



## YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK SCENIC VISTA MANAGEMENT PLAN



### Public Scoping and Concern Screening Report

April 2009



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS SUMMARY .....	1
CONCERN AND COMMENT ANALYSIS PROCESS.....	2
USING THIS REPORT .....	3
<b>PLANNING PROCESS AND POLICY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ECOSYSTEM PROCESSES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>WATER RESOURCES.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>VEGETATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>SCENIC RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SPECIAL LAND DESIGNATION, WILDERNESS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>VISITOR SERVICES .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>PARK OPERATIONS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>OUT OF SCOPE CONCERNS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SCREENING PUBLIC CONCERNS.....</b>	<b>17</b>



## Introduction

Yosemite National Park was originally set aside for preservation due to its outstanding scenery. In 1851, Dr. Lafayette Bunnell, one of the first Europeans to gaze on Yosemite's beauty, described the supreme grandeur of Yosemite Valley: "...the clouds...partially dimmed the higher cliffs and mountains. This obscurity of vision but increased the awe with which I beheld it, and as I looked, a peculiar exalted sensation seemed to fill my whole being."

Millions of modern-day explorers have experienced this same view. Today, we call it Tunnel View. It's just one of many iconic views and vistas for which Yosemite is famous.

Past management practices such as fire exclusion have allowed vegetation growth to obscure iconic views, vistas, and discrete lines of sight; and to allow coniferous forests to overgrow meadows. This has degraded both natural and cultural resources in Yosemite as well as compromising visitor experience. Vista Management in the park has, to date, been done on an ad hoc basis with no consistent strategy.

The purpose of the *Scenic Vista Management Plan* is to:

- Protect Yosemite's historic viewsheds and the natural processes that created them.
- Preserve the historic and cultural contexts in which the viewpoints were created.
- Restore visitor-use opportunities associated with lost vistas.
- Where historic viewpoints cannot be rehabilitated, identify potentially new views or vistas.
- Restore or maintain vistas by restoring natural species composition, structure, and function to systems or by using traditional American Indian management practices.

The National Park Service (NPS) conducted public scoping from February 12, 2009 through March 20, 2009, as part of the early development of the *Scenic Vista Management Plan* for Yosemite National Park. During public scoping, the NPS sought comments from members of the public to better understand the spectrum of concerns, interests, and issues that may need to be addressed as part of this planning process. The NPS accepted comments submitted by email, U.S. mail, and fax. This report is a summary of the public comments received during the scoping period.

### **Public Scoping Process Summary**

Members of the public were invited to submit comments throughout the comment period, February 12, 2009 through March 20, 2009. The NPS provided information about the plan and the public scoping period through the following means:

- 1) A press release describing the intent to begin the public involvement process for the proposed plan was issued on January 23, 2009. The *Mariposa Gazette* published the press release on January 26, 2009.
- 2) The scoping announcement was included in the *Yosemite National Park Electronic Newsletter*, which has about 7000 subscribers.
- 3) The scoping announcement was included in the park's *Daily Report* in February and March. The scoping period was announced via the park's website.
- 5) The plan's fact sheet was made available at visitor centers within the park.
- 6) Information regarding the project was disseminated during the January 28, 2009 and February 25, 2009 monthly Yosemite National Park Open House held in the Yosemite Valley auditorium.

Invitations to the National Park Service's monthly Open Houses were included in the public scoping announcement and the plan's fact sheet. Public comments are included in this report which can be found along with copies of the public comment letters on the project website at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/vista.htm>. The plan's fact sheet is also posted on the above website.

Nine public scoping comment letters (including emails) were received during the public scoping period. These responses were carefully reviewed and individual ideas were identified and assigned a code according to the subject matter addressed. These discrete individual ideas are known as public comments. The nine public comment letters consisted of 74 public comments. The public comments were then grouped into 31 concern statements. The public concern statements were used to identify common themes expressed by individuals or groups requesting particular lines of action by the NPS.

The public concerns were then screened to determine whether a concern pertained to the purpose and need for this project and the level of action required by the park's interdisciplinary team and/or park management. The plan's interdisciplinary team is composed of park specialists from a variety of backgrounds including recreation planning, resource management and science, wilderness, public information, environmental compliance, and visitor use/social science. The plan's interdisciplinary team is reviewing the concern statements and will use these concerns to aid in the development of alternatives. Copies of public comment letters and this report can be found on the project website at: <<http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/vista.htm>>.

## **Concern and Comment Analysis Process**

The letters, emails, and direct submission represented in this *Public Scoping Report* were analyzed using a process initially developed by the USDA Forest Service, Washington Office Ecosystem Management Staff, Content Analysis Team. For the last eight years, this system has been refined by the NPS and used to analyze comments for nearly all planning efforts in Yosemite National Park.

The comment analysis is comprised of three main components: a coding structure, a comment database, and the narrative summary contained in this report. Initially, a coding structure is developed to sort comments into logical groups by topic. Code categories are derived from an analysis of the range of topics covered in relevant present and past planning documents, NPS legal guidance, and the letters themselves. The purpose of these codes is to allow for quick access to comments on specific topics. The coding structure used was inclusive rather than restrictive—every attempt was made to accurately code all comments, including those that may not have pertained directly to the *Scenic Vista Management Plan*.

The second phase of the analysis process involves the assignment of codes to comments made by the public in their letters, emails and direct submissions. For each comment in a piece of correspondence, codes are assigned by one reader, validated by a second reader, and then entered into a database as verbatim quotes from members of the public. The database, in turn, was used to help construct this *Public Scoping Report*.

The third phase includes the identification of public concern statements and the preparation of this narrative. Public concerns are identified throughout the coding process and are derived from and supported by quotes from original letters. These concern statements present common themes identified in comments. Each statement is worded to give decision-makers a clear sense of what action is being requested.

Public concern statements are intended to help guide the reader to comments on the specific topics of interest. They do not replace the actual comments received from individuals. Rather, concern statements should be considered as an efficient and effective way of accessing information contained in original letters and the coded comment database. All comments are captured in public concern statements, whether they were presented by hundreds of people or a single individual.

## **Using this Report**

This report presents public concerns arranged by topic, along with a representative sample of supporting quotes. The following list of acronyms has been developed to assist the reader in reviewing the report.

### **List of Acronyms**

EA            Environmental Assessment

EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
GMP	General Management Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPS	National Park Service
ROD	Record of Decision
SVMP	Scenic Vista Management Plan

## Organization of comment information in this document

### Scoping Concern Category

Concern Statement (expressed as a sentence).

Letter Numbers: (i.e., 1, 2, 4)

*Direct quote from a representative public comment (i.e., "Better site delineation is needed at several park trailheads.")*

Type of comment and comment number: (Individual, Comment #4-1)

## **Planning Process and Policy**

The following scoping concerns or concern defining issues will be addressed by the planning document:

### **Concern 1: The NPS should limit the scope of the SVMP.**

Letter Number: 4

*"In closing, we recognize that this Park-wide scenic vista assessment could easily become so broad and include so many potential sites that it becomes so expansive that it ends up being unwieldy as a focused management tool."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #4-11)

### **Concern 2: The NPS should continue their work without an EA process which is not necessary.**

Letter Number: 6

*"The NPS since its establishment has done a good job of taking care of Yosemite. Going through the expensive Environmental Assessment process in order to continue their regular fine work should not be necessary. It also runs the risk of precipitating a lawsuit similar to that filed on the Merced River Plan."*

(Individual, Comment #6-4)

### **Concern 3: The NPS should avoid creating new viewing areas.**

Letter Numbers: 1, 3

*"I would be concerned about the creation of new view areas."*

(Individual, Comment #1-1)

*"No matter where you stand in Yosemite a tree, granite dome, something will be obscuring the view of what is behind it. How can we improve upon what nature has provided us? No giant fan to blow away the obscuring clouds, no chainsaw to fall site-offending trees, nor controlled burn to eliminate unwanted brush will make Yosemite look better."*

(Individual, Comment #3-2)

*"Please try to refrain from making subjective decisions about what Yosemite visitors should see and where they should see it. My wife and I are very concerned about the scope of the Scenic Vista Management Plan if anything other than the no action alternative is approved."*

(Individual, Comment #3-8)

### **Concern 4: The NPS should manage scenic views using a holistic approach**

Letter Numbers: 7, 8, 9

*Explore reasons WHY view sheds were lost (if possible). Was it because of a stop in vista management? climatic change? time? combination of many factors? If reasons are identified at each iconic viewpoint, appropriate future management of those sites may be clearer."*  
(Individual, Comment #7-4)

*"Developing a strategy to determine when to protect historic vistas in developed areas outside wilderness, when anthropogenic factors are not clearly implicated, generally should favor allowing natural processes to prevail. Guarded exceptions might be considered near developed areas where inaction would impact not only historic vistas but the ambience of the area as well...There are times when preserving historic and cultural landscapes may exceed the value of allowing natural processes to prevail."*  
(Conservation Organization, Comment #8-6)

*"Use a holistic approach to the planning process. We question past emphasis on the iconic views. Important as they are, Yosemite is not just a collection of certain views which are seen from particular points...The issue is how to manage the viewing of scenery holistically, rather than in individual increments. It is the difference between viewing Yosemite comprehensively, as opposed to seeing the components in isolation and un-related to each other."*  
(Conservation Organization, Comment #9-14)

**Concern 5: The NPS should address vista management in Yosemite to restore and maintain the quality of the visitor's visual experience.**

Letter Numbers: 4, 6

*"The Park should not be limited in this Scenic Vista Management Plan to only creating scenic viewing spots or opening up scenic viewing areas where it can be documented that historic conditions were previously open at those specific locations. If important viewing opportunities can be created without harming the ecosystem at a particular location, then the Park should carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of doing so."*  
(Conservation Organization, Comment #4-3)

*"CSERC recommends that the Park identify 20 or so higher priority areas for a first phase of scenic vista management, and that even those 20 locations be broken into those projects that are easily doable and fundable, and those that may take extra resources or more study."*  
(Conservation Organization, Comment #4-12)

*"Fifty years ago the NPS had an established policy of creating and maintaining appropriate vistas. The park visitor was able to easily identify turnouts and parking areas that presented outstanding views of waterfalls, streams, rock formations, forests, meadows and ridges. Now, in many places, the visitor parks at the turnout which is still there, and then walks back along the shoulder in order to find a place to photograph the outstanding view. With the removal of some Valley roads, the narrowing of others, along with elimination of roadside parking, the visitor frequently stops in the travel lane in order to see and photograph a view."*  
(Individual, Comment #6-2)

## **Ecosystem Processes**

**Concern 6: The NPS should consider mechanical thinning other than fire removal of large trees.**

Letter Numbers: 4, 8, 9

*"Throughout most of the Park, an unnatural concentration of young to mid-size conifers now dominates the roadside areas...a visitor will drive along roads where there is very little opportunity to look "into" the forest alongside the road. CSERC recommends that the Scenic Vista Management Plan designate substantial areas along main roads in the Park where roadside tree removals of small to mid-size conifers will take place for at least 50' to 100' from the edge of the road in order to (1) open up the scenic viewing opportunities along those roads, (2) to increase the ability for motorists to see deer, bear, or other wildlife that may be attempting to cross those roads, and (3) to increase the effectiveness of utilizing roads and adjacent low-fuel areas for halting destructive wildfires."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #4-6)

*"The Committee supports a comprehensive strategy of restoring historic scenic vistas lost to human actions in recent decades. These efforts should employ natural processes where possible utilizing fire and restoring natural water flows altered by past human activities. Where that is not feasible mechanical thinning and trimming would be an acceptable alternative to control growth."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #8-2)

*"Prescribed burning is a relatively natural way of removing small trees. However, the aftermath of some burning can be quite ugly, and in a way which is not natural. The recent burn in Yosemite Valley at Bridalveil Creek, adjacent to the road, is an example. Much of that burn appears to have been at a high intensity, resulting in scarring of trees which will be evident for many decades to come. Had the area been more open, as it apparently was prior to the arrival of Europeans, that damage would not have occurred. Consideration of the visual aspects alone should perhaps have prompted some mechanical thinning before the fire was ignited."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #9-10)

## **Water Resources**

**Concern 7: The NPS should minimize any runoff of petroleum into ephemeral streams when conducting major structural grading or paving at scenic vista points.**

Letter Number: 2

*"Our Center suggests that any major structural grading or paving needed at scenic vista points be designed to minimize any runoff of petroleum by-products into nearby ephemeral streams. Even at existing vista sites, when literally thousands of cars park during a single season, there is potential for petroleum products to leak onto the ground or pavement, and in subsequent rain events, to move into the soil or into down-slope drainages. Where possible, the Park should*

*incorporate berms or small catchment basins downslope from vista parking areas in order to capture pollutants and prevent them from reaching ephemeral or year-round streams."*  
(Conservation Organization, Comment #2-4)

## **Vegetation**

**Concern 8: The NPS should utilize native plantings to ameliorate unsightly views and improve near and middle views of a scenic vista.**

Letter Numbers: 8, 9

*"Yosemite's native under story vegetation, dogwood, spice bush, azalea, for example could be used to screen unsightly infrastructure (work and storage areas) that might be viewed an eyesore to many visitors."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #8-3)

*"Some judiciously selected native plantings might ameliorate the view as seen from both directions. There are countless other affronts to the near and middle views. This is just an example to illustrate the point we wish to make about near and middle views."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #9-4)

*"Many of Yosemite's scenic and historic view sites have been obscured in recent years by past management inaction and rapid vegetation growth that may not have occurred if completely natural or historic cultural processes were in play. Many remaining historic viewpoints will soon be lost if an active scenic vista management plan is not implemented in Yosemite Valley and other developed areas of the Park."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #8-1)

**Concern 9: The NPS should not be reluctant to remove trees when they are young to improve views and alleviate the issue of removing large trees.**

Letter Number: 9

*"Removal of trees: Shall we cut down some trees in order that people shall be able once again to see the views which are steadily disappearing behind a screen of foliage? This is not a new issue, but has been debated and acted upon going back to the early years of the Park. There is a long history of tree removal for this purpose. But in recent decades the NPS appears to have developed a reluctance to deal with the issue. The trees are getting bigger, and the views are disappearing. When the trees get big enough, people become reluctant to see them cut, and the distant views become permanently lost. Remove the trees when they are young, so their size does not become an issue."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #9-8)

**Concern 10: The NPS should retain mature oaks if trees will be removed to improve scenic resources.**

Letter Number: 2

*"When creating new vista points or thinning forested areas at existing vista points, our Center urges that mature oaks and other hardwoods be favored for retention when trees are being removed for scenic reasons, since these deciduous trees do not have foliage for half the year, and the fall season leaf colors could only add to the view."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #2-3)

**Concern 11: The NPS should intensively remove trees in especially dense thickets to open up views.**

Letter Numbers: 4, 7

*"CSERC strongly agrees that the interference with the natural fire regime in particular has resulted in overly dense stands of conifers, the blockage of countless scenic viewing opportunities, and a great decrease in hardwoods that have important scenic values, particularly during the fall color season."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #4-1)

*"In particular, along roads where incense cedar and white fir thickets now are creating especially dense thickets, CSERC recommends intensive removal of trees up to at least 20" dbh to open up the views. If this kind of work is approved, we recommend extra effort be made to cut all stumps to within 4" of the ground, to remove or to pile and burn as much of the cut material as possible, and to avoid areas with streamside zones, riparian vegetation, thickets of hardwoods (such as dogwood, alder, maples, or oaks), or other areas of ecological concern."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #4-7)

*"Acknowledge that "historic" views change through time and allow for that change in some areas. Restoring to a "Period of Significance" can be problematic. Even though it is the correct lingo, many people don't understand it and think that you can have significance through time."*

(Individual, Comment #7-3)

**Concern 12: The NPS should consider safety and impacts on other resources of facilities if tree clearing is considered in plan alternatives (in SVMP).**

Letter Number: 7

*"If tree clearing becomes a management action in alternatives, please ensure that safety, and impacts to other resources and/or facilities are considered... explore methods of removal that are light on the land. Finally, the sale of the removed trees should go towards implementing the plan...a couple could go to the woodlots in Yosemite Valley, Wawona and El Portal!"*

(Individual, Comment #7-5)

## **Scenic Resources, Visual Quality**

**Concern 13: The NPS should consider impacts of burning on visitor experience and their ability to see vistas.**

Letter Number: 9

*"Particulate matter in the air, regardless of whether it is from prescribed burns or naturally-ignited fires which are allowed to burn, frequently has a severe impact on the ability of the visitor to see the Yosemite which he/she anticipated seeing. This impact is huge, and certainly must be addressed in this planning process."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #9-11)

**Concern 14: The NPS should consider all views, near and middle, as well as distant.**

Letter Number: 9

*"The scope of the plan should include all views, near and middle as well as distant. To illustrate the point, Housekeeping Camp is quite an eyesore, and is right on Southside Drive, so everyone sees it. The ugliness of housekeeping camp as seen from Southside Drive should be addressed in this plan. At the same time, the ugliness of traffic on Southside Drive as seen from Housekeeping Camp is perhaps an equal consideration."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #9-3)

*"The Tunnel View project illustrates a point we wish to make: Removal of the trees improved the distant views, but the human-created talus slope below the rock wall is now more ugly than it was. And from the Four Mile Trail that foreground area is part of the distant view, and is now seen as an unnatural area. In both cases, the view has been impaired. Removing the trees improved the distant view as seen from the tunnel, but harmed the foreground view, and also harmed the distant view when looking back toward the tunnel from other areas. This could still be remedied by suitable treatment of the talus slope below the rock wall with appropriate native vegetation."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #9-9)

**Concern 15: The NPS should consider the creation of new vista points along part of Tioga Pass Road.**

Letter Number: 2

*"CSERC encourages the Park to consider the creation of new vista points along the westernmost 10 to 12 miles of the Tioga Pass road, where there are currently few places to pull off the road to view spectacular scenery."(Conservation Organization, Comment #2-2)*

**Concern 16: NPS should encourage visitors to be on foot in lieu of in their vehicles to see views of Yosemite.**

Letter Numbers: 1, 3

*"I think Yosemite is best experience outside of a vehicle and more view areas may encourage more car window visitors."*

(Individual, Comment #1-2)

*"Instead of altering the landscape, encourage visitors to use their feet in lieu of their vehicles to see the magnificent views of Yosemite National Park. Let them discover their own favorite viewpoint...Why encourage visitors to crowd into a few roadside turnouts to tussle over the limited parking only to have their site obstructed by other view hungry visitors? Even with the recent alterations to the "Tunnel View" area, it remains crowded and unsafe during peak visitation times as you know."*

(Individual, Comment #3-4)

## **Special Land Designations, Wilderness**

**Concern 17: The NPS should not clear vistas in designated wilderness.**

Letter Numbers: 7, 8

*"The NPS should not consider management actions to restore iconic vistas within Wilderness. Wilderness should be as free-from man's influence as possible. Views into Wilderness, but from non-wilderness vantage points, should be considered for scenic vista restoration. Road corridors should be considered for the most aggressive type of vista management, especially for historic pullouts."*

(Individual, Comment #7-1)

*"The Committee opposes any vista clearance action in designated wilderness where anthropogenic factors are not clearly involved. Any such actions must of course not violate the Wilderness Act or regulations there under."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #8-5)

## **Facilities & Operations**

**Concern 18: The NPS should avoid the use of mechanized equipment within areas of the Park managed as wilderness.**

Letter Numbers: 4

*"CSERC strongly, strongly advocates for the Park to avoid the use of mechanized equipment, even chainsaws, within areas of the Park managed as wilderness. If an area along the Tioga Pass Road or some other major transportation route runs along wilderness, and if there would be scenic benefits from removing a substantial number of trees to open up that viewing opportunity, then CSERC urges Park fire staff to stack fuel around the bole/trunk of the trees that are blocking the view and to burn the site hot enough to kill most or all of the trees that interfere with the view. If resulting snags then pose any hazard to the public due to the proximity*

*to the road or due to a lean towards the viewing site, public health and safety would justify the Park using chainsaws to fall those specific snags. Otherwise, the Park should rely entirely upon non-mechanized treatment methods within wilderness to implement scenic vista enhancement work."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #4-4)

**Concern 19: NPS should not enhance scenic vistas along wilderness boundaries if it causes more than minor degradation to wilderness values.**

Letter Number: 4

*"In terms of locating pull-outs or scenic vista opportunities along wilderness boundaries along roads, it is also important to consider the trade off of providing scenic views with the down side of potentially concentrating noise, the glare of headlights, or other human disturbance activities along the wilderness boundary. Where there is a significant potential for the degradation of wilderness values to be more than minor, CSERC would discourage the Park for selecting those sites for enhancing scenic vistas."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #4-5)

## **Visitor Services**

**Concern 20: NPS should use natural vegetation to restore aesthetic conditions of many Park campgrounds.**

Letter Number: 8

*"Site specific native vegetation could also be employed to improve the aesthetic condition of many Park campgrounds impacted by many years of heavy use. Restoring campgrounds with native plantings where possible between camp units, would greatly improve the unsightliness of barren campgrounds and would improve the camping experience for visitors as well. These actions should be considered a basic component of any scenic vista management plan."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #8-4)

**Concern 21 NPS should identify trailheads and destinations that guide visitors to alternative viewpoints accessed without vehicles.**

Letter Number: 3

*"Distribute/display maps that identify trail heads and destinations that will take visitors to scenic, but lightly used areas of the Park that offer them a chance to begin enjoying Yosemite from alternative viewpoints without the assistance of their vehicle"*

(Individual, Comment #3-6)

**Concern 22: NPS should ensure accuracy in interpretive displays.**

Letter Number: 7

*"In areas where historic vistas cannot be restored, please address interpretive displays that may still be there (i.e. there is a pullout on Southside Drive that has an interpretive display about the view of El Cap across the meadow, however, you can no longer see El Cap from that vantage point. If the view can not be restored there, the interpretive info as it is can be confusing to park visitors)"*

(Individual, Comment #7-2)

**Concern 23: The NPS should consider viewing pullouts where inbound park visitors must access them by crossing oncoming traffic flow, thus creating a traffic safety risk.**

Letter Number: 4

*"It can be easy to get caught up in enthusiasm for creating wonderful viewing opportunities and to overlook the fact that traffic flow, parking, and entry onto or off of the roads are all highly important public safety issues that must be given prioritization in any scenic vista proposal. The most enthusiastic visitors who are seeking viewing opportunities are generally those who are ENTERING the Park for their Yosemite experience, rather than those who are LEAVING the Park. Thus, CSERC strongly discourages the scenic vista management plan for proposing to create pull-outs or to aggressively open up scenic viewing areas along existing pull-outs if those pull-outs are on the wrong side of the road for visitors who are driving INTO the Park. Drivers who cross the on-coming flow of traffic to enter a viewing pullout or to exit from the pullout back across traffic to get into their inbound lane again will consistently be creating a traffic safety risk. CSERC strongly urges such traffic concerns to be fully spelled out by the Park in any proposed action alternative for this project."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #4-8)

## **Park Operations**

**Concern 24: NPS should minimize visual impacts of construction activity.**

Letter Number: 9

*"A major source of ugliness is the never-ending construction activity. Totally aside from the issue of whether a particular construction activity should even be occurring, principles should be established, and adhered to, which would minimize the visual impacts of construction activity."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #9-7)

*"Visual damage caused by trail crew activity should be considered... It is not unusual to find that a trail crew has been so focused on creating or restoring a trail alignment that they let nothing stand in their way. The result is damage to esthetics, as well as to other environmental aspects. The problem was observed recently, within the past couple of years, on the Mono Meadow Trail, following the Meadow Fire. A huge snag had come down across the trail, and a user-created*

*bypass which went around it had become established. The bypass was completely acceptable, as it deviated very little from the original alignment, and was practically at the same gradient. But the trail crew chose to cut through the downed snag, creating a very large and ugly scar which will be there for many decades.”*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #9-12)

**Concern 25: NPS should consider removal of structures in order to restore views.**

Letter Number: 9

*"The study should consider the removal of human structures in order to restore more natural views. Removal of human structures could, but need not, be on such a grandiose scale as removing a hotel. It could start with something as simple as removing the Mirror Lake causeway and "pulpit" which was constructed out into the lake from the shore. That particular eyesore has always struck some people as being particularly intrusive, and its continued retention seems inexplicable."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #9-6)

## **Out of Scope Concerns**

The following comments were reviewed and will be considered in its application to overall park operations and practices. However, the comments are not directly related to this project.

### **26: The NPS should consider renaming Tunnel View to Valley Overlook.**

Letter Number 6

*"The recent removal of trees improved the outstanding vista at what was historically known as "Inspiration Point" at the East end of the Wawona Tunnel, The recent "Tunnel View" name, like tunnel vision, is much too restrictive. The name "Valley Overlook" is better, but not as good as "Inspiration Point"."*

(Individual, Comment #6-3)

### **Concern 27: The NPS should evaluate what would be needed to restore a portion of the El Cap moraine.**

Letter Number: 4

*"CSERC also recommends that the Park evaluate what would be needed in terms of work to restore a portion of the El Capitan moraine that was removed in 1879, and to consider whether the restoration of that moraine would have enough meadow restoration benefits to justify the cost and the disturbance."*

(Conservation Organization, Comment #4-10)

### **Concern 28: NPS should include correct Native American history in planning documents.**

Letter Number: 5

*"...the Park should include the correct Native American history. If the Park is discussing Dr. Lafayette H. Bunnell then the Park should include where Bunnell wrote that Chief Bautista, also known as Vow Chester, said that the Miwoks were afraid to enter Yosemite Valley. This is the same Chief Bautista the Southern Sierra Miwuks (American Indian Council of Mariposa) claimed in a recent book called "Deeper Than Gold" written by Brian Bibby and published by Heyday Press, was an important historical chief of theirs. Many of Bautista's own descendents are now in the modern day Southern Sierra Miwuks.*

*Bunnell also wrote that Kau'tcitti (Cow'chitty) was a sworn enemy of the original Yosemite people, yet he was a leader of the Miwoks. Without Cow'chitty's help the Mariposa Battalion would have never captured Tenaya's people, the Ahwahneechees of Yosemite Valley. Dr. Lafayette H. Bunnell also wrote that the leader of the Ahwahneechees, Chief Tenaya, was the founder of the Paiute Colony of Ahwahnee. That Tenaya spoke Paiute and that his band was made of Paiutes and Monos. That the Monos were proud of Tenaya for his war exploits, which*

*meant he fought the Southern Sierra Miwoks. Yet today Yosemite National Park Service consults the Southern Sierra Miwuks, also called the American Indian Council of Mariposa, thinking that they represent the original indigenous Natives of Yosemite. The Southern Sierra Miwuks were not the original Indians of Yosemite but they were the sworn enemies of the original Yosemite Valley people and workers for the whites along the western foothills. This is why we Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiutes object to the false history that is being perpetrated by the Park. Please correct this and try to tell the real historical facts."*

(Individual, Comment #5-1)

*"We request that Yosemite National Park Service use the correct tribal identification of the original Indians of Yosemite Valley, which were Ahwahneechees; Paiutes and Monos, and not "Miwoks".*

(Individual, Comment #5-2)

*"...using traditional American Indian management practices" Then the Park Service is describing a practice called by the U.S. Department of Forestry as the "Piute Burn". That was an early practice that the Paiutes in the area used to clear cluttered brush, helped the growth of certain grasses and maintained their original area of Yosemite. That is why we Paiutes object of calling it a "Miwok burn" because that is a recent concocted term. There is history of the burn being called the "Piute Burn" in previous decades. We request that the Park Service call the original practice the "Piute Burn" and have federal recognized Paiute tribes, not the non-profit Southern Sierra Miwok group, do the traditional burning."*

(Individual Comment #5-5)

## **Screening Public Scoping Concerns**

The purpose of the screening process is to identify whether a concern pertains to the purpose and need for the project and the level of action required by the planning team. All concern statements and supporting quotes presented in this document have been analyzed by park staff and assigned screening codes according to the criteria described below. Screening codes indicate how concerns will be addressed by the proposed project. When screening a public scoping concern, each supporting quote must be examined for the presence of a rationale (the “why”) supporting the requested action. All identified public concerns, whether supported by the comments of one person or many, are considered. This report was structured according to the results of the screening process.

**Screen #1** identifies public concerns that do not meet the purpose and need of the subject planning process, or are non-substantive, and therefore, do not warrant further consideration. These public concerns do not require management consideration. Any concern for which an affirmative answer can be given to one of the following questions falls in this category:

- 1.1 Is the concern outside the scope of the proposed action? (i.e., out-of-scope)
- 1.2 Does law or policy already decide the concern? (i.e., out-of-scope)
- 1.3 Is this the wrong planning level for a decision on this concern? (i.e., out-of-scope)
- 1.4 Would acting on the concern place untenable restrictions on management, conflict with approved plans, or entail significant and reasonably foreseeable negative consequences? (i.e., effectively out-of-scope)
- 1.5 Is the concern a simple editorial correction? (i.e., no response needed)
- 1.6 Is the concern an unsupported personal opinion (i.e., a question, problem, suggestion, or interest, with no supporting “why”); or a simple statement of fact with no request for action, stated or implied? (A non-substantive concern)
- 1.9 Out-of-Scope but take to Management for consideration for any reason

Concerns that do not reasonably match the above criteria are considered within the scope of the subject plan, could be substantive, and are passed on to screen #2.

**Screen #2** defines concerns and comments that fall within the reasonable scope of the project and will be addressed in its compliance document (EA or EIS):

- 2.0 Scoping concern defining an issue already to be addressed within the scope of the planning document, as initially described to the public
- 2.1 Review concern requesting a technical correction (an EA or EIS)

- 2.2 Review concern requesting an action that can be addressed in FONSI (EA), or by rewriting document text for substance or clarification (DEIS, FEIS, ROD)
- 2.3 Review concern requesting an action adequately addressed in the planning document (EA or EIS (including alternatives considered and dismissed)); still may need a response in the *Response to Public Comment*
- 2.8 Scoping concern defining an issue expanding the scope of a project, as initially defined, that now will be included in the project scope on the decision of the project manager.
- 2.9 Scoping concern defining an issue expanding the scope of a project as initially defined that will not be included in the project scope on the decision of the project manager.

**Screen #3** defines concerns and comments that fall within the reasonable scope of the project and will be addressed in its compliance document (EA or EIS) and are coded using the same structure as that of Screen #2. However, these concerns may warrant further consideration by the management team:

- 3.0 Scoping concern defining an issue already to be addressed within the scope of the planning document, as initially described to the public
- 3.1 Review concern requesting a technical correction (an EA or EIS)
- 3.2 Review concern requesting an action that can be addressed in FONSI (EA), or by rewriting document text for substance or clarification (DEIS, FEIS, ROD)
- 3.3 Review concern requesting an action adequately addressed in the planning document (EA or EIS (including alternatives considered and dismissed)); still may need a response in the *Response to Public Comment*
- 3.8 Scoping concern defining an issue expanding the scope of a project, as initially defined, that now will be included in the project scope on the decision of the project manager.
- 3.9 Scoping concern defining an issue expanding the scope of a project as initially defined that will not be included in the project scope on the decision of the project manager.

**Screen #4** defines substantive concerns that need to be reviewed by park management. As defined in the National Park Service Director's Order #12 Handbook (*Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making*) and Council of Environmental Quality regulations, a concern is "substantive" if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- 4.0 Scoping comment that expands, with reasonable basis, the scope of the project as initially defined to the public

- 4.1 Questions, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information presented
- 4.2 Questions, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of analysis presented
- 4.3 Questions or helps clarify, improve, or evaluate, with reasonable basis, the appropriate use or span of the park's authority (this includes appropriate scale of planning, public involvement, and legal authorities)
- 4.4 Presents a reasonable new alternative (i.e., not included or considered and dismissed)
- 4.5 Calls for, with reasonable basis, or results in a modification of the proposal
- 4.6 Calls for or would require, with reasonable basis, additional analysis
- 4.9 A substantive concern on which the project manager makes a decision without management review when an issue raised has been sufficiently discussed with the management team