



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yosemite National Park
P. O. Box 577
Yosemite, California 95389

IN REPLY REFER TO:
Y1427 (YOSE)

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to present to you the *Final Yosemite Fire Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*. It represents a major effort by the public and park staff, and one that will greatly benefit Yosemite National Park and its neighbors.

Fire management is a complex and crucial subject, and one that requires a great deal of study, planning and commitment to action. The ecosystems of Yosemite National Park evolved under the influence of fire, and you could almost say they cannot live without it. Fire is needed to reduce fuels, maintain the diversity and structure of plant communities, and even open the seed cones of species such as giant sequoia. But fire cannot be taken lightly. There are risks involved, and there are benefits to be realized. Simply put, fire management is among the most important and difficult of things we do in managing Yosemite National Park.

The attached *Final Yosemite Fire Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* is a product of the discussions we've had with the public and local, state and federal cooperating agencies, and of the professional input of the park's fire and resource management staff. The outlined fire management program is also a product of evolution. The program at Yosemite is not a new one. It has benefited from over thirty years of implementation and refinement, research and monitoring, learning and doing. Revision processes, such as this one, give us a chance to revisit old issues, discuss how things are done, improve the ways of doing them, improve our communication with the public, and sort through the diverse public needs that drive fire management decisions. Air quality-related issues, for example, are difficult, but refinements have been made in our program and in our processes for communicating with the public and other agencies.

Changes were made between draft and final. For your ease of reference, these are described in the Executive Summary, and again in the Purpose and Need chapter.

To those of you who contributed comments, attended public meetings, and met with us—thank you. You have my appreciation for considering the draft and offering your input.

I hope you will remain involved as we continue in our implementation of the Yosemite fire management program.

Sincerely,

Michael Tollefson
Superintendent