STATE OF CALIFORNIA – THE RESOURCES AGENCY

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, *Governor*

OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
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August 23, 2004

Dr. Stephanie Toothman
National Park Service
Pacific West Region
909 First Street
Seattle, Washington 98104-4159

Dear Dr. Toothman:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Register Multiple Property nomination for Yosemite National Park. I concur that the properties identified and evaluated n the nomination do constitute a coherent group of geographically dispersed resources that are eligible for listing in the National Register. The nomination does an excellent job of defining separate, but related contexts that make clear the significance of the individual resources, as well as the reasons that they collectively constitute a multiple property. The inclusion of a number of the park's less elaborate, high altitude resources is particularly noteworthy. The context statements synthesize a large amount of historic documentation in a clear and concise manner and the descriptive material that is provided for the individual resources or resource groupings is excellent.

We concur in all of your findings regarding the resources enumerated in the multiple property nomination. We agree that the following properties are eligible for the National Register as a part of a multiple property.

Lake Vernon Cabin Building #2450
May Lake High Sierra Camp Historic District
Hetch Hetchy Comfort Station Building #2104
Henness Ridge Fire Lookout Building #5300
The Golden Crown Mine
Glen Aulin Sierra Camp Historic District
Chinquapin Historic District
Buck Creek Cabin Building #4800
Snow Flat Cabin #Building #3501
Snow Creek Cabin Building #3450
Sachse Springs Cabin Building #2452
Ostrander Ski Hut Building #5110
Old Big Oak Flat Road
New Big Oak Flat Road
Merced Lake Ranger Station Building #3400
Merced Lake High Sierra Camp Historic District

Wawona Tunnel
Vogelsang High Sierra Camp Historic District
Tuolumne Meadows High Sierra Camp Historic District

I have signed the application as commenting authority. If you have any questions, please call Gene Itogowa of my staff (916) 653-8936.

Sincerely,

Milford Wayne Donaldson
State Historic Preservation Officer

Cc: Kimball Koch

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. Aug. 2002)

OMB No. 1024-0018
(Expires Jan. 2005)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Merced Lake High Sierra Camp Historic District

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number N/A not for publication ___

city or town Yosemite National Park (YOSE) vicinity ___

state California code CA county Tuolumne code 109 zip code 95389

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this___ nomination___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.

____ determined not eligible for the National Register

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many as apply)

___ private
___ public-local
___ public-State
_X_ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one)

___building(s)
_X_district
___site
___structure
___object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
27	1	buildings
		sites
	3	structures
		objects
27	4	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park, California

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6.Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Camp

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Camp

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
Other: NPS Rustic
Vernacular wood frame

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation stone; wood
walls canvas
roof canvas
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

_X__ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

_____ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

_____ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

_____ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education
Conservation
Entertainment/recreation

Period of Significance
1916-1938

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
____ B removed from its original location.
____ C a birthplace or a grave.
____ D a cemetery.
____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
____ F a commemorative property.
____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Dates
N/A

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Yosemite Park and Curry Company; Desmond Park Service Company

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register

Primary location of additional data
____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University

Merced Lake High Sierra Camp Historic District
Name of Property

Tuolumne, CA
County and State

___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
_____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

_X_ Other
Name of repository:
Library and Archive,Yosemite National Park

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _1 acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	287000	4178775	**3**	11	287050	4178650
2	11	287150	4178775	**4**			

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)
The National Register boundary includes all the tents, cooking structures, restrooms and bathhouses, and other miscellaneous structures associated with the High Sierra Camp facilities, and the immediate environment.

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)
The boundary includes all structures associated with the provisions of overnight accommodations and eating facilities for park visitors, plus any structures that are part of the camp intended for visitor enjoyment, use, and recreation. It also includes the immediate setting, which is an important part of the site's significance as a wilderness experience.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Andy Kirk, Richard Coop, Charles Palmer

organization UNLV Public History ____ date 3/8/04

street & number 4505 Maryland Parkway Box 455020 telephone (702)895-3544

city or town Las Vegas state NV zip code 89135-5020

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets
Maps
A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs
Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.
Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)
name _____
street & number_____ telephone_____
city or town_____ state_____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.0. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Summary

(From MPD) The Merced Lake High Sierra Camp contains tents and a dining/cooking structure. This was one of the first High Sierra camps established in 1916 and has been operated by the Yosemite Park and Camp Curry Company since 1925. Activities include swimming, boating, fishing, hiking, and climbing. The camp is significant recreationally as a part of the High Sierra loop trail camp system designed to provide visitors with a backcountry experience while at the same time exposing them to wilderness values and the supporting role of the Park Service.

(From Previous Nomination) Merced Lake High Sierra Camp lies at an elevation of 7,150 feet and is 7.6 miles from Vogelsang via Babcock Lake, 8.4 miles from Vogelsang via Vogelsang Pass, 10 miles from Sunrise, and 13 miles from Yosemite Valley. Its nineteen tents plus dining/cooking structure accommodate fifty-nine people.

General Description

The trail from Vogelsang to Merced Lake via either the Fletcher Creek or Vogelsang Pass - Lewis Creek trails, is downhill all the way and characterized by beautiful wildflowers and scenic vistas. Merced Lake, one of the largest in Yosemite, is encircled by granite ridges and domes. The low elevation makes for warm temperatures and thick woods.

Merced Lake was one of the first of the High Sierra camps built in 1916 by the Desmond Park Service Company. The camp is bounded on the south by the Merced River and by the lake on the west.

The camp closed in 1918, although possibly it served tourists up until the end of 1921, but reopened in 1922 as an enlarged, sports-oriented boys' camp. The Yosemite Park and Curry Company took the site over as a High Sierra camp after 1925, with a capacity for twenty guests. It became very popular because of its isolation and good fishing. In 1928 the company rebuilt the camp and expanded it to accommodate fifty-nine guests. At that time it was the only camp to offer hot and cold showers and canvas cabins with permanent flooring.

The contributing properties at Merced Lake High Sierra Camp consist of twenty-four canvas and frame seasonal buildings and three permanent buildings:

Seasonal Canvas and Frame Buildings

--Twenty-two tents, typically twelve feet by ten feet in size, are used for guest and employee housing.
--Two tent bathhouses measuring eighteen feet by twenty-four feet. These were rebuilt in 1994
All have concrete slab floors, and are generally in good condition.

Permanent Buildings

--The cookhouse is a wood framed building measuring approximately eighteen feet by thirty-six feet. It has a shake shingle roof, with concrete foundation and floor. A frame tent measuring eighteen feet by twelve feet is attached at one end as employee sleeping quarters, with the dining tent measuring thirty-five feet by eighteen feet attached at the opposite end. Both tents have concrete slab floors. The building was renovated in the 1990s.

--The icehouse is constructed of indigenous logs, and measures approximately fourteen by eighteen feet. The building is set on a loose stone foundation, with concrete flooring. The freestanding interior walls are of log construction and separated from the exterior walls by a two-foot insulation space. The roof was originally covered with shake shingles, but was recovered with galvanized metal in the 1980s. One wall was reinforced with external shoring in the mid-1990s to prevent collapse due to rotting of the lower logs.

--The barn is a wood framed building with shingle siding. It measures approximately twenty by thirty-eight feet, and sits on a stone foundation. A galvanized metal roof was installed in the 1980s. The building is in fair condition, showing the effects of age and the constant attempts by local wildlife to gain access to stock feed stored within.

Today's visitors can indulge in swimming, boating, fishing in Merced Lake, hiking, climbing, and botany. Nearby Washburn Lake also contains trout in abundance and Mounts Clark and Florence and Gray Peak are available for climbers, as is Vogelsang Pass. Within a day's walk are Yosemite Valley, Tenaya Lake via Forsyth Trail, and Tuolumne Meadows via Tuolumne Pass.

The Merced Lake Camp is reached via a trail through Little Yosemite and Lost valleys and then through the marvelous granite gorge of the Merced River, affording a walk along a wonderful stretch of wild water. From Echo Creek, it is two miles to Merced Lake High Sierra Camp.

Significance

Property Type: Resources Associated with Tourism, Recreation and the Preservation Ethic in Yosemite (1864-1973)
Subtype: Camping, Hiking
Period of Significance: 1916-1938

The Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is considered significant in recreation and education as one of seven high country camps whose origin dates back to the earliest days of the National Park Service. Director Stephen Mather believed that this type of public service in the Yosemite high country helped fulfill the Park Service's interpretive responsibility to educate visitors in the conservation role of the agency. The Yosemite camp system initially began in 1916 as an effort to attract people into the park's high country. Its purpose as time went on became closely tied to management problems: to relieve congestion in the valley by enabling outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy the Yosemite wilderness with relative ease and in some degree of comfort and to provide a compatible environment in which, through interpretive means, visitors could be instructed in the tenets of conservation and the objectives of the National Park Service in that area. Through the use of organized parties guided by a Yosemite naturalist, the Park Service established a unique pattern of interpretive service in the high country of one of the most populous national parks, which helped acquaint the American public with the conservation objectives of the agency in all natural areas of the system.

Historic Context

An important and historically significant portion of the Yosemite National Park lies above the elevations normally approached by the casual tourist and sight-seer. The High Sierra Camps allow for exploration and enjoyment of this remote and seasonally accessed part of the park. A series of camps established for the enjoyment of the more adventuresome of visitors, the High Sierra Camps offer support and shelter on several of the trails that carry hikers, riders and backpackers through this rugged and challenging wilderness.

In 1916 the fledgling National Park Service asked its Yosemite concessionaire—the Desmond Park Service Company—to build mountain chalets at Tenaya Lake, Tuolumne Meadows, and Merced Lake. The Desmond Company owned the Sentinel and Glacier Point hotels and the Big Trees and Yosemite lodges in and around Yosemite Valley. Construction took place during that summer. Each camp contained a frame combination lounge, dining room, and kitchen building roofed with canvas. Guest tents provided sleeping accommodations, and the camp staff consisted of a manager, a cook, and a fisherman. The cost for dinner, bead, and breakfast the next day was minimal. The Desmond Company went bankrupt in 1917, and as a result, the camps closed the following year. After reorganizing in 1920, the Desmond Company became the Yosemite National Park Company.

In 1920, the Park Service requested that the High Sierra camps be reopened. Superintendent Washington B. Lewis advocated their reestablishment to fill a need he saw for simple, inexpensive accommodations for the park visitor that could be provided at minimum expense to the operator. As a result, the camps at Tenaya Lake and Tuolumne Meadows were

reopened as "Hikers' Camps." The first organized party to use them left Yosemite Valley on July 20, 1923, guided by a Park Service naturalist. Other nature-guided parties went out over the next two months and met with considerable success. As a result, Superintendent Lewis requested that the Yosemite National Park Company expand the system to include sites not accessible by roads. He sent Yosemite Park Naturalist Carl P. Russell on a pack trip into the Sierra to choose sites for five additional camps. The resulting list of camp and trail locations, viewsheds, and recreational opportunities, gives the High Sierra Camp system and the Loop Trail connecting them their unique qualities and significance.

The trail-side campsites that seemed best suited to the High Sierra system were at Little Yosemite Valley, Merced Lake, Boothe Lake, the Lyell Fork of the Tuolumne River, Tuolumne Meadows, Glen Aulin, and Tenaya Lake. Russell selected these locations because of the beauty of their surroundings, their distance from other promising campsites, and the availability of water. In 1924, five of those sites were planned as "Hikers'-Camps," built and operated by the Yosemite National Park Company. The Lyell Fork and Glen Aulin camps intended for installation were omitted from that year's program of expansion because of the uncertain travel conditions caused by a drought year. It was planned that all of the camps would consist of a mess and cook tent and dormitory tents for men and women. Attendants and cooks would staff each camp, with equipment and supplies brought in by mules.

During a part of the winter of 1923-24, Naturalist Russell was in San Francisco on Yosemite Museum business. At the suggestion of Yosemite National Park Company officials, he took the opportunity to cultivate the acquaintance of some of the newspaper editors in San Francisco with the intent of releasing to them photographs, maps, and notes on the proposed Hikers' Camps. Writers for the *Call*, *Daily News*, *Examiner*, *Herald*, and the *Chronicle* seized upon the opportunity to use the material. The *Herald* for February 13, 1924, first publicized the camps, and other articles followed in quick succession. By February 17, the San Francisco office of the Yosemite National Park Company reported that it was somewhat overwhelmed with inquiries engendered by the publicity. The most timely announcement was made in the *Chronicle* of May 4, when its Sunday Rotogravure Section featured a full page of photographs of the camp sites. A 1924 article on the High Sierra camps by NPS Chief Naturalist Ansel F. Hall provided a description of the High Sierra Loop and the comfortable beds and wholesome meals, provided at a mere 75-cents each, that awaited backcountry travelers at day's end.

Meanwhile, the park prepared maps and colored posters announcing the expanded camp system and readied sets of the old-fashioned, hand-tinted lanternslides of "standard" size featuring the camps and the trails between camps. The Yosemite National Park Company met the expense involved in making those visual devices. During the travel season of 1924, the Hikers' Camps received a good deal of emphasis in evening talks, in a special printed bulletin, and on the pages of the mimeographed "Yosemite Nature Notes." On June 24, the first backcountry nature guide party, a group of ten, set out from Camp Curry for the Hikers' Camps. Thereafter, at two-week intervals, the six-day trips were offered through out the

summer and continued during the next six years. Backcountry excursions were operated annually during the 8- to 10-week season during the summer when the snow pack had retreated sufficiently for the parties to access the trails. By the early 1960's, the popularity of these guided treks had risen to the point that horse-mounted trips left the stables in the Yosemite valley weekly and traversed the trails from camp to camp in a clockwise direction and hiking parties generally started at the Tuolumne Meadows area and traveled in a counterclockwise direction. Demand for the lodging at the camps has remained high and currently the available beds are reserved literally months in advance, although because of cancellations, some permits are available on a day-to-day as available basis.

The sheer size and demand for access to this remote area of the park has required significant planning and coordination among the Park concessionaires, the Park Service and the campers and hikers. The following descriptions of the campsites and their physical relationships demonstrate the logistical dexterity that must be maintained in order for the park to accommodate the tourists, maintain the integrity of the wilderness area through and in which these trails and camps exist and protect the wildlife and scenic beauty indigenous to this region as well as protect the travelers from significant exposure to the dramatic elements that can change abruptly and without warning.

What follows is from the original hikers' camps descriptions:

"To give some idea of the portion of Yosemite National Park that is opened up by the seven new camps, let us make a brief tour of inspection. After a leisurely half-day climb from Yosemite up the scenic Vernal and Nevada Falls Trail one finds one's self on the level forested floor of Little Yosemite Valley. Here, near the site of the ancient Indian village of Kah-win-na-bah, stands the first of the hikers' camps. The position is particularly well chosen. The canyon itself is remarkably scenic but almost unknown, because the main trails climb around its precipitous sides. We have thus a major canyon within seven miles of Yosemite that offers the unique attraction of being as wild as was the larger valley half a century ago. The new Little Yosemite Camp is a convenient stopping-place if one wishes to break the trail trips to Clouds Rest, Half Dome, Merced Lake, or Glacier Point. Besides, it is a good base camp from which to explore the little-known Starr King Plateau and Helen Lake region. Three hikers' camps lie within one day's walking distance. Tenaya Lake Camp may be reached by climbing to Clouds Rest, thence following the Forsyth Pass Trail to Tenaya, a total distance of about nine miles. The beautiful alpine Sunrise Trail leads northward past Cathedral Peak to Tuolumne Meadows Camp; a full day should be spent on this exceptionally scenic trail. To the eastward the main trail veers to the north of Little Yosemite and climbs gradually in about nine miles to Merced Lake.

"Those who have climbed to Vogelsang Pass or have followed the Babcock and Emeric Lake Trail to Tuolumne Pass will remember the splendid park of Jeffrey pines that stands where the trail leaves the main Merced Canyon and branches up the McClure Fork. Here, a mile above Merced Lake stands Merced Lake Camp. The region is one of

great beauty. The glaciated canyon cuts eastward deep into the heart of the mountains. Through it runs the singing Merced, now plunging over cascades, now flowing deep, now swift, and now loitering for a time in placid Washburn Lake. Not only here, but also in the McClure Fork, Babcock Lake, Bernice Lake, Emeric Lake, and other waters the trout abound. Merced Camp is a good base from which to ascend Florence Mountain or Mount Clark and its lofty neighbors. Within a long day's walk are Yosemite Valley and the hikers' camps at Lake Tenaya (via Clouds Rest), at Tuolumne Meadows (via Tuolumne Pass or Vogelsang Pass), and in Lyell Canyon (via Vogelsang Pass or Tuolumne Pass). A short day westward is the Little Yosemite Camp. A seven-mile climb on the scenic Babcock and Emeric Lake Trail, or on the even more spectacular Vogelsang Pass Trail, would take us to Boothe Lake Camp.

"Boothe Lake Camp is situated on a cove of a beautiful little heather-bordered alpine lake at the headwaters of Emeric Creek. Not only is it a well-located stopping-place on the trails between Merced Lake, Tuolumne Meadows, and Lyell Canyon, but it also makes accessible a great upland terrain hitherto reached only with great difficulty. Not far distant are Unicorn, Echo, and the other summits of the Cathedral group; in another direction are Vogelsang Peak and its unnamed neighbors; Fletcher Lake and Evelyn Lake are easily reached, and it is but a short walk to Ireland Lake, which exploring fishermen tell us contains some of the finest trout in the Sierra. From Boothe Lake Camp the Tuolumne Meadows Camp is about four hours' walk northward via the Rafferty Creek Trail. Eastward, the Mount Lyell Camp is four hours distant. To the southward Merced Lake Camp may be reached in three hours via the Babcock and Emeric Lake Trail, or in five hours via the Vogelsang Pass Trail.

"At the head of the Lyell Canyon, where hundreds of Sierra Club members have bivouacked before ascending Mount Lyell, now stands Mount Lyell Camp. There has long been a demand for an easily accessible camp located thus in the heart of Yosemite's highest Sierra within striking distance of Mount Lyell, Mount McClure, Parker Peak, Mammoth Peak, Kuna Crest, and other less-known but equally difficult summits. But the camp is not only for the ambitious mountain-climber. One may spend a leisurely day on the trail that will take him to Donohue Pass, where he can peer over the divide toward the spectacular peaks of the Mount Ritter Group, or he may be well repaid for his entire trip by merely loitering through the flower-dotted meadows that carpet this great glacial trough as far as the Tuolumne Meadows. Within three hours walk are the Tuolumne Meadows Hikers' Camp and the previously mentioned camp near Tuolumne Pass.

"Of all the spots in the High Sierra, John Muir's favorite was the Tuolumne Meadows. So many are the attractive excursions that may be taken afoot from the camp near the junction of the Lyell Fork and Dana Fork that hikers will be tempted to prolong their stay here from days to weeks. Among the shorter walks are those to Lambert Dome, Dog Lake, Fairview Dome, Evelyn Lake, and Gaylor Lakes; a little longer are the trips to Young Lake, McCabe Lakes, Tioga Pass, Tioga Lake, Ellery Lake, Saddlebag Lake, and Old Tioga Mine; and then there are the ascents of Mount Dana, Mount Conness, Ragged Peak, the rugged summits of the Cathedral Group, and dozens of other unnamed

vantage-points. Trails radiate in every direction. A few miles westward are the famous Waterwheel Falls, with Glen Aulin Camp conveniently located for hikers. A little to the south of west the Tioga Road leads to Tenaya Lake Camp, some eight miles distant. Southwest, a full day's walk by the Sunrise Trail lies Little Yosemite Camp. Southward one may climb in four or five hours up the Rafferty Creek Trail to Boothe Lake Camp. The Mount Lyell Camp is but two hours' walk southeastward up the canyon.

"From the highland plateau of Tuolumne Meadows one descends abruptly into the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne, passing California Falls, Le Conte Falls, and many other spectacular but unnamed cascades. Suddenly one comes upon Glen Aulin, a tranquil little valley shut off from all the world by great sheer granite walls. Here, where the river pauses for a moment before resuming its tumultuous rush into its mile-deep canyon, is Glen Aulin Camp. Waterwheel Falls, the Tuolumne's unique expression of leaping power and spotless beauty, may be reached by a newly constructed trail that further descends the canyon. Within one day to the north of Glen Aulin are Cold Canyon, Alkali Canyon, Virginia Canyon, and Matterhorn Canyon. Four hours to the southward Tenaya Lake may be reached via the McGee Lake Trail; half a day eastward up the Canyon lies Tuolumne Meadows Camp.

*"On the shore of Lake Tenaya near the mouth of Murphy Creek stands the seventh of Yosemite's high mountain camps. The fine swimming and boating, the fishing, and the superb scenic surroundings make this a camp where one may stay with enjoyment until the roving spirit bids him go in search of "the other side of the mountain." A number of near-by peaks offer splendid views, and hidden in glacial cirques on their flanks are actually some of the mythical fishing lakes of the old-timers' stories. Trails lead in many directions from Tenaya; Yosemite is five hours away by the Mirror Lake Trail or a full day's walk via the Tioga Road and the Yosemite Falls Trail; Little Yosemite Camp can be reached in a leisurely day by climbing first to Clouds Rest via the Forsyth Pass Trail; Tuolumne Meadows Camp is about eight miles distant by the Tioga Road; and to the north, via the McGee Lake Trail, lies Glen Aulin Camp.**

"The establishment of hikers' camps in the High Sierra is not a money-making venture. The splendid co-operation shown by the Yosemite National Park Company in running them at cost calls for the appreciation not only of the Park Service, but of all whose ideal is to explore, enjoy, and render accessible the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast.

**The Yosemite Nature Guide Service will schedule regular trips over the trails outlined above. Hikers may learn to read the trail-side in this High Country Wonderland from a competent scientist. This service is provided without cost by the Government.* [1]*"*

Almost immediately it became apparent that horseback riders as well as hikers favored the camps, which soon became

1 Ansel F. Hall, "High Sierra Camps," *Sierra Club Bulletin* 12, no. 1 (1924): 39-42.

known simply as "High Sierra Camps." The proposed Glen Aulin Camp began operating in 1927, but later moved slightly east of its original location because of a mosquito problem. A few years later the Boothe Lake Camp was abandoned in favor of a new camp, Vogelsang, first located near the junction of the Rafferty Creek and Lyell Fork trails and, in 1940, on the banks of Fletcher Creek. In 1938 the Tenaya Lake Camp was closed, and in its place another was established amidst the mountain hemlocks at May Lake under the ramparts of Mount Hoffmann. This left the Tuolumne Meadows Camp the only one on a road. White Wolf did not become a part of the High Sierra Camp System until 1951, while Sunrise High Sierra Camp was not established until 1961.

Since 1925, the High Sierra Camps, a unique public service offered Yosemite National Park visitors, have been owned and operated by the Yosemite Park and Curry Company. The camps are not primarily money-making ventures, with services provided generally at less than cost. Russell, later Chief Naturalist of the Park Service, stated once that the High Sierra Camps comprised one of the most important assets of the park. He believed that the resumption of interpretive work in the camps and on the trails between camps in 1923 was a sagacious move on the part of the government, because the backcountry was considered the best field in which to spread the word regarding National Park Service objectives in preservation and conservation of natural resources. It was recognized early that the comparatively small numbers of visitors that initially took advantage of this service in the backcountry could not be the criterion for judging the effectiveness of the project. The great advantages of placing a competent naturalist--provided free of charge by the Yosemite Nature Guide Service--with the same individuals day after day amidst the superlative high country surroundings outweighed most of the arguments of would-be efficiency experts in the government bureaucracy. The greatest asset of these ranger-guided trips was that ranger-naturalists would be on hand at moments of greatest visitor receptiveness--while they were viewing magnificent natural wonders--to help them understand and more fully appreciate the innumerable treasures of the Yosemite high country and, on a broader scale, those of all natural areas within the National Park System.

During the 1930s the High Sierra Camps underwent some renovation and stone cookhouse/ dining structures replaced the old frame and canvas ones. By 1938 five High Sierra camps existed: two original ones at Merced Lake and Tuolumne Meadows, which had ice houses, and new ones at May Lake (replacing the Tenaya Lake camp), Glen Aulin, and Vogelsang (replacing the Boothe Lake camp). The company had discontinued the Tenaya Lake and Little Yosemite Valley camps. About 1935 a small stone lodge was constructed at Glen Aulin. The Curry Company erected a stone dining room and kitchen at May Lake in 1938. Mary Curry Tresidder, president of the Curry Company, established the Sunrise High Sierra camp in 1961 and also equipped it with a canvas dining tent and stone kitchen structure. It overlooks Long Meadow on the John Muir Trail a few miles from Cathedral Pass.

There exist today seven High Sierra camp locations. Two of them are accessible by auto--White Wolf, on the old Tioga Road, and Tuolumne Meadows, along an access route off the new Tioga Road. The other five comprise the High Sierra Loop, a seven-day backcountry experience along well-marked, safe trails that is unique within the National Park System and that attracts hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts year after year. The camps are open from six to eight weeks a year,

from mid-June or early July to Labor Day, weather permitting.

The High Sierra camps have been significant as an innovative interpretive concept luring more people into the Yosemite backcountry and representing a successful joint effort by the National Park Service and the Yosemite concessionaire to encourage travel beyond the roads and thus enhance visitor appreciation of wilderness areas as part of our national parks. Their establishment also marked an early implementation of the Interior Department's policy of making remote areas of parks more accessible to the visiting public. Another aspect of the 1923 reopening of the camps involved Park Service Director Stephen Mather's strong desire to carry out what he believed were the agency's interpretive responsibilities in the high country. The park established a new pattern of interpretive service there, comprising backcountry Nature Guide trips to the camps, which was unique within the National Park System and set precedents for similar programs in other units. None, however, developed along exactly the same lines as this one. Despite the initially small number of visitors exposed to this service, Mather and park officials strongly believed that a naturalist talking to the same people day after day, amidst the magnificent peaks and meadows of the backcountry, could probably exert a stronger and longer-lasting influence on the formation of positive visitor attitudes toward national parks and conservation in general than could result from guided short walks on the valley floor, daily lectures at the museum, or single-day hikes to the valley rim. The High Sierra Loop is considered the highlight of the park's interpretive services to this day.

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