 9

Author Information

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 10/10/2011 Date Received: 10/10/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The trees need more care. Remove the parking lot and all that asphalt and turn the area into an attractive picnic/relaxation area. Parking should be increased outside the grove and improve the shuttle facilities. The shuttle route should be shortened and there should be areas of the upper grove, above the museum, that they do not access. The tram price should be lowered. The asphalt should be removed from the upper grove.
There should be a visitor center and it should be outside the grove so as to not impinge on the sequoias.

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Correspondence: 10

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 10/12/2011 Date Received: 10/12/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Flushable public restrooms at the parking lot.

Eliminate all tram routes that would impact the root system of the Sequoias and definitely remove tram routes from the Upper Grove.

As for "restoring" the Mariposa Grove and how it should look like 150 years from now, I would look at the first artist renderings and/or photos first taken. Obviously, and hopefully, the trees will be taller!

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Correspondence: 11

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 10/12/2011 Date Received: 10/12/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Specific ideas:

1. Removing the parking lot in the lower grove will enhance all visitors experience
2. Addition of a visitor center in its place as well as establishing short trails in the visitor center area (one or more of which could be ADA accessible) will also improve the visitor experience.
3. Upper Grove: As a volunteer at the Museum, I think it is important to keep some kind of vehicular access to this most spectacular of forest settings. I also believe the museum should be preserved (not moved)and the lighting system improved.
4. Many of the tram visitors just would have no way to visit without vehicular access. I would recommend however, terminating the motorized access at the Museum. I would remove the road in the upper part of the upper grove and replace with a trail. This could be routed around sensitive root systems and need not follow the current road.
- 5.. The road from the lower to upper grove transits very near some of the sensitive sequoias. There may be other ways to transport people either with innovative travel surfaces (that allow drainage through the surface for example) or lighter weight transportation systems that don't require an asphalt surface.

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 10/13/2011 Date Received: 10/13/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Just a brief history of myself. I had over 20 years working for the NPS in Yosemite, mostly in Wawona as a fee collector and supervisor at the South Entrance and law enforcement ranger.

My main concern is the South Entrance. The road was developed in the 1930's and obviously is a poor design now, with the park visitor numbers as they are now. The "T" intersection needs to be removed and some type of road realignment designed to improve safety of the entrance station and staff and a more smooth vehicle flow through the entrance. My years working as a LE ranger, I took countless reports of vehicles striking the entrance station booth. Most of the damage were minor, but there were a few incidents where the whole booth(s) were moved, causing disruptions to traffic flow, and fortunately no injuries to staff.

An realignment should make it easier for motorhomes, buses and large trucks able to make it through without making the sharp turns they have to do currently.

In the past, there were discussions of new parking near the entrance for the Mariposa Grove. I believe that should be seriously looked at again. This would get rid of the major traffic congestion that occurs at the grove parking lot. This would also be able to eliminate the commercial bus issues that have plagued the grove for years (the restriction of the 40 foot plus buses) and have a shuttle bus system to transport visitors to the grove.

A large enough parking lot at the south entrance, could ease the congestion in Wawona around the store/hotel area. Which is definitely getting out of hand. The current shuttle bus system now, works OK to a point, but can get overwhelmed quickly in the summer. A lot of visitors are left waiting for long periods

of time to get on a shuttle bus.

A new shuttle bus system at the entrance parking area would hopefully eliminate a good portion of the issues in Wawona. There should be plenty of shuttle buses to move visitors quickly and this could possibly ease some traffic congestion in the area.

The other issue for the entrance station would be a new office. The current office is in the one side of the duplex housing at the entrance. It is very difficult for employees to get to the office in the winter during snowfall conditions. It is also not safe since these employees have to cross the busy road to get to the entrance booths. A new office needs to be build close to the new booths, to prevent that unsafe practice. This would also again provide critical housing for the park, by having that duplex available again.

Thank you for your time, I can be contacted by the above email address or phone # [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 13

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 10/17/2011 Date Received: 10/17/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

After visiting Mariposa Grove I can request the following:

Remove the parking lot that is so very close to the Sequoia Forest. We were told that the roots stretch laterally which would mean that Gasoline, Oil, Black Top, Concrete are too close to the root system and encourage seed loss.

Continue to allow walking paths for visitors and consider electric golf cart rentals for those who are unable to walk on their own.

DO NOT ALLOW DISNEY TO Purchase the commercial rights to Yosemite and/or Mariposa Grove.

Set up a visitor area at a greater distance from the Sequoias and require the visitors to view a video that explains the importance of preserving, restoring, and developing continued support for the Sequoia Forest. Too many visitors that I saw reacted as though they were at Disney Land rather than a TRUE NATIONAL FOREST.

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Correspondence: 14

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Wed 10/12/2011

Bathrooms - are INEXCUSEABLE.
Held my breath so long its made me dizzy. I'm a WalMart exec and I know customer service.
Thanks

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 15

Author Information

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The bathrooms are absolutely DISGUSTING!

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055
Correspondence: 16

Author Information

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Stop the Trams!
Stop the senseless controlled burns. They are always out of control.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 17

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Stop the trams!
Stop the out of control prescribed burns.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 18

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Stop the trams in the grove. Leave old RD. to grizzley for handicap access. Mule tours. Snow cat tours in adequat snow. Guided all day or half day tours by park service. Revamp shuttle busses. System is not efficient.

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Correspondence: 19

Author Information

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The open air tram ride is great with the audio. Possibly improve it with eco-friendly power equipment. If the tram road could be improved without impairing the trees that might be good. It's good to imagine that the grove would look essentially the same as now, in 150 years from now. The grove is amazing!

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Correspondence: 20

Author Information

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Cafe/Deli please!

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Correspondence: 21

Author Information

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

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- 1) I would like to clearly be shown young trees as well. I loved the Big Trees but kept wondering if they were reproducing. It was not until the stop at the museum that I saw "little" Big Trees.
- 2) It is such a delicate balance - doing a great job.
- 3) Allow us in with minimum impact - Maybe a brief orientation before we are allowed in to ensure we cause no damage.
- 4) I would like to see even less impact from trams and trails.

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Correspondence: 22

Author Information

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Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

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- 1) First off the bathrooms need improvement, they smell all the way across the parking lot, also signs for proper direction should be placed without taking from the beauty. Animal prints leading to the bathrooms and such would be helpful.
 - 2) I believe the trees are already quite protected, due to the restriction fences so people won't walk along the bases.
 - 3) A restored grove would be more efficient information so people can know more of how things work and how to get places. Because of all the misunderstandings the grove is being trashed.
 - 4) In 150 years the grove should look like this, but more efficient such as cleaner restrooms, more efficient signs.
- *we can not actually improve anything until people improve themselves, without proper education everthing will go to ruins*

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Author Information

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Please keep up the bathrooms. The smell is overpowering.

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Correspondence: 24

Author Information

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Mariposa Grove -

Toilet situation is out of the Stone Age. Would expect improvements by our next visit next year.

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Correspondence: 25

Author Information

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Very "bad" smell in restrooms.
Dirt, T.P. on floor, wet floor.
Really ugly for a beautiful Park.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055
Correspondence: 26

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: N/A N/A
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Big Tree bathrooms unexceptable. Seperate rooms for men and woman are necessary. Need clearing on an hourly basis.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055
Correspondence: 27

Author Information

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Restroom facilities are disgusting. Shame!

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 28

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 09/20/2011 Date Received: 10/12/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

We spent a grand day hiking around these sequoias and noticed that NPS is accepting comments. We drove from Michigan to see these fabled trees and would like to help keep them around for another 1,000 years. Climate change is beyond NPS's ability to control, but NPS can take steps to (A) remove the parking lot at the Grove, thus helping those roots that spread several hundred feet get the air and nutrients they need (re-mulch area after pavement is gone; (B) remove Museum and put this historic building somewhere outside the sacred sequoia grove; (C) remove paved trails that go near the trees - they are better comprehended at a distance anyway; (D) require people to take tram or walk into the grove area.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 29

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: N/A N/A
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: N/A
N/A, UN N/A
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 09/20/2011 Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Letter
Notes:

Correspondence Text

1. If the parking is to be relocated to a "nearby location", I would hope this location is a reasonable walk to the Grove. I would not want to see the public totally dependent upon NPS shuttle buses for access to the grove.
2. The overflow parking should NOT be the Wawona Store/Post Office parking lot. Cars there are already circling in the summer, trying to find a spot to park.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 30

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: N/A
N/A, UN N/A
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E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 10/26/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Letter
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am a local resident living south of Yosemite National Park and want to comment on the future plans for the Mariposa Grove in the south end of the Park. What is eventually decided will affect one of the most precious resources that Yosemite encompasses. The historical aspects of the Mariposa Grove are very important in the story of the National Park Service as well and should be considered in the decision-making. In reference to your comment form, I would like to address some of my ideas and concerns:

1. I would like to see the parking lot in the lower grove removed and replaced with a walk path the includes places to sit on benches to observe the trees. I would also like to see the Gift Shop removed and the footprint that it now occupies to be included in the enlargement of a shuttle system stop that would originate near the south Park entrance. Near the south Park entrance there should be built:

- a) large parking area
- b) large visitor center facilities focused on Giant Sequoia trees
- c) gift store/snack bar, perhaps like Glacier Point
- d) large restroom facilities to accommodate all visitors
- f) picnic areas to accommodate people who bring their own food
- g) new south gate entrance station
- h) benches and areas to relax and sit

I think that the above major facilities would be best located adjacent to the present Park gate on the northwestern side. There is already a dirt road that is located in that area and large flat areas that could accommodate large infrastructure without having facilities built in or around on the Giant Sequoia root structure. I believe that locating the major hub to see the Mariposa Grove near the south gate would alleviate much of the congestion and longer travel times presently in place at Wawona.

2. I have mixed feelings about access in the Mariposa Grove. On one hand, it appears that most people are

able and willing to walk the approximate one mile up to see the Grizzly Giant and the California Tunnel Tree. That section of trail gets impacted incredibly hard with sheer numbers of people. The outer loop trail sees much less travel and is pleasant for walking for that very reason. The upper grove is much less impacted and has a quieter and more isolated feel to it. I wonder about the possibility of having a free shuttle go all the way up into the upper grove from the south Park gate? If a free shuttle ran from the Park gate, there could be one stop at the upper grove museum and then back down in reverse order. Would spreading people out in the grove achieve a more equal impact overall or is it better to concentrate the human impact down in the lower grove only? I am still trying to weigh these opposing ideas. The extreme would be to remove all infrastructures in the Mariposa Grove completely. Less people would be willing or physically able to make the journey to see the Giant Sequoia trees and the soil around the root structure of the Sequoia trees would be much less trampled. If easy access was reduced in the Mariposa Grove, would the public at large still value the trees if they could not emotionally and physically connect with the place and the trees?

3. If the open-air tram is allowed and encouraged to operate in the Mariposa Grove, I believe that the interpretive message, which is very informative and well done, should be made available to the public only through earphones of some sort. To hear the engine of the tram is invasive enough, but to hear the audio message projected throughout a large part of the grove is quite disruptive. A tram or shuttle system does allow for people with disabilities to have access to the upper grove with an added educational component while traveling through the grove, which appears to enrich their experience and understanding. Could the cost of the tram be less? Why does it have to be so expensive? There are many people who cannot afford the cost of the tram, but would enjoy and benefit from that experience. A family of four pays over \$100.00 to ride on the open-air tram. The cost is prohibitive for many people and I think that is very unfortunate. If there is to be a shuttle or tram system in the Grove, the asphalt road is in desperate need of repair, including new pavement and improvements.

4. I believe that it is imperative to continue the prescribed burns in the Mariposa Grove. I have seen the new growth and opening of the forest canopy over the years and prescribed burns will encourage the perpetuation of the species in a natural, original and conducive environment. There needs to be more educational information about the history and need for fire in the grove available to the public.

5. The signs and maps in the Mariposa Grove need to be updated and made to be more accurate. Many trail junctions do not have any trail signs and most mileages are incorrect. The maps and signs have confusing and incorrect information with junctions that do not exist. I frequently find Park visitors that are confused or lost on some of the lesser-known trails in the Mariposa Grove.

6. I hope we are visionary enough to look far into the future and work to ensure the survival of the Giant Sequoia trees for those beyond us. The Giant Sequoia ecosystem will change and evolve, as the earth and all living things are dynamic. We must do what is necessary to ensure that Giant Sequoia trees continue to thrive, not only as an individual species, but as a part of a much larger ecosystem where many other plants and animal species are co-dependent with the Sequoia trees. I believe that scientific research on the Giant Sequoia ecosystem needs to be continually studied and researched so that small nuances or changes can be observed and remedied if possible.

7. The Mariposa Grove is the largest and most spectacular grove of Sequoia trees in Yosemite National Park. There is an increasing number of people that desire to see the trees. To protect this species and provide for a quality experience for Park visitors, will it be necessary to implement some sort of permit system, as is now being put into place for Half Dome? How many human beings can the Mariposa Grove ecosystem accommodate? Are there a finite number of people that should be allowed into the Giant Sequoia

Grove on any given day? I believe there is some sort of cap on numbers of human beings in the grove that will allow the Mariposa Grove to remain healthy and viable for a very long time. I don't know what the number is, but I am sure there is one.

8. Whatever infrastructure, maintenance, shuttle or tram repairs that need to be done for the Mariposa Grove, please ensure that it does not commence on top of the roots of the sequoia trees. All maintenance and repairs need to happen at a distant location. It is appalling to see employee vehicles, tram repair equipment and extra trams parked directly on the roots of the Giant Sequoia trees! Thank you for your effort in creating an environment where the Giant Sequoia trees can continue to grow and thrive. The Mariposa Grove is a treasure beyond compare.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 31

Author Information

Keep Private: Yes
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Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 10/30/2011 Date Received: 10/30/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

- 1.a Provide electricity and lights for museum at the top. I could not re4ad much of the material.
- b. Provide better access for the handicapped when not in the tram
- 2.a Would not have parking of vehicles at the base. Provide shuttle bus service for all.
- b. Limit the number of visitors in order to protect the Grove
- 3, Encourage a documentary maker,like Ken Burns, to do a feature on the Grove

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 32

Author Information

Keep Private: Yes
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 12/05/2011 Date Received: 12/05/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

YOU FAILED TO PROTECT THE GIANT SEQUOIAS THE FIRST TIME. WHY WOULD ANY TAXPAYER/CITIZEN TRUST YOU TO DO SO NOW. YOU ARE A FAILURE AS A GOVT PROTECTIVE AGENCY. I DO NOT ADVOCATE THAT ANY MORE TAXPAYER DOLLARS GO TO THIS AGENCY SINCE YOU HAVE SHOWN A SHODDY, SLIPSHOD, SLOPPY WAY OF PROTECTING SEQUOIAS THAT ARE IRREPLACEABLE. YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GROW THOSE TREES AGAIN. YOU ALLOWED ENDLESS PROFITEERS TO DESTROY AND DECIMATE THOSE TREES. NOW YOU WANT TO BANKRUPT AMERICAN TAXPAYERS AND YOU HAVE SHOWN YOU ARE INCAPABLE OF PROTECTING THESE TREES. WE DO NOT TRUST YOU ANYMORE. YOU ARE JUST WANTING MORE MONEY TO GO ABOUT YOUR SLOPPY, SLIPSHOD NEGLIGENT WAYS. THIS ATTEMPT TO GET MORE MONEY TO RUN A SLOPPY, NEGLIGENT AGENCY IS UNJUSTIFIED AND YOUR BUDGET FOR THIS EFFORT SHOULD BE ZERO. THE TAXPAYER WANT IT PROTECTED THE FIRST TIME. WE DO NOT WANT ENDLESS REQUESTS FOR MONEY MONEY MONEY BECAUSE YOU FAILED IN THE JOB YOU SHOULD BE DOING. THE CORRUPT NATURE OF THE NPS THESE DAYS, WHERE GUN WACKOS AND WILDLIFE MURDERERS SEEM TO BE IN COMMAND IS DISGUSTING AND DESTRUCTIVE FOR AMERICA. YOU SEEM TO HAVE SOLD OUT. YOU ALLOW CORRUPT POLITICIANS TIO USE AMERICNA RESOURCES FOR THEIR OWN CAMPAIGN USES. GIVE SOME PROFITEER THE RIGHT TO DESPOIL WHAT BELONGS TO ALL AMERICANS AND YOU GET CAMPAIGN DOLLARS. WE ARE SICK OF THE CORRUPTION IN SKANKY CORRUPT WASHINGTON DC. NO MORE MONEY. DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME..

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055
Correspondence: 33

Author Information

Keep Private: Yes
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Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 12/12/2011 Date Received: 12/12/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

This is a great plan. The environment should be restored to its natural condition to maintain the health of these amazing trees.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 34

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: Alan Carlton
Organization: Sierra Club Yosemite Committee
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: Sacramento, CA 95762
USA

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 12/13/2011 Date Received: 12/13/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389
Attention: Mariposa Rehabilitation Plan

1 Dec. 2011

Dear Mr. Neubacher:

The following comments are submitted on behalf of the Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee. We hope they will be of value in developing your Mariposa Grove restoration plan.

The Sierra Club strongly supports the removal of parking and all asphalt from the lower Mariposa Grove and restoring the entire area to natural conditions. Restoration ecologists could assist natural vegetation succession by planting appropriate native sequoia grove plants following removal of the existing parking lot and pavement. Trail access to the restored area should be routed or rerouted to avoid wet areas and shallow sensitive sequoia root systems. The Sierra Club also supports the area under consideration for replacement parking, shuttle transfer and a visitor information kiosk west of the south entrance station. It is a relatively flat area of second and third growth mixed conifers obscured from the highway by a natural berm and appears well suited as a staging area and replacement parking for the proposed restoration project.

There are other issues and actions to consider for this restoration project.

Noise pollution in both the lower and upper grove is obnoxious and is especially problematic in the lower grove where DNC trams, Park shuttles, and tour buses operate. The Sierra Club supports Park actions that would reduce this problem by relocating these and all other inappropriate activities and structures further west out of the lower grove.

The Sierra Club would strongly support eliminating DNC tram service from the upper grove to insure peace and quiet in this spectacular setting and restricting DNC tram use and ADA access to the lower grove. Tram noise in the lower grove could be reduced by replacing existing DNC trams with quiet, efficient fuel cell propulsion and hydraulic brake technology, or with other more noise efficient conveyance systems.

The Sierra Club supports establishing an information and orientation kiosk in nearby Fish Camp to familiarize visitors with the Mariposa Grove and other Park destinations prior to arriving at the Park's south entrance station. Advising visitors to visit the Grove before proceeding to other distant Park destinations might help to reduce traffic volume from visitors back-tracking the Wawona road to visit the Mariposa grove passed by earlier in the visit.

Thanks for listening

Alan Carlton, Chair Sierra Club Yosemite Committee

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 35

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: Alan Carlton
Organization: Sierra Club Official Rep.
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 12/01/2011 Date Received: 12/13/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: E-mail
Notes:

Correspondence Text

1 Dec. 2011

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Thanks for listening

Alan Carlton, Chair Sierra Club Yosemite Committee

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 36

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 12/15/2011 Date Received: 12/15/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

First, I spent 1 month working in Wawona as a volunteer for NPS about 4 years ago and the first thing that struck me was the lack of any NPS presence. When visitors take the shuttle from Wawona and are let off at the Grove, the first thing they see is the tram ticket office and the store. It also struck me that a family of four, who wanted to take the tram tour through the Grove would have to pay about \$60.00 to ride the tram, after paying a \$20.00 entrance fee. (I don't know the cost of the tram ride today.) So now they have paid a total of roughly \$80-\$100.00 and haven't even gone to the Yosemite Valley yet.

I understand and realize that concessionaires' financial interest must be respected but isn't there some way people would not, first of all, be confronted right away with the need to put out money or buy tickets? Couldn't a small kiosk be installed near the bus stop staffed by a ranger or a volunteer who could hand out guides, and other information about the Mariposa Grove so that people can sense and see a National Park presence? I work as a volunteer for NPS in the Visitor Center in the summer for the last 14 years and I would be happy to volunteer to help staff a kiosk during the summer months, one or two days a week.

Second, as I'm sure you are aware, the parking situation at the Grove and at Wawona is a mess. In the short time that I volunteered at Wawona, I talked with visitors numerous times that were so completely frustrated because of the lack of parking, both at the Grove and at the parking lot where the grocery store and post office are. Then they got themselves in a driving loop, having driven directly to the Grove, then turned away because the parking lots were full, drove back to the main Wawona parking lot, only to find that also full. However, I see that this parking problem is going to be addressed, so I'm sure the Park Service will be successful in alleviating this problem.

Third, the restrooms at Wawona are really awful. They are poorly lit, sometimes really smell bad and often, very crowded.

Fourth, and perhaps most important, I encourage the Park to figure out some way to keep people from tromping all over the grove and not staying on paths. One of my tasks as a volunteer was to try and keep people from stepping into areas where young Giant Sequoia seedlings were growing. Once again, having a small kiosk or information booth where signs could be posted asking visitors to stay on trails and not stomp around areas where seedlings were growing, would be helpful. (Yes, I know you can have all the signs in the world, but not everybody heeds them.)

Lastly, I am absolutely sure that, whatever the Park decides to do to improve visitors' experience at the Mariposa Grove will be a positive step in preserving the Grove and will be as successful as all the other improvements projects. My hat is off to you.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 37

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 10/23/2011 Date Received: 10/27/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

You can't have too many signs! As we two fifty year olds made our way to the Fallen Wawona Tree, we took wrong trails because WE felt trails weren't marked as well as they should be. And my cousin is a great map reader!

I really like the new fencing that has begun to be built and rebuilt on trails and around trees. Please make sure that we can walk all the way around the Grizzly Giant and benches would be wonderful!

Great idea to move parking away from the beginning of trails and make one of the largest trees on the road to the parking lot the FIRST THING hikers would see as they walked toward teh main grove.

A restored grove would be minimally developed, but trails and fences clearly delineated. Perhaps with old granite removed and the burn field explained with signs. I feel a special affinity with those magnificent trees and I am assured that decisions will be made about the Grove that will insure that my great-great-grandchildren will be able to marvel at the trees like I've been able to do.

P.S. It would be nice to know to what elevation you are hiking and how steep the trail would be.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055
Correspondence: 38

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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Organization:
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N/A, UN N/A
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E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 12/15/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes: Collected on 11/2/2011 from Mariposa Grove Gift Shop Comment Box.

Correspondence Text

Stop the Trams and Buses!

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 39

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: N/A N/A
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Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 11/02/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes: Wawona Hotel Comment Box, collected 11/2/2011

Correspondence Text

It would be fun to have one tree planted each year (side by side) for the next 150 years so that we, the public, would see how much growth happens each year. I hope this would help us appreciate the value of keeping forests and replanting programs.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 40

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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N/A, UN N/A
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 11/02/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes: Collected from Wawona Hotel Comment Box, 11/2/2011

Correspondence Text

I am writing this with mixed opinions. I love what you are doing to stop traffice in the grove. I HATE the tram's audio, the tram is intrusive enough in the prestine silence of these magical trees. I've jumped out of my skin on 5 occasions from the loud boom of the audio tour. It is NOISE pollution! If there is any way to give people headsets- or get rid of it, please do! I understand you need to cover accessibility [unreadable] but paved roads and a tram are enough to diminish the experience for others. PLEASE find another solution for the audio. I would LOVE it. Thank you.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 41

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: N/A N/A
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: N/A
N/A, UN N/A
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E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 11/02/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes: Collected from Wawona Visitor Center at Hills Studio on 11/2/2011

Correspondence Text

Create a greenhouse/nursery for giant sequoias. Reduce width of trails - possibly place wood chips on trails to reduce impact. International visitors were climbing over fencing! Maybe mult-lingual signage? Nursery also for horsetail wetland plant.
Increase range of sequoias by additional plantings to anticipate climate change impacts.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 42

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 12/15/2011 Date Received: 12/15/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

<http://www.chron.com/life/article/An-electric-no-emission-car-has-made-folks-gawk-1602174.php>

Could you use an eco-friendly transportation system to pick up visitors from the various campsite areas to visit the Mariposa Grove versus having the small and competitive parking area and taking the shuttle in?

Also, I could hike the trail just fine, but my mother became winded and did not get to see most of this area. She sat at the space in the front by the gift shop. Would there be a way to transport the elderly or disabled (or out of shape!) people through this section of the park?

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 43

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Cedarburg, WI 53012
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 12/16/2011 Date Received: 12/16/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I simply can't find words to describe how I felt when I saw the Mariposa Grove. It is a treasure beyond words.

My husband I visited this past summer. My husband has inoperable and incurable cancer. He truly enjoyed walking through the lower grove, but getting to the upper grove was just too much for him. We took the tram.

I agree with all your objectives in this initiative, but I would ask that you keep people with disabilities in mind as you go forward.

Our trip to Yosemite lifted my husband's spirits tremendously. It was medicine for his soul. Again, please keep this in mind.

PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055

Correspondence: 44

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: N/A N/A
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: N/A
N/A, UN N/A
USA
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 12/27/2011 Date Received: 12/28/2011
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: E-mail
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Date: December 27, 2011
To: Yosemite Park Planners
Re: Mariposa Grove Plan
From: [REDACTED] Reno, NV

Park Planners:

Regarding your request for public comment as it relates to how best to manage and restore the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias in Yosemite National Park, let me start by saying that I believe the premise of your planning effort here is a prelude to another plan you have, which is to find ways so as not to comply with the seventh district court's mandate. It is my belief that your planning goals have only a little to do with preserving The Grove, as it has be rebuilt in recent years already. I am sure there are those within your organization that would argue otherwise, as there are many fine and highly respected naturalists and botanists within your organization who mean well, who may not want to believe that the larger goal is to cram as many people into the Park in defiance of the court's mandate as is possible.

It is my feeling that your goal is and has been to micro manage the court's mandate by circumventing the main Merced Wild and Scenic River related planning with as many other little planning agendas that you can come up with, like this one, to see where you can redesign things

in such a way as to accommodate more people. You want to accommodate all who want to come there regardless of the number of people that show up at the Park's gates on any given day; even on days where complete gridlock is occurring in Yosemite Valley.

You are planning how to mitigate crowding by way of finding ways to push people into all areas of the Park that could possibly accommodate a single person more. You are doing this in advance of your compliance to the court's mandate so that by the time you are asked by any governing body to account for your compliance to the mandate, you will have rebuilt every potential infrastructure so that it can then accommodate its maximum headcount. At that point, you will be able to tell the court that because of the implementation of all these otherwise unrelated construction projects you've completed, the Park can then handle any number of people that civilization can throw at it. You don't even try to be covert about this, because you never seem to have to answer to anyone, not even the courts. You never had to answer to Congress for refusing to repair the flood damaged campgrounds to pre-flood conditions, which was the provision under which you took the money.

The Mariposa Grove Plan, as well as all other plans that come to mind, are actually all about crowd control. Your solutions will have nothing to do with limiting the overwhelming volumes of people who want to come during the summer season, but instead how to accommodate them. The obvious real answer to your problem is a reservation system that allows a percentage of first come first serve, with a limit on daily visitation that will turn people around at the gates once you reach the limit.

Another solution might be to build a circular road around the entire Park so that people can just make the loop as many times as is needed until they are waved in by your Park traffic control experts, just like you do now, with employees stationed at various parking lots in Yosemite Valley.

Let's get back to the basics and begin some dialogue as it relates to how to plan a reservation system that might work. The User Carrying Capacity issue should come well before you go out to the public for input on ways to mitigate congestion at places like the Mariposa Grove. Let's hear about a public input planning effort as it relates to picking a number for the maximum headcounts inside Yosemite at any one time.

My recommendation: Start a plan that should begin a search for a solution to ultimately propose to develop and implement a Park wide computer system for entry gates that would enable gate employees to have access to real time updated information about park headcounts. That way decisions about gate closures could occur at appropriate times before gridlock occurs. That way you can turn them around and send them away well before there is absolute gridlock from the Yosemite Chapel to Stoneman Meadow, as was the case much of this last summer.

In the mean time, please repair the flood damaged campgrounds to pre-flood conditions, as you agreed to do when you took the money from congress.


Reno, NV

**PEPC Project ID: 38400, DocumentID: 43055
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Correspondence Text

Widen the entrance gate 3 lanes each way.

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Correspondence Text

Public Scoping meeting Jan. 25, 2012

1. Before final improvements are made: better communication is needed for parking spaces available between teh Grove Parking lot and the So. Entrance Station parking lot: let's do something so people don't have to drive back to Wawona to wait for the next shuttle.

2. Last couple of shuttles leaving Grove ahead of day to go back to Wawona terribly crowded, and people tired and hungry.

3. Improving of sinage
a) at So. Entrance
b) within Grove itself, on trail intersections

4. What do I think it should be like in 150 years?
a) fire sites left to nature
b) fewer pines and furs

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Correspondence Text

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Mariposa Grove Restoration Project.

My first visit to the Mariposa Grove was more than 50 years ago, and during the last 5 decades the Grove has become like a good friend - one that I appreciate more with each visit. Living in Oakhurst, about a dozen times a year I make it a point to rise early in the morning, drive to the parking lot and hike to the Upper Grove before sunrise. I find it a sacred experience to be present for the sun rise on the Upper Grove.

With that experience in mind, I offer the following for your consideration as you develop plans to restore the Grove:

1. Sustainability: Certainly the first, and by far the most important, goal of the Project should be sustainability. I find it very disturbing that because of the way we enjoy the Grove, we may be destroying the Grove! The protection of these trees and forest must be paramount. I want you to know that this objective is so important to me, that if in order to protect the Grove human presence had to be prohibited or outlawed in the Grove, I would be supportive. Fortunately I understand that with a good plan that won't be necessary. None-the-less I totally understand taht all other objectives must be a distant second to the ojective of Grove sustainability.
2. Automobile Parking Lot: It seems obvious that the parking lot in the Lower Grove needs to be relocated well outside the Grove. I have heard suggestions for a new parking lot at the South Entrance Station. I certainly don't have the expertise to know where the parking lot should be, but it's obvious that it should not be within the Grove itself!

3. Operations and Maintenance Infrastructure: Also all other paving and infrastructure within the Grove should be removed. This includes the Bus Parking, Tram Loading/Unloading, Operations and Maintenance infrastructure (such as gas tanks!), buildings and the old roadway now used for the tram. Once again it seems rather obvious that all of these should not be within the Grove.

4. Future Access: So how would the public access the Grove? I would hope that the Project Team would look at innovative ideas. What about some type of twenty-first century "people mover" that is both more energy efficient and more effective? Across the United States, indeed around the world, there are numerous examples of Automated People Movers (APM) in use today: city centers, colleges and universities, airports, and theme parks. While some of these are rather expensive (and could require major construction), there are others that are smaller systems and might fit the more modest requirements of the Grove. There could be several advantages to such a system. First it could be a much more efficient than the current diesel busses, even hybrid busses. As a matter of fact one wonders if a relatively small solar array at the new parking area (operating at a rather conservative 10 watts per square foot), could be designed to give the entire transportation system a net zero "energy footprint" on an annual basis. Secondly, such a system could significantly reduce the present noise pollution in the Grove or near the Grove where visitors would arrive/depart. It might also be more operationally effective and reduce visitor transportation wait time and crowd congestion. (One wonders what a well written Request for Proposals, RFP, sent to several reputable APM companies might bring forth. Might such firms view a Yosemite contact as a marketing asset and thus offer a competitive price?)

5. Access to the Upper Grove: I would ask the Project Team to seriously consider how visitors access the Upper Grove Museum area. The existing diesel trams give tourists a chance to see the remote reaches of the Grove, but unfortunately they do it with a great deal of noise and intrusiveness. One minute the solitary hiker is experiencing God's creation and the next minute there's a diesel truck and trailer with 50 or 60 people rumbling down the center isle of God's Sanctuary. Is it time to forgo public transportation to every inch of the Grove? Or if total access is to be maintained is there a better, less intrusive method?

6. A space set aside for reflection: In keeping with the previous suggestions, I would ask the Project Team to consider a quiet space - an area set aside for quiet, personal reflection - within the Grove. As one who frequently experiences the Grove in the solitude of the early morning, I have become aware of the vast difference between experiencing the trees in a quiet isolation versus in noisy crowds. Many of the visitors to the trees appear to be on vacation, but yet they don't really have a chance to "vacate" all the noisy, frenzied, chaotic crowds which the trees attract. Is it possible to provide both spaces for the hectic crowds who are just being introduced to the trees and, at the same time, space for those who want to absorb the profound beauty of the forest in a more quiet and reflective way? Would it be possible to set aside 10 or 20 acres as a place dedicated to quietness and tranquility? I'm thinking of something akin to the "Wilderness Areas" that were established by Congress during the mid 1960s, only on a much smaller scale...a relatively small Sequoia Wilderness area for the purpose of sitting among God's creation and vacating a little of the "frenziedness" of modern life.

5. Grove Information and Orientation: I've noticed that when people arrive at the parking lot they anxiously pile out of their cars and just start walking. It's as though they're saying, "I've sat in this car long enough...I'm here now...and I want to walk!" (Believe me, I totally understand their feeling.) It seems that many of them have only a vague goal of reaching the Grizzly Giant, but other than that they don't really understand what experiences the Grove holds for them. I frequently meet people who have gone on just a little ways beyond the Giant - near the California Tunnel Tree or the Faithful Couple - and then they stop. It's here that they've asked me questions that show their puzzlement: "what's up this way?" or "what else is there to do?" or "where's the museum?" or "what's in the museum?" or "what's the telescope tree?" and

so forth. They're confused by the various trails and roads. I've often wondered if it would be helpful to suggest a plan for their visit at the trail head. Possibly it would be helpful to have a kiosk with different types of visits based on the time they had available. For example: "If you only have 1 hour available may we suggest..." Or "If you have 2 hours available may we suggest..." Or 4 hours...Or 8 hours. Possibly a small information booth, manned by volunteers, just beyond the Grizzle Giant would be helpful. (I'd be willing to volunteer for a shift!) A personal comment: the improvements in the trail between the parking lot and Giant are excellent and the new interpretive signs along the way are outstanding. Good job!

8. Grove Information and Orientation - Hi Tech: One of the beauties of the Mariposa Grove is its "remoteness" from our world of modern technology. We need that! But at the same time, if the Restoration Project is to be valid for the 21st century it should consider if there is an appropriate role that the modern technology, especially Personal Communication Devices, PCDs (I-pods, I-pads, smart headsets, etc) could play in visitor orientation and education. As an example, I offer my own personal experience: at some modern museums my experience has been greatly enhanced by a personal headset that allowed me to understand the background and importance of various artifacts. Each artifact had an (out of sight) sensor that could trigger my headset to its particular information. For a modest fee I had the Smart Headset PCD for my use throughout the museum and had the full personal freedom to tailor my visit to my own desires. I understand that some museums now offer this digital information to be downloaded to one's own I-pod or I-phone prior to the visit. Once again it's vital that the beauty of nature not be compromised by modern technology, and so the issue is a sensitive one. (If the Park had used such a system in the past, I fear that my "twenty and thirty something" children would have known more about the Grove than I before they made their first visit!)

One of the treasures of the Mariposa Grove, in my opinion, is Wawona Point. I enjoy it largely because it's relatively unknown and unused. However, I find myself asking - in a broader context - is its lack of notoriety and use an advantage or disadvantage. It's certainly an advantage for me, but it's an inspirational opportunity that is missed for the majority of visitors. Possibly this is the primary question for the entire Restoration Project: how much publicity and how much access?

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to comment on such an important project. If you have any questions about these comments, or if I can be of help, please don't hesitate to contact me. I would be honored.

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Correspondence Text

As in our Merced River Plan comments, our interest is in insuring that the visitor remains a critical factor in the decision making process. We are very cognizant of the need to balance visitor use with resource protection as long as access is not encumbered. The Mariposa Grove is an important asset to the millions of people that visit, including the many that come through our Gateway. This includes families that visit from our local mountain area and those from the greater San Joaquin Valley.

We are very aware of the congestion that occurs due to the lack of parking at the grove. Shuttles must operate from the Wawona area, back and forth to the grove in order to accomodate the visitor. This leads to crowding in the community of Wawona at the shuttle pick up area near the store. At times there is a lack of adequate parking at the shuttle stop due to the convergence of store customers, Pioneer History Center visitors, picnic area users, shuttle passengers, and locals wishing to pick up their mail. When parking becomes full, visitors are forced to park along the highway and on Chilnualna Falls Road. There is inadequate signage to lead visitors to their destination after parking in these remote areas. Visitors are walking along the busy highway to reach the shuttle stop or store. Obvious to anyone is the safety factor that is inherent in this scenario. Visitor experience is definitely at a low point as well.

Unfortunately, "restoration" many times has meant removing facilities and disallowing the original use such as the campgrounds flooded in 1997. We believe that there can be improvements made in the grove such as adjusting the hiking trails to help preserve the root systems of the Sequoias, replacing the surfacing of the trails with a more natural surface, updating the infrastructure and repairing the road surfaces. We are **ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO REMOVING** any of the existing parking. In fact, we support **ADDITIONAL PARKING** near South Entrance that will help ease the congestion on the Wawona highway and in Wawona proper. Shuttles can operate more efficiently with fewer miles to travel as well. Visitor experience will improve significantly. Removal of parking in the grove will only lead to more

congestion and the absence of access unless a shuttle service is provided 24/7 when the grove road is open. We believe that this would be an untenable situation, both from a cost and visitor experience perspective. Accommodating the disabled is difficult if a shuttle only system is used as well. Tour bus parking must be addressed also. It only adds to traffic congestion if tour buses must travel to Wawona and then back again, instead of parking nearer to the grove. We totally support and very much appreciate the continuing efforts to reduce the South Entrance congestion. A complete re-design of kiosk placement and traffic management is of utmost importance! The long lines waiting to access the Park are creating a huge negative impact on the visitor experience. The constituents of the National Park Service deserve more.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment. The Bureau as always, stands ready to assist your office with visitor related issues.