



Wilderness Stewardship Plan



Located in the Sierra Nevada Range in central California, the Yosemite Wilderness encompasses over 704,000 acres and accounts for over 94% of Yosemite National Park. Officially designated by the California Wilderness Act in 1984, the Yosemite Wilderness has long been a place for inspiration, wonder, and discovery.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this planning effort is to review the management direction in the 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Plan and update it as necessary to better align with contemporary use patterns and National Park Service policy.

In particular, there is a need to examine and refine the existing plan to incorporate new information and understanding about changes in visitor use patterns, methods of managing visitor use, techniques for trail design and construction, and concepts for managing stock in wilderness settings. There is also a need to incorporate new policy direction and definitions for wilderness character into the park's wilderness management framework and

to review the status of potential wilderness additions. Finally, there is a need to determine the extent to which commercial services will be performed in the Yosemite Wilderness.

Once completed, the direction in the revised Wilderness Stewardship Plan will apply visitor, commercial, and administrative use in wilderness. While some site-specific actions may be necessary, the primary focus of the plan will be to provide a framework for measuring and monitoring wilderness character to ensure that future management actions will be taken as needed to adapt to changing conditions.

Public Scoping

Scoping is an important first step in involving the public in this planning effort. During this phase we are sharing a preliminary list of topics we intend to address and asking for your feedback.

As we prepare to revise the 1989 Wilderness Plan, we anticipate the need to address the following management issues: visitor use and capacity, trail management, stock use, and commercial services. We invite you to share your thoughts about these issues, alternative

ways to approach them, and other topics that you believe to be relevant to this plan.

For example:

What do you value about the way in which the National Park Service currently manages the Yosemite Wilderness?

What are the most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness today and how should they be addressed?

Potential Management Issues

Visitor Use and Capacity

Changing use patterns (summer and winter), have increased use in certain areas of Yosemite's wilderness leading to social and physical impacts in these locations. The level of use in these popular areas can consume the entire zone capacity, thereby limiting access to more remote locations. This project will consider changes to our current trailhead quota system and/or consider adding new types of quotas to address this situation.

Stock Use

The NPS minimally manages the location, timing, and amount of stock use. Each of these factors affects the amount of impact to soils, vegetation, archeological sites, and meadow fauna. This project will provide a management framework to better and more consistently manage these aspects of wilderness stock use.



Pack stock grazing in Yosemite's high country.



Popular trail through Lyell Canyon.



Backpackers on a guided trip in Yosemite's Wilderness. (Image by Keith Walklet courtesy Yosemite Conservancy)

Trail Management

Changing travel patterns in the wilderness (on and off trail), are making it harder to effectively and efficiently manage and mitigate the physical impacts of wilderness travel. This project will provide a management framework to address the maintenance of existing trails, when to construct and how to manage new trails, and whether to restore seldom-used trails.

Commercial Services

The Wilderness Act requires that the National Park Service evaluate the need for commercial services within wilderness (i.e. guided hiking, climbing, and stock use). This project will determine an appropriate amount of commercial services in wilderness.

Get Involved

Share Your Thoughts

Public scoping for this project will extend through January 29, 2016. This is an ideal time for you to share your thoughts, concerns, and vision for the future of the Yosemite Wilderness. Your input will help guide the planning team in revising the park's Wilderness Plan, including the development of alternative approaches for guiding future management. We intend to hold informational scoping meetings in the near future and the venues will be announced soon. We look forward to hearing from you and working with you throughout this planning process. For more information visit: <http://www.nps.gov/yose/getinvolved/wsp.htm>

How to Comment

Comment online:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/yosewild>

Comment by mail:

Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan
P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be publicly available at any time.

The Wilderness Act, signed into law in 1964, created the National Wilderness Preservation System and defined wilderness as an area that is "...in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape."