

Yosemite National Park

Tuolumne Wild & Scenic River

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Overview of Action Alternatives for the Tuolumne River Plan

The Tuolumne River Plan focuses on protecting and enhancing river values. Many of the actions that would be taken to address management concerns about those values are common to all the action alternatives. For example, a comprehensive ecological restoration program for the subalpine meadow and riparian complex is included in all the action alternatives, as well as removal of roadside parking. The alternatives vary primarily in how they balance the protection of river values with different kinds of visitor use and associated user capacities in Tuolumne Meadows and at the Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp.

Alternative 1: Emphasizing a Self-Reliant Experience

Alternative 1 would restore conditions for primitive, unconfined recreation in an undeveloped natural area to much of Tuolumne Meadows and Glen Aulin. Tuolumne Meadows Lodge, campground "loop A", undesignated parking, and most commercial facilities would be removed, while water treatment facilities would be upgraded. Administrative use would be reduced by decreasing employee housing, combining the visitor and wilderness center functions, and combining the NPS and concessioner stables.

All current recreation opportunities except commercial use and concessioner day rides would be retained. Tuolumne Meadows Lodge and the Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp would be removed, and the Tuolumne Meadows campground would be reduced from 304 to 237 sites. Overnight visitor use would be reduced from 2,742 to 2,032 and day use reduced from 1,774 to 1,033. Estimated water demand would be reduced from 64,141 to 35,964 gallons per day. Alternative 1 would result in the restoration of 208 acres of meadow and riparian habitat and 25 acres of upland habitat, with 38 acres of disturbance from new construction or relocation of facilities.

Alternative 2: Expanding Recreational Opportunities

Alternative 2 responds to those members of the public who expressed a desire for more recreational opportunities. It would facilitate resource enjoyment and stewardship by a broad spectrum of visitors and help visitors forge a connection with the Tuolumne by getting out of their cars and taking short walks or hikes to sites of natural, cultural, or recreational interest.

The visitor center would be relocated to a new site near the existing Tuolumne store. Administrative use would be more efficient by consolidating NPS and concessioner housing, combining the ranger station with the wilderness center, and the NPS and concessioner stables. New NPS employee housing would be added to accommodate about 60 additional employees. The Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp would be converted to a seasonal outfitter camp with no permanent facilities.

The number of sites at the Tuolumne Meadows campground would be increased from 304 to 345; some restrictions would be placed on commercial stock use; and six whitewater kayaking trips per year, with up to eight people/boats per trip, would be allowed on limited portions of the river. Overnight visitor use would increase from 2,742 to 2,988 and day use increased from 1,774 to 1,913. Estimated water demand would increase from 64,141 to 70,081 gallons per day.

Alternative 2 would result in the restoration of 170 acres of meadow and riparian habitat and 5 acres of upland habitat, with 40 acres of disturbance for new construction or relocation of facilities. Ecological conditions would be improved by directing use to resilient areas and access to the meadows and river via formally maintained trails.

Alternative 3: Celebrating the Tuolumne Cultural Heritage

Alternative 3 responds to those members of the public who have strong traditional ties to the Tuolumne River Corridor and who expressed a desire to see the area remain unchanged. It would preserve many aspects of Tuolumne Meadows' historic setting.

The majority of existing visitor serving facilities would remain in their current locations except for the mountaineering shop and fuel station, both of which would be removed. Undesignated parking spaces would be removed or formalized with new parking lots added, and water treatment facilities would be upgraded. Capacity at Tuolumne Lodge would be reduced from 276 to 136.

Current recreation opportunities would be retained and the campground would remain at current capacity. Overnight visitor use would be reduced from 2,742 to 2,598 and day use reduced from 1,774 to 1,568. Estimated water demand would decrease from 64,141 to 59,739 gallons per day.

171 acres of meadow and riparian habitat and 5 acres of upland habitat would be restored with 11 acres of disturbance for new construction or relocation of facilities.

Alternative 4: Improving the Traditional Tuolumne Experience

Alternative 4 responds to a range of public concerns by balancing desires to retain a traditional Tuolumne experience with desires to reduce development and make visitor use more sustainable. It also addresses the need to provide a meaningful introduction to the Tuolumne River for the growing number of short-term visitors.

The majority of existing visitor use facilities would remain in place except for the removal of the mountaineering shop/school and fuel station. The visitor center would be relocated to a site near the campground. The NPS and concessioner stables would be combined and a slightly higher number of NPS employee housing units would be added. Concessioner stock day rides into wilderness would be discontinued. Capacity at Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp would be reduced from 32 to 20.

Current recreation opportunities would be retained and the campground would remain at current capacity. Overnight visitor use would decrease slightly from 2,742 to 2,730 and day use would increase from 1,774 to 1,839. Estimated water demand would increase from 64,141 to 66,778 gallons per day.

Alternative 4 would result in the restoration of 171 acres of meadow and riparian habitat and 2 acres of upland habitat, with 27 acres of disturbance for new construction or relocation of facilities.

How to stay involved

Learn more about this plan, including open house dates and other information on the Tuolumne River Plan website at www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/trp.htm. You can also follow this and other park plans on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YosemiteNPS.

Comment on this draft comprehensive management plan and environmental impact statement by visiting the Tuolumne River Plan Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/trp_deis. Electronic comment submittal through PEPC saves resources and allows for direct entry into the NPS comment analysis system. Alternatively, your comments can be emailed to yose_planning@nps.gov, faxed to 209/379-1294, or mailed to:

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