

Yosemite National Park

Mariposa Grove Restoration

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The Big Tree is nature's forest masterpiece, and so far as I know, the greatest of living things. It belongs to an ancient stock, as its remains in old rocks show, and has a strange air of other days about it...

- John Muir

Giant Sequoia Ecology

Giant sequoias are only found on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada in California and are known for their immense size (up to 275ft./84m tall with diameters of up to 35ft./11m). The Mariposa Grove is comprised of approximately 500 mature giant sequoias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) and is the largest of three sequoia groves found within Yosemite National Park.

The large Sierra snowpack provides much needed moisture to the trees as it slowly melts during the spring. Fire also plays an important role in the life of a sequoia. It provides sunny gaps in the forest, burns heavy forest litter, and provides nutrients to soils, all of which, encourage germination for the tiny seeds. Sequoias have a relatively shallow but extensive root system, reaching to over a hundred feet in all directions from their base. These roots capture the groundwater which allows the trees to survive the long, hot summers of Yosemite; a healthy root structure is essential to ensure their longevity.



This restoration project is supported through generous grants from Yosemite Conservancy.



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Major Issues Include:



A 150 vehicle parking lot is situated within the Lower Grove of giant sequoias.



Tree trunks have been damaged by trams on the narrow historic roads.



Parking lots and visitor shuttles are quickly filled to capacity, leading to visitor frustration.



Paved roads throughout the Grove disrupt the surface water needed by the sequoias.



Traffic congestion and long waiting times for visitors entering the park through the nearby South Entrance Station.



Fuel storage tanks for the tram are located beneath the giant sequoias.



The visitor arrival sequence is confusing and routinely congested, and it could be greatly clarified and enhanced.



Signage instructs visitors to avoid walking around the bases of the trees, but vehicles and trams routinely park on them.



Shuttle parking at the various staging areas at South Entrance and Wawona does not meet current demand.



Accessibility enhancements are needed in the developed area.



Wawona Point, a significant example of National Park Service landscape architecture of the 1930s, is in a state of disrepair.



Stormwater runoff from roads and parking areas runs directly into the surrounding forest.

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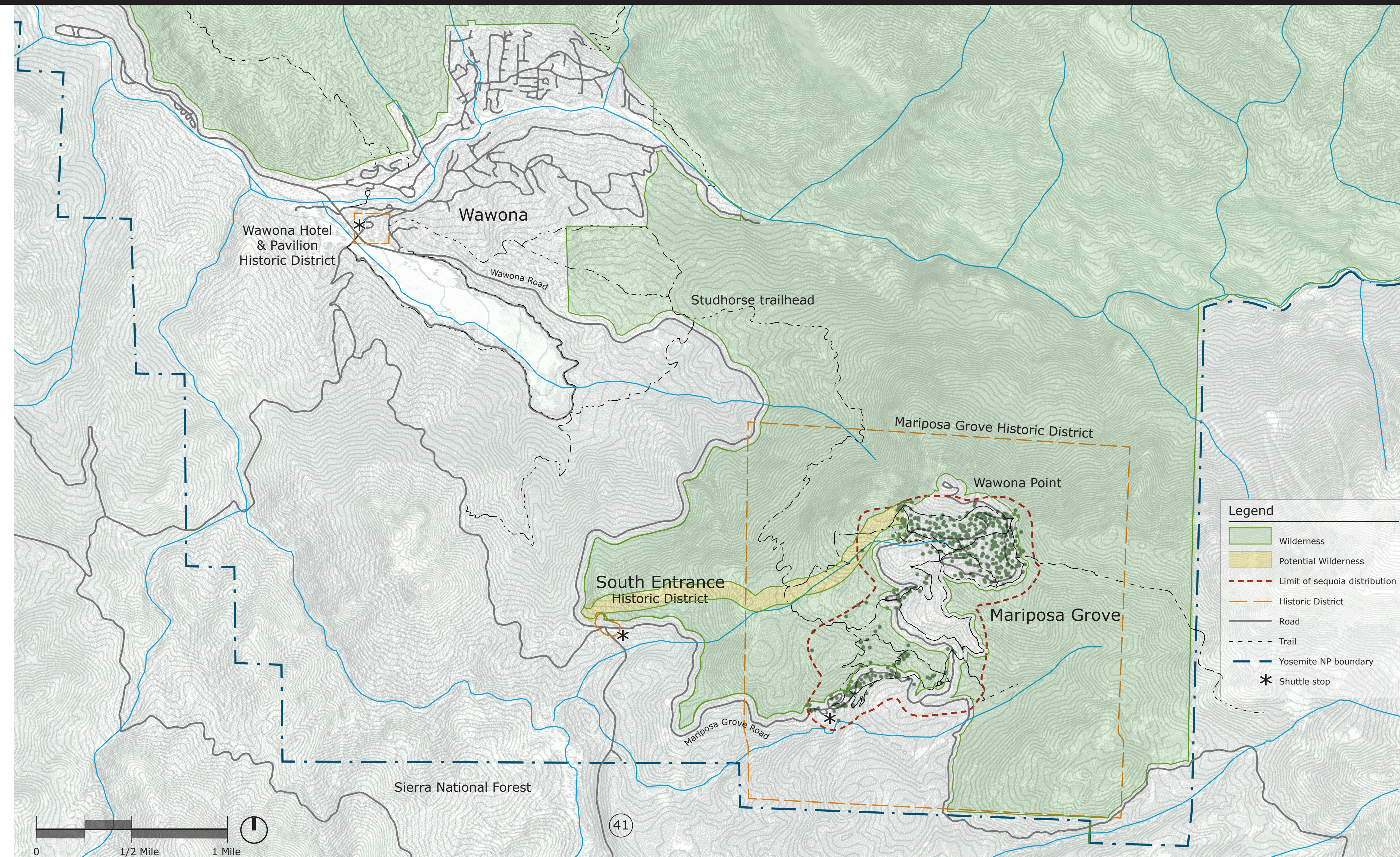
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NPS is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias.

Project Goals:

- Restore Degraded Grove Habitat
- Enhance the Visitor Experience
- Sustain Long-Term Health of the Giant Sequoias



Get Involved!

